

# Social Enterprise & Social Entrepreneurship in Practice

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*I want it to be said of me that 'I was involved at the start of that revolution which had such an impact in the economy and prosperity of our country.' (Black, 2002).*

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Ade Adeagbo**

### **Social Enterprise and Social Entrepreneurship in Practice**

In my practice experience and exploration of literature, I discovered that there are limited examples and research about organisations that aim to change from a charity to a social enterprise. In addition to this, there are limited knowledge and understanding about what social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are and a lack of frameworks that will enable one to know a social enterprise and social entrepreneur when you see one.

This research, therefore, is an exploration of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in practice, arriving at working definitions and frameworks. It examines the process, experiences and challenges that come with an organisation – Age Concern Bexley – changing from a charity to a social enterprise. The research then shares the experiences and the challenges that come with such organisational change

The research also examines and exposes my role and experiences - as the Chief Executive, social entrepreneur, leader and change agent, during this period. The research then provides an insight into the self-discovery, self evaluation and reflections of a social entrepreneur in practice, especially from the insider practitioners' perspective, thereby enabling seeing social enterprise and social entrepreneurship from the lens of a social entrepreneur.

This research does not look into the issues surrounding governance during this change; as recent researches concluded that governance have little impact in this context (Young, 2006). My view is that governance is important and relevant; although the experience

during this research does highlight that it was not a major issue. However, I would recommend it as an area of and for future research.

The research combines empiricism and rationalism with iterations. In the research, I applied methodical pluralism as overarching research methodology by applying a portfolio of methodologies, using different methods to gather necessary data from different sources.

The research contributes to practice with the establishment of a social enterprise service at Age Concern Bexley whilst also developing a set of high-level challenges that organisations that aim to explore social enterprise need to be aware of and how to manage them. The research contributes to theory by arriving at a working definition and framework of social enterprise. It also provides a better understanding of social entrepreneurship in practice and the role of a social entrepreneur as a leader and change agent.

Other contributions to theory are the employment of metaphors to explain organisational change, the application of socio-psychological theory of labelling to explain the deviancy of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship and argument for sector differentiation, that is, social enterprise as a distinct sector.

Some other contributions to practice are the showcasing of social enterprise in practice, the establishment of *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium*, the establishment of an international development social enterprise organisation - *Hephzibah* – and the aim of establishing a social enterprise academy in Nigeria. These are to enable me put into further practice, what I have learnt through this research.

The research concludes that the practice of social enterprise is here to stay, that social entrepreneurial organisations need social entrepreneurs in leadership and that it will be challenging for existing charities to convert in totality to social enterprises.



# Chapter One

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## 1. Introduction: structure of the research

This chapter is an elucidation of the structures of the chapters.

From my experience and knowledge, some in the voluntary sector are not adopting operating models that can generate efficiencies and effectiveness. The operating environment is changing and the voluntary sector needs to realise and respond to this (Shore, 1999). They are also not favourably competing in the market for service provision or delivery, whilst some still perceive 'profit' as a bad thing.

As Bill Shore puts it, "...too many not-for-profit organisations are financially stagnant, raising and distributing funds the same way they have for decades.... A not-for-profit that is run for profit sounds like a contradiction in terms. But it doesn't have to be" (Shore, 1999, p.7). Age Concern Bexley is one of those entrenched in the culture that I describe as the traditional charity – full of good values but lacking in applying and embracing good commercial or business approaches to its operations.

The rules of the game for the voluntary sector appear to have changed dramatically during the past 20 years (Boschee, 1995). Operating costs have soared, resources available from traditional sources have flattened, the number of nonprofits competing for grants and subsidies has more than tripled and the number of people in need of services and/or products from them has escalated (Boschee, 1995).

In Bexley local authority area for example, it is projected that by 2011, approximately 30% of the population will be older people (i.e. over 60s). These have made some of the Chief Officers of voluntary organisations and trustees realise they must increasingly depend on themselves to ensure their survival and ability to respond to these market forces.

In the survey of Chief Officers, some of the respondents' state:

*"We want to achieve a self-sustenance status"* [Respondent 10].

*"We are currently self-sustaining and we need more ideas and support to develop further"* [Respondent 12].

The question some face is whether social enterprise is an option to explore, making it worthy to research it and to establish a better understanding of what it means in practice.

Parker (2002) argues that becoming a social enterprise is something that all voluntary and community organisations need to consider. This is because, in Parker's view, in the years to come, there may be a turning-off of EU funding or the fund may be diverted to the new member states in Eastern Europe. Therefore, the voluntary sector needs to be thinking about an exit strategy, it needs to start looking at ways to generate new fund and income and one of the option being propounded is exploring social enterprise. Hence, an in-depth study of its principles and practice will add value to what it means.

Some debates in the voluntary sector have started raising the question of whether the 'voluntary sector' is a concept that covers too many interests (Third Sector, 9 March 2005). As the voluntary sector is encouraged to engage in public service delivery, Lloyd (2003) for example, suggests that social enterprise can potentially have a role across the board as an alternative form of organisational structure. Therefore, a better understanding of what it is



in practice and what it takes to become a social enterprise is required for those that aim to engage with it.

I have discovered that policies and practices for social enterprise in the UK are moving rapidly forward and are possibly the most developed in Europe, as this was also the conclusion reached at a social enterprise conference I attended at the Open University on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005. Findings at the Open University indicate that there are a range of arguments about the role of third sector organisations operating between public and private sectors. Some of the conference participants argued that some co-operatives have lost their 'social dimension' and become more like conventional businesses, that voluntary organisations need to concentrate more on social and advocacy roles that are their unique selling points.

Some participants went as far as claiming that the voluntary and co-operative organisations need to tackle the perception that although they may be well meaning, but they lack the professionalism and management expertise required in becoming a social enterprise. The question was then raised as to whether social enterprise could promise reconciliation between social and economic activities for third sector organisations. They also raise questions about the role of the social entrepreneurs in this context (Kaospilot 2005; Case 2005), as leaders and change agents.

To be an effective leader, Kouzes & Posner (1987), highlight certain features. They argue that common to successful leaders are the abilities to challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enabling others to act by giving them the tools and methods to solve the problem and modelling the way. This becomes important as some research has shown that there is growing and compelling evidence that those who take a socially entrepreneurial approach can be a transformational force in society (Phillips, 2007).

Hence, in my view, what needs to be better evidenced, which this research aims to achieve, is the nature of leadership that needs to be displayed as a social entrepreneur. As Phillips (2007) puts it: we need to “understand why some are able to turn their sense of social justice and compassion, or their environmental concerns, into a driving force that results in effective action” (p.12).

Hence the chapter structure takes cognisance of the two strands to this research – the practice of social enterprise and the actions of a social entrepreneur in practice, as a leader and change agent.

What this research does not explore is the role and/or essence of governance in an organisation that aims to make a transition from a charity to a social enterprise. This is because evidence demonstrated by researches commissioned by the Governance Hub and the Social Enterprise Coalition, both in 2007, confirmed that an examination of this will not add huge value and will not elucidate new knowledge about governance, that we do not know before.

These researches also concluded that there are no specific and/or unique “...characteristics of governance practices specific or distinctive to social enterprise” (p.6) and that the support needs required are generic to most organisational types (Spear et. al., 2007). What these researches confirmed though are that choosing and developing the appropriate governance structures for a charity and social enterprise is important and can sometimes be complex and difficult and that there are diversities of governance types across the varied types of social enterprises in existence.

What the research further confirms, which resonates my experience at and with Age Concern Bexley, for example, is that, “some charities...experience problems establishing a social enterprise when moving from a charitable culture to an enterprise culture. For



example board members may lack business skills...and may be risk averse...” (p. 11). All these are identified and are clearly detailed in the chapter on “challenges and lessons learnt”, as a result of Age Concern Bexley changing from a charity to a social enterprise – see chapter 6.

However, in my view, I would agree that although governance is of strategic importance, it was not a main thrust of and for change at Age Concern Bexley. The experience with this research highlights more of the change dynamics and the role of the social entrepreneur as a leader and as a change agent, working with the senior management team in the organisation – see chapter 5.

One of the suggestions made by the UK Government Hub, that I agree with, is that board members need to be developed for “market challenges and culture change” (p. 12). This therefore reinforces the importance of governance; hence I will suggest that an examination of the issue of governance in organisational change, especially in a charity, be an area of and for further research.

Chapter one of this research is this section with the introductory part and the details of how the chapters are structured.

The second chapter highlights the research justifications and the factors that influenced the choice of research topic. These are the increase interest in and emergence of social enterprise coupled with the need for an agreed working definition and the need for Age Concern Bexley to engage in social enterprise. I introduced Age Concern Bexley and its internal and external environments as they inform and influence the choice of making them an arena for social enterprise practice. Another justification is my personal interest and drive in this subject as I presented my personal profile, laying out my interests, assumptions, drive and motivations that led to the research on social enterprise. With the

views in literature and that of practitioners, I applied the *Force Field* as an analytical tool, leading to the conclusion that social enterprise is worthy of a research study.

Chapter three is the literature review of the various definitions and models of social enterprise and the descriptors of a social entrepreneur and social entrepreneurship in the context of leadership and change agency. This is complemented with the views of practitioners garnered via Delphi and Convergence Interview techniques. I also examined the concept of labelling as it applies to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, to explore descriptor of these terms as 'labels'. This chapter also presents my self analysis as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent. These informed the arrival at working definitions and frameworks of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

The fourth chapter examines the research philosophy, methodology and methods. The epistemological stance is empirical and rationalist, as the aim is to forge a link between intellectual theory and practice (Coghlan, 2001). The research methodology employed is "methodical pluralism" as I argue for the adoption of mixed methods (Chung, 2003) – as it enabled me to apply varied methods that suit the needs of the research and the research journey. I detail the methods employed, how they are applied, and the justifications of and for their application and their advantages and limitations.

To demonstrate social enterprise in practice, chapter five records the experience and the change processes at Age Concern Bexley, as it transits from a charity to a social enterprise. The organisation went through a self-evaluation and a review of its mission and objectives, selecting and ultimately implementing of a social enterprise idea. The board of trustees and the senior management team were involved in this detailed process, which led to the arrival of a new mission statement and corporate objectives and the establishment of a new social enterprise service.



The implementation of social enterprise in practice carried with it ethical considerations and some challenges. Chapter six shares these challenges and lessons learnt, whilst also detailing the ethical issues confronted and how I recognised, reflected on and attempted to manage them. As part of my self-discovery and an attempt to demonstrate social entrepreneurship in action, the sixth chapter also has a section on my self discovery and self reflections.

Chapter six consolidates my reflections throughout the research journey, looking at my personal stance, the metaphor of the *Bata* dance – Age Concern Bexley becomes a “stage” where I sometimes dictate the steps and emphases – and the application, with rigour, of reflexivity that enabled me to be a legitimate part of the research, shaping me, Age Concern Bexley and the outcome of the research (Lapadat et. al, 2005, Douglas, 1988). This is essential for the research, as part of the driving force for the interest in this field is because I am a social entrepreneur and I influenced the research and the research influenced me as I played the role of an insider practitioner, social entrepreneur, leader and change agent.

Chapter seven details the contributions to knowledge, theory and practice. Some of the contributions to theory are the arrival at a working definition and framework of social enterprise and definition of social entrepreneur and typologies, the sector differentiation argument and the exposition of the change process and organisational design requirements of changing from a charity to a social enterprise. Some contributions to practice are the implementation of the Handy person service as a social enterprise, sharing the experiences with other Age Concerns across London, the establishment of *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium* and *Hephzibah* - an international development social enterprise.



The research's concluding chapter, chapter eight, highlights some areas of and for further research and argues that social enterprise will grow and is here to stay. The research also acknowledges that for some charities, a growing focus on entrepreneurial activities appear inevitable, however, a complete change from a charity to a social enterprise will be challenging for some and that in many cases will require the leadership of a social entrepreneur.

# Chapter Two

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## 2. Research justifications

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the factors that influenced the choice of research and why this study is of importance. These are the need to clarify its meaning, due to the growing interest and emergence of social enterprise as a field of study and practice. There is also the need for Age Concern Bexley to aim for reduction on grant dependency whilst strategically reacting to environmental changes, therefore changing from a charity to a social enterprise as a potential solution to achieving self sustenance and self sufficiency. This chapter paints a portrait of Age Concern Bexley, the influencing factors - internal and external – and why the change to a social enterprise provides a strategic option.

This chapter also examines the history and background of social enterprise and establishes the argument for the need for a working definition. Applying *Force Field* (Lewin, 1943) as an analytical tool, I explored some of the factors that are influencing the emergence of social enterprise, for example looking at the changes being experienced by the voluntary sector in general and Age Concern Bexley in particular, that are creating and forcing strategic rethink of focus, status and identity. The initial surveys also support the justification for this research as some practitioners clearly indicate that they have limited knowledge and understanding of what the concept and the practice of social enterprise mean.

I also have a personal interest in social enterprise, hence, this chapter provides an insight into my personal portrait and how these influenced the choice of research, examining my

personal profile, values, background, that is, the social entrepreneur, leader and change agent in me.

The research's justifications are further informed by views in literature, the views of some practitioners garnered via varied research methods and my personal views as a practitioner.

## **2.2 An introduction to Age Concern Bexley**

One of the main themes and thrust of this research is its relevance to Age Concern Bexley, as some of the questions that Age Concern Bexley confronts are why it needs to change from a charity to a social enterprise, how could it achieve this change and what challenges come with such a change.

This section details the history and background of Age Concern Bexley, what it does and an insight into the local and internal environment within which it operates that forces and influences the change.

### **2.2.1 History & background of Age Concern Bexley**

Age Concern is a federation of organisations and agencies, all sharing the 'Age Concern' brand. Each organisation is a separate legal entity. Age Concern Bexley was established as a registered charity in 1965 with charity registration number 1088399. Age Concern Bexley also has a non-charitable trading arm - Age Concern Bexley Trading Limited [company registration number 3194003] - acting as an agent for insurance services and other products like holidays, equity release etc. The Board of Trustees are responsible for the overall management and control of the charity. Bexley London Borough financially



supports the core of Age Concern Bexley's service and activities, through a Service Level Agreement.

Age Concern Bexley's mission statement was:

*"To improve the quality of life of older people in the London Borough of Bexley by providing information services and support"*

The corporate objectives were:

- a. To raise awareness of the needs of older people amongst local politicians, health and social care providers*
- b. To provide services that supports and enhances the quality of life of older people in the Borough*
- c. To encourage and support older people in articulating an independent, influential voice*
- d. To encourage and support voluntary action as central and positive to the work of Age Concern Bexley and the well being of the Borough as a whole*
- e. To be an active member of the Age Concern, the federation, working in partnership and co-operation with other organisations both in and outside the federation*

Note: Both the mission statement and the corporate objectives changed in September 2005, as part of the organisational preparedness as Age Concern Bexley went through the implementation of social enterprise – see chapter 5.

### ***Summary of services provided by Age Concern Bexley***

- a. Volunteering: 210 volunteers, as at March 2007
- b. Day Centres: Manages four Day-Centres for people over 60 years old who are socially isolated and/or housebound
- c. Community Support: Provides support for vulnerable older people, with their everyday affairs, assisting them to live independently in the community
- d. Night Centre: Provides respite care for older people suffering with dementia
- e. Supporting Carers Scheme: Provides a break of three hours, once a week, to carers that provide 24-hour care for relatives or friends
- f. Foot care: A toenail cutting service is delivered at three clinics across the borough and for older people that are house bound
- g. Wheelchair Loan: A free wheelchair loan service for up to two weeks duration
- h. Welfare Benefit Advice: Assists older people to maximise their income by supporting them to claim benefits due to them
- i. Information, Advice and Advocacy: Face-to-face and telephone services, that provides free and relevant information as well as impartial advice, dealing with a wide range of issues
- j. Parlours: Venues for socialising and companionship that also provides light refreshment, information, holidays, day trips, entertainments and health



promotional activities. The parlours are also made available as meeting places for clubs and local organisations

- k. Handyperson Scheme: This scheme assists older people with small 'odd-jobs' they cannot manage, in order to make their homes safer and more comfortable

### **2.2.2 The local context: The London Borough of Bexley**

Bexley is a London Borough bordering Greenwich and the River Thames in the North, Kent to the East and Bromley in the South. Although less deprived than the UK average, higher levels of deprivation exist in the North and South extremities of the borough. Bexley local authority boundaries are co-terminus with Bexley Care Trust (BCT, 2005).

According to census 2001, it has a population of around 218,757, with projections estimating that the population of older people in Bexley aged 60-64 years will increase from 10,880 to 14,800 between 2005 and 2021. A similar increase is anticipated in the population of older people aged 65-84 years, whilst the population of older people aged 85 years and over is projected to increase 4,200 in 2005 to 6,300 by 2021 – see table 1 below.

Age	2001 Figures	Population Projections of Adult Aged 65+		% Change 2001-2011
		2006	2011	
65-69	9,633	8,974	9,606	-0.3
70-74	8,659	8,074	7,587	-12.4
75-79	7,339	6,863	6,458	-12.0
80-84	4,892	5,127	4,867	-0.5
85+	4,081	4,340	4,567	+11.9
Total 65+	34,604	33,378	33,085	-4.4

*Table 1: Population projections in the 65 plus age group in Bexley: 2001-2011*

From a research commissioned by Bexley Care Trust in 2004, it was concluded that it is likely that people will live longer, choose to remain living in their own home for as long as possible, as opposed to living in a residential or nursing home. People will choose to die at home, as opposed to in an institutional setting and will be socially isolated, as families live further apart (BCT, 2005)

Consequently, it is likely that there will be more older people living at home who may therefore have more complex and intensive health and social care needs and are more likely to experience mental health problems e.g. dementia/depression etc. They are also likely to be carers or to have an older person caring for them, have more complex and varied illnesses and in need of more social and or spiritual stimulation.

The Bexley report also concluded that as expectations change, it is likely that people will want greater control or a greater say over the services that support them in their own homes. This may well include improved choice over who provides the service, how the service is provided and when the service is provided. People will expect a high level of co-ordination between the different health and social care agencies that provide their services,

their families will expect a holistic approach towards assessing and meeting their needs - this will include consideration of their health, social, emotional, spiritual and security needs. (BCT, 2005)

These local contexts, in my view, provide opportunities and challenges for Age Concern Bexley, in ensuring that the services the organisation provides respond to local demographics and that it makes the organisation relevant and current within the local economy.

As a trustee commented at the review of the organisation's review:

*"One of the key issues facing many Age Concerns organisations is that the government is throwing contract about, creating opportunities. On the one hand, we can do all sorts of things in the care sector with a much heavier service delivery role in one end, as the government and many statutory bodies are suggesting we should engage with this agenda. On the other hand, the community and our target clients are asking for varied and different stuffs. Do we want to be the organisation social services think we are, focusing on the social care side or do we want to be focussing on social needs? Where do we have to be? At the moment we are sitting on the edge, with local authority contract for care and parlours for the active older people"* [BOT3]

Hence, one would expect that Age Concern Bexley's development and its choice of services would reflect these demographic dynamics and needs. However, these were contrary to the findings and my judgement of and about the organisation, as the next section highlights.

The 'wall paper' metaphor was what I used to describe Age Concern Bexley's internal and local environment, when I had my first year review with the chair of the board of trustee.



Wallpaper, as a decorative feature on a wall, is usually selected at the taste of the homeowner and/or decorator. How neat and tidy it is depend on how well maintained it is and the level of pressure from behind the wall – i.e. dampness, nature of the wall, heat retention etc. – and the pressure from outside, ranging from temperature, use, touch etc.

When I started as the Chief Executive in August 2003, my brief, as explained to me by the chair of the board at my induction, appeared to be to maintain the wallpaper and keep it in a good shape and form. The concern I first expressed was that the aesthetic value and judgement passed on the wall were mainly dependent on and formed by those who live with it most of the time, i.e. the staff and volunteers. Being an internal feature, it was, at most times, not open to closer public scrutiny.

My other view was, maintaining the wallpaper does not necessarily ensure its currency, fitness for purpose and relevance, especially if one takes cognisance of the demographic context, as I detailed earlier. Lastly, I was also concerned about not knowing the state of the wall behind the paper. I then peeled the wallpaper and these were my findings.

### **2.2.3 The world inside Age Concern Bexley**

I was asked to give a picture of the organisation in my first year in office. This was a summation of some of the issues I identified. Some are external to the organisation but requires some form of reaction and/or cognisance, whilst some are internal and embedded in the culture and operations of Age Concern Bexley.

This account was a form of self-reflective practice (McNiff, 2002), an action enquiry process that inquired into my own assumptions and ways of thinking and acting, “inquiring into the inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall, 2001 p. 454, as cited in Coghlan 2003).

Age Concern Bexley operates in an era of rapid change in the health and social care sectors. It operates within a local authority area that works quite closely with the voluntary sector. It has long serving staff and trustees with detailed knowledge and experience of the locality and organisation. It is one of the largest voluntary organisations in Bexley – in terms of turnover, numbers of employees, volunteers and range of services - and well placed to deliver some commissioned services from the statutory sectors.

One of Age Concern Bexley's strength, in my view, was the numbers and commitment of its team of volunteers – 210 as at March 2007 - across most service areas and one of the legacies of the last Chief Officer was established relationships with the local and health authorities and other partners.

During my induction, my judgement was that most staff and Board appeared contented with Age Concern Bexley as it was. My first year, I would liken to a room with wallpapers that on the surface appeared to require a bit of tidying up. What I did was to peel off the paper to ensure the wall is adequate with little blemish and explore options for redecoration rather than replacing like with like. These were my findings.

By my assessment, there was no defined map of/for the future. The development plan was already out of date, with outstanding action plans. There was also an outstanding fundraising plan yet to be implemented. The Service Level Agreement with Bexley Council was out of date and none-reflective of the current services delivered and not reflective of the demographic context [see *Table 1*] and needs of older people in Bexley.

The quarterly monitoring system lacked rigour and was not used to influence funding agreements and service delivery. Relationship with some local co-ordinators were distanced and strained, whilst there were no centralised control of activities and operations of these outlets. Some contractual agreements have little detail or in some cases are none



existence. Examples are the foot care services and Hospital Discharge contract with Bexley Care Trust, leaving Age Concern Bexley financially and contractually vulnerable.

I inherited a deficit budget. There was no cost centre management system and managers had no budgetary responsibility. Approximately 60% of income was dependent on grants – see *Table 2* below - although there is a healthy reserve and reasonable contributions from pop-in-parlours. Trading activities were the 'cash cow'.

	Age Concern Bexley	London Average
Income	£813,877	£639,911
Expenditure	£777, 734	£635,598
% Restricted Income	66%	50%
% Unrestricted Income	34%	38%
Contract income from statutory bodies	58%	56%
Turnover	£813,877	17 of Age Concerns have less than 0.5m turnover; 13 have 0.5 to 1m turnover, 3 have £1m to £1.5m, 1 has £1.5m to 2m, 2 over £2m

*Table 2: Age Concern Bexley's CORE Analysis 2003/4 in comparison to the London average of all Age Concerns in London (Barker, 2005)*



There was in existence a service review report that identified gaps in development and use of Parlours and Day Centres, but the implementation plan was yet to be drawn up. Age Concern Bexley has none of the innovative service concepts in operation that other Age Concerns in London have, for example, "Ageing Well", "Active Ageing", "Home Service" etc.

Some of the service locations were inadequate for the clients and staff e.g. Bexleyheath Day Centre was situated at a youth centre. There were no self-sustained services and gaps existed in services to meet the needs of older people from the black and minority ethnic group, a group that constitutes approximately 9-10% of Bexley population (BCT, 2005).

Some of the infrastructure and office facilities were inadequate. The telephone system needed upgrading and the IT system was not adequate for current requirements – my computer was the only one with online facilities. The web site was not functional and had little impact. Manual systems and processes permeated most of the processes. The office space was far from adequate with limited potential for expansion.

There were gaps in capacity and the staff structure. Staff wages were, in some cases, disparate and not competitive. There were pockets of discordance about workload and low pay. Organisational policies were in dire need of updating, when compared with the requirements of current legislation and statutory requirements.

With this internal insight, I then looked outside the organisation.

#### **2.2.4 The world outside Age Concern Bexley**

Within the Age Concern Federation, there had been a broad level of interest in new funding models; a mixed economy of provision and consideration of charging for services is now more acceptable. The Age Concern Federation however, is encouraging social enterprise model, whilst encouraging members to become financially self sufficient, self-sustaining and less dependent on grants (Egan, 2005).

Despite this, there were concern by some Trustees of Age Concern organisations (and some external stakeholders) at the impact of charging on access to services and for many the case needs to be made more explicit (Egan, 2005). This included the arguments that many services cannot exist at all without charging and that it is important to put a real monetary value on services as part of wider consciousness raising. It was recognised, though that users need to be consulted to assess their views on charged for services.

It is claimed that over the next 10-15 years, social care services for all adults will be organised with a greater emphasis on choice and control for users. It will be focused more tightly on prevention and independence, mainstreamed to other services such as housing and leisure and assessed on outcomes rather than processes (Barker, 2005).

It is proposed that there will be more use of “Individual Budgets” (pilots from 2005), which will be predicated by person centred assessment. Commissioning will aim to promote health and social inclusion, seek to maintain the independence of people with emerging needs (with implications for current eligibility criteria), provide care management for people with higher level needs and encourage development of “Telecare” [i.e. the use of assistive technology] in the home. There will be increased capacity building and more contracts, which will be based on full cost recovery (Baker, 2005).



There was the introduction of Direct Payment by the central government – which enables older people select what services they require and who they ‘buy’ the services from. This will pose a particular challenge for some Age Concern Bexley clients - especially at the Day Centres, as some may not opt for the traditional services, hence Age Concern Bexley needs to repackage and ‘market’ some of its services.

The implications for Age Concern Bexley, in my view, are the need to focus on prevention that is evidence based. With an emphasis on choice, users may not choose Age Concern Bexley as their service provider, hence the need to spend (even) more time investing in joint planning and market existing services differently e.g. advocacy, care navigation. There will be the need to better engage with health promotion and/or chronic disease self-management and the potentials to explore providing assistance with self-assessment (Barker, 2005).

The Charity Commission’s governance arrangement requires a fundamental shift in the roles and responsibilities of trustees and demands a clear set of organisational objectives, with its SORP 2005 regulations [Standard of Operating Procedures]. The Commission for Social Care Inspectorate has also developed new guideline for all domiciliary services, which put more scrutiny on some of the services e.g. Domiciliary Foot Care and Day Centres.

Within the Borough of Bexley, Age Concern Bexley now has a more complex partnership relationships with three major agencies to deal with – Bexley NHS Care Trust, Queen Mary Hospital and Bexley Council. Even though Bexley Borough has a Care Trust model, there was no borough wide older people’s strategy. There is a growing increase in contract and commissioning culture by Bexley Social Services, with all their services becoming outsourced. This meant a change from Service Level Agreements to contracts, with tighter monitoring regimes. Therefore, Age Concern Bexley had to have a more robust system of



evaluating services and their impact and outcome, plus taking on a more contract led culture.

The government made four major policy announcements in 2005 and 2006. These were the publication of the white paper on the future of adult social - *Independence, Well-being and Choice* - followed by the white paper on integration of out of hospital health care and social care, the publication of *Commissioning a Patient led NHS* which involves a reconfiguration of the NHS and a rapid expansion of GP practice based commissioning. The last one is the white paper - *Our care Our Health Our Say* – that attempts to consolidate the first three.

Together these represent a hugely significant change in the way health and social care services for older people will be planned and funded. All Age Concerns, need to familiarise themselves with these changes and consider the implications on the organisation and services (Barker, 2005).

Some of the issues that Age Concern Bexley needed to consider, in order to be prepared for these changes, are to find out what the health and social profile of the populations are and then work out which services it can offer. Age Concern Bexley needs to develop the system and culture of providing evidence that demonstrated the effectiveness of services.

This, it is argued, will aid the organisation to demonstrate to contracting agencies that its services are cost effective, meet the needs of older people more effectively than those provided by others and could deliver the health outcomes and targets set by government (Barker, 2005). At Age Concern Bexley, there will be the need to explore whether it has the skills to market its services effectively, to General Practitioners and Primary Care Trusts, rather than waiting to be approached.

The main criterion upon which funding applications is now judged is 'Value for Money' and part of that assessment will be the track record of the organisation. All of these reforms were being suggested in a context of reduced funding, hence Age Concern Bexley needed to develop full cost recovery accounting in order to ensure that services are sustainable. What also counts, in my view, is the ability of Age Concern Bexley to do things differently and give added quality to the service (Barker, 2005) and as I argue in this research, for the organisation to change from a charity to a social enterprise.

This view was also echoed by one of the senior manager:

*"We need to be more creative on how we raise and develop funding opportunities within and outside the present regime. Let us think of how we sustain ourselves"* [SMT3]

At a meeting in September 2004, I shared these insights with the board and senior management team. We all concluded that in these changing environments, if Age Concern Bexley did not change, it might not survive this new operating environment. There was a general acceptance among the board and staff that things will have to change. We agreed we could not sustain the organisation in its current mode of operations. We knew we had to take some risk but we were wary of the risk of going overboard at the expense of social aims. There were also concerns about the capacity to sustain any change agenda, as the organisation had not been through any major change for over seven years.

As a trustee said:

*"The Board needs to get to grips with the direction of travel of the organisation, but some of these social enterprise issues are quite complicated and difficult to tackle in such short time. We might need more time..."* [BOT5]



My stance was that Age Concern Bexley needs to explore the practice of social enterprise, change from being a charity to a social enterprise, as a way to take on and address these challenges and changing environment.

### **2.2.5 My initial thoughts and reflections**

For Age Concern Bexley, I see social enterprise more as a means than as an end. It will not be embarked on simply to generate profits, but to reshape the organisation to meet current and future challenges. Social enterprise will be an attempt to bring an entrepreneurial approach to mission activities and a driver for increasing social impact (Davis et. al. 2004).

I am making this claim, based on my judgement as the Chief Executive [and as I later concluded, a social entrepreneur - see chapter 3, section 3.6 - and with the knowledge that Age Concern Bexley needs to increase the quality of its services to better meet the needs of its beneficiaries – older people in Bexley. In my view, Age Concern Bexley can also use social enterprise as a way to recover costs of existing programs [e.g. Foot Care Service], or to sustain a new project [e.g. Direct Payment] and/or services that donors will not fund [e.g. Out & About scheme].

Social enterprise, I also argue, can enable Age Concern Bexley to achieve stronger organisational and financial sustainability and act as a means to diversify its funding base, decrease donor dependency and in some cases, increase assets (Davis et. al., 2004). Through social enterprise, I would argue, Age Concern Bexley may capture part of the marketplace for social ends, using enterprise activities to create an "alternative economy" more responsive to the needs of older people in Bexley (Davis et. al. 2004).



My initial concerns, possibly prejudices, for and at Age Concern Bexley were that the organisation may find it difficult to adjust to the idea of entering into the 'business arena' and may consider social enterprise a financing strategy that would lead it too far astray from its mission. Another concern I harboured was about some of the employees, especially the long serving ones, who may believe that running a business might over-tax them. In addition, the new pressure of a business's "bottom line" might be perceived intimidating, especially for those with limited exposure to the world of commerce.

For example, a member of the senior management team once said to me:

*"Why do I have to worry about the money bit...I am only a social worker!"*

These informed some of my apprehensions, notions and concerns, which I did explore in this research.

Nevertheless, in the attempt to introduce social enterprise into the organisation – as I detail in chapter 5, Age Concern Bexley did revisit its core mission and values to make it current and relevant to its target audience. The organisation had to develop strategies to keep the social enterprise in line with its social goals during both the enterprise development and implementation process.

Having an organisation design and development process assisted - applying the NEST tool -- to articulate and reconfirm the organisation's core values, at the same time maintaining those values as the guiding force in implementing social enterprise (Davis et. al. 2004) - see chapter 4 for details of this research method and chapter 5 on how it was put into practice at Age Concern Bexley. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the ultimate goal of social enterprise is not just financial sustainability for Age Concern Bexley, but also increased mission impact, it is not a total and radical change of values and direction (Davis, 2004).

As these issues at Age Concern Bexley are some of the driving forces for the interest in social enterprise, so are my personal interest and drive. The next section details my values, social images and background that triggered the social entrepreneur in me, hence the interest in social enterprise as a research study and how it influences this research.

### **2.3 The research and me: a personal portrait**

Many threads are woven into the fabric of my life (Muncey, 2005), the main ones being my family, religious orientation, cultural and social values, academic pursuit, travel to and living in the UK and deep values shaped and informed by most of these. All these are intertwined and define my worldview and current preoccupation with social enterprise, thereby reinforcing the research interest and position.

Although I do not aim to write about the whole of my life, however I aim to tease out the main context, which forms a continuum whilst paying attention to physical feelings, thoughts and emotions that exposes “a vulnerable self” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p.7). Kierkegaard (1957, cited in Muncey, 2005), also suggested that “life must be lived forward but can really be understood only backward” (p.8), so my story aims to represent this iteration, looking backward and forward, examining experiences through a lens that has been influenced by combinations of factors as I detailed in the research.

I want to write about the context of my life and childhood to demonstrate that although one's memory and history is selective and shaped and is retold in the continuum of one's experience, that they are still valid (Muncey, 2005). I have adopted Muncey's use of defined technique that together allows me to form a tapestry to share my story. These are - *'value-location'*, *'social images'* and *'my metaphor'*.



### 2.3.1 Value-location

I was born into what I will describe as a humble Christian family, where the values and principles of Christianity were fed into me from childhood, hence I had little options about my choice of faith, values and moral principles when I was young - I am not suggesting that this was necessarily a bad thing. Therefore, my Christian values play a major role in informing my personal philosophy and views about life.

Another major influence on my world view was witnessing my mother, on several occasions, playing marriage counsellor, career guidance to excluded children, hostess to children with challenging behaviour mostly rejected by their families for being too difficult, some sharing my home for months. This image of “social activist” (Martin & Osberg, 2007) still lives with me to date, establishing in me an unwavering belief that there is an innate capacity in people to contribute to their community and address social issues (Hartigan, 2002).

### 2.3.2 Social images

My first taste of commerce was when I started street hawking, at age 10, selling confectionaries to supplement the family income. My older sister, younger brother and I peddled the streets of Lagos, with tray loads of provisions. This was my first exposure to some of the slums and low-income earners in my community, I saw more poverty than I can recount. Then I experienced the drive and will to do something about it, to bridge the gap between the haves and have not. I sold to prostitutes, families living in derelict housing and shelters with little to survive on. I was selling to those who sometimes could not afford it.

My frustrations and anger made me do something unconventional, I sold to many people below the mark up price, offered credit facilities, knowing that they would not pay and I



would not follow up. I remember giving some stock away, of course without the knowledge of my family. I did have a healthy impatience as I could not wait for things to happen – this was my attempt to act as a “social agent “, aiming to make things happen (Hartigan, 2002).

On reflection, I discovered the reason for doing this was my attempt to support and assist those I perceived as being less fortunate, compared to me. I could not turn my back on their perils, I felt somewhat responsible for some of them, even though I never saw many of them again. This was I taking on an innovative stance on a social issue, coupled with my determination to break away from the constraints imposed even by my Christian values.

Anytime I return from these trading exploits, I always aim to return with an empty tray, sounding a drum rhythm, using the empty tray on my way home. These were my triumphant returns, my moments of fame and achievements of championing, with the feeling of a conqueror. Neighbours usually applauded and commended my assumed commercial achievements, when they see the empty trays and heard my drumbeats, not knowing I gave most away.

I enjoyed this applaud and recognition, even though I knew the trading exploit was a commercial failure and I never confessed it. I am not sure though what my elation was about – victory of making a difference or wanting to be centre of attraction or defiance of traditional practices (Hartigan, 2002 and Becker, 1963).

A first degree in philosophy and masters in business administration, although both emergent career and academic pursuits, appear to reflect my dual values of appreciation of business values and wanting to make a difference and not accepting status quo. My work experiences have spanned the private, public and voluntary sectors and I have always felt more at home in the voluntary sector. However, I do experience the frustration of seeing

the voluntary sector relishing in its do-good image and not competing with the larger world of the private sector, to amass the economic resource to make social change a reality.

When I discovered the notion of social enterprise, it was to me my 'road to Damascus experience'. I saw the link and possible marriage of my social value and my commercial interest, the fourth way [DTI, 2003]. My pursuit of a doctoral qualification, my craving for academics, to me are solace and opportunities to attain credibility and status that provides me that platform and world stage to shout about my views, whilst providing me with the legitimacy and voice to place my values within a system and practice (Catford, 1998)

### **2.3.3 The palm tree metaphor**

There was this palm tree in the communal back yard, in the home I resided in when I was 10 years old. I remember spending a lot of time in this yard playing games, sports and sharing experiences with others. Most of my youthful activities and ideals were cultivated near [or shall I say] in the presence of this palm tree. Sometimes late at night, especially when it was dark, it represented a symbol of fear and reverence, taking up the image of some spiritual being.

The biological nature of a palm tree is such that it survives many seasons. The root of a palm tree is usually longer than the stem and what it tends to do is when the root hits a rocky earth; it turns and keeps seeking a moist or watery earth, which then supplies the trunk, aiding its perennial existence. Despite the harsh seasonal turbulent like gale and storms, the palm tree hardly falls under these circumstance. While other trees fall or are destroyed, the palm tree mostly bend, due to the pressure, but hardly falls. It is discovered that the trunk at which it bends, becomes the hardest and strongest part of the stem.



This has become an important metaphor in my life as it assists me to explain what I am made of. I tend to use this metaphor to explain the connections between my life, my academic pursuit and work. This is how I sometimes see myself, a survivor of varying environment, haven come to the UK and make something of myself. I imagine myself as a strong individual with ethical values, driven by a history and root that goes deeper than what you perceive.

My life experiences, especially the negative ones, I have converted to strengths. I do have a driving passion to make things happen, be it through new initiatives or applying a different or new idea. This metaphor provides for me a significant meaning by trying to capture the essence of the life it represents (Muncey, 2005).



*Figure 1: Palm Tree by James Lee- Source: [users.ox.ac.uk/.../Palm%20tree.jpg](http://users.ox.ac.uk/.../Palm%20tree.jpg); retrieved 24 June 2007*



I did reflect on my experiences during the research process and evaluate the impact it has on my person, my existing knowledge and expectations. I have confirmed that my interest in social enterprise is also because I see myself as a social entrepreneur as I resonate some of Catford's (1998) descriptors of a social entrepreneur, as someone that "...combine street pragmatism with professional skills, visionary insights with pragmatism, an ethical fibre with tactical thrust. [Someone that] sees opportunities where others only see empty buildings, unemployable people and unvalued resources.... Radical thinking is what makes social entrepreneurs different from simply 'good' people... [I] can 'boundary-ride' between the various political rhetoric and social paradigms to enthuse all sectors of society" (p. 96). See chapter 3 for more details and self-analysis.

I also believe that some of my autoethnographical account, although has not indicated me as someone innovative and it says little about how I manage relationships, however, I believe it exposed me as someone who has values and is made of strong ethical fibre. I do exploit opportunity where and when they occur and I do have a vision. I do aim to create social wealth through economic processes and I believe I can make a difference.

However, what makes a social entrepreneur, can not just be reduced to typology in literature, one also needs to look at underlying factors, such as childhood and adulthood experiences, social, cultural and religious values (Catford, 1998). Young (2007) agrees with this, when she argues that we need to avoid "a list of ideal characteristics, derived by looking at similarities found among successful leaders" (p.13). This approach Young (2006) describes as "utopian descriptions of the ideal candidate" and that is flawed because it is only an averaged summation.

Being able to describe myself as a social entrepreneur, enables me to reconcile within myself my dual yet competing values - to be economically self sufficient while still retaining my values. This position and self-discovery do have impact on the action research process

at Age Concern Bexley and further strengthen the reasons for researching social enterprise.

Therefore, my interest in social enterprise is not just about clarity of or about what social enterprise stands for, it is also about my person, biases, prejudices and my being a social entrepreneur. I made my bias public in my letter in *Third Sector* magazine of March 2003 – see appendix A - where I argued that the voluntary sector needs to start looking at strategies to address its over dependence on grants whilst highlighting social enterprise as an organisation model to explore as one of the available option.

My interest is also fuelled by a genuine interest and aim to lead Age Concern Bexley to change from a charity to a social enterprise. This is confirmed by Young's (2006) research of social entrepreneurs that leadership is reflected “as an active and purposeful relationship, supported by the activities, which enhanced levels of motivation and focused direction to mobilise the enterprise's supporters towards a goal” (p.14).

Hence, I played the role of the social entrepreneur, leader and change agent, driven by a passion to make a difference and to add value.

The next chapter explores the history and background of social enterprise and the need for a definition and framework.

## **2.4 Social Enterprise: the need for clarity of meaning**

This section details why the lack of definition and clarity about what social enterprise is and stands for, justify it as an area worthy of research. The section starts with the history and background of social enterprise, examines some factors that influenced its emergence, and then develops arguments for why a definition and clarity of meaning are important.



### **2.4.1 History and background of social enterprise**

The history of social enterprise can be traced back to Mutuality, which predates the modern public, private and charitable sectors in Britain by almost a thousand years. Mayo (2001) defines a 'Mutual' as an organisation run with the close co-operation or control of key stakeholders. The earliest records of mutual social enterprises dates back in Britain to the time of St. Augustine in the sixth century and can also be traced back to the demise of the Roman Empire, which left behind the legacy of mutual aid groups of artisans called *collegia* (Thorton, 2003).

The second wave of mutuality was the formations of co-operatives in 1830, by flannel weavers in Rochdale when they formed the Rochdale Friendly Co-operative Society after a strike (Thorton, 2003). The third wave of mutuality started in Edinburgh in 1979. A group of residents in Craigmillar came together with the idea of setting up a business run by and for the community. Within five years, 45 such businesses were up and running in neighbourhoods across the Lothian and adjacent Strathclyde, all focused on local services, from arts to workspace, not all succeeded (New Economics Foundation, 1999).

With this, a new generation of what might loosely be termed social enterprises was born. There was no insistence on a co-operative ownership model – the new bodies ranged from charities to co-operatives, from informal voluntary groups to industrial and provident societies – but there was an emerging shared focus. The new mutual worked to benefit the community, they sought the genuine participation of local people and they aimed, from this work, to earn an income or at least cover their costs (New Economics Foundation, 1999)

Social enterprise did not start by accident as its history indicate, hence I believe it is important to have an understanding of the factors that have and are still influencing its emergence



#### 2.4.2 Emergence of social enterprise: influencing factors

As with any change-oriented activity, social enterprise has not evolved in a vacuum, looking at the **global context** (Reis, 1999). Social enterprise has evolved within a complex framework of political, economic and social changes occurring at the global, national and local levels. While the impacts of this shift are generally discussed in economic terms, they also have significant implications for social change initiatives, Reis (1999) claims.

Globalisation processes have also created an increasingly powerful market sector, one in which governments at all levels are finding they have less overt power to regulate or even influence. The prevalence of a global market model leaves governments in a difficult position vis-à-vis social spending in an era of increasing calls for tax relief and in the UK, for example, the call by pensioners for government to withdraw council tax (Botsman, 2002). Smallbone (2002) argues and I agree that social enterprise has emerged as one of the ways of addressing this.

**Public service reform**, looking at the UK example at the current times, is also creating a change in design and delivery of service, therefore influencing the emergence, practice and the growth of social enterprise. There is a new vision that is based not on serving citizens but on co-operating with them, playing a key role in the design and delivery of public services. This type of state enlists people as partners rather than users, whilst recreating a new form of mutuality focused on participation and social entrepreneurship rather than conventional ownership (Mayo, 2001).

This reformist impulse was evident in Tony Blair's first term in government as the prime minister of UK [1997 – 2007], in the attempt to spell out specific rights and responsibilities as the basis for new forms of social contract. But these new forms of social contract have not been easy to establish (Mayo, 2001). Involving people and the community in public service delivery, it is argued, would thus offer a powerful opportunity for a wide-ranging and

participatory civic renewal and there is a way to create such a renewal, which Mayo (2001) reduces to the creation of social enterprises.

Another influencing factor is **the emergence of social entrepreneurs** – which also informs the other strand of the research, that is, social entrepreneurship in practice. The not-for-profit sector has been mugged by reality, Boschee (1995) strongly warns, posing a daunting challenge for not-for-profit boards of directors, that “...volunteers and staff members have taken yeoman strides to meet the challenge, but they’re continuing to fall further and further behind. The very survival of many social services, arts and other not-for-profit organisations appears to be at stake” (p. 39).

Boschee (1995) then goes on to claim that “...nonprofits must survive and continue to serve and in recent years organisations across the country have begun responding to the challenge in a new way. What we are beginning to see is a tectonic shift in the culture of the not-for-profit sector, in the way it behaves, in the way it thinks about itself and in the way, it is funded. The shift is shattering old definitions, changing the very nature of those doing the job” (p.40).

The proponents of this view then claim that this movement is being led by a new type of social servant, a growing body of pioneers who are telling the sector to shed the old definitions and to take responsibility for its own survival, to stop depending so heavily on contributions and government support. Boschee (1998) describes these men and women as “social entrepreneurs” who are changing the face of the not-for-profit sector. These are not-for-profit executives who pay increasing attention to market forces without losing sight of their underlying missions. Balancing moral imperatives and the profit motives is the heart and soul of this movement. This new breed of not-for-profit managers – “social entrepreneurs” – are evolving, learning and adapting to a new political, economic and social environment (Boschee, 1995).



**Funding challenge** is another force of change. As Boschee (1995) gloomily alerts; “the not-for-profit sector is in trouble” (p.40). The sector has been bludgeoned repeatedly for nearly two decades and the pressures on nonprofits today are daunting. Citing examples from the USA and the UK, there are continuing cuts in public sector support, government spending on social services was plummeting and there were fluctuations in individual and corporate giving. There are now more nonprofits organisations competing for available funds, coupled with increase pressures from funders and others to merge or downsize (Boschee, 1995 and DTI, 2002).

At the same time, the not-for-profit sector is facing intensifying demands for improved effectiveness and sustainability in light of diminishing funding from traditional sources and increased competition for these scarce resources. The number of not-for-profit organisations seeking funding has increased exponentially, as such, not-for-profit organisations are finding themselves facing stiff competition from other not-for-profits and sustainability of funding has become a serious issue for many (DTI, 2002).

This competition has many implications for not-for-profit organisations. Age Concern Bexley is an example of where there is the necessity to judiciously use scarce resources, whilst facing increase pressure to demonstrate organisational effectiveness (for example, the expectation to produce or demonstrate outcomes and impact by funders).

The prevalence of market-based development models has also resulted in pressure on Age Concern Bexley – staff and trustees - to become more conversant with the language and vision of market models (for example, conducting market research with client groups, targeting services rather than 'donations'). Finally, the uncertainty surrounding traditional funding sources has required Age Concern Bexley to begin to rethink funding strategies. As an example, to some of these challenges, I employed a fundraising consultant to take on some of these tasks.



In the survey of Chief Officers, or their equivalent, of voluntary organisations in Bexley, when asked about strategic challenges facing their organisations, of the respondents, nearly two-third [57%] of the organisations identify funding as top strategic challenge – see appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

Citing some respondents:

*"We need core funding as distinct from SLA"* [Respondent 11]

*"Our challenge is to secure adequate funding for our services and to establish guaranteed funding year on year"* [Respondent 22]

*"Ours is to endeavour to create permanent on-going funding"* [Respondent 13]

With the decrease in public funding, questions have also been raised concerning the sustainability of not only not-for-profit organisations, but also the sustainability of their social change initiatives.

The **increase call for social responsibility** is also one of the forces for change. The concept of social enterprise has been rapidly emerging even in the private and public sectors over the last few years. For example, recent grassroots opposition to globalisation processes and the increasingly growing awareness about carbon foot prints, attest to growing citizen uneasiness with an increasingly powerful market sector and some view this as an opportunity for the private sector to balance corporate profit with a corresponding commitment to public responsibility (Reis, 1999).

This is not to say that those in the private sector are not motivated by more idealistic goals, but rather one note that some organisations are rethinking the assumption that doing social good and making a profit are mutually exclusive. Or, as noted in a discussion regarding the

success of Ben and Jerry's, a socially-conscious ice cream company, "... having a social conscience is also good for business" (Cannon, 2000, p.190).

At the same time, the increasing concentration of wealth in the private sector is promoting calls for increased corporate social responsibility and more proactive responses to complex social problems. Botsman (2001) goes on to reaffirm these views, when he suggested that to contemplate such a challenge, we need to embrace the processes and lessons of the market, of business enterprise, of competent management and of entrepreneurial behaviour. He goes on to suggest that we need to be looking at every public institution with new entrepreneurial eyes, creating what Botsman (2001) describes as a 'social enterprise state', which I equate to a social enterprise sector.

Although, I will argue that social enterprise is not the same as social responsibility, however, the increase call for social responsibility is placing social enterprise more in the lime light and at the centre stage of debates, among all the other sectors – private, public and voluntary (Reiss, 1999).

There is **increasing interests and enthusiasm** – academics and politicians alike - in social enterprise. Tony Blair [the British prime Minister from 1997 to 2007] is an enthusiast. He once told a meeting of social entrepreneurs that they were breaking through the sterile public/private debate, whilst offering radical new ways of operating for public benefit. Blair argued that by combining strong public service ethos with business acumen, the sector can open up the possibility of entrepreneurial organisations - highly responsive to customers and with the freedom of the private sector - driven by a commitment to public benefit rather than purely maximising profits for shareholders (DTI, 2002)

Gordon Brown [the British Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1997 to 2007 and the prime minister thereafter] also advocated for social enterprise when he said on 9th February



2000: "I want to see more investment in the UK in social enterprises". Patricia Hewitt [Minister of state, Department of Trade and Industry, 1999 – 2001] who set up a social enterprise unit in her department, stated social enterprises are key components "...in the process of modernising and reforming our public services" (DTI, 2002, p.12).

David Cameron, the Conservative Party leader [as at the time of this research], has also tagged on to the debate when he affirmed that he had been a passionate advocate of social enterprise for many years, but he confirmed that many people do not really know what it is, "...even though it plays a distinctive and increasingly important role" (p.5). David Cameron sees social enterprise as a key part of driving public service delivery, coupled with the need to break down barriers between different sectors.

In the survey, one of the Chief Officers says:

*"In my organisation, my trustees and I believe it's the only way to go now, if we are to be part of the next century charity. All of us are going for it big time!"*  
[Respondent 11]

Even President Bush, the US President, as at the time of this research, took notice. At a ceremony at the White House in 2005, he asked, "... Are we encouraging social enterprise in America? That's one of my favourite words..." (Guardian, 2002, p.4).

One of the latest evidence of commitment to the social business idea by central government was the establishment of the Cabinet Office of the Third Sector in 2006 and the introduction of Community Interest Companies (CICs) in the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Bill, as introduced in the House of Lords on 3 December 2003. This is now a new type of company specifically designed for social enterprises that aim to use their profits and assets for the public good.



According to the DTI,

*"CICs will be easy to set up, with all the flexibility and certainty of the company form, but with some special features to ensure they are working for the benefit of the community. CICs will report to an independent regulator on how they are delivering for the community and how they are involving their stakeholders in their activities. [They] will require legislation...a community interest test, and community interest reports."* (DTI, 2005).

Companies formed under this model can now register from November 2005.

However, some might see these developments and support as not necessarily a positive development in the not-for-profit world. In a report entitled *20 Years: Past and Future*, published by Framework in 2005 – a network of five self-employed consultants – they describe this as “tyranny of innovation”. They warned that new projects like social enterprise, will take priority over the best projects and that the voluntary sector’s bottom line will shift from ‘are we having positive impact’ to ‘can we guarantee our ongoing existence’? (Thomas, 2005).

I do disagree with Framework’s conclusion as the focus for social enterprise is both, that is, having positive impact and self-sustenance. I do not see any value in an organisation that provides positive impact but whose future existence cannot be sustained.

### **2.4.3 The need for a working definition**

I went to a global social enterprise conference at Oxford University in April 2005, attended by some of the leading figures in the field of social enterprise, with over 600 delegates from 40 countries - a mixture of renowned practitioners and academics. I discovered that

definition was still an issue and that clarity and consensus about framework are still outstanding and hunting the field and practice.

As social enterprise becomes more popular, in my view, there arises a need to understand what this concept means. However, there is no common definition, the understanding of the concept still differ and there is no uniformity in terms of how it is described, but the label – social enterprise – appears important (Martin & Osberg, 2007), as this section attempts to explicate.

The debate about the definition of social enterprise is on going. Some in the field are acknowledging that "...there is a spectrum of emerging approaches to generating public good, which vary from pure charity at one end to purely commercial at the other. In between these are co-operatives, charities engaged in commercial activities, private companies involved in social good, as so on" (Third Sector, 2005, p.26). This article also acknowledged that these different entities overlap and that there is now a new breed of organisations, which has also put many charities under greater pressure to become more entrepreneurial, i.e. social enterprises.

The publication of *Social Enterprise: a Strategy for Success* by the DTI, gave an impetus to the debate and the emerging groundswell of interest in the social economy in general and social enterprise in particular. However, as the enthusiasm for social enterprise grows, so is the need for clarity about, what precisely this label mean and what weight it should legitimately claims (Lloyd, 2003, Martin & Osberg, 2007). This is also a time for good footwork by promoters of social enterprise, Lloyd (2003) argues, which makes it a good time for me to research and to attempt to define it.

In this research into social enterprise, I confronted similar challenges stressed by Sherill (2002) and Smallbone (2001), that there is no universal, commonly accepted definition of



social enterprise and that defining what social enterprise is and what its conceptual boundaries are, is not an easy task. Sherill (2002) goes on to explain that this is in part because the concept is inherently complex and in part because the literature in the area is so new that little consensus has emerged on the topic. While the ideas fuelling social enterprise are not new, the term as it is used in the academic and popular literature currently encompasses a rather broad range of activities and initiatives (Thompson et. al., 2000).

In the survey of Chief Officers, or their equivalent, of voluntary organisations in Bexley, 69% of the respondents claimed not to have an understanding of the term social enterprise. Only a third [26%] of the respondents described their organisation as a social enterprise, although this does not tell us anything about the model or nature of social enterprise practised, or whether it is an emerging or established social enterprise organisation - see appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

This survey also confirms that many organisations have differing views and understanding of the concept of social enterprise. Some expressed views like:

*"I need information to signpost me to what it is"* [Respondent 6]

*"I need to know more about what social enterprise is"* [Respondent 3]

The research with the Delphi group also indicates that there is a varied response and rating to all the questions by each respondent, which confirm my conclusion that there are varied level of understanding and definition to the term social enterprise - see appendix C for a copy of the profile of Delphi group and appendix D for the Delphi group questionnaire.

Therefore, one of the research objectives is to arrive at a working definition.

There is also no model of good practice or a set of defined features or criteria of what constitutes or could constitute a social enterprise. To address this, some sees social enterprise more broadly as a hybrid model involving both for-profit and not-for-profit activities as well as cross-sectoral collaboration (Dees, 1998).

Sherrill (2002) also confirms that social enterprise is still a very new area and research on social enterprise lags far behind the practice. Sherill goes on to affirm that detailed models of good practice are lacking in the field, as are guidelines for operationalising partnerships and/or collaborations. Hence, one of the objectives of this research is to establish a framework that can be applied in practice.

The debate about putting non-profit public service delivery into a “fourth sector” is still ongoing (Third Sector, 15 March 2006). The argument of some in the field is that “...putting service delivery on contract by non-profits and mutuals is not what most people understand by charity – the lustre that the word charity enjoys is at risk” (p.1). This debate strengthens my view for a sector differentiation, as supporters of social enterprise emphasise that it might be best if service delivery is done through trading companies to keep the word charity closer to what the public thinks it is about (Barker, 2005).

However, Reid & Griffith (2005) question whether one can actually achieve developing a framework for social enterprise by raising the question of whether social enterprise is institutionally different from earlier mechanisms created to engender an innovative (and accountable) approach to community regeneration? They further claim that if we are to work towards a set of standards to govern and maintain the institution, then one would assume that all such organisations contained in that institution will be measured against the same set of standards. They then emphasised that given the current variation in social enterprises, such standards may place undue burdens on the field and limit the innovations that can be achieved.



I do not agree with Reid & Griffith (2005) conclusion, as it is possible, as I have argued that we can have a framework and definition whilst not limiting innovations, flexibility of practise and creativity in the field. Both Reid & Griffith (2005) however reaffirm that social enterprise is institutionally different. Their concerns are about the kinds of standards that will be chosen to measure effectiveness, accountability, purpose and democratic governance.

They further raised questions about what makes a good social enterprise versus a poor one, whether such standards are possible, if having double or multiple bottom lines are taken into consideration and how complex the regulatory process become before small social enterprises are unable to compete.

Reid & Griffith (2005) then further suggest that one should not legislate about standards, benchmarks or structures, although acknowledging that some practitioners, theorists and people like me will not be comfortable with this. The reason given is that it will always ultimately become a game of inclusion and exclusions.

The flexibility and choice agitated by Reid & Griffith (2005), by my interpretation, appears an easy way out in my view, as one of the practical dangers posed by this position is the potential flourishing of alternative organisational forms and alternative business models all in the name of social enterprise. There is nothing wrong in alternatives, I will argue, but there is something not right about not being able to define the field.

The current enthusiasm for social enterprise appears to add to its varied definition, bringing with it differing meanings, as some view it as a business-like approach to selling services, combined with an explicit social objective in the same organisation. Some claim it may be about process - a way of working - rather than structures, while others argue that it may be about using a variety of resources to meet social needs or deliver social change (Smallbone et. al., 2001).

An ESRC report in 2004 concludes that some social businesses are unaware of exactly how to describe themselves, or how changing their status from one category to another may affect their interaction with the different types of support organisations and networks available (ESRC, 2004). This report further argues that definitions are important because they sometimes determine the access a social business has to support services, grant funding, loans, contracts and a variety of other things that may determine how successful and sustainable the business is.

I agree with this argument, however, I need to emphasise that, in my view, the value in definition is more than its ability to enable access to support systems, rather its more about attaining better understanding of the field, the practice and the organisation design process/principles required when the change of status occurs (ESRC, 2004). This is also explored in this research, with the Age Concern Bexley example.

The need for this research focus is confirmed in a research by Pharoah's et. al. (2004), where it was argued that there is little information about social enterprise as a self sustaining strategy for the voluntary sector and that the pace at which the social enterprise culture and promotional policies are growing means there is an urgent need for greater understanding of how practice is developing and of the extent of change.

Pharoah's et. al. (2004), further argue that the diversity of approaches to social enterprise does not result from a single set of policy initiatives, or from an explicit attempt to create new institutional structures, but that social enterprise is both a culture and a type of organisation. The authors of this research see social enterprise as bit of 'pick 'n' mix' in relation to core defining characteristics. This argument, I believe, further opens up the debate.



This position is taken by Pharoah's et. al. (2004) because of the history of social enterprise, which is described as being experimental to a certain degree, coupled with the view that current notions of social enterprise have emerged because of significant changes in the social and economic environment over the last decade. Because social enterprise activities combine highly diverse partners, cultures, social and economic needs, they mean different things to different interest groups.

The work of Pharoah et. al (2004), however goes on to stress that it is time to 'fine-tune' policy to take increased account of this organisational variation that is emerging and of some contradictory impacts on practice. They go on further to suggest that "it is not merely academic to search for a greater understanding of variation, that there is sound policy and practice logic in identifying the core characteristics, values and structures of social enterprise" (p.10). This position further appears to strengthen the theme of this research and my quest for a working definition and framework.

Tony Clare, a social enterprise officer at Cheshire County Council [as at the time of this research] further supports this argument when he raises the question that "...at this pivotal point in development, isn't it crucial for the sector to develop a clear definition of 'social enterprise' if it is to get its feet under the table of the academic and banking world?" (Third Sector, 15 October 2003, p. 28).

Lisa Harker, writing in the *Third Sector* of 15 October 2003, also confirms that despite it coming from the margins, the world of social enterprise is still largely hidden from view, nobody knows how big it is and there is not a common identity. She confirms that in an attempt to create an identity, some social enterprise tries to squeeze themselves into business or charity headings that they do not quite fit. She concludes on the note that "...for only when social enterprises are better known will they have a hope of fulfilling their potential to make a lasting difference to society" (Third sector, p.16)

An ECOTEC report in 2003 also confirms that there are large variations in definitions used in mapping studies and in the way they are applied. The ECOTEC studies conclude that even for those who have used the Government's definition, issues of consistency and comparability remain in its application (ECOTEC, 2003). This demonstrates that the quest for a definition is still an ongoing issue and debate among practitioners and academics.

Hartigan and Billimoria (2005) also express the views that social enterprise [and social entrepreneurship] has become 'buzzwords' that suffers from the 'five blind men and the elephant' syndrome.

This is the story:

*"Five blind men wanted to find out what an elephant was. They had one brought to them. Surrounding the elephant, each blind man reached up to touch it. The first blind man grabbed the elephant's trunk. He said, 'Aha...it's like a snake'. The second blind man, holding one of the elephant's legs said, 'oh no, it's like a tree trunk'. The third grabbed the elephant's ear and said, 'it's clearly like a fan'. The fourth, clutching the animal's tail said, No, no, it is like a rope. The fifth, climbing the side of the elephant said, 'you are all wrong, it resembles a small hill" (pp. 18-19).*

Hartigan and Billimoria (2005) were attempting to use this metaphor to expose the varying views and definitions of social enterprise, claiming that people see it differently – practitioners, academics and politicians – because they perceive social enterprise from their varying lenses and world view. However, this analogy assumes that there is a concept of elephant that society already subscribes to, that the 'blind men' already have different notions and understanding of other social concepts like fan, snake and rope.



My view is that the lack of definition of social enterprise is not necessarily the blind men and elephant syndrome, what the 'blind men' need to do is to work round and touch every part of the animal before giving it a name. Hence, one of the aims of this research is to develop a working definition and framework.

Smallbone (2001) further confirms this by stating that there is no universal, commonly accepted definition of social enterprise and that the variations tend to reflect differences in emphasis rather than in substance. Smallbone (2001) however, succumbs too quickly by arguing that rather than becoming overly concerned with definitional issues, it may be more productive to focus on the "distinctive characteristics" of social enterprises and their implications for their support needs.

In my view, as challenging and intellectually rigorous as "definition-seeking" might be, I disagree with Smallbone (2001), as it is becoming apparent that there is mileage in the pursuit of establishing a working definition. Using the 'distinctive characteristics' and their implications to describe or define social enterprises, as Smallbone (2001) suggests, will not elucidate the core features and will limit the description to organisational type rather than engender a sector wide understanding.

Citing the London Social Economy Task Force, "without a great deal of rigour in 'standard definitions, methodologies and practices', it will be impossible to make effective use of target driven approaches to set benchmarks and monitor output. A good start would be for the sector itself to set some quality benchmarks for definitions, mapping and evidence collection" (Lloyds, 2003, p. 93).

To confirm the importance of arriving at a working definition, Boschee (2001) articulates that too many not-for-profit managers and trustees continue to use old methodologies and old definitions to glossy up their books and their brochures. "It has reached the point where

almost everything new in the sector is called 'entrepreneurial' and the people who create these new approaches (not to mention the people who write about them and underwrite them) walk away satisfied that they have changed the fundamental equation. I believe they have not" (p.31) and so do I.

I am in agreement with the views of some writers, for example Hill (2002), when she asserts that social enterprise is the flavour of the month and that many people - especially in government and advisory services - are fuzzy about what it means. Hill (2002) goes on to explain that it is, in truth, a fuzzy concept, as demonstrated by the parties to the new coalition - they include co-operative organisations old and new, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), credit union organisation, the Community Action Network, the UK Social Investment Forum (UKSIF) and the Development Trust Association. Examples of social enterprise typology range from the trading arms of charities to conventional businesses with social and capitalist objectives, such as The Body Shop, the Co-op and even the Guardian newspaper.

Although the concept of social enterprise is gaining popularity, it still means different things to different people and this can be confusing. Different terminologies are used to describe social enterprise and the concept in itself is loaded with inherent ambiguity and compound meanings – 'social' and 'enterprise' and 'entrepreneurship'. Social enterprise appears to be one of the most misunderstood phrases in the not-for-profit sector today. Everybody, it seems, has a different definition of what it means (Boschee, 2001).

This argument is strengthened by some of the feedback from the survey of chief officers, or their equivalent, of voluntary organisations in the London Borough of Bexley, when I sought their views on their understanding and knowledge of social enterprise. There were 35 replies to the survey, which constituted 29% return. This survey was an initial step to establish practitioners' level of understanding of the term 'social enterprise', check if their



understanding of the concepts is substantiated, or not, by any of the views in literatures and to identify the challenges these organisations face. I carried out a survey, as it was a good way to collect the type of information I needed quite quickly and expediently – see appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

Less than a third [23%] claimed to have no need for grants or external funding. In my interpretation, based on this survey data, over two-third of the voluntary organisations in Bexley are still reliant on grants and external funding. Very few [9%] claimed to create opportunities from change in the industry. Only a small proportion [3%] delivers new and more services using existing resources, with no need to resort to external funding.

This does not complement the 23% claiming that they have no need for grants and external funding, unless most do not deliver new and more services. It also indicates that of the respondents, a large percentage of them cannot create new services using existing resources. This is also echoed by the numbers of respondents who mentioned funding as one of the key strategic priority for their organisation.

About two third of the organisations [63%] claimed to have a social mission. I would have expected more, as in my view this should be one of the fundamental principles of a charitable or voluntary organisation (Spear et. al., 2007). Whilst a substantial number [74%] believe their organisations add social value when it deliver service(s) or product(s). This is a fair shift from having a social mission but not too distant in terms of descriptors.

It needs to be noted that some of the respondents who claimed to have social missions [14%], did not identify with adding social values when delivering service(s) or product(s). This could be due to lack of clarity of the question or may be they do not deliver service(s) or product(s). However, of those who associated with adding social values, some [27%] did not describe their organisation as having social missions and pursuing social goals.

Only a few [14%] of the respondents can confirm that their organisation applies commercial business models to its operations. However, of those [9%] that create opportunity from changes in the industry, a third of them apply commercial business models. 13% of those that claimed to have no need for external funding, also claimed to apply commercial business model to its operations, indicating that a fair percentage do exist with no reliant to external funding and are not applying commercial business model. What is interesting to note is that there is a correlation between the numbers of respondents that describe their organisations as a social enterprise [26%] and those that have no need for external funding or grants to survive [23%].

Only 11% of the respondents identifies with sustainability as a key strategic challenge; as one describes it:

*"Finding enough subcontracts work to make ends meet and strengthening the infrastructure for future existence of our services"*[Respondent 5].

Only a few respondents mentioned or used the term 'self-sustenance', seeing social enterprise as a self-sustaining organisational model:

*"For us it's about generating more income. We already pay for everything; we only need more avenues for sustainable income"*[Respondent 23].

The survey confirmed the view that the level of awareness and knowledge of the concept is yet to be well developed among voluntary organisations and that there is a gap in having a common understanding of the term, influencing the emergence of social enterprise and justifying social enterprise as an area worthy of research.

I applied the *Force Field* technique to summarise the balance of the interaction of the two opposing sets of forces – forces for and against the emergence of social enterprise. As the analysis below reflect, the forces seeking to promote change – the driving forces – scores



higher than those attempting to maintain status quo – the restraining forces (www.valuebasedmanagement, 2006). The scoring is subjective, based on the Bexley examples and its purpose is to help weigh the importance of these factors (Lewin, 1943).

Details of how I arrived at the ‘Bexley indicators and factors’ are culled from some of the lessons learnt in implementing social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley – detailed in chapter 6 – the influencing factors detailed above which resonate some of the commentaries from the survey of Chief Executives of voluntary sector organisations or their equivalent in Bexley London Borough.

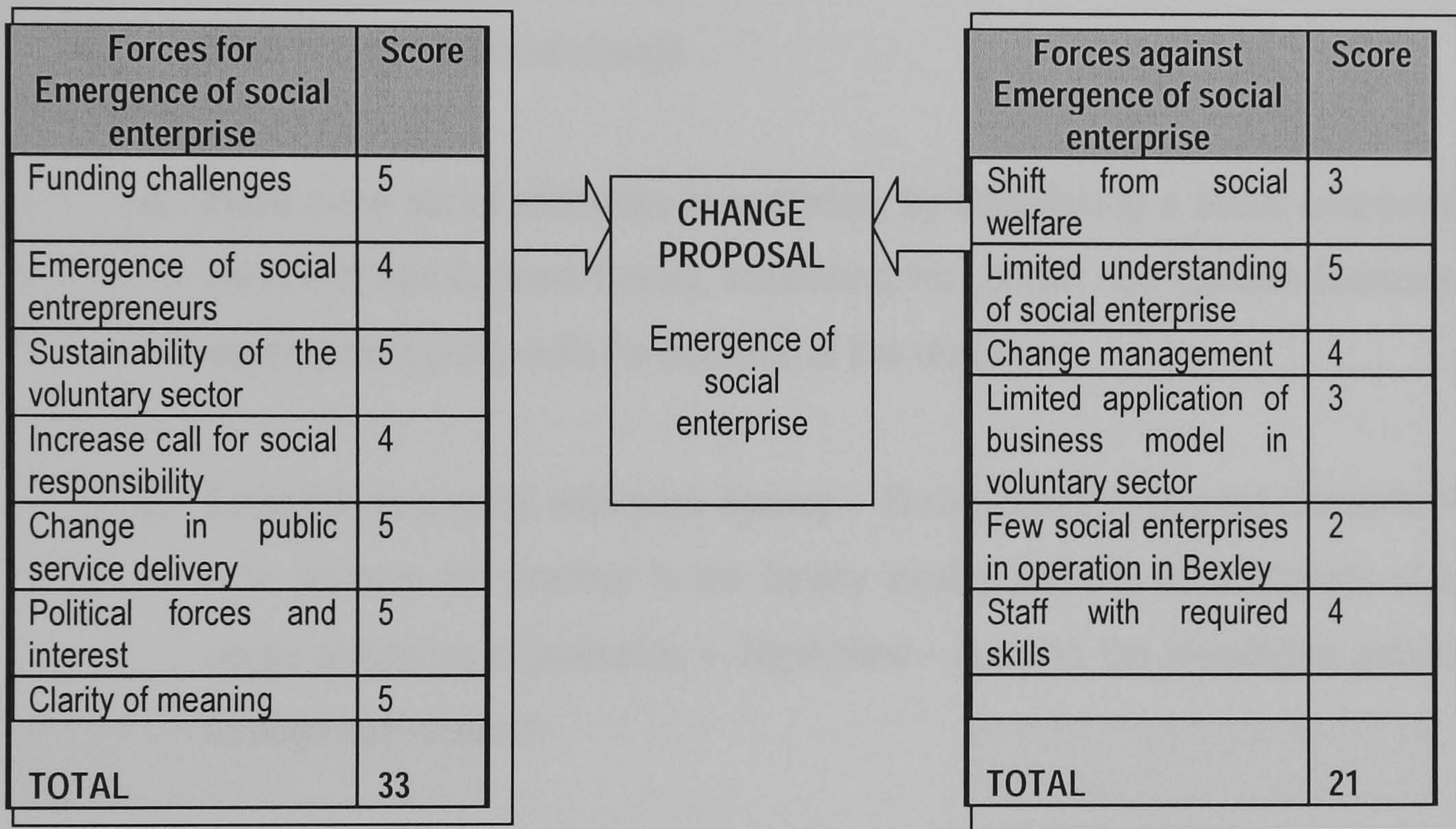


Figure 2: Force field analysis (www.valuebasedmanagement, 2006)

As Figure 2 above indicates, the forces seeking to promote change [the driving forces] score higher than those attempting to maintain status quo [the restraining forces]. With this, I conclude that the emergence of social enterprise will be on the increase and it is a viable change, judging from the strengths of the driving forces. Decreasing the restraining forces by addressing them will also effect this change.



This further justifies this research, as it does address some of the restraining forces by aiming to:

- a. Increase understanding of what social enterprise is by arriving at a working definition and framework
- b. Share knowledge and experience of implementing social enterprise, by highlighting the challenges and sharing the result of the research study at Age Concern Bexley with other practitioners and organisations
- c. Understanding social entrepreneurs better and their role and influence in leading organisational change
- d. Have more social enterprise in operation, by establishing a social enterprise service at Age Concern Bexley, influencing the London Age Concern Business development group with the outcome of this research
- e. Establishing a social enterprise agency – *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium* – to promote the practice in the Bexley locality and the establishment of a social enterprise organisation – *Hephzibah* - applying the knowledge gained through this research

The analysis of the factors that contribute to the emergence of social enterprise, in my view, justifies why it is worthy a field of research.



## 2.5 Conclusion

The research into social enterprise has become a learning experience for me as I brought into the research, what I do, what I knew and what I have experienced. The research processes has enabled me to experience what some writers describe as changing patterns of thinking and action that were well established in me (Adler et. al in Coghlan, 2001).

Before the research, I assumed that many in the voluntary, public and private sectors are fairly aware and clear about what the concept of social enterprise stands for and aim to represent, but I was wrong. However, I also believed that the voluntary sector especially should be more conversant about this notion, as it offers a mid road for some in the sector in terms of being able to make profit and not feel ethically compromised.

However, the exploration of literatures and views from practitioners made me realise that there is little understanding and awareness of the concept of social enterprise and there are varied descriptors and no agreed definition or framework for what constitutes social enterprise. The challenge at arriving at a working definition still lingers and new materials and thoughts emerge as I research this field.

With Age Concern Bexley requiring change, influenced by internal and external factors and my self as the Chief Executive, the transition into social entrepreneurship, leadership and change agent, was a psychological turning point, typified by a sharply defined and challenging moment when I realised that I must take the lead in shaping Age Concern Bexley's transition from a charity to a social enterprise.

Young (2006) describes from the view point that "commitment to [the] cause was the driving force - an often sudden awareness that if [I] did not take the challenge then what [I] most passionately wanted would not happen" (p.15). Hence, my leadership of Age

Concern Bexley, in my view, was not about self-aggrandisement, but a necessity for pursuing “the cause” - i.e. social enterprise in practice - and acting on my values.

One can therefore assert that there is a strong emotional content to entrepreneurial leadership. This is reflected in a passionate belief about a need; recognition that action is about taking personal responsibility (Muncey, 2005). In my case, this was coupled with “...positive energy and empowerment; a background of unusually powerful messages from parents, societal background and other significant models, either about making a positive difference in the world or, negatively, about never making waves and becoming aware of how to make use of [one's] particular characteristics and style, recognising [one's] outstanding capabilities, getting a real ‘sense of self’ and beginning to create a unique leadership signature” (p.15), as explicated by my “value location”, “social images” and my “metaphor” (Muncey, 2005).

This interest in this research and my attempt at leading change at Age Concern Bexley has thrown up some concepts: *social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, leadership, change agent and organisation design*. The next chapter is an exploration of literature about these concepts.



# Chapter Three

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## 3. Literature review and conceptual framework

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with the application of labelling theory to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, following the chain of views of some practitioners and academics that argue that social enterprise, even as a label is important (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Sherrill, 2002 and Lloyd, 2003). I discovered that the concepts of 'social enterprise' and 'social entrepreneur' are sometimes used interchangeably by practitioners and in literature. Hence, I believe that it is essential to establish some clarity around the two concepts as they are sometimes misunderstood and tagged with different definitions and meanings (Boschee et. al., 2000).

A practitioner once commented to me:

*'Social enterprise and entrepreneurship' are statistically improbable phrases'*  
[CR-11: one of the convergence interviewee. See appendix E for the profile of convergence interviewees.

This chapter therefore explores the concepts of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. Regarding social enterprise, I developed a classification of the views into models of social enterprise, then a literature review of varied definitions, complemented by views from practitioners garnered via Delphi and convergence interviews. I then concluded with a working definition and framework of social enterprise.

Regarding social entrepreneurship, in this chapter, I attempt to achieve a better understanding of the term 'social entrepreneurship', by exploring some of its definitions from literature and the views and definitions given by practitioners.

The chapter also examines the concept of leadership and leadership within the context of social entrepreneurship, looking at social entrepreneurs as leaders and the relationship between "social entrepreneurship" and "leadership". This chapter also addresses the issue raised by some writers about how challenging it is for social entrepreneurs to be leaders, whilst also arguing that if "leadership" is hard to analyse, how much more so in a field as diverse and little known as the socially entrepreneurial third sector (Phillips, 2007, Young, 2006).

This chapter examines the concept of "change agency" and adopts a working definition for the purpose of this research. This chapter also elucidates a self analysis, looking at myself as a leader, social entrepreneur and a change agent, by applying the Personal Construct Theory and the Repertory Grid. The chapter concludes with a working definition of social entrepreneurship, with me concluding and affirming that I am a social entrepreneur, following the self analysis.

### **3.2 Labelling, social enterprise and social entrepreneurship**

Through the course of this research and the interviews, I recognise that some academics, practitioners and writers sometimes equate social enterprise to a label, arguing for clarity about what this 'label' mean (Sherrill, 2002 and Lloyd, 2003).

Some in the Delphi group - R4 and R5, as examples - also confirmed that social enterprise, even as a label is important.



Quoting R4:

*"It is important we retain the label of social enterprise. It makes it distinct and different"*

Hence, the research explores the theories of labelling and their relevance to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

Labelling theory, in this research, is explored from the socio-psychology school that attributes labelling to deviancy. By applying this theory, I conclude that social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are labels – although more than just a mere labels – and that they are deviant practices from the traditional charity or voluntary sector, in terms of organisational and leadership types.

Labelling theories are popularly associated with deviance behaviour in social psychology. Howard Becker developed his theory of labelling (also known as social reaction theory) with its roots in the symbolic interaction foundation of Cooley and Mead. Choosing Cooley's example, Becker (1963) develops the theoretical concept of the 'looking glass self', that people define themselves according to society's perception of them.

Frank Tannenbaums (1938 in [www.sonoma.edu](http://www.sonoma.edu), 2004) has another approach to labelling. His view is that the stigma that accompanies the deviant "tag" causes a person or organisation to fall into deeper nonconformity. Tannenbaum argued that the process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing and emphasising any individual or organisation out for special treatment becomes a way of stimulating, suggesting and evoking the very traits that are complained of, that is, a person or organisation becomes the thing they are described as being.

Lemert's (1951) focuses on the social construction of deviance, describing deviance as the product of society's reaction to an act and the affixing of a deviant label on the actor. Lemert (1951) then goes on to create a distinction between primary and secondary deviance. According to Lemert (1951), primary deviance is the initial incidence of an act causing an authority figure to label the actor deviant.

This initial labelling of a deviant act will remain primary as long as the actor can rationalise or deal with the process as a function of a socially acceptable role. If the labelled deviant reacts to this process by accepting the deviant label and further entrenches his or herself in the deviant behaviour, this is referred to as secondary deviance (Lemert, 1951).

Becker (1963), on the other hand, views deviance as the creation of social groups and not the quality of some act or behaviour. Becker (1963) criticises other theories of deviance for accepting the existence of deviance and by doing so, accepting the values of the majority within the social group. According to Becker (1963), studying the act of the individual is unimportant because deviance is simply rule breaking behaviour that is labelled deviant by persons in positions of power; the rule breaking behaviour is constant whilst the labelling of the behaviour varies (Becker, 1963).

Becker (1963) views those people or organisation that are likely to engage in rule breaking behaviour as essentially different to members of the rule-making or rule-abiding society and that they see themselves as morally at odds with those members of the rule-abiding society.

My view is, social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are not just defined according to society or sector's perception, as Cooley's (1902) 'looking glass self' theory will suggest. Although, many still define social enterprise and social entrepreneurship based on this



approach (Bartlett, 2002), however, Tannenbaum's (1938) deviant 'tag' somewhat resonates the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship experiences,

This was also confirmed by one of the convergence interviewee, when CR-13 claims that he is in the business as a businessperson and for the profit, that the social and entrepreneurial values were unintended consequences and were highlighted to him by others. He also claimed that the term 'social entrepreneur' was used to describe him, so he did not set out to be a social entrepreneur, but it is now a label he has adopted;

*"No. I am in it because it is a good business and I make money. If they decide to call me that, that is up to them. Of course, I do like the fact that my business addresses social issues. I will want to see a situation in which a person who joins ADT as a cleaner can become a director if he or she wants to in the future"*[CR-13]

CR-12 is also of similar view;

*"I have been called this term even before I know how to spell it or what it means"*

Tannenbaum's (1938) view could also be interpreted to mean that this does not make social enterprise or a social entrepreneur fall into deeper non-conformity. This is because the emergence and development of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship can be attributed to varied factors, for example, those detailed in the force field analysis – see *Figure 2* in chapter 2, section 2.4.3.

The concept of primary and secondary deviance can also be attributed to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship (Lemert, 1951). For example, the label 'social enterprise' was generated by academics, politicians and practitioners, which can be likened to Lemert's (1951) 'authority figure'. Therefore, these 'authority figures', throwing these labels around, give it some legitimacy and recognition. For example, the example cited in section 2.4.2, of

President George Bush [the USA president as at the time of this research], at a ceremony at the White House in 2005 was quoted as saying, "...are we encouraging social enterprise in America? That's one of my favourite words..." (Guardian, 2002, p.4).

What has happened in recent years, one could argue, is the acceptance of this label and an entrenchment in this label by, for example, some practitioners and academics. This Lemert (1951) describes as secondary deviance. For example, even though one of the convergence interviewee claimed he is a business person, he exhibited some of the features of a social entrepreneur – he created opportunities, adds value and created social wealth (Hartigan, 2002).

His business has a triple bottom line as he says:

*"I keep the environment clean by limiting public fouling of environment, I create employment for local touts and I make profit, so I am a social entrepreneur then".*  
[CR-13]

Becker's (1963) views go a step further to support of the argument that social enterprise should be a separate sector. His approach could be translated that social enterprise is the creation of a social group [a sector?] and not the quality of some act or behaviour. Becker (1963) argues against the acceptance of labels just because of deviance act. He argues further that the new social groups and individuals [social enterprise and social entrepreneurship] that engage in 'rule breaking behaviour' [i.e. non-conformist to the 'rules' or 'norms' of the charitable sector] are different to the conformists, hence becoming outsiders in the voluntary sector, by accepting the label attached to them because they are different from 'mainstream'.

This is also my view, as the more I explore the concept of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, the more it appears that the principles and practices that underline them



depart from the traditional ethos of the charity or not-for-profit sector. I would say that there are indications of deviancy from the 'charity norm', if one looks at some of the definitions of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship – as detailed later in this chapter. In the same vein, I do not believe that only the label of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship makes individuals and organisations fall into more conformity, as no one has provided what constitutes the conforming features of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

For me, social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are more than just labels and they are not just 'tags. If by accepting the label 'social enterprise' and "social entrepreneurship", it creates non-conformity and the perception of deviancy from the charitable sector, so be it. An emergent leadership character or sector or organisation type can easily be labelled a deviant or non-conforming, hence my aiming for a working definition and framework for social enterprise and social entrepreneurship to achieve clarity of meaning.

### 3.3 Defining social enterprise

At a global social enterprise conference I attended at Oxford in 2005, where I carried out convergence interviews, there appeared to exist, in my view, what one can describe as a form of 'democracy of intellects' – that is, a form of agreement and acceptance that the world of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship can still exist and should carry on despite lack of agreed definition or framework.

There were lots of emotive and value-laden languages and passions expressed by practitioners mostly, when discussing social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. For example, Drayton and Stan, both leading practitioners and academic on social enterprise, went as far as agitating for the 'hero notion' i.e. seeing the social entrepreneur as a hero that should be celebrated.

It might be intellectually challenging to validate this, however, many of the practitioners I interviewed and some of the participants that delivered addresses and lectures expressed

an interesting level of passion about what they do or did in the field of social enterprise. They tended to delve into an emotional realm when questioned about their views of and about social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

For example, in defining social entrepreneur, one of the interviewee says;

*"The power of the social entrepreneur is that we are married to a value based vision, same faith, not just a clever idea. This is so central to our movement and we need to talk more about it. We need to set up institutions to reinforce this quality"* [CR-9]

Another common approach some of the practitioners employed was the use of story telling about 'heroic achievements' of social enterprise and social entrepreneurs. There was a director of a USA based social enterprise who claimed he normally tells the story of a dying child who wanted to see the rainbow before he died as the trigger to the establishment of his organisation and that this story he always use at fund raising events.

The support for this approach was quite amplified by many, agitating for more emotive stories and tales of notable social entrepreneurs and stories that could appeal to people's emotions and sense of social justice and trust, rather than emphasis on what the sector and practice really stands for.

So, when one of the convergence interviewee was asked, if he accepts the label of a 'social entrepreneur, he used the analogy of reincarnation to explain his transition from a political activist to a social entrepreneur.

*"My explanation is this: I saw myself undergoing three reincarnations. My first reincarnation was as a student of Marxism harmed with various writings about socialism, riding to a remote part of India in the hills. I started a lean and mean political group, mobilising the Adivasi people and assisting them to developing their activities, helping the people to plant and till their land and grow their own tea"* [CR-12]



With the varied approaches and slants to how social enterprise is described and defined, this made me to conclude that writers, thoughts and views on and about social enterprise can be classified into different schools of thoughts or models. This classification, I have to say, is not exclusive, neither is it exhaustive. I have structured these thoughts in conceptual and ideological terms, not just as an academic exercise but to also enable me achieve better understanding and develop some clarity of the different views

### **3.3.1 Models of social enterprise**

I developed and teased out seven models and schools from the varied thoughts in literature and from that of practitioners. They are altruistic model, mental model, citizenship model, regeneration model, social firm model, Marxist model, and sectoral location model.

#### ***Altruistic model***

I categorise these writers as such, as they hold the views that social enterprise emanates from good motives of individuals. They argue that this is the motivation behind social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, which is often an obstacle for people trying to understand the sector (Lloyd, 2003). Heath (2002, p.91), quotes from the private diary of the Swedish UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, claiming it emphasises his views, which is particularly relevant in describing social enterprise and social entrepreneurs.

Hammarskjold writes:

*"I'd like to think that each one of us here is in the business of altruism and that we share an understanding that when we care for someone else we care for ourselves - that our happiness is inextricably linked to the happiness of others, the people we meet on the street, in the shops, our friends, our family, our work colleagues and even our enemies. I'd like to think that each one of us here is in the business of scratching other people's backs knowing that in some strange way that by not expecting anything in return that our own backs soon become*

*less itchy. I'd like to think that each one of us here is in the business of inspiring others and inspiring in the full sense of the word because inspire means 'to breath life in or into'".*

By "we", Heath (2002) was referring to social enterprise and others engaged in social agendas.

### ***Mental model***

These are writers and practitioners that believe that social enterprise is driven by passion and that people that practice social enterprise have particular states of mind. They opine that whilst it is important to spend time looking at the forms social enterprise can take; it is vital never to lose sight of the fact that the enterprise is driven by the passion of people not legal documents. Black (2002) is of this view, when he claims, "...we have learned that social enterprise is a state of mind, an attitude, a way of being. We work very hard to create and feed a socially entrepreneurial culture from shop floor to Board. Constitutional structure and legal status is no guide to determining the level of impact of an enterprising or an organisation" (p.21). Doran (2002) aligns social enterprise with passion, when he states that "Social enterprise is currently very sexy. Social business is like sex. When it's good, it's very, very good; when it's not so good, it's still good!" (p.11).

### ***Citizenship model***

These are the writers and practitioners that agitate for the "mutual state," in which public services are increasingly given to not-for-profit enterprises to deliver and where the citizen becomes involved in the design and delivery of public services, not as volunteers but as stakeholders, co-producers and service users. Botsman (2002) is of this view when he describes social entrepreneurship as individual empowerment. For Botsman (2002), it is about giving back the capacity to act, giving back the capacity for people to solve their own problems by gaining control of social wage money, resources and expertise, arguing that



one needs to start with individuals and practical problems in small communities and work from there.

This school argues that the community advantage of social enterprise, is that they create ways for local people to take ownership of their futures, to be actively involved in designing and implementing solutions to fit their own, or their community's needs. That through working in this way, people can develop a sense of their own power to change things, recognition of the importance of collective action and better understanding of wider concepts of citizenship (DTI, 2002). My view is that social enterprise is not just a community driven agenda; it can sometimes be about the individual social entrepreneur's drive, ethos and belief system, as the altruistic model and the views of those that hold the heroic notion of social entrepreneurs purport (Drayton, 2004).

### ***Regeneration model***

This appears an extension of the citizenship model. This school argues that social enterprises can provide solutions to some of the problems faced by many in disadvantaged communities. Social enterprise, they argue, provide inclusive economic activity and are often responsible for promoting creative and entrepreneurial behaviour in communities where this is most needed. Social enterprises, the DTI for example claims, could give people opportunities as potential employees and as consumers, whilst encouraging participation in the mainstream economy (DTI, 2002).

Alexander (2002) is also of this view. He expresses that social enterprises are expected to have key roles to play in regeneration and in the promotion of social inclusion, helping to encourage sustainable economic activities – and as they are often so close to their customers they can really help to add to local wealth creation. Lloyd (2003) describes this model as the “‘bottom up’ and economic inclusion” model, that is rooted in the social inclusion agenda, seeing social enterprises as pathways to promoting enterprising localities and to foster economic inclusion.

I agree with the UK government's belief that social enterprises have the potential to play a far greater role in the delivery and reform of public services and the government is currently considering a number of ways in which to increase the role of such organisations. Entrepreneurial behaviour combined with a continuing commitment to delivering public benefit, can lead to local innovation, greater choice and higher quality of service for users, the DTI will claim. However, I believe that this is not its only role.

### ***Social firm model***

A social firm is one type of social enterprise. The European Confederation of Social Firms and Co-operatives (CEFEC) describe it as a business that uses its market-oriented production of goods and services to pursue its social mission. In a social firm, a significant number of its employees will be people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market and every worker is paid a market wage or salaries appropriate to the work, whatever his or her productive capacity (Higgins, 2000). The limitation of this model is that its focus is only on people with disabilities.

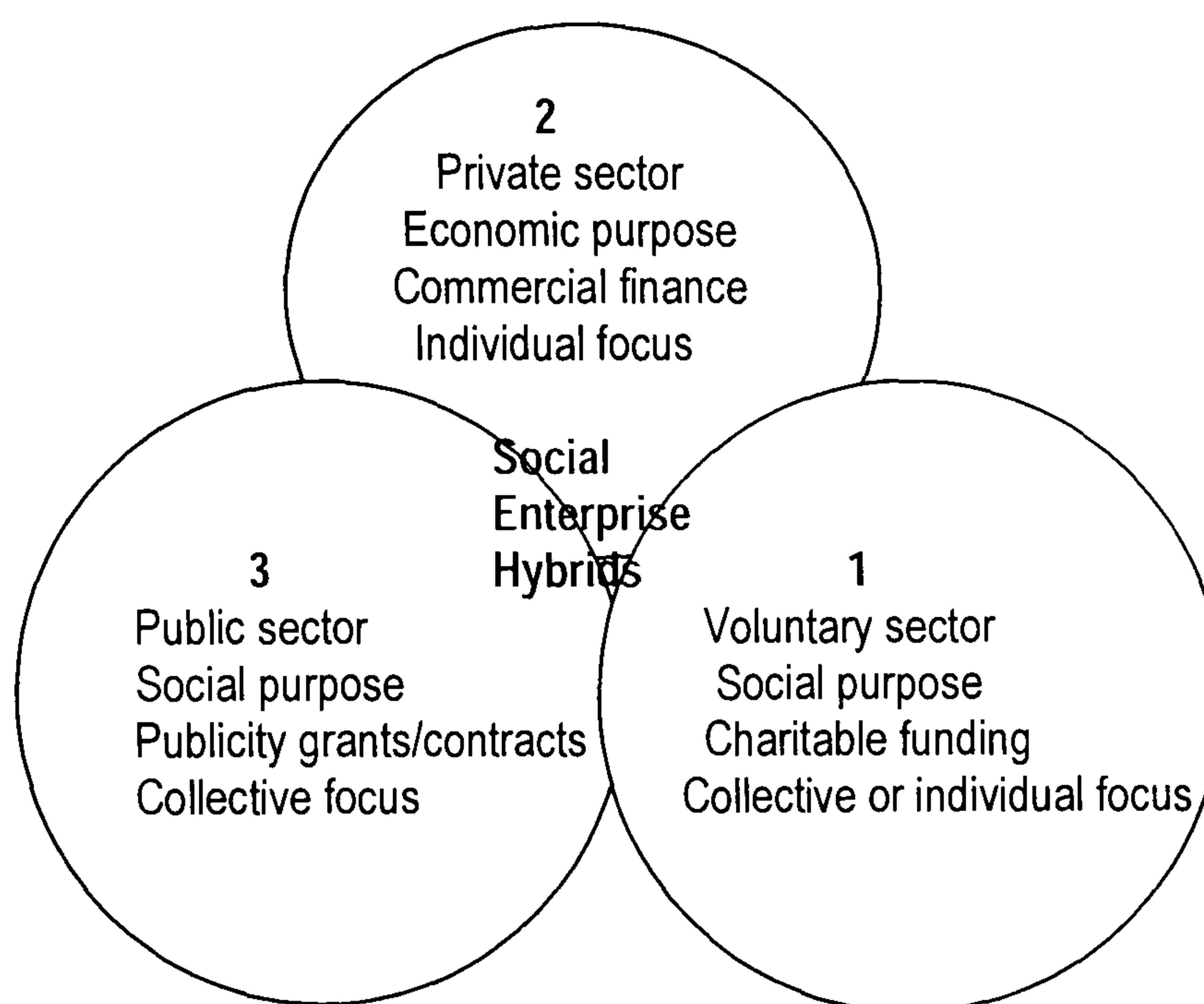
### ***Marxist model***

Another contemporary analysis of social enterprise has ideological links to Marxism, claiming that there are three dominant explanatory perspectives. One is described as 'neo-liberalism', which emphasises the value of individuals, both as 'entrepreneurs' and as 'beneficiaries' of enterprise. Another is 'utopian co-operatism', which is evidenced, for example, in credit unions, local exchange trading schemes and cooperatives. The last one is called 'communitarianism', linked to associative democracy 'social capital' (Amin et al, 2002). This perspectives, locates social enterprise development in relation to de-industrialisation and the need for the state to use local enterprise as both a distraction from and response to the significance of broader inequalities and as a re-branding (and re-deployment) of resources rather than the creation of additional ones (Amin, 2002).



### *Sectoral location model*

This is an attempt to place social enterprise within the existing sector types - this is the closest model to the argument for a fourth sector. Proponents of this model argue that it is important to avoid total preoccupation with organisational dynamics, that the structure and content of social enterprise organisations will also be crucially affected by their external environment (Pharoah et. al. 2004). By external environment, these proponents are suggesting that a social enterprise organisation will be placed principally within or oriented towards, state, corporate or voluntary sector (Pharoah et. al. 2004).



*Figure 3: Social enterprise and sectoral location (Pharoah et. al. 2004)*

Looking at *Figure 3* above, I see this school of thought as suggesting that a social enterprise organisation can be and operate within any of the above sector, whereas I argue that social enterprise requires a total sectoral differentiation that is, as the fourth sector. This is because, in my view, the dynamics, ethos and practices of the three sector types contribute to the variations and difficulty in establishing a definition and identity for social enterprise.

### ***My initial thoughts and reflections***

In my view, none of the models and schools of thoughts discussed above gave a definitive definition of social enterprise that takes account of its varying descriptions, nature and practices. The sectoral location model could have been more definitive rather than tethering on the edges of placing social enterprise as separate sector, rather it positioned it as 'boundary-riding' with the other existing sectors.

However, these models, I believe, are helpful in exploring the complexities and challenges that come with defining and engaging with social enterprise. What they are not doing, I will argue, is addressing the core issue of what it is and how do you know one when you encounter one, further raising the issues between theoretical and reality positions. However, these models are helpful and do inform and influence the arrival at a working definition and framework, as detailed later in this chapter.

This next section details some of the varying definitions of social enterprise as highlighted in literature.

#### **3.3.2 Some definitions of social enterprise**

Each definition I came across – via literature and data from practitioners – has some form of central theme or core focus. What I have attempted to do in this section, is to collate these views, thoughts and definitions under the umbrella of the identified theme. This is to create a frame to understand and make simpler, I hope, the varied definitions with due cognisance to and for overlaps in thoughts and views.

Some definitions have a “business theme” or emphasis. For example, the Cat’s Pyjamas, defines social enterprises as businesses that trade with a social purpose and use business tools and techniques to achieve social aims (Cats Pyjama, 2002). Phillips (2003) defines a social enterprise as a winning formula and business solutions to social problems. Mapp (2002) was more emphatic about this notion when he writes that “...social enterprises are businesses and when we talk of social enterprises, we are talking about businesses” (p.4).



Thornton (2003) defines it as a “businesses distinguished by their social aims, their ownership and management structures and how they use surpluses for the benefits of employees, consumers and the local community” (p. 3).

One of the convergence interviewee supports this view;

*"Social enterprise is used rather loosely to cover charitable organisations and none-charitable organisations. It is used to cover a wide range of area. Although, many social enterprises are charities, for example, independent hospitals, hospices, but not all social enterprises are charities, for example SELDOC. So social enterprise to me means to carry on a trade and do business. That is what social enterprise is after all"* [CR-4]

Thornton (2003) goes on to affirm that social enterprises compete in the marketplace like any other business and they use their business skills to achieve social aims. Thornton (2003) sees them as part of the broader social economy and that whereas many voluntary organisations and community groups may be involved in some kind of trading activity for goods and services, social enterprises see trading as a significant and defining part of their business.

Although some commentators like to use the term "not for profit" when referring to social enterprises, this in Thornton's (2003) view is misleading. Social enterprises, Thornton suggests, aim to sustain their business and make profit and surpluses that are reinvested to serve their social aims. It is those aims, Thornton (2003) argues, that drive the business rather than the need to deliver profit to shareholders and owners.

In the first round of Delphi interview, definition 4 – *"running a business of some kind..."* – had the highest rating among the Delphi group [34 ratings], whilst Descriptor 5 – *"business model applied to not-for-profit operations"* – had the second highest rating [46] – see *Table 3: "Delphi - ratings of definitions of social enterprise"*. This Phillips (2003) describes as business solution to social problems.

CR-4 in the convergence interview is also of the business mindset, when he said:

*"Social enterprise to me means to carry on a trade. That is what social enterprise is after all"*

In the second round of the Delphi group, I compiled some definitions and I asked the respondents to indicate which of the definitions they agree or disagree with, rating one on a scale of 1 to 10 [1 being the least you agree with and 10 being the most you agree with].

*"Running a business of some kind where all the profits go back into the organisation"* appears to be the most popular or subscribed to definition or understanding of social enterprise. There is also a common agreement that it could mean, *"involving clients in the business strategy"* and a *"social business"*, although R6 disagrees with this definition.

Still on the business theme, Alexander (2001) takes this view further when he asserts that those social enterprises are at heart businesses and that they offer economically sustainable business solutions to social problems. To be able to thrive and grow they have to be as innovative and entrepreneurial and indeed more innovative and entrepreneurial than their mainstream competitors.

Alexander (2001) further argues that they are more likely to be risk-taking in order to meet their social objectives and provide new models of new and socially responsible business. In addition, as well as creating economic value through their own activities, they also help to create new markets, goods and services all of which have positive knock on effect for mainstream business.

Another with a business emphasis is the DTI that argues that a social enterprise is first and foremost a business (DTI, 2002), describing and classifying it as businesslike approach to services (Smallbone et. al. 2001; Thornton 2003). Other writers like Black (2002) argues that since social enterprise generates revenue, it is therefore a business, while some appear more passionate, claiming that it is a business at heart (Pedelty 2002; Alexander 2001, R3 and R4 on the Delphi group). The sectoral location model also recognises the



business dynamics and elements in social enterprise, by placing some elements of its practice in the 'business sector'.

Another common feature of social enterprise, as expressed by writers and practitioners is the entrepreneurial characteristic it purports to have as a social enterprise is meant to create economic values, new markets, goods and services (Black 2002; Alexander 2001; OECD 1999; Dees 1998; Doran 200). The Delphi group also scored this highly – with a rating of 46 – Descriptor 4 "*value creation*".

Grove's (as cited in SEL, 2001) view is that social enterprises combine the entrepreneurial skills of the private sector with a strong social mission that is characteristic of the social economy as a whole. Social enterprises, Grove (2001) claims, address many community needs by creating and retaining jobs, delivering new and improved local services, promoting economic development and tackling social issues.

When asked what social enterprise meant, one of the convergence interviewee, [CR-1] replied:

*"The voluntary sector has its own unique selling points; the bits missing are the entrepreneurial skills, hence social enterprise".*

Others define social enterprise more broadly and argue that social enterprise can occur within the public, private or not-for-profit sectors and that their activities are entrepreneurial in nature, adding creativity and innovation in solving social problems. This conceptualisation suggests social enterprise can take a variety of forms, including innovative not-for-profit ventures, social purpose business ventures (e.g., for-profit community development banks and hybrid organisations mixing for-profit and not-for-profit activities (e.g., homeless shelters that start small businesses to train and employ their residents) (Dees, 1998).

A phrase that one will hear in a conversation about a social enterprise is "double or triple bottom line", which describes the enterprise's dual or sometimes triple aim to meet its

financial, social and often environmental goals. (Thornton, 2003). Hence, the social goals, social values and 'problem-solving nature' (McLeod, 1997) of social enterprise is prominent in some definitions coupled with the corresponding emphasis on developing and implementing initiatives that produce measurable results in the form of changed social outcomes and/or impacts. For example, McLeod (1997) quotes one social entrepreneur who criticised his own organisation's ineffective approach, noting they originally asked "...how many people walked in the door' rather than 'how many people are better off for having walked in the door?" (p. 22).

These definitions lay emphasis on the social goals and values and sometimes the community focus of social enterprise. The OECD, for example, defines social enterprise as any private activity conducted in the public interest, organised with an entrepreneurial strategy but whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals and which has a capacity of bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment. The OECD sees social enterprise as businesses based around values that place emphasis directly on meeting social needs than building shareholder value (OECD, 1999).

One of the convergence interviewee [CR-7] also highlights the ethical values that underline social enterprise, just as Dees (1998). When I asked CR-7 his understanding of social enterprise, he culled a scene from his film 'Ghandi';

*"A Hindu man killed a Moslem child because a Muslim man killed his own child. He went to Ghandi and said that he had no redemption and cannot go to heaven because of the sin he had committed. Ghandi says to him: 'I know a way out of hell. Find a Muslim child, same age as your dead son, raise him and train him as a Muslim, even though you are Hindu. If you can do this, that is the way out of hell'. This is a story about redemption; this is the story of social enterprise"*

The UK government also defines and describes social enterprise as a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to deliver profit to shareholders and owners (DTI, 2002). They see social enterprises as tackling a wide range of social and



environmental issues and operate in all parts of the economy. By using business solutions to achieve public good, the Government believes that social enterprises have a distinct and valuable role to play in helping create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive economy (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2003)

It needs pointing out that some of the respondents in the Delphi group do not subscribe to the “social values” definition. Some among the Delphi group indicate that the suggested definition of social enterprise as “*working for the common good using private resources*” is the least agreeable to them. For example, R5 and R4 disagree with this type of definition. In my view, this could be a reflection of the charity ethos of the respondents or anxiety against ‘profit making’ or concerns about ethical conflict i.e. social value versus profit making.

At another round of Delphi, I offered seven descriptors – see *Table C2* in appendix C - summarised from literature. The most popular descriptor was descriptor 3 - the “*creation of social wealth*”, with a median of 8. “*Value creation*” and “*business models applied to not-for-profit operations*” are the second most agreed frameworks, followed by ‘sustainability and self-sufficiency’.

My inference at this stage was that most in the Delphi group define social enterprise as an organisation with social value and that makes profit that is ploughed back into the organisation to sustain its activities. This is re-emphasised as most agree to the descriptor of *creation of social wealth* as a key descriptor, with *value creation* and the application of business models as the next key descriptors of social enterprise.

The Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), who have sponsored various research and development initiatives concerned with social enterprises, since the 1980s (e.g. DETR, 1998; 1999), have recently used the term synonymously with community enterprise: “Sometimes known as social enterprise, a community enterprise is owned and run by local people. It serves the interests of the local community rather than generating private gain, tackling social and environmental issues...” (p. 2).

The Social Investment Task Force (UKSIF, 2000) also shares this definition, viewing the terms social enterprise and community enterprise as synonymous. However, it must be noted that a geographical focus is implicit in the case of community enterprise. The key characteristics of a community enterprise have been summarised as community owned, led and controlled enterprises that have a concern for economic, social and environmental problems (Pearce, 1993, p.29). It is usually a place-based notion, at least in terms of the spatial 'boundedness' of benefit. Therefore, social enterprise is not the same as community enterprise (Smallbone, 2001).

Some are softer on the call for a social purpose, suggesting that a social enterprise needs to only support a social purpose (DTI, 2002) or that it must offer some solutions to social problems (Alexander, 2001). These views are in line with the regeneration model of social enterprise. The Delphi group also rated highly the descriptor of social enterprise as "*creator of social wealth*" – with a rating 57. This position also resonates the citizenship model which sees social enterprise as playing a social empowerment role.

Some definitions emphasise the self-sustainable and self-sufficient nature of social enterprise. Emerson (2001 in Sherill 2002) argues for "sustainability" and "self-sufficiency" as key criteria. He claims that a "dependency" model, relying primarily on philanthropy, voluntarism and government subsidy, with earned income has traditionally driven the not-for-profit sector a distant fourth. "But social entrepreneurs have turned that formula on its head: philanthropy, voluntarism and government subsidy are welcome, but no longer central, because two others have replaced the dependency model. In the not-for-profit world, 'sustainability' can be achieved through a combination of philanthropy, government subsidy and earned revenue. It's a wonderful thing, sustainability, but for many nonprofits it's only a way station. 'Self-sufficiency', on the other hand, can be achieved only by relying completely on earned income and this should be the ultimate goal of social enterprises" (p.12).



Some convergence interviewees are also of the sustainability school.

*"Social enterprise is not the same as voluntary sector. Independence is completely crucial, you need good practice, maintenance of ethical base; double and triple bottom lines. We want to see a sustainable voluntary organisation, not organisation chasing pots of money available, to see a sustainable sector, sustainable organisations and sustainable activities"*[CR-3]

In the case of CR-5, he says;

*"It is not about changing the whole organisation to a social enterprise, it's about individual services or projects that are sustainable"*

The ability of social enterprises to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining is also rated highly by the Delphi group – rating 40. The arguments of some writers on this feature are that social aims can be achieved if organisations move from grant dependency to financial self-sufficiency and/or self sustenance and if possible to a trading profit (Arthur, 2006). CR-8 of the Convergence interview is also of this view suggesting social enterprise to be *"...independent sustainable organisations"*. Those that promote this particular feature argue that, even though subsidies are welcome; they should not be central to the sustenance and long term viability of social enterprise (Grove 2001; Emeron 2001; Sherrill 2002).

Self-sufficiency and self-sustenance appear as key criteria for a social enterprise as Emeron (2001) and Sherill (2002) also emphasise. However, from my experience of working in the voluntary sector, I believe this will be challenging for some in the voluntary sector with grant dependency culture.

Some define one of the major criteria of social enterprise as responding to change, that real markets can change very quickly. Doran (2002) for example, argues, that sometimes overnight and away from the warm blanket of grant funding, organisations must be able to move rapidly in response to market change.

Citing his experience, Doran (2002) records: "The changes we need to make to respond to this must happen in a matter of weeks if we are to retain market share. Costs must be cut, suppliers shaken up, teams re-organised. Action must start today not when the board meets in three weeks. If we had to consult the community and go through long-winded and constipated structural consultation, we would be dead. Someone standing in your shop with money in their pocket is unmoved by your noble intention of transparent consultation if that product can be purchased cheaper by a fleetfooted supplier down the road!" (p.2).

As Black (2002) cites, in an account about his organisation, "...we transformed ourselves from a small second-hand furniture charity, dependent on grants, to a social business achieving our charitable and social purposes by creating and sustaining commercially viable trading activities. We have moved from the can to the catalogue...we have learned, sometimes the hard way, how tough it is to compete in real markets and hang on to our social change agenda. We are a living, breathing example that it is possible to achieve the double bottom line of financial and social profits. As a social enterprise, we do our work in the space between the private, public and voluntary sectors. We try and take the best from all and create something new" (p.1).

Black (2002) sees social enterprise as vehicle to business and economic liberation, as emancipation from the shackles of funders and the government, when he claims, "...as a social enterprise earning our way in the world we are free from the deforming influences of grant funding. No matter how generously given, grant income knocks you off your primary purpose to a greater or lesser extent. We are free from the agenda of others, free to experiment and innovate, to take risks, to fail sometimes...to create real well paid jobs for workers who without us would probably have never worked again" (p.2).

A further attraction for Black (2002) was the prospect of generating revenue, which would enable his organisation to achieve its social and environmental purposes in a much more innovative way, and "...to become masters of our own destiny" (p.2).

As CR-8, says:

*"It is about long term, independent and sustainable organisation".*



The Delphi group – consisting of Chief Executives or their equivalent of voluntary organisations in Bexley – also provided further insights into the views of some practitioners on definition - chapter 4 provides details of and about this method]. For the Delphi group, I labelled the respondents 'R' to maintain anonymity – see *Table C1* in appendix C for the respondents' profile.

In the first round of Delphi - respondents were asked to give their definitions and/or their understanding of the term, social enterprise. Below were the responses:

Definition 1: *'Involving clients in the business strategy'* [R1]

Definition 2: *'Social business'* [R2]

Definition 3: *'Making money through charitable work'* [R3]

Definition 4: *'Running a business of some kind where all the profits go back into the organisation'* [R4]

Definition 5: *'Raising money for our services'* [R5]

Definition 6: *'Working for the common good using private resources'* [R6]

As *Table 3* below indicates, this question commanded low level of scoring from many of the respondents and this could be due to the level of awareness and understanding of the term. R1 also did not respond to this question at all and could have contributed to the lower median rates. However, these definitions offered by the respondents are not far away from some of those in literature (Lloyd, 2003 and Mapp, 2002).

Therefore, to establish whether the views of practitioners resonate what literature claim, or not, I attempted to establish whether there is a commonality of ideas and understanding of social enterprise.

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total [Out of maximum of 70]	Median
Definition 1	0	5	7	5	6	0	8	31	5
Definition 2	0	0	9	0	3	10	5	2	5
Definition 3	0	0	8	0	7	7	0	22	4
Definition 4	0	6	10	9	0	9	0	34	6
Definition 5	0	3	0	9	6	8	0	26	4
Definition 6	0	2	6	0	0	6	0	14	2

Table 3: Delphi – ratings of definitions of social enterprise

At the next stage, I offered seven descriptors, summarised from literature. Respondents were asked to indicate if they agree or disagree with any of them and to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 10 [1 being the least you agree with and 10 being the most you agree with]. See *Table C2* in appendix C for details of the descriptors. The most popular descriptor was “creation of social wealth”, with a median of 8. “Value creation” and “business models applied to not-for-profit operations” are the second most agreed descriptors, followed by ‘sustainability and self-sufficiency’ – See *Table C3* in appendix C, for ratings of descriptors.

With these, one can infer that the varied definitions of social enterprise has the following “themes” running through the: “a business”, “entrepreneurial”, “social goals and social values”, “self-sustainable and self-sufficiency” and responding to “change”.



### 3.3.3 Working definition and framework of social enterprise

From the varied definitions above, it is apparent that social enterprises come in all different shapes and sizes and the concept is used to describe a broad range of organisations and practices (Mapp, 2002). My position is that one should define it succinctly, of course with consideration to economical, social, political and geographical contexts and even, cultural context.

As I argued in the section on labelling – section 3.2 – and as emphasised by the sector location model, social enterprise has emerged from and is affected by practices in the other three sectors – public, voluntary and private – hence it is a deviant from the “norm” (Becker, 1963; Tannebaum, 1938), therefore deserving its own definition and identity. This, Arthur et. al. (2006) describes as “deviant mainstreaming”.

As social entrepreneurs and social enterprise organisations - or those who claim to be - view the landscape of issues that confront them, I believe it is high time to reflect on what is it that we are engaging in when we talk about social enterprise, as whatever definition or descriptor is adopted, it will have critical impact on how a social enterprise is viewed in the marketplace (Hamaoui, 2005). This argument could appear complicated by the fact that on the one hand a part of social enterprise activities often sit squarely in the public domain, while on the other, some of their commercial activities (by definition) would best be served by a more commercial format (Hamaoui, 2005).

There are those that favour a hybrid model or a model of social enterprise that allows for flexibility in terms of where it is positioned, within a sector or as an organisational type. As a colleague once describes it at an Open University Conference on Social Enterprise, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005, that social enterprise is ‘sectorally promiscuous’.

This hybridisation model some described as ‘sector bender’ (Hamaoui, 2005), suggesting non-profit organisations buying out commercial ventures to advance the social missions of the social enterprise. Proponents of this view argues that social enterprise “...is based on the idea that a humanitarian mission is achieved most efficiently if it is supported by...a profit motive...’Upstreaming’ those profits to a single charitable foundation instead of

investors...would create a 'hybrid' model' that preserves the business drivers of his company while simultaneously supersizing a practice already common in the non-profit world" (p. 2). This model will be quite challenging for many in the not-for-profit world in my view, as it requires knowledge of the market, access to capital and the appropriate skills to operate in the world of private ventures.

By analysing and consolidating these thoughts and views, one can identify the main streams of thoughts on and of how social enterprise is defined and described. There are those that emphasise the entrepreneurial requirement, that is social enterprise as a business and on the other hand there are those that favour the social purpose element of social enterprise.

From some of the authors and practitioners in the field, the views and arguments are that unless a not-for-profit organisation is generating 'earned' revenue from its activities; it is not acting in a social enterprising manner. It may be doing good and wonderful things, creating new and vibrant programs, but can only be classified as being 'innovative' but not 'entrepreneurial'. This distinction is important, these writers claim, as in their views, only earned income will ever allow a not-for-profit to become sustainable or self-sufficient – the 'self sufficiency' argument (Emeron 2001; Sherill 2002).

Some writers recognise and often emphasise more of the social purpose character of social enterprise, Smallbone et. al. (2001) for example argue that social enterprise must have an explicit social objectives, which Pedelty (2002) describes as social purpose. Also, Thornton (2003) on the other hand argues that a social enterprise is not just about having the social goals, but it must also achieve it.

These views were further consolidated when Arthur et. al. (2006) states that "...once social enterprise turned toward the market...the business case...dominate the discourse" and that "where the social is discussed within the context of social enterprise it tends toward the assertion of social values and purposes" (p.3).



The Coalition's view also assists this summation, by arguing that a social enterprise is not defined by its legal status but by its nature, its social aims and outcomes, the basis on which its social mission is embedded in its structure and governance and the way it uses the profits it generates through its trading activities (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2003).

Mapp (2002) view also serves as a template on which to build a definition by suggesting the identification of the unifying features of social enterprise and using these features to describe them, which are the "...dual commitment to enterprise activities and the pursuit of social goals" (p.6).

Thus, the views of those I interviewed – the Delphi group and convergence interviewees and that in literature, have contributed to the working definition of social enterprise and the development of a framework. Therefore, the working definition and framework developed is an amalgam of the notions in the different definitions, views and models explored. I also need to emphasise that the working definition and framework do reflect my subjective views, judgement and elements of prediction (Pharaoh, 2002).

The working definition of social enterprise, therefore, is a **business with a social mission**.

A **framework** of social enterprise, therefore are:

- a. A business that generates revenue
- b. Must have a social mission(s)
- c. There must be clear demonstration of entrepreneurial features such as innovation and creation of opportunities and social wealth
- d. It must be financially self-sustaining or self-sufficient. 'Self-sustaining' is defined as a combination of subsidy and earned revenue and 'self-sufficient' is defined as complete reliance on earned income (Emeron, 2001).

The working definition is not an over-rigid definition. What it offers is prevention from differentiated understanding and intellectual dilemmas facing social enterprise. Therefore, the definition offers, I believe, a conceptual and explanatory guidance to the meaning of social enterprise.

This working definition, I hope, also offers a balance between 'economic' and 'social' objectives (DTI, 2002 p.17). Therefore, the challenge for any organisation that aims to be described as a social enterprise, by the definition, is to be comfortable with the business label and attain clarity about the social element(s) that reflect their core values. Hence, the 'failure' and/or 'success' of a social enterprise, I would argue, will have to be evaluated in both financial and social terms; "evaluation or measurement will need to consider social as well as financial capital" (Pharaoh, 2002, p. 16). This will create tensions and ripples I believe, but they are tensions and ripples that I believe come with being a social enterprise.

The next section attempts at arriving at a better understanding of and a working definition of social entrepreneurship.

### **3.4 Social entrepreneurship and leadership**

This section attempts at establishing a clearer understanding of the term 'social entrepreneurship', by exploring some of its definitions from literature and the views of practitioners. It then explores the relationship and/or connections between social entrepreneurship and leadership, concluding that social entrepreneurs do have leadership traits and qualities.

#### **3.4.1 Some definitions of social entrepreneurship**

The term "entrepreneur" originated in French economics as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. In French, it means someone who "undertakes" a significant project or activity. More specifically, it came to be used to identify the venturesome individuals who stimulated economic progress by finding new and better ways of doing things (Dees, 1998). The French economist most commonly credited with giving the term this particular meaning is



Jean Baptiste Say, writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Say (in Dees 1998) argues that the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield and that entrepreneurs create value.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economist most closely associated with the term was Joseph Schumpeter. He described entrepreneurs as the innovators who drive the "creative-destructive" process of capitalism. In his words, "the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionise the pattern of production." (Dees, 1998, p.49). They can do this in many ways: "by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or a new outlet for products, by reorganising an industry and so on" (Dees, 1998, p. 49).

Dees (1998) however pointed out and I agree with this view, that many of the entrepreneurs that Say and Schumpeter have in mind serve their function by starting new, profit-seeking business ventures, whereas starting a business is not necessarily the essence of entrepreneurship. Although other economists may have used the term with various nuances, the Say-Schumpeter tradition that identifies entrepreneurs as the catalysts and innovators behind economic progress has served as the foundation for the contemporary use of this concept.

The origin of Dees' (1998) position can be traced back to Peter Drucker, who affirmed that starting a business is neither necessary nor sufficient for entrepreneurship, commenting that not every new small business is entrepreneurial or represents entrepreneurship (Dees, 1998). Dees goes on to argue that entrepreneurial quality also does not mean the ability to lead, to administer, or to get things done; there are millions of people who can do these things. Instead, it refers to someone who has a very special trait, someone who, in the core of her or his personality, absolutely must change an important pattern across his or her whole society. According to Dees (1998), exceedingly few people have this driving motivation.

Drayton (in Ashoka, 2003) is thought to have coined the term 'social entrepreneur' several decades ago. He is widely credited with creating the world's first organisation to promote the profession of social entrepreneurship. Drayton recognises that social entrepreneurs have the same core temperament as their industry-creating business entrepreneur peers but use their talents to solve social problems on a society-wide scale (Davis, 2002).

Over the last two decades, with the rise of what Drayton (2004) describes as the citizen sector, the popularity of the concept has exponentially increased and multiple definitions have mushroomed. The term is sometimes used to describe entrepreneurs who start a social enterprise.

I asked convergence interviewee [CR-9] why he describes himself as a social entrepreneur;

*"When I see a problem, I feel responsible to fix it. I feel that sense of responsibility even if no one suggests it or compel or authorise me to do it. I know how to work with others to get things done. Common course is not necessary, common purpose or objective is what is important"*

CR-10's slightly differ from that of CR-9, whilst resonating the views of Cannon (2000);

*"There are different types of social entrepreneurs. One is the 'Eco type'. This is private sector entrepreneur extending or moving into the social sector. The other type is the socio-political one. These are people engaging in an enterprise to change their social environment; by working with or lobbying government and institutions and developing individual capacity to influence the world"* [CR-10]

In an attempt to probe further on these views, I asked CR-11, whether she agrees with CR-9 or CR-10, her views were;

*"There are two types of social entrepreneur. Type one are those who want to fix things, change something but he/she is actually fixing him/herself of 'wounds and bruises' of previous experience. Type two are those that already have the wound but sharing the experience with others to bring about change"*



CR-13's definition – his second “reincarnation”, as he describes it - resonates the typology of social entrepreneur as opportunity creator (Sherill, 2002; Stevenson 1998).

*"Then I underwent my third reincarnation, becoming a social entrepreneur. For me, this was a realisation that wealth has more in developing and delivering services not just in trade of goods.*

These characteristics demonstrated by CR-12 and CR-13, for example, are described by Phillips (2007) as “exceptional drive, powered by strong values and passion, together with their sense of ownership and identification” (p. 33), leading them to network extensively and that “they used symbolism and dialogue to keep alive the narrative about what they were trying to do...they demonstrated utter commitment and belief and showed direction through stories and behaviour... they gave supporters autonomy and scope [and build] intensely rewarding emotional climate” (p.33).

These social entrepreneurial characters, Goffee & Jones (2005) describe as “authentic leadership”, which they define as leadership that is attuned to its environment, intuitive, [possibly] born of formative and/or harsh experiences, who retain his/her distinctiveness, linked closely to her/his origin and use elements of corporate and social culture as a basis for radical change. Authentic leaders, Goffee & Jones (2005) then argues, acquire these attributes through the focuses pursuit of their goals and the way they communicate them to followers – sometimes intensely – thereby promoting the self-disclosure.

The characteristics identified above as described by Phillips (2007), Goffee and Jones (2005), CR-12 and CR-13, have much in common with those of effective leaders in any organisation (Chambers in Phillips, 2007. But, as Chambers would argue, it is how an individual mixes and balances them that enable some to thrive in an environment that is different from - and may be more challenging than - mainstream business. Hence, social entrepreneurs are often described as leaders.

The next section explores the concept of leadership in social entrepreneurship.

### 3.4.2 Leadership in social entrepreneurship

A “leader” is sometimes defined as a person initiating interaction with other members of a group, a person who moves the group towards group goal (Inyang, 2008). The dictionary definition of a leader is ‘one who leads or goes first’. In other words one who first perceives the group’s needs far ahead of others and therefore plans and enlists the cooperation of others in its implementation.

A person is a leader in any social situation in which her or his ideas and actions influence the thoughts and behaviours of others. (Inyang, 2008). Leadership has also been defined as the process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences or controls the thoughts, feelings or behaviours of other human beings. The term ‘leader’ also refers to a person or an actor and ‘leadership’ then becomes a process (Inyang, 2008).

To be an effective leader, Kouzes & Posner (1987), highlight certain features. They argue that common to successful leaders are the abilities to challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enabling others to act by giving them the tools and methods to solve the problem and modelling the way. This becomes important as some research has shown that there is growing and compelling evidence that those who take a socially entrepreneurial approach can be a transformational force in society (Phillips, 2007).

Hence, in my view, what needs to be better evidenced, which this research aims to achieve, is the nature of leadership that needs to be displayed as a social entrepreneur. As Phillips (2007) puts it: we need to “understand why some are able to turn their sense of social justice and compassion, or their environmental concerns, into a driving force that results in effective action” (p.12).

This definition is echoed by Boulding (2007), that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Social entrepreneurs, for example, carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, which Boulding describes as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills.



This can be likened to the experience of a convergence interviewee [CR-12], a practising social entrepreneur. CR-12's applied a reincarnation metaphor that resonates the typology of social entrepreneur as a visionary (Dees, 2001; Ashoka, 2003; Smallbone, 2001).

*"I had my second reincarnation when in the first six month of me living with them, six of the women died of childbirth. Then, we developed and set up medical facilities, later schools and other institutions; we became a social conglomerate. Although, they are not as poor as sixty years ago, but their share of wealth have reduced, because while they were taking small steps, the capitalist world was taking giant steps. The question I asked was: has it changed anything in their life?"*

With these definitions in mind, leadership in social entrepreneurship then appears as more of a group phenomenon that occurs in a situation calling for interaction between a group of people, with specific objectives or task(s). Leadership in social entrepreneurship also appears as a function of personality. It is sometimes said that there can be no leadership without followership, that attempts at leadership must be responded to and be favourable by others before they can be described as acts of leadership (Ekong, 2003 in Inyang, 2008). Hence social entrepreneurship's leadership call for readiness to accept responsibilities and requires knowledge of the group and its objectives (Ekong, 2003 in Inyang, 2008).

This was the experience of CR-12, when he claimed he had his third reincarnation, resonating the social entrepreneur as resource manager typology (Dees, 2001).

*"Then I set up 'Just Change' and colleagues from previous life said I have sold out. 'Just Change' aims to link poor communities to the consumers, therefore building new ways of trading. It also aims to redefine economy, creating a world where economic activities do not just belong to those with capital, share of wealth is not seen as charity but rather as fundamental rights; where economic activities is not just for the benefit of the capitalist, economic activity should be for the benefit of all. The task for social entrepreneur is to build network, let us*

*bring about the death of distance that cuts across class, religion, creed, so our hearts will sing a common song that is the network we need to create"*

Boulding (2007) takes this further, that every organisation has a particular work environment that dictates to a considerable degree how its leaders respond to problems and opportunities. In Boulding's (2007) view, social entrepreneurial leaders, therefore exert influence on the environment via three types of actions: the goals and performance standards they establish, the values they establish for the organisation and the business and people concepts they establish.

These definitions and views are summarised by Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999), that leadership is distinct and sometimes contextual and/or situational; that leadership is also not necessarily the same thing as status or authority or office holding, that leadership is not always necessary and that the activities, services or misfortune of an organisation can not solely be attributed to leadership. This argument I can relate to as I cannot claim to be solely responsible for Age Concern Bexley's need to change from a charity to a social enterprise, as some of the major factors that influence the change are within and outside the organisation's environment, as highlighted in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.

According to Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999), some even see leadership or leaders as possessing "...a special form of power...a way of commanding and focussing resources to achieve a particular vision..." (p.3). This was the experience of CR-13 resonating social entrepreneur as an opportunity creator (Emerson, 1996). [CR-13 owns a business that manufactures and supplies mobile toilets in Nigeria].

*"On my return to Nigeria, I identified an opportunity and gap in the Nigerian market to provide mobile public toilets. I used my own fund to purchase the first batch of toilets, imported from the UK. This went wrong because the UK specification did not comply with the Nigerian social and environmental requirements and settings. There were no local manufacturers, so I had to import, until a group of entrepreneurs imported from the US and started competing with me". "Now I manufacture locally and sell at bottom line price to*



*evade foreign competition because mine is cheaper. I now supply local authorities and businesses. I have distributors but I fix the price, so it cannot be inflated. I hire them out at social and public functions and events and offer generous discounts. I locate them at prominent public locations like police checkpoints, busy markets, so people can use them for a fee rather than defecate in the nearest dark corner. I contract it out to local touts to oversee and they charge 20 Naira per use. They maintain and clean and they keep about 65% of the daily income"*

The above example, Collin (2001) would describe as the level 5 leader that "...sits on top of a hierarchy of capabilities and is...a necessary requirement for transforming an organisation from good to great" (p.4) However, Collin acknowledges that four other layers lie beneath, each one appropriate to its right but not at the same level as level 5, whilst further arguing that "individuals do not need to proceed sequentially through each level of the hierarchy to reach the top, but to be a full-fledge Level 5 requires the capabilities of all the lower levels, plus the special characteristics of Level 5" (p.4)

The traits for a level 5 leader, according to Colin (2001), are: creating superb results, a clear catalyst in the transition from good to great; demonstration of an unwavering resolve to do things whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult; setting standards of building an enduring organisation and not settling for nothing less. Collin concedes that Level 5 is not necessarily a requirement from moving from good to great, but it is appears to be essential; it is "... a satisfying idea, a powerful idea" (p.10).

Other levels are:

- Level 4: Effective Leader – Catalyses commitment to a vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision; stimulates the group to high performance standards
- Level 3: Competent Manager – Organises people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives.

- Level 2: Contributing Team Member – contributes to the achievement of group objectives; works effectively with others in a group setting.
- Level 1: High Capable Individual – makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habit

However, Gilstrap (2007) raises cautions about this approach that is, defining leadership based on just features and qualities. He reinforces the importance of searching for meaning through the perceptions of individuals. Perception is regarded as “...the primary source of knowledge, the source that cannot be doubted” (p. 52), thereby arguing that leaders’ perceptions of organisational dynamics become central to their construction of meaning and every perception takes on new and equal meanings in the narrative descriptions of leaders.

Gilstrap (2007) then argues that although we should not discard the important and extrinsic value of leaders, however he warns that we might do this at the expense of losing understanding of how the intrinsic and interconnected processes of leadership take place in complex organisational settings. Therefore, in providing an understanding of leadership and leadership effectiveness, we also need to further our understanding of how we describe the process of leading.

Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) distinguish between transformational and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership, they claim, is more routinised, mundane and day to day. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, “...transform the status quo, create a vision for the future and then invest considerably in sharing that vision. Through sharing that vision, they...propose a new future” (p.5).

Some of the traits of transactional leaders that resonate with social entrepreneurship (Dees, 1998, Davis 2002) are projecting of vision, gaining support for that vision, consistency, persistence and focus and energetic (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999). Citing Warren Bennis, Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) state that these leadership traits,



“...stimulate a transformative power because leaders of such fortitude can turn intention into reality and equally sustain that momentum...the transformational power of the leader is to so penetrate the goal and psyche of others, that there is raised in others a level of awareness that reawakens people to strive for even greater ends” (p.5)

Social entrepreneurs, I would argue, are more of transformational leaders. Citing the views of some practitioners, for example, CR-9 and CR-11;

*"There are two types of social entrepreneur. Type one are those who want to fix things, change something but he/she is actually fixing him/herself of 'wounds and bruises' of previous experience. Type two are those that already have the wound but sharing the experience with others to bring about change"* [CR-9]

*"When I see a problem, I feel responsible to fix it. I feel that sense of responsibility even if no one suggests it or compel or authorise me to do it"* [CR-11]

These characters and features Antonacopoulou & Bento (2004 in Akins et. al. 2008), describe as “leadership from within”. Leadership in social entrepreneurship, to Antonacopoulou & Bento (2004 in Akins et. al. 2008), is underpinned by the ability of the social entrepreneur to integrate and adapt the social conditions with the risks of environmental uncertainties and to make them interact with each other.

Even though Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) warn that the landscape of leadership is complex and can not be reduced to transformational and transactional values only, I will argue in agreement with their view that leadership [and social entrepreneurship] needs to give time “...to attending to transactional activities while maintaining the transformational outlook” (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999, p.49).

The UK's NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement is also of the transformational leadership school. They define an “outstanding leader” as someone that sets a vision for the future, has “intellectual flexibility” and a drive for results. High performing leaders, they

argue, “act now” to shape the future and are motivated to take action to achieve a radically different future. Other features include: making the most of current opportunities to bring about improvements that are of benefit; being able to interpret the likely direction of changes; using their insights into the broad strategic direction of the organisation and being prepared to undertake transformational, rather than just incremental change where this will achieve service improvement (NHS, 2006).

This definition is suggesting that social entrepreneurs are also change agents, which requires two forms of leadership: “adaptive leadership” and “participatory leadership” (Akins et. al., 2008). “Adaptive leadership” is viewed as one of three major behavioural competencies in leadership, together with appropriate evaluation of the environment and effective communication (Hersey and Blanchard 1988 in Akins et. al. 2008).

According to this school, adaptive leadership approach simultaneously offers three dimensions of change: it extends current opportunities, supports the growth of new ideas and activities, and seeks options for future innovations (Beinhocker 1999 in Akins et. al. 2008). With adaptive leadership, the focus is on value-added outcomes, roles are flexible, networking is encouraged and more people are invited in the process of leading change (Albano 2007 in Akins et. al. 2008).

The implementation of radical changes calls for high risk-taking by the leader and taking the leap in experimenting with unconventional solutions. In such situations, the leader should focus on developing innovative solutions, identify possible supporters, resources and consensus building and sell the ideas to the people who would be able to implement them (DeGenring 2007, Gabriel 2005 in Akins et. al. 2008). This approach is reflected in my leadership of Age Concern Bexley – see chapter 5.

“Participatory leadership” is seen as an effective technique in bringing about change and that it fosters ownership in the decision-making and evokes responsibility for group’s effectiveness. Participation in decision making implies mental and emotional involvement in contributing to the outcome, thus bringing higher satisfaction with group interactions, more



enjoyable environment and perceiving the task at hand as interesting and meaningful (Preston and Heintz 1949 in Akins et. al. 2008).

This form of leadership is team-oriented, promotes participant interaction and tenders the conflict of power and influence between the various cadres of the organisation. (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988; Owens, 2001 in Akins et. al. 2008). Leader's authority to make important decisions, ample time for decision-making, team-players' knowledge relevant to the decision and willingness to participate are important prerequisites for applying participatory leadership approach (Yukl 1981 in Akins et. al. 2008). All these were demonstrated, albeit amidst challenges – see chapter 6 for highlights of the challenges faced by Age Concern Bexley in its transition from a charity to a social enterprise.

The definition of social entrepreneur leaders as change agents is further reinforced by Schumpeter's when he describes social entrepreneurs as the change agents in the economy, that by serving new markets or creating new ways of doing things, they move the economy forward (Dees, 1998). Dees also defines a social entrepreneur as someone who has a very special trait, someone who, in the core of her or his personality, absolutely must change an important pattern across his or her whole society. According to Dees, exceedingly few people have this driving motivation (Dees, 1998).

The next section therefore explores the concept of change agent or “change agency”.

### **3.5 Change agency - a conceptual clarification**

Definitions of change agent are less frequent in literature than descriptions of what change agents do, what competencies they require and how they should behave. Change agents are defined as people with considerable legitimate power who act to influence change (Ginsberg and Abrahamson 1991; Pettigrew and Whipp 1991; Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder 1993; Mant 1997; Butcher and Atkinson 1999).

A change agent is also described as a political astute facilitator who steers a creative path through the organisation's cultural systems to "manage meaning", influence, negotiate and sell change (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992, p. 27). Part of the abilities of the change agent, these writers argue, are the ability to "casually work the [idea for change] into as many conversations as possible" and then "repeat the principle in as many different ways as possible", coupled with the ability to "increase dissatisfaction with the status quo' and be able to 'meet resistance or rejection with persistence" (p. 27).

A classic definition is the rationalist's [Lewin] concept of change agent as an expert facilitator of group processes of planned change (Caldwell, 2005). Lewin conclude that organisational change can not be conceived of as intrinsically emergent or processual, but rather as a planned process requiring the intervention of a change agent. Therefore, the change agent, also seen as an action researcher, acts as a feedback mechanism ensuring transitions between states of stability while helping to diffuse or dissipate resistance (Caldwell, 2005).

A successful change agent must have leadership, management, consultancy and team skills (Caldwell, 2005). As leaders, change agents must have vision and support the long-range strategic goals of the change process. The change agent's role as manager is to move the organisation toward attaining the strategic goals of change. Consultancy means the change agent must have the expertise and project management skills to properly advise employees to implement the change process. Finally, the team feature of change agents is concerned with their ability to work with functional specialists, managers and employees through out all levels of the organisation (Cadwell, 2005).

The working definition of change agent, for this research, is someone who "facilitates change in the particular area in which it is needed" (McCalman and Paton 1992, p. 144). This in itself is a demanding definition. It proposes that to be an effective change agent, one needs sufficient expertise to be able to manage the tricky task of finding a balance between what one knows is the better solution - in the case of Age Concern Bexley, adopting a social enterprise model - and the process by which one facilitates (Paton,



1992). This is why Paton sometimes describes the change agent as a “change merchant”, with “a pathological need” to create external chaos commensurate with his or her internal state” (Panton, p. 261).

It should be noted that this research is adopting the rational economic approach of agency theory (McCalman and Paton, 1992). The intention is not to obviate the importance of behavioral and motivational factors that also inform the features and competencies of change agents that play more prominence in other agency theories. This I have demonstrated with my self-evaluation as a social entrepreneur – see section 3.6.2. Therefore, some of the arguments would be tempered by the inclusion of behavioral factors such as desire for prestige, the will to succeed, or need for achievement plus the features of social entrepreneur I detailed later – see section 3.6.2.

Even with the adoption of a working definition, I would still argue that there is no ‘ideal’ change agent. Particular requirements normally relate to the actual situation in the organisation, the person’s background and baggage, values etc. that I have openly expressed, in some of my autoethnographical accounts.

The next section is a self analysis and an examination of my role as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent at Age Concern Bexley. It also provides an insight into the issues I confronted and the process of self discovery, self learning and reflexivity in the research.

### **3.6 Me as a leader, social entrepreneur and change agent**

#### ***3.6.1 As a leader***

My leadership role at Age Concern Bexley was somewhat predetermined by the virtue of my role as the Chief Executive. Young’s (2006) view further confirms my experience at Age Concern Bexley, when she claims that, in the context of social entrepreneurship, a leader is rarely appointed but is more likely to evolve into a leadership role. Most of Young’s

research subjects experienced the transition to leadership as a major psychological turning point, typified by a sharply defined and challenging moment when they realised they must take the lead. In my case, this was the realisation that Age Concern Bexley needs to change in reaction to its operating environment – as I detailed in chapter 2, section 2.2.4.

My commitment and interest to social enterprise are also driving forces and my awareness that if I did not take the challenge, then what I most passionately wanted would not happen, that is, experiencing social enterprise in action. Leadership for me was not about self-aggrandisement, but a necessity for pursuing a cause and acting on my values (Young, 2006).

Just as Young (2006) further confirms, that one's leadership approach and traits are influenced by "...a background of unusually powerful messages from parents and/or other significant models...becoming aware of how to make use of their particular characteristics and style, recognising [*one's*] outstanding capabilities, getting a real 'sense of self' and beginning to create a unique leadership signature..." (p.15) – These I expressed in chapter 2, section 2.3, with my "value location", "social images" and "metaphor".

In leading Age Concern Bexley to change from a charity to a social enterprise, my leadership style were combinations of transformational leadership (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999), adaptive leadership and participatory leadership (Akins et. al., 2008). For example, working with the trustees and the senior management team, we set a vision for the future – changing from a charity to a social enterprise – and I had to use my "intellectual flexibility" to drive for results.

My leadership entailed shaping the future and motivating the trustees and senior managers to take action to achieve a radically different future for Age Concern Bexley – see sessions in section 5.4 in chapter 5. I had to make use of current opportunities in the Bexley local economy [detailed in section 2.2.2] to bring about improvements that are of benefit, interpreting the likely direction of changes and using my insights into the broad strategic direction of the organisation in undertaking transformational change (NHS, 2006).



My use of adaptive leadership style was demonstrated in how the Handy Person service was converted to a social enterprise and the identification of other services that can potentially be converted to social enterprises - e.g. podiatry service - for future development as a social enterprise service (Akins et. al., 2008) – see section 6.4, chapter 6. My approach was also participatory as I fully engaged the senior management team and other stakeholders, for example, Bexley local authority and Bexley Care Trust officers.

Participatory leadership was utilised by me, for example, at the mission review session. The team – trustees and senior managers - was “moderately ready for change” and there was good relationship between me and the participants, “facilitating sharing of ideas in decision-making” (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988 in Akins et. al. 2008).

### ***3.6.2 As a social entrepreneur***

This research has made me to conclude that my interest in social entrepreneurship transcends popularity and fascination. The experiences I underwent in implementing social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley and my self-reflections indicate that there is a social entrepreneur in me. This is further validated by my self-evaluation with the application of Personal Construct Theory and Repertory Grid interview technique.

The purpose of the application of personal construct theory for me was more ‘reflective’ than ‘extractive’ (Mayes, 2005) as much as a personal exploration. I applied the Repertory Grid interview technique [as detailed in the section 4.4 in chapter 4] for my personal explorations and as a tool to assist in revealing and exploring my views, plus my understanding of the characters and features of myself as a social entrepreneur.

One of my objectives was to use this technique to assist me in ascertaining if I fit the social entrepreneur descriptors, as detailed in literature and by some practitioners and how this impact on this research. With this tool, I went through a challenging and rigorous compare-and-contrast process and then produced a graphical representation that shows how I describe and evaluate myself as a social entrepreneur.

With the engagement with literature and from views garnered from practitioners, it has emerged that thoughts and views on and about social entrepreneurship can be classified using some descriptors. Although Gilstrap (2007) raises cautions about this approach that is, defining social entrepreneurship and leadership based on just features and qualities, Gilstrap also reinforces the importance of searching for meaning through the perceptions of individuals, which I translate to mean the teasing out of descriptors and features.

This classification, I have to say, is not exclusive, neither is it exhaustive. These descriptors have been put together by me from views in literature and practitioners', to enable me achieve better understanding and develop some clarity of the different features attributed to a social entrepreneur. This analytical exercise and approach also aided in developing elements and constructs for my application of 'Personal Construct Theory' and Repertory Grid.

See appendix F for my analysis of a self-administered Repertory Grid interview, coupled with some of my personal reflections.

Typologies	Definition
Innovator	Engages in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning (Dees, 2001). This innovation takes many forms; it does not require inventing something wholly new; it can simply involve applying an existing idea in a new way or to a new situation.
Relationship Manager	Creates and work on relationships. For example, relationships between members of the local communities, statutory bodies, business people, politicians and anyone who has interest in social development (Botsman, 2001).
Resource Manager	Does not let their own limited resources keep them from pursuing their visions, skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources from others (Dees, 2001).



Creator of social wealth and values	<p>Grounded in certain values (Hartigan, 2002) and adopts a mission to create and sustain social value (Dees, 2001). "Making a profit, creating wealth, or serving the desires of customers may be part of the model, but these are means to a social end, not the end in itself. Profit is not the gauge of value creation...social impact is the gauge...they want to create lasting improvements, they think about sustaining the impact." (Dees, 2001 p. 55). Combines commercial enterprises with social impact, using earned income strategies to pursue a social objective (Emerson, 1996).</p>
Steward	<p>Seek a sound understanding of the constituencies they are serving, they make sure they have correctly assessed the needs and values of the people they intend to serve and the communities in which they operate, that in some cases, this requires close connections with those communities. (Brinckeroffh, 2003).</p>
Opportunities' Creator	<p>Starts with the vision of an attractive opportunity - one that has sufficient potential for positive social impact to justify the investment of time, energy and money required to pursue it seriously (Guclu as quoted in Sherill, 2002 and Dees, 2001).</p>
Visionary	<p>Recognises whenever a part of society is stuck in an inefficient or harmful pattern, to conceive a better and safe alternative, make that vision realistic and then persuade his/her entire society to make the leap to this new way. He/she is married to a vision and cannot rest until it has transformed all of society. He/she has a vision of how to achieve improvement, determined to make that vision work and are persistent (Dees, 2001, Ashoka, 2003, Smallbone, 2001, Martin &amp; Osberg, 2007).</p>

*Table 4: Social entrepreneur descriptors*

The chosen elements are the social entrepreneur descriptors above. These elements are the concrete examples representing what I explored and they are related to my purpose (Mayes, 2005). I used six constructs, which I also applied as qualifiers (Mayes, 2005). I developed bipolar questions from them that directed me to consider the elements in terms of their particular purpose or relevance. The qualifiers I have chosen are derivatives from the social enterprise framework I have developed. I applied the elements, constructs and

qualifiers to create a social entrepreneur grid that generated the scaling, also based on my personal judgement.

Discovering the score on 'relationship management' was a revelation; it slightly disturbed me, as it exposed an element of me I have always struggled with, which I am somewhat aware of. I can conclude that I resonate Botsman's (2001) view that social entrepreneurs may revolt to relationships that are based on dependency and passivity. It was revealing to see the score on 'Stewardship'. I would have seen myself more of an individual that have close connections to the community he serves (Dees, 2001) - see appendix F.

I will be the first to admit that I tend to leave resources to manage it self and this was reflective of my personal life and finances. I enjoy the buzz of the project, the money part always seem less important to me. The score on 'Resource Management' is reflective of this and I fit the description that Dees (2001) gave when he describes the social entrepreneur as someone that tends to act boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand and that do not let their own limited resources keep them from pursuing their visions. Dees (2001) conclusion that a social entrepreneur is skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources from others also resonates my character.

I decided to select the three highest scoring elements- 'innovator', 'opportunity creator' and 'visionary' – so that I may get closer to what ought to be my more important values, beliefs and preferences (Mayes, 2005). Therefore, I used three new qualifiers – 'my strongest feature', 'this is how I like to be described as' and 'I always demonstrate this feature at work' - see *Table F4: "Laddering Up"* in appendix F.

This exercise indicated to me and made me draw the inference that being innovative is a feature one would like to have and that one needs to make some effort to come up with something new, to have an edge. These features or attributes are also confirmed by Dees (2001) when he affirms that social entrepreneurs need not be inventors that they simply need to be creative in applying what others have invented and that their innovations may appear in how they structure their core programs or in how they assemble the resources



and fund their work. This willingness to innovate, Dees (2001) claim, is part of the *modus operandi* of social entrepreneurs, that it is not just a one-time burst of creativity, but also rather a continuous process of exploring, learning and improving.

I decided to select the two lowest scoring elements – ‘relationship management’ and ‘stewardship’ – to see if I can elicit any relationship between the two. I also applied the three qualifiers – see *Table F5: "Laddering Down"* in appendix F.

This result is reflective of my character, that is, more of a steward than a relationship manager. I have to admit that I ignore relationship in my drive and ambition to prove myself, but I still maintain a sense of stewardship along the way as I can act out the servants when occasions call for it. I have a high level of self-determination and self-belief in myself and in what I do, hence I sometimes expect others to appreciate this, even when I do not communicate it, or share the self-driven passion.

These experiences and reflections led me to conclude that I am a social entrepreneur, as I possess and display a passion to make things happen. I do have a stance about social issues and a dogged determination to succeed. I do not allow constraints imposed by ideology or rules to limit me and I can be daring (Hartigan, 2002). I do see myself as a social change agent that make things happen. I combine street pragmatism with professional skills and insights; I tend to see opportunities where others only see problems and challenges (Catford, 1998). Citing Drayton (in Ashoka, 2003), when he used a fishing metaphor, I am not content just to give a fish, or be taught how to fish, I will not rest until I have revolutionised the fishing industry.

The Repertory Grid provided an appropriate tool for me for this reflective process. It allowed me to create my own way of self-evaluation whilst also enabling me to develop my own constructs deciding what is important to me and the constructs I find effective. I did attempt to use the ‘Enquire Within’ software, but I find it user-unfriendly, prescriptive and a barrier to the organic development of my personal reflection and processes.

Personal Construct Theory is a reflexive theory that allowed me to have a construct system relating to social entrepreneurship. However, I do accept that other writers, practitioners and academics may and do have their own constructs that are different in content from mine. I also do accept that there is no one right view of social entrepreneur and I do not intend to impose my construct system on others. However, I do hope that this exercise demonstrates a good assessment of anyone who can or does describe himself or herself as a social entrepreneur.

This self-evaluation has now given me the confidence to describe myself as a social entrepreneur and that this character or feature of mine does influence my world view, my interest in the research and my drive and ambition in life.

### ***3.6.3 As a change agent***

Schumpeter sees the entrepreneur as a change agent, whereas Peter Drucker sees them rather like an exploiter of change, arguing that they search for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity (Martin & Osberg, 2007). Whichever view one takes, change is paramount to the elements that next section detail.

I saw myself as a change agent as I define change as the process I went through at Age Concern Bexley. Being involved in this change meant, "...being involved in processes of persuasion, influence, resistance and commitment and the potentially irremediable loss when choices have to be made" (McNiff, 2002, p.4).

My role as a change agent at Age Concern Bexley came in different shapes. Using the 'levels of change' model of Jim Canterucci (cited in Buchanan & Boddy, 1992), I accept the need for change, attempted to communicate and defend the need for change throughout the organisation, for example, using my "wall paper" metaphor – in chapter 2, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3. I led the change and translated the mission of Age Concern Bexley into the context of a specific change initiative, i.e. changing Age Concern Bexley from a charity to a social enterprise, requiring the revisiting of the mission and objectives at the board and



senior management team session. I championed the development of the Handy Person service as a social enterprise, whilst along the way I challenged the status quo and hopefully transformed Age Concern Bexley.

As a change agent, I realised that I always needed the ability to get all people affected by the project involved – senior management team and trustees especially - to ensure their support and commitment. This required of me a high competency in soft skills, also described as 'emotional intelligence' (Buchanan & Boddy, 1992). This included the ability to communicate, to understand and to take into account opinions and doubts of others.

The adoption of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley involved a great variety of factors and forces that are just the reasons and objectives for change, but also took cognisance of the existing state of the organisation, values, beliefs and routines of the staff and board. The social enterprise model challenged the existing cultural framework of Age Concern Bexley, examples of which I detail in chapter 2, section 2.2, when introducing Age Concern Bexley. Hence my efforts to change such lasting values, led to some resistance and denial. For example, a senior manager said, commenting on the social enterprise experience:

*"It would have been wasted energy and resources"* [SMT3].

I realised it was my task to generate the acceptance needed in order to implement the change (Jones, 1992).

Understanding the transition process was a requirement I later realised and this turned out to be the time I also needed some help. I was so close to the changes and the implementation of social enterprise, that I sometimes failed to remember that I myself took some time to come to terms with the necessary change and that the senior management team needed at least as long to do so. I stressed myself into questioning why anyone would not embrace change and ended up sometimes believing that the senior management team were ignorant, rigid, or outright hostile to the new direction. I later realised that it was the transition, not necessarily the changes themselves, that were holding some back.

I experienced what Bridges (2000) described as the 'marathon effect'. As the Chief Executive, therefore high on the hierarchy chain, I moved through the change process quicker because I saw the intended destination before others even knew the race had begun. I sometimes forgot that senior management team and board would take longer to make the transition: letting go of old ways, moving through the neutral zone and finally, making a new beginning (Kanter, 1991). Therefore, I needed to understand how to help the senior management team and trustees through transition, a role I discovered, was far more interpersonal and collaborative. This I shared, for example, in chapter 6 when reflecting on challenges and lessons learnt.

As a change agent, I questioned the knowledge of the organisation, for example in the 'Behind the Wall paper' write up in chapter 2, challenging the existing patterns of thinking and existing assumptions about Age Concern Bexley, its markets, customers and relationships (Buchanan & Boddy, 1992). I then realised that there was more than one right solution, as I had to evaluate facts from different points of view.

I recognised that I could have involved and done more coalition building, as I should have involved more opinion leaders, decision makers on resources, functional experts and other important persons as early as possible in the early stage, for example leading Councillors in health and social care and Bexley local authority commissioning officers, to garner more and wider local support for social enterprise. This also influenced the setting up of *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium* – see more details in chapter 7, as part of the contribution to practice.

Internally, to get the "blessings" of the trustees on major decisions, I had direct and detailed discussions with the Chair of the board of trustees, to obtain endorsement, get him to sponsor the initiative and convert other trustees. In dealing with major objections, I applied the tactics of appealing to larger principles (Kanter, 1991). That is, tying the social enterprise concept to an unassailable value and position, reiterating the environmental challenges and issues that permeate the operating environment. I did more persuading than "ordering", spent a lot of time on team building and creating tasks' groups. I sought



input from other stakeholders - for example, getting the local authority to adjust the contract mid way to accommodate the new charging regime for the Handy Person scheme. I had to display political sensitivity by briefing the new conservative cabinet as soon as they settled in office in May 2006.

I realised it was not enough for just me to have a convincing vision, as real commitment were only gained when I gave the senior management team more chance to become actively involved, to contribute their own experiences. For example, I made the Development Manager realise that his contribution to the project was important and is valued, by giving him the free hand to manage it and make important decisions, post implementation of the Handy Person scheme. I then noticed there was increase in sense of ownership for the project, which, in turn served as a major source of motivation.

Acknowledging some of the benefit, some managers said:

*"We are not just a charity any more; this has enhanced the development of Age Concern Bexley [SMT3]*

*"The Handy person as a social enterprise got everyone thinking differently, seeing programs and services that are not involved in earned income activities in a different light." [SMT2]*

I learnt to manoeuvre between all positions. This required a great deal of 'straddling the fence' (Mott, 2000), listening, careful analysis of when to act and when to remain silent. One of the hardest lessons I learnt was not to respond too quickly, assisted by my increase awareness of the 'Ladder of Inference' – see examples in chapter 5, section 5.5. As Age Concern Bexley experienced more pressure from its operating environment, I noticed more reliance on me as the Chief Executive as I had to make more decisions on matters for which routine response did not exist. I saw myself moving Age Concern Bexley beyond what it already knew into more uncertain realm of innovation and uncharted territories (Kanter, 1991). For example, establishing Foot Care Clinics, an unknown service territory for Age Concern Bexley.

I saw my role as the person in the driving seat and the source of power (Kanter, 1991), shaping and pushing the social enterprise concept until it became a useful form and in the shape of the Handy Person scheme and other emerging services like wheel chair loan and foot care service. It was appealing to sometimes see myself as an idealist – captivated by the idea of social enterprise and eager to show its value. However, I still recognise I am still human with impure thoughts, emotions and needs.

I did not see problems, I saw challenges. I made new connections, applying my business skills and working across boundaries and reaching beyond the scope and limits of my job (Kanter, 1991). For example, attending Bexley's local authority cabinet meetings as an observer.

Many a times, I was willing to continue single-minded pursuit of the vision, even when the lines of resistance were at their toughest – this was demonstrated at the mission review session, detailed in chapter 5, section 5.3. During this period, I also realised that I needed others to contribute and participate, as their participation sometimes acted as checks on my actions. I therefore faced the paradox of 'participation by command' (Kanter, 1991), I had to sometimes push and force others to go along. An example was when I insisted that we implemented a social enterprise model at the flagship rendezvous at Bexleyheath and Welling, to push them towards self-sustenance.

However, some thinkers now believe that you can not singly attribute change to a leader or single agent, that the role of leaders are now to manage the team and empower subordinates to be receptive to organisational change and enterprise. This school argues for what is described as 'dispersed agency' - made up of self-managed teams, quality circles or task groups - acting as agents of change and transformation (Caldwell, 2005).

This shift to 'dispersal agency' - also described as 'communities of practice' - made popular by Senge (1999) and Wenger (1998) - is based on the notion that organisations are no more top-down structurally but are more of loose structures of systems and network or process. This is also based on the belief or recognition that central hierarchical control has



declined in many organisations and that large scale organisational change is too simply complex and high risk for any one person to lead or direct, even where there is a strong sense of vision and direction (Caldwell, 2005). The notion of singular agent, they argue, have exaggerated the autonomous role of leaders and managers in organisational change and undermined the various practical roles other human actors can actually play in processes of organisational change.

These critics also suggest the removal of the change agent from the centre stage by placing them within a multiplicity of discourses and practices, that change agents are simply a conduit and bearer of discourses of knowledge and power (Caldwell, 2005).

I disagree, with these views, as in my case at Age Concern Bexley, the senior management team and trustees - individually and collectively - were not mere bearers, filters or puppets of change process over which they have little control. In my view, informed by the research experience, it was more of a case of shared knowledge, insight and responsibilities, in the quest to ensure the sustainability of Age Concern Bexley.

For example; a trustee said:

*"If we go this social enterprise idea, it shows we are concentrated and focussed. It will lead us to not moving the goal post all the time. So we need to define and decide for ourselves as an organisation where we aim to go"*[BOT3]

I of course played a central role and these experiences made me understand and know myself better, at the same time enabled change at Age Concern Bexley, as I play the role of a leader, social entrepreneur and change agent.

### **3.7 Defining social entrepreneurship**

In defining social entrepreneurship, Catford (1998) summarises; "Social entrepreneurs combine street pragmatism with professional skills, visionary insights with pragmatism, an ethical fibre with tactical thrust. They see opportunities where others only see empty

buildings, unemployable people and unvalued resources.... Radical thinking is what makes social entrepreneurs different from simply 'good' people. They can 'boundary-ride' between the various political rhetoric and social paradigms to enthuse all sectors of society" (p. 96).

I agree with Dees (2001) critic of this definition, that these definitions are an "idealised" one that social entrepreneurs will exemplify these characteristics in different ways and to different degrees, in varying contexts and environments.

Influenced by the views in literature and that of practitioners, I have arrived at a working definition of a social entrepreneur, for the purpose of this research. Haven defined social enterprise as a business with a social mission; I define a social entrepreneur as: **a leader with a vision and values that creates change whilst ensuring self-sufficient and/or self sustained earned income strategies to pursue social mission(s).**

With this definition and informed by my self analysis, I can affirm that I am a social entrepreneur.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the concept of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship in the context of leadership and change agency. It also details the self evaluation of a social entrepreneur [that is, me]. I then arrive at a working definition.

What this research aim to explore are driven by the research question and the organisational issues that arise from literature review, complemented by the views practitioners.



These are:

- a. The need for a working definition of social enterprise to enable a better understanding of the field (Sherrill 2002; Dees 1998; Thompson 2000)
- b. Being able to clarify what constitutes social enterprise and social entrepreneurship,
- c. Knowing what it takes to change an organisation from a charity to a social enterprise coupled with the issues and challenges that come with this change (Pharoah 2004; Hartigan & Billimora 2005; ECOTEC 2003, Mapp 2002) and
- d. Having an insight into these experiences from the lens of a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent (Dees 1998; Hartigan 2002; Davis 2002).

To address these issues and noting the breath of them, the research philosophy adopted is empirical and rationalist whilst I adopted a multiple method strategy, to ensure I address the varied research and organisational issues that have emerged. The next chapter details the research philosophy, methodology and methods and how they help to answer and address these research and organisational issues.

# Chapter Four

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## 4. Research philosophy, methodology and method

### 4.1 Introduction

One of the issues I had to face was that this research question is an environmentally driven issue and I as the researcher; I am also part of the same environment as the Chief Executive of the organisation, with my assumptions and prejudices. Therefore, my relationship with the environment and issues is such that I interact with the research and data and this necessitates me to expose my perception and biases by reflecting it in the research findings.

I needed a research philosophy, methodology and methods that will assist in addressing how to arrive at a working definition of social enterprise and what constitutes social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. There is also a need to employ research method(s) in exploring the change of Age Concern Bexley from a charity to a social enterprise and a set of methods that will assist in reflecting the role and the voice of a social entrepreneur in practice, enabling the sharing of the insight into the experience of a social entrepreneur as a leader and change agent, whilst creating the opportunity to see organisational change from the lens of a social entrepreneur (Dees 1998; Hartigan 2002; Davis 2002)

Therefore, with this research, I aim to gain a better understanding of the existing body of knowledge on social enterprise, contributing to the body of knowledge, whilst also attempting to improve and develop Age Concern Bexley and myself. Hence, I needed to understand the interrelationship between my reality, what I can claim to be warrantable knowledge and how I can discover what I believe can be known (Crossnan, 2003).

Literature, surveys, convergence interviews, Repertory Grid and the Delphi technique, assisted in answering the questions of what social enterprise and social entrepreneurship



are and how you know one when you see one. Action research, the NEST tool and the Ladder of Inference assisted in addressing the research issue of experiencing, recording and learning from organisational change, whilst autoethnography enabled the voice of the practitioner [me] to be heard in the research. I needed the research to achieve comprehensive understanding, whilst also aiming to become versatile as a researcher deliberately building my “methodological toolboxes” (Morse and Chung, 2003 p. 1).

This chapter explicates the research philosophy, methodology and methods, how I applied them and the justifications for their use.

## **4.2 Research philosophy**

The research takes both empirical and rationalist stance (Swepson, 2004). I highlighted the research question I was addressing and developed questions from them, based on my situation specific knowledge. In an attempt to address the questions, I raised further questions, hence iterative in my approach. By employing this cyclicity of thought process, I was able to develop a working definition and framework for social enterprise, descriptors of social entrepreneurship and examination of social entrepreneurship, leadership and change agency – as detailed in chapter 3. These frameworks I see more as maps, rather than the territories (Swepson, 2004).

I also adopted a constructivist position (Swepson, 2004), as the views I expressed, the definitions I arrived at and the framework I developed are my own constructs, based on my knowledge, experience, engagement with literature and research data. The research methods are mostly qualitative in nature, with in-depth analysis and reflections on survey results, interviews, self-reflection and action research within Age Concern Bexley.

However, I did apply statistical analysis in my application of the Delphi technique, for example, whilst gathering data from practitioners [in chapter 3] - and repertory grid in my self-analysis as a social entrepreneur [also in chapter 3, section 3.6]. The employment of

statistical data is to enable me achieve a better understanding and analysis of the data. For example, the varying views of what social enterprise is by the Delphi group.

This approach is endorsed by practitioners in the evaluation field who hold the view that both quantitative and qualitative methods contribute to all aspects of evaluative enquiries and can be successfully used together (e.g. Cook, 1995 in Briedenhann et. al. 2002). This is true of this research as one of the important issues for consideration, for me, are to ensure the ease with which the data emanating from the evaluation can be understood and its credibility in the eyes of the audience who will receive and utilise the results (Patton, 1999).

As Crossnan (2003) also argues, that while quantitative and qualitative research methods are "...often seen as opposing and polarized views they are frequently used in conjunction" (p.49) and that the distinction between the philosophies are often overstated. Crossnan (2003) goes on to affirm, that "...philosophically the qualitative and quantitative paradigms are not as diverse or mutually incompatible as often conveyed" (p.49).

I carried out action research at Age Concern Bexley and took it through the experience of implementing and managing the challenges that come with practicing social enterprise, whilst aiming to improve practice. Hence, "I see my philosophy...in terms of first person engagement rather than the perspective of second person participant or of a third person neutral observer...I see the methodology and epistemology in my claim...as an integral part of my...development...In attempting to live more fully my values within the context of my workplace [and] I believe that I was helping to produce a good social order" (Whitehead, 1999, p. 89).

In this mode of research, I as the researcher was not just concerned about studying some aspect of Age Concern Bexley, but also with changing it. Therefore, I was immersed experientially in the situation (Flyvbjerg 2001 in Coghlan 2003). I learnt how to look at the familiar from a fresh perspective and became open to discovering what I did not see. I



attended to what Coghlan (2003) describes as my 'pre-understanding', my 'role duality' and 'organisational politics'.

"Pre-understanding" is described as the researcher's knowledge, insights and experience before engaging in the research. The challenges this posed ranged from the type of language I used, being too close to the data or assuming too much, due to my role and status in the organisation. I did adopt Coghlan's suggestion of critical reflection and unpicking of ethical issues, as some of the ways to address this. For example, see section on ethical issues in chapter 6. "Role duality" refers to how I managed my role as a researcher, whilst at the same time playing the role of the Chief Executive of the organisation, what Holian (1999 in Coghlan 2003) describes as "identification dilemma" (p.5). I also reflected on this throughout the research and record the experience.

This research threatened a long-standing tradition at Age Concern Bexley and the culture of 'if it is not broken, do not fix it'. For example, the chairperson of the board of trustee once said at a meeting:

*"Over my dead body will any drastic change happen!"?*

Hence, I had to manage 'organisational politics' (Coghlan, 2003, p.5). Throughout the research period, I had to maintain credibility as an effective driver of change, act as an astute political player, especially when dealing with the board of trustee.

The research, I perceive as a process, in which I am a participant involved in data collection process about the environment and myself and I utilise the data I generated to review the facts about the environment and myself, in order for me to take some form of remedial or developmental action. This I demonstrated in the next chapter on the implementation of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley. During this process, "the researched and the researcher are working in collaboration" (Coghlan, 2001 in Cohen and Manion, 1989 p.223 and Bell, 1993, p. 6).

In this research, I did not see myself as an object, rather a subject to many influences on my behaviour, feelings, perceptions and attitudes – all relevant to the research. For me as a researcher, reality is not a rigid thing, rather a creation of those individuals involved in the research – for example, the practitioners I interviewed, the senior management team etc – and myself.

Therefore, my reality does not exist in a vacuum, as “...its composition is influenced by its context and many constructions of reality are therefore possible” (Hughes, 1994 cited in Crossnan, 2003, p. 52). Some other factors that influenced my reality constructions, also confirmed by Crossnan (2003), are my culture, cultural belief and social background and upbringing. These I demonstrated in some of my autoethnographical accounts and reflections.

This philosophical stance therefore assumes that reality is multiple, subjective and mentally constructed (Crossnan, 2003). Hence, I will argue that the use of flexible and multiple methods are desirable as a way of exploring the research question over time to enable me “...establish warranted assertibility as opposed to absolute truth” (p.54). I as the researcher interact with the subjects of the research and the findings are the outcome of this interactive process with a focus on meaning and understanding of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and organisational change (Crossnan, 2003).

The purpose of the research is not simply or primarily to contribute to the fund of knowledge in the practice of social enterprise or social entrepreneurship, or just to develop emancipatory theory or framework, but rather to forge a more direct link between intellectual theory and practice (Coghlan, 2001). Therefore, I aimed for this research to contribute directly to the development of thoughts on social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, knowledge about the change from a charity to a social enterprise and, my personal awareness and development and that of Age Concern Bexley (Coghlan, 2001).

To achieve this, I applied methodical pluralism as an overarching research methodology.



### 4.3 Research methodology: methodical pluralism

To discover what I believe can be known (Crossnan, 2003), I employed more than one type of research method, therefore the methodology of methodical pluralism – i.e. the use of a mix of qualitative methods (Chung, 2003). The methods are: literature review, questionnaire survey, Delphi technique, convergence interview, action research, Ladder of Inference, NEST tool, personal construct theory and autoethnography. Hence, one can describe this research methodology as 'multi-strategy' research (Bryman, 2001 in Brannen 2005). This comes with added advantages and challenges as I argue below.

One of the justification of and for the adoption of methodical pluralism is that I had to allow each area of study and research that emerge from the research cycles and process, to dictate the direction and nature of the next, allowing me to identify the scope of the issues (Morse and Chung, 2003). Examples are the application of autoethnography to record my personal reflection and Personal Construct Theory and Repertory Grid interview for self-evaluation as a social entrepreneur.

During the research, I explored opportunities that emerged to garner useful and relevant data. For example, from some meetings, conferences and seminar I attended, where social enterprise was the central theme, thereby not limiting myself rigidly to the time table of work as detailed in the research proposal. I adopted a participatory and reflective action research style at these sessions when the experiences occur (Schon 1983, 1987, 1991, in Coghlan, 2001). For example, I carried out 'convergence' interviews at a world conference on social enterprise at Said Business School, Oxford University, proving to be a wealth of data source, for example in defining social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

Exploring varied methodologies further allowed me to acquire some knowledge and skills about these methods, as it broadened my methodological repertoire. It also allowed me the opportunity to think outside the box as I employed a method as soon as I confront a research issues, hence determined by practical rather than disciplinary influences (Brannen, 2005). An example is my discovery and application of convergence interview

technique, when I attended an international conference and had limited structured environment to have one to one interviews with the target audience.

Methodical pluralism also enabled me to examine the convergence between the methods I used, allowing me to do what Fielding and Fielding (1986) describe as "...being imaginative in pondering what our data are telling us" (p.10). Doing this allowed me pay attention to discrepancies that emerged between items of data derived from the same method and other methods.

I do have an appreciation of other methods, however methodical pluralism allows the choices of the methods made to be the ones best suited to deliver the desired results for this research, hence achieving 'fitness for function' (Swepson, 2004). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 in Fielding, 1986) also support this notion that different research strategies should be explored and their effects compared with a view to drawing theoretical conclusions.

I took the paradigmatic position that works on the principle that choice of method is not made in a philosophical void that research questions should be thought of in relation to epistemological assumptions (Barbour, 1999 in Brannen, 2005). Hence, the choices of methods in this research are influenced by the question of and about the knowledge I seek to generate. For example, I employed the Delphi technique to garner the views of practitioners who are usually difficult to reach; hence, the technique suited the purpose. I tried to ensure that I chose methods that are appropriate to the research question.

However, as much as I would argue that I could justify the adoption of methodical pluralism as a research methodology in terms of tailoring methods to research questions, in practice, I did refer and was quite conscious of the outcomes of the research. Hence, while the choice of methods started in relation to the questions, the practicalities of the research process did divert the original intention. For example, I never envisaged that I would use the Repertory Grid on myself, as the initial plan was to use it with the board and senior management team. However, as the research turned out to be as much about myself as



much as Age Concern Bexley, the use of the Repertory Grid on me appeared necessary, justifiable and appropriate, as I needed to establish if I am a social entrepreneur or not – as demonstrated in chapter 3, section 3.6.

I can argue that the methodology of mixed method produced better outcome for a “universalistic discourse” for me (Bryman in Brannen, 2005), as “complex and pluralistic social contexts demand analysis that is informed by multiple and diverse perspectives” (p. 9). This is the case with this research as I explored the arguments for social enterprise in practice, focussed on me as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent and I also led the change of Age Concern Bexley from a charity to a social enterprise. This allowed the inferences I made from the research, generally strengthened by the use of mixed methods (Bryman, 2005).

One of advantage of methodical pluralism did not emerge until during and at the end of the research process and this was not anticipated at the outset. This “post hoc justification” (Brannen, 2005, p.9) does contrast with the rationales I generated at the initial design stage of the research, where I was nearly sure and prescriptive about which methods I was going to apply.

It was a fundamental shift for me, as not only did I use more and varied methods, I ended up changing the original research topic from “Social enterprise: the 21<sup>st</sup> century voluntary sector or the 4<sup>th</sup> sector?” to “Social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in practice”. Brannen (2005) confirmed this experience, when he stressed that “...innovative insights may arise irrespective of the original research questions posed in the investigation and may indeed lead to the replacement of the original questions with new questions” (p. 9).

Another reason for applying methodical pluralism was the “feasibility of particular methods” (Brannen, 2005, p.10). An example of this instance was the use of the Delphi technique, which was employed because of the nature of the research population – Chief Executives or their equivalents – who are difficult to access, which ultimately affect the choice of method. This method of collecting data was chosen because it made for better cooperation

with research informants (Brannen, 2005). I also used some methods because they have a better 'fit' (p.10) – for example the use of Convergence interview technique – which was more sensitive and appropriate to the environment at which I carried out these interviews.

In support of the choice of methodical pluralism, researchers are now waking up to the views that research questions need to be approached with as much methodological flexibility as possible. Citing Vroom, "I no longer seek one lens or theory that will explain or unify it all. Pluralism and the interplay or conflicting modes of sense-making have replaced my need for order and convention" (p.44). Methodical rigidity and over-reliance on techniques and tools were cited as common factors that block creative development (Vakkayil, 2006).

Having used mixed methods, I have decided not to apply triangulation, as some writers will suggest. I see the methods and the data collected as complementing one another in order to support – or in some cases debunk – the research arguments and issues. I do not see the data and methods as acting as checks, validating, or verifying one another.

The use of mixed methods was to enable me to understand social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, leadership, change agency, myself as a social entrepreneur and the organisation design and development of the change from a charity to a social enterprise, from different vantage points. This is in line with the view of Brannen (2005) that data collected from different methods cannot simply be added together to produce a unitary or rounded reality or truth. "If we move away from assuming that we are trying to arrive at a single reality we need to understand how different accounts are arrived at and the purposes these accounts serve" (p. 12).

In some cases, during the research, the result from one data and the way I analysed them added better understanding. For example, the data I garnered by applying Personal Construct Theory, added better understanding to data via literature on the features of a social entrepreneur, as I demonstrate in chapter 3. This Brannen (2005) describes as 'elaboration or expansion' (p.18). In some other cases, the use of a first method sparked new hypothesis or research question that I pursued using a different method; this is termed



'initiation' (Brannen, 2005). An example of this in this research was the use of *Ladder of Inference* to reflect on my actions during the implementation stages at Age Concern Bexley.

I also had a case of 'complementarity' (Brannen, 2005) where one data analysis enhanced the other. An example was the link between the questionnaires and Delphi interview, as the two methods were juxtaposed and both generated complementary insights about the views of Chief Executives of voluntary sectors organisations in Bexley - or their equivalent – on social enterprise. This was exemplified in the sections on aiming at a working definition of social enterprise in chapter 3, section 3.3.

As Hammersley (2005, in Brannen 2005) warned, that the complementary rationale for mixing methods may not complete the picture and that there may be no meeting point between epistemological positions, however, there is a need for a dialogue between them. In the case of this research, I believe that methodical pluralism as a research methodology enables this dialogue to ensue. For example, the initial fact finding questionnaire led to the Delphi group, whilst the use of Personal Construct Theory relates quite well to the use of autoethnography.

Brannen (2005) also suggested that the ordering of the methods requires consideration. In the research, methodical pluralism enables the methods to be sequential. For example, the use of an initial questionnaire helps to generate representative samples from which sub groups were selected to become part of the Delphi group.

One of the criticism of methodical pluralism as a methodology is that there is the potential of dominance of a method over the others (Brannen, 2005). In this research, I did attempt to award equal weight to all the methods employed, although the preference emerged as autoethnography, evidenced by the level of self-reflection I carried out and recorded.

I believe that the application of methodical pluralism for this research allowed me opportunities for various methods to interact with each other in a structured way, obtaining

quality data for the research, whilst committing myself to an ontological assumption that there are multiple realities (Linstone, 2002).

#### 4.4 Methods

I had different 'actors' that influenced and impact on the research, either by virtue of their importance and relevance to the research and/or as a source of data. Hence, as I argued earlier, influencing the research to have a mix of qualitative methods.

To address the research issue of defining social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in the context of leadership and change agency and the organisation design process/requirement that Age Concern Bexley requires as it attempts to change from a charity to a social enterprise, I needed to know the views of theorists, writers, politicians and academics on what social enterprise is. Therefore, I explored secondary data in literature. These provided an overview and insight into existing views and thoughts.

I used surveys, to garner the views of practitioners in the field about what social enterprise is and their level of understanding/knowledge of it. The sample size is the Chief Executives or their equivalent of voluntary organisations in Bexley. This technique turned out to be a good way to collect the type of information I needed quite quickly and expediently and also contributed to the exploration and analysis of factors that contributed to the emergence of social enterprise. I also used the survey method whilst implementing social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley. The aim here was to garner the views of some of customers about the proposal to change the handy person service to a social enterprise.

I applied the Delphi technique, also to address the research issue of what social enterprise is and its features. The 'actors' here are Chief Executives or their equivalent of voluntary organisations in Bexley. This technique was inexpensive and convenient and provided a means whereby 'experts' that cannot come together physically can be inexpensively facilitated. I complemented this with interviews with academics and practitioners applying



the Convergence interview technique. This technique enabled me to explore the views of academics and practitioners in a non-structured environment.

To address the research issues of social enterprise in practice – changing from a charity to a social enterprise - and the identification of the issues and challenges that come with its implementation, I carried out action research at Age Concern Bexley, applying organistic oriented action research that allowed me to draw on my experience as a practitioner, researcher and an employee of the organisation, thereby enabling distinctive contribution to the development of knowledge and practice.

In the implementation of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley, I employed the NEST tool as an organisation design tool. This tool allows for deep examination of the process through discussions, assessment, evaluation and practical exercise. It assisted me to focus on the pre-planning stages that are required as preparation to engage with social enterprise. I also employed the *Ladder of Inference* as a technique that assisted me to give cognisance to alternative inferences. I learnt to inquire and check out potential inferences and ultimately act in more effective ways, especially at the implementation stage of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley.

To share the experiences and thoughts of a social entrepreneur, I applied Personal Construct theory on myself, using the Repertory Grid interview. This method enabled me to develop and apply my own constructs and develop my own meaning of social entrepreneurship, as I perceive it. As part of my self-reflection and reflexivity, I employed autoethnography to ensure my voice is heard and distinct in the research.

This section provides further overview of these methods, how and where applied and the justification for their use.

#### 4.4.1 Secondary data

I used literature to provide an overview of existing views and thoughts on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, leadership, change agency and organisation design. Literature provided me an insight into the history and background of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship and details of the factors responsible for and those that contributed to the development and emergence of social enterprise and those against it.

Literature for me was mostly an exploratory tool to examine varying views, opinions and definitions and models of emerging themes, social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, leadership, change agency and organisational design. This allowed me to conceptualise and develop classifications, framework and typologies whilst informing further research methods and the direction of the research.

#### 4.4.2 Surveys

I used surveys as fact-finding tools. The first survey was an initial step to establish practitioners' understanding of the term "social enterprise", check if their understanding of the concepts is substantiated, or not, by any of the definitions or models in literatures and to identify the challenges their organisations face. I then compared the views amassed with the models and theoretical underpinnings in the secondary data. The outcome of this survey influenced the direction and focus of the research. See appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

The sample size is chief officers, or equivalent, of voluntary organisations in the London Borough of Bexley. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed to voluntary organisations that are affiliated to Bexley Voluntary Service Council [BVSC]; hence, it is possible that some were left out. This was the best data source and avenue to target this sector group and I believed this sample size was representative of the local market I was focussing on (Bell, 1993). I did not aim to differentiate based on the industry or varied services areas, although I recognised that these are variables that may have influenced responses and data.



I attached a covering letter to the questionnaire, using Age Concern Bexley's letter headed paper, highlighting the reasons and justification for the research – see appendix B for a copy of the letter. This also may have influenced not only the level of response, but also the answers given, as anecdotally, Age Concern Bexley is well regarded within the social economy, being one of the largest voluntary sector organisations in Bexley and its lead role in policy and service development. These perceptions and status might have influenced the returns.

Further advantage of the survey method, for the research, was that it was a good way to collect the type of information I needed quite quickly to enable me to reflect and relate the theoretical underpinnings in the literature review to the views of practitioners in the field. It also enabled me to obtain information that I can analyse and patterns extracted and comparisons made between views expressed by those working in the sector against the views in literature.

The second survey was carried out to garner the views of service users on the proposed model of the Handy Person service – this is the service that was selected and implemented as the social enterprise idea [see section 5.4 in chapter 5]. This was accompanied by a standard covering letter, explaining what Age Concern Bexley aimed to achieve, so that the clients were not unduly concerned or confused. 420 questionnaires were sent out and there were 385 responses, constituting approximately 91% response. See appendix G for a copy of the questionnaire and covering letter.

The data collated from this survey, were used to ascertain the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the service, the clients' perception of its effectiveness or lack of it, how well the service met their needs or not and their views on the proposed service development. The feedback from this survey influenced the implementation of the Handy Person service – details in the following chapter.

Some of the respondents from the first survey became part of the Delphi group, with the data from this survey informing the Delphi questionnaires.

#### 4.4.3 The Delphi technique

The choice of Delphi was a departure from an early decision to have focus group sessions, as some writers have argued that focus groups are fraught with problems that cause expert groups to produce less-than-optimal results, primarily because the interpersonal dynamics of group members often get in the way of the members' rational thinking processes (Dalkey, 1972).

As the sample size was a selection of Chief Executives of voluntary organisations in Bexley, Delphi appeared an inexpensive and convenient technique to apply. Delphi also provided a means whereby interaction between experts, who cannot come together physically but whose involvement increased the validity of the information gathered was inexpensively facilitated (Linstone, 2002).

Part of the merit of the Delphi technique was that it allowed me to utilise the knowledge of practitioners, combining it and redistributing it. This allowed the research to open doors and forced new thought processes to emerge whilst, allowing for respondents to see how closely they responded to the rest of the field of practitioners and to justify their train of thought (Linstone, 2002).

The Delphi technique offered me a very inexpensive means of achieving "interdisciplinary interaction." (Ono & Wedemeyer, 1994 in Linstone 2002). It exposed real agreements and disagreements among respondents as well as giving me [the facilitator] simple and direct control over the scope of the study (Amara 1975). Therefore, the iterative nature of Delphi made it an attractive option for me and I welcome the fact that it engendered more thoughts from participants.

A further advantage of the Delphi technique, for the research, is the guaranteed anonymity of respondents or participants, as some of those I approached, emphasised anonymity as a key issue. Goodman (1987) strengthens this position when he claimed that anonymity is likely to encourage opinions that are free of influences from others and is therefore more likely to be 'true'. Gupta and Clarke (1996), have also suggested that anonymity



encourages experts to make statements on the basis of their personal knowledge and experience, rather than a more 'cautious institutional position' (p. 186). To achieve confidentiality, I profiled the Delphi group using acronym "R" [Respondents] and a unique number for each person. See appendix C for the profile of Delphi respondents.

Other advantage for the research is the ability to use questionnaires "that have the capacity to capture a wide range of inter-related variables and multi-dimensional features" (Gupta and Clarke, 1996, p. 186) and enables a geographically dispersed group of practitioners to provide their understandings (Rogers and Lopez, 2002). Respondents completed the questionnaire at their leisure and this reduced time pressures and allowed for more reflection and contemplation of response (Linstone and Turoff, 1975).

This, in turn, I believe, encouraged the numbers and quality of contributions. Some argued and that this can decrease respondent burden by allowing participation at the participant's convenience, an approach I believe the participants appreciated because of their level of responsibilities and commitments, being mostly CEOs. See appendix D for a copy of the Delphi questionnaire.

Usually a group of experts is chosen as participants in a Delphi study. However, a study by Sweigert (1974 in Linstone, 2002) suggests that expertise may not be a critical criterion for selecting respondents in a study that is concerned with what should be. He goes on to suggest that the more important question is who should be involved in deciding policy. The term 'expert' is contested (Hasson et al., 2000) and it has been suggested that this title is misleading (McKenna, 1994). Cognisant of this debate, I applied the term 'experts by experience' in this study rather than 'experts', as the sample size consisted of those who work and practice in the voluntary sector.

The sample size, are CEO or equivalent, in voluntary sector organizations in Bexley, who also took part in the first cycle questionnaire. They were selected, based on their ability to establish the nature of the input sought from them and based on an understanding of the aims and objectives for which the study is being undertaken, as these are important

considerations (Delbecq, 1975). Equally significant is the degree to which participants are themselves interested in the problem under investigation (Delbecq, 1975), hence those I selected for the Delphi group have had various discussions about social enterprise at different forums. This is particularly significant in minimising the dangers of frustration and loss of interest before completion of the process, which requires a significant commitment of time from participants (Delbecq et. al, 1975 and Andranovich, 1995).

I therefore took cognisance of the views of Bernard (1998) who suggests 'purposive sampling', when selecting participants. I ensured that the purpose I want the participants to serve were made clear to them and I had a definitive set of criteria for selection of appropriate participants before identifying and soliciting their participation. This view is also supported by Andranovich (1995), who argues that in order to secure meaningful participation in a Delphi survey, the study problem and the questions posed by the survey must match the interests of the participants that solution of the problem should also be of benefit to them.

The minimum number of participants to ensure a good group performance is somewhat dependent on the study design, Linstone (2002) would suggest. Therefore, I had a target of 10 participants, which was a manageable number for me. The group however, started with nine participants, all agreed to be part of the research and responded to the first round of questionnaire. However, only seven of this nine responded to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Delphi – see appendix C.

Iteration is a key feature of the Delphi technique (Rowe and Wright, 1999) and feedback on the first questionnaire analysis was provided to each respondent at the second round. Feedback has been defined as: "the means by which information is passed between panellists so that individual judgement may be improved and debiasing may occur" (p. 370). These writers suggest that the purpose of feedback is also to allow each expert to revise his or her own judgement in light of the judgement of others.



I had two loops of feedback so that participants were able to situate their responses within the broader context. Two, because it is an achievable target, considering time and resource constraints and to avoid the participants getting bored with the process (Delbecq et al., 1975). The timing of feedback was also an issue and it has been suggested that the quality of the Delphi study increases as the time between completing a questionnaire and the next one being mailed becomes shorter (Waldron, cited in van Zolingen and Klaassen, 2003). In this research, the timing between the first and the second round was six weeks.

When analysing the answers from the questionnaires, I ensured that the study strived to give cognisance to varying views. In this way, divergent opinions were acknowledged and included in the findings. I opted for the use of a rating scale (from 1- 10, where 1 is least important and 10 is most important). I applied statistical average of points for each factor and a rating scale. This enabled me to establish the level of commonality and differences in views and opinions. I did ensure though, that individual comments and views were not lost within this statistical aggregation, by allowing respondents to 'agree' or 'disagree' and capturing both views and judgment.

It has been claimed that a Delphi study is at the mercy of the worldview and biases of the researcher who choose the respondents, interpret the returned information and structure the questions (Masini, 1993). This is true, in this research, as my views did influence the interpretations of the data, as I see my self as part of the research and the processes. Some also criticise Delphi's process of achieving consensus, that extreme points of views run the risk of being suppressed, when in fact they may provide important new information or insights.

In the application of Delphi, I ensured I gave cognisance to each view rather than be mainly driven by statistical analytical methods. The Delphi technique allowed me to expose real agreements and disagreements among respondents and gave me a simple and direct control over the scope of the study (Amara 1975).

The next method I employed was the convergence interview. The data from the Delphi group informed and influenced these interviewees as I realised I needed to garner more views from practitioners especially outside the Bexley locality.

#### 4.4.4 Convergence interviews

I adopted the definition of Moser and Kalton (1971), that interviews are "...a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent" (p. 271). Bell (1993) however, confirms that the definition makes the interview process appear straightforward, whereas the attainment of a successful interview is much more complex than this statement might suggest. Therefore, I gave cognisance to the view that "...interviewing is an activity requiring careful preparation, much patience and considerable practice if the eventual reward is to be worthwhile..." (p. 82).

The initial intention was to have one to one interview sessions with a selected sample of Chief Officers of voluntary sector organisations in Bexley, following on from the Delphi Group. However, one of the limitations of this approach for me was that it would require time commitment, which these target audience could not give. Hence, I had to rethink the strategy; I then adopted the convergence interview technique.

I received an invitation to attend the annual World Social Enterprise Conference at Skoll Business School, University of Oxford on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005. This conference usually commands over 600 delegates from over 40 countries, mostly academics, practitioners and researchers in the field of social enterprise. This proved an exciting opportunity to interact and engage with practitioners and academics in the field, some of whom I have read and cited in this research. I have labelled the respondents 'Convergence Respondent' [CR] to maintain anonymity. See appendix E for the profile of convergence interviewees.

I was also influenced by Patterson and Brogden (2004) article, "*Living Spaces for Talk with/in the Academy*" in their attempt to explore the methodological stance behind what they describe as "useful spaces for others to think about their talk, to engage in and to



value their talk as a part of their research rather than taking it for granted, leaving it unacknowledged or unexamined" (p1).

Based on this thinking, I classified the World Social Enterprise conference at Oxford University as an academic space to 'talk' and to interview some practitioners and academics about their views and understanding of social enterprise, social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship in the context of leadership and change agency. Despite this, I had to give cognisance to Patterson and Brogden (2004) view that "our talk is not without purpose and its confusions" (p.1).

Therefore, I heeded to their suggestion that there should be careful listening, careful probing and questioning, careful reframing. They further suggest that one could use examples, reminders and connections among and between conversations, that "...the talk needs to be full of explorations, confusions, exhaustions, exhilarations and silent thoughtfulness...Moments experienced as digression that later are remembered as points of clarity and points of clarity that dissolve into bigger puzzles than we had when we started" (p.3).

In an attempt to conceptualise this method, Patterson and Brogden (2004) came up with the concept of 'method talk'. They argue that in questioning our talk, "...we find that exploring to find the question is always already exploring to find method. This recursive pattern of knowing and not knowing brings us to methodological uncertainty where limiting our talk and the making of our talk to some specific definition seems reductionist. Rather than force ourselves into a box, we find ourselves and our talk working at the 'lived borders' of qualitative method" (p. 8).

Dick (1990) also confirms this view when he claims that talking informally to people can be an effective method for data collection. However, he describes it as convergence interview technique. Therefore, recognising that there is need to clarify the methodological stance of the 'method talk' and noting that what I did was more of interviewing than 'method talk', I

adopted the principles of convergence interview technique, including some of the values of 'method talk' as described by Patterson and Brogden (2004).

The qualitative method of convergence interview technique was originally used to explore the use and impact of the Internet on inter-firm relationships in Australian service industries (Rao et. al., 2003). Those who adopted this method argued that it assisted in gathering insights into the phenomenon and it provided them a better understanding of the issues involved (Mahotra, Hall, Shaw and Oppenheim, 2002, in Dick 1990).

The convergent interviewing process, took the form of a series of in-depth interviews in which data was analysed after each interview and used to refine the content of subsequent interviews (Dick, 1990). Although, the process was structured, the content of each interview remained unstructured to allow for the flexible exploration of the subject matter without determining the answers. Where there was consensus between more than one interviewee about a certain issue, a series of probes was initiated to test the information. Where there was disagreement, probes were initiated for clarification and explanation. Convergence was achieved when no new information could be uncovered (Dick, 1990).

According to Dick (1990), the convergence interview technique was designed as an action research technique, claiming that it is systematic enough that it can be described easily, but flexible enough that it could be used in messy situations. It is this flexibility and the ability to use it in a less structured environment that made it appropriate for this research.

There are some definable stages to each interview. One is advised to interpret the information as one proceeds and that the series of interviews should be structured in such a way that information is interpreted from interview to interview.

I followed the five main stages to a convergent interview (Dick, 1990).

- a. Rapport building: This was the stage I introduced myself, gave brief details of who I am, what I was doing, who gets given any information, the purpose of the



interview was and any other information that the interviewees wanted to know about the research.

- b. Asking the opening question: This is the question that defines the general area without being specific, a question that is almost free of content (Dick, 1990). The main questions I asked the respondents were: their understanding and definition of/for social enterprise, social entrepreneur and social entrepreneurs as leaders and change agents.
- c. Keeping the interviewee talking: This is the key part, as one of the goals was to get a lot out of the interviewee in a short time. Hence the need to use certain methods to keep them engaged, like pausing, looking expectant, repeating their last word or phrase with a questioning intonation, or use of what counselling literature calls "minimal encouragers" (Dick, 1990, p.4).
- d. Develop probe questions: This is a key element in the process, as this was where I compared the summaries and looked for themes mentioned by all interviewees. Where two or more interviewees agreed, I had to devise a probe question or questions to find exceptions. When and where interviewees disagree or have mentioned the same theme but they have different perceptions of it, I had to develop a probe to explain the disagreement.
- e. Summary: This is the stage where I summarised the key points the interviewees have mentioned. I was courteous by thanking the interviewee; very briefly repeated the key points about what will happen to the information and how the interviewee can access it, if required.

These stages were demonstrated, for example, where I cited practitioners' views, in section 3.4.

Due to the nature of the data-gathering environment, choosing a good sample is important; hence, what I aimed for is what Gubrium and Holsten (1997) describe as 'a maximum diversity sample'. These were practitioners and academics with varied interests, including minority interests, ensuring they are represented. At the conference, a 'Contact Salon' was set up where researchers like me arrange an appointment to meet any selected practitioner or academics I aimed to see.

However, the opportunity to achieve this at the conference was limiting, as the meetings were dependent on the interviewee's availability. What I did was to add to the sample as I developed a better understanding of the diversity of people at the conference, as Dick (1990) suggests.

Some of the features of the convergence method are its cyclic nature and its use of dialectic, as each pair of interviews, including the review session immediately following them, constitutes an action research cycle (Dick, 1990). The flexibility of this technique was an advantage, because during the interview sessions, I had the chance to rethink and review the questions and reflected on some of the answers, which I might not have been able to achieve at a more structured one to one interview.

The 'contact salon' scenario allowed me to check the sampling and selection, enabling me to modify and change them if necessary. The probe questions I used, contributed to the efficiency of the technique, as in subsequent interviews, I had the opportunity to challenge the interpretations arising from early interviews. I asked specific questions, pursuing deeper understanding of the issues and followed up on explanations and disagreements. I also noticed that the interviewees and the data they provided drove the process. Although the probes became more specific, each interview began with an open-ended question and each interviewee was given a chance to contribute data.

This technique was advantageous as I interviewed more people than I would have if I organised a one to one interview in the traditional sense. However, one major limitation of



this technique was that the interviews' data was not at a depth I would have liked, as I sometimes had to share the interviewees with other interviewers at a fairly informal setting.

Another limitation of the convergence technique was that it raised a question about how participative this technique is, because on the face of it, it does not appear a very participative approach to data collection. However, Dick (1990) reassures that most of the information will be and did come from the interviewees, not being determined by the questions one asked and through probe questions.

I also involved the interviewees in interpretation and in helping to develop a better understanding of the situation. As Dick (1990) further suggested, I showed curiosity about the interviewees' experience, giving them full attention, noting that this required effort. I was also aware of some of the potential pitfalls that Borg (1981) highlights as eagerness of the respondent to please me, as I am 'one of them' (p.87).

Haven garnered data from practitioners; I explored the practice and implementation of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley, by employing action research.

#### **4.4.5 Action research**

The research indicated to me that I the researcher see social reality from my own position within the world, as I saw myself as part of the research. I attempted to discuss my views and reflect on the influence of my own social location on my perspective (Young, 1997; Hertz, 1997). Hence, this research has been 'a social activity', during which I as the researcher, the research itself and those that have participated in the research to date, have produced an account that is context specific (Meetoo et. al. 2003).

Action research affords me a practical way of looking at the research to check that it is, as I would like it to be, making this research a practitioner based research (McNiff, 2002), that involves thinking about and reflecting - a form of self-reflective practice. The idea of self-

reflection is central to this research as it is an enquiry conducted by the self into the self (McNiff, 2002).

The action research began with an idea that I developed (McNiff, 2002) – that is, the challenges of implementing social enterprise in practice. The research process have also been a developmental process of following through the idea, experiencing how Age Concern Bexley attempts to change from a charity to a social enterprise and continually checking whether it is in line with what I wish to happen. Seen in this way, action research, for me, is a form of self evaluation, a strategy that assisted me to pursue a line of argument I believe is valid, that I believe in, whilst enabling me to give good reasons, I hope, every step of the way.

The application of action research also assisted me in answering questions about how I led Age Concern Bexley to engage in social enterprise as part of a self-sustaining strategy and how I could change the design and practice at Age Concern Bexley in the light of the research. Part of the research objectives are to improve and develop Age Concern Bexley for the benefit of the stakeholders - staff, board and especially older people in Bexley - by improving what we do as an organisation and how we do it, by adopting the features of social enterprise, whilst also improving my understanding of what I am doing.

I believe this research achieves this with the implementation of a social enterprise service - the Handy Person Service – ensuring the continuity of the service [as detailed in chapter 5] and enabling Age Concern Bexley to explore further social enterprise services, for example the foot care service, placing the organisation in a stronger position to respond to the needs of its target audience and market.

Action research allowed me to evaluate what I was doing and to check constantly if the research was really influencing Age Concern Bexley and me. In doing action research, I gave an account of myself, as I was claiming to be a responsible person, hopefully justifying what I was doing with good reason. Action research assisted me to formalise my learning and to give a clear and justified account of my work, not on a one-off basis, but as



a continuing regular feature of my practice (McNiff, 2002). For an example, see my reflections on learning from the research in chapter 6, section 6.3 on “knowing myself”.

Action research afforded me the opportunity to be the Chief Executive and a researcher at the same time. As Gummesson (2000, in Coghlan 2003) describes it, “...this means being a management consultant and an academic researcher at the same time; hence it is done in real time. It is...about understanding, planning and implementing change...it aims at being holistic and so can recognise complexity; and it requires an applied pre-understanding of the corporate environment and of the conditions of the organisation” (p.453).

My actions embodied some of my learning and my learning was informed by my reflections on my actions (McNiff, 2002). Therefore, in writing the research findings, I showed not only the actions of the research, but also the learning involved, taking heed of McNiff’s (2002), warning that some researchers focus only on the actions and procedures and that this can weaken the authenticity of the research.

With action research, I showed that certain changes took place as I changed some practices at Age Concern Bexley and particularly in myself. I showed a development of influence, an unfolding of new understandings and actions from people working together in new ways and their influence on one another – the senior management team and me - how we learnt with and from one another (McNiff, 2002). Some of these are detailed in chapter 5, sections 5.5 with my application of *Ladder of Inference* to manage my relationship with SMT2.

I did not apply action research as a problem-solving tool, although this research contains some elements of problem solving, for example, the reduction of Age Concern Bexley’s dependency on grant funding and attaining self-sufficiency. I problematise the issues and engaged with them; questioning myself and what was happening at Age Concern Bexley and asking how it might be improved (McNiff, 2002). For example, I raised questions about the conditions that are allowing Age Concern Bexley to be complacent with organisational

position and funding status, whilst finding ways of changing these conditions by engaging with social enterprise.

I adopted 'organistic-oriented action research' of Coghlan (2003), as it allowed me to draw on my experience as a practitioner and as a complete member – a paid employee - of Age Concern Bexley, thereby enabling distinctive contribution to the development of knowledge. It also allowed me a 'first person research' (Fisher et. al. in Coghlan 2003), so I can reflect on my values and assumptions.

By 'organistic', Coghlan (2003) means "action research projects in which the inquiry process is a value in itself" (p.454). Hence, by using this method, I engaged in an action enquiry process in which inquiring into my own assumptions and ways of thinking and acting is central to the research process. Marshall (2001, in Coghlan 2003) describes these as "inquiring into the inner and outer arcs of attention, engaging in cycles of action and reflection, and being active and receptive" (p. 454).

Organistic-oriented research allowed me to take the primary focus away from practical outcomes and more on to what is being learned from changing from a charity to a social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley and about me as a social entrepreneur. It also allowed me to explore how the process of inquiry challenges my values and ways of working at Age Concern Bexley to enact a transformation. I can say that it was "not transformational in the sense of pre-identifying a transformation, rather it focuses on the process of inquiry itself" (Coghlan, 2003, p. 455). These are exposed mostly in chapters 5 and 6.

The use of organistic-oriented research did appear subversive to some staff and trustee, especially those who have been working in the organisation for some time, as I attempted to address underlying assumptions and 'defensive routines' (Coghlan, 2003). Some of these individuals felt uncomfortable about being exposed, some did oppose and some did try to subvert.



SMT1 once alleged at a meeting:

*"He [i.e. myself] wants to use this research to show we are incompetent, then he can sack us"*

Another challenge in the application of organistic-oriented action research was the challenge I faced in articulating my intentions, values and assumptions (Coghlan, 2003). This frustration was reflected in one of the self reflection after the mission review session with the trustees and senior management team – see chapter 5, section 5.3. This was not helped with the issue that I have preconceptions about how the idea of social enterprise should be perceived and/or received by the staff team. Therefore, to ensure I improve my communication through reflection, during the action research, I employed the Ladder of Inference technique.

#### 4.4.6 Ladder of Inference

The *Ladder of Inference* is a form of action research developed by Chris Argyris (1985) and subsequently presented in Peter Senge's "The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization." The proponent of this method argues that we begin with real data experience, we then choose a set of selected data and experience that we pay attention to. To this selected data and experience, we affix meaning, develop assumptions, come to conclusions and finally develop beliefs. These beliefs then form the basis of our actions, which create additional real data and experience (Ross et. al, 1994)

I applied the *Ladder of Inference* technique as a tool to help me become more aware of and discriminate among these four very different types of information and their use in my communication, especially among the senior management team. I started recognising that the further I moved or extrapolated from the actual, original data (i.e., the verbatim words spoken and observable actions made by any of the senior management team), the greater my potential error. The *Ladder of Inference* then became useful in helping me reduce such errors and the resulting interpersonal problems.

Using the *Ladder of Inference*, I improved my communications through reflection. I became more aware of my own thinking and reasoning through reflection; made my thinking and reasoning more visible to others and I inquired more into others' thinking and reasoning (Ross et. al. 1994).

Applying the *Ladder of Inference* helped me to slow down and focus on the inferential steps and implicit assumptions I was using in abstracting conclusions from the original data of an event. As these inferences sometimes happen quickly, skilfully and without awareness, I recognised that I may need assistance in reconstructing my implicit steps and re-examining the inferences and attributions made along the way (Ross et. al. 1994). This process assisted me to learn about my typical response patterns and I became more skilful in recognising and avoiding ineffective patterns as I dealt with senior management team sessions.

The *Ladder of Inference* technique assisted me to recognise the kinds of inferences I was making, the assumptions implicit in these inferences, the conclusions they led to and the effects that acting on these inferences have in the organisational setting (Mitchell, 2005). This technique further assisted me to give cognisance to alternative inferences, learn to inquire and check out potential inferences and ultimately act in effective ways, especially at the implementation stage of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley – see chapter 5, sections 5.4 and 5.5.

The *Ladder of Inference* also enabled me to check my self from converting my long standing assumptions, preconceived notions and biases about Age Concern Bexley and the staff team as data (Mitchell, 2005). It is also a tool that enabled my thinking process visible, to see what the differences are in my perceptions and the data. See *figure 4* below.



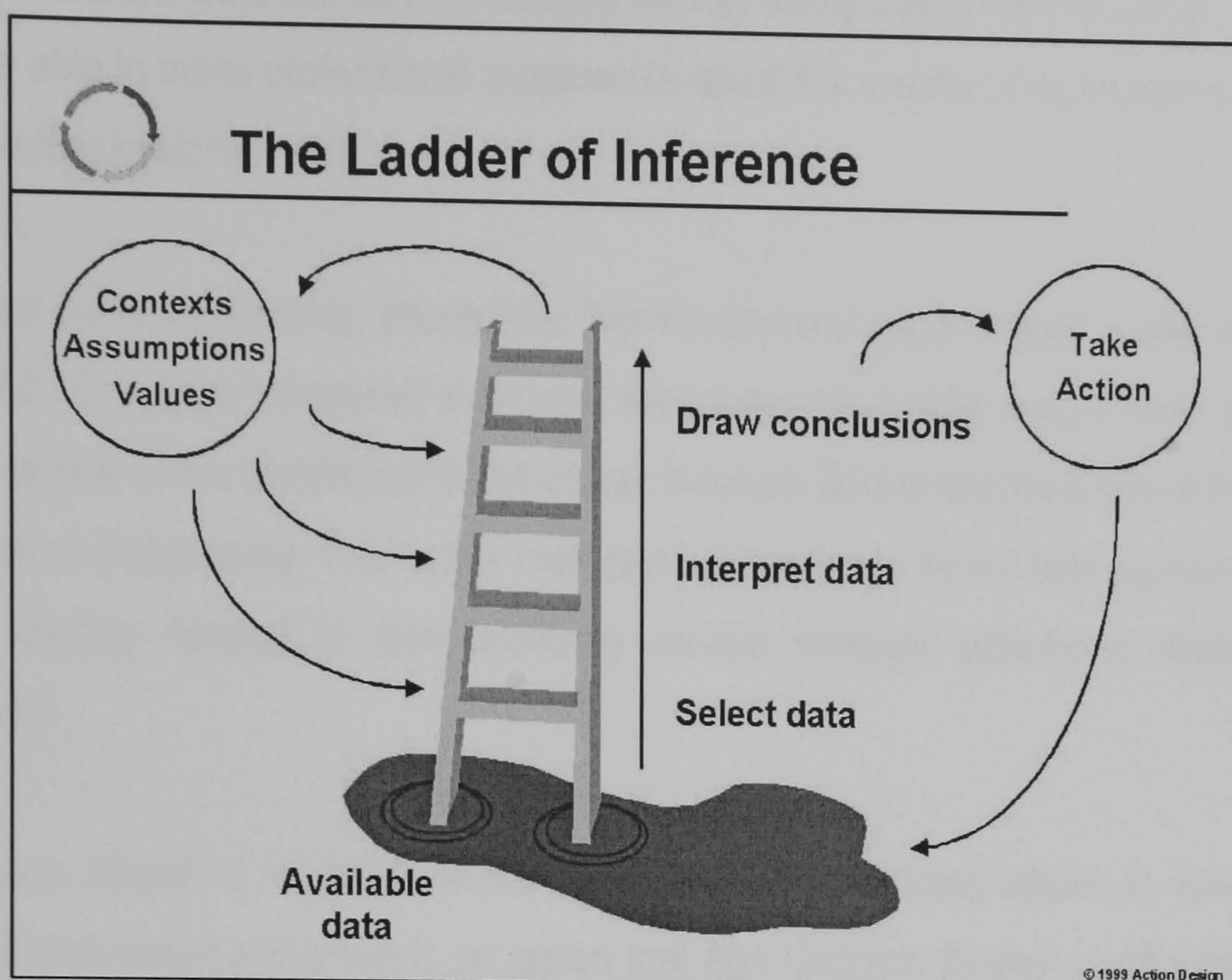


Figure 4: Ladder of inference (Ross et. al. 1994)

However, I cannot say hands to heart, that this permeated all the research experience and that I did not climb up and down the ladder several times over, during the research. However, at least I now have increased level of awareness. An example of where and how I applied this tool is in the next chapter when I was reflecting on the senior management team's sessions.

I needed to have a structure and tool that will guide the analysis and action research process; hence I employed the NEST tool.

#### 4.4.7 The NEST Tool

The validation group for the implementation of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley consisted of the senior managers, heading various departments in the organisation. We usually meet twice a month and these meetings were used to discuss progress reports and the implications and challenges of social enterprise in the organisation. Although the senior



management team were not fully conversant with all the details of this research, however, they were able to make professional judgements about the validity of my report and offered critical feedback (McNiff, 2002).

I had, at a previous meeting, shared the 'Behind the wall paper' report – see chapter 2, section 2.2. This report triggered a general acceptance that there was a need to have a strategic review of the direction of travel of Age Concern Bexley and its purpose in life – i.e. its mission and objectives. The senior management team and board also agreed that Age Concern Bexley needed to start exploring various strategic options to achieve self-sustenance.

A few have heard of social enterprise and attended seminars about it; hence, they acknowledged social enterprise is an option that Age Concern Bexley could explore. The research was therefore seen as a useful process that can contribute to this thought process and organisational wide debate. This makes the research partly opportunistic as I was researching real time actions (Coghlan, 2003).

As part of the data, I recorded what was said, using a tape recorder, with their permission and developed a diary record of what happened and changes in practices and effects on the organisation. I recorded social relationship, including changes in relationships and in the organisation. I monitored the progress and changes in the organisation and overall situation at Age Concern Bexley. I also monitored the environment, external changes that influenced the research, as detailed in chapter 2, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.4.

The NEsT tool was used to collect data, as it combines the tools and strategies of business entrepreneurship with the mission and values of non-profit entrepreneurship to support the implementation and development of social enterprise (Davis, et. al. 2004). The NEsT tool assisted Age Concern Bexley to focus on the pre-planning stages that were needed to go through as the organisation prepared to engage with social enterprise. It served as a set of guides for the senior management team, the trustees and I, taking us through a series of exercises that assisted to assess the organisational and financial readiness for an



enterprise activity and to outline the values as well as mission and financial goals that we wanted to achieve (Davis, et. al. 2004).

The NEST tool outlines a creative method of selecting an enterprise idea that meets both the core competencies and self-financing criteria of the organisation. Once we identified the idea, the tool guided us through the steps of a pre-feasibility study, designed to quickly assess whether the idea is feasible and whether it will eventually meet the organisational goals. Designed specifically for the non-profit organisations, the NEST tool assisted in building the entrepreneurial capacity and to prevent mission drift (Davis, et. al. 2004).

NEST does not promote the commercialisation of the nonprofits; rather it believes that social enterprise can provide nonprofits with a certain level of independence and sustainability. NEST argues that income from social enterprise can be one alternative for nonprofits to support work oftentimes more difficult to finance through traditional philanthropic sources of funding. Through social enterprise, as NEST claims, Age Concern Bexley became empowered by the abilities to generate new revenues, as the organisation develops a social enterprise Handy Person service, albeit with challenges (Davis, et. al. 2004).

This tool is applied to enable the research to have a structured way to implement the action research process, as it is an existing framework that is known in the sector and I found it easy to use. Other advantage of this tool is that, due to its interactive nature, it enabled me to share knowledge and experience within the research process, with the trustees and management team (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998). This tool also involves deep examination of the process through discussions, assessment, evaluation and practical exercise, which resonate the action research cycle (Coghlan, 2003).

Other merits of this tool are that it allowed Age Concern Bexley to narrow the ideas and to make sure that they were consistent with the core values, competencies and self-financing goals. Inherent in the tool is also the assessment of the risks of the venture and the

enterprise development process used by NEST incorporates identification of risks and risk mitigation strategies throughout (Davis, et. al. 2004) – see appendix L for the risk analysis.

As part of my journey of self-discovery and my exploration of social entrepreneurship, I applied personal construct theory as a self-analytical tool.

#### 4.4.8 Personal Construct Theory

The key message of the Personal Construct Theory (PCT) is that the world is 'perceived' by a person in terms of whatever 'meaning' that person applies to it and that the person has the freedom to choose a different 'meaning' of whatever he or she wants. George Kelly, the original proponent of the theory, called this *alternative constructivism*, that is, the person is capable of applying alternative *constructs* (meanings) to any events in the past, present or future (Kelly, 1955).

PCT is based on the model of *man-the-scientist*. Within this model, the individual creates his or her own ways of seeing the world in which he or she lives. That the world does not create them for him, he or she builds *constructs* and tries them on for size. The *constructs* are sometimes organised into systems, the same events can often be viewed in the light of two or more systems, yet the events do not belong to any system and the individual's practical systems have particular foci and limited ranges of convenience (Kelly, 1955).

This is why PCT is employed for this research, as it assists in addressing a strand of the research – “social entrepreneurship in practice”. Through the application PCT, I developed a set of social entrepreneur descriptors, whilst enabling personal reflections. I also develop and apply my own *constructs* and develop my own meaning of social entrepreneurship, as I perceive it.

The advantages of PCT to the research are that my *construct* of social entrepreneurship can change, they are not static and they can be challenged. It allows my personal experiences to influence my expectations and perceptions of social entrepreneurship. Kelly



(1995) explains that this is because our *construct* systems reflect our experience and they also influence our expectations and behaviour.

PCT allows some of my *constructs* of social entrepreneur to be more important than others. For example, I place more emphasis on 'opportunity creation' than 'resource management'. Kelly (1995) suggests that, this is because when we feel, think and behave according to our *construct* system; we adapt our *constructs*, immunise them, or have them confirmed.

Furthermore, my *construct* system is also my truth as I understand and experience it, nobody else's (Kelly, 1995). My *constructs* of social entrepreneur cannot be judged in terms of their objective truth - whatever 'objective' means in the world of personal feelings and choices. They are my 'truth' as I understand them; hence, if others' are different from mine, I had to accept that their system worked for them and that it is different from mine as they might have had different experiences, different reactions and see different things as important.

To understand our *construct* system, Kelly (1955) developed the Repertory Grid interview technique, because he was concerned and discontent with the psychological theories of his time, as he was looking for more rigour in the way psychologists went about their task of understanding people. I applied the Repertory Grid Interview on me, as a method that enabled me to make precise statements and sometimes predictions about my behaviour and character. Kelly (1955) took the view that if you want to know what is wrong with someone, ask him or her - they probably know. This was exactly what I did – asking me about me.

I carried out an in depth interview with myself, producing a map of data. These maps are my perceptions of myself, feeding it back to myself so that I can view the implications of what the map says about me. This assisted in revealing and exploring my views and understanding of social entrepreneurship and show how I describe and evaluate myself as a social entrepreneur. These are detailed in chapter 3, section 3.6.

The application of this method, awards more legitimacy to my claiming to be a social entrepreneur. However, I needed my reflections and my voice to be heard throughout the research, leading me to employ autoethnography.

#### **4.4.9 Autoethnography**

Before and during the course of the research, it became reinforced that my interest in social enterprise is not just about clarity of or about what social enterprise is, it was also about my biases, prejudices and the influences of my personal experiences and background. In the same vein, taking up the roles of social entrepreneur, leader and change agent in changing Age Concern Bexley from a charity to a social enterprise, made me conclude that I needed a degree of self reflection and personalised account about myself. I needed reflexivity and for my voice as the researcher to be heard and be distinct in the research (Perriton, 2001).

Autoethnography is an emergent writing practice in research that involves highly personalised accounts, where authors draw on their own experiences to extend understanding of a particular discipline or culture (Reed-Danahay, 1997). The movement towards personalised research reflects calls to place greater emphasis on the ways in which the ethnographer interacts with the culture being researched (Holt, 2003). Hence, this method assists my exploration of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley, from the perspective of a social entrepreneur, therefore assisting to address the social entrepreneur in practice strand of the research topic.

Ellis & Bochner (2000, in Reed-Danahay, 2002), advocate autoethnography and define it as a form of writing that "make[s] the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" (p. 733) rather than seeming "as if they're written from nowhere by nobody" (p. 734). Autoethnography is "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739); autoethnographers "ask their readers to feel the truth of their stories and to become co



participants, engaging the storyline morally, emotionally, aesthetically and intellectually" (p. 745). These texts are usually written in the first person and feature dialogue, emotion and self-consciousness as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure and culture (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

In the application of this method, I cited my experiences, with cognisance to my values, culture and upbringing, coupled with reflexivity, whilst looking more deeply at self and other interactions. By writing myself into my own work as a major character, I challenged some of the accepted views about silent authorship, where the researcher's voice is not included in the presentation of findings (e.g., Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997 in Reed-Danahay, 2002).

For me, autoethnography is not a single event, incident, or experience; not written to the self as the major audience and not a simple description or story. Autoethnography is an opportunity to explain differences from the inside (Ellis & Bochner, 2000 in Reed-Danahay, 2002). I wrote about the context of my life and childhood to demonstrate that although my memory and history is selective and shaped and is retold in the continuum of my experiences, that they are still valid (Muncey, 2005). This for example, is detailed in chapter 2; section 2.3, where I presented a "personal portrait".

A criticism of autoethnography is that the method is not scientific and too sentimental to have any value (Moore, 2005). It is also claimed that the author might become a 'hero', agitating for a need to find a balance between who and what we are writing for or about. The use of self as the only data source has also been questioned (Sparks, 2000 in Holt 2003).

However, in the context of this research, I believe this was not the case, as I employed other data collection methods. What I attempted to do was to produce a narrative in which I tell a story through self reflection, whilst also addressing one of the strand of the research – social entrepreneurship in practice - rather than produce what Holt (2003) describes as '...a heavily theoretical reflective piece' – see chapter 6, section 6.3 for examples.

I agree with Wolcott (1994, in Holt 2003), where he suggested that qualitative researchers need to be story tellers and story telling should be one of their distinguishing attributes. In addition, I drew on how my actions and behaviours may have influenced the research and also drew on a reflective framework, linking my 'findings' back to outcomes that emerged from the use of other research methodologies, for example, the repertory grid interview.

I ensured I gave cognisance to the factors Richardson (2000) used when reviewing personal narrative papers that included analysis of both evaluative and constructive validity techniques. My autoethnographic account did contribute to my understanding of the issue, hence satisfying the 'substantive contribution criteria'. It had 'aesthetic merit' as it is shaped and hopefully not boring. My subjectivity was as both the producer and a product of this text, hence exhibiting 'reflexivity'.

Writing this account had impact' as it did affect me emotionally and intellectually and it generated new questions for me, whilst moving me to address certain elements of my character – examples are my recorded reflections post my self-administered repertory grid interviews – see appendix F. These accounts do 'expresses a reality' as it embodies a fleshed out sense of lived experience (Richardson, 2000).

My application of autoethnography was based on the contention that it can be used as a tool to place the relationship between knower and known at the center of knowledge created. The use of this technique was not about making evidence or finding facts – a positivist assumption – rather, it is a tool that assisted in making explicit the relationship between the researched and me as the researcher (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

The use of and another advantage of this method for this research is further reinforced by Irving and Klenke (2004 in Gilstrap, 2007) compelling arguments for the use of what they describe as "metanarrative" in exploring leadership effectiveness. They define metanarrative as "...the idea of storytelling, specifically one which alludes to other narratives, or refers to itself and to its own artifice." (p. 54). It relates to the rich descriptions



that emerge through conversation either with an individual or from within a text created by an individual.

Hence, to understand the complexities of the decisions and experiences of leaders, they argue, we need to search for the deep meanings that emerge through descriptions of organisational environments as an attempt to contribute to the research. In their view, this will assist in generating the meaning making necessary for understanding what leaders truly do to be effective leaders, as during the process of leadership, “what is avoided in logic, turns up in practice!” (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001, p. 996 in Gilstrap, 2007).

As Perriton (2001) also argues, “for many researcher community, reflexivity represents a ‘turn’ in the representation of research and researcher and is a fundamental part of why and how they research...we have hidden the distinctive voice and role of the researcher...We deploy the passive voice, make seem as if methodology drives the researcher and not the other way round and write our texts as if choices have not been made in the construction of them. Reflexivity challenges the double silencing that takes place in a research text...” (p. 1).

I applied autoethnography, to ensure my voice is heard and distinct in the research, it allowed me to say “I” with authority (Muncey, 2005). The section on “knowing me” in chapter 6, section 6.3, is also an example of where I applied autoethnography coupled with reflexivity.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter established the research philosophy, methodology and methods. It is also an overview of how I have applied them in addressing the research question, justifying their use and making explicit their limitations. Literature provided views of theorists and authors. Surveys, interviews and the Delphi technique were used to garner the views of practitioners. Action research was employed as it is a practitioner based research, whilst autoethnography was used to structure my self reflections.

Although I have argued the adoption of methodical pluralism as the research's methodology by using mixed methods, I have to own up that it was not an intended strategy; rather it was an emergent strategy. I believe the judge of the appropriateness of the use of mixed methods in the research is that it allows the different results to be integrated in the overall analysis, which I believe are evidenced in this research.

I believe that the research demonstrates what Teddlie and Tashakorri (2003 in Brannen 2005) describe as 'inference quality', which is the quality of the conclusions drawn from the research. Therefore, I have no apology for going for a pluralistic approach of choosing the combination and mixture of methods that work best for answering the research questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This approach, in my view, resulted in rich, varied and complementary strengths in data and research outcome.

Having established the research philosophy, methodology and method, this provided the platform to implement social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley.



# Chapter Five

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## 5. Social enterprise in practice

After presenting the “wall paper” report – detailed in chapter 2 - Age Concern Bexley's trustee and senior management team decided to explore a change from a charity to a social enterprise, whilst adopting the working definition of social enterprise as “a business with a social mission”.

This chapter details the process Age Concern Bexley went through in implementing social enterprise. The chapter examines the concept of “organisation design” and the organisation design principles that guided the change processes at Age Concern Bexley. By applying the NEST tool as an organisation design framework; this led to a review and change of the mission statement, strategic objectives and the implementation of the Handy Person service as a social enterprise service. The chapter also reflects my role as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent in this context.

### 5.1 Organisation Design

The design of an organisation to support its business strategy, it is argued, is critical as inappropriate organisational design can cripple any strategy implementation (Payne, 2008). Many writers have pointed out the importance of organisation's design and the relationship between it and the organisation's size, strategy, technology, environment and culture. Some writers also stressed the importance of configuration of strategy and structure whilst some emphasise that to achieve maximum performance then its structure must fit with or match the rate of change in its environments (Burns and Stalker, 1961 cited in McMillan 2007).

There are two main concepts at play – “organise” and “design”. Autrey (1996) defines organisations as “...*contrived* social systems through which groups seek to exert influence or achieve a stated purpose” (p.2) and that people choose to organise when they

recognise that by acting alone they are limited in their ability to achieve and by acting in concert one may overcome limitations. By organising, Autrey (1996) claims that we seek to “direct, or *pattern*, the activities of a group of people toward a common outcome and how this pattern is designed and implemented greatly influences effectiveness” (p. 2).

An effective organisation, according to Autrey (1996) will also have patterns of activity that are complementary and interdependent and are likely to result in the achievement of intended outcomes (Autrey, 1996). The process of organisation design, Autrey does claim, involves matching resources – human, finance, information and technology - to the purpose, vision, and strategy of the organisation with the end product being an integrated system of people and resources, tailored to the specific direction of the organisation.

Another definition from Hands (2007), resonates this, that organisation design is the matching of “...the *form* of the organisation as closely as possible to the purpose(s) the organisation seeks to achieve. Through the design process, organisations act to improve the probability that the collective efforts of members will be successful” (p.12).

If one adopts the definitions and principles of organisation design above (Autrye, 1996; Hands, 2007), Age Concern Bexley’s transition from a charity to a social a enterprise can not just be done by tweaking its existing organisation design, it required an organisation design that is fit for purpose in ensuring that it has the capacity to get the most out of its resources and to continue to follow its strategic direction in the face of change and environmental uncertainty (Payne, 2008).

What Age Concern Bexley required, therefore, is an organisation design that supports its strategy of adopting a social enterprise, whilst allowing the deployment and manoeuvring of its resources for optimum performance. The organisation design needs to assist to establish and reflect the culture of the organisation positively and supporting its values and beliefs, especially as a charity that is focused on supporting older people. Age Concern Bexley had to ensure that its organisation design helps to build the organisation's capacity required to operate effectively considering the dynamics of its operating environments



(Payne, 2008) – as highlighted in chapter 2, section 2.2.4. These dynamics were played out during the mission review session – later in this chapter, in section 5.3 - where there was a debate about target age groups and the image/branding of the organisation as “Age Concern”.

As BOT6 commented:

*"This age thing has to be elastic. We will have some other worries about how to say no to people and how do we deal with signed SLA that has specified age?"*

And other trustees responded:

*"It should more about where we most want to focus our energy"*[BOT5]

*"How many people will approach us, with a name like Age Concern? Not many really"*[BOT2]

*"I will advocate we call us 'Age Action' rather than 'Age Concern. On the one hand we want to engage with the younger old and on the other hand there are older vulnerable people we want to cater for"*[BOT3]

These comments do suggest, in my view, that it is equally important that the organisation design enables prevent clashes between different processes and alleviate any 'bottle necks' or sticking points in the transition, provide the freedom for staff – especially the board of trustees - to fully utilise their talents within the workplace and encourage and promote the flow of information to allow for informed decision making (Payne, 2008).

The organisation design approach adopted by Age Concern Bexley for its change from a charity to a social enterprise is what Hands (2007) describes as the *task* approach. This approach ensures that the organisation was optimally arranged so that it could fulfil all of the objectives and functions for which it had been established. However, this approach also sees it as crucial that the organisation should also provide a stimulating and fair

environment in which employees could feel valued both as unique human beings and as contributors to the success of the enterprise.

The task approach also requires close examination of the purpose and tasks for which the organisation is established and the design of the requisite “structures” and “systems” that are required to achieve those purposes. In other words, “the *form* of the organisation should follow its function” (Hands, 2007, p.14). The NEST tool, applied in the change process, as detailed later in this chapter, created the platform to attain this.

Therefore, the organisation design of and for Age Concern Bexley began with the creation of a strategy — to change from a charity to a social enterprise. Having this clear strategy, informed the actions of the trustees and the senior management team, with myself as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent, in making decisions for appropriate actions (Hands, 2007).

The strategy to change is derived and informed by a combination of internal and external factors – detailed in chapter 2, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3; “*the world inside and outside Age Concern Bexley*”. This strategy therefore unifies the intent of the organisation and focuses the trustees, the senior management team and myself, toward actions designed to accomplish the desired outcome of achieving a successful transition to a social enterprise.

What I had to do, as part of playing the leadership role, were to get the commitment and involvement from the trustees and the senior management team through facilitating sessions and review meetings, take on the coordinating [leadership] role, have clear objectives and priorities by focussing on the Handy Person service as a pilot, communicate these across the organisation through varied means [meetings, board papers etc], translate them into service objectives and outcomes and identify strategic goals and long-term direction by identifying other social enterprise opportunities like podiatry service, wheel chairs loan etc that can be explored (Autrey, 1996).



This research did not venture into organisation structure – that is the “...pattern of relationship between roles in the organisation and its different parts” (Mullins, 1993 cited in McMillan 2007). This is because, in my view, it was not a major issue for Age Concern as it is a medium sized charitable organisation with a fairly simple organisation structure that has limited and manageable layers of authority – see appendix H. Hence, the organisation design that will change it from a charity to a social enterprise rather than the organisation structure is more strategic, relevant and poignant to this research.

## 5.2 Organisational readiness

When asked, whether non-profits should launch a profit-making business, O’Heffernan (2005) answer was “...proceed with caution and do so only if the business is closely related to your mission” (p.1). With this in mind and applying the NEST framework, the mission statement of Age Concern Bexley was revisited to ensure that there is a mission-fit with the idea of embarking on social enterprise.

This review session took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2005. Those in attendance were members of the Board of trustee and the senior management team. One of my main sources of anxiety was the power relationships that existed between me and the ‘others’ – the trustees and senior management team - what Douglas (1988) describes as, the explorer and her audience.

I have a Board whose membership constitutes very long serving members and some of them volunteer in various capacities in the organisation. Some on the senior management team on the other hand, do not engage very well with me, as some commented, garnered from a feedback by the chair that I sometimes judge them as *"not being in tune with strategic issues"*.

I then realised that to discuss the mission of the organisation in a ‘none subjective’ context, may mask the power differentials between us all, that is, between myself that is perceived dominant and the somewhat submissive senior management team and Board. It occurred

to me that in a situation where there is a powerful leader and possibly a submissive audience, the chances of successful communication about issues of real value might be slight (Collins, 1990 in Douglas, 1988). I also took cognisance of my 'self-discovery' as highlighted through my self-administered repertory grid – detailed in chapter 3, section 3.6 - and I reflected further on this issue in chapter 6, where I also addressed the ethical issues experienced in the research.

As suggested by McNamara (2005), the scheduling of the strategic review was also triggered by the nature and needs of the organisation and its immediate external environment, [as analysed in chapter 2, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3], whilst also considering the rapid changes the industry and sector are confronting. For the purpose of the research, it was also essential to undertake this process to ensure preparedness for a major shift - developing a social enterprise culture.

With this in mind, I took heed of McNamara (2005) warning that the strategic planning process is usually not an "aha!" experience, that it is like the management process itself, so we made it a series of small moves that together kept the organisation doing things right as it heads in what we hope was the right direction.

The involvement of the senior management team, is also in line with McNamara's (2005) suggestion, that an organisation may be better off to involve board and staff as much as possible in all phases of the review. He argues that, mixing the board and staff during planning helps board members understand the day-to-day issues of the organisation and helps the staff to understand the top-level issues of the organisation.

The review day was planned as an all day trustees and senior management team retreat and included introductions by the Chairman of the board and myself, providing an overview and explanations of the benefits of strategic planning to Age Concern Bexley and the organisation's commitment to the planning process. I made it known that data collected will be recorded and used for my doctoral research and everyone consented to this and to participate, but on the condition that the report will not specify individual names and identity



and that it must reflect the true nature of the events and discussions. This permission was given to me, they emphasise, because of my role as the Chief Executive. Hence, my identifying members of the Board as BOT 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and senior management team as SMT 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Due to the importance and sensitiveness of the subject matter, the overall methodological assumption was that to gather reliable data, the subjects had to trust me (Adler and Adler 1987 in Douglas, 1988). Establishing a bond of trust was, thus, a heuristic device to help create an atmosphere in which discussion would flow easily. The sessions were therefore approached “interactional events” (Douglas, 1988), more of discussions and conversations rather than having too many structures that could become potential barriers. However, I could not ascertain if I did gain the trust.

The day began with my presentation, highlighting current and future issues that we needed to address and summarising the key ‘agents of change’. I then emphasised that the aim and anticipated outcome of the day was to revisit Age Concern Bexley’s mission and to achieve an agreed set of strategic objectives.

To ensure, we all have a shared sense of purpose, I raised the question: *‘do we all know why we are here and do we all agree to why we are here and what we aim to achieve?’* I started with this question, to enable us achieve a focus and apply ‘goals-based’ planning approach (McNamara, 2005). This approach suggests one starts with establishing common purpose, then focus on the organisation’s mission, develop strategies to achieve the mission and action planning.

We all agreed the following as the objectives of the day.

- a. Clearly, define the purpose of Age Concern Bexley
- b. Establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined period within the organisation’s capacity for implementation.

- c. Provide clearer focus for Age Concern Bexley, whilst enabling focusing resources on key priorities.
- d. Prepare Age Concern Bexley for embarking on social enterprise.

### 5.3 Review of mission

I adopted the definition that mission describes what an organisation is trying to do, how it wants to go about it and where it is headed. Knowing these help to keep the organisation on track, gives one the yardstick one can always use to measure the organisation's present performance and plans against future aspirations (Adams, 2005). Adams goes on to claim that mission is the *raison d'etre* of an organisation i.e. why it exists, that mission must be re-examined and refreshed periodically if an organisation is to remain dynamic.

My view is that there is a "process" benefit to hashing over an organisation's existing mission statement (Peyser, 2002), as the advantage of this, is that in the course of discussion and debate, new staff and board are introduced to nuances of Age Concern Bexley's mission and changes in the environment and existing staff and board refresh their understanding of both. As a result, the group will have confidence that the mission statement that emerges (whether it is a new statement or a rededication to the old mission statement) is genuinely an articulation of commonly held ideas (Peyser, 2002).

Therefore, when asked what the mission for Age Concern Bexley should be, these were the responses:

*"The organisation's mission is what is its purpose in life, what it is doing here, why it's here"*[SMT1]

*"To come to grips with why its here"*[BOT2]



Some emphasised ownership of the mission as being core and important:

*"It is important to own the mission and even understand the jargon, even staff and volunteers need to own it. It is more important for the Board of Trustee to take care of the mission and strategic direction of the organisation"*[BOT1]

Some however expressed some concerns about the process, suggesting we should have had more time to ensure we achieved all the objectives set for the day:

*"The Board needs to get to grips with the direction of travel of the organisation, but some of the issues are quite complicated and difficult to tackle in such short time. We might need more time"*[BOT5]

*"The process may probably become uncomfortable, challenging, even complicated if done in a short time, therefore I need more time to reflect on it"*  
[BOT7]

On the other hand, there was also a criticism of the process that it was not detailed enough and not totally inclusive and consultative:

*"The ideal process should have been to have consultations with stakeholders, staff get together to discuss, hear what other people have to say, then slowly tease out ideas and then gradually articulate Age Concern Bexley's mission in life"*[SMT2]

Whilst I acknowledged these comments, I had to refer to the aim of the meeting and background information provided to them, whilst re-emphasising the benefits of this process and its outcome to Age Concern Bexley. I did mention that having a full and detailed consultation process, although ideal, would have been rigorous, expensive and difficult to achieve within the period we were working with.

This position is also supported by the views of Peyser (2002), that there is no formula for finding the wording that best expresses the collective intention of an organisation, that it can be drafted by one person alone or after input gathered at leadership retreat. Peyser

(2002) therefore argues that the most important issue is that there is consensus on the answers to the questions used in developing the mission statement.

Despite these criticisms, the Chair of the board of trustee asked if anyone is uncomfortable with carrying on, no one raised any objection. It was then agreed that we do what we can on the day and see how far we could go in achieving the agreed objectives.

In terms of process, I adopted Peyser's (2002) suggestion that the group discussions should be about big ideas and concepts and that one should draft and redraft the wording before submitting a reworked version for the group to respond to. In addition, that it is important to circulate the draft mission statement a few times and keep refining the mission statement until one arrives at a version that people can actively support.

I allowed the group to 'self-manage' this activity instead of me being focused on as a "facilitator." I tried to allow everyone to present his or her views and ideas during the session. The goal was to give them as much ownership of the ideas and process as possible. When individuals presented their views, I captured the main ideas on a flip chart so that we all have a view of the suggestions made.

The current mission statement reads:

*"To improve the quality of life of older people in the London Borough of Bexley by providing information services and support".*

I presented a typed version of this statement and then asked everyone to present suggestions on what the mission statement should be, giving consideration to the organisation's environmental context.

I put up the six suggested statements that came up. As the discussions continued, I further emphasised that the process was not about what Age Concern Bexley is already doing, it is about what Age Concern Bexley wants to do. I also emphasised that none of the suggested statements are presented as the answer of the appropriate mission statement,



just a guide and a start, so all participants can refuse or reject, or agree partly, or even dismiss it. I also reiterated the key questions that we all needed to keep reminding ourselves, whilst evaluating the statements, that a way to unpick what Age Concern Bexley's mission should be is to ask 'what is Age Concern Bexley's purpose in life', 'why is Age Concern Bexley here'?

Some members of the board showed the willingness to adopt new ways of thinking, which I found reassuring.

For example, BOT 1 said:

*"It could be that what we want to be doing conflicts with what we already do. Therefore it could mean we need to look at some things we want to develop differently or get rid of something we already do or explore a whole other area of work"*

The six statements suggested were:

Statement 1: *The purpose of Age Concern Bexley is to ensure that the views, interests and needs of people in the Borough of Bexley are properly heard, understood and met*

Statement 2: *To identify and advance the interests of everyone in Bexley over the age of 50*

Statement 3: *To act on behalf of and care for the vulnerable and needy older residents of the Borough of Bexley*

Statement 4: *To ensure that Age Concern Bexley is the largest and most active older peoples' voluntary sector organisation in the Borough*

Statement 5: *To mobilise people over the age of 50 to identify, design and lead on the provision of the services required by older people*

Statement 6: *To ensure that the needs of isolated and vulnerable older people are properly met across the Borough*

Many showed more preference for Statement 1 compared to others, arguing that:

*"It distinguishes between interests and needs"* [BOT1]

*"It is saying all the key words, views, interests, needs, are done, but its not saying Age Concern Bexley has to do them, but we have to ensure its done"* [SMT4]

*"The first one sum up everything, all the others are flawed. Not everyone is vulnerable or lonely. It talks of interest as well as needs. It seems to cover what we are all about"*

Other trustees also supported this view:

*"The first requires Age Concern Bexley to get into action in terms of forcing and influencing and coercing other people to doing things. It requires Age Concern Bexley to be activist in small 'a', for example in policy, campaigning, but not about service delivery"* [BOT6]

*"The mission needs to be around for a relatively length of time, we don't want to be fiddling around with it ever so often, maybe a three to five years life span. Number one defines Age Concern Bexley; this is the advantage of this one"* [BOT7]



Some however criticise statement one by arguing that:

*"The last word 'met' is challenging, we might not have enough resources to achieve this"* [BOT1]

*"We cannot ensure, as many things are outside our control"* [SMT4]

Statement three was rejected on the basis that;

*"It is almost but not quite opposite to statement 2"* [BOT2]

*"It is very much focussed on the 'vulnerable' and 'needy"* [SMT1]

*"Will require definition of and clarification of 'vulnerable' and 'needy"* [SMT2]

Certain elements of statement 4 were agreed with, but not in totality:

*"This is going for Age Concern Bexley being the biggest and the best"* [BOT1]

*"It almost doesn't matter what we are doing here, we just want to be the biggest and the best. We may be already"* [SMT3]

The whole group agreed that statement 4 implied that there is the aspiration to be a real player, a real force to be reckoned with, that this statement resonates with an organisation that aims to be the leading or most influential.

As one trustee puts it:

*"I like the idea of being the largest and biggest, but big is not necessarily beautiful"* [BOT1]

Statement 6 on the other hand was totally rejected, with comments like:

*"It is probably the least ambitious of the lot"* [BOT7]

*"It is too focussed on isolated and vulnerable"* [SMT1]

*"It is very much focussed on care services based idea"* [SMT3]

*"It's too much about need"* [BOT4]

Statements 2 and 5 triggered a lengthy debate about what age group Age Concern Bexley should focus on. Some agreed with the targeting of 50 years old, arguing that:

*"It is not about us doing it for them, or getting it done for them, but mobilising them to do it for themselves, a different kind of role for Age Concern Bexley"* [BOT2]

*"This is broader; the interesting bit is the 50s. Would it be better or different if it says 60s, 70s, and 80s?"* [BOT1]

Some however argued strongly against reducing the age range to 50 by claiming that:

*"The age is too young. I think it should be 60s."* [BOT7]

*"Age Concern England starts from 50s. 50s is terribly young; people at that age don't consider themselves old"* [SMT1]

*"With people living longer, the difference and variations between the decades are massive. So maybe what we need to do is concentrate on the older age range, as the needs are getting greater and greater"* [SMT3]



The question then arose whether it is important to have an age range indicated at all? This question initiated the following responses:

*"It is helpful to have an age in there somewhere, but what age depends on what our focus is"* [BOT1]

*"It gives us the flexibility as Age Concern to be part of the market that promotes and targets the 50s and to provide a range of services across this age range"* [SMT4]

*"It gives market opportunities, especially with Age Concern Bexley Trading"* [SMT3]

*"We work within a service level agreement, which defines an age, so we are restricted already"* [SMT2]

*"One of our challenge is when we let people in, when do we let people access our services, who is an older person, how do you define this?"* [SMT1]

*"Who and what is this older person? Who can answer that?"* [SMT5]

*"Age is about how people feel about themselves; therefore let us use the term older instead of trying to define age"* [BOT7]

In conclusion of the age debate, the consensus was not to specify age in the mission statement, although everyone appreciated that there might be implications for not specifying age as we could be stretched trying to satisfy the whole age range and in determining the priorities. The group then decided to leave the mission statement broad and agreed to address age in one of the objectives. The age debate also opened up a new set of discussions about the relevance of Age Concern Bexley in current times, considering the external environment and demographic changes.

The group also raised issues of innovation in the voluntary sector and the level of dependency on local authority funding and grants, with comments like:

*"We also do not want to forget the ethos of the voluntary sector, which allows us to be innovative sometimes. Unfortunately, in our sector, we are sometimes hampered by our dependency culture on the Council for funding, so we need to snap out this culture"* [BOT2]

With these comments and assertions, I concluded that the trustees would want Age Concern Bexley to reduce its dependency on grants and pursue self-sustenance status and services. This reassured me that at board and senior management team level, there is the appreciation and consideration for self-sustenance and self-sufficiency, hence social enterprise as an organisational model.

BOT7 then interjected, bringing us back to the mission statement agenda:

*"The question for us is what we want to do, what Age Concern Bexley wants. What do older people want? Maybe that is where we need to start. What is the unique contribution that Age Concern Bexley wants to make? What else do we want to do that nobody else will want to do, something that fire up our belly"?*

After a few more debates and thoughts, we arrived at a new set of mission statement and strategic objectives.

### ***New Mission Statement***

*To further, develop Age Concern Bexley as the leading older people's voluntary organisation in the Borough of Bexley, in order to ensure that the views, interests and needs of older people are properly heard, understood and addressed.*

### ***New Strategic Objectives***

- a. To develop an understanding of local the issues affecting older people through research and consultation, ensuring opinions and ideas heard*



This is to sharpen the direction and discussions with the statutory bodies and will inform what and why we are doing things

- b. To develop and implement strategies to ensure our services are accessible meet diverse needs*

This objective is meant to enable us address the demographic changes and diversity in the community.

- c. To continue to provide and develop appropriate services which enhance independent living and the overall well being of older people in Bexley*

This is in recognition of the fact that independence and quality of life is important, hence Age Concern Bexley is aiming higher. This objective will also enable us engage with the 'active' older group – therefore not ignoring the 50 plus – and that diverse age range of older people can access the services

- d. To ensure Age Concern Bexley is effectively managed as an organisation that is sustainable in the long term, with commitment to workforce development*

This objective allows social enterprise to be explored at Age Concern Bexley as a model for self-sustenance and establishes a strategic statement that enables us to commence establishing the independence from the statutory sector dependency. This will also allow us to further explore diversification of funding streams.

Peyser (2002) breaks down a mission statement into four elements - a definition of purpose, future direction, identity and standards and values. Age Concern Bexley's new mission satisfies all these criteria, as it is prefixed with an infinitive that indicates a change in status, defining its purpose: '*To further develop...*' indicating its future direction by identifying a condition to be changed '*...as the leading older people's voluntary organisation in order to ensure ...*' Age Concern Bexley's standards and values are expressed in the last clause: '*that the views, interests and needs of older people are properly heard, understood and addressed*' (Peyser, 2002).

Hence the new mission statement and strategic objectives answer the question of why Age Concern Bexley exist, the ultimate result of its work, the activities it is going to do to accomplish its purposes and the basic beliefs that we share as an organisation. The mission statement and strategic objectives further answer the questions of the issues Age Concern Bexley is trying to address, what makes it unique and who the beneficiaries of its work are (Peyser, 2002).

This was the mission statement and strategic objectives that emerged at the end of the session. It was also agreed that the senior management team should further reflect on them and refine them if required, until a final version is agreed. The senior management team was asked to prepare detailed operational plans for implementation during the financial year 2006/7. The mission statement was agreed to be in use for a minimum three years, 2006 till 2009, at least. Everyone concluded that the key objectives of the session were achieved.

As BOT2 said at the end of the session

*"I'm glad we did what we did. No one can say they don't know what Age Concern [Bexley] is about".*

### ***My initial reflection on the session***

Throughout the session and the discussions, there were distance of views and lack of rigour that sometimes frustrated me as I longed for a feeling of dialogue and encounter. Despite our relationship, having held and had numerous meetings together and in my attempt to create an environment that encouraged everyone to talk, I found it a challenging experience and process.

There were many times, haven struggled to convey a feeling or an idea that had not been previously articulated, I longed for feedback that would enable me to know that I – not simply the content of my words had been understood. I wanted to know how my thoughts, views, knowledge and experience influenced Age Concern Bexley and the session and



vice versa as these were part of the reason why I became engaged in a research topic that involved Age Concern Bexley. However I felt a sense of frustration, disappointment and loss that the process appeared as if it did not enable me to know the organisation better.

I remembered my feelings of awkwardness at the end of the session, the engagement felt unfinished, sometimes like the *Bata* dance – see section 6.3 of chapter 6 for details of the *Bata* dance metaphor. I felt like dropping the Chief Executive role and have a good bold and honest conversation around these issues – person to person – forgetting the Chief Executive to Board dynamics.

I wanted to say to the trustees: ... *"OK, so now let's talk - what were your experiences and ideas and what sense have you made of the external factors and change agents I recounted to you?"* It was interesting to observe that although I was well acquainted with all of the audience, I did not express these thoughts and feelings.

Reflecting on this process a day later, I realised my unplanned but emerged facilitator's role inhibited the possibility of real dialogue. I had been constrained by this role and I wondered whether the Board and senior management team too had felt confined by the role and maybe dissatisfied. With interest, I observed that though feeling constrained by the respective roles we adopted, I had not attempted to change the rules. I feared that it was not my place to initiate a change in the roles and that by changing the rules; I may contaminate the process and data.

From this I realised something of the scale and nature of the challenge we were engaged in as we attempted to shift the assumptions, nature, culture and behaviour of and at Age Concern Bexley, within this session.

The open method (Peyser 2002), I realised, did not empower me to take a more responsible and proactive role in the process, but simply to react – as I was facilitating, taking the notes, acting as a researcher, leader and change agent. I also thought that this may have created a level of anxiety or it may have been, simply, that the method in itself

was alienating. After this experience, I concluded that the approach though useful in the generation of data were unlikely tools for total transformation of Age Concern Bexley.

The core purpose of this study was that it should, in itself, be a vehicle for change and development, I was hoping for a transformational process that would affect the dominant organisational system and lead to a change from a charity to a social enterprise, but I ended up concluding that the method I used did not seem to offer that to me.

However, I was energised and excited when I discovered that radical change was taking place with regard to developing a new mission statement for Age Concern Bexley, as the current mission statement was over ten years old and was limited in currency.

What I also noted was the paradox of power in the process. I observed and experienced the disorientation and lack of direction that occurred anytime I stopped playing the leadership and change agent roles sometimes during the session. It was an insight into the challenges posed to an insider researcher when attempting to create an environment in which power is shared (Douglas, 1988).

Working alongside the trustees, I was also able to gain subjective knowledge about the feelings of insecurity and anxiety that emerge when I as the Chief Executive moved from autocracy to power sharing, allowing the group to take active responsibility. An example of this was when I asked if they want us to postpone the session and most participant said it was OK, even though subsequent comments from BOT1 was '*I wish we ended early, that was tiring*'. This Douglas (1988) describes as 'power in co-operative inquiry'.

Heron (1981, in Douglas 1988) presents some persuasive arguments for the need for participation in any form of human inquiry. He argues that the research participant or 'subjects must be 'privy to the research thinking', further suggesting that that the "wise researcher" will "through dialogue, interaction and co-operative endeavour" establish from the participants of the research "how they symbolize their experience in their world." In the process of human-to-human encounter, the researcher and participants are able to



generate a shared view of their world” (p. 21). In the case of Age Concern Bexley, we generated a new mission statement and strategic objectives (Douglas, 1988).

Heron (1981, cited in Douglas 1988) also goes on to suggest that when there are major differences between the researcher and his/her participants such as cultural, racial, gender or class differences [in my case I will add experiential and academic] there is an increased need for participation, if quality is to be assured. In such situations, the need for full engagement and for empathetic interaction becomes heightened. I perceived participation to be critical to this research, as I believed that it was only through this process of dialogue that we were able to achieve developing a new mission statement and strategic objectives.

In choosing to have this session with the trustees and senior management team I was not only making a political stance (Peyser 2002), but an academic attempt to garner research data in ways that reflected the aim of ensuring that Age Concern Bexley was ready and willing to engage in social enterprise. I also wanted to enable organisational development in an environment in which development had been static for over ten years.

In line with many participatory action research methods, I saw this research as an opportunity not only for gathering data, but also as a means by which interventions designed to change the organisation are made (Collins, 1990, in Douglas 1988). Aiming as I was to empower Age Concern Bexley to change from a charity to a social enterprise, to manage resistance and even transform the forces that tend to limit the organisation's experience and potentials, what I realised throughout the process and experience was that it was important that there remained a constant link between action and reflection (Douglas, 1988).

Now that Age Concern Bexley has a new mission statement and strategic objectives, the senior management team and I commenced the process of selecting a social enterprise idea.

## 5.4 Exploring a social enterprise idea

After the discussions with the board of trustee about the mission statement and strategic objectives, there were discussions with the senior management team to schedule a programme of meetings to address and take the issues further. The initial meetings revisited the agreed mission statement and strategic objectives to ensure everyone is comfortable with what were agreed and if there were need to edit or amend.

It was concluded and agreed by all that there was no need to amend. It was also agreed that the senior management team and I commence discussions on how Age Concern Bexley can start exploring social enterprise in tackling the sustainability agenda and to explore some organisational issues that may enable us to take this process forward.

The objectives of these sessions were to assess Age Concern Bexley's readiness for current environmental challenges and to prepare the organisation for social enterprise. All the members of the senior management team were present at all the sessions held. I also discussed, re-emphasised and obtained their agreement that the discussions will be used as data for this research.

To give the discussions some structure, the NEST tool was adopted. One of the process and stages recommended by the NEST tool is to carry out an 'organisational readiness assessment'. The focus of this readiness assessment is to assist to clarify the overall purpose and objectives of the organisation and to understand what internal support, financial and organisational capacity were in place to undertake social enterprise. This assessment aimed to enable Age Concern Bexley to:

- a. Learn what self-financing is
- b. The potential benefits, challenges and risks
- c. Determine whether self-financing complements the core values and overall strategic plan



- d. Establish clear goals and expectations for self-financing
- e. Develop a strategy to garner sufficient organisational support for social enterprise ideas and
- f. Assess whether sufficient organisational and financial capacity exists to undertake social enterprise (NEsT, 2004).

Another important element and process was in selecting a self-financing idea that meets both Age Concern Bexley's mission and financial goals. This stage offered a method that enabled the senior management team and me to narrow down on the social enterprise ideas that Age Concern Bexley wanted and aim to pursue.

During this stage, the organisation's criteria for self-financing were clarified, self-financing options and ideas were identified and the most appropriate for Age Concern Bexley was prioritised and selected. For the purpose of this research, Age Concern Bexley ended up implementing one of the enterprise ideas – the Handy Person service.

This following sections detail the processes and how the decisions were arrived at.

#### 5.4.1 Organisational assessments

This session details the assessment of Age Concern Bexley as an organisation, starting with an attempt to define it, using same descriptors that were used in the initial survey. See appendix B for a copy of the survey questionnaire.

	Descriptors <i>I would describe Age Concern Bexley as a voluntary organisation that...</i>	Comments by senior management team
1.	Descriptor 1: "Has no need for external funding or grants to survive"	Two of the senior management team claimed it was false while the others gave no answer because they were unsure.

2.	Descriptor 2: "Creates opportunities From changes in the industry"	Three of the senior management team claimed it was true and the other two unsure
3.	Descriptor 3: "Delivers new and more services using existing resources, with no need to resort to external funding"	Two of the senior management team claimed this to be false and the other three were unsure
4.	Descriptor 4: "Has a social mission and pursue social goals"	Everyone agreed with this view
5.	Descriptor 5: "Adds social value when it delivers its services"	Everyone agreed with this view
6.	Descriptor 6: "Applies commercial business models to its operations"	Three of the senior management team were unsure; one claimed it was true; possibly saw it from a commercial s

*Table 5: Senior management assessment of Age Concern Bexley*

This exercise indicated that all the senior management team perceived Age Concern Bexley as an organisation with social mission and goals and as a service delivery organisation that adds value. The position on funding was not consistent across the board, which reflected different emphasis, knowledge and understanding of funding regimes. This also explains, in my view, the varied position on Descriptor 3.

There was also an assessment of potential implications of self-financing on Age Concern Bexley's mission and objectives – see appendix I for details. This process was an attempt to consider some of the potential implications that self-financing could have for Age Concern Bexley's mission and core values. It was also a framework to enable the organisation to identify the strategy that it could develop and/or use to prevent its values from being threatened.



When asked, which of the core objectives the senior management team was not willing to compromise and why, the range of answers was different:

*"Objective 3, because this is what Age Concern Bexley is about"* [SMT3]

*"For me its objective 4. It is essential if we want to continue with the work"*  
[SMT2]

*"I will say all the objectives, because they represent Age Concern's ethos"*  
[SMT4]

*"It is definitely objective 3; it lies at the heart of all we should be doing"* [SMT1]

The varied answers and responses slightly baffled me, as I was expecting everyone or at least most senior management team to have shared views and/or commonalities in their answers. However, what reassured me was that further discussions indicate that no one was against Age Concern Bexley exploring social enterprise.

Some other comments were:

*"Social enterprise will enhance all the objectives"* [SMT5]

*"We need to ensure the protection of our core values. We need to promote ourselves more and our purposes for being. We must keep putting ourselves out and what we stand for. Transparency, educating people around us is what we have to do to sustain our ideas"* [SMT1]

*"Social enterprise will take us on a track that is new if we stop chasing statutory funding. There will be some divorces along the way"* [SMT4]

*"Self-financing means that cap in hand mentality can be eradicated, but our financial systems have to be sound and robust"* [SMT2]

At this stage, it was agreed by the senior management team and I that social enterprise is an option that Age Concern Bexley will pursue as it provides the assurance that it will aid the organisation's sustainability.

#### **5.4.2 Organisational sustainability**

This framework was used to assess the sustainability of the organisation against certain core criteria (NEsT, 2004). The result was then collated and tallied, looking for the percentage of responses that are strong, average and weak. The process also aims to identify areas of consensus and areas of wide divergence (NEsT, 2004). In the context of this research and to ensure that the feedback and response time are managed and for expediency, this framework was only used with the senior management team. See appendix J for the sustainability analysis.

Although this framework is not scientific, it is not meant to be (NEsT, 2004). The result enabled for discussion among the senior management team and created an opportunity to evaluate the 'sustainable health' of Age Concern Bexley, thus allowing the organisation to establish how self-financing goals can be set to help strengthen the areas of weaknesses (NEsT, 2004). The result also assisted in gauging whether it was a good time to pursue self-financing activities or whether other urgent issues require more and immediate attention (NEsT, 2004).

From the responses, the conclusion reached by the senior management team and I was that Age Concern Bexley was in a reasonable position to embark on a social enterprise idea – see appendix J. However, there were concerns about the organisation's ability to deal with the changing environment, the weakness of leadership from the board of trustee and the limited financial resources, which all combined could limit the ability and opportunities to be innovative and take risks.



As some senior managers commented;

*"I agree, that there are commitments, although does not appear strong enough. It is not clear what the levels of commitment are from this people "[referring to the trustees and volunteers] [SMT2]*

*"There are resistance to change in some areas"[SMT5]*

*"I don't think we have strong leadership, social enterprise will scare the crap out of them partly because it has elements of risk"[SMT3]*

*"We do not have limitless financial resources either"[SMT2]*

5.4.3 Identifying potential enterprise service(s)

The next task that was embarked on was to identify the services that can be developed as a social enterprise. The NEsT framework was used to generate an inventory of all the current and potential self-financing activities of Age Concern Bexley as well as any new ideas the senior management team could think of (NEsT, 2004) – see *Table 6* below. This exercise was open, creative as it could possibly be and ideas were not limited. The senior management team also attempted to indicate as many possible clients/customers as it could for each enterprise idea.

Suggested enterprise activities	Target customers/clients E.g. housebound, 50+, active older people, frail and dependent etc
1. What kinds of services could Age Concern Bexley “sell”?	a. Home care b. Personal assistance c. Handy person scheme d. Out and about e. Day trips & Outings
2. What kind of services could Age Concern Bexley offer for fees?	a. Expertise b. Talks i.e. seminar and lectures c. Consultancy in some areas of care services

*Table 6: Suggested enterprise activities and target customers/clients*

At this session, using a services/customer matrix assisted the senior management team and I to generate enterprise ideas for existing/new beneficiaries/customers and new/existing services (NEsT, 2004).

The pattern, it was discovered, as indicated in *Table 7* below, was that the Handy Person service was consistently the service that featured in 3 of the boxes, indicating that it is an existing service that Age Concern Bexley provides for existing clients and can generate income and be self-sustaining. It was also concluded that, this same service could be redeveloped as a new service even for existing clients and for new clients.

It was also noticed that box one is closest to the mission, hence less risky, as compared to box four which is further away from the mission and thus potentially more risky, whilst noting that the services here are new territory for Age Concern Bexley.

<p><b>Box 1 = Existing services + Existing clients</b></p> <p>What existing services can Age Concern Bexley provide existing clients that can also generate income and be self-sustaining?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handy person</li><li>• Out &amp; About</li><li>• Refreshment and events at parlours</li><li>• Charging for wheel chair loan</li><li>• Gardening</li><li>• Hairdressing</li></ul>	<p><b>Box 2 = New services + Existing clients</b></p> <p>What new services can Age Concern Bexley develop for existing clients that can also generate income and be self-sustaining?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decorating</li><li>• Home service</li><li>• Social events</li><li>• Handy person, if expanded</li><li>• Internet café at parlours</li></ul>
<p><b>Box 3 = Existing services + New clients</b></p> <p>What existing services can Age Concern Bexley provide to new clients that can also generate income and be self-sustaining?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handy person</li></ul>	<p><b>Box 4 = New services + New clients</b></p> <p>What new services can Age Concern Bexley develop for new clients that can also generate income and be self-sustaining?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active ageing services like tai-chi,</li><li>• Reflexology etc</li></ul>

*Table 7: Services/customers matrix*



Therefore, it was concluded that the suggested enterprise ideas, in order of preference, are:

Idea 1 - Handy Person

Idea 2 - Out & About

Idea 3 - Refreshment and events at parlours

Idea 4 - Charging for wheel chair loan

Idea 5 - Home service

Idea 6 - Social events

#### **5.4.4 Developing an enterprise criteria**

To demonstrate some rigour in selecting an enterprise idea, even though the Handy Person service was coming up top, the NEsT tool was again employed. A list of criteria that are deemed appropriate for Age Concern Bexley were developed, which were, an enterprise idea must;

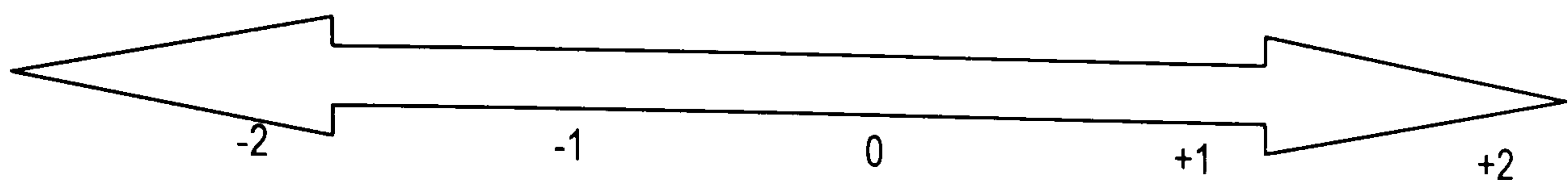
- a. Meet needs in the market – i.e. the market must be identifiable, the organisation needs to find out first that the needs are not met elsewhere and the service must meet the needs of local people.
- b. Be affordable, can be evaluated and sustainable – i.e. there is a need to ensure that the organisation has enough set up cost, that resources are not sucked in to the detriment of other valued services, the enterprise idea must be self sustaining and full cost must be recovered.
- c. Have competitive edge – i.e. must be able to compete with existing organisations and/or service providers.

- d. Must have required staff skills – i.e. staff skills must match what is aimed for.
- e. Link with mission – i.e. it must support and align with the mission statement.
- f. Must be ethical – i.e. must be in line with the values of the organisation.

The seven criteria are not far from the behavioural model of Dees (1998), which outlined certain factors to explain social entrepreneurship. These are: relentlessly pursuing new opportunities, supporting mission, continuous innovation, adaptation and learning, acting boldly not limited by resources in hand, heightened sense of accountability, generating earned income towards self-sufficiency and mission related to social value.

The next stage was an evaluation of the enterprise ideas against the enterprise criteria. In evaluating, the NEST (2004) model suggests the use of a scale of –2 to +2 [–2=low; +2=high] to assign a score to each of the enterprise ideas to indicate how closely each idea meets each of the enterprise criteria.





	ENTERPRISE IDEAS					
	Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	Idea 4	Idea 5	Idea 6
Enterprise Criteria	Handy Person	Out & About	Refreshments & event at Parlours	Charging for wheelchair	Home service	Social events
Meet needs in the market	2	2	1	-1	1	2
Be affordable...	2	1	-1	-1	1	0
Have competitive edge	2	1	-1	-2	1	1
Must have required staff with the appropriate skills	2	0	1	0	-2	0
Link with mission	2	2	2	2	2	2
Ethical	2	2	2	2	1	1
	12	8	4	1	4	6

Table 8: Evaluation of enterprise ideas against enterprise criteria

After adding up the score for each, the enterprise idea with the highest score was selected, the Handy Person service. At this session, ideas 2, 4 and 6 were shelved as potential future social enterprise projects/services.

#### 5.4.5 Implementing the Handy Person service as a social enterprise

The focus at this stage was to assist in assessing the viability (and potential profitability) of the selected social enterprise idea, whilst highlighting the challenges, risks and benefits, before implementation. The aim of the Handy Person service is to assist and support older people within the Bexley London Borough to remain in the community, by carrying out necessary minor repairs and adaptations, at their homes.

The Handy Person service at Age Concern Bexley is available to anyone who is over the age of 60 or who is caring for someone over the age of 60, who cannot carry out the work themselves. A minor repair or adaptation is defined as a non-skilled task. This service was set up in 1996, with a paid part time administrator, but relied only on volunteers to do the tasks, who joined the scheme because of the enthusiasm for DIY and the will to assist vulnerable older people. Age Concern Bexley promotes the Handyperson Service through whatever means is appropriate.

Requests are assessed and assigned a priority, as detailed below: -

- a. *High* - work that will decrease risk of injury, affects essential supplies of heat, light or water or make premises secure following break-in or accident
- b. *Medium* - work that will decrease the danger of damage to health, improve mobility around the home, improve home security, affects non-essential supplies of heat, light or water or requested by the Bexley London Borough Rehabilitation Team.
- c. *Low* - all other work within the specification

When a request for a Handy Person service is received, Age Concern Bexley identifies volunteers in the area with the appropriate skills and then makes contact until one is found who can carry out the work within a reasonable timescale. Where the volunteer believes that the client may need any further assistance in order to remain in the community, Age Concern Bexley will contact the client to seek permission to refer them to the local authority



Social Services department or another appropriate agency. If the client refuses permission for referral, Age Concern Bexley will contact Social Services to seek advice. Clients are expected to provide, or pay for the provision of, any essential materials necessary to carry out the work requested. Age Concern Bexley does not charge for this service, but accepts voluntary donation.

Some of the strengths of the current operational model are that it was a simple system to administer. However, the service was weakened by the lack of a quality assurance and monitoring system. As it was manually administered, there was no effective way to manage information efficiently and generate statistics. There were no procedures or guidelines in place to monitor the standard of the service.

The opportunities for growth and development, it was concluded, lied in having a social enterprise model, hence the Handy Person service becoming a social enterprise in its own right. It was also agreed that Age Concern Bexley needed to increase and extend the range of services offered.

Over the past two decades, there has been a progressive erosion of low-level preventive services for older people (Egan, 2005). A range of research needs analyses and surveys have been undertaken which demonstrate interest and benefits of the proposed model. Joseph Rowntree Foundation researched housework and domestic services in 1998, interviewing 51 older persons in three local authority areas. The report concluded that especially older women place a high value on domestic help and that additional benefits of these services include sense of control over their lives, enhanced self-worth and emotional/social contact (Egan, 2005).

Evidence from the Egan (2005) research confirmed that rather than compromise independence, *'that bit of help'* assists older people to sustain their 'independence' in its widest sense and that timely provision of practical support, which enables older people to maintain their homes and gardens in a safe, comfortable and attractive state, sustains a sense of competence and well-being.

In support of the Handy Person service, this research also discovered that with people over 65 living at home, that 28% of this group are unable to manage jobs involving climbing, like changing a light bulb and also that 28% of over-65s who report an inability to manage jobs involving climbing, amounts to almost 3 million people nationwide. Considering the demographic context of Bexley London Borough – as highlighted in section 2.2.2, chapter 2 – the Handy person service appears a service that reacts to local market and needs.

A survey of existing clients was carried out. 420 questionnaires were sent out and there were 385 responses, constituting approximately 91% response. The data collated from this survey, were used to ascertain the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the service, the clients' perception of effectiveness, how well the service met their needs, views on charging for the service and the future of the service with 'add-ons'. See appendix G for a copy of the questionnaire, covering letter and the analysis of the survey.

Using the feedback from questionnaires and the data compiled, the Handy Person service was remodelled. A £5 charge was introduced and clients are still expected to provide, or pay for the provision of any essential materials necessary to carry out the work requested. Fire and smoke alarms will be fitted free of charge. These positions were taken in response to the comment of one of the survey respondents – “*You can't be charging for fire and smoke alarms!*” - coupled with the ethical criteria and stance of Age Concern Bexley.

A new framework and standard of targets and performance monitoring were also established, which are:

- a. Carry out emergency work within 24 hours high priority work within three working days and any other work within five working days.
- b. Refer inappropriate work to a more suitable agency within one working day.
- c. Each visit should be for a maximum 2-hour duration



- d. Organise quarterly meetings with volunteers to assess further training needs, identify possible issues, concerns or area(s) of improvements to the service and to support the volunteers.
- e. Produce quarterly reports, using a database, indicating the following:
  - Numbers of requests for work
  - Urgency of request: high priority, low priority, inappropriate
  - Percentage of response times met: emergency calls dealt with in less than 24 hours, high priority calls deals with in less than two working days, low priority calls dealt with in less than five working days
  - Nature of work carried out, e.g. Home safety, Security, Electrical, Plumbing, Furniture/shelves, Collections, Others.

'Value add-ons' were included, by suggesting that each visit by the Handy Person also includes a "Home Care Assessment" which entails an holistic assessment of the clients needs, covering property maintenance check, home safety check, falls prevention check and fire safety. Each visit will also include identification of needs/services that the clients may and/or do require. See appendix K for a copy of the Handy Person service request form.

For service consistency and to ensure quality and control were maintained, a paid Handy Person was employed to deliver the services, using the volunteers as the support team. This is a major shift in culture and practice at Age Concern Bexley and the financial and operational risks that this involved were recognised and highlighted to ensure they were well managed. To minimise this risk, the Handy Person was employed with one year contract, at 25 hours a week. A database was set up to record requests, allocate workers, monitor service use, estimate unit costs and inform future service development.

Before implementing the Handy Person project, we a detailed risk assessment was carried out, covering all aspects of the operation and core activities including possible constraints. As Egan (2005) suggested, that however good one's organisation is, one can never

remove all risk especially when implementing social enterprise. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to carry out a detailed risk assessment covering all aspects of the operation and core activities, like funding, staffing, premises and scale of operation, with due consideration to possible constraints e.g. policies, insurance and time factors. See appendix L - Risk analysis and map.

Another process embarked on was to identify the main competition and potential partners. The current competitors are Care Partners Trust who received some funding from the National Lottery in 2005 to provide similar but varied service and BVSC that targets the lower age range.

To promote the service, the organisation developed a marketing plan, exploring the following:

- a. Use of key local events: where the service can be show cased
- b. Forums and outlets e.g. Bexley Older People Forum, Bexley Older People's Panel, all older peoples Sheltered Housing units
- c. Production and distribution of promotional material: new leaflets were designed and were distributed to all Age Concern Bexley's outlets, residential and sheltered accommodation units, local libraries and other local outlets that older people visit. See appendix M for a copy of the Handy Person leaflet
- d. Communication/promotion channels: Age Concern Bexley's web site was used, advertisements were frequently placed in the quarterly newsletter with features and articles, a press release was developed and advertisements were placed a local newspaper - *Bexley Extra*
- e. Word of mouth – through existing customers, partners, stakeholders and trustees



- f. Direct communication - All existing customers were contacted by letter and leaflets were sent to them about the new service and the charging policy

The key selling points identified are: competing on quality and price, unique service package, trusted brand, complementary services and marketing based on benefits for clients. A new three years contract was negotiated with Bexley L&Q Housing Association to provide the Handy Person service to their sheltered accommodation residents in Bexley. From historical figures, it was projected that Age Concern Bexley can deliver an average of nine jobs a day, now that it has a paid Handy Person, supported by volunteers. All other overheads are based on historical cost and experience. See appendix N for a copy of the financial modelling/budget.

Age Concern Bexley attempted to make the pricing accessible, understandable to clients, manageable and predictable in order to project minimum income for three years and into the future. The organisation also ensured that it avoided over-complex pricing that could become bureaucratic and expensive to administer. It also had in mind the criteria of 'Full Cost Recovery', coupled with realistic apportionment of overheads.

Therefore, a fixed fee of £5 per task was agreed. This decision was influenced by the response in the customers' survey – 89% of respondents indicating that they are willing to pay £5. It was also believed that this figure will sustain the business, having given considerations to:

- a. Knowing the real costs (unit costs) of all services
- b. Minimising contract/grant income as a proportion of income and maximising revenue from charges – aiming for at least 50% of income in charges – then if funding is cut, Age Concern Bexley is in a less worse position
- c. Maximising subsidies from stakeholders e.g. Bexley Council providing free accommodation for storage of equipment

- d. Seeking additional agreement from other Registered Social Landlords in Bexley. This will provide additional funding tied to specified jobs

With these in place, the senior management team and I expressed confidence to launch and commence the new social enterprise Handy Person service.

#### **5.4.6 Evaluation of the implementation and change**

To evaluate the implementation of the Handy Person service and the change towards a social enterprise organisation, the “fit tests” were applied (Goold & Campbell, 2008). This framework is used to cut through some of the complexities that emerge with a new approach to organisation design and is based on the proposition that organisations need to be fit for purpose and that its strategy should be a key driver of and for organisation design. In the case of Age Concern Bexley, the strategy is to change from a charity to a social enterprise.

By my assessment, I take the view that Age Concern Bexley does pass the “fit test”, as demonstrated below.

- a. The market advantage test: Age Concern Bexley now exploits the demographic shift in its locality and the gap in provision – by developing and implementing the Handy Person service
- b. The parenting advantage test: the move to social enterprise, with the example of the Handy Person service, now adds value to the customers and the organisation. For example, this is demonstrated with the services/customer matrix and evaluation of ideas exercises and sessions in this section – 5.4
- c. The people test: the process does reflect the motivations, strengths and also the weaknesses of the trustees, senior management team and me as the leader and change agent – see the application of Ladder of Inference in the



following section, as an example and some of the challenges raised in the next chapter

- d. The feasibility test: the process took account of the constraints that may make the proposal unworkable. An example of this is reflected in the risk analysis and map – see appendix L
- e. The good design tests: The process is “sufficiently related” to the strategy of changing from a charity to a social enterprise, that is, there is evidence that there is a mission fit as the mission review session took the organisation through that process of ensuring that it is willing, prepared and able to make the transition – section 5.2 above
- f. The specialist cultures test: Age Concern Bexley's adoption of social enterprise with the implementation of the Handy Person service, did not take over other work and other existing services and it did not dominate the organisation's operations. This test enables the organisation to focus attention on the dangers of suppressing or damaging activities that fall outside the social enterprise culture and practices and one can say that this did not happen as other existing services and operations were not adversely affected by this transition
- g. The difficult links test: Haven established social enterprise drive as part of the corporate system and culture; this enabled Age Concern Bexley to start seeing other exiting and new services from a self sustenance lens. For example, podiatry, wheel chair loans etc – see section 6.4 in chapter 6, for further details
- h. The redundant hierarchy test: This was not an issue as Age Concern Bexley converted an existing service rather than a new service, hence there was no need to create new units or make any service(s) and/or staff redundant

- i. The accountability test: The new reporting system developed for the Handy Person service; enable the senior management team and other staff to focus on the change, whilst providing clarity about the performance measures for the service.
- j. The flexibility test: The transition to a social enterprise creates a flexible culture and nature for the organisation, which is now allowing for evolution and adaptation, with considerations for the changes which may be needed in the future – section 6.4 in chapter 6.

Applying these tests enables Age Concern Bexley to raise issues and assisted the organisation to be more thoughtful about challenges that occurred and future changes that may be needed (Goold and Campbell, 2002).

## 5.5 My reflections

The sessions with the senior management team produced result, at least the result that I wanted though not necessarily the results I envisaged when I started this research. That Age Concern Bexley's is now implementing an enterprise idea is a shift from status quo.

During and after these sessions, I reflected on the experiences and pondered on some issues, raising questions about whether the data and their analyses were sufficiently rigorous. I raised questions about steps I have taken to guard against selectivity. I struggled with explaining how the data I presented in the research were selected from original sample. I did attempt to derive themes and categories from the data, as I simultaneously battled with points of tension, contrast and competing arguments. An example was when some of the senior management team raised their lack of confidence in the board.



Citing SMT2:

*"I don't think we have strong leadership, social enterprise will scare the crap out of them, partly because it has elements of risk"*

I did acknowledge it but decided not to explore it, as it would have opened complex issues and drive this research into another territory that I was not prepared to venture into that is, governance during organisation change. This issue, I have recommended as a potential area of future research.

Working with the trustees and the senior management team and haven set a vision for the future – changing from a charity to a social enterprise – I realised that I had to use my “intellectual flexibility” (Akins, et. al. 2008) to drive for results during and after the implementation of the Handy Person service. My leadership entailed shaping the future and motivating the trustees and senior managers to take action to achieve this radically different nature of service delivery, that is, working the social enterprise way (NHS, 2006).

My adaptive leadership style was demonstrated, I believe, during the implementation of the Handy Person service as the process was successful and I also suggested other services and potentials - e.g. podiatry service - for future development as social enterprise, which also confirms my ability in making the most of opportunities and driving the result (Akins et. al., 2008).

My leadership style and approach was also participatory as I fully engaged the senior management team. There were quite high levels of mental and emotional involvement in contributing to the result, which I have to say brought higher satisfaction and outcome (Preston and Heintz 1949 in Akins et. al. 2008), for examples, the arrival at a new mission statement and strategic objectives. My reflections and application of *Ladder of Inference*, later in this chapter, share some of the emotional involvement.

During the session with the senior management team, I had to apply the *Ladder of Inference*. I experienced the tendency to select data and pay attention to those that

supports my beliefs. In one of my recorded reflections, I did admit that I experienced stronger affiliation and likeness to senior management team members that supported and demonstrated stronger understanding of/for social enterprise. One of the question for me was, how I do I stop short circuiting reality and begin to see reality for what it really is? (Ross et. al, 1994)

What I discovered was that I was so skilled at thinking that I often jumped up the ladder without knowing it. I often and tacitly registered some data and ignored other data. I also found myself imposing my own interpretations on these data and drew conclusions from them. Hence, I found some of my conclusions looking so obvious to me that I saw no need to retrace the steps I took from the data I selected to the conclusions I reached (Ross et. al, 1994).

For example, after the first session, I still concluded that we all agreed that social enterprise is an option we will pursue despite some senior managers voicing some apprehensions like;

*"None sustainability of the service will be a disaster!"* [SMT4]

I admit that the contexts I was in, my assumptions and my values channelled how I jumped up the ladder. My model of how the world works and my repertoire of actions influenced the data I selected, the interpretations I made and the conclusions I drew. My conclusions therefore led me to act in ways that produce results that fed back to reinforce my contexts and assumptions (Ross et. al, 1994).

Therefore, when some voiced certain apprehensions like:

*"We have to make sure the service is reliable"* [SMT3]

*"If dependent on people paying, we must ensure sufficient take up of the service"*  
[SMT1]



I still concluded that the Handy Person in a social enterprise framework is still a viable option.

To address these, I adopted Ross's (1994) recommendation, that "...to establish and maintain a reliable exchange of valid and verifiable information about important problems and issues" this "...requires the ability to discriminate among four types of information: description, inference, attribution, and evaluation" (p.4). "A *description* is a (hopefully objective and reasonably accurate) report or account of an experience or observation. An *inference* is a conclusion derived from beliefs or what are thought to be facts. An *attribution* is an ascribed, inferred, or assumed cause, characteristic, or motive of another person. An *evaluation* is a determination or judgement about the value or "goodness" of a statement or action by another person" (p.4)

I then applied the *Ladder of Inference* technique as a tool for helping me become more aware of and discriminate among these four very different types of information and their use in my communication, especially among the senior management team. I started recognising that the further I moved or extrapolated from the actual, original data (i.e., the verbatim words spoken and observable actions made by any senior manager), the greater my potential error. The *Ladder of Inference* then became useful in helping me reduce such errors and the resulting interpersonal problems.

To cite an example, at an initial senior management team session where I presented the NEsT tool, SMT2 then asked,

*"What does he mean by strategy?"*

After this comment made by SMT2, I saw myself moving up the different steps of the ladder. Rather than describe (report objectively and accurately) what SMT2 said. I operated at two more steps removed from the verbatim data to select and derive meaning of what happened by inferring and attributing meanings, which were different from the verbatim statements.

One example of the thinking and what came to my mind was:

*"SMT2 is trying to make me look bad and shoot down my project".*

I also saw myself moving further beyond the data to higher steps of the ladder by developing conclusions, including attributions about SMT2's motives and evaluations of SMT2's actions and utterances.

I then thought:

*"SMT2 is lazy, had limited education, so would not have a clue about what strategic management means. So why am I bothered?"*

On reflection, it became clear to me that as I moved further up the ladder, I moved further from the actual data about what occurred in the event and therefore was prone to error. The *Ladder of Inference* assisted me to recognise the kinds of inferences I was making, the assumptions implicit in these inferences, the conclusions they led to and the effects that acting on these inferences have on the data and my relationship with this member of the senior management team.

I have probably leapt up that ladder many times before with SMT2 [and possibly others – for example, the trustees]. The more I believe that SMT2 is an incompetent manager, the more I reinforced my tendency to notice SMT2's malevolent behaviour. I discovered that for no apparent reason, SMT2 and I started becoming bitter enemies.

With this realisation, I started to consider other alternative inferences. I learnt to inquire and check out potential inferences and ultimately act in ways that are more effective. For example, when I had a one to one supervision with SMT2 six weeks after this statement was made. I realised that SMT2 genuinely had little knowledge and understanding of strategy and was interested in pursuing further studies for self and professional development. SMT2 has now started a degree course and I have asked SMT2 to develop a strategy on how we can develop another Age Concern Bexley service, using a social enterprise model.



Applying the *Ladder of Inference*, I improved my communications through reflection. I became more aware of my own thinking and reasoning through reflection; made my thinking and reasoning more visible to others and I inquired more into others' thinking and reasoning (Ross et. al. 1994).

With SMT2, I started to stop conversation in its track and ask several questions checking if we both agree on what the data is and asking SMT2 to run me through SMT2's reasoning again. I started asking questions in an open-ended way and tested my own assumptions.

For example, I asked SMT2 at a session:

*"You've been quiet". To which SMT2 replied, "I've been taking notes to ensure I understand all that was happening".*

This was more of a positive progress, as previously I would have attributed SMT2's silence to discordance.

Using the *Ladder of Inference* assisted me to slow down and focus on the inferential steps and implicit assumptions I was using in abstracting conclusions from the original data of an event. As these inferences sometimes happened quickly, skilfully and without awareness, I recognised that I may need assistance in reconstructing my implicit steps and re-examining the inferences and attributions made along the way (Ross et. al. 1994).

This technique assisted me to learn about my typical response patterns and I became more skilful in recognising and avoiding ineffective patterns as I dealt with future senior management team sessions. However, I cannot say hands to heart, that this permeated all the research experience and that I did not climb up and down the ladder several times over, during the research. However, at least I now have increased level of awareness.

The senior management team and I learnt that many ideas, especially if they are new or different, run into trouble before they reach fruition. We did have a plan, based on the knowledge, analysis, experiences and assumptions. However, we were not prepared to

accept serious departures from plans. Even though I have built a coalition and involved key stakeholders, the critics, sceptics and cynics still challenged me as the possible impact of the change became clearer and those who felt threatened formulated their objections.

Citing SMT1, for example, at one of the sessions:

*"I am not sure the structure is right and I don't have much confidence in our systems to carry off this social enterprise thing"*

This happened because transition occurred in the course of every attempt at change; transition is the state that change puts people into (Kanter, 1999). The mistake was that I imagined that transition was automatic - that it occurred simply because the change was happening. However, it did not. Even when the Handy Person service was showing signs that it was working, there was the issue of timing, as the transition happened much more slowly than change. That was where my ambitious timetable turned out to have been wildly optimistic: it was based on getting the change accomplished, not on getting the people through the transition (Kanter, 1999).

Age Concern Bexley had to "self renew" (McMillan, 2007) by revisiting and revising its mission statement. This required some commitment and energy from the trustees and the senior management team and the outcome of the day – as detailed in section 5.3 – indicates a reshaping and openness to engage with environmental factors and influences.

Citing some trustees:

*"We need to start right at the beginning of the story, the place to start is the organisation's mission, to know why its here"*[BOT3]

*"It is about where we are going; it's not about where we are"*[BOT5]

The underpinning design principle is the ability of Age Concern Bexley to unfold and emerge as it learns and grows into a social enterprise as a result of its exploration of the Handy Person service whilst responding to the external environment (McMillan, 2007). This



then creates a structure "...with learning space for individuals to experiment, change and adapt co-operatively... [which]...enhance organisational sustainability" (Allen, 200 in McMillan 2007 p.34).

Using the human artery as a metaphor, McMillan (2007) analysis of the organisation design experience, resonates that of Age Concern Bexley in its journey towards social enterprise. There was a "chill out space" that allowed for staff to have fluctuation of energy and rhythm and sometimes the need to slow down and reflect on activities – for example, the various sessions detailed above.

Therefore, separating the process and scheduling them at different days, allow for this to occur. Just like the artery, there was still continuous flow of activity as the Handy Person scheme was on schedule and was achieved without "...dismantling or breaking up the overall structure or compromising its design principle" (p.34). This in my view was because Age Concern Bexley's structure was flexible and responsive enough to the needs of the organisation to transit from its current state as a charity to a social enterprise.

Part of my role, as the change agent therefore, which McMillan (2007) described as the "artery", was to ensure that "...energy from inside and outside the organisation is pumped around the structure" (p. 34). This was essential, McMillan would claim and I agree, "...for learning to take place and for knowledge to develop..." (p. 34)

My role as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent, I found was essential to this learning and knowledge and as an instrument for organisational development because it assisted Age Concern Bexley to build consensus (and therefore commitment) within the organisation about the goal of pursuing social enterprise and the *requisite* structure and systems to achieve them, albeit not without challenges as the next chapter explicates. However, I can conclude that it was effective in achieving desirable change (Hands, 2007), in moving towards a social enterprise type.

Some trustees confirmed this;

*"The Board has collectively agreed it...we should not leave anything out that is appropriate"*[BOT6]

*"It is important that every body owns it. It is so important that the board collectively agrees that the mission is right for the organisation and that we have not left anything out"*[BOT3]

## 5.6 Conclusion

Looking at the working definition of social enterprise and framework, I can conclude that one could not convert the totality of Age Concern Bexley as an organisation to a social enterprise. At best, what could be achieved is to develop social enterprise ideas and services within the existing organisational context and environment.

The handyperson service is a business with a social mission. Evaluating it against the social enterprise framework, I can also conclude that the handyperson service generates revenue. It has a social mission as it addresses the needs of older people in Bexley. It demonstrates entrepreneurial features as it has innovative features, for example, the 'Home Care Check' that takes a holistic view of the needs of the client and it is financially self-sustaining as the bottom line indicates in the first year of its implementation – see appendix N.

The character and roles of a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent were played out as I identified and created the social enterprise opportunity from an existing service coupled with the knowledge of social needs. One can say that Age Concern Bexley's values were preserved and there was an application of business modelling in ensuring effective implementation.

However, this process was laden with challenges and ethical considerations, which the following chapter exposes.



# Chapter Six

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## 6. Challenges, lessons learnt and ethical issues

This section starts with some acknowledgement of the benefits of social enterprise to Age Concern Bexley. It then provides an insight into the ethical issues, challenges and lessons learnt by the organisation and myself as a social entrepreneurial leader and change agent, as a result of engaging in social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley. The chapter then applies a dance metaphor – the *Bata* dance - to explicate how the research has enabled me to discover and “know myself”

### 6.1 Challenges and lessons learnt

#### 6.1.1 Acknowledging some benefits

It needs to be acknowledged that Age Concern Bexley’s implementation of social enterprise was judged successful by the senior management team, the board and me. Adopting entrepreneurial strategies enabled Age Concern Bexley to analyse each of the services from the perspectives of both mission and sustainability, to focus on the most effective and needed services, leading the organisation to dramatically reallocate some of the resources (Boschee, 1995).

These views were backed up by a Quick Poll survey conducted by the Social Enterprise Alliance. In this survey, almost 79% of the respondents agreed that social enterprise could be of beneficial impact (SEA, 2004). Among the greatest benefits mentioned are, forcing system improvements (78%) and exposing deficiencies within the existing infrastructure (67%) (SEA, 2004). For example, Age Concern Bexley now has a new database for the Handy person service and the organisation is exploring similar system/technology for the foot care and wheel chair loan services – see section 6.4 below for further details.

Citing a senior manager;

*"With social enterprise, we can now deliver more cutting edge services". [SMT2]*

However, despite the acclaimed advantages of social enterprise by the senior management team, trustees and I, the organisation had challenges, which one hopes other organisations that aim to explore social enterprise can learn from. Conversations about social enterprise were not easy, even when it appeared the right strategic option. A number of factors had to be overcome, about staff, management, structure, culture and governance.

### **6.1.2 Making the transition – from a charity to a social enterprise**

From the research at Age Concern Bexley, the recommendation to other organisations or practitioners or social entrepreneur, is that you need your staff or team to *say goodbye*, that is, to let go of the way that things and the way that they themselves used to be. Having gone through this change, Age Concern Bexley needed to let go of their old ways, as I found the team unable to start anew - *shifting into neutral* – the second difficult phase of transition, the in-between state that is full of uncertainty and confusion that simply coping with it takes most of people's energy (Bridges, 2000).

At some stage, I realised a high level of skepticism from senior staff. Many of them are not risk takers and their unwillingness to think outside the box constantly amazed, worried and frustrated me. One of the challenges they faced, one realised, was the lack of understanding of what social enterprise is all about. There was little understanding of the language of entrepreneurship, lack of micro business and marketing skills, how to identify new opportunities and very little knowledge of how to demonstrate impact and outcome (Lyon & Ramsden, 2005).

The level of the trustees' engagement (or disengagement more like it) became an issue. No one on the board had any professional experience either of social enterprise or of commercial business, which contributed to some of them not having enough confidence



about the project. The level of feedback to the trustees were also not regular enough, I took some of this for granted until more questions were asked at a particular board meeting which made me realised the level of anxiety being experienced.

When asked about what some of their concerns were at a board meeting, some of the trustees expressed the anxieties that, if the organisation is not cautious, social enterprise could contribute to the demise of the organisation and maybe it was safer to stick to the grant regime.

As one trustee said;

*"It will be such a shame if we no longer exist because of this social enterprise. If only we could be given more money from the local authority or even elsewhere, we could continue the way we were"* [BOT4].

A senior manager also commented;

*"The way we are carrying on, things will implode. I suspect we are moving too fast too soon and not having enough time for these things to bed in. What is this social enterprise thing, as if we don't have enough to deal with now"?* [SMT3]

Another trustee also commented;

*"Maybe what we could have done is identify sources of funding, those that can provide support and funding. We can ask the local authority to give us longer funding agreement and ask BVSC to campaign for increase funding to the voluntary sector or compensation when funding is withdrawn"* [BOT1]

This neutral zone (Kanter, 1999; Bridges, 2000) was uncomfortable for some, as SMT4 for example, rushed ahead into exploring other possible ventures like 'Out & About' service, while SMT1 tried to back-pedal and retreat into the past, by constantly arguing that it will not work and once said:

*"Let us take a softly softly approach".*

Age Concern Bexley did move forward and it began operating the Handy Person service in a new way. However, at this stage of the research, this made me question whether any of them has the capability or the readiness to support the further exploration of social enterprise now and in the future. The lesson was, manage the transition as you manage the change (Kanter, 1999).

### **6.1.3 Economic versus social goals – managing the paradox and tension**

One of the warnings given by *Social Enterprise London* [SEL] (2001) was that the operating structures of a voluntary organisation might not be suited to running a social enterprise. "Its not just about new constitution, all the operations of the organisation may need to be reviewed" (p. 36). The experience at Age Concern Bexley confirmed this.

Hence I will conclude that adopting a social enterprise approach or outlook by an organisation does require changes in the nature of the organisation and how it situates its values within its economic activities. Age Concern Bexley found itself, for the first time in its existence, developing and providing services in response to market demand, rather than what the organisation believes it should be providing or commissioned to it by statutory bodies. This was a strange territory for Age Concern Bexley to be, making the transition from a non-profit to a social enterprise was quite challenging for Age Concern Bexley as an organisation (Botsman, 2002).

Sherill (2002) also confirms that a common implementation issue is that of the clash of cultures between for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. This clash emerged in various ways at Age Concern Bexley; for example, it manifested itself in the 'distrust of money-making activities' felt by some senior management team. This Boschee (2000) calls the 'non-profit mentality' and consequently "...the belief that capitalism and profits are social evils...the single greatest obstacle in the implementation of entrepreneurial strategies" (p. 28).



The chair of the Board said at a meeting;

*"Over my dead body will any drastic change happen".*

This was an example of someone in the organisation who remained vaguely uncomfortable with the idea of social entrepreneurship. In his judgement, making money seems to run against the historical grain of "non-profit" activity (SEL, 2001).

SMT3 confirmed this anxiety when she said:

*"I'm only concerned that we may compromise our charitable aims or voluntary ethos"*

As SMT2 also commented;

*"Using volunteers to make money is inappropriate; we should be using only paid staff".*

From my experience of working in the private sector, businesses take a more proactive approach by anticipating and responding to trends and needs. Successful businesses are able to continue to build market share around the particular needs they are addressing and these manifest themselves in the culture of the organisations (Sherill, 2002). In the case of Age Concern Bexley, even though a charity, this was not the case. My view is that Age Concern Bexley was and is still driven by a cause, rather than by a desire to meet needs.

Through social enterprise, Age Concern Bexley attempted to integrate its economic goals with its social goals, which meant that the organisation had to clarify these goals to itself and its stakeholders. Developing an understanding of how to integrate social and economic goals was critical and often was a source of tension, between the senior management team and myself and sometimes with the trustees (SEL, 2001). This is one tension, in my view, that all organisations embarking on social enterprise may confront and will need to deal with and address.

A report in 2005 by CAF, also flagged up this challenge of attempting to integrate entrepreneurial approaches into a charitable organisation. This was also described as “the clash between social and commercial goals”, highlighting that there can be tensions between them. One of the lessons learnt from this CAF study was that a charitable organisation like Age Concern Bexley, cannot quickly convert itself to a social enterprise and become self sufficient, that it will need a strong foundation and a mix of financing, including grants, for quite a while (Third Sector, 2005). This was the case at Age Concern Bexley, as the organisation still needed the grant allocation from the local authority to survive.

Hartigan (2002) asserts that this challenge of understanding social enterprise will not go away that easy. Drawing from the Australian example, he writes: “I suspect Australian social entrepreneur’s face the social entrepreneur-as-charity misrepresentation continuously. The false dichotomy between those who work in the social arena and those who work in the financial arena will continue as long as the legal structures and mentality exist dividing what is profitable and what is not” (p. 42).

This mentality was one of the challenges faced at Age Concern Bexley as it moved into the business arena and one of my ways of resolving this was re-badging the role and department of the Development Manager as the social enterprise division of the organisation, thereby creating a distinction between and where social enterprise operates and where it does not in the organisation.

To manage this paradox and tension, from the experience from this research, I would argue that there is a need for a social entrepreneurial leader to lead organisations of this nature. Looking at the working definition of social entrepreneurship arrived at in this research as – “a leader with a vision and values that creates change whilst ensuring self-sufficient and/or self sustained earned income strategies to pursue social mission(s)” – coupled with the social entrepreneur descriptors [see appendix F], an organisation like Age Concern Bexley requires a leader that is creative, innovative, creates opportunities and has



social values. I would therefore argue that social enterprises require social entrepreneurs in leadership.

#### **6.1.4 From a charity to doing business – the need for a financial strategy**

A further issue was the under-resourcing or under capitalisation of the Handy Person service. Age Concern Bexley had a fair share of this challenge, as it had always been cash strapped, with approximately 80% of income being restricted.

SMT3 commented at a review meeting that:

*"Setting up infrastructure, staffing level and expertise and start up cost will be difficult to afford. I just need to warn us that there are insufficient funds to restructure current services"*

The health warning for other organisations and potential practitioners of social enterprise is that lack of strategic financial planning skills within the sector, as Leslie (2002) also pointed out, has meant that there have been many social businesses set up without sufficient expansion capital, or even sufficient initial resource capital for items as essential as equipment, marketing support, or other basic business needs.

The complexity of the funding streams also provided barriers to success, as Age Concern Bexley expended a lot of effort in trying to obtain grant renewal and the organization became entangled in highly competitive conflict situations with other social businesses locally.

At some stage, some staff showed and expressed some concerns:

*"I am having concerns about 'profitability of the venture'"[SMT5]*

*"My worry is trying to sustain the business with the little money coming in"*  
[SMT4]

Even though the organisation's objectives are social, it had to employ business tactics and be more competitive in terms of how it positions and markets the service. What was discovered was that older people will not just contact the organisation because it has the "Age Concern" badge or even because it is the best provider. Hence, the organisation had to be a bit more market aggressive. Therefore, more road shows were held, more leaflets were printed and more advertisement was placed in local newspapers than originally planned.

Others also need to learn from another experience Age Concern Bexley had, which was partly due to the anxiety for success and anticipation of starting, as the organisation started off spreading the margarine too thinly. Age Concern Bexley initially took on more bookings and commitment than the capacity could take. It was recording an average of 25 enquiries a day with only a part time paid worker and 7 volunteers. Taking on this volume meant that it was late in terms of response time and quality suffered in some cases.

Age Concern Bexley also experienced a stage when custom declined. This was a cycle it never envisaged and I had to make a decision whether to lay off the paid staff and continue the service with only volunteers. It was hard, but I held on to the agreed model and the service survived. Age Concern Bexley nearly got too soft by allowing the balance of social mission and the sustainability mission to get out of hand, in exceptional circumstances letting people off the £5 charge so as not to appear too commercially aggressive.

Therefore I will recommend to others that aim to pursue social enterprise that you need more brutal discipline about the financial end of the business. In the case of Age Concern Bexley, there was a need to know, where it was financially almost on a weekly basis, before going too far down the road. Age Concern Bexley needed 'just-in time financials' (Boschee, 2002) and it also needed to know the customers and market better.



### 6.1.5 From clients to customers – the need for better marketing

As in the case of many organisations, Age Concern Bexley had to promote and market the Handy Person service in competition with other providers, thereby it had to sharpen and develop good marketing skills.

Doran (2002) puts it more bluntly, that it is about customers first, second, third. “You can get away with this for a long time in a fund raised environment because most funders don’t ask hard enough questions and we can all play ‘pleases the funder’. However, there is nowhere to hide in a sales-led business when your survival is dependent on how your markets re-act to the quality and price of your goods and services. Your customers’ needs matter more than yours. It’s as simple as that...Customers – real paying customers who can go elsewhere – don’t care about our democratic aspirations, our passionate desires for social change and our commitments to community empowerment. They are interested in price, quality and service. End of. If your social business is not obsessively focussed on that then turn the lights off now.” (p. 14)

Age Concern Bexley recognised this form of assertion and it resonated its experience in changing from a charity to a social enterprise. Two of the senior managers summed it up, when they claimed that:

*“We quickly noticed we have insufficient skills and knowledge base specific to strategic planning and marketing” [SMT3]*

*“Tailoring services to match trends and competition is new around here” [SMT2]*

Boschee (1998) also emphasises the customer focus ethos, as one of the most difficult shifts in perspective required of any non-profit adopting entrepreneurial strategies. At Age Concern Bexley, moving from a social need to market demand environment did appear a little different between operating as a voluntary organisation and as a social enterprise. Many of the staff and trustees still considered Age Concern Bexley a charitable organisation, even when the Handy Person service makes it to be socially enterprising.

What the organisation needed to do, as SMT 4 puts it, was *"to learn to operate in a more commercial environment"* and be explicit about how it adds value.

Hence, I will recommend to other organisations and/or practitioners, the need for systematic support in raising the profile of their social enterprise, as it would increase awareness of the organisation and the services/products (SEL, 2000). Therefore, what had to be imbibed at Age Concern Bexley and quite quickly, were cultures of marketing and good customer service, which were historically lacking.

#### **6.1.6 The challenge of measuring outcome – not knowing when value is added**

One other challenge faced was the lack of standard audit process or robust independently verified social auditing system for social enterprises and there are no nationally agreed standards so it was impossible to gauge the relative effectiveness of a social enterprise labour market invention (Black, 2002). "Social enterprises reach the parts the private and public sectors don't. That's the proposition. How would we know if this were true? How beyond anecdote will we comparatively verify...?" (p. 2).

At Age Concern Bexley, this issue was a struggle, as SMT2 summed it up:

*"To provide value for money and be able to demonstrate the same is a bloody tall order"*

Westall (2001) also recognised this challenge, that a critical issue for all social enterprises and their advocates is the ability to point to the added value that the sector brings to service provision. The DTI also confirms that there are little hard evidence to demonstrate the impact and added value of social enterprise, as social enterprises create a range of social and environmental impacts, beyond their financial return (the 'double' or the 'triple' bottom line) that are hard to measure (even by the social enterprises themselves) (DTI, 2002).



What was done at Age Concern Bexley was to include some extras and add-ons, by suggesting that each visit by the Handy Person also include a "Home Care Assessment" which entails a holistic assessment of the clients needs, covering property maintenance, home safety, falls prevention, security and fire safety checks. Each visit include identification of needs/services that the clients may and/or do require. The organisation took the view that by assisting an older person to carry out minor repairs and adaptations, it reduces his/her chance of falls and assisted them achieve greater independence. In the future, Age Concern Bexley aims to commission a research to evaluate if the 'Home Care Assessment' has any impact on the lives of the clients it had provided the services to.

As an organisation, Age Concern Bexley agreed to go further by measuring the service not only against the targets that have been set, but also to show how it was performing compared with other competitors in Bexley and other Age Concerns providing similar model of service. This is to demonstrate the organisation's ability that the social enterprise service is meeting both its financial and its social bottom lines - reconciling mission and money. I have also suggested this as an area of future research in the concluding chapter.

Dees (2002) however noted that markets do not work as well for social entrepreneurs and it does not do a good job of valuing social improvements. As a result, it was much harder for Age Concern Bexley to determine whether it was creating sufficient social value to justify the resources used in creating that value. How the organisation attempted to resolve this was to go along with the DTI (2002) suggestion of applying a social audit and impact evaluation, using Age Concern England's evaluation toolkit. The suggestion to other organisations and practitioners is to explore and adapt or adopt audit tools that suit their local and/or organisational needs.

#### **6.1.7 The people factor – having the right people and the right skills**

One of the biggest barriers to the growth of a profitable, sustainable social business economy is the scarcity of people willing and able to balance the commercial and social agendas. "Finding and retaining these people is my hardest job and it will be yours", as

Doran (2002, p.1) warned, sharing his own experience. This was certainly reflective of the Age Concern Bexley experience.

Educating some of the senior managers was a tedious task. Black (2003) confirms this frustration in his article in The Guardian newspaper of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003, that this is a big barrier facing social enterprises. He writes: "It's very hard to find skilled people who understand how to run a business and who buy into the social agenda as well. Sometimes I wonder in my darker moments whether what we're trying to do as a sector is just too ambitious - maybe those people just aren't there." (p.18).

Doran (2002) shares some of his experience, some of which are reflective of the research, when he wrote: "My biggest mistake has been believing that if I tried hard enough, sent them on enough training courses, harangued them enough, loved them enough, people would change from being charity/community workers to social business men and women. Only a handful of old timers (at management/supervisor level) have made it in the journey from fundraised charity to sales led enterprise." (p. 12). Some on the senior management team at Age Concern Bexley are still straddled in the charity versus social-business divide and are yet to make the transition into an enterprise culture, despite the success of the Handy Person scheme.

This assertion was food for thought for me, as I did seriously consider a radical change of senior staffing. The approach taken at Age Concern Bexley, which was not most effective although practical and less risky, was to replace staff that eventually leaves, if/when they leave, with individuals that are experienced and/or are in tune with social enterprise. The organisation had to be restructured twice to ensure that there was an appropriate structure to take on some of the challenges that emerged.

As some senior manager commented;

*"We need to restructure the officers and posts to provide a more team based 'one stop shop' approach. This would ultimately depend on our relocating to*



*suitable premises. Currently we tend to work in little boxes. There is no logic to some of the duties allocated to some posts, in my opinion!*[SMT 4]

*"Robust training and recruitment of competent staff is what we need. We also need to train our staff and have development plans"*[SMT1]

Hence, for any organisation aiming to explore social enterprise, I will recommend an audit of staff skills and capabilities to ensure there is a fit.

#### **6.1.8 Designing the organisation for change – from generalist to focussed**

Through the engagement with social enterprise, Age Concern Bexley realised it needed to sharpen the organisation's focus and stop trying to be all things to all people, dusting off "the grain of the traditional non-profit mentality" (Steckel, 1999, p.14). As Steckel (1999) explains it, "...we see people in pain, we start a program. We see somebody else in pain, we start another program...soon we're overwhelmed...searching desperately for a way to focus, to identify their most effective and needed programs - and to productively dispose of their more peripheral programs (either finding a home for them in other agencies, by allowing them to die a natural death, or by eliminating those that are wreaking financial havoc on the rest of the organisation)" (p. 14).

Historically, Age Concern Bexley was in this type of situation, as most of the service level agreements and contracts were emergent, rather than planned. The organisation was experiencing what Drucker (in Steckel, 1999) describes as "organised abandonment" (p.15). Botsman (2002) also echoes this challenge and describes it as "the dilemma of working for all". To expand the impact of social enterprise, Age Concern Bexley realised the need to concentrate more of the resources on fewer services, develop positioning strategies and having marketing plans that work, whilst selectively adding new services that meet current and emerging needs of older people in Bexley. For example, I created the post of an Events' Coordinator to organise events in response to emerging needs and

gaps in the market. The organisation is also in the process of reviewing the Night Centre, which has little take up, little impact and cost a lot of money and resources to manage.

Flannery (1996, in Sherill 2002) confirmed that this is one of the biggest challenges for the leader of a social purpose enterprise that is creating and managing one organisational culture that brings together both the non-profit and for-profit cultures. To successfully bring these two distinct cultures together under one organisation, it is required of me as the Chief Executive to understand the differences between a typical business culture and a typical non-profit culture.

These differences were difficult to understand, even by some of the senior managers. Hence, there was a need to continually identify the reoccurring dilemmas and tensions that arose from putting these two sectors together within one organisational design. This is where I believe that my role as a social entrepreneur was of value as I held on to my stance of adopting social enterprise and I kept reinforcing the merits of this approach to all stakeholders and the potential consequences of not employing social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley.

Therefore, organisations aiming to change from a charity to a social enterprise need to ensure that there is a strategic focus, with regards to the nature of the product(s) and/or service(s), its target audience and market and its organisational form. One of the lessons learnt at Age Concern Bexley, during the session on identifying potential enterprise services and when the services/customers matrix was developed, was that the organisation cannot be all things to all people – see section 5.4 of chapter 5.

#### **6.1.9 Leading the change – with a social entrepreneurial leader**

Some writers argue that part of the general notion in organisations and organisation design is the presumption that leaders are unquestionably necessary for the functioning of an organisation (Grint, et. al. 1997). This research however counters this view as I will argue



that there is a need for a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent in an organisation transiting from charity to a social enterprise.

With the experience at Age Concern Bexley, I experienced some elements of “unconscious aspects of leadership (Grint et. al., 1997). The relationship between the trustees, the senior management team and me were sometimes influenced by “...socially constructed meanings and behaviour patterns that emerge through perceptions and reactions...” (p.75), as I sometimes experienced playing a “nurturance” function, on the verge of being parental during the transition period.

An example was during the mission review session when I expressed my frustration at the outcome of the process – see section 5.3. At this session, some on the senior management team and board, I suspect, unconsciously perceived me as providing protection against external threats.

Some trustee at the mission review session commented;

*"You seem to understand this social enterprise business and that's great and I am happy about that or else I wont be agreeing with you"*[BOT1]

*"If you are not here Ade, where we would be? Things have changed so much and we can't keep up with this. I am glad you know all the stuff"*[BOT3]

The downside to this was that in situations like this, subordinates tend to project “...their anxiety and aggression onto the leader, followers perceive themselves as freed from the anxiety and responsibility of taking initiative, seeking autonomy, taking risks or expressing their own fears and feeling...”(Grint, et. al. 1997, p.75).

It also needs to be reiterated that looking at the example of Age Concern Bexley, leadership during this change was not a default to “social defenness” or “psychic prison” as Grint (et. al. 1997) describes it, that is, Age Concern Bexley projecting into me as a leader as result of a change agenda or crisis. It was also not the “Darwinian manner”, that is,

some form of elitist selection process out of the need for Age Concern Bexley to survive. It was also not a subscription to the causality argument, that is, I as the Chief Executive being in control of events and therefore causing the change to happen. The factors for change - as detailed in chapter 2 are environmental factors, some of which are beyond the control of my self as the CEO, Age Concern Bexley as an organisation, the staff and stakeholders.

One of the lessons learnt was that, to make the transition from charity to a social enterprise, the leadership style therefore had to disengage from what appeared as a “childlike dependency” relationship with the trustees and the senior management team, which some writers concur, could become deskilling and alienating.

Maslow (1971 in Grint et. al., 1997) describes it as the “Jonah Complex”, that is submissive and preferring to safe and easy security. I had to adopt more of the leadership as a social process paradigm (Weick, 1977 in Grint et. al., 1997) that required the senior management team and trustees working more as a team in dynamic collaboration, interacting in ways that have intellectual and emotional meanings (Grint et. al., 1997).

Therefore, social entrepreneurs leading organisational change need to have the realisation that the management of change, especially from a charity to a social enterprise, needs to be done by working with the team and should not be a heroic leadership stunt. I also learnt that leaders must devote a great amount of time to the change process, as well as one’s construction of reality (Gilstrap, 2007)

Age Concern Bexley also experienced what Morgan (1997) describes as the paradox of “spiralling tensions”. Even though, one of the intent is to move the organisation, staff and trustees, away from some established charity norms into a social enterprise culture, the normative behaviour within these groups wanted to return to the status quos. On the one hand, some accepted the need for change.



For example a trustee said;

*"Bexley is nice, relationship between voluntary sector and Bexley council is good, but the voluntary sector in Bexley depends too much on the council for accommodation and grant and many other things. Unless we wean ourselves out of this dependency, then start to be creative, start to think much more visionary and be self-sustenance, too much of this cosiness compromises us"*[BOT1]

On the other hand, some wanted to remain in the "comfort zone", citing another trustee;

*"The process may probably become uncomfortable, challenging, even complicated if done in a short time, therefore I need more time to reflect on it...sometimes I am not sure there is anything wrong with us as we are"*[BOT7]

Hence, in leading change, social entrepreneurs need to be focused on articulating the vision with compelling clarity, keeping the focus on change and inspiring others to be positive in their support (NHS, 2006). I had to continually gain the support of others by ensuring that they understand the reasons behind the change. I shared leadership with the team and others in the organisation by designating some key responsibilities, encouraged others, especially front line staff, to find new ways of delivering and developing services and took the lead in the implementation of change. For example, I asked one senior manager to develop a business plan for two potential social enterprise Day Centres – at Crayford and Erith.

To achieve this change, the lessons and challenges for social entrepreneur leaders is the continuous need to demonstrate highly visible leadership underpinned by strongly held values.

#### **6.1.10 The paradox in social entrepreneurial leadership**

As a social entrepreneurial leader and change agent, I will concur that social entrepreneurs need assistance and support, what Young (2006) describes as "entrepreneurial peers", to gain insight, objectivity and self-knowledge. The application of the repertory grid technique,

albeit self administered, was useful to gain insight into my self, however, I will argue that social entrepreneurs still need exposure to sympathetic experts who can give them guidance and real-time advice. "They need honest feedback and coaching...access to confidential interventions... [and] intelligent nurturing" (Young, 2006, p. 31).

I agree with some of the conclusion in Phillip's (2007) research on the characters of social entrepreneurs, which on one hand praises social entrepreneurs as "successful people", also warn that their 'winning' trait may have negative impact on the long-term success of the social enterprises and community bodies they lead. The research suggests that 'all these features can be enacted in ways that are either beneficial or detrimental to the success of the venture.' In other words, essentially positive features - such as focus, drive and strong interpersonal skills - may, if not tempered by good judgement and self-awareness, become flaws that can damage both the person and the organisation and leave supporters (and staff) feeling overwhelmed or manipulated.

I can relate to these comments as one of the senior management team anonymously feedback to me that;

*"You are special in seeing and taking opportunities for growth, but sometimes things run away with you and we on your team and the whole of Age Concern Bexley practices don't always keep up."* [SMT1]

Chambers (in Phillips, 2007) identifies this paradox - that strong upsides, necessary for success, also have strong downsides and has implications for our understanding of social entrepreneurial leaders. The 'winning' social entrepreneurs, Chambers argues, are those who know which characteristics to deploy to what degree in which situation. Hence, it is how a social entrepreneur mixes and balances them that enable some to thrive in an environment that is different from - and may be more challenging than - mainstream business.

What one realises as a social entrepreneurial leader is that there is no single 'right' mix that will fit every size and type of socially entrepreneurial organisation at each phase of its development. Successful leaders, I would argue, are the ones who realise this and build teams that complement and challenge them, encouraging the team to adapt their



behaviour and learn new skills, without ever losing sight of the key driver of and to change, innovation and opportunity creation (Phillip, 2007).

## 6.2 Ethical issues in implementing social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley

This section provides an overview of the ethical issues experienced in and through this research.

At Age Concern Bexley, I was the first and only black Chief Executive in its entire history and over 95% of staff are white middle class. I also have a private sector background and my previous job was with an international charity, overseeing their international chain of charity shops. Hence I was viewed by some of the staff as an 'outsider' in the social care field.

The 'organisational gossip' – which the Chair of the board shared with me in one of my supervision sessions - was that although they acknowledged my extensive experiences and knowledge, but I simply was not what they want as a Chief Executive. Many staff defined me as a 'business person' therefore, not appropriate for a social care environment. This belief did lead some staff to renegade and even suggested to some trustees that I should be sacked!

As some SMT anonymously feedback during the research;

*"I don't totally believe in the social enterprise cause"*

*"Will it work here? I'm not sure"*

*"I'm not sure the values and actions are consistent"*

As I reflect on these comments and on my position in the organisation, I did realise that my need to meaningfully show that I can do the job and that I am capable of delivering, shaped the performance of my role. I had a hunger to show that I can achieve and the

corresponding need to be valued as an individual, irrespective of my background and not be treated as an outsider. The staff eventually picked up the signals that I am a 'no nonsense person' with the intention to weather the storm and therefore engaged me in ways I had not anticipated.

At the same time, my management style had not adapted to the 'care community' style, as I retained my output and outcome driven approach as informed by my private sector experiences and business studies. Some staff initially interpreted my style as being bossy and uncompromising, whilst some tried to win me over by expressing their undying support for me. Whatever position taken by any of them, my style became more firmly cemented. All of these factors changed my role in the organisation and influenced the research because, as desirable as it would have been, I could not be unaffected by all these.

This led to an ongoing dilemma as I became so entwined in the values and culture of the organisation, I could not look upon the progress objectively. I was also worried that because I so intensely want to succeed and be a change agent, I would only fulfil my own personal expectations that social enterprise is the way to go for charities that want to be a serious player in the market in time to come.

I saw the *Bata* dance – detailed in the next section - playing out. It was a constant awareness and observation of all the stakeholders, sometimes seeing them as the audience, as supposed to co-dancers – i.e. staff, members of the board of trustee, other partnership agencies and other Age Concern Organisations in London - while also attempting to maintain direction in terms of ensuring that Age Concern Bexley delivers on all its service level agreement and its role in the social economy.

I saw my role in the organisation and the research question as shifting tension-filled drama that cannot endure too much disruption from this "audience" if it is to sustain its direction and purpose (Douglas, 1988). Just as the *Bata* dance, most of my moves and decisions were completed with emphatic stance and defined outcome, mostly dictated by me.



One of my frustrations was the disruption to the process of moving towards social enterprise ideals. For example, I asked and demanded for 'business cases' to be presented to justify any major organisational change – which means that only certain people with appreciation and knowledge of this approach get invited onto the dance stage and only with the rules and expectation understood. I clearly preferred staff members who could dance the *Bata* dance, both literally and metaphorically, in the organisation, although I tried not to show it (Douglas, 1988).

I admit that I did struggle with my personae as a researcher, social entrepreneur, leader and change agent. It sometimes appeared like a split personality. At work, on a daily basis, I made decisions because I was expected to and because I needed to. As a researcher, I had to be more reflective of what I did and sometimes self-critical when I was in the research role. As a line manager, my first concerns centred on the needs of the staff rather than the needs of the research.

Therefore, I sometimes had to find different styles to explain the same concept to the senior management team. I realised that the staff are first people who have stuff going on in their lives that may impact whatever conclusions I drew from their implementation of the action research process and change agenda. For example, I discovered that SMT2 had domestic challenges that did not allow SMT2 to deliver some tasks and responsibilities, which made me allow for 2 weeks' slippage in the implementation of the Handy Person service.

The observer and participant aspects of my roles also conflicted, especially during the implementation stage. One other challenge was finding ways to switch between participating and observing and recording. Some of my interactions and discussions with the senior management team yielded insights that are contextual and dynamic; however, some experiences were lost, leaving scant traces before I recorded them. As I periodically say to myself: *"real life sets in"*.

I did recognise from the on set that by engaging the senior management team as participants in the research, I have assumed 'double agency' (Edwards & Chalmers, 2002 as cited in Ferguson et. al 2004) and I did experience conflicts of interest and threats to ethical principles in the relationship. 'Double agency' refers to fulfilling two roles simultaneously in relation to the same individuals. As a result of this, it was apparent to me from the start of the research that the relationship was characterised by differential power relations (Ferguson et. al 2004).

I was aware of and did analyse the power relations at Age Concern Bexley. Considering my role, I did have some power over the staff and some stakeholders had power over me - the trustees, for example. I had to evaluate and raise the issue of the shared understandings I did or did not have with these stakeholders – these being personal relationships, similar or varied background and experience, similar professional background etc. I had to ask my self, during the process, if this research strengthened this relationship or perhaps abuse it and the implications on the way I focused the research (Coghlan, 2003).

According to Ferguson (et. al., 2004), ethical issues are inherent in research designs involving human respondents owing to an intrinsic tension between the needs of the researcher to collect personal data on which to base generalisations and the rights of the participants to maintain their dignity and privacy. In the case of the senior management team, Ferguson et. al. (2004) would consider them 'captive participants' as I the researcher have a 'status relationship' with them. Captive participants are deemed to be those individuals who are in dependent or restricted relationships with the researcher such that their ability to consent voluntarily is compromised or limited by their vulnerability to the power of the researcher. Such vulnerability, Ferguson et. al. (2004) argue, might in itself become a coercive element in the free and voluntary consent, in the example of the senior management team.

As SMT1 allegedly said;

*"He can only do these because the trustees are weak, he controls them anyway"*



Therefore, the potential for abuse of the power in the relationship remains, nonetheless, an ethical issue that I had to continually reflect on throughout the course of the research.

To manage these ethical issues, I aligned myself with utilitarianism as a guiding principle - the ends justify the means - thus subscribing to Ferguson et. al (2004) suggestion that researchers that recruits staff as participants and rely on the coercive aspect of the relationship to encourage participation are justified if the findings of the studies are important to the discipline and to society as a whole.

From this perspective, I had to compromise my fiduciary relationship with the senior management team and focussed a bit more on the findings of the research and the anticipated outcome. For example, I had to insist that we put in a business bid to manage a £250,000 podiatry contract; as if we did not, the foot care service we provide [estimated annual value of £30,000] may cease to exist by March 2007.

I had to insist on this initiative, even though one of the senior management team objected because, by their own admittance;

*"I have limited knowledge of managing a 'business' of such magnitude. I'm not sure I can manage this"* [SMT2].

I also subscribed to "deontological ethics", (Ferguson et. al, 2004), the principle that allowed me as an individual to be a moral agent and to be mainly concerned with the motivation for action and a basic respect for autonomy of the individual. In this context, as a manager and a researcher, I strived towards and for ethical practice and tried to ensure 'morally adequate action' – treating the participants as individuals, reflecting respect for their being and not for their use (Schuklenk, 2000 as cited in Ferguson et. al 2004). The convergence interview process was an example of this.

Like many researchers, I had the goal of engaging participants that will satisfy the requirements of sampling and rigour for the research design and data collection, hence engaging the senior management. In my zeal to conduct the research process

appropriately, I suspected that I might have inadvertently exerted pressure on them to participate (Ebbs, 1996 as cited in Ferguson et. al 2004).

As a senior manager said at the mission review session;

*"We are not in control of this process. If you ask staff from this department to take on a different genre, they all say they are stressed and so on... we all feel the stress"* [SMT2]

This pressure was often subtle and sometimes overt, for example, converting a scheduled senior management team meeting to discuss the research issues or calling a meeting specifically for this purpose. The senior management team could not have refused participation despite potential concerns that such participation is onerous or demanding or affect their work and role in the organisation. I had to do this, as this was the only practical and tactical way to ensure timely implementation and having a forum to discuss social enterprise, giving it the adequate focus required.

Although some writers suggest that this situation is inherently unethical, others have asserted that the research process can be managed ethically if the pressure on staff to participate can be moderated in some way (Bell & Nutt, 1999 as cited in Ferguson et. al 2004). I believe I did moderate it, as the NEST tool provided a framework.

The pressure to participate might also have been perceived rather than actual and was not necessarily intended by me. I was all the time conscious that this perception may have arisen from the inherent power relationship between me as the line manager and the senior management team as subordinates. I also had the view that some on the senior management team, if they have refused to participate – although none did - might have anticipated possible risks to future relationships with me and fear repercussions.

Some might also have been motivated to participate as a desire to please me or had the believe or illusion that by going along with the research and exploring social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley, this will be more beneficial than current practice. In my view, this may



also have been influenced by the fear that their progress in the project and in the organisation will somehow be jeopardised by not participating in the research (Bowman & Waite, 2003 as cited in Ferguson et. al 2004).

Everyone in the organisation was aware of the research and studies. I ensured that I obtained informed consent, from the trustees and senior management team and I informed them about the aims and objectives of the research, as well as the risks and benefits of participation. Their consent to participate was given, mostly verbally and by attending the scheduled sessions. I also let the trustees and senior management team know in advance the questions and issues that would be addressed at these sessions.

I did describe the risks to people participating in this study and potential risks to Age Concern Bexley. I ensured that I explored and made obvious the financial risk that comes with engaging with social enterprise and I had in place steps to minimise these risks, as a risk analysis was carried out and used to manage the process – see appendix L.

I ensured confidentiality, reciprocity and feedback of results (Du Toit, 2005). In ensuring confidentiality, I agreed with the senior management team, trustees, Delphi group and interviewees, that I will not report any private data that identifies participants, by not recording their names or attributing any specific statements to them. I also agreed with all the participants to share the research report, when completed, as a form of recognition and gratitude for their participation, if they requested it (Du Toit, 2005).

I protected the anonymity of staff, trustees and any other participants, by using pseudonyms in my notes e.g. Senior Management Team [SMT1, SMT2, SMT3 etc], Convergence interviewees [CR-1, 2, 3 etc]. However, I struggled with the gains and losses of anonymity and equally struggled with making choices about the data I chose to report. What I tell and what I store were constant nags (Zeni, 1998). For example, I struggle with using “corridor” conversations as part of the research data.

During the fieldwork, I did ensure that participation was made as easy and pleasant as possible and I ensured that the research process caused the least possible disruption to the on-going life of the participants and their organisations. For example, the convergence interviews at the 'Contact Salon' and especially the Delphi group (Watt, 1995).

I also kept asking myself, if the research evaluated effectively my own effectiveness as a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent. I believe the answer at most times were yes, even though there were times I was closed to saying no. I struggled with wanting to know if observers who did not share my assumptions confirmed and agreed with my findings and how I protected myself from the temptation to see only what I hoped to see.

For example, I struggled with the anonymous feedback from one of the senior manager who said:

*"Will it work here? I'm not sure"*

One of the key questions for me throughout the research cycles was about how I could modify the practice at Age Concern Bexley and change it from a charity to a social enterprise to ensure sustainability. I have always maintained that if by adopting the framework of social enterprise, there emerge positive developments attributable to this change, as long as I am still the Chief Executive, I would aim to carry on working in this new way, especially if it produces the result envisaged and it is a better way to work compared to before. I am happy to claim that I did do this by implementing the newly re-provided Handy Person service based on a social enterprise model. However, I was sometimes plagued with the fear of what to do if it went wrong.

This does not mean closure, McNiff (2002) does suggest, that even though I may have addressed one issue, others did emerge which needed attention. In my attempt to address the issue of sustainability at Age Concern Bexley by employing social enterprise framework, I did unearth other issues that I have not expected, for example, the need for a revised mission and strategy and the level of skills updating required by the board and even the senior management team.



I agree with Zeni (1998), when she argues that in action research – as in most qualitative inquiry – we pursue a question through an often-meandering route, finding appropriate data sources as we go along. In doing so, many of the traditional guidelines collapse, whilst still confronted by ethical issues that needs addressing. Throughout the research process, further ethical issues did arise, which I had to take cognisance of and address, whilst noting how they impact on the research. For example, the observation that I was friendlier and more accommodating of senior managers that appear pro social enterprise and the constant clash of ideas with the chair of the board – all these impact on the research and data collected.

Hence, it sometimes did appear that the research will have no end as that is the nature of developmental practices and part of the joy of doing action research – its ability to resist closure, each ending did become a new beginning, each event carried its own potentials for new creative forms (McNiff, 2002), just like the *Bata* dance. I had to examine my own subjectivity as a researcher. Since I cannot be a fly on the wall in at Age Concern Bexley, I dealt with my own emotional and interpersonal responses as part of the data, with reflexivity (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983).

## 6.3 "Knowing Myself "

### 6.3.1 The "me" in the research

Coming to the research, I experienced what Heron (1981, as cited in Douglas, 1988), described, when he said that "traditional research on persons is also a way of exercising power over persons" that "research then becomes another agent of authoritarian social control." "That all writing is autobiographical. If true, then one's research – because it is such an intense and focused form of writing – must be a particularly intimate form of autobiography. In this sense, all scholarship is self-revelatory" (Vakkayil, 2006, p. 44).

Through the research and the experiences I gained from it, I discovered a 'me' that I never knew and I also discovered my internal critic – “the system in me” (Douglas, 1988). This 'me', shared my anxiety about my decisions and approaches to the research. On many occasions, it demanded that I considered again, some of the methods, my thoughts and my conclusions. Research such as mine, in my view, holds a mirror to a particular facet of reality and will always yield a partial truth based on the particularities of the relationship developed between the research subject and me. Methodological rigour, therefore means, a commitment on my part to fully account for how this partial truth has been arrived at and to communicate the process to the research community (Kisfalvi, 2006).

In my case, the path to methodical rigour was a thorough recording and examination of the subjective and emotional aspects of the fieldwork. This reflexivity also kept me as a researcher honest to myself by helping me avoid confounding the boundary that separates my experiences and background from the research data or establishing 'damaging intimacy' with them (Irwin 2006 in Kisfalvi, 2006). In this research, I considered who I was, who I am, what I believed and believe and how I felt and feel. This made me shape the story (Kisfalvi, 2006).

By confronting and acknowledging these aspects of the research, rather than sweep them under the carpet or repress them, it also allowed me the opportunity to making me part of the data. It also allowed the chance to arrive at deeper understanding not only of the data, but also of social enterprise, Age Concern Bexley, myself as a social entrepreneur, a leader and a change agent. It enabled me to better understand the impact of the chosen methods and methodology, on the types of data that are gathered, as I am part of the primary research instrument (Kisfalvi, 2006).

Alexander Pope, in his essay on man, noted that: "Know then thyself...the proper study of mankind is man" (cited in Kanter, 1999, p. 18). To really understand my own biases, perceptions and capabilities, I had to look inside and as objectively as possible, ask myself, who I am, what my limitations and strengths are and the baggage I carry from years of experience and existence.



As Kanter (1999) would argue, rarely do we "take ourselves out of ourselves and look at ourselves." Without an objective understanding of our own values, beliefs and biases, we are continually in danger of misunderstanding the interpretation we give to the external world. Our motives, expectations, decisions and beliefs are frequently driven by internal forces within us, of which we are completely unaware" (p. 19)

This research created in me a greater sense of self awareness and the need to constantly monitor myself for particular traits, biases in my thinking and processing. I am more self-observant and I carefully analyse my experiences, having applied some useful tools, for example, the Repertory Grid and the *Ladder of Inference*, in understanding myself. Along the way, I have identified limitations and strengths that I need to be aware of and build upon. An example was my need to work on relationship management as exposed through my self administered Repertory Grid interview – appendix F.

Part of knowing myself, is the understanding of the mental models I have formed in specific areas of the external world. Mental models are the models one uses to represent one's own picture of reality; they are built up over time and through experience and represent one's beliefs, assumptions and ways of interpreting the outside world (Kanter, 1999). This mental model, now serves as an efficient way that allows me to react quickly to changing conditions and make rapid decisions based on my presupposed model.

However, I am aware that these models may become dangerous if it is inaccurate or misleading, considering the rate of changes in my working environment. Therefore, I needed to continuously review my perceptions and assumptions of the external world and continuously question my own mental models to ensure they are consistent with reality (Kanter, 1999). An example was how my biases were exposed when I applied the *Ladder of Inference* in chapter 5, during the implementation of social enterprise.

One of the challenges I faced was knowing when I have learnt something or acquired new knowledge. As Kanter (1999) argue, learning and forgetting are critical elements of self as

a change agent because they are the primary processes through which we change and grow and are prerequisite for continuous learning.

I would argue that the operating environment of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship is becoming highly dynamic and will continue to become more complex, hence learning will become more and more essential and critical in keeping up with this world. I therefore realised that I needed the willingness to exert mental effort, curiosity, the ability to challenge others and myself, the self knowledge to permit me to maintain an objectivity and open mind toward things that appear paradoxical or contrary to my experience and a willingness to experiment, to play with ideas and to take risks (Kanter, 1999).

Kanter calls this 'double-loop learning', where one challenges one's internal beliefs and perceptions and identify new beliefs and perceptions that most effectively represent reality, thus yielding solutions to one's problems. Kanter also admit that this can be quite difficult because we have usually built up defense mechanisms that make it hard to change our internal beliefs. According to Kanter, the true test of learning is what we do differently today than what we did yesterday and also in my case, my perpetual yearn to influence or "change the world", with the knowledge I am acquiring. I believe I am on the path to this with the arrival at a working definitions and frameworks and by establishing an international development social enterprise – *Hephzibah, Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium* and the further aim of establishing a *Social Enterprise Academy* in Nigeria.

This research is idiographic in nature as it pertained to and involved the study of the practise of social enterprise at Age Concern Bexley, that is, Age Concern Bexley changing from a charity to a social enterprise - and social entrepreneurship in practice – looking at my role as a leader and change agent (Langley & Royer, 2006). This allowed me to have a lot of personal stories and reflexivity, what some writers described as 'confessional tales' (Van Maanen in Langley & Royer, 2006), as I painted a picture of how I lived through the research process, going beyond formulaic descriptions and rigid explanations, varying into emotive positions.



I need to point out that my stories and reflections were not just tales; they were related to consider their impact and relevance for the research. I used personal stories as a means to reflect and reveal the joys, anxieties and complications of research process and activities to reflect that research is not just an abstract activity set apart from normal and everyday life and that these empirical details do deepen the understanding and appreciation of the research process and output (Langley & Royer, 2006). The palm tree metaphor in chapter 2, section 2.3 is an example of this.

Therefore revealing me within the research report was a way to deal with how my biases, emotions, professional, cultural, religious, social and academic background and experiences aligned with and affected the data I collected and the interpretations I gave them. The strategy was to use them to understand and improve my interpretations of the data.

I took cognisance of the warning given by writers such as Weick (2002 in Langley & Royer, 2006) that “reflexivity is not a magic solution” (p. 88) and that over-emphasis on self can sometimes divert attention from the object of the research. As van Maanen also warned, that we need to avoid the research becoming “a black hole of introspection” (Down et. al. 2006, p.88). Therefore, I ensured that I offered rich and descriptive details and provide lessons and insights that may potentially transfer to other organisations exploring social enterprise or even other researches looking at the practise of social enterprise – as detailed section 6.1 above.

I also attempted to use narratives of self and others [the researched] because of the implications it has for epistemological claim I can draw from this research. Hence, I consciously did not avoid impoverishing my understanding of the research world by omitting references to my emotionality (Down et. al. 2006), as emotions evoked by this research provided useful data regarding the social dynamics I engaged in. An example was my experience with SMT2 and the application of the *Ladder of Inference* in section 5.5, chapter 5.

I hope I indulged in “uncomfortable reflexivity” as opposed to “comfortable reflexivity” that only leads to ‘modernist seduction – promising release from...tension, voyeurism, ethnocentrism - a release from...discomfort...” (Pillow, 2003 in Down et. al. 2006, p.103). My reflexivity was not just confessions of the soul and revelation of identity to produce emancipatory knowledge (Down et. al. 2006), “it was an attempt to grapple with difficult questions, often uncomfortable, always raising the questions: ‘so what?’” (p. 108). To reinforce this view, I have included, in the following section, an analysis and evaluation of me by a third party.

### **6.3.2 A third party’s perspective of me**

As part of a recruitment process for a job I applied for, I was asked to complete a Myers Briggs assessment in March 2007. I decided to include the written feedback from the consultant as what I found intriguing was the degree of correlation in the conclusions I drew from my self-administered repertory grid interview and the analysis drawn by the consultant, even though both assessments were done nearly two years apart. The Myers Briggs personality type indicator classified me as an ENTJ personality type i.e. Extroverted, Intuitive, Thinking and Judging. It confirms some of my characters as being intuitive, visionary and driven by logic whilst also exposing my weakness on relationship management.

I would have explored another tool/framework like 360 degrees appraisal. However, the limitation of time and the fact that I have the board of trustees and senior management team focussed and engaged on major organisational change through the implementation of social enterprise, in my judgement was enough demand on their time from me regarding this project.

I need mention that my inclusion of this data is not an endorsement of this method, I see it more as an opportunity to draw on correlating data that supports and add value to the research. See Appendix O for a copy of the Myers Briggs report.



### 6.3.3 The Bata dance metaphor

As demonstrated in this research and through the employment of repertory grid and autoethnography, I as the researcher, am both the research instrument - implicated at every stage of the study, reflexively shaping and being shaped by the research (Lapadat, et. al. 2005). What I discovered, was that my perceptions of myself, my role and of my relationships with the research issues and questions, which had at first seemed invisible and unproblematic, transformed into a dance form – the *Bata* dance.

To make sense of the research processes and experiences, I sought a metaphor to represent my experiences. The metaphor was the *Bata* dance, as the research seemed like a series of dance moves, with a rhythmic stance, very personal moves with the end move finishing on a part of the body [research], but could be any part of the body; so far it ends with the rhythm. Age Concern Bexley then became the stage, with features through which I the researcher navigate and position my movements. The research process represents the context that allows me to express my personality, character and hang ups, located within the research landscape. This metaphor came naturally to me, as I am a product of the culture and society that engages in the *Bata* dance.

*Bata* is a dance form from the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. I originated from and I am a product of this culture and was opportune to be trained on how to dance the *Bata* dance, when I was young. *Bata* moves symbolise the energy and forceful nature of the Shango deity – the god of thunder and lightning. *Bata* requires rhythm and coordination with the drum. The drum dictates the start and stops of every move and the moves involve a simultaneous movement of all the limbs, joints of the body and the outfit. *Bata* can be used as a tool of self-expression, as the moves can sometimes be individualistic and self determined, as supposed to group/strict choreography.

The uniqueness of the dance is the bodily experience it offers and the flexibility that it allows one to use any limb for each drumming sequence, but the big rule is that each sequence must end with an emphatic stance of/on any chosen part of the body, which could be the arm, leg or even the eyebrow. This, in *Bata* the dance defines the outcome.

This metaphor was a recurring one as it reiterated one of the attractive things about doing this type of research which set out with an idea of where one would like to get to, but no clear idea of the means by which you will attain it.

For example, I started the research with what I thought was a clear research issues and questions, but I had to change it thrice. I thought I could change the whole of Age Concern Bexley to a social enterprise, but I realised that I could only introduce a social enterprise project within existing organisational framework and culture rather than a complete change. The research ended up focussed as much on me as it is on Age Concern Bexley, whereas I started from the view and position that it was mainly about Age Concern Bexley and the sector.

This was because the research conjured up rhythmic images and dance steps, using all my energy and resources, but aiming to complete the moves and sequences [research cycles] on any part of the process. As I selected the cycles, I found me sequentially aiming for the next one. It was like a journey of self-discovery sometimes, sometimes self-driven, some exploratory, some determined by the process [the drum and the dance steps]. Some of the write ups were developed and delivered in varying styles, determined by the rhythm of the pace, some uniquely placed and some worthy of a study in themselves, for example, my use of autoethnography.

The *Bata* dance allowed me to stop for a while, rest, re-energised and refresh before continuing the dance, I was driving it, as I was my own choreographer. An example of this was when I self-administered the repertory grid in chapter 4 and I shared this self reflection;

*"I found this experience quite a grilling and uncomfortable, after undertaking this process. I developed a slight headache after I completed the grid - possibly also due to undertaking this exercise after a full day's work, but I can say mostly due to the experience of undergoing the self-administered interview. This was partly because I tried to make it as honest an experience, exercise and process as I possibly could as I was open minded about it. I found it quite an emotional*



*experience, confronting what I am in relation to the elements and constructs. The result was an emotionally moving experience for me. I felt my heart throbbing and I was a bit tearful, as I felt exposed. At this stage, I took a break from the process and continued the next day”.*



*Figure 5a: A picture of me as dancing the Bata dance at the New Covenant C&S Church Annual Convention, September, 2006*

When thinking of research in this way, the process becomes the product and the goal becomes the varying dance steps (Douglas, 1988). So having done the dance, I can infer that it could act as the map for those who also aim to pursue similar steps and explore social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. It seemed in this way of thinking, the outcome for me was the journey itself – the dance sequence. For others that may read this research, it could be the influence on practice, the definitions and the framework of/for social enterprise and social entrepreneurship I have developed.



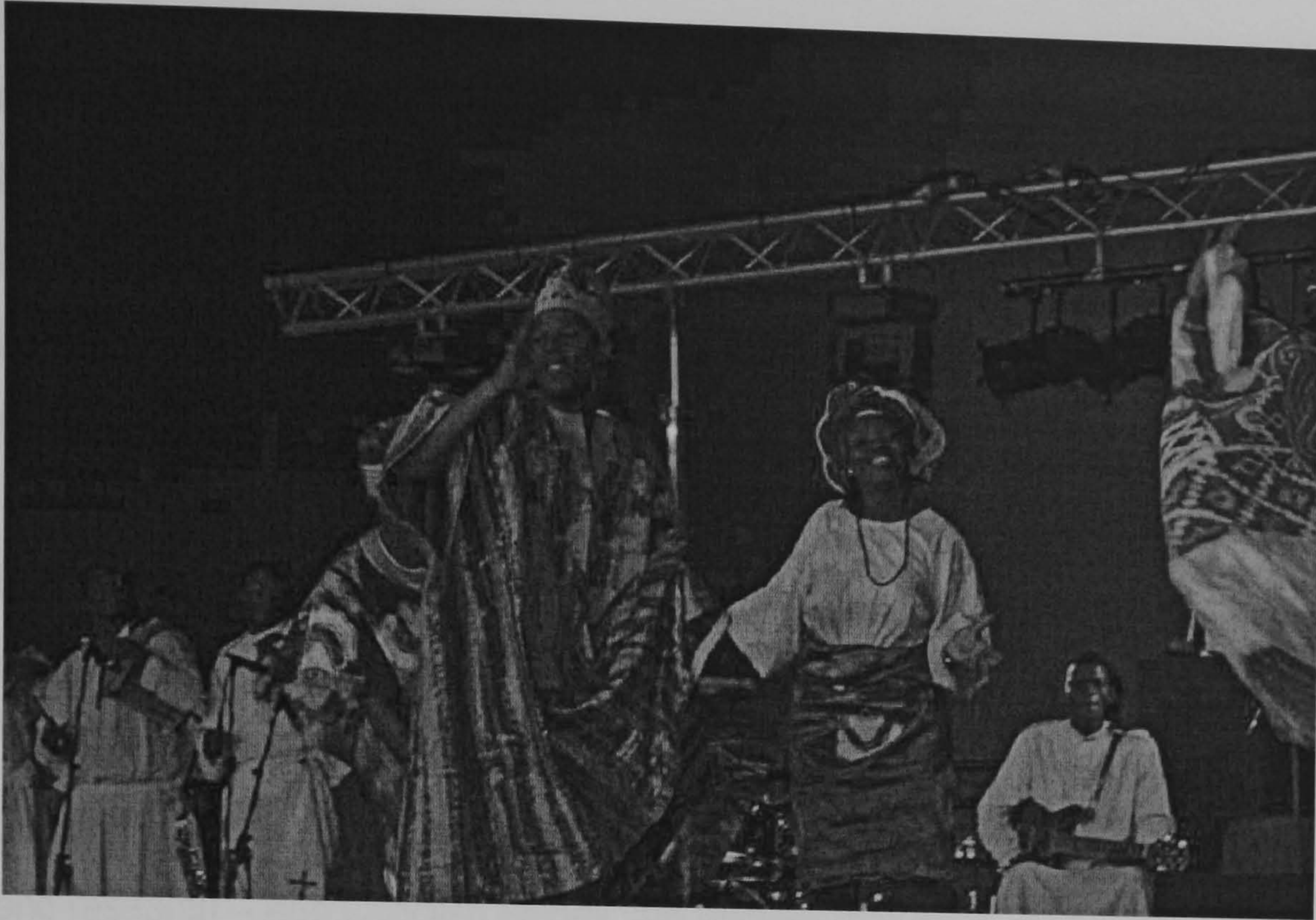
This metaphor assisted me to understand an important difference between new paradigm and traditional research. In the traditional method one starts with the map, the paths are sign-posted and one start off with a clear idea of what one will study. The aim being to enhance and expand the map, that is, that which is already known. Exploration outside of the predetermined area becomes a deviation - activity that has distracted from the main goal and purpose. This seems a very simple way of mapping the process, but it assumes that the process is static and confinable (Douglas, 1988)

The choreography of the *Bata* dance constantly changed as the moves were individually determined, as I engaged with the drumbeats, revealing myself in different ways to the various audiences and co-dancers and as I self reflect the more. When I found myself in situations like this, each dance move became a unique experience, revealing new things – some of which I recorded as part of the data. In a dance form of this nature, what I, the dancer, produced, I hope may be of use to others. This may mean that the ‘validity’ of the outcome may partially depend on the experience, if this turn out to be the case; I aim not to control or influence it.

I also realised that the *Bata* dance will be challenging to an audience that have never experienced the *Bata* dance [social enterprise and social entrepreneurship] and knows nothing about the movements and the belief system that underlies it. This in itself posed a challenge for me as a researcher and practitioner as the audience may demand choreography, a map, a framework and guide into the social enterprise world.

To such audience – the trustees and Senior management team, for example – it did seem a grave omission and even irresponsibility on my part, as social enterprise was not well defined when I started the research, so how could I expect and convince them to engage with it if the understandings and interpretations are still fuzzy and can be individualised by me.





*Figure 5b: A picture of other performers and me dancing the Bata dance at the New Covenant C&S Church Annual Convention, September, 2006*

This was one of the difficulties I faced in communicating my views [the *Bata* dance] on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship to the audience, as there was no shared and agreed definition of the concept and practice. This was also doubly difficult as considerable power lies with me, as the Chief Executive – the leader and the change agent - and as the holder and owner of the paradigm. However, I still engaged in the *Bata* dance, the research I describe as self-expression with original purpose (Douglas, 1988).

The post-modern turn in organisational literature and studies, has allowed for notable exceptions in the way research are recorded, as it has interjected issues of perspective, voice, subjectivity, emotion and reflexivity, into methodical conversation (Kisfalvi, 2006). As Irwin (2006, in Kisfalvi, 2006) puts it, “to throw one’s self into the field, body and soul, is now not only a valid stance, but marks investigatory excellence” (p.110). This was exactly what I did in the research, by demonstrating the varying *Bata* steps.

These elements can be seen as a source of bias (Kisfalvi, 2006), but for me they were not, as I did not deny them and I ensured I examined them, making them valuable sources of



insight. To reduce the distortions that could be caused by my anxieties and subjectivity, I acknowledged them and paid particular attention to moments of anxieties that arose during the research process – for example, when interacting with the senior management team and trustees and when analysing research data. Hence, my subjective emotional reactions played a vital role in bringing a deeper level of understanding to the findings of the research.

By allowing me, my voice and my person and emotions to interact with the research, whilst reflecting on them, they made me more aware, more transparent and less bias, in my view. They also became tools that enhanced my understanding of the experiences I had during the course of the research and the relationship that emerged with the subjects of the data and research – Age Concern Bexley, the trustees and senior management team.

For example, as I explored Age Concern Bexley and started developing social enterprise services, it became clear to me that Age Concern Bexley represented something that went beyond a mere research subject (if such a thing actually exist) with whom I could maintain a certain distance. I also realised, from comments and feedback from the trustees and senior management team, that I in turn elicited a certain amount of anxiety on Age Concern Bexley as an organisation.

As a member of trustee once said to me at a meeting:

*"You are quite formidable, I won't want to get into a disagreement or fight with you".*

What Age Concern Bexley and I felt, was sort of double or mirror anxiety, one that created a certain level of confusion in me, causing me to ask myself whose anxiety it was that I was feeling or "whose dream was I dreaming (Giami, 2001 in Kisfalvi, 2006).

I vividly remembered sitting in my office one evening, after working hours, feeling frustrated about my job and Age Concern Bexley's inability to respond to change and take on the challenges thrown at it. As I did so, Age Concern Bexley began to emerge for me once



again, not as a research study, but as a real organisation with a past, an organisation I had forged real, albeit complex and often problematic and difficult relationship with. I began to feel empathic for the challenges it faced and how it was developed from nothing to a medium sized Age Concern organisation, compared to many of its peers. I started to reflect on its accomplishments, how it survived many political and environmental changes thrown at it well before my time as the Chief Executive and how it must have survived it, despite not taking on a social enterprise organisation model. I started to feel the upbeat tempo of the drumbeats to the *Bata* dance.

My feelings became mixed as I started feeling real sadness for this organisation, whose past had also moulded it into a complex, wary and rigid organisation, one that finds it very hard to change with the times, one that I struggle at best of times to form real relationship with. I allowed these emotions to become conscious feelings, as I began to mourn all that Age Concern Bexley could have been, had it embraced some of the changes and opportunities that came with the changes in the past. The *Bata* tempo slowed down.

I then asked myself the question of whom or what Age Concern Bexley is for me. I questioned if it was an outlet to demonstrate my social entrepreneurship skills, leadership traits, business abilities and drive for change, as a change agent, or that I have converted Age Concern Bexley to my social enterprise laboratory to self-actualise my personal vision for social enterprise to become a sector, a stage to dance the *Bata* dance, a place for my academic self-indulgence.

What I did was to translate the knowledge I have garnered into behavior, creating the ability to model that behavior to influence others into taking requisite actions, for example, by establishing *Hephzibah* and *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium*. Having gained a better knowledge of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, I am now translating that into personal actions that can potentially become a role model for others to follow and become motivated and knowledgeable about social enterprise and social entrepreneurship – more details in the following chapter.

Wherever possible, of course, I will aim to share as much knowledge as possible to encourage others to dance their own dance – *Bata* or not - act independently and develop their own internally and situation-driven behavior. For example, I have shared the outcome of this research with colleagues at Age Concerns in London and voluntary sector organisations in Bexley.

I will continue to deliver seminar and conference lectures on social enterprise any time such opportunities emerge, more so now that I have been nominated as one of the UK ambassador of the *Third Sector Leadership Centre*. I hope by doing these, the value of this knowledge will increase and this knowledge shared and used by others may find ways to improve upon it or innovate. I aim to become a "sharing-expert" (Kanter, 1991) in the field of social enterprise and also to become recognised as an expert on the subject.

This research has been fairly life changing for me and has led me to make some personal decisions. Age Concern Bexley appears to have a slower pace and appetite for change than I relish, thereby slowing my pace and repressing my hunger to practice social enterprise. I did resign in June 2007, to continue my sojourn to make more impact and to fully use my social entrepreneurial skill in other spheres.

#### **6.4 Other developments at Age Concern Bexley...after the change**

In my view, Age Concern Bexley has moved on from the level scepticism to accepting that social enterprise is a model it wants to explore and engage. This was partly due to the success of the Handy Person scheme – the organisation has increased the level of custom by over 60%, the income projection have been met within the first 12 months of operations and response time has improved by nearly 90%.

Age Concern Bexley got out of the box as we offered something that says that "...the Social Enterprise model can deliver for everybody and that it is in fact a more sustainable and healthier economic model for growth and development..." (Grove, 2001 in SEL 2001, p.11)



The senior management team and I had a review meeting in December 2006 where this research was shared with them. I was expecting reactions to some of the judgemental comments I made, but none were given, I suspect the power dynamic played out. A few decisions were made which we all believed could aid the future transition into social enterprise.

At this session, it was agreed that training and seminar sessions on social enterprise for the trustees and the senior management team will be organised and that there will be a skills audit. Examples of skills that the organisation now requires from its trustees are: financial and accounting, business development, project management, business planning, legal, contracts and local authority commissioning.

As one of the senior manager suggested at this meeting:

*"Let's get the right people on the board by positive recruitment. May be we can set up a CIC with a new board, not the old one. The present trustees are at the end of their reign"[SMT1].*

It was concluded that there is a lot of work to be done to make these happen and it was equally agreed that traditional services are on their way out, that Age Concern Bexley is need of new money and that a team and participative approach is what is required to make the transition easier. It was agreed that Age Concern Bexley commissions a research to identify where the service gaps are, with evidence of need before it commences on any new service development into social enterprise. This I also proposed as an area of future research for Age Concern Bexley.

To achieve and sustain this, a new administrative team staff structure had been developed and implemented to provide additional support for all senior managers and across the organisation. The position of a Volunteer Co-ordinator was created, to enable strategic focus and development of volunteers and volunteering. Cost Centre budget management system is now initiated and implemented

The quarterly newsletter, *Age Connection* has now been revamped into a tabloid style/format and is generating advertisement with the aim of it becoming self-sustaining, income generating and engaging stakeholders more. *Team Brief*, an internal staff newsletter, has now been introduced to cater for internal communication with both volunteers and staff, whilst a dedicated page has been allocated to volunteers in *Age Connection*. A monthly *Chief Exec Update* is now in place to inform and engage Trustees of activities and developments. Team meetings among all staff, including Day Centre Managers are now scheduled monthly.

Work had been completed to update the web site as a communication and PR tool – see [www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk). The organisation has purchased and installed *Charity Log* – an information management system - to be used by the information service and other services such as foot care service and wheelchair loan, to ensure better data capture for monitoring, strategic planning and service development. The IT systems and infrastructure have been upgraded at HQ, Day Centres and at four out of the eight pop in parlours in operation.

Training sessions were organised for the trustees on “full cost recovery”, governance and SORP in 2007 and the first half of some of the senior management team meetings are now converted to seminar-like sessions on social enterprise, sometimes inviting external speakers. The service level agreement with Bexley Council is now updated and had been agreed to commence from April 2007 to March 2010. The organisation has agreed the development of a three-year business plan with the trustees, from 2007 to 2010, with detailed annual work plan, to align with the Service Level Agreement’s life span.

The developments highlighted above were not only implemented because of the research, they are organisational issues that required addressing, some of which were exposed having gone through an organisation design. This is in line with Hands (2007) “task” approach to organisation design, that it enables the design of the requisite social “structures” and “systems” that are required to achieve those purposes, hence the *form* of the organisation should its function (Hands, 2007)



The senior management team and trustees now share an appreciation and the conclusion that Age Concern Bexley is not and could not become a fully-fledged social enterprise and maybe it does not want to be as it is comfortable in its history and culture. However, the senior management team and trustees have also agreed certain positions, concerning where and what Age Concern Bexley should do to develop it further and better as an organisation. Age Concern Bexley is resolved not to lose its charitable purpose and ethos, but the senior management team and trustees agree that the organisation needs to start to manage services in a more business-like fashion.

This became more pertinent, because at a local strategic partnership meeting that the senior management team and I attended in January 2007, it was publicly announced that the local economy is experiencing financial constraints that will impact on the voluntary sector in general and Age Concern Bexley in particular. Bexley Care Trust was tackling approximately £16m budget deficit, hence rapidly changing its commissioning process and undergoing a major organisational restructuring and service redesign. Bexley Council on the other hand is evaluating all services against the “Value for Money” criteria, aiming for a £10m savings so as not to increase Council Tax, whilst increasing the threshold for access to social care from moderate to substantial.

The implications of these on Age Concern Bexley are that there are greater scrutiny of some of the commissioned services like the Day Centres and the Night Centre. This could lead to closure of some of these centres; hence staff redundancies and loss of approximately £95k from the grant envelope over the next three years. Bexley Care Trust has also reduced podiatrist service, leaving many vulnerable older people without foot care services.

What the senior management team, trustees and I have agreed to do, most of which are now at varied implementation stages, are to set up 3 self sustaining foot care clinics in the borough, establish two fee paying “Active Ageing Centres” at Crayford and Slade Green, to replace the Day Centres that may be eventually closed and lost due to the changes in social care criteria the local authority aim to implement. Age Concern Bexley is also

increasing charges for Handy Person to £5 per hour as supposed to £5 flat rate and will start charging for wheel chair loan – first week free, 2<sup>nd</sup> week and thereafter at £10 per a week. See appendix P for the updated Handy Person leaflet indicating the new charges and appendix Q for a copy of the wheel chair loan service poster with the new pricing model and appendix R for the Foot Care Clinic leaflet.

To achieve this, the trustees have agreed that all projects need to be self-sustaining or self-sufficient, whilst taking on the principles of ‘full cost recovery’, with detailed business plans and costing. The organisation has developed a comprehensive communication strategy to address public perception and understanding of this new direction of travel i.e. ensure the public see Age Concern Bexley as a champion, providing services where there are needs and gaps rather than being perceived as a business. See appendix S for a copy of the advertorial published in the *Bexley Extra* of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007.

There are future intentions to make some staff redundant – administrative and Night Centre staff especially – with further intention to restructure the organisation, to ensure that the organisation is ‘lean and mean’, whilst integrating the new service models in the appropriate departments and establishing a structure that can take on this new challenges and ways of operating.

Other resolutions that have been agreed are to keep abreast of new research about older people and services and ensure that this information is incorporated into service planning. Age Concern Bexley aims to implement Age Concern England’s monitoring and evaluation toolkit to develop performance measures, specifically outcome indicators for existing services and any services developed in future.

The organisation is planning to conduct an analysis of competitors and stakeholders, in order to work out a strategy for reconfiguring local relationships. It aims to request the support of an Age Concern England field worker to carry out an audit and evaluation of its governance. Trustees’ and senior management ‘away day’ is being planned for 2007, to explore other strategies for growth and diversification.



I resigned from Age Concern Bexley in June 2007. To update the research data coupled with my wanting to know where the organisation is a year after the change, in March 2008, I interviewed two of the senior managers that were part of the change process and are still employed by Age Concern Bexley – these are the two that could make themselves available.

One acknowledged some of the ongoing benefits;

*"At least we can say that we have some independence from statutory sector funding, which means our Handy person can be self-sustained. We now have the potential to develop our Handy person service without being dependent on grant funding". [SMT2]*

Both of them still share the sustainability and income generating argument (Sherill, 2002 and DTI, 2002).

*"The Handy person service as a social enterprise is bringing more money into the organisation to sustain other services. There are more funds now to maximise grants and achieve sustainable growth". [SMT3]*

*"I think the advantage is income generation and self-sustainability, we will not be tied to just restricted funds"[SMT 2]*

*"We realised we had more talent and capacity than we thought. Other voluntary agencies in Bexley seem to admire our entrepreneurial spirit and ask us for advice" [SMT3]*

*"Absorbing the new Handy person service was a burden, but once the activities became routine, the problem diminished. It became an opportunity to broaden our viewpoint and explore new methods and systems."[SMT2]*

A sense of optimism and pride were also expressed, for achieving the change;

*"If we keep getting it right, it will continuously raise the profile of Age Concern Bexley". [SMT3]*

These comments reassured me that the change from a charity to a social enterprise has been of benefit, with challenges, to Age Concern Bexley.

## 6.5 Conclusion

I will conclude that for an organisation changing from a charity to a social enterprise, some of the challenges and lessons learnt from the Age Concern Bexley experience, as detailed in section 6.1 above are of relevance and need to be taken on board. I will also argue that the role of the social entrepreneurial leader is also pivotal to this change.

I believe the research overall has contributed to not just me the researcher, but also to knowledge, theory and practice, as the next chapter details.



# Chapter Seven

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## **7. Contributions to knowledge, theory and practice**

What this research aim to explore are driven by the research questions and the issues that arise from literature, the views of practitioners and the organisational issues that Age Concern Bexley confronts due to its changing environment – as detailed in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.

These are that arise from literature, complemented by the views practitioners the need for a working definition of social enterprise to enable a better understanding of the field (Sherrill 2002; Dees 1998; Thompson 2000), being able to clarify what constitutes social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, knowing what it takes to change an organisation from a charity to a social enterprise coupled and the challenges that come with this (Pharoah 2004; Hartigan & Billimora 2005; ECOTEC 2003, Mapp 2002) and having an insight into these experiences from the lens of a social entrepreneur, leader and change agent (Dees 1998; Hartigan 2002; Davis 2002).

The purpose of this chapter is to summarised and demonstrate the research's contributions to knowledge, theory and practice, whilst ascertaining how well the research questions and issues raised above have been addressed in the research.

### **7.1 Contributions to knowledge and theory**

Through this research, a working definition of social enterprise was arrived at, as “a business with a social mission”. By arriving at a working definition, this research has addressed the issue raised by some writers and practitioners for the need for clarity about what social enterprise means (Lloyd, 2003, Martin & Osberg, 2007). For those that also hold the view that it is challenging to define social enterprise and its conceptual boundaries (Smallbone, 2001; Sherill, 2002), arriving at a working definition does assist in addressing

this challenge. I therefore argue that this research has provided some cohesion around the debates among practitioners and academics about what social enterprise is.

As I argued, in section 3.3.3, the working definition is not an over-rigid definition; rather it offers prevention from differentiated understanding and intellectual dilemmas facing social enterprise. Therefore, the definition also offers, a conceptual and explanatory guidance to the meaning of social enterprise and a balance between 'business' and 'social' objectives (DTI, 2002 p.17).

This research also enables those in the field to know a social enterprise when they see one, as the research provides a template of what constitutes a social enterprise by developing a framework of social enterprise, as a business that generates revenue, that must have a social mission(s), with clear demonstration of entrepreneurial features and must be financially self-sustaining or self-sufficient. This addresses the need for a set of defined features or criteria of what constitutes or could constitute a social enterprise that some writers and practitioners agitate for (Dees, 1998; Sherrill, 2002), some of who clamour for "guidelines for operationalising" social enterprise (Reid & Griffith, 2005).

One needs to acknowledge that some organisations may want to claim to be or stay as a form of hybrid – that is, still retaining their voluntary sector cum charity status and having social enterprise practices and/or services as part of their organisational design (Dees, 1998). The position of this research on this is that this should be encouraged so far it supports the organisation's strategic aims and objectives - Age Concern Bexley is a case in point.

However, this does not make the organisation a social enterprise. At best, the descriptor that can be used for them is to identity them as a charity or voluntary organisation that engages in social enterprise. For example, one would not describe Shell UK limited as a charity just because one of its charitable subsidiary is Shell LiveWIRE, a charity funded by Shell UK limited that provides advice and support to young entrepreneur.



Through literature review, this research has also consolidated some of the key factors responsible for the emergence of social enterprise. These are: the global context (Reis, 1999; Botsman, 2002; Smallbone, 2002), public service reform (Mayo, 2001), the emergence of social entrepreneurs (Boschee, 1995), funding challenge (Boschee, 1995; DTI, 2002), the increase call for social responsibility (Reis, 1999; Cannon, 2000; Botsman, 2001) and the increasing interests and enthusiasm (DTI, 2002; Thomas, 2005). Although the research concedes that the list may not be exhaustive, however it provides a starting point for other researchers interested in the field.

A working definition of social entrepreneurship was also not well defined in literature and some practitioners confessed to being attributed the label without knowing what it meant – for example convergence interviewees CR-12 and CR-13. This research as therefore arrived at a more comprehensive working definition of social entrepreneurship as *'any person that creates opportunities, combining innovation, vision and values, whilst ensuring self-sufficient and/or self sustained earned income strategies to pursue a social mission'*. This definition combines the features and characteristics developed in literature and those expressed by practitioners, thereby creating a better understanding of this concept.

The research also developed a set of social entrepreneur descriptors. These are: "innovator" (Dees, 2001); "relationship manager" (Botsman, 2001); "resource manager" (Dees, 2001); "creator of social wealth and values" (Hartigan, 2002; Dees, 2001; Emerson, 1996); "steward" (Brinckeroffh, 2003); "opportunities' creator" (Guclu as quoted in Sherill, 2002 and Dees, 2001) and "visionary" (Dees, 2001; Ashoka, 2003; Smallbone, 2001; Martin & Osberg, 2007). These descriptors can be adopted as a framework for self-evaluation for those that adopt this label.

This research postulates models of social enterprise, based more on ideological and philosophical stance , as supposed to existing practice in the field, where classifications are based on typologies (Pharaoh et. al., 2004; Arthur et. al.; 2006). The seven models are: "altruistic model" (Lloyd, 2003; Heath, 2002); "mental model" (Black, 2002; Doran, 2002), "citizenship model" (Botsman, 2002; DTI, 2002); "regeneration model" (DTI, 2002;



Alexander, 2002; Lloyd, 2003); “social firm model” (Higgins, 2000); “Marxist model” (Amin, 2002) and the “sectoral location model” (Pharoah et. al. 2004). These models, offer an alternative lens via which social enterprises can be viewed and understood. These models are also helpful in exploring the complexities and challenges that come with defining and engaging with social enterprise.

This research established an argument for social enterprise becoming a separate and distinct sector, an argument supported by some writers (McLeod, 1997; Hamaoui, 2005). The research also argues that social enterprise, even as a separate and distinct sector needs to give cognisance to and acknowledge that there will be strategic and operational interfaces and/or overlaps cum relationships with the other existing sectors. Therefore, for example, rather than organisations like Age Concern Bexley tethering on the edge whilst struggling with ethical, cultural and organisational dilemmas, having social enterprise as a separate sector would assist such organisations decide what it wants to be and what sector it wants to belong to.

The social enterprise sector, this research describes as a sector populated by organisations, institutions and companies that are characterised by being self-financing, economically self-sustaining, operate on the free market, but who want to be measured and judged by their social purpose(s) (Kaospilot 2005; Bob Kuhry 2003; Alessanddrini 2002). This research hold the position that social enterprise is not necessarily an alternative to charities or the private sector; it needs to be a separate sector, but a complementary partner to existing sectors that brings different skills, resources, approaches and objectives. See appendix T for a copy of my letter published in *Community Care Magazine*, September 2005, arguing for sector differentiation.

This research is possibly one a few in the field that examines and explicates the journey, challenges and obstacles of an organisation aiming to move from being a charity to a social enterprise, with a social entrepreneur as the leader and change agent. The chapter on challenges and lessons learnt therefore creates a form of roadmap for others that may aim to pursue a similar change as writers and practitioners have been agitating for such a



“road map”. (Lloyd, 2003, Martin & Osberg, 2007 and Respondent 3 and Respondent 6 – are examples).

This research, in my knowledge, is also one of a few documented in the field where the ‘voices’ and views of practitioners and non practitioners are reflected, as supposed to mainly academics, to inform definitions and frameworks. This addresses the call for research of and about social entrepreneurs (Young’s (2006) as many want to know about “this new breed of not-for-profit managers” that are evolving, learning and adapting to a new political, economic and social environment (Boschee, 1995).

This research explicates the role, actions and reflections of a social entrepreneur in a non social enterprise or non entrepreneurial environment. It is a unique insight into the persona, experiences, challenges and ethical dilemmas such character confronts in such an environment. The result of this, the research argues, provides further knowledge and enlightenment about the character of a social entrepreneur and also inform debates about the values of a social entrepreneur and the issue of whether having a social entrepreneur is a necessity and/or requirement or not in practicing or implementing or establishing social enterprises. Based on this research, the conclusion reached is that a social entrepreneur is required for such transition, to ensure the sustenance of the values and the drive, especially at challenging times, as demonstrated by the experience at Age Concern Bexley.

By writing one’s self into my own work as a major character, this research challenged some of the accepted views about silent authorship, where the researcher’s voice is not included in the presentation of findings (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997 in Reed-Danahay, 2002). Hence the research made a bold move of employing and demonstrating the application of autoethnography – an upcoming research method – that allows the researcher’s voice to be heard and distinct in the research, (Muncey, 2005).

Autoethnography, in this research, became a form of writing that makes one’s experiences a topic of investigation in its own right (Ellis & Bochner, 2000 and Reed-Danahay, 2002)

and "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). This one hopes enables the readers of this research to feel the truth of my stories and become co-participants, "...engaging the storyline morally, emotionally, aesthetically and intellectually" (p. 745).

The research demonstrates that the use of metaphors can be an important tool in research as it assists in explaining views and the connections between me as the researcher, an individual and a practitioner. For example, the 'wall paper' metaphor was used to describe Age Concern Bexley's internal and local environment and the palm tree metaphor provided a means of awarding significant meaning to an era of my life by trying to capture the essence of what it represents (Muncey, 2005). The *Bata* dance allowed me, as the researcher, the opportunity to liken the research processes and experiences to a series of dance moves, with the research environment, Age Concern Bexley, becoming "the stage" and "the dance floor" (Douglas, 1988). The use of metaphors became a tool for creative thinking, for questioning embedded assumptions and as a mode of interpreting an organisational environment (Gaddefors, 2007).

This research also demonstrates how theories from another field can be employed to explain issues and concepts, in this instance the application of labelling theories to unpack social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. The value added of labelling theory to this research is that one can conclude that social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are labels – but not just mere labels – and that they are deviants from the traditional charity or voluntary sector practices (Becker, 1963).

Through this research, one can also infer that it will be challenging, not impossible, for a charity to totally change to a social enterprise. Such organisation may need a gradual transition and must be willing to re-examine its core values, mission and strategic objectives, as Age Concern Bexley experienced.



## 7.2 Contributions to practice

### 7.2.1 At Age Concern Bexley

In my view, the research created the forum and environment to clearly redefine Age Concern Bexley's mission, whilst taking it through a change from a charity to a social enterprise. When I joined Age Concern Bexley, even some board members were not always clear about the organisation's mission. The confusion about the mission was associated with the lack of clarity about roles, responsibilities, boundaries and environmental impact on what the organisation did. This was important as Adams (2005) claims that mission is the *raison d'être* of an organisation i.e. why it exists, that mission must be re-examined and refreshed periodically if an organisation is to remain dynamic

The recommendation to practitioners, citing the experience from this research, is that one needs to establish an effective governance model that will enable and ensure that the board of trustees [where applicable] owns the organisation's mission, creates standard of accountability and plays a role in balancing the interest and power of the staff and leadership with the interest and needs of the community.

For example, at Age Concern Bexley, the trustees' agenda now includes update on strategic plans and activities with specific report on the Handy Person service. A new initiative called "Board Champions" " has been created. "Board Champions are leads for older people across the organisation, with the responsibility for ensuring that older people remain a priority within the organisation, whilst supporting the development and implementation of corporate strategies in the allocated area(s) of service(s). Each "Board Champion" is expected to have periodic meetings with staff and visit to service sites/locations and feedback issues and development related to their respective area(s) of service(s) at board meetings.

In my judgement, Age Concern Bexley is now a better-managed organisation, with a clear mission, well-defined program goals and strategies, measurable outcomes and some

employees that possess some of the skills required to effectively execute their responsibilities. This allows Age Concern Bexley to address one of the key challenges raised by Doran (2002) that "It's very hard to find skilled people who understand how to run a business and who buy into our social agenda as well" (p.2) In addition, Age Concern Bexley now have a defined structure with lines of supervision and clear roles and responsibilities. For example the annual plan for 2006/2007 now indicates who is responsible for what and when, linking them to the strategic objectives.

With this new set up, what can be recommended to practitioners, that Age Concern Bexley now has, are mechanisms for honest dialogue and ongoing reflection. Senior management and trustees' meetings' dynamics have changed, nowadays appearing like a setting for critical reflections on how things are going and how to make adjustments in the face of new information and changing environment. For example, the trustees and senior management team are jointly working on the news of imminent cuts in funding allocation by both Bexley Council and Bexley Care Trust. One needs to say that the organisation still needs to work on this to perfect it, but my view is that with the adoption of social enterprise, Age Concern Bexley is on the right path.

It is important to me that the enterprise model at Age Concern Bexley succeeds and it is equally important that I am not isolated or poorly understood in a stressed-out environment. So I had to build a "field", i.e. a space that willingly shares its winning ideas that help others to understand the social enterprise story (Bradach and Foster, 2005). In developing Age Concern Bexley as a social enterprise, we have had to 'frame the field for others' [other Age Concern organisations, for example] (Schwab, 2004), using every opportunity to describe the experiences and emphasising the benefits social enterprise had played in galvanising systemic and organisational change using entrepreneurial approaches to modify the services.

For example, I have given presentations about the Handy Person scheme to other Age Concern organisations in London, at a service innovation show case events. I am also encouraging other senior management team to do this where opportunities arise. This I will



suggest that proponents and champions of social enterprise to take on board as a way of increasing the knowledge of and about social enterprise, addressing the issues raised by some writers and practitioners about not knowing enough about the practice. For example, Hartigan and Billimoria (2005) used the elephant metaphor to expose the varying views and limited understanding of social enterprise whilst Hill (2002) concluded that many people are fuzzy about what it means.

As a social entrepreneur – and I will suggest other practitioners to adopt this - I believe that I have a responsibility to ensure the continuation of this work when I move on. Thus, I have invested in further training, mentoring and coaching for the senior managers, who are likely to succeed me (Schwab, 2004); by increasing the annual budgetary allocation on training and building it into annual work plans.

The research and practice experience taught me that establishing a social enterprise service is the start and not the end. One does need to explore further and think ahead. At Age Concern Bexley for example, there is now the drive to maximise the strategic alliances with other Age Concern organisations as well as with relevant public and even private sector organisations locally, to increase the scalability of the social enterprise initiatives. For example, Age Concern Bexley is now aiming to pursue more Handy Person contracts with registered social landlords, like Bexley Orbit Housing Association and Gallions Housing Associations.

Age Concern Bexley has also recognised that it needs to be able to continue to provide services, which promote independent living and offer choice. This addresses the industry changes raised by Barker (2005) that over the next 10-15 years, social care services for all adults will have greater emphasis on choice. In response to this, Age Concern Bexley is aiming to develop more social enterprise services that both provide jobs in the community and an invaluable service to its clients – older people in Bexley. Some examples are foot care clinics [see appendix R] and wheelchair hire [see appendix Q].

### 7.2.2 At Bexley local economy

The experience, through this research, makes one to conclude that to expand the field of practice of/for social enterprise, practitioners need to take a bold and vocal stand, sometimes take on a leadership role or act as advocates or ambassadors for the field (Pharoah et. al 2004; Hamaoui 2005).

I delivered a presentation to all Chief Executives of voluntary sector organisations in Bexley in September 2006, as part of the feedback on the research and to showcase the success of the Handy Person service. This triggered a high level of interest in social enterprise, especially debates about self-sustenance. This group has now set up a working group to start exploring modalities to develop self-sustaining culture and relationship of parity with the local authority – the major funder of the voluntary sector in Bexley. A training seminar on ‘full cost recovery’ was organised for all chief officers or their equivalent in 2006 as the starting point.

There was a meeting with one of the senior local authority officer in September 2006 and since the meeting, there has been some change in attitude, with Bexley local authority now providing some extra support and resources for social businesses within its locality and now promising to employ a paid worker that will coordinate social enterprise in the local authority area.

Seven organisations, including Age Concern Bexley and led by me, has now set up *Bexley Social Enterprise Consortium*. The initial terms of reference are, on a short term to jointly identify areas of efficiency savings via partnership work and shared back office. On a medium term, the aim is to identify potential joint ventures. The current focus is on community transport as all the organisations involved have mini buses and the opportunity was just emerging to take over the Bexley Council's transport fleet, if the business case stacks up. On the longer term, the aim is to explore the development and establishment of a community resource building cum center for the voluntary sector in Bexley.



There are plans to organise series of seminars, inviting key decision makers from Bexley Council, Bexley Care Trust and some local private sector organisations, to discuss the merits and potentials of supporting social enterprise development in Bexley. The first business breakfast meeting was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007.

My view is, if the voluntary sector in Bexley local authority area want to deliver public services and be self sustained, I believe that there is a need to adopt more business-like approach and develop professionalism, overcoming widespread antipathy, indifference and misunderstanding towards private sector practices (Sheffield, 2006).

### **7.2.3 Age Concerns across London**

This research also concludes that social entrepreneurs and practitioners of social enterprise can make a tectonic shift (Boschee, 1995) in changing the landscape and that if social entrepreneurs and practitioners make the effort to share their experiences and make bold moves to change the landscape of practice, it will address the issue of limited knowledge and understanding of social enterprise. Below are some examples.

At a pan London Chief Officers' and Chairs' meeting in January 2006, a seminar was held on social enterprise, exploring the concept and learning more about its practical application to the delivery of services within Age Concerns in London. At this meeting, I delivered a talk, sharing the experience of the Handy Person service at Age Concern Bexley. It was then concluded, that across the board, there were limited knowledge, resource, capacity and know-how to develop social enterprises at Age Concerns across London.

As a result of this, a group of Chief Officers, including myself, were asked to look at raising a grant to pay for a consultant. The role of this consultant is to identify key and common issues and challenges about how to introduce social enterprise into Age Concern organisations, managing the risk, governance issues, legal structures, pricing, market research and user involvement.

In parallel to this, the group is considering the feasibility of establishing jointly owned trading companies, which will put Age Concerns across London in a good stead to address the changes in service commissioning by Social Services department and Primary Care Trusts. Part of the objective is to also explore the development of services commissioned by older people using a social enterprise model whilst fully noting the risks that could and/or may arise from all the above. I gave a presentation in April 2006, sharing Age Concern Bexley's foot care clinics' business plan and service model that led to the award of a £17k grant from Age Concern England towards the capital set up cost for this clinic to be established at Erith, Kent.

This has now led to the establishment of *Age Concerns in London Business Development Group*. This group has been tasked to recognise the need for Age Concerns in London to diversify their income streams and to develop a model approach to commercial activities within the context of charitable status and in line with the values of Age Concerns. With the anticipated increase in competition for/in traditional Age Concerns market, this group has been asked to develop a coordinated approach and response to identify new markets and increase potentials.

It is also proposed that the *Age Concerns in London Business Development Group* investigates ways of generating new income, develop income generation capacity within the region and across regions, where and if possible and practicable. Membership of this group includes me, a chair of one of the Age Concern in London, Age Concern Enterprise Development Manager, the London Regional Coordinator and four other London Chief Officers, which includes me.

This group's current projects are:

- a. Exploring a London wide equity release package, working and partnering with an established commercial organisations in the field
- b. Establishing a support service organisation that can provide 'back office' support for Age Concerns to achieve efficiency savings and
- c. Developing a charity 'rag trade' enterprise.



#### 7.2.4 Developments at international arenas

From the analysis from a study carried out by Barendsen & Gardner (2004), they concluded that social entrepreneurs are unusual in a number of ways that like many people they usually have deeply rooted beliefs that are formed early. They further argue that some social entrepreneurs' beliefs stem directly from spiritual or religious upbringing, which appears to be the case with me.

With others that shared my faith and vision, we have now established an organisation named *Hephzibah*. The first project commenced in November 2006 during a visit to Nigeria. We shipped some used computers and printers to Nigeria and also raised some fund to refurbish the library of one of the secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria, to be converted into an IT resource centre cum internet café.

To ensure self-sustenance, the business model is to allow members of the public to have access but charge below current market rate, whilst students will only pay token fees to use it. Income raised via this will be used to sustain the centre. A second centre is now established at Kaduna, in the northern part of Nigeria, an area with higher level of deprivation and low educational take up. In May 2008, a fourteen bed orphanage was also established at Ibadan in Nigeria.

My next project is the establishment of a *Social Enterprise Academy* in Nigeria. This academy will train individuals that aim to pursue social entrepreneurship and will also provide them with business support and incubation services. The ultimate goal is for this organisation to become the main advocate for the recognition and practice of social enterprise across Africa.

I am currently in negotiation with a publishing outfit to publish a book that will tell the story of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, through the lens of a social entrepreneur.

### 7.3 Conclusion

This research shares the challenges of implementing and adopting social enterprise, especially for charitable organisations. The research also stresses the importance of social entrepreneurs in this context to ensure that are greater understanding of this character and their roles in managing organisational change. The chapter also exposes the fact that social entrepreneurs need learning through practical action, self enquiry and support (Phillip, 2007).

By reflecting on the findings of this research, the field of social enterprise ought to become better at identifying when entrepreneurial flair combined with social commitment will result in strong leadership and lead to the establishment of effective, sustainable organisations. Learning form the Age Concern Bexley's example of change from a charity to a social enterprise, led by a social entrepreneurial leader, the field should become better at understanding the triggers and barriers to individual and organisational growth.



# Chapter Eight

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## 8. Conclusion

The justifications of and for this research are the combinations of personal interest in the field as a social entrepreneur, issues facing Age Concern Bexley, considering the environmental context and also questions that emerge from literature and data from practitioners interviewed, using varied methods. The research arrived at a working definition of social enterprise as the need for a working definition was identified and to enable a better understanding of the field and practice. The limited clarity about what constitutes social enterprise and social entrepreneurship was also addressed by the research by developing frameworks.

The research then shares the practice of social enterprise by exploring the experiences and challenges faced by Age Concern Bexley in changing from a charity to a social enterprise, so that others can learn from it. There was also a reflection on the roles and character of a social entrepreneur during organisational change, providing the opportunity to see organisational change from the lens of a social entrepreneur (Dees 1998; Hartigan 2002; Davis 2002)

Through this research, one can deduce that social enterprise is challenging to do and establishing a social enterprise within an existing charity is definitely a challenge, especially if taken to scale, as the Age Concern Bexley example demonstrates. The research also demonstrates that organisational values and ethos can be part of the challenges and sometimes obstacles to and/or success of organisational change, looking at the Age Concern Bexley example (Skloot, 1987). Hence, converting the whole of a charity like Age Concern Bexley to a social enterprise, poses risks to its values, ethos and organisational design

This research also concludes that there is a need for a social entrepreneur to lead a social enterprise organisation, as the leader and change agent, especially if the organisation is a charity aiming to change to a social enterprise. One can also conclude that the practice of

social enterprise is still a big change issue for charities and specifically charities like Age Concern Bexley, whose primary focus had historically been on charitable services not social businesses.

As areas of future research, it is suggested that there is a need to establish standards to measure the effectiveness of social enterprises, thereby enabling them to demonstrate their ability to confirm that social enterprise services meet both financial and social bottom lines, that is, reconciling social purpose and business. There is also a need to carry out comparative studies, that is, how social enterprises are performing compared with other competitors within and outside the sector. It is also suggested that further research into the role of governance in organisational change, with specific focus on charities changing to social enterprise be undertaken so that the field can learn more about the impact on organisational change.

As a social entrepreneur, I will recommend more studies to be carried out on and about social entrepreneurs to assist the field in identifying the unique make up and characters of such individuals and the factors that influence their drives and motives. Most recent studies carried out, for example, by Said Business School at Oxford University are mostly looking at the heroic models rather than underlying factors such as family background, cultural orientation, faith etc.

For many charities, in my view, a growing focus on entrepreneurial activity appears inevitable. Although some charities welcome this trend, while others worry that traditional activities and ethos could be undermined, but in my view the changes are here to stay. The coming years will show to what extent the voluntary sector is able to incorporate an enterprise culture.

However, as Phillip (2007) warns, the sector needs to “move forward experimentally; don't expect to be able to shift large-scale service provision to the sector quickly” and organisations interested in exploring social enterprise are urged to “understand what phase their organisation is currently going through” and to “take time to get to know their particular social entrepreneur in some depth” (p. 67).



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# 10. APPENDIX



- APPENDIX A: My letter published in the *Third Sector*, March 2004.
- APPENDIX B: Questionnaire survey and covering letter sent with Questionnaire
- APPENDIX C: Delphi: data and analysis
- APPENDIX D: Delphi Group: questionnaire and covering letter
- APPENDIX E: Profile of convergence interviewees
- APPENDIX F: Analysis of self-administered repertory grid interview, with some of my personal reflections
- APPENDIX G: Handy Person service questionnaire to current users and questionnaire analysis
- APPENDIX H: Age Concern Bexley: organisational structure [May 2007]
- APPENDIX I: Assessment of potential implications of self-financing on Age Concern Bexley's mission and objectives
- APPENDIX J: Age Concern Bexley: Sustainability analysis
- APPENDIX K: Handy Person service request form
- APPENDIX L: Risk analysis and map
- APPENDIX M: Handy Person service leaflet, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2005
- APPENDIX N: Budget – Age Concern Bexley Handy Person scheme, September 2005

APPENDIX O: Myers Briggs Personality type Indicator for Ade Adeagbo

APPENDIX P: Handy Person service leaflet – updated with new pricing, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007

APPENDIX Q: Wheel Chair hire service poster, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007

APPENDIX R: Foot Care Clinic leaflet, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007

APPENDIX S: Advertorial in Bexley Extra of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007

APPENDIX T: Published letter in *Community Care Magazine*, September 2005



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The Editor

Third Sector, 174 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP

Date: 9-Mar-04

Dear Editor

**Wake up call**

I write in response to the recent events at Leicester (*Third Sector*, 25 Feb & 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004). I see this event as a wake up call for all voluntary organisations, especially those that are highly dependent on grants and funds from public and statutory bodies.

The sector is facing intensifying demands for improved effectiveness and sustainability in light of diminishing funding from traditional sources and increased competition for these scarce resources, coupled with increase in the numbers of organisations seeking these funds. Sustainability of funding has become a serious issue for many, resulting in the squalor of the social sector.

However, the sector must survive and continue to serve whilst responding to the challenges in new and different ways. What we need to see is a tectonic shift in the culture of the sector - in the way it behaves, in the way it thinks about itself, and in the way it is funded, a shift that must shatter old definitions.

It is high time the sector starts exploring the classic "third way", [for example, social enterprise organisational model], more sustainable options and the eventuality of less dependency on government subsidies and corporate and individual philanthropy.

There are so many challenges out there, so much for us to do. As one writer puts it, it's like sitting down at a table to eat an elephant; the task just seems completely overwhelming. There is only one thing to do, sit down and take the first bite. If we don't, the obituary for the voluntary sector will read, "*Fondly remembered, failed to deliver*".

*Ade Adeagbo, Chief Executive, Age Concern Bexley*

## APPENDIX B – Questionnaire survey and covering letter

### Purpose of research

I am currently undertaking research into social enterprise. Please see attached covering letter for details. A copy of the report and development in this research can be made available to you if you so wish.

### Please note:

- a. This questionnaire, ideally, should be completed by the most senior officer in the organisation [i.e. Chief Officer, CEO, Project Manager etc]
- b. Please complete all questions
- c. Return your completed questionnaire to: Ade Adeagbo – Chief Executive, Age Concern Bexley, Grassington Road, Sidcup DA14 6BY OR fax to: 02083002495
- d. Return by **29 April 2004**. Thanks for your time and participation.

### Questions

1. Do you have an understanding of the term 'social enterprise'? Please tick (✓)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [please go to question 3]

2. Will you describe your organisation as a 'social enterprise'?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Which of the following descriptors would you use to describe your organisation?. Please tick (✓) all that applies.

I would describe my organisation as a voluntary organisation that:

- ☐ My organisation has no need for external funding or grants to survive
- ☐ My organisation creates opportunities from changes in the industry
- ☐ My organisation delivers new and more services using existing resources, with no need to resort to external funding
- ☐ My organisation has a social mission and pursue social goals
- ☐ My organisation adds social value when it delivers its service(s) or product(s)
- ☐ My organisation applies commercial business models to its operations

4. What are the top 5 strategic challenges for your organisation?

- i] .....
- ii] .....
- iii] .....
- iv] .....
- v] .....

5. What is your position in the organisation? Please tick (✓)

- ☐ Chief Officer/Chief Executive
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Project Manager/Coordinator
- ☐ Others [please specify].....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. If you questions and/or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. [Ade Adeagbo, 28 March 2004]



Questionnaire Covering letter

Ms. AA XX  
Chief Officer  
CCC [Bexley]  
Kent DA14

Date: 28-Mar-04

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking research into social enterprise at Bournemouth University towards the award of a doctorate in business administration.

From discussions we have had at Chief Officers meeting, I garnered that there is a growing interest in social enterprise, many colleagues would like to know more about it and there are willingness to explore it further. These have partly informed my decision to undertake my research in this area.

On a personal note, I also believe that social enterprise as a model is worth pursuing for organisations that aim to achieve self-sustenance and reduce grant dependency. Please see attached a copy of my published letter in the *Third Sector* Magazine of March 2004.

I would appreciate your contributions and participation in this survey, as I believe some of the outcome of the research may assist in forming views that might shape the future of the voluntary sector in Bexley and possibly nationally. Most importantly, your contributions will aid my studies and this I will openly acknowledge.

I will be willing to share the final write-up with you, if you so desire.

Thanks once again for your anticipated support.

Kind Regards

Ade Adeagbo  
Chief Executive – Age Concern Bexley

APPENDIX C – Delphi: data analysis

Profile of Delphi respondent

The table below details who the respondents are, without giving away too much of their identity.

	Profile of respondents
R1	Manager of a charity that provides support services
R2	Director of a children charity
R3	Director of a charity that provides employment for people with disability
R4	Chief Executive of a community trust that provided information, advice and services for people with disabilities
R5	Director of a social housing association
R6	Chief officer of a charity that supports carers of all ages
R7	Director of racial equality organisation

Table C1: Profile of Delphi respondents

Table of descriptors

	Delphi Descriptors
Descriptor 1	'Opportunity creation' – Social Enterprise is an organisation, which is not necessarily required to create change, but has exploited some of the opportunities created by change, in its industry or sector or local economy.
Descriptor 2	'Resourcefulness' – Social Enterprise is an organisation that does not allow limited resources to limit its options
Descriptor 3	'Creation of social wealth' – A Social Enterprise must have a social mission and pursue social goals; this is not necessarily economic wealth or economic viability.
Descriptor 4	'Value creation' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that has the ability to add value
Descriptor 5	'Business models applied to not-for-profit operations' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that shows entrepreneurial flare and creativity, rather than only social value.
Descriptor 6	'Sustainability and self-sufficiency' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that is self sufficient and not dependent on grants, donations or handouts. Even where it has grants and donations, it must be able to sustain itself if any of those funding taps are turned off or have a strategy in place to manage such an occurrence.
Descriptor 7	'Challenges management' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that has the ability to confront and deal with the challenges that will emerge from being and/or becoming a social enterprise, with strategies in place to confront and deal with these challenges.

Table C2: Profile of Delphi respondents



APPENDIX C – Delphi: data analysis

*Ratings of descriptors*

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total [Out of Maximum of 70]	Median
Descriptor 1	0	0	6	0	3	5	0	14	2
Descriptor 2	0	6	9	8	5	9	0	37	5
Descriptor 3	10	8	7	10	6	8	8	57	8
Descriptor 4	0	7	10	10	8	4	7	46	7
Descriptor 5	0	8	10	10	5	6	7	46	7
Descriptor 6	0	5	8	10	6	10	0	40	6
Descriptor 7	0	5	5	10	7	7	0	34	5

*Table C3: Delphi – rating of descriptors*

## APPENDIX D – Delphi Group: questionnaire and covering letter

### Covering letter to participants of the Delphi Group

Ms. AA XX  
Chief Officer  
CCC [Bexley]  
DDD  
DDD  
Kent DA14

Date: 07-Mar-05

Dear AA,

Thanks for participating in the group discussion on social enterprise at the last Chief Officers' meeting. I hope you found it useful.

I do appreciate your contributions as well as agreeing to be part of the Delphi Group survey I discussed with you. This, I hope, will assist in forming a view that might shape the future of the voluntary sector in Bexley and possibly nationally. Most importantly, your contributions will aid my studies and this I will openly acknowledge.

I will be willing to share the final write-up with you, if you so desire. However, what I am engaged in is a 3-year process, hence it may be sometime before the final output is available.

I will be in contact soon to commence the process for the Delphi Group.

Thanks once again for your participation and support.

Regards

Ade Adeagbo



APPENDIX D – Delphi Group: questionnaire and covering letter

Delphi Questionnaire

By Ade Adeagbo [Chief Executive, Age Concern Bexley]

**Purpose of research:** This is a continuation of my research on social enterprise. I would like to use this opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to all those who returned the first set of questionnaires and those that partake in the session at the Chief Officers meeting of Thursday 9 September 2004.

At this stage of my research, I have adopted the use of Delphi Technique as a research methodology. What this entails is that I will re-circulate sets of questionnaires [over 3 rounds], which will include feedback of your responses at each stage, whilst re-evaluating your views and responses. I hope I can count on your cooperation through these stages. A copy of the report and development in this research can be made available to you if you so wish.

**Confidentiality:** I would like to emphasise that your views and responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, as anonymity is part of the requirement of this research methodology.

Please note:

- Please complete all questions
- Return your completed questionnaire, in the **FREEPOST SAE** or fax to 020 83002495
- Please return by **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2005**.
- Thank you for your time and participation.

SECTION A

**Question 1** - Below are the summary responses, given by you, as the key strategic issues facing your organisation.

1.1 Do you agree or disagree that these are the key strategic issues for your organisation? Please tick [✓] as appropriate

1.2 Please rate each one on a scale of 1 to 10 [1 being the least important and 10 being the most important]

		I agree [✓]	I disagree [✓]	Rating Scale of 1 to 10 [1 lowest, 10 highest]
1	'Security of contract and/or service level agreement'			
2	'Funding'			
3	'Retaining staff'			
4	'Decent salary i.e. competitive salary'			
5	'Opportunity for expansion'			
6	'Attracting appropriate skills'			

1.3 Please list other key strategic issues not detailed above, also rating them on a scale of 1 to 10

	Rating - Scale of 1 to 10 [1 lowest, 10 highest]

APPENDIX D – Delphi Group: questionnaire and covering letter

Question 2 - Below are the various responses you gave when asked to define or explain what 'social enterprise' means to you?

2.1 Which of these definitions do you agree or disagree with? Please tick [✓] as appropriate.

2.2 Please rate each one on a scale of 1 to 10 [1 being the least you agree with and 10 being the most you agree with]

		I agree [✓]	I disagree [✓]	Rating Scale of 1 to 10 1 lowest, 10 highest]
1	'Involving clients in the business strategy'			
2	'Social business'			
3	'People supported in making money through project working'			
4	'Running a 'business' of some kind where all the profits go back into the organisation'			
5	'Raising money for our services'			
6	'Working for the common good using private resources'			

2.3 Please list other definition(s) or meaning(s) not listed above, also rating them on a scale of 1 to 10

	Rating - Scale of 1 to 10 [1 lowest, 10 highest]

Question 3 - What are your views of the following definitions of a 'social enterprise'?

3.1 Please complete the table below, to indicate if you agree or disagree with any of them. Please tick [✓] as appropriate.

3.2 Please rate each one on a scale of 1 to 10 [1 being the least you agree with and 10 being the most you agree with]

		I agree [✓]	I disagree [✓]	Rating Scale of 1 to 10 [1 lowest, 10 highest]
1	'Opportunity creation' – Social Enterprise is an organisation, which is not necessarily required to create change, but has exploited some of the opportunities created by change, in its industry or sector or local economy.			
2	'Resourcefulness' – Social Enterprise is an organisation that does not allow limited resources to limit its options			



APPENDIX D – Delphi Group: questionnaire and covering letter

3	'Creation of social wealth' – A Social Enterprise must have a social mission and pursue social goals; this is not necessarily economic wealth or economic viability			
4	'Value creation' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that has the ability to add value.			
5	'Business models applied to not-for-profit operations' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that shows entrepreneurial flare and creativity, rather than only social value.			
6	'Sustainability and self-sufficiency' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that is self sufficient and not dependent on grants, donations or handouts. Even where it has grants and donations, it must be able to sustain itself if any of those funding taps are turned off or have a strategy in place to manage such an occurrence			
7	'Challenges management' – A Social Enterprise is an organisation that has the ability to confront and deal with the challenges that will emerge from being and/or becoming a social enterprise, with strategies in place to confront and deal with these challenges.			

3.3 Please use the space below to add any other comments or views you may like to express, that this questionnaire has not covered?

SECTION B

1. Would you like to take part in a one to one interview session, which will last approximately 25 minutes, to discuss some of these issues further? [Please tick ✓ as appropriate]  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No

2. Would you like to have a copy of this report when it is completed?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No

3. If you indicate YES to any of the questions above, please provide your contact details below:

Name: .....

Organisation: .....

If you require further questions and/or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.  
Ade Adeagbo – Chief Executive: Age Concern Bexley, Grassington Road, Sidcup DA14 6BY  
020 8300 0883 / aadeagbo@ageconcernbexley.org.uk

Thank you for participating.

7-Mar-05

## APPENDIX E - Profile of convergence interviewee

Acronym used	Profile of convergence interviewees
CR-1	CEO of a UK based social enterprise
CR-2	Chair of a Voluntary Sector Council and professor of Urban Regeneration.
CR-3	Deputy Chief Grants Officer of a UK Trust
CR-4	Head of Charity and Social Enterprise at a private law firm and author of guidebooks on law for small business and charities.
CR-5	Chief Officer of an Age Concern organisation in London
CR-6	Chief Officer of an Age Concern organisation in the Midlands
CR-7	A social entrepreneur and Hollywood film producer
CR-8	US philanthropist and an internationally renowned social entrepreneur
CR-9	Founder and CEO of a US based and international social enterprise organisation
CR-10	Harvard professor
CR-11	Chair of a foundation in the USA
CR-12	Founder and director of an India based charity and fellow of Skoll Centre
CR-13	A Nigerian awarded a social entrepreneur award by Schwab Foundation, USA

*Profile of convergence interviewee*



APPENDIX F - Analysis of self-administered Repertory Grid interview, with some of my personal reflections

Repertory Grid elements

	Social entrepreneur as...
A	Innovator
B	Relationship manager
C	Resource manager
D	Creator of social wealth and values
E	Steward
F	Opportunities creator
G	Visionary

Table F1: Repertory Grid elements

Constructs and Qualifiers

	Constructs and Qualifiers
A	I create opportunities
B	I generate revenue, hence I am resourceful
C	I have social mission and social goals
D	I am innovative and create opportunities
E	I apply business models
F	I ensure the self-sustenance and self sufficiency of my organisation

Table F2: Constructs and Qualifiers

APPENDIX F - Analysis of self-administered Repertory Grid interview, with some of my personal reflections

The social entrepreneur grid

Rating: 5	A. Innovator	B Relationship manager	C Resource manager	D Value creator	E Steward	F Opportunities creator	G Visionary	Rating: 1
I opportunities	5	1	3	4	3	5	5	I do not create opportunities
I am resourceful	5	2	4	4	3	5	4	I am not resourceful
I have a social mission	4	1	2	2	1	3	3	I do not have social mission
I am innovative	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	I am not innovative
I apply Business models	5	3	5	4	3	4	5	I do not apply business models
I aim for sustainability	5	3	4	3	2	4	4	I do not aim for sustainability
<b>Cumulative Scores</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	

Table F3: The social entrepreneur grid

Note: Each of the rows consists of a bipolar (two-ended) scale. The left hand pole of the scale is rated 5 and the right hand pole is rated 1.

Some reflections...

I found this experience quite a grilling and uncomfortable, after undertaking this process. I developed a slight headache after I completed the grid - possibly also due to undertaking this exercise after a full day's work, but I can say mostly due to the experience of undergoing the self-administered interview. This was partly because I tried to make it as honest an experience, exercise and process as I possibly could as I was open minded about it. I found it quite an emotional experience, confronting what I am in relation to the elements and constructs. The result was an emotionally moving experience for me. I felt my heart throbbing and I was a bit tearful, as I felt exposed. This resonates Young (2006) view that “most... [are] unusually self-aware - aware of their faults and abilities...They defined the cause in order to provide coherence and meaning” (p.15). At this stage, I took a break from the process and continued the next day.



APPENDIX F - Analysis of self-administered Repertory Grid interview, with some of my personal reflections

Laddering up

Rating: 5	Innovative	Opportunity Creator	Visionary	Rating: 1
This is my strongest Feature	2	5	4	This is my weaker feature
This is how I like to be described as	4	2	5	This is not how I want people to view me
I always demonstrate this feature at work	4	3	4	I do not always demonstrate this feature at work
Cumulative Scores	10	10	13	

Table F4: Laddering up

Laddering down

Rating: 5	Relationship management	Steward	Rating: 1
This is my stronger feature	2	4	This is my weaker feature
I am better at this	1	4	I am not very good at this
I believe I need to improve on this	5	3	I do not need any improvement
Cumulative Scores	8	11	

Table F5: Laddering down

APPENDIX G – Handy Person service questionnaire to current users and questionnaire analysis



Date: Sep, 2005

Dear Client,  
We are currently reviewing our existing handy person scheme and proposing the possibility of expanding this service. We require your views and comments to inform this development. Please respond to the questions below. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.

1. What service(s) have you used the Handy Person's Service for? Please tick all that apply.
- |   |                                      |  |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Alarms                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Key         | <input type="checkbox"/> Curtain rails | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Bells    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture moves              | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Bulbs | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Windows/Doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone                    |                                      |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify ..... |                                      |  |  |

2. How would you describe your experience of the service?
- |                               |                                       |                               |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|

3. What would you suggest we include in the current service on offer? Please detail below
- .....

4. What would you suggest we remove from the current service on offer? Please detail below.
- .....

5. We are planning to start charging for this service. Will you be willing to pay?
- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes [please go to Question 7] | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|--|-----------------------------|

6. Please state why you are not willing to pay for this service [and the go to Question 8]

7. How much will you be willing to pay for this service?
- |                             |                             |                              |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> £5 | <input type="checkbox"/> £7 | <input type="checkbox"/> £10 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than £10, please indicate..... |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|

8. Do you have any other suggestion(s), which you think may improve the service? Please indicate below.
- .....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. If you have questions and/or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Katrina Morris on 020 8300 0883.

Please Return your completed questionnaire in the freepost addressed envelop to: Katrina Morris, Development Manager, Age Concern Bexley, Grassington Road, Sidcup DA14 6BY OR fax to: 02083002495



## APPENDIX G – Handy Person service questionnaire to current users and questionnaire analysis

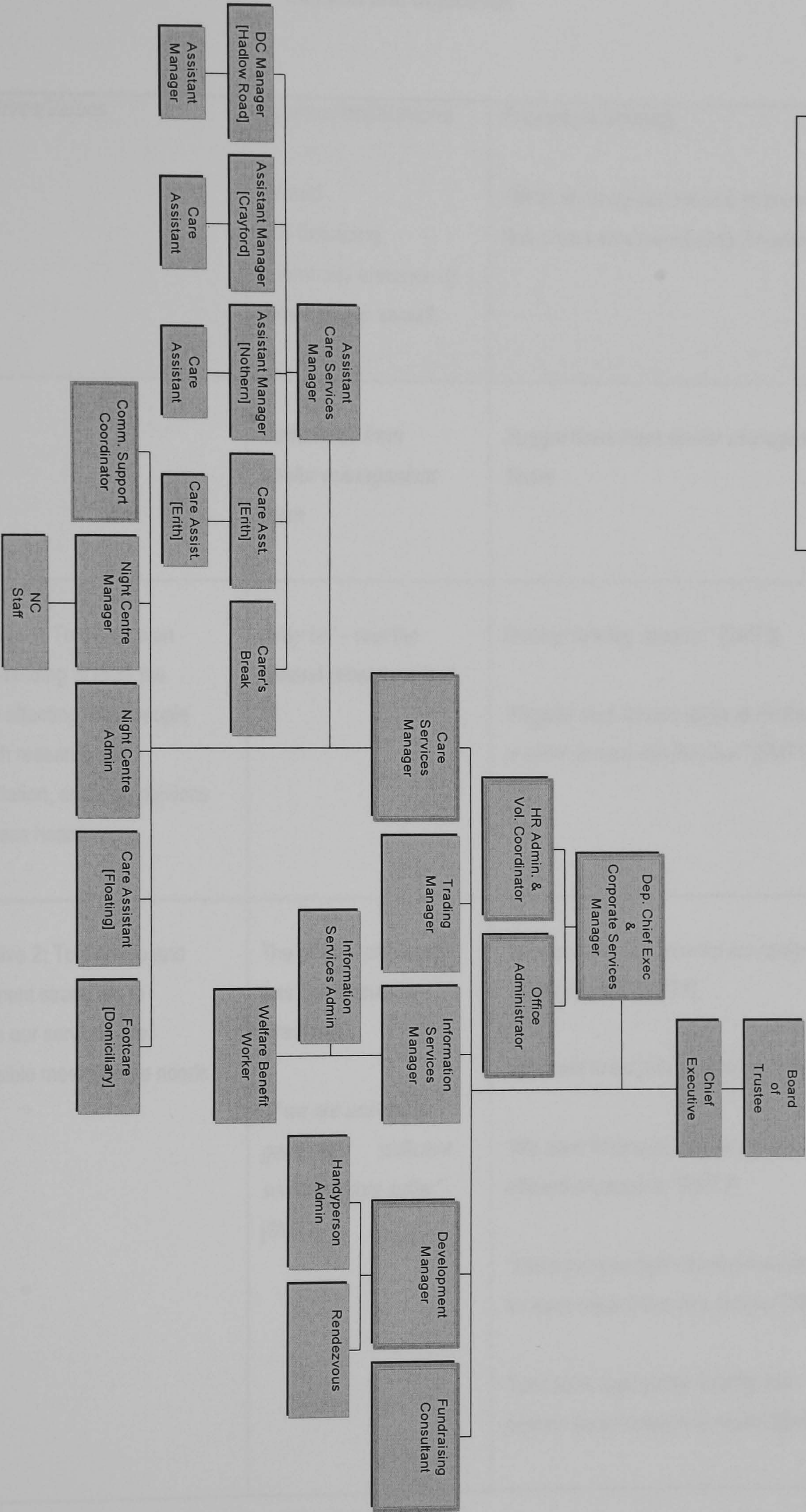
### Analysis of Handy Person service questionnaire

Questions asked	Feedback and responses
1. What service(s) have you used the Handy Person's Service for?	93% of those surveyed have used over 70% of the services we provide; whilst 89% have used less than 50% of these services
2. How will you describe your experience of the service?	Good – 96%  Satisfactory – 4%  Poor – 0%
3. What would you suggest we include in the current service on offer?	No suggestions were indicated by respondents
4. What would you suggest we remove from the current service on offer?	Nothing was indicated by all respondents
5. We are planning to start charging for this service. Will you be willing to pay?	Yes – 92%  No – 8%
6. Why did you tick No? [For those that ticked No]	Comments include: <i>"I cant afford it"</i> <i>"I'm a pensioner"</i> <i>"Age Concern should do it for free"</i> <i>"More information first"</i> <i>"You can't be charging for fire and smoke alarms!"</i>
7. How much would you be willing to pay for this service? [For those that ticked Yes]	£5 – 89% of respondents £7 – 7% of respondents £10 – 4% of respondents
8. Do you have any suggestions, which you think may improve the service?	None



APPENDIX H – Age Concern Bexley  
Organisation Structure (May 2007)

Appendix H  
Social Enterprise & Social Entrepreneurship in Practice  
Ade Adeagbo [DBA- Bournemouth University, 2008]





APPENDIX I - Assessment of potential implications of self-financing on Age Concern Bexley's mission and objectives

<i>Objectives/Values</i>	Potential Implications	Preventive Strategy
	-Would self-financing potentially enhance or threaten this value?	-What strategy can we use to prevent this core value from being threatened?
	<i>Comments from senior management team</i>	<i>Suggestions from senior management Team</i>
Objective 1: To develop an understanding of local the issues affecting older people through research and consultation, ensuring opinions and ideas heard.	"May be" – was the general consensus from all	<i>Diverse funding streams" [SMT2]</i>  <i>"Regular user forums either at Parlours or other venues like the Civic"[SMT1]</i>
Objective 2: To develop and implement strategies to ensure our services are accessible meet diverse needs	The general consensus was that it could be threatened.  <i>"If we are unable to generate sufficient services might suffer"</i> [SMT3]	<i>"Must ensure that services are really what clients require" [SMT1]</i>  <i>"We need to list priority services" [SMT5]</i>  <i>"We need to ensure that we are as efficient as possible" [SMT2]</i>  <i>"There must be tight development plan for each department and service"[SMT4]</i>  <i>"Lets seek appropriate funding and explore social enterprise model"[SMT3]</i>

APPENDIX I - Assessment of potential implications of self-financing on Age Concern Bexley’s mission and objectives

Objective 3: To continue to provide and develop appropriate services which enhance independent living and the overall well being of older people in Bexley	All agreed that it would enhance it.	<p><i>"Let us create social enterprise"</i> [SMT2]</p> <p><i>"We can develop best value services"</i> [SMT4]</p>
Objective 4: To ensure Age Concern Bexley is effectively managed as an organisation that is sustainable in the long term, with commitment to workforce development	All agreed that it would enhance it.	<p><i>"Let’s ensure that the structure is right and that systems and procedures are efficient. "</i> [SMT4]</p> <p><i>"We can recruit more specialist volunteers"</i> [SMT5]</p> <p><i>"We need to cultivate a sense of urgency in some areas"</i> [SMT3]</p> <p><i>"Sustainability comes from being proactive and innovative"</i> [SMT2]</p> <p><i>"Robust training and recruitment of competent staff is what we need. We also need to train our staff and have development plans"</i> [SMT1]</p>



APPENDIX J: Sustainability analysis and framework

Each member of the senior management team was asked to tick the rating they most agree with or see as appropriate.

	Strong	Average	Weak	Other Comments
1. We have a clear mission	✓✓✓✓✓			"I believe the mission statement is appropriate and has values supported by all"[SMT2]
2. We have commitment among the trustees, volunteers and staff	✓✓	✓✓✓		"I agree, that there are commitments, although does not appear strong enough. It is not clear what the level of commitment are from this people "[referring to the trustees and volunteers] [SMT2]  "There are resistance to change in some areas"[SMT5]
3. We have the ability to adapt and be flexible to changes around us		✓✓	✓✓✓	"Somewhat constraint and it is mostly financial and legislation"[SMT3]  "Not necessarily so, we are governed by legislation and limited by our Board, some of whom are not forward thinking"[SMT4]
4. We have clear, realistic, strategic plans to achieve our mission	✓	✓✓✓✓		None
5. We have competent staff with the appropriate skills/experience	✓✓	✓✓✓		"We need to carry out a training needs analysis to identify current skills and training requirement"[SMT5]  "We do not. If you ask staff from this environment to take on a different genre, they feel and claim to be stressed, then we'll all feel the stress"[SMT2]  "We are working towards this in my department"[SMT4]

APPENDIX J: Sustainability analysis and framework

6. We have leadership		✓✓✓✓	✓	"We have a weak Board of Trustee"[SMT1]  "I don't think we have strong leadership, social enterprise will scare the crap out of them partly because it has elements of risk"[SMT3]
7. We have effective, efficient, high quality services	✓✓✓	✓✓		None
8. Our services have an impact and produce valuable benefits	✓✓✓✓	✓		None
9. We have a reputation for being accountable, ethical, transparent	✓✓✓✓✓			None
10. We have an enabling legal, regulatory and political environment that allows us to do our work without hindrance	✓	✓✓✓✓		"I disagree, we are bound by legislations and policies like CSCI, FSA, SORP and others"[SMT
11. We have Sufficient financial resources for our work		✓✓	✓✓✓	"We do not have limitless financial resources either"[SMT2]
12. We have good relations with sectors/agencies	✓✓✓✓✓			None



APPENDIX K  
HANDY PERSON SERVICE REQUEST

AGE Bexley  
*Concise*

Name of client [Mr/Mrs/Ms].....

Date of Birth.....

Sex [M/F].....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Tel No.....

[If different from client's]: Caller's Name:.....

Tel No: .....

NOTE: It is important that the relevant boxes below are completed in relation to the client's circumstance(s). Please tick [✓] as appropriate

☐ Home Owner    ☐ QSL    ☐ ORBIT    ☐ L&Q    ☐ Gallions    ☐ Others.....

The client is in receipt of [please tick [✓] as appropriate]

☐ Income Support    ☐ Council Tax Benefit    ☐ Housing Benefit

JOB DETAILS: Please obtain and obtain as much information as possible

Call taken by .....

Date.....

For Coordinator's use only

Job number:..... Assigned to:..... Date: .....

☐ Emergency    ☐ High priority    ☐ Low priority    ☐ Inappropriate

☐ Referred to:.....

For handyperson use only

I have received the sum of £.....

From [Mr/Mrs/Ms].....

Signed.....

Completed on [date]: .....

Comment(s).....

HOME CARE CHECK

These checks have been carried out with the consent of the client. Please tick [✓] as appropriate

- ☐ Fire risks  
☐ Security risks  
☐ Safety checks  
☐ Falls hazards  
☐ Advice & information about other services and agencies:

Handy Person Social Enterprise Project  
Risk analysis and map  
Date: August 2005

External risks – economic, market and political					
<i>Risk type</i>	<i>Level of risk</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Management of risk</i>	<i>Responsible for managing risk</i>
Knowledge and awareness of social enterprise	Medium	High	Lack of general awareness of what social enterprise is	<div>a. Careful marketing of proposition and benefits within Age Concern Bexley's client group and stakeholders</div> <div>b. Comprehensive marketing strategy.</div> <div>c. Link to existing Age Concern Bexley's services</div>	Information Services Manager
Competition	Medium	High	Competition is growing, with other local organisations providing similar service E.g. Care Partners Trust & BVSC	<div>a. Market services carefully and sell the value of the combined Age Concern Bexley package and overall benefits</div> <div>b. Continue to monitor market developments closely.</div>	Development Manager & Information Services Manager
Regulatory and legal	Medium	High	Risk that we fall foul of non-compliance, or legal action taken against Age Concern Bexley.	<div>a. Extensive experience of Board and Age Concern Bexley as a delivery organisation</div> <div>b. Social enterprise will have adequate and appropriate insurance cover</div> <div>c. Robust compliance processes and regular contact with regulatory bodies to manage risk.</div> <div>d. Take on an additional employers insurance, if required</div>	Corporate Services Manager



APPENDIX L - Risk analysis and map

Operational, Marketing & Financial Risks					
Risk type	Level of risk	Impact	Description	Management of risk	Responsible
Reputation issues (image of social enterprise)	Medium	High	Consumer confidence is critical. The image generally affects confidence.	<div>a. Age Concern Bexley will market the Handy Person service differently</div> <div>b. The Board will evaluate more frequently</div>	Development Manager  Board
Lower than expected service users	High	High	Any shortfall will have an impact on ability to generate income and ultimately to becoming self-sustaining.	<div>a. Realistic service user projections based on census 2001 report and client list</div> <div>b. Regular monitoring and review of targets to identify shortfalls and take action</div> <div>c. Scale staff employment to service levels, hence part time status</div> <div>d. Regularly review the impact of marketing activities</div> <div>e. Ensure projections are realistic and based on achievable targets</div> <div>f. Review every month and revise plans where appropriate</div>	Board & CEO
Operating risk	Medium	Medium	In the first one year, this could mean lower income due to not meeting planned target	<div>a. The actual expenditure will be monitored against the budget on a monthly basis.</div> <div>b. If business targets are not met and additional funding shortfalls are predicted, or if the plan has underestimated the necessary expenditure, then operational (and staffing) levels may need to be revised.</div>	Development Manager
Fiduciary risk	Low	Medium	Risk that board fails to act with due diligence and duty of care when making strategic and tactical decisions.	<div>a. Bring in external advisors where necessary</div> <div>b. Have cash flow at outset</div>	Board & CEO  Corporate Services Manager

APPENDIX L - Risk analysis and map

			Cash flow risk		
Development risk	Medium	Medium	The introduction of a new service does not have the impact expected and the expenses are not recovered.	The take up of the new service will be monitored carefully and assessed on a monthly basis.	Board & CEO

Human resource risks					
<i>Risk type</i>	<i>Level of risk</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Management of risk</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
Recruiting an experienced Handy Person	Medium	High	<p>It is essential that Age Concern Bexley recruit a suitably qualified and experienced individual to deliver the service.</p> <p>Without this level of skill, the achievement of the planned targets may not be achieved</p>	<p>a. The Development Manager will oversee service development and implementation</p> <p>b. A salary has been agreed that will encourage suitable candidates to apply for the Handy Person post</p> <p>c. Commence recruitment with plenty of time to ensure that the right person is employed.</p> <p>d. The HR sub committee to lead on the recruitment process</p> <p>e. CRB and other appropriate checks must be carried out</p> <p>f. Have training and development plan in place for the Handy Person</p>	Human Resources Sub-Committee & Corporate Services Manager



## Handyperson & Gardening Services



Supporting  
independent  
living for older  
people

### Gardening Service

Age Concern Bexley maintains a register of people prepared to provide gardening services for older people in Bexley.

To be included on our register the gardeners have -

- ❖ Agreed to charge no more than an agreed rate
- ❖ Provided us with two references
- ❖ Attended an informal interview
- ❖ Agreed to abide by our code of practice
- ❖ Are required to undergo Criminal Records Bureau check

### Who can use the service?

If you are over 60 and live in the Borough of Bexley.



### How do you use the service?

Telephone our office on 020 8300 0883 and we will provide you with a list of gardeners their contact details and the code of practice they have agreed to use.

### Age Concern Bexley Services

- ❖ Rendezvous meeting points throughout Bexley
- ❖ Information and advice
- ❖ Insurance
- ❖ Holidays
- ❖ Handyperson
- ❖ Hairdressing
- ❖ Gardening
- ❖ Wheelchair loan
- ❖ Toe nail clipping
- ❖ Day Centres
- ❖ Night Centre
- ❖ Community Support
- ❖ Carers Breaks
- ❖ Advocacy

For more information contact:

Age Concern Bexley  
Grassington Rd  
Sidcup DA14 6BY

Monday to Friday  
10.00am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4.00pm

Tel: 020 8300 0883  
Fax: 020 8300 2495

Email: [info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk](mailto:info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk)  
[www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk)

Design and print by Concept 2 Design & Print  
01322 524455 • Email: [concept2@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:concept2@hotmail.co.uk)



### How do you use the service?

If you are eligible call our office on 020 8300 0883, give us the details of the job and your contact details, then we will contact you to arrange a visit or to assess the task.

### What can't we do?

Examples include repairs to gas and electrical appliances or wiring, complex or large plumbing or home decorating jobs, any tasks that are above stepladder height or that the handyperson assesses as a risk to themselves or others. In these cases we will refer you to another reputable agency.

help to you.

- ❖ Advice and information on other services and agencies that may be of help to you.
- ❖ Falls risk
- ❖ Safety checks
- ❖ Security risks
- ❖ Fire risks

This will seek to identify:

### Check.

### Adding Value

With your consent, a visit by our handyperson can include a Home Care

Priorities  
Our target is to complete each visit within 2 hours. Each job request is defined as a task taking up to two hours to complete.

Our target is to complete each visit within 2 hours. Each job request is defined as a task taking up to two hours to complete.

- ❖ Paths cleared of snow
- ❖ Simple draught proofing
- ❖ Fitting small hand rails
- ❖ Repairs to gates and sheds
- ❖ Replacing small panes of glass
- ❖ Easing doors and windows
- ❖ Cosmetic repairs to paintwork
- ❖ Re-fixing tiles, wallpaper repairs
- ❖ Simple furniture repairs
- ❖ Moving and assembling small pieces of furniture
- ❖ Simple furniture repairs
- ❖ Laying and repairing small areas of flooring
- ❖ Fitting shelves, mirrors pictures
- ❖ Fitting curtains and curtain rails
- ❖ Fitting door chains bolts and locks.
- ❖ Bleeding radiators, changing tap washers and unblocking sinks
- ❖ Fitting smoke alarms and wireless door
- ❖ Replacing tubes, bulbs and fuses

### What kind of jobs do we do?

will be carried out first.

We will make an appointment before a visit. Where required, a free assessment

Smoke alarms are supplied & fitted free. Light bulbs & tubes are fitted free.

There is a charge of £5.00 per hour. In addition, you will be required to pay for or provide the necessary materials. This will be agreed with you beforehand.

What does it cost?

in sheltered accommodation ask your warden or manager to contact us for you.



You are eligible, if you live in the London Borough of Bexley, are over 60 or care for someone over 60 and are unable to carry out the work yourself. If you live

### Who can use the Service?

insurance.

All our handypersons carry an identity card, will not call without making an appointment and have public liability

round the home.

carrying out minor repairs and DIY jobs

Bexley maintain their independence by

To assist and support older people in

### Aims of the Service



Budget - AGE CONCERN BEXLEY HANDY PERSON SCHEME - 2005									
INCOME	Start Up Cost	Year 1		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
		Sept 05-Aug06		Actual		Projection		Projection	
		Projection	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	NOTES
Contract - from L&Q Housing	0								Contract with L&Q Housing
Client Receipts	0		11250	14100	14523	14959			projection of 3% increase in activities and income
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21250</b>	<b>24100</b>	<b>24523</b>	<b>24959</b>				
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>									
Computer Equipment	500		0	0	250	0			Upgrade of lap top in year 2
Office Equipment	600		100	188	194	199			3% inflation rate
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>199</b>				
Recruitment	400		0	255	0	255			Assumes change of staff as a possibility
HPS Staff Salaries - Development	1200		3000	3000	3090	3183			Management support cost
HPS Staff Salaries	0		12000	12540	12916	13304			3% inflation rate
Training	250		250	460	474	488			3% inflation rate
Travel	0		600	880	906	934			Based on historical figures
Subsistence	0		350	360	371	382			Based on historical figures
<b>Total Staffing Costs</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>16200</b>	<b>17495</b>	<b>17757</b>	<b>18545</b>				
Materials	0		350	690	711	732			3% inflationary increase
Transport Costs	0		220	310	319	329			3% inflationary increase
Equipment Servicing/Maintenance	0		250	475	489	504			3% inflationary increase
Stationery & Postage	200		190	280	288	297			3% inflationary increase
Telephone/Fax/Internet	100		150	120	124	127			3% inflationary increase
Printing & Publicity	800		300	570	587	605			Leaflet publication and local press
Volunteer Expenses	150		450	320	330	339			
Insurances	0		0	150	155	159			Already covered by corporate insurance
Bad Debt	0		563	1075	1452	1496			Assumes 10% bad debt
Legal and Professional	0		0	155	0	0			
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>2473</b>	<b>4145</b>	<b>4455</b>	<b>4588</b>				
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>18773</b>	<b>21828</b>	<b>22656</b>	<b>23333</b>				
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>-4200</b>	<b>2478</b>	<b>2272</b>	<b>1867</b>	<b>1626</b>				
Appendix N									
Social Enterprise & Social Entrepreneurship in Practice									
Ade Adeagbo [DBA- Bournemouth University, 2008]									



## APPENDIX O - Myers Briggs Personality type Indicator for Ade Adeagbo

### The Description of an ENTJ

**Definition: ENTJ: Extroverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Judging Personality Type.**

There is no right or wrong type and most of the population functions out of all EIGHT preferences at some time or another. What is described here is the way an ENTJ would normally prefer to function in a work context and frequently in a social context. MBTI does not reflect I.Q.

One motivating force of the ENTJ is to comprehend, master, to perfect. They strive for truth and justice. They put a premium on impersonal analysis, developing new skills and applying themselves to innovation or reform. ENTJs have a tendency to establish plans for a task or organisation but search more for policy and goals than for regulations and procedures. For an ENTJ, nothing exists or occurs without reason, neither impersonal procedures nor personal feelings are sufficient by themselves to warrant a course of action. No single moment, episode or event is as significant as the ongoing situation in totality. No issue can be discussed nor understood without explanation of its origins, its evaluation, its conclusions or its direction.

ENTJs like to mobilise people to achieve long term goals. They want to be involved in designing any changes, which are likely to affect them and want to decide on appropriate solutions to challenging problems. ENTJs may neglect other areas of work/life balance for the sake of their careers.

The empirical and objective approach of the ENTJ allows them to generalise, discriminate, classify, summarise, or infer with ease. They can grasp abstract theory, convert it into practical applications, and enjoy problems requiring parallel or sophisticated solutions. As managers, ENTJs organise their units into a smooth- running system, planning in advance and keeping both short-term and long- term objectives well in mind. Their concept of time coupled with their intuitive approach to information gathering enables them not only to anticipate the future but also to identify the leverage points for changing it. As ENTJs are able to see relationships between apparently discrepant or remotely associated things, they can see seemingly isolated cases as part of a trend.

More than any other type, ENTJs can see where things are going and communicate that vision to others in the form of specific action plans.

Since ENTJs care so much about consistency and continuity, they try to live their lives according to logic and to behave in a way, which guarantees that their actions will fit into some overall theory. This approach can produce rather mixed outcomes. When motivating others, ENTJs may wish to master a

## APPENDIX O - Myers Briggs Personality type Indicator for Ade Adeagbo

tested theory of human behaviour and then intellectually respond to people's needs, matching techniques to the situation just as the theory would predict. If they are faced with a conflict, they may go out of their way to ponder a strategy and engineer events that get the other person to think that the ENTJ's ideas are his/her own.

ENTJs will also try to control their emotions and gain emotional stability by being totally rational. They may attempt to hide their anger behind a façade of logic and reason but in doing so may ultimately experience high levels of stress.

ENTJs' non-personal approach to life may cause them to inadvertently ignore or overlook the feelings of others. In reserving their expressions of deep concern or enthusiasm for others to moments of critical need, exceptional achievement, or dramatic occasions, they may be seen on a day-to-day basis as cold, detached and uncaring. In addition as they view accomplishment as its own reward, they may not express appreciation and give recognition for the hard work of others.

ENTJs have practically no tolerance for dependent relationships. They will be very stern with individuals who make repeated errors or who perpetrate confusion. Although they will go out of their way to explain how to accomplish a task, they will later lose patience with those who refuse to work things out for themselves. They will insist that people offer solutions rather than present problems alone.

Dot Palmer Fry

Palmer Fry Associates

Executive Development Consultants

49 Hanover Gardens, London SE11 5TN

020 7820 3531/07774 636 848

Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2007 16:00:36



## Handyperson & Gardening Services



Supporting  
independent  
living for older  
people

### Gardening Service

Age Concern Bexley maintains a register of people prepared to provide gardening services for older people in Bexley.

To be included on our register the gardeners have -

- ❖ Agreed to charge no more than an agreed rate
- ❖ Provided us with two references
- ❖ Attended an informal interview
- ❖ Agreed to abide by our code of practice
- ❖ Are required to undergo Criminal Records Bureau check



### Who can use the service?

If you are over 60 and live in the Borough of Bexley.

### How do you use the service?

Telephone our office on 020 8300 0883 and we will provide you with a list of gardeners their contact details and the code of practice they have agreed to use.

### Age Concern Bexley Services

- ❖ Rendezvous meeting points throughout Bexley
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- ❖ Toe nail clipping
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- ❖ Night Centre
- ❖ Community Support
- ❖ Carers Breaks
- ❖ Advocacy

For more information contact:

Age Concern Bexley  
Grassington Rd  
Sidcup DA14 6BY

Monday to Friday  
10.00am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4.00pm

Tel: 020 8300 0883  
Fax: 020 8300 2495

Email: [info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk](mailto:info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk)  
[www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernbexley.org.uk)

Design and print by Concept 2 Design & Print  
01322 524455 • Email: [concept2@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:concept2@hotmail.co.uk)



### How do you use the service?

If you are eligible call our office on 020 8300 0883, give us the details of the job and you will contact you to arrange a visit or to assess the task.

### What can't we do?

help to you.

- ❖ Advice and information on other services and agencies that may be of help to you.
- ❖ Falls risk
- ❖ Safety checks
- ❖ Security risks
- ❖ Fire risks

This will seek to identify:

Check.

With your consent, a visit by our handyperson can include a Home Care

Adding Value

Priorities  
The risk of injury, the risk to security and the risk to health.

Our target is to complete each visit within 2 hours. Each job request is defined as a task taking up to two hours to complete.

- ❖ Paths cleared of snow
- ❖ Simple draught proofing
- ❖ Fitting small hand rails
- ❖ Repairs to gates and sheds
- ❖ Replacing small panes of glass
- ❖ Easing doors and windows
- ❖ Cosmetic repairs to paintwork
- ❖ Re-fixing tiles, wallpaper repairs
- ❖ Simple furniture repairs
- ❖ Moving and assembling small pieces of furniture
- ❖ Simple furniture repairs
- ❖ Laying and repairing small areas of flooring
- ❖ Fitting shelves, mirrors pictures
- ❖ Fitting curtains and curtain rails
- ❖ Fitting door chains bolts and locks.
- ❖ Washers and unblocking sinks
- ❖ Bleeding radiators, changing tap
- ❖ bell systems
- ❖ Fitting smoke alarms and wireless door
- ❖ Replacing tubes, bulbs and fuses

What kind of jobs do we do?

We will make an appointment before a visit. Where required, a free assessment will be carried out first.

Smoke alarms are supplied & fitted free. Light bulbs & tubes are fitted free.

What does it cost?  
There is a charge of £5.00 per hour. In addition, you will be required to pay for or provide the necessary materials. This will be agreed with you beforehand.

You are eligible, if you live in the London Borough of Bexley, are over 60 or care for someone over 60 and are unable to carry out the work yourself. If you live in sheltered accommodation ask your warden or manager to contact us for you.



Who can use the Service?

All our handypersons carry an identity card, will not call without making an appointment and have public liability insurance.

To assist and support older people in Bexley maintain their independence by carrying out minor repairs and DIY jobs round the home.

Aims of the Service



**AGE**  
*Concern*

# Wheelchair Service

Supporting independent living  
for older people

- Wheelchairs are hired for up to 4 weeks at a time
- The first week of hire is free
- A charge of £10 is made for subsequent weeks or part of a week
- A £30 deposit is required

Contact us on:

**020 8300 0883** or

**[info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk](mailto:info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk)**



# AGE Bexley

*Concern*

## Foot Care Clinic

The service aims to assist older people to remain safely mobile and active. Regular foot care is crucial in reducing the risk of falls, accidents, limited mobility, infection and hospitalisation.



Our staff are NHS trained and our charges are extremely competitive and is not for profit.

### Clinics:

**Inspire Community Trust,**  
Whitehall Centre, 20 Whitehall Lane,  
Slade Green DA8 2DH

**Mondays: 10am to 2pm**

**Tuesdays: 10am to 2pm**

### Bellegrove Surgery

174 Bellegrove Road, Welling DA16

**Thursdays: 2pm to 4pm**

**Fridays: 10am to 2pm**

**Charges: £12 per clinic visit**

**To book an appointment and for more information please contact:**

Age Concern Bexley  
Manor House, Grassington Road  
Sidcup DA14 6BY  
Tel: 020 8300 0883  
[info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk](mailto:info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk)



## Working with and for older people, ensuring their future

Age Concern Bexley now operates at a time of increasing numbers of older people, many from black and minority ethnic groups. This demographic shift is coupled with the challenging times that face our health and social care sectors. Bexley Care Trust is tackling a substantial financial deficit whilst changing its service commissioning and delivery practises. Bexley Council is also aiming for financial savings as it increases the threshold for access to social care, from moderate to substantial.

All these affect the services delivered to and for older people in Bexley. If nothing is done, we will see older people experiencing limited preventative services, isolation and becoming housebound with reduced independence.

However, Age Concern Bexley is resolved to ensuring that we support older people, provide services that bridge the gaps and address the health and social needs whilst aiding their well-being and independence.

Ade Adeagbo, Chief Executive of Age Concern Bexley says: "We see these developments as opportunities for Age Concern Bexley to reshape and work closely with the statutory and other voluntary sector agencies that provide services and support for older people in Bexley. As an organisation, we have identified area of service development that will address the gaps created by these local changes and in some case cushion the effect that they could have on the lives of older people in Bexley".

Age Concern Bexley therefore, is developing the following services to enable older people to make choices and have adequate provision that will ensure they live happy and fulfilled lives.

### FOOT CARE SERVICE

The service aims to assist older people to remain safely mobile and active. Regular foot care is crucial in reducing the risk of falls, accidents, limited mobility, infection and hospitalisation. Our staff are NHS trained and our charges are extremely competitive and is not for profit.

### Our Clients are:

#### Inspire Community Trust

Whitehall Centre, 20 Whitehall Lane, Slade Green DA8 2DH

**Mondays: 10am to 2pm**

**Tuesdays: 10am to 2pm**

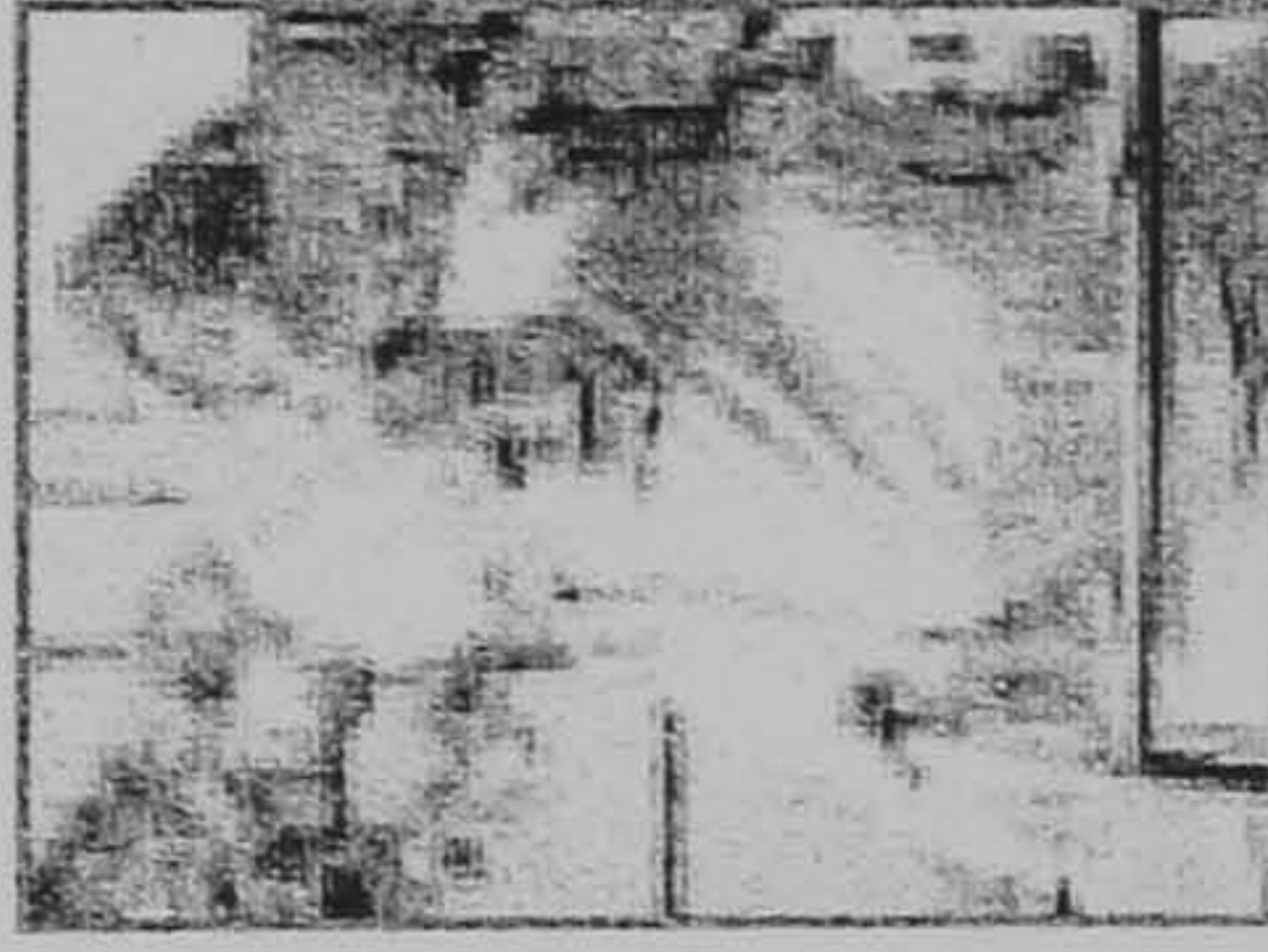
#### Bellgrove Surgery

174 Bellgrove Road, Welling DA16

**Thursdays: 2pm to 4pm**

**Fridays: 10am to 2pm**

**Charges:**  
**£12 per**  
**clinic visit**



**For further information, please contact:**

**Age Concern Bexley, Manor House, Grassington Road, Sidcup DA14 6BY**  
**Tel: 020 8300 08833 • info@ageconcernbexley.org.uk**

## AGE CONCERN BEXLEY NIGHT CENTRE

### We plan to provide:

- Provide 10 bed spaces, with potential to increase it to 12
- Separate bedroom for male and female clients
- Lounge and dedicated space for stimulating activities
- Creation of a new service - the "Evening Sitting Service". This would enable carers to have an evening out, knowing that a loved one is being looked after.
- Better links with the Rapid Response team, intermediate care and hospital discharge
- Partnership working - we will be establishing stronger working relationship with "Together"

**Venue: Bushey Court, 169 Hazel Road, Slade Green.**

## OUT & ABOUT SERVICE

This service uses our two mini buses and provides regular outings for older people, complementing our Day Centre and Rendezvous. We organise shopping trips, visits to theatres, cinemas, restaurants, pubs, museums, art galleries, trips to the coast, etc. This service operates from a number of our rendezvous.

Some of our scheduled outings for the next few weeks are:

- Pollhill Garden Centre
- Lakeside Shopping Centre
- Pub Lunch in Kent

## AGE CONCERN BEXLEY RESOURCE CENTRES

Proposed Services at our centres are:

- Day Centre facilities • Bathing service • Hairdressing • Games & Resource room
- Garden • Treatment room • Exercise classes • Laundry service – in-house only
- Quiet room available for reading, one-to-one discussions, short nap, etc.
- Outreach Room: for welfare benefit advice, information and advice, etc.
- Catering services: the venue has a fully-equipped catering facility that can provide freshly-made meals.

VENUES: • Bushey Court, 169 Hazel Road, Slade Green

• Crayford Ageing Well Centre, Waterside Gardens, Crayford, Kent DA1 4JJ



## APPENDIX T – Published letter in *Community Care Magazine*, September 2005

The Editor,  
Community Care  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Quadrant House, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5AS

Date: 5-Sep-05

### **A call for sector differentiation**

It was interesting to read Lord Victor Adebawale's assertion, ("It's the services that matter, not ideology", 1<sup>st</sup> September), attempting to balance the ideological drive that mostly differentiate the voluntary sector from the other sectors, whilst arguing that the sector can still engage in government contracts and service delivery role.

This view is quite valid, but only for established and well developed organisations, like Turning Point with the resource, capacity and organisational infrastructure to seat on a table with statutory bodies and government parastatals to negotiate contracts and service agreements.

There are thousands of organisations out there that only depend on volunteers and established for a singular purpose. If lucky enough, will have a part time paid coordinator, with little or no regular funding stream and devoid of the experience and/or exposure to the world of service level agreements and contracts.

To achieve what Lord Adebawale was arguing for, we need to start exploring differentiating between organisations in the voluntary sector, looking at those with the vision, capacity and possibly entrepreneurial drive/capabilities to engage with service delivery, as supposed to those that are, and sometimes intend, to remain small, cause-related and 'ideological'. There are umpteen examples of some charities that have dabbled into service delivery and social enterprise and found themselves in ethical puddles.

If we do not commence the journey towards this direction, the current dilemma in the voluntary sector, in terms of what its identity is and what it aims to be will persists.

Ade Adeagbo - Chief Executive,  
Age Concern Bexley,  
Grassington Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6BY