

Social Accounting and Audit at Community Enterprise Unit (CEU).

CEU is a not-for-private-profit co-operative, and company limited by guarantee based in Exeter, Devon. Although a small team of five, their work takes them throughout the South-West, and to South Wales. CEU provides quality business advice and support, training and consultancy services to those working for the benefit of the social economy. This includes social accounting and audit work.



CEU's social accounting support programme is called "Valuing the Extra Stuff!" (VEST) in recognition of the added impact social enterprises can have on their local community and economy. VEST has been delivered 5 times in the South West and Wales, with participating organisations being helped to set up social accounting systems to capture their social, environmental and economic impact.

CEU themselves have an annual turnover in the region of £120,000 and have prepared 3 sets of social accounts, and have gone to audit panel twice. The staff are committed to the process and believe it to be beneficial both to their own organisation and those that they support.

In particular, CEU believes that social accounting and audit has helped them and their clients in the following ways:

- *To secure contracts* – as the social accounts not only demonstrates quality systems are in place, but also gives evidence of need, quality of service, and track record of delivery.
- *To act strategically* – in particular to develop more focused organisational objectives, incorporating feedback from stakeholders.
- *To improve internal systems* – particularly strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- *To fine-tune communication with stakeholders* - through regular and comprehensive involvement and consultation.
- *Gaining IIP status* – the whole process was made much easier as many of the systems required by IIP were already in place thanks to social accounting. The assessor was highly impressed with levels of support and accountability within a small social enterprise.

Through feedback from stakeholders, the CEU team has realised that their work gives confidence to client groups to progress their business ideas, and that people choose to work with CEU not only because they provide a quality service, but also because CEU's underpinning values resonate with clients and partners. Social accounting has also highlighted the need for better marketing of CEU and this has shaped their marketing activity and ongoing development of their website.

Further information can be found at CEU's website www.ceultd.co.uk