

## Community Campus 87

### Introduction



Community Campus 87 is an Industrial and Provident Society whose core aims are to house, support, train and develop young people in housing need. Formed in 1987, Community Campus has developed a range of projects in supported housing, resettlement, personal development and training and has established Community Campus Trading Ltd to provide construction services and employment opportunities for local people. It has an annual turnover of £1.2m, 38 employees, 8 volunteer management committee members and 12 volunteers.

### Social accounting and audit

Community Campus 87 has only just started keeping social accounts with their first year being 2007/08. Despite this they have been interested in adopting social accounting and audit for a number of reasons. They feel that social accounting will help them prove the social value that they achieve and provide a way to monitor their performance and impact on stakeholders. They also feel that social accounting is an internally driven management tool adding to existing quality standards and a further way that they can listen and respond to the needs of their stakeholders. They are particularly keen on applying social accounting as it includes values and ethics as well as explaining what they do – and it is something that they control. So far they have found it to be a good experience and it has contributed to outlining their activities and ethos. They are using the SAN Manual (2005) and their social accountant attended a SAN 2 day masterclass. Although the tasks involved in social accounting have been “added” to the social accountant’s current job description, so far, there has been just enough time to do the work as many of the necessary information collecting systems are in place. In addition, the activities involved in setting out the mission, values, objectives and identifying the stakeholders has been relatively easy and they *“found the experience supported by the excellent materials (book/cdrom) as liberating for the organisation!”* They have received positive feedback and the process is clear. They reported that *“attending the masterclass was a very useful exercise in understanding the concepts and preparing (mentally) for the development of the social accounts.”* So far in stakeholder consultation they have found questionnaires, focus groups and workshops most effective but have also used interviews and evaluation forms. Their preference is participatory methods with service users but may use “survey monkey” with other stakeholder groups.

### Benefits and value of social accounting and audit

The main benefits to Community Campus 87 have been in planning; understanding their performance, impact and key issues; reviewing their

mission, values and objectives; understanding stakeholders; and using the information collected for publicity and with funders. They added that it has been *“good to involve people from various parts of the organisation in understanding and developing the social accounts”*. The social accountant felt that he had personally benefited from the process as he had more understanding of the organisation, been able to develop skills and is now more adept in methods of consulting stakeholders. He also has been approved as a SAN Social Auditor and is more knowledgeable on monitoring systems linked to outputs and outcomes.

### **Negatives, problems, snags**

The main reported problems so far are that social accounting has to be done *“on top of everything else”* and there are no funds available to contract extra assistance when needed. The main difficulty with the process has been formulating the right questions to use in consulting stakeholders. Time is obviously an issue for them in keeping social accounts – *“in the busy working lives that we lead there are always a number of pressing deadlines which take precedence!”*

### **General thoughts on social accounting and audit**

Community Campus 87 felt that the best ideas to improve the process would be to ensure extra funding, help funders, etc. to be aware of social accounting as a comprehensive reporting system and to train more people in social accounting.

Lastly, Community Campus 87 reports that *“social accounting fits the organisation well. It is driven by the organisation and is done at the organisation’s pace, which is sometimes slow!”*. Their social accountant is also a Social Auditor and states that *“after being on the other end of the social audit panel...I think for the organisation it has been a very worthwhile experience and it is no doubt useful to get an objective viewpoint and to collate and reflect on what your organisation has achieved/not achieved and what it needs to do to improve. A frustration is that although increasingly more people have heard of social accounting, not many understand. I would be less supportive if the process was a diluted one which organisations gained with less effort.”*

A further two people from the staff team, including the Coordinator have attended the masterclass training to further strengthen the organisations commitment and capacity

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