

## Section 3 Vision, Values, Ethics and Mission

### Introduction

Everyone in business needs to be aware of their organisation's vision, values, ethics and mission. For anyone involved in a social enterprise these concepts are the cornerstone of the enterprise's activities and are vital to its success.

### Vision

Vision is the image you create and hold, which describes how you want things to be, both now and in the future. For example:

*'The Orchardville Society's vision is one where each person with learning disability has the opportunity to maximise their potential, achieve a real sense of fulfilment and be a valued member of society.'*

*The Orchardville Society*

### Values

Values are core principles that underpin and lie at the heart of the business. Examples of values include:

- integrity
- respect
- trust.

### Ethics

Ethics are the moral guidelines which the business observes in its day-to-day dealings. Examples of ethics include ensuring that:

- the business is environmentally aware, and observes environmentally sound practices at all times
- all accounting techniques are scrupulously audited and are one hundred per cent honest
- the health and safety of members, clients and customers are given priority, regardless of the expense.

### Mission

Mission – usually set out in the form of a written Mission Statement – describes, clearly and simply, what the business is about, and what it intends to achieve. For example:

- *'to provide a high quality service to customers and a rewarding working environment for the members, within a sustainable, ethical, co-operative business structure*
- *to strive to promote a healthier lifestyle by supplying ethical, eco-friendly, vegetarian products.'*

*Suma Wholefoods*

In this section we look at the following key topics:

### Topic 1: Vision

When you have worked through this topic you should be able to:

- explain what is meant by business vision
- describe why vision is important
- identify your own vision for the future of your own social enterprise.

### Topic 2: Values

When you have worked through this topic you should be able to:

- explain the differences that are likely to arise between the values of a commercial enterprise, and the values of a social enterprise
- describe how you might best cascade values throughout your own social enterprise
- identify the values that you would like to see adopted by your own social enterprise
- list the attitudes and behaviours which would signal to you that your staff are not totally committed to the enterprise's values.

### Topic 3: Ethics

When you have worked through this topic you should be able to:

- describe what is meant by ethical business behaviour
- list examples of both ethical and unethical business behaviour
- identify practical strategies you can use to ensure that ethical behaviour becomes an integral part of your social enterprise
- take decisions on more complex ethical problems that your enterprise may face.

### Topic 4: Mission

When you have worked through this topic you should be able to:

- describe what is meant by business mission
- state clearly your vision for your enterprise, the values that will lie at its core, and how your enterprise will promote an ethical approach
- create a written mission statement for your social enterprise.

### Resource finder

Organisation	Website address
<b>Furniture Resource Centre</b>	<a href="http://www.furnitureresourcecentre.com">www.furnitureresourcecentre.com</a>
<b>Forth Sector</b>	<a href="http://www.forthsector.org.uk">www.forthsector.org.uk</a>
<b>Scottish Union of Supported Employment</b>	<a href="http://www.suse.org.uk">www.suse.org.uk</a> and click on about SUSE and then click on aims and objectives
<b>Pentreath Industries</b>	<a href="http://www.pentreath.co.uk">www.pentreath.co.uk</a>
<b>Suma Wholefoods</b>	<a href="http://www.suma.co.uk">www.suma.co.uk</a>

Make a note here of any other helpful resources you find.

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## Section 3 Vision, Values, Ethics and Mission

### Topic 1 Vision

Vision is a word that is often used when talking about business and entrepreneurs – irrespective of whether the business is primarily motivated by the desire to make a profit, or desire to contribute to society in some way by achieving a social aim or mission. But, in a business context, what does vision really mean?

In this topic we shall look at what a business vision means as a concept and in practice, and help you to formulate a vision statement for your own enterprise.

#### What is vision?

This is how a cross section of social entrepreneurs (people involved in leading and running social enterprises) responded to the question ‘What, in your view, is vision?’

‘Vision is being able to look ahead and imagine how we want things to be ... and then being able to put into place, in a very real and practical way, the plans, systems and procedures that will make these imaginings real.’

*Mike Golding*

‘I think having vision is about knowing how you want the enterprise to be in the future ... and sharing that knowledge with everyone in the business so that, ultimately, everybody shares the same picture of the future and works together to make it happen.’

*Linda Davenport*

‘Being able to create a picture in my mind of what the business should look like in, say, two years’ time ... and five years’ time ... and even ten years’ time. And then shaping what we do, on a daily basis so that, little by little, the business is transformed from what it is now, to what we want it to be in the future.’

*Jonathan Templeton*

‘Having a vision means setting goals for the future and then working towards achieving those goals ... never faltering, never losing sight of the vision, never giving up.’

*Kate Rushwell*

These are the key points:

- Every business needs a vision ... and a social enterprise particularly needs to have a clear picture of what it wants to achieve, and what kind of social contribution it wants to make. A vision will give you and everyone involved something to aim for. When problems arise – as they surely will – your vision will help you to keep going.
- Every social enterprise needs to have a vision that is shared by everyone within the organisation. So, whilst the vision might, in the first instance, come from the person at the helm of the organisation, if the vision is to be made concrete and real to everyone, then it must be shared and co-owned by everyone.

Mike Pedler, in *A Concise Guide to the Learning Organisation* (1998), said:

- ‘visualising a desired future requires the ability and time to rise above the everyday reality and create a vision of how it could be’
- ‘this vision needs to be developed and shared by everyone in the organisation’.

**Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.**  
**Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric**

## Vision statements

Vision statements need not be complicated. Here is an example of some components of an organisation's vision, presented as a vision statement.

Our vision for our social enterprise is to:

- be financially independent and making a profit by 2006
- expand into Scotland and Wales by 2010
- help all of our members to develop their true potential
- stay true to our social enterprise values, no matter what.

**You got to  
be careful if you  
don't know where  
you're going ... because  
you might not get there.  
Yogi Berra, baseball  
player, coach and  
manager**



The check point below will give you the opportunity to consider your vision for the future of your social enterprise.

## Check Point

Take a few moments to think about what it is you want your social enterprise to be doing and achieving five years from now. Do you see your social enterprise as a small, tightly knit group? Or, do you see your social enterprise growing and expanding into a large organisation which can help large numbers of people? Is your social enterprise to be, primarily, of benefit to its members and the people who work in the enterprise ... or of benefit to the wider community, as well as the employees?

Now complete the statement below.

My vision for the future of the enterprise is:

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Who else needs to be involved in discussing and agreeing the vision for the future of the enterprise?

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If you are unsure about how to phrase your vision statement, look back at some of the examples given above. Your own vision will of course be personal to you and your enterprise, so remember to think about what it was you most wanted to achieve when you decided to set up your enterprise – if that is what you still want, include it.

Of course, this is the vision of just one person involved in the enterprise, i.e. you. For the vision to be of value, it has to be discussed, reflected upon and agreed by all those with a stake in the enterprise. In short it has to be owned by everyone. Take some time to think about how you might arrive at a shared vision for the future of the enterprise.

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### Topic 2 Values

This topic investigates the meaning of ‘values’ for social enterprises, and why values are important. Using the Furniture Resource Group as a case study, we shall look at how values can be cascaded throughout an enterprise, and how you can identify your own values and incorporate them into your social enterprise.

#### What are business values?

A value is a belief or a philosophy. If asked, most businesses would almost certainly agree that the business has values, and that those values underpin everything the business does. Some examples of values adopted by businesses which are primarily motivated by the need to make profit include:

- ensuring customer satisfaction
- building customer trust
- undercutting the competition
- providing quality goods at value-for-money prices
- producing innovative, cutting-edge solutions to customer problems
- growing the business and making profits for our shareholders
- gaining and keeping the competitive edge.

#### What are social enterprise business values?

Some of the key differences between a strictly commercial enterprise and a social enterprise are the values which lie at the very core of the business. Examples of values adopted by social enterprises might include:

- building integrity and honesty into everything we say and do
- fighting for social inclusion
- fighting against social exclusion
- treating everyone – members, employees, customers, suppliers – with fairness and respect
- caring for our members, employees and customers
- caring for the environment
- helping the community
- producing quality goods and services
- providing meaningful training and work experiences
- fostering a supportive and safe environment for our employees and members
- love, respect, courage, creativity and impact – *The Big Issue*
- passion, professionalism, creativity and bravery – *The Furniture Resource Group*.

#### Cascading values

It isn't enough merely to have values. Those values need to be cascaded throughout the enterprise so that everyone working in the enterprise knows what those values are, and why they are important. In addition, everyone who comes into contact with or deals with the enterprise should be made aware of the values that underpin all of the enterprise's activities. As with vision, the values that underpin a social enterprise should be commonly owned and understood by everyone in the organisation.

#### Members and employees

Some of the ways in which you can cascade the enterprise's values to members and employees include:

- creating ‘ownership’ of the organisation's values, in the same way as for the organisation's vision
- telling people, face to face, about the values that underpin the enterprise
- listing the values in a members' and/or employees' handbook
- regularly referring to the values at members' meetings and employee briefings
- using the enterprise's values as part of the employee appraisal process
- ensuring that the values-based training and development programmes assume equal importance with task-based learning
- rewarding outstanding value-led business behaviour.

## Customers, suppliers and other stakeholders

Some of the ways in which you can cascade the enterprise's values to customers, suppliers and other stakeholders who have an interest in the enterprise include:

- listing the values in brochures, leaflets and other printed materials, and on the enterprise's website
- including the values in the enterprise's stationery – e.g. incorporating words such as integrity, honesty, care for the community – into the enterprise's logo, or the wording of the enterprise's letterheads.

However, take care that your organisation's deeply held values, to which employees are highly committed, do not translate as a (friendly) marketing strapline that may trivialise your values to the external world.

The value system that makes your firm work is exactly the same as the value system that makes your family work.  
**Will Hutton, newspaper editor and author**

### Case study: Furniture Resource Centre Group

The FRC Group was founded in 1988 by Nic Frances as a small community-based business dedicated to responding to poverty in inner-city Liverpool. By 2002, the small community-based business has grown into one of the UK's best-known social businesses, and now has an annual turnover of millions of pounds.

The FRC Group consists of:

- 1 The Furniture Resource Centre – which provides a one-stop furnishing service to social landlords. This means that tenants on low incomes can move into a decently furnished property which contains everything they need – from a three-piece suite right down to knives and forks.
- 2 Revive – a furniture store which sells pre-loved furniture to low-income families. Revive has links to over 100 referral services, which means that the furniture goes to the people who need it most.
- 3 Bulky Bob's – a collection service which, working on contract to Liverpool Council, calls on at least 200 homes each day collecting unwanted furniture. The collected furniture is then repaired and refurbished ... and then delivered to Revive.

## The FRC's values

The FRC Group has adopted, for its values: passion, bravery, creativity and professionalism.

### Passion

For the FRC Group passion, as a value, means:

'really caring about what the Furniture Resource Centre Group does, how it does it, and how it treats people'.

They suggest that passion is not happening in the business when staff:

- say 'that's nothing to do with me'
- whinge and/or find fault a lot of the time
- skit/make fun of colleagues who are enthusiastic
- never volunteer for extra work – e.g. the events team
- say or act 'it's only a job'.

### Bravery

For the FRC Group bravery, as a value, means:

'being willing to take risks in the interests of personal and company development'.

They suggest that bravery is not happening in the business when staff:

- say 'it wasn't like this in the old days'
- cave in quickly and take the easy way out
- tend to give up on a problem in the face of an initial obstacle
- fail to see the long-term benefits of change, and focus instead on immediate difficulties or problems
- sit on the fence, and are defensively non-committal.



## Creativity

For the FRC Group creativity, as a value, means:

'having an active and relentless commitment to help create and shape a successful future for the Furniture Resource Centre Group'.

They suggest that creativity is not happening in the business when staff:

- say or act 'this is the way it's always been done'
- say immediately 'yes, but ...' or, with words or actions, block new ideas
- demonstrate a haven't been trained, can't do it mentality
- never go out of their way to seek freshness, and lack proactivity
- always wait to be told what to do.

## Professionalism

For the FRC Group professionalism, as a value, means:

'adopting a professional approach to everything'.

They suggest that professionalism is not happening in the business when staff:

- treat issues other than customers as a priority
- blame others when things go wrong
- help to create and sustain cliques
- present a poor image of the organisation to the outside world
- refer issues upwards unnecessarily.

The key point here is that everyone in the Furniture Resource Centre Group:

- knows what the values of the business are
- supports and upholds those values
- seeks to find ways in which they can further develop those values within the organisation.

The FRC Group cascade these values throughout the business by a values reward scheme and presenting annual awards for Passion, Bravery, Creativity and Professionalism to their staff.

Use the Check Point below to help you think about the values that are important to you, and which you would like to see cascaded throughout your enterprise.



### Website to visit

[www.furnitureresourcecentre.com](http://www.furnitureresourcecentre.com) – to find out more about the FRC Group.

## Check Point

- 1 Begin by ticking the circle alongside each value in the chart below which represents a belief or philosophy that you would like to see incorporated as a value within your enterprise.
- 2 If appropriate, add your own preferred values to the chart.
- 3 When you have chosen a minimum of 3: maximum of 6 values, note down the kinds of behaviours and attitudes that would indicate that your chosen values are not happening in the enterprise.
- 4 Sum up in a single sentence, what each of the values you have chosen means in the context of your enterprise.

Tick not less than three and not more than six circles. These are the values you want to build into your enterprise. There are some extra circles so you can add your own values if you want to.

- |                                     |                                        |                                      |                                          |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty    | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity     | <input type="checkbox"/> Democracy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork   | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity    | <input type="checkbox"/> Passion     | <input type="checkbox"/> Courage         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Openness   | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect       | <input type="checkbox"/> Equality    | <input type="checkbox"/> Professionalism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courtesy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliability   | <input type="checkbox"/> Truth       | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solidarity | <input type="checkbox"/> Sincerity     | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Optimism   | <input type="checkbox"/> Determination | <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy        | <input type="checkbox"/> Imagination | <input type="checkbox"/> Effort          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>               | <input type="checkbox"/>             | <input type="checkbox"/>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>               | <input type="checkbox"/>             | <input type="checkbox"/>                 |

What kinds of attitudes and behaviours would suggest that your chosen values are not happening in the business? For example: Creativity is **not** happening when staff always wait to be told what to do.

Value 1: This would not be happening in the business if staff:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 2: This would not be happening in the business if staff:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 3: This would not be happening in the business if staff:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 4: This would not be happening in the business if staff:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

What do your chosen values mean in your enterprise?

For example: For our enterprise, involvement means everyone's opinion and participation are actively sought and acknowledged.

Value 1: For our enterprise \_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_

Value 2: For our enterprise \_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_

Value 3: For our enterprise \_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_

Value 4: For our enterprise \_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_

If you have had difficulty defining your chosen values, look back at the definitions given by the FRC Group of their values. You could also try telling someone else what your chosen values mean to you in your enterprise, and together coming to the simplest, clearest definition of the most important point in each case.



## Section 3 Vision, Values, Ethics and Mission

### Topic 3 Ethics

This topic looks at the meaning of ethics in practice: that is, ethical and unethical behaviour in business practices, and how ethical behaviour can be introduced into your enterprise.

#### What is ethical behaviour in business?

**Ethical** behaviour is firmly based on the values and principles that guide the business. It is behaviour that is decent, honest, fair and respectful towards other people, and the environment.

#### Unethical behaviour

**Unethical** behaviour, which can be observed in all kinds of organisations throughout the world, involves, for example:

- using insider knowledge or confidential information for personal gain
- buying shoddy materials and equipment because there is some kind of payoff from the supplier
- sidestepping rules and regulations, such as health and safety, because it is cheaper and more convenient to do so
- miscalculating invoices and hoping customers won't notice
- providing misleading information in order to win contracts
- making false claims about products or services
- adjusting business expense accounts in order to make a personal profit, e.g. charging the business for two nights' hotel accommodation when, in fact, only one night has been spent away from home.

#### The consequences of unethical behaviour

The summer of 2002 saw a nosedive in stocks and shares around the world, which was largely attributable to the alleged unethical (and possibly illegal), accounting practices of major corporations such as Arthur Andersen, Xerox and Worldcom. These companies had, apparently, overstated their profits, i.e. on paper they looked as though they were more profitable than was actually the case. In practical terms, what this meant was that:

- the price of their shares increased, so that the businesses were overvalued
- because the businesses were overvalued, anyone selling shares in these businesses was likely to make an inflated profit.

Because of the doubts raised that additional corporations might have inflated the value of their shares through unethical practices, shareholders began selling. This created a fall not only in the shares of these organisations, but also in their sectors and in the whole global financial market.

Sadly, this had a knock-on effect on just about everyone in the developed world. Even people who did not personally own shares in any companies were affected, because many people are connected to the Stock Market through, for instance, a pension fund, an endowment policy linked to their mortgage or a life insurance policy, all of which rely, to some extent, on investment in stocks and shares to increase their value.

As you can see, the consequences of unethical behaviour can quickly spread around the world and can, in some instances, have a devastating effect on people's lives.

#### Ethical behaviour

Ethical behaviour is, for example:

- honest accounting and tax calculation
- paying suppliers on time
- providing quality goods and services
- keeping your promises
- treating members, staff, customers and suppliers with courtesy, dignity and respect
- conserving natural resources and protecting the environment.

For every business, whether it is a social enterprise or not, the key areas where ethical behaviour needs to be standardised, implemented and monitored are:

- 1 money and accounting
- 2 dealings with staff
- 3 dealings with customers
- 4 dealings with suppliers
- 5 dealings with external agencies (e.g. Charity Commission, the Government, European Social Fund and other grant agencies)
- 6 use of resources and the environment.

### Specific examples of ethical behaviour

Here are some straightforward examples of ethical behaviour:

- using only recycled products
- empowering staff to keep their promises to customers all the time, every time, no matter what ... even if it costs money
- paying suppliers on time, every time
- doing whatever it takes to provide a clean and safe environment
- making a commitment to Fair Trade practices, so that suppliers are paid a fair and equitable price for goods and services they provide
- making sure that goods and raw materials are purchased from suppliers who obtain goods and materials from sustainable sources
- buying only from suppliers who are ethical in their choice and treatment of employees, who do not use or support the use of child labour; who provide decent working conditions, and who pay their employees a fair and adequate rate for the job.

### Activity

Read the following case study.

Imagine that you are a member of the Green Dreams Advisory Board. How will you advise Mary, and what positions do you find acceptable and unacceptable in relation to any decision that Green Dream makes?

#### An ethical dilemma?

Green Dreams, a social enterprise involved in recycling, has recently been offered a contract from Food Importers Ltd. to divert 130 tons per year of steel packaging waste from landfill into a recycling stream. The company that produces the waste steel packaging is an international trading and processing company in foods, and imports products from (amongst other sources) India, China and Vietnam in 20 litre steel tins, which form the waste stream that Green Dreams is considering contracting to recycle. The net profit from this potential contract is sufficient to support three workers (disadvantaged in access to the labour market) in employment and training, on a 16 hour per week contract.

Mary, the contracts manager of Green Dreams, is aware that, in some under-developed economies, children are often part of the 'working family' – supporting their parents in earning sufficient income. She also knows that sometimes children are employed in circumstances that Mary regards as exploitative and abusive. However, Mary is keen to accept the contract for recycling because she knows that three previously unemployed people in the community can be employed; also, recovery from landfill is a mainstay of the vision and values of Green Dreams.

Mary is in a quandary. Should she ask Food Importers Ltd. for a guarantee that its suppliers do not employ children? Should she seek reassurance that any children involved in economic activity are not in an exploitative or abusive employment relationship? Or doesn't it matter?

If Green Dreams doesn't accept the contract, another company will, and whatever the position in the supplying countries, nothing will change. Or should she accept the contract on the basis that whatever the position, Green Dreams will be wholly unable to effect any change?

You are doubtless aware that there are no easy answers to such complex dilemmas. The main thing is to be aware of all the issues, to consider them carefully and to have the organisation's support for any decisions that are made.

## Introducing ethical behaviour into your social enterprise

Everyone in the enterprise needs to be made aware that ethical behaviour underpins everything in the business. Often, the best way to raise awareness is to invite members and staff to create their own ethical behaviour guidelines, rather than just imposing a list of guidelines without explanation. The activity that follows is designed to help you work with your members and staff to create a set of ethical guidelines that will lie at the heart of the enterprise.

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### Activity

You can, of course, work through this activity on your own to create a list of ethical guidelines. You will probably find, though, that it will be much more effective to work with the members and staff so that, together, everyone in the enterprise has some input as to what is and what is not ethical behaviour, and what ethical guidelines should guide and inform behaviour within the enterprise.

Gather your members and staff together and complete the following lists with them.

List four things we can do to show our commitment to ethical behaviour when we are working **with one another**:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

List four things we can do to show our commitment to ethical behaviour when we are dealing **with customers**:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

List four things we can do to show our commitment to ethical behaviour when we are dealing **with suppliers and external agencies**:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

List four things we can do to show our commitment to ethical behaviour in the care and conservation of **the environment**:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

The lists you have drawn up are your ethical guidelines to behaviour. You may have included statements such as: ‘sorting and recycling our waste products’, as an ethical commitment to the environment; or ‘treating everyone with respect and consideration, no matter what their position or job in the enterprise’, as an ethical commitment to each other.

## Is it unethical but legal?

For some businesses, there are occasions when they are faced with the dilemma of deciding whether or not to take up an opportunity that is unethical but legal, e.g. buying goods at a bargain price because they have been manufactured in an undeveloped country where the people who made the goods were paid way below the market rate. It is a good idea to think about such situations beforehand, so that you would not have to make snap decisions which you might regret later.

### Activity

Think about circumstances that could arise, within your own social enterprise, where you are faced with an opportunity or a course of action that is:

- unethical but legal
- ethical but illegal.

Note down your ideas in the chart below, and the way in which you might tackle the problem, if it should arise.

**Opportunities that would be unethical but legal**

**How I would deal with the problem**

**Opportunities that would be ethical but illegal**

**How I would deal with the problem**

Obviously, different types of businesses are likely to face different types of ethical problems, but you may have come up with problems such as the following.

- 1 For an opportunity that would be unethical but legal: you find out that the bank which has offered you very enticing rates, is investing in a foreign business that uses child labour.  
Your response might be to ask an ethical bank if they can match the other bank’s rates, but be prepared to accept not such good rates in order to continue acting ethically. You might also write to the other bank telling them that you have taken your business elsewhere and encouraging them to reconsider their investment policy.
- 2 For an opportunity that would be ethical but illegal: some of your members engage in illegal direct action (civil disobedience) in a cause which takes the same ethical stand as your enterprise, e.g. breaking into an animal experimentation laboratory to take photographs, when your enterprise proudly proclaims its use of only non-animal-tested products.  
Your response might be to speak to your members about a collective stand, either in support of, or distancing yourself from, the actions of these members.

As you will have found, most aspects of ethical behaviour are straightforward, about behaving honestly and fairly in all your personal and business dealings. However, some ethical problems can force you to face rather more complex choices.

## Section 3 Vision, Values, Ethics and Mission

### Topic 4 Mission

This topic looks at what a mission statement is and why it is important, and gives examples of the mission statements of social enterprises. It will also help you form your own mission statement, based on the ideas you have formulated throughout this section, on your vision, values and ethical behaviour.

#### What is a mission statement?

A mission statement is really a declaration of what a business intends to achieve. A properly thought through mission statement will:

- enable the business to stay true to its vision
- have the values of the business at its core.

Here are examples of mission statements created by organisations that are not social enterprises.

Our mission is to:

- provide the best quality goods at the cheapest possible prices
- deliver innovative educational opportunities designed to meet the needs of gifted children
- publish books that entertain and inform
- manufacture safe motor cars.

Here are some examples of mission statements created by a range of different social enterprises:

Our mission is to:

- provide financial help and support to everyone living on this estate (credit union)
- create a clean and healthy environment where children can grow and develop in safety and security (development trust)
- make fresh fruit and vegetables available at a price that low-income families can easily afford (co-operative)
- give meaningful training and work opportunities to people with a disability or other disadvantage (social firm)
- provide a supportive environment, sheltered accommodation and paid work to people with mental health problems (social firm).

#### Mission statement

**A mission statement should be straightforward, crisp and clear. It should state, in just a few words, what the business is all about and what its priorities are. Long, wordy statements are easily forgotten. Short, punchy mission statements are remembered ... and taken to heart.**

*'To provide a mechanism to support and assist homeless and long-term unemployed to become financially independent, gain confidence and self esteem'*

*The Big Issue, Australia*

**Here are some examples of key objectives, from the Grameen Bank, each of which could be a single mission statement:**

To:

- extend banking facilities to poor men and women
- eliminate the exploitation of the poor by money lenders
- create opportunities for the vast multitude of unemployed people in rural Bangladesh
- bring the disadvantaged, mostly the women from the poorest households, within the fold of an organisational format which they can understand and manage by themselves
- reverse the age-old vicious circle of 'low income, low saving and low investment' into virtuous circle of 'low income, injection of credit, investment, more income, more savings, more investment, more income.'

## Check Point

This check point will give you the opportunity to create a mission statement for your own social enterprise which:

- will help you stay true to your **vision**
- is based on your enterprise's **values**
- promotes an **ethical approach**
- will remind everyone, inside and outside the enterprise, what the enterprise is all about.

Note down your vision – (you thought about this in Topic 1 of this section).  
My vision for the enterprise is:

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Note down the values you have selected for your enterprise (you thought about values in Topic 2 of this section).

The values that should lie at the core of the enterprise are:

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Note down how you intend to promote an ethical approach within the enterprise (you thought about this in Topic 3 of this section).

I intend to put ethics at the top of the agenda by:

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Note down a mission statement for your enterprise.

The mission statement for my enterprise is:

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A sense of mission is essentially an emotional feeling by the people in the organisation. An organisation with a sense of mission has captured the emotional support of its people.  
**Andrew Campbell,**  
corporate consultant