

## Special Session

### Title

Evaluating the Success Factors for Establishing a Thriving Social Enterprise in Scotland: Case Studies to Inform and Inspire

### Presenters

Graham Bell, Chief Executive, Kibble, Scotland

Lesley Fuller, Funding, Marketing and Communications Manager, Kibble, Scotland

### Summary

Two experienced practitioners from Kibble ([www.kibble.org](http://www.kibble.org)) - a 150 year old Scottish child and youthcare charity - will host a special session to discuss the challenges and critical success factors in transforming a traditional 100% grant dependent charity into a thriving social enterprise. This session will be underpinned by the findings of recent research commissioned by the Scottish Government (Coburn and Rijdsdijk, 2010) to help understand the characteristics that are fundamental to the success and resilience of social enterprises, and the ways in which these characteristics might be encouraged and supported more widely in Scotland. This qualitative study was based largely on a case study research design covering 11 organisations. Kibble was the largest case study in this research and the presenters will discuss the following key findings:-

- A number of common traits are critical to the success of social enterprises, many of which are common to businesses of all forms.
- The ability to sustain an appropriate balance between social and commercial goals is critical to the success of the social enterprise business model.
- The path to success for social enterprises is not a straightforward one – like all organisations they change, adapt, and evolve over time – and various forms of support are required at key stages of development and transition.
- The continuing success of social enterprises is influenced by a range of external market influences, most notably the influence of public policy and spending.
- The impact of the economic downturn on social enterprises has so far been uneven and unpredictable although there is a growing recognition of the challenges to the future success of those social enterprises that are reliant on public service markets.
- While social enterprises are susceptible to adverse market conditions and shocks, their continuing success and resilience relies heavily on strong and effective entrepreneurial leadership.

Operating as a social enterprise, based on its original 17.5 acre site adjacent to Glasgow International Airport, Kibble provides a uniquely integrated array of specialist services to some of the most troubled and troublesome young people in Scotland (aged 12 to 18). These include intensive residential services, day and community services, full secondary education, intensive fostering and an 18 place maximum security facility. Under the banner of KibbleWorks, the organisation also operates a portfolio of small social enterprises in warehousing and distribution, catering, gardening, trades, household goods recycling, new media, promotional goods production, mechanics and ICT, offering a range of employment training opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds who have had some involvement with the child welfare, mental health or youth justice system. In 1996 100% grant funding was withdrawn, the organisation was operating at 50% occupancy and had 10 years of under-investment. Today Kibble is one of Scotland's largest social enterprises, employs almost 500 staff, had a turnover of £21m last financial year and turns around the lives of around 150 young people a year. Services are sold to local government across Scotland and approximately 94% of turnover comes from fee income.

As social enterprise practitioners, the presenters are involved on a day to day basis with the challenges of running a large complex social enterprise. We also know the benefits which have come from undertaking formal academic study, complemented by learning from best practice nationally and internationally, and have a successful track-record to back this up. Social enterprise should have at its heart a willingness and desire to learn from and share with others, and we both welcome the opportunity to lead a practice-based special session at the inaugural Massey University Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference.

### **Presenters' Biographies**

#### **Graham Bell MBA, BA, PGCSWE, CQSW**

##### **Chief Executive**

Joined Kibble in 1993, and has over 35 years of national and international experience, encompassing residential child care, youth work and the Third Sector. He is chair of the Social Enterprise Academy ([www.theacademy-ssea.org](http://www.theacademy-ssea.org)), a former non executive director of Children in Scotland, CCC Training, Traidcraft plc and Turning Point Scotland. He is a former Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Fellow, was appointed Entrepreneur in Residence at the University of the West of Scotland in 2010, is a newly appointed board member of Engage Renfrewshire and of [www.cyc-net.org](http://www.cyc-net.org) the international child and youthcare network.

#### **Lesley Fuller MBA**

##### **Funding, Marketing and Communications Manager**

Joined Kibble in 1995 having previously worked in the private sector. In 2010 Lesley received her MBA from the University of the West of Scotland and was also awarded the Court Medal. Lesley has travelled extensively in Europe and North America and co-presented and facilitated sessions on Leading and Learning in Social Enterprise. Lesley and her team have brought in over £10m of investment from a wide range of philanthropic, European and Government sources and she plays a pivotal role in managing the social marketing and communication activities of the organisation.

### **References**

Coburn J, Rijdsdijk R, (2010) *Evaluating the Success Factors for Establishing a Thriving Social Enterprise in Scotland*. EKOS Ltd [<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch>]  
Kibble Education and Care Centre [www.kibble.org](http://www.kibble.org)