

Case Study of *BAPtec* (Goal 3)

BAPtec was established back in 1998, as a direct community led response to meet the skills shortage within the IT Sector in Dublin15. The gap for this service was identified by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership in its Area Action Plan 1996-2000, and in research commissioned Murphy, P. (2001) *Barriers to Employment*, Local Employment Service.

A voluntary management committee initially drove forward the action. Their main objective: to provide high quality and targeted training in a secure environment for those with little or no previous experience of Information Technology. In May 1999, BAPTEC legalised its structure and set-up as a company limited by guarantee. By April 2000, the voluntary management committee decided to explore the principles of Social Economy. By November 2001, *BAPtec* had become a Ltd Company and secured funding under the national FAS Social Economy Programme.ⁱ

BAPtec now employs 6 staff and has an extended range of courses on offer. In 2004, it achieved the FÁS *Excellence Through People Award*, and also completed a social benefits audit. In addition, *BAPtec* successfully tendered for FÁS external training contracts, and developed a new 3-year Business Plan for the organisation.

Most social enterprises are involved in a constant battle to meet their social objectives while trying to achieve financial viability. *BAPtec* are aiming to achieve both. The social objectives are written into the company's Memorandum & Articles of Association and with the help from FAS Social Economy Programme the company are in a healthy financial situation and well within their target; to reach financial independence by 2004.

BAPtec avoids duplication with other agencies by adapting its programmes to provide added value to other local provider's e.g. new accredited programmes such as E-Cert and "high-end" programmes such as MCP and MOUS. The multi-agency board advises the board on local provision in the community, public and private sector. Strategic partners range from statutory agencies such as FAS, Department of Social Protection, Co DublinVEC to national agencies such as REHAB to local agencies such as the Local Employment Service, Community Employment Projects.

For the past decade *BAPtec* has formed a central part of the Local Development Companies strategy to support persons into IT related employment in local labour market. In 2010, the company delivered IT training to 339 persons who are target groups of the LCDP under a service level agreement with the Partnership of which 215 received accreditation. Courses delivered included TAS Accounts, Payroll Manual and Computerised, Mail Merge and ECDL.

The Partnership supported *BAPtec* financially via the LDP/LDSIP (1999-2009) and the LCDP (2010). Two employees (Enterprise Officer) and (LES Training Coordinator) currently represent the organisation on the *BAPtec* Board. For more information www.baptec.ie

ⁱ 6 social economy enterprises are set-up in Dublin 15 via the Working Group. BASE Centre & *BAPtec*, Castleknock Parish Centre, Huntstown Community Centre and Mulhuddart Community Centre. 60 jobs were created. A further 10 groups received pre-establishment supports. The Social Economy Working Group also organised for personnel from various projects around Blanchardstown (Traveller Support Development Group, BASE, BAP, CE projects to attend the 1st Social Auditing Course in Ireland that was delivered via PARTAS Ltd.
