

CHAPTER ONE: Analysis of the Evaluation Conference Results

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## CHAPTER ONE: Analysis of the Evaluation Conference Results

### 1.1 Introduction

In October, 1985 Don Pugh and Steve Drake-Brockman were approached by the New Enterprise Scheme to evaluate their training courses. The object of the evaluation was to obtain information on the three, ten week training courses operated during 1985 and to obtain from the participants information on the strengths and weaknesses of these courses. The evaluators were requested to provide a description of the operations of the courses, identify areas of concern and to make suggestions for the improvement of the courses.

The evaluators possessed the following backgrounds. Don Pugh, possesses a Masters Degree in Education with a specialisation in Evaluation. He has been involved in a number of evaluations which were conducted in secondary schools in Perth. Steve Drake-Brockman is a small business man operating in Perth who is also a member of the New Enterprise Scheme Board. Both evaluators are not connected with the New Enterprise Scheme directly although Steven was known to the participants of the courses as one of the guest speakers who had been invited to address them.

### 1.2 Evaluative Design

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#### 1.2.1 What is Evaluation?

Evaluation has been described by Stufflebeam (Worthen, 1973) as a process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.

Steps in conducting the evaluation process included:

#### (a) The Evaluation Focus

Who are the audiences that are to make the decisions? For the NES evaluation, the primary audience was Peter Kenyon, director of the Community Employment Initiatives Unit with members of the NES Management Team.

#### (b) Information Collection

What information is to be collected, how and when? The information collected by the evaluation was based on the perceptions of the participants who had completed the former training courses and those who are presently enrolled in the current September/October training course.

With the exception of three participants, data collection included all who had attended the former training courses. The three participants who were not involved are presently absent overseas. All the participants currently enrolled in a training

course were involved in the information collection.

The technique used to collect information was inter-active. Developed by a German company called Metaplan, the process is taught and utilised in Perth by a franchise, Group Elements. The technique involves the use of sequenced focus questions posted on sheets of butchers paper on a series of bulletin boards. Participants are grouped. Six to seven people share a group facilitator.

A Nominal Group (NGT) Technique is used to obtain information initially from the group participants. This technique involves participants answering the focus question on a series of cards prior to group discussion. One idea is placed on a card with each participant completing at least three cards.

These cards are mounted on the bulletin board beneath the focus question. Under the leadership of the facilitator the group is involved interactively in clustering similar ideas into concepts. Each cluster is labelled as a concept. Participants are constantly encouraged to complete further cards and to add them to the group display during the discussion process.

Participants are involved in clarifying their ideas, explaining them to the group members and recording further ideas as group discussion triggers further thoughts. Clusters are ranked by giving the group participants one or two dots of one colour which are used as votes by the participants who stick them to concepts based on certain criteria. Criteria used included the importance of the idea (one colour) and the extent of achievement of the idea. (another different coloured dot) Dots are represented in the typewritten versions as (X's) and (O's).

A thunderbolt (z) was used to mark ideas and concepts on which there was disagreement. Consequently, concepts without the (z) designation may be assumed to represent a group consensus.

A complete description of the evaluation seminars using Metaplan techniques are to be found appendixes 1.1 and 1.2.

The basic theme behind the technique for gathering data is based upon the formulation of group questions which give "maximum opportunity for complete and accurate communication of ideas." (Smith, 1975 p. 171) The questions are worded in simple language which permits ready communication. A common frame of reference is used to permit a common point of view between the evaluator and the participants. Questions are open-ended to cause the respondents to recall, order and to evaluate their experiences. Open-ended questions motivate the respondents since they are being asked to express and justify themselves.

#### 1.2.2 When?

The evaluation was started on the 15th October. Because the report was required by the end of November with only two days a

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week of time being available, the time schedule for the evaluation was tight. Consequently evaluation seminars were organised on the 28th October for current participants in the training course. This conference was a one day affair from 9.00 to 4.30 pm. A second evening conference was organised on the 4th November from 4.30 to 7.30 pm for previous course participants.

### 1.3 Organisation

#### 1.3.1 How was the information organised?

The structure of the evaluation was organised around these questions:

- What is happening now?
- What is happening elsewhere?
- What concerns have been raised?
- What recommendations can be made?

Under the heading 'What is happening now?' the traditional structure of evaluations are to list the intents of a course, to describe present practises and to point to gaps between the intents and practises. These needs provide a basis for recommendations. One difficulty with this process is that there is no evaluation of the intents themselves.

To overcome this difficulty this evaluation involved participants in formulating their concepts of the qualities, characteristics and knowledge required by successful business people? The intention was to focus on the ideal. A comparison was then made between the participants' concepts of the ideal situation and the intents as designed for the present training course.

Usually evaluation involves the collection of three kinds of information: planning, implementation and outcomes.

This evaluation does not involve itself in collecting information on the NES planning processes. Furthermore, it was unable to look at long-term outcomes from the programme because of the short length of time that the programme has operated. Consequently, the focus was almost entirely on the implementation process.

The implementation process refers to the integrated collection of data related to the participants' and former participants' interaction with the course co-ordinator, Peter MacDonald, the course lecturers, the research officers, the NES leadership, and the NES board. Information was also collected on the participants' and former participants' views on the course content, teaching methods, evaluative tactics, the provision of resources and funding.

### 1.4 An Evaluation of the Present Course.

#### 1.4.1 The Structure

The present training course is run for ten weeks from 9.00 to 4.00 pm, five days a week. The course is broken up into forty minute periods. The course content consists of themes which are largely spread over the period of ten weeks. The list of topics is found in Appendix 1.3.

The principal topics include undertaking market research, developing accounting ability, creating a business plan and gaining some knowledge of computer usage. To these major topics a large number of minor topics are added. These include such ongoing features as the business form, legal forms, taxation, consumer law, insurance, life skills, communications and body language, the trades practises commission and the Confederation of West Australian Industry. Teaching methods are based on a mixture of the use of guest speakers, discussion, lectures by Peter MacDonald, and question and answer sessions. The unit on bookkeeping is offered by a visiting lecturer from TAFE.

#### 1.4.2 Course Strengths

The training courses for 1985 have been described by the participants as very successful. When asked the question, 'What adjectives describe the training course?' participants wrote down a series of adjectives which described the course. These adjectives were then grouped into clusters based on concepts. The complete responses can be found in Appendix 1.4 for the present course participants and 1.5 for the former course participants. However, some of the responses were as follows:

##### A) Descriptive Adjectives

Under the concept 'exciting' such adjectives as marvelous, highly inspiring, and superlative were used. Under the concept 'rewarding' participants described the course as adventurous, informative, helpful, stimulating, and an eye-opener.

Under the concept 'opportunity' participants saw the course as a golden opportunity to improve their life's chances. "It's an unequalled opportunity for the unemployed, learned heaps, superb."

Under the concept 'social' participants appreciated the comradeship, sense of tolerance and teamwork developed by the programme and through interacting with the participants.

Under the concept 'enjoyable' the participants viewed the course as humorous, enjoyable, and fun.

Under the concept 'information' participants referred to the enlightening nature of the course, its informative and practical 'down to earth' nature and its educational value.

## B) Beneficial Experiences

Participants were also asked 'What experience from your involvement in the course had been beneficial for you?'

Content areas identified by the participants included the following.

### I) Course Content, Attitudes, Relationships

#### Marketing:

Students enjoyed the marketing sessions including market research techniques, and associated marketing skills. They found the marketing lectures interesting. One student commented, "I found out that people may not actually want to buy your product."

#### Accounting

Students were uniformly in agreement that the TAFE lectures on bookkeeping were excellent. Students praised the budgeting, bookkeeping and cash flow forecasting. One student said, "This was an absolutely necessary subject for me as I thought it was as easy as putting money in my pocket."

#### Business Plan

Participants reported that the process has pointed them in the right direction and provided the skills to develop a plan.

#### Attitudes

Students also praised the course for instilling good business attitudes and regular office hours. They referred to finding out what being in business meant, ways of organising business, and they appreciated opportunities for meeting business people. They referred to an arousal of business interest and development of a belief in their own ideas.

#### Relationships

Another area of success referred to the support given to the students. This support was provided by other students through group interaction, discussion, suggestions and interests. Reference was made to the encouragement given by Peter MacDonald and his ability to create optimism and build confidence and self-esteem. The communication skills and personal development group sessions were felt to be valuable. Participants felt "more comfortable in approaching people in the business world."

#### Location

Students liked the centralised location, enjoyed the 'practical' down to earth nature of the course and appreciated the library and photocopying machine.



## Relations with Government

Participants liked the tea and coffee, informal lunch hours, help of the training staff and secretary and "the mainly genuine though sometimes confusing concern for the applicants" of 32 St Georges Tce.

## II) Choice of Concepts and Their Successful Achievement

Students were asked how the course assisted them to obtain the characteristics, attitudes and knowledge needed to become successful business people. They were then asked to choose one quality from the list which they had devised, that they believed had been achieved by their course.

### Attitudes

Students felt that the course was successful in making them think like business people through looking at case studies of successful business people. They enjoyed meeting successful business people.

### Self-Concept

Another area of success was in learning to set long and short term goals and in developing their self esteem and confidence in planning and establishing a business. For one group, self-development and confidence through group relationships were rated both as the most important business quality and the one goal most achieved. Students felt that the emphasis by the course on life skills with role playing helped to build positive self-esteem and attitudes.

### Business Skills

The area of greatest success in the course was voted by students as being the learning business skills. Some noted a good combination of individual assignments and guest speakers. Students also reported on a good balance between field work and individual assignments.

Another important goal which was viewed as achieved involved putting applicants under stress through scrutiny of their business plans.

### 1.5 Some Concerns

The training course has been identified by participants as being valuable and successful. The following sections dealing with various concerns and must be taken as suggestions for improvement by the participants.

It should also be emphasised that the design of the evaluation conference was to pick up from the participants specific areas

for improvement. Questions were asked how courses could be made more interesting, more relevant and more comprehensive. For these reasons, the areas of satisfaction felt by participants did not receive as much coverage as the areas for improvement.

Participants were asked, 'What questions should we be asking to evaluate the course?' This question was designed to focus on the concerns of the participants over the present course. Participants were provided each with one vote and were asked to identify the evaluation question which they felt to be the most important.

Participants were also asked, 'What experiences from your involvement in the course have caused concern for you?'

#### 1.5.1 Flexibility

Group A felt that the length of time spent in class each day should be investigated perhaps with an emphasis on varying the hours per day and running evening classes. They also raised the question concerning increased flexibility in the course timetable with breaks between course sections.

There was concern over the overall length of the course and over the time allocated to various topics.

#### 1.5.2 Funding

An area of concern was with funding arrangements. Students were concerned whether or not they would be granted funding. Connected with funding was a concern over criteria for funding and expectations of the participants. There was felt to be some need for closer liaison between the funding committee and the New Enterprise Programme.

Students were concerned over funding criteria. They raised their concern over the competition 'paranoia' demonstrated by the Government. It was felt that there should be broader Government and industrial support for the programme.

There was concern over the uncertain future. Students were concerned over statements like "don't you worry, you'll know all about it." Students were concerned about what was going to happen at the end of the course.

Participants from courses one and two were particularly vocal in their concern over funding. They wished to have closer relations with the funding committee, receive lectures from the committee on projects funded or rejected and the reasons why and be able to attend and present their case to the funding committee.

They felt that the actual funding following approval was slow and some quoted waits of nearly two months. Funding for sole traders was seen in some cases (2) to be inadequate. Some wished support so that they could obtain bank funding.

### 1.5.3 A Support System

Another area of concern was the need for business practitioners to be giving individual support to the participants during the progress of the course.

Some participants wished to investigate whether there was bureaucratic conflict between the New Enterprise Programme and the Government administration.

An area of concern was whether sufficient consideration was given to participants' personal situations and how these affected their performance on the course. Related to this concern was possibly the need for more counselling with respect to decision making and communications.

There was concern over follow-up support from the course. For instance, is there a conflict in satisfying the Department of Social Security requirements and trying to get ones own business operating. Should participants be able to receive CES allowances without applying for a loan and still receive the other benefits such as field officer support?

Participants from courses one and two seemed bitter over what they believed to be a lack of government support. Under the concept heading of unbusiness like attitudes, they referred to a lack of communication between research officers and applicants. They complained of inconsistent reports and answers issued from the ninth floor to applicants. They complained of a lack of correct information at the course beginning, and a lack of business attitudes by DET staff. (eg procrastination.) Other ideas recorded included a negative ninth floor approach, a slowness in decision making, and an apparent lack of departmental skills in marketing research.

There was concern over restrictive funding criteria: principally the over twenty one clause the need to provide guarantors and financial references.

Some felt that funding was political. One applicant stated: "I feel like a pawn in a political vote catching game." There was concern that the funding committee was impersonal and failed to realise that they were dealing with people rather than submissions. This was viewed as devastating when so much time and energy had gone into the preparation of a business plan.

### 1.5.5 Topics

There was concern over the timing for the development of the business plan and the degree of time allocated. Participants felt that further investigation into development of a business plan was warranted.

There was concern that the course lacked a procedure for

establishing an ethical frame-work.

#### 1.5.6 Time Management

The relevance of some lectures was of concern. Another area of concern was a lack of ability of some lecturers in communicating to the students. Participants felt that some lecturers had vested interests which they were trying to communicate rather than business skills. Other lecturers were inefficient communicators. E.G. "Some time has been wasted in a few lessons which the lecturer didn't make plain or understandable, e.g. body language. Some lecturers were late or absent."

Some participants reported frustration over time management in the course. There was concern that time was being wasted waiting for lecturers who arrived late. Some reported time wasting in that lecture periods were not fully utilised, that some time allocations were wrong, and that some lectures were disjointed or were irrelevant in content. Inattention and discipline problems among participants was also a concern.

There was concern over the pressure involved, the frustration created over the amount of material to learn, and the limited time.

Students were concerned over time management. They were concerned over not having scheduled lectures as planned. They felt that more time was needed for issues within lectures.

Participants felt that "good ideas at the beginning should be good enough for funding." Funding should be guaranteed along with entry into the course and the course should be compulsory for everyone funded.

#### 1.5.7 Resources

There was concern over the provision of resources for the course particularly the number of telephones and computers.

Students were concerned that the textbooks were not directly relevant. They felt that hand-outs should be provided at the beginning of the lecture with more hand-outs provided at the beginning of the course with suitable, easy to understand, diagrammatic illustrations, summaries and overviews.

#### 1.5.8 Teaching Processes

Some students were concerned over not getting information to meet their particular needs such as how to market new and innovative products and services. Instruction should be individualised to meet the requirements of each business idea.

#### 1.5.9 Evaluation

Some students were concerned over a lack of feedback concerning

their performance in class. They wished to have more diagnostic remediation during the course to illustrate to them their areas of weakness and to help to improve these weaknesses. A one off test at the end of the course was seen as a stress and not a practical way of aiding in remediation. It also conflicted with the completion of the business plan.

#### 1.5.10 The Environment

Some students were concerned about the environment and ventilation of the classroom which was felt to be inadequate.

#### 1.6 Recommendations on Strategies to Improve the NES programme

The structure of the evaluation seminar was such that it elicited numerous suggestions for improving the NES course. Initially participants were asked this question, 'What characteristics, attitudes and knowledge will we need as successful business people?' From this question the participants developed what they believed to be an ideal in terms of a business person. Here are their ideas:

##### 1.6.1 Psychological Factors

Entrepreneurial - Good businessmen must have vision, be enterprising and creative.

Ego - Participants felt that a business person would require a positive attitude, good self-esteem and self-confidence.

Pertinacious - Good businessmen must be committed, have drive and initiative, be enthusiastic and be willing to work long and hard.

Resourceful - Good businessmen must be enquiring, innovative, flexible, resourceful and possess a questioning disposition.

Adventurous Planning - Good businessmen must be willing to undertake some risks.

Integrity - A good business person is honest.

##### 1.6.2 Knowledge and Skills

Business Skills - Participants felt that business people required knowledge, an understanding of business, an understanding of customers needs, and management skills.

Planning - Participants felt that efficiency in planning skills were essential including the collection of information, analysis and organisation of information, goal setting ability and the skills for managing the implementation and evaluation of plans.

Financial Knowledge - Good businessmen must have a thorough accounting knowledge, financial planning and budgeting abilities.

Relationships - The business person must be good at public relations, selling and communicating. A courteous and friendly, outgoing manner is needed.

#### 1.6.3 Relating to Others

Public Relations - Good businessmen must have good communications, leadership and personal contacts.

Attitude - Participants felt that people must have tolerance towards others, an ability to manage other people and awareness of people.

#### 1.6.4 Ethical

Good Ethics - Good businessmen must be positive, open minded and honest.

#### 1.6.5 Degree of Success

Participants were asked to rank their ideas of a good business person in terms of importance and in terms of achievement by the course. This simple needs assessment points to gaps between what the course is presently achieving and what the participants feel it should be achieving.

Participants felt that the course had achieved its objectives, mainly in terms of developing business skills and knowledge, particularly, in terms of accounting, planning, and developing confidence and self-esteem.

However there were some areas identified as important for good business people which participants did not feel were being achieved by the course. Group A, for instance, felt tolerance of other people was one area, while another area was in the development of resourcefulness, and promoting an enquiring, innovative and questioning attitudes. A third area was in personnel management.

The participants from courses one and two saw needs for a process to clarify values (integrity) develop creativity, develop trade knowledge, develop public relations skills, develop business skills, self-confidence and faith in the products.

Skills which were being achieved or overly achieved included knowledge, and financial skills.

#### 1.7 Processes

Participants were asked, 'In what way could a course assist them in developing the characteristics, attitudes, and knowledge needed to become successful businessmen.' Once again, participants listed their ideas prior to discussion then grouped their ideas into clusters which were labelled with concepts. These clusters were rated for importance and for their actual

achievement by the course.

#### 1.7.1 Association with Business People

In terms of importance the participants felt that developing business thinking by looking at case studies of successful business people to make the participants think like business people was very important. They favoured meeting successful businessmen and women in order to develop a business mentality. They recommended the development of the mentor system and a continued use of established business people as guest lecturers.

Participants felt that it was essential to find and tap contact with business people who could act as motivators and personal contacts. Successful people in similar businesses should be identified.

#### 1.7.2 Life Skills Instruction

Some participants favoured greater life skills instruction in real life situations with illustrations and in increased use in role playing. It was felt that role playing could be a useful method for stimulating positive attitudes. Public speaking was rated as important but under achieved.

#### 1.7.3 Accounting

Continued stress on accounting and budgeting was seen as essential.

#### 1.7.4 Classroom Processes

Use of good quality lecturers which were relevant, a tutorial system, increased discipline and good hand outs prior to lectures were seen as necessary characteristics of any course. Some participants found difficulty with reading and preferred greater use of pictorial and video materials. There should be follow-up assistance, information and guidance. Case studies of successful business people was an useful strategy.

Use of TAFE training where possible such as self-assertiveness, self-development and communications courses was highly recommended as a good means to obtain experienced instructors in specialised fields.

Participants wished more visits to businesses relevant to their ideas and a chance to gain relevant work experience in a managerial position.

Participants favoured setting homework and classwork so that they could receive diagnostic feedback on their progress.

### 1.7.5 Work Space

Participants felt that a work-space area was essential for a course to incubate and develop ideas.

### 1.7.6 Needs Assessment

Some felt that an initial assessment period for the course participants should be undertaken to identify prior knowledge and to assist needs. The course should be structured upon these needs to include those in which the participants were weak, such as bookkeeping, financial planning, research, etc. Work should be set and assessed regularly.

### 1.8 Choice of Participants

Participants were asked, 'What qualities should be look for in selecting people for a training course?' Ideas were then shared on a bulletin board, clarified, clustered and labelled with concepts. The types of characteristics which the NES programme should seek in selecting people for a training course were identified as follows :

Ego - Participants should be self-confident, energetic, enthusiastic, determined, and willing to work hard.

Experience and Skills - Participants should have some experience in a trade, aptitude, have practical ability and relevant managerial and background skills and expertise.

Attitude - Participants should be open minded, desiring to learn, and with some staying power, mature, and ambitious.

Viability - The business idea should be considered in terms of its innovativeness and possibilities. This includes the market for the product, the skills involved, the competition, and the capital needed. The person and the plan need to be credible. The business idea needs to be capable of expansion.

Ambition - There should be a desire for self-employment and a desire to be free from government handouts. People should recognise their limitations but be expressing a desire and showing real drive and willingness to improve themselves. They should be leaders rather than followers.

Personality - Applicants should be outgoing, friendly, pleasant, good communicators and be able to sell their ideas.

Integrity - Applicants should have a good credit reference and track record.

Reliability - Candidates should have a proven record of reliability and punctuality with former employers.

### 1.9 Criteria for Funding



Participants were asked the questions 'How should NES select the projects to be funded?'

Criteria identified by the participants included the amounts of funds required, the profitability of the business, the demand for the service, the degree of technical expertise to implement the plan and innovative unusual ideas. There should be potential for long term self-employment and potential for commercial profitability.

#### 1.10 Analysis By Topic

Participants were asked the means by which course topics could be made interesting and relevant. Six areas of the course were identified for participants and each participant was asked to generate an idea under the column interesting and a second idea under the column of relevant. (Please refer to appendices 1.4 and 1.5 for the full range of ideas suggested by the participants.)

General ideas suggested included these: Notes for course should be prepared in advance of topics. Research officers should be skilled ex-business people and should not impart their own ideas. An enterprise course should allow the enterprise to develop and not bog down on the ninth floor. The NES allowance should commence with the start of the business, not course graduation. Banks should decide on loans which would be underwritten by the Department.

##### 1.10.1 Marketing

Participants felt that practical examples to develop strategy would be useful. Actual case histories of people who had marketed successfully would also make the topic interesting. A suggestion was made to get involved and enthusiastic speakers or videos.

The marketing topic could be made more relevant by more practical illustrations of actual businesses and more specific instructions on market research techniques. It was felt that an exchange of ideas on marketing was an effective method in spite of the problem of some non-participation. There was the need for greater discussion on the information collected by the participants, and a need for feed-back to participants about directions that they might take. There was more need to target individual needs.

Course one and two participants wished more exposure to simple inexpensive advertising techniques related to their own business ideas (services as well as retail) rather than the use of radio and TV. Access to cheap artists, printers and painters, for instance, should be arranged. Marketing techniques, as presently promoted, were out of the budget range of small businesses.

should be made for the business plan.

The ideal structure and appearance of the business plan model should be clarified by the administration.

#### 1.10.5 Elements of a Business Operation

Participants felt that more computers were needed and more computer instruction. Participants felt that too much time was wasted in waiting to use computers or to learn to how to use the computers. It was felt that computers should be made available after hours or early in the morning.

Some participants favoured greater use of video examples such as the John Cleese film. Other participants favoured some time being spent in an actual business environment. Elements of the business operation could be made more relevant through production line planning and operation. Examples should be presented of the stages from the start up of the business to its success. The main effort should be to try to personalise the elements to the business operation as much as possible.

Course one and two participants felt that more time was needed, particularly on the relevance to individual business ideas. Advice should be available on supporting agencies; secretarial, temporary manpower, etc.

#### 1.10.6 Guest Speakers

Generally participants favoured the idea of more guests speakers and visitors as a motivational device. Participants felt that the speakers could be made more relevant by getting guest speakers to react to individual business ideas. Some participants favoured the funding committee members being involved as guest speakers in bringing in plans that had not been funded in order to outline their deficits.

It was emphasised that lecturers should all be practising business people. Speakers need to be carefully screened and selected to be relevant dynamic, enthusiastic and informative. Content should be screened for relevance. A summary of the speaker's talk should be provided in advance. Speakers really need to be identified in advance rather than trialled on the group. It was noted that 90% of the guest speakers were excellent. Others, however, were late or failed to appear.

#### 1.11 Teaching Methods

The participants favoured no particular teaching method. One group felt that a useful method was a loop system commencing with a lecture, followed by questioning, followed by a group discussion with a possible assignment or field work.

Group discussion was highly favoured but an experienced facilitator was needed to run the groups. Some instruction in

group techniques was recommended at the commencement of the course. There was need for individual assignments with one to one counselling. Time must be allocated for field work. Work was particularly relevant for the personal development portion of the programme.

Participants were asked how comprehensive the coverage of each of their topics should be. Reactions varied. Many students felt that they could not answer that question at this point in the course. They did identify that a new budgeting lecturer was needed.

In terms of guest speakers it was felt that more specialists were needed. Investigations should be conducted into catching people from the Eastern states or overseas. Speakers needed to be highly motivated to motivate the group. A solicitor should be brought in as a guest speaker. It was also suggested that speakers be brought in on computers and that computer communications through modems and the use of Viatel be introduced.

Discussion on whether the course should be shortened met with mixed opinions. Some participants felt that the course could be cut by some weeks. Other participants favoured the present length whilst still others favoured even further time. The social advantages resulting from group cohesion, mutual support and growing self-confidence provided the rationale for continuing the present course structure. Areas identified as needing more time by Group C included the market research, the development of a business plan and the number of guest speakers.

#### 1.12 Support Needed For 1986

Participants were asked - 'What will we need in 1986 from the New Enterprise Scheme?' All groups identified the need for venture capital. Numerous other areas of support were also identified. (Please see appendices 1.4 and 1.5 for original conference reports.)

#### Available Experts

Groups felt that there was need for ongoing business advice. This would include a link with other sources to obtain further venture capital. Some participants felt that partners should be allowed to be employed rather than funded people being unemployed only. There was felt to be a need for contact with qualified experts who were easily accessible. For instance, there was need for ongoing support by bookkeeping lecturers.

It was recommended that experts be retained in a pool to be made available for the participants. Included in this pool should be legal advice from a solicitor. University students involved in commerce and marketing courses could also be involved as well as law students and accounting students. It was suggested that a work space be made available with a specialisation of industries.

### Access to Resources

Participants wished continued access to computer hardware and facilities (typewriters, photocopying, coffee, library etc) with flexible hours during evenings and on weekends.

### Mentors

Participants would like to become involved with mentors and private business people who could provide support and advice on a regular basis.

### Club

Participants would like to maintain contact with those who had done previous and future courses. It was recommended that a New Enterprise Club be formed with a newsletter, located at the work space, with functions such as discussion forums, evening seminars, talks and sharing of successful and unsuccessful experiences of members. A club could act as a lobby group and retain specialist help such as marketing experts, legal aid, accounting expertise etc. Services such as cheaper printing and advertising assistance could be made available. An information library with video tape facilities, videos and publications should be established.

### Role of Field Officers

Participants wished to retain contact with field officers who were actual business people rather than professional public servants they said, "to facilitate communication and speed up processes." Field officers should be independent of the bureaucracy to minimise red tape. They should act in advocacy roles on behalf of the participants. Criteria for the selection should include maturity, accounting skills and motivational abilities. Participants would like to be visited regularly, at least once every three months.

Participants did note however that they did not want too much interference unless they requested assistance.

Participants wished guaranteed incomes from the end of the course to NES funding or until the results of the funding application were known.

Participants wished a chance to resubmit their plan if it was initially rejected. They also wished a chance to apply for additional interest free capital if necessary. It was suggested that such capital might be made available at commercial rates or from banks. Participants wished the opportunity to apply for the NES allowance without applying for a loan.

The first and second course participants felt that funding should be paid equally to husband and wife. Funding allowances should

be available even to people who intend to take out a bank loan. There should be no means test during the first twelve months of the funding allowance period.

The community representative should not have to sign cheques. Personal accident insurance should be provided for the first twelve months.

One applicant wished to know "at what point does the community representative cease to know all about my business and when I buy my groceries."

### 1.13 Conclusion

This chapter is based on the theme, "What's happening now in the training course?" The chapter has sought to bring together, summarise and organise the voluminous information which was collected in the two evaluation seminars.

The interpretation of this data is around the themes, "What is happening elsewhere?" and, "What recommendations could we make?" This interpretation is to be found in subsequent chapters.