

## NEWS RELEASE

### **SOCIAL BUSINESS TRUST INVESTS £250,000 IN THE SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FESTIVAL**

**February 18, 2013:** The Shakespeare Schools Festival, which helps children from diverse backgrounds and from across the UK to boost their literacy and confidence through performing Shakespeare in professional theatres, is to receive £250,000-worth of professional advice from the Social Business Trust.

The professional investment – to be provided by SBT partners Bain & Company and Ernst & Young – will help the Shakespeare Schools Festival develop new revenue streams in order to grow and become sustainable.

The Shakespeare Schools Festival is the largest Youth Drama Festival in the UK. It provides both primary and secondary school pupils the opportunity to perform shortened Shakespeare plays in theatres across the country. This year it is working with 1,000 schools in 120 theatres enabling 25,000 children to participate.

This is the seventh investment the Social Business Trust has made since it started in December 2010. Its partners are seven of the UK's world-class businesses: Bain & Company, British Gas, Clifford Chance, Credit Suisse, Ernst & Young, Permira and Thomson Reuters.

The investment from Social Business Trust will help The Shakespeare Schools Festival realise its ambition to work with over 100,000 children between 2014 and 2016 as part of the Shakespeare Generation project celebrating the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bard's birth in 2014 and 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 2016.

Of the students SSF works with, 26 per cent have learning difficulties or a disability, 17 per cent are from inclusion schools and 25 per cent come from ethnic minorities.

Penelope Middelboe, Shakespeare Schools Festival Chief Executive, said "In the last 12 years we've enabled 100,000 young people realise their potential and raise their aspirations. With SBT's help we can expand further into primary and special schools, transforming the lives of a further 100,000 in just two Festival years: 2014 and 2015. We are a small, energetic and ambitious team, extending our hands-on reach with students and teachers via talented freelancers. SBT's advice on commercial sustainability and on our own internal capacity and capability is invaluable at this watershed moment as we invest in taking the Festival to 250 theatres UK-wide."

Education Secretary, Michael Gove MP, welcomed the investment in the Shakespeare Schools Festival by adding: "Shakespeare's language is our language. It is our inheritance. Through the Shakespeare Schools Festival many pupils will now have the chance to share and enjoy this inheritance. I am very grateful for the fantastic work the Shakespeare Schools Festival does."

Adele Blakebrough, Social Business Trust Chief Executive, said "We are thrilled to be able to invest in the Festival. It is both a wonderful and worthwhile enterprise that could grow significantly in the next few years. We look forward to helping it do so."

Stephen Lambert, a Partner at Ernst & Young, who is contributing professional support in the capacity as Investment Director said, "I am delighted to have helped Shakespeare Schools Festival secure investment from the Social Business Trust. The Festival is a hugely worthwhile experience for the children taking part and we at Ernst & Young are excited about working with SBT's corporate partners and the Management team to help scale up the business. This is a pivotal time for the organisation as it approaches the Shakespeare Generation years and it is a great opportunity for SBT to demonstrate the value that professional support can bring to the social enterprise sector."

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Social Business Trust was formed in December 2010. Since then it has invested in Timewise ([www.timewisejobs.co.uk](http://www.timewisejobs.co.uk)), The Challenge Network ([www.the-challenge.org](http://www.the-challenge.org)), Moneyline ([www.elmline.co.uk](http://www.elmline.co.uk)), the London Early Years Foundation ([www.leyf.org.uk](http://www.leyf.org.uk)) the Inspiring Futures Foundation ([www.inspiringfutures.org.uk](http://www.inspiringfutures.org.uk)), Bikeworks ([www.bikeworks.org.uk](http://www.bikeworks.org.uk)) and now the Shakespeare Schools Festival ([www.ssf.uk.com](http://www.ssf.uk.com)).

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