

Breakthrough

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Year founded	Breakthrough fund launched 2005
Sector focus	Social enterprise
Geographical focus	UK-based social enterprises
Size of fund	€3m raised to date
Investment support	High-engagement grants, strategic support, focussed capacity-building, advocacy
Investment size	Variable according to specific investment plan

Breakthrough is dedicated to helping social enterprises scale up and maximise their social impact. The project was launched in 2005 as a joint venture between the social enterprise CAN and the European private equity firm Permira. It provides a combination of funding and business support to help social enterprises overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of their ambitions to grow. The first fund, Breakthrough I, was launched in 2005 and invested €1m in four social enterprises over two years. The fund provided established social enterprises with money, in the form of equity-like capital, and time including mentoring from private equity and voluntary sector professionals and general project support. Breakthrough I social enterprises, Green-Works, Law for All, TimeBank and Training for Life, enjoyed strong annual turnover growth at around 20% and even greater social impact growth at around 40% a year between 2005 and 2007. Breakthrough II, was launched in 2007 and the €2m fund has to date invested in four outstanding social enterprises: Law For All (reinvestment), FareShare, Speaking Up, which supports and empowers people with learning difficulties, disabilities and mental health problems; and Teach First, which encourages top graduates to teach in challenging secondary schools in London. Further investments are currently under review.

Breakthrough does not provide start-up funding, but concentrates on supporting established social enterprises. For more information please visit:

www.can-online.org.uk/pages/breakthrough.html