

Developing Leaders for Social Enterprise

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Developing Young Leaders Borders Projects

2011 – 2013

The 2 year Developing Leaders for Social Enterprise project commenced in the Summer of 2011 coinciding with the opening of The Social Enterprise Academy's hub in the Scottish Borders. We worked with over 130 learners of all ages and backgrounds across the Borders.

Our Developing Young Leaders Borders project was delivered in late 2013 to a total of 32 young people with 8 of those learners progressing towards a qualification with the Institute of Leadership & Management.

What are the aims of your project?

This project delivered Enterprise and Leadership learning programmes to people across the Borders that were working, volunteering or had an interest in developing social enterprise.

The Academy learning programmes developed key skills required by people developing social enterprises;

- awareness of their strengths and leadership style
- understanding of their values and how to act on them
- clarity about their challenges and potential
- confidence to grow or change their organization
- skills to get the best from others and lead change

Where is it?

Our learning programmes were delivered in local communities across the Borders. Our mission is to support social entrepreneurs wherever we might find them, and that includes taking our learning programmes to the smallest communities where social enterprise can often make the biggest impact.

Who's involved?

Our learning programmes are facilitated by tutors who are themselves social entrepreneurs. They can empathize with participants from first-hand experience, as well as having one or two stories to share about their own learning journey. We call this 'practitioner led learning exchange' and we find learners really enjoy it.

Our 'Developing Leaders for Social Enterprise' programme had a steering group made up of local Third Sector organisations and we worked with the wider sector to recruit learners to our

programmes. This means we benefitted from local knowledge of people 'on the ground', and also ensured our learning programmes added value to their own work.

For our Developing Young Leaders Borders programme we worked closely with the youth hubs across the region, with support from **Youth Borders**, and also the local authority to identify young people that would benefit from the programme.

How is it funded?

Both projects were funded by **Scottish Borders Leader** and **The Scottish Government**. Across Scotland about a third of our work is grant funded like this, a third is covered by contracts that we win and the last third comes from sales of e-learning programmes. We're also now selling learning programmes and setting up other hubs outside of Scotland, which contributes to our sustainability.

Where did you go for help and advice?

We worked closely with the partners of the Borders Third Sector Partnership and spoke with staff and volunteers of local third sector organisations. We always work closely with local partners. We only ever do things in partnership – this ensures our learning is not duplicating existing work.

What's been your greatest achievement so far?

That's a tricky one! Our achievements are all about enabling social entrepreneurs to make real and lasting changes to our communities. Sometimes this means communities taking over key local services which are under threat, like shops or bus services. It's great to watch these new enterprises growing. It's also great to see the impact our learning has on people's lives. We call these 'lightbulb moments' when people (young and old) realize they can do something about the things that have been holding them back.

And the biggest challenge?

The rural nature of the Borders and limited public transport were challenges, in particular for the young people that participated in our programmes although we were fortunate to engage a local social enterprise to accommodate our transport needs. After that, the weather! We always keep a close check on the weather forecast in the winter, but very rarely do we cancel learning programmes. Our tutors always manage to get to the venue somehow, though sometimes they have epic travel stories reminiscent of polar explorers!

Any tips for someone for someone setting up a similar project?

We put our clients - the learners - at the heart of our organization and all our planning. When we are designing a learning programme we ask ourselves, 'what would be best for the learners', and then make decisions about venues, timings, visiting speakers or whatever. This learner focused approach has served us well, everything else just slots into place!

What's next for your project?

We will continue to provide learning programmes in the Borders. We are all on a learning journey, so there is always a place for our learning programmes. We also find the impact of second and third learning programmes is even greater than that of the initial learning programme – it's about creating a culture of learning within lives and organisations.

We're also growing, taking our learning to new places and communities, in Scotland elsewhere in the UK and overseas too. In the last year we've worked with social entrepreneurs from Melbourne to Malawi to Melrose, and (it seems!) most places in between.

More info (links to website, photos, videos, documents etc)

Our Website: <http://www.theacademy-ssea.org> and you can find us on facebook and follow us on twitter. And most importantly come along and experience our learning for yourself. Our learners all say three things – it's nothing like what they were expecting, nothing like anything else they have experienced and it's really enjoyable!

Facebook

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Contact details

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