

Added Value of Networking



Engaging Young People in Northumberland

Basic information	
NRN:	English NRN
Theme:	Success story
Coordinator:	Tom Burston
Partners:	Northumberland Uplands LAG
Beneficiaries:	Young people and businesses
Resources:	n.a.
Period:	2010 - 2013
Main element of networking:	Effective stakeholder engagement
Other elements of networking:	Capacity building and training Support for cooperation and joint actions

Background

In June 2010 the Northumberland Uplands LAG (NU LAG) completed a simple analysis of their Delivery Plan and Local Development Strategy against the projects supported through the LAG. This acted as a gap analysis with the aim of shaping the future of NU LAG and the projects that are supported.

A total of five gaps were identified, this included projects involving or initiated by young people and enterprise as well as employment and skills provision.

As a direct result of this analysis in May 2012 NU LAG recruited a Youth Engagement Officer to work on the ground with identified groups/organisations to develop projects that would help fill the gaps identified in the Local Development Strategy. Their remit was to develop and deliver enterprise activities and projects for young people in the Northumberland Uplands until September 2013. The three higher level objectives of the youth engagement role are:

1. Providing increased and relevant opportunities that promote enterprise and empowerment for young people
2. Strengthen local rural development projects by encouraging greater involvement of young people in their activities
3. Including the reality for young people from Northumberland Uplands in local, regional and national policy debate and implementation

The projects being delivered are described in the 'Main Activities' section below.



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Main activities

The gap analysis prompted the NU LAG to put out a call for projects;

- with a specific focus on 'extending the participation of young people in business'
- that included study tours and exchange visits for young people that had an enterprise focus
- that focus on getting people into employment or on people progressing whilst in employment through gaining new skills

With the following projects now being supported to meet those identified gaps.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Providing increased and relevant opportunities that promote enterprise and empowerment for young people.

Through the **Engaging Young People** project, in partnership with Leader Linne in Southern Sweden, we are giving young people aged 18-25 from the Northumberland Uplands the opportunity to develop their enterprise, employability and personal skills. There are two elements to this project:

- Residential training course in the Northumberland Uplands
- Travel to Sweden for 12 days to take part in study visits and a work placement.

There will be a total of three exchanges over the course of the project, the first of which took place in October/November 2012. The residential training course focuses on developing participant's employability skills. During the three day course topics covered include problem solving and decision making, communication skills and entrepreneurship. During the Sweden trip the five young Northumbrians took part in an inaugural youth conference which included youngsters from all over Sweden, Finland, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania as well as Northumberland. The conference discussed common issues for young people in rural settings such as unemployment and lack of opportunities in rural areas and enabled participants to build up their networks and contacts for the future. Workshops were led by a team of inspiring and encouraging coaches with business, creative arts and personal development backgrounds, which all provided practical advice on how to make yourself stand out from the crowd and take your future into your own hands. Following the conference, participants then completed a work placement, these took place in a variety of businesses – from farms, forestry and game management to an outdoor activity centre and a glass blowing craft business.

Our **Young Enterprising Leader Project (YELP)** Phase One is also fulfilling objective one and is aiming to engage with young people aged 14-17, resident within the Northumberland Uplands, to develop their enterprise skills. This will be achieved by providing a two day learning experience. One day will be spent working on their communication and team building abilities by taking part in a high ropes course. The second day will be an 'Enterprise Day' which will be delivered by Skills4U, and will involve an enterprise challenge.



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OBJECTIVE TWO:

Strengthen local rural development projects by encouraging greater involvement of young people in their activities.

As part of the **Engaging Young People** Project the Swedish participants also completed a week of work experience at a local NU LAG business/organisation. This has encouraged businesses within the Northumberland Uplands to engage with young people, and allow a new transfer of skills, where both parties benefitted greatly. Those businesses involved will be more confident in taking on future placements.

YELP phase one will involve a series of open days at businesses throughout the Northumberland Uplands showcasing to young people what can be achieved in the area, and how it is a can-do place to live and work. The businesses will also be invited into the local high schools to expand the opportunity out to other students from the area. The project also hopes to work with a local church which is undergoing restoration to develop opportunities for young people to learn new heritage skills and also explore the opportunities to develop a new Heritage Tourism Project.

OBJECTIVE THREE:

Including the reality for young people from Northumberland Uplands in local, regional and national policy debate and implementation

Young Northumberland has engaged a **Changemaker**, Fran Johnson. Changemakers is a charity which places young people with organisations to specifically encourage youth engagement. Frances is 23 and lives on a local farm, she has studied Countryside and Environmental Management and is a keen member of the local Young Farmers Club. Fran is looking at putting a mechanism in place to give young people in the Northumberland Uplands a voice in the matters that are important to them. She has been in contact with local youth clubs and organisations to deliver session which get everyone thinking about what it is like living in rural Northumberland and asked them the following question:

“What are the main issues facing you as a young person living in rural Northumberland?”

Attendees also filled out a project questionnaire exploring various aspects of living in this rural area.

Main results/benefits

Much of this activity is still on-going so it is difficult to identify the full range of benefits anticipated. There are however already results from some of this work.

Engaging Young People - As well as developing their enterprise skills the Sweden exchange also introduced the participants to new people (both from home and abroad) resulting in new friendships and networks being made. Their time in Sweden also made them more independent and improved their 'life' skills. Close contact has been maintained with the young participants, and NU LAG are looking into



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further training for them to help add to their skills base. Since the training three have sought further help with their CV's and job applications. Also, since the exchange, Matt, one of the participants, has found a new job and feels the career development and support he received as part of the Swedish exchange was fundamental to his achievement.

Change maker - It is hoped to get young people more involved with the forum in the future and getting Fran's feedback from this year's event has helped in taking this forward. The meetings being set up by Fran are giving young people the confidence and opportunity to put their point of view across about how they feel about their local area, therefore giving them a sense of empowerment.

Success factors

Carrying out the gap analysis enabled the NU LAG to identify the areas within their LDS they had not yet delivered. It was vital however to carefully explore the types of projects they sort to fund and be as clear as possible in the calls provided in order to attract activities which would meet those needs. Engagement with young people in EU Programmes can always be challenging so having a dedicated officer who could develop and support youth engagement was vital to the success of the activity.

Added value of networking

Networking has underpinned all of the activity that has been developed. It has supported the participation of young people, businesses and participants from other countries. It has also enabled all those involved in the different activities to work more effectively together and so supported their success.

Contribution of the NSU

The English NRN provided advice and guidance on the process of the gap analysis and has provided on-going support throughout the duration of the activities.

Contribution of the partners

A range of different partners have been involved with these activities – local, national and European. All of which have contributed skills, knowledge and expertise which has enabled these projects to be delivered successfully.



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Additional information

Find out more about Changemakers on Fran's blog at www.nychangemaker.tumblr.com .

Pictures

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