

UNITED KINGDOM

Local development

Location

Boyndie

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure

M411 – Competitiveness

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 195 571

EAFRD 85 682

National/Regional 16 234

Private 93 655

Project duration

2011 – 2012

Project promoter

Boyndie Trust

Contact

boyndietrust@hotmail.com

Website

www.boyndievisitorcentre.co.uk/

EAFRD funding helped expand and develop a social enterprise in rural Scotland. A new training centre is built, a visitor centre expanded and more jobs for adults with special needs created.

Summary

Boyndie Trust is a visitor centre and social enterprise in Banff, Scotland. It was set-up in a semi-derelict former school building in 2003. The project provides training and support to more than 50 unemployed adults, most of whom have special needs.



They work at the visitor centre which has gardens, ponds, woodland paths, a gift and plant shop and a restaurant specialising in home baking using local produce. RDP funding was used to refit and expand the centre's training and job opportunities, allowing it to cater for more visitors.

Results

The project has created 9 new jobs and safeguarded 9. It has trained a total of 60 people.

The visitor centre has been able to expand its retail offers, boosting revenue and helping increase tourism along the Banffshire coast.

The local area can benefit from a wide range of individuals within the local area regardless of their skills or wealth, helping to bring the community together.

Lessons & Recommendations

- It is of vital importance to plan expansion and enhancement of an organisation after proper research and evaluation. Once you know what you want to do, go and find funding that matches the project
- One way of making charitable activities self-sustaining, and minimising grant-dependency, is to adopt social enterprise principles of working
- More needs to be done to encourage successful and experienced businesses to see charitable activity and outcomes as a key end goal, rather than purely generating bottom-line profit.

Context

In 1999 The Boyndie Trust was formed, to take forward a multi-faceted plan to provide development and job coaching for adults with special needs, together with creation of employment for the area. In 2003, Aberdeenshire Council transferred a semi-derelict Victorian school building to the Boyndie Trust for the discount price of £1. It has been steadily upgraded and expanded every year since, and the previous LEADER programme was a key tool for this. The building was starting to constrain the space for future activities. The Boyndie Trust applied for LEADER funding so as to do a major refit and reconfiguration of the building.

Objectives

The project aimed to make every aspect of the daily running of the busy visitor centre, which includes retail, catering, crafts, gifts and horticulture, into development opportunities for those in training placements, with a team of specialist job coaches and training leaders assisting and facilitating.

The project followed consultation with the community. Improving the use of the space available has enabled additional beneficiaries to undertake training initiatives, as well as creating two posts which became self-sustaining after one year. The community has benefited from this project with additional opportunities for economic growth and also improved opportunities for promoting social cohesion.

Activities

The project altered the internal layout of the existing visitor centre and equipped newly created retail, training and workshop areas. It improved the shop and increased the growing space in the garden centre. Two posts were created to run and develop the commercial and training activities, which were self-sustaining after one year. An extension to the existing car park was made to enable more people to visit the centre at any one time, and solve the long running problem of inadequate parking facilities.

Main Results

The enlargement and refit of the building allowed to expand both the services the Boyndie Visitor Centre provides and also the number of jobs.

The result was that the Centre was redeveloped to

increase its use. It was able to train more individuals, accommodate more visitors and increase retail space. The centre created more skilled individuals, increased tourism, increased revenue generation, and created jobs.

The project has improved the opportunities for local economic growth by increasing the tourism offering along the Banffshire coast, while promoting other tourism and food related businesses.

The job creation and training element of this project has ensured that the local area can benefit from a wide range of individuals within the local area regardless of their skills or wealth, helping to bring together the community.

The Banffshire coast area has clearly benefitted from LEADER, in terms of better facilities, better services and increasing the tourist trade, which in itself has brought increased prosperity to the area.

Jobs Created: 9

Jobs Safeguarded: 9

Individuals Trained: 60



The centre has managed to ensure that it is still a strong, relevant, growing and popular organisation after more than fifteen years in business, relying on self-generated income - sustainability!

EAFRD funding allowed the social enterprise to grow and develop, becoming financially sustainable and thriving.

The centre continues to grow and thrive, adapting to customer needs and expanding to attract new markets.

“Everybody needs a value, everybody needs a purpose in life, we give that to people, we give them a sense of being part of the community.”

Rebecca Thomson, Job Coach

Key lessons

Boyndie was already a successful organisation, but this grant enabled us to expand both our range of services, and the quality of what we deliver. It created sustainable jobs, enabling us to bring new and experienced staff into our organisation, who in turn brought yet more fresh ideas; and it has permanently enhanced our financial sustainability too.

It is of vital importance to plan expansion and enhancement of an organisation such as Boyndie, according to needs and opportunities identified, after proper research and evaluation. Often stakeholders see a pot of money first, then think “how can we make up a project for our organisation so we can get the grant”; that is not a good way to achieve real and lasting outcomes.

One way of making charitable activities self-sustaining,

and minimising grant-dependency, is to adopt social enterprise principals of working, which is what has been done at Boyndie from the very start, back in 1999. There has been much recent emphasis on getting charities, and those who run them, to learn and embrace commercial business, and many have found it a difficult concept to grasp, as it is so different from their usual mind-set.

It seems that nowhere near enough has been done nationally to approach social enterprise from the opposite direction, which is to get successful and experienced businesses and business managers to see charitable activity and outcomes as a key end goal, rather than purely generating bottom-line profit.

Boyndie’s success is at least partly because experienced business managers such as myself have seen it as an enjoyable, challenging and different career move.



Additional sources of information

www.ruralnetwork.scot/case-studies/boyndie-visitor-centre

<https://vimeo.com/183505238>