

Evolve – Community organisation development workshops

Development Aim: Tailored to your skills and objectives but include: communication skills, analysis and problem solving, Influencing skills and building good relationships as well as enhancing professional skills (such as HR, IT, Finance, etc) and improving commercial awareness.

Evolve – Skills Based Volunteering

The aim of these development days is to provide your team with an opportunity to develop and use their skills in a different environment and at the same time support a social enterprise or community organisation. Small grassroots third sector organisations are given the opportunity to present their organisations issues informally to a group of volunteers for questions and scrutiny. In doing so they gain the opportunity to receive an external opinion. The questions you will likely ask will be different to those they might usually receive in their own sector. The organisation will have a key theme or priority of the moment that they would like to discuss with your group. The organisation will be matched to you based on your existing skills, the skills you would like to develop and your experience.

Working with your matched organisation, the initial part of the day is spent on analysis of the organisation. A suggested approach is to use some analytical tools such as SWOT or PEST analysis to assess the organisation after a general discussion and question sessions. This will help to pick out some key areas to devote the rest of the time towards.

Participant organisations are asked to bring any marketing materials, business plans or other relevant documents with them on the day in case they need to refer to them. The aim is for the participant organisation to leave with some key outputs, ideas, or actions to take so it is helpful to review and consolidate the discussions towards the end of the time allowance.

Working in a different context helps you to understand people, their values and different perspectives and generate ideas that are creative and innovative.

SBC facilitators will run the event and be on hand at all times to assist with the sessions, venue and catering is provided if not available at your place of work.

What is a social Enterprise?

Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition defines this as “... a dynamic businesses with a social purpose. They have social aims, trade in competitive markets and reinvest their profits for community benefit. DTI research in 2005 indicated there are at least 1,100 social enterprises in Scotland, employing 30,000 people and adding £1.25bn to the national economy. More recent local and national studies suggest the true figure could be more than 3,000”.

Feedback from previous participants

Feedback from both sides has been very positive. Third sector organisations find that they gain new insights and ideas from the day. They find it useful speaking about the issues they face with new people who are unconnected to the sector. They also find it useful validation for the things they are doing well, and a useful experience to test their message to make sure it makes sense to new audiences.

Volunteers find it an enjoyable experience and an insight into a sector where there is little opportunity to work with otherwise. Most find it very uplifting to meet people engaged so closely in communities and are surprised by how much they are able to help.

HBOS Case Study

“On 30th October 2008 the HBOS MI Centre of Excellence took part in a volunteering activity with a difference. We arranged a team challenge based in Edinburgh, run by Scottish Business in the Community. The aim was to engage our relatively new team, build awareness, develop teamwork and widen the involvement of companies in local communities.

On the day we split into 3 teams and spent time understanding the challenges that our 3 social entrepreneurs were facing. Each organisation was relatively new and they were looking for ideas to move them forward. The social enterprises were involved in:

- getting educational supplies to Grenada
- providing an important social gathering place through a focus on fair-trade and organic produce
- horticultural education for people with learning difficulties

It’s hard to get across the passion and dedication of these people. They were truly an inspiration and at the beginning, many of us were wondering what on earth we could do to help. We spent about an hour finding out about each of the businesses and the challenges they were facing. We then used a series of tools to generate ideas to help the businesses move forward.”

Feedback from the MI Centre of Excellence team has been extremely positive:

“It makes you think in different ways and use skills that you didn’t really know that you had, and of course you get to elaborate on other peoples ideas and help develop them too”

“Overall the experience was enjoyable and left you with a sense of making a difference. I’d willingly do this again without a moment’s hesitation”

“The social entrepreneurs were truly inspirational and their dedication and selfless attitude was truly humbling” .