

Elan Gives Back

Introduction

The LEAF (Learning to Enable Achievement & Fulfilment) pilot took place in Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Powys in 2017. In Powys the 'Elan Gives Back' project piloted to help secure funding and to practice delivery for the 5 year Elan Links project. The pilot gave them an opportunity to build a network and relationships with tutors and referral agencies across the county and to work out the logistics of delivering outreach and training activities in a large isolated location.

The project piloted delivery of the well-established Tir Coed training and engagement model in the Elan valley working with people from across Powys whilst trialling the delivery of a brand new five-day intensive progression course, leading to certification for participants. This new programme developed on from Tir Coed's accredited 12-week training course, and was developed to offer progression training to beneficiaries who wished to increase their skills and progress into different woodland related industries. This included piloting the logistics of delivering, assessing and certificating brand new subject areas. Tir Coed also needed to make the new woodland sites at the Elan valley 'fit for purpose' and so involved the installation/building of facilities such as benches and shelter and tool storage areas.

The training offered skills in woodland carpentry and sustainable woodland management, as well as providing a supportive environment in which people developed social contacts, made new friendships and increased their confidence and wellbeing. Ten outreach days were delivered for local community groups including 'forest school' type sessions, ecology, woodland treasure hunts and family days. These sessions included participants from disadvantaged communities, including people who were most disengaged from woodland and outdoor settings.

Outcomes

The project had social, environmental and economic benefits as well as improving wellbeing and mental health. The pilot was very successful in securing access to a number of sites at the Elan valley, and working through the logistics of getting trainees and participants to and from the sites, accessing facilities and safety issues due to the lack of mobile reception across the Elan valley. This led onto a smooth transition into the larger five-year project, funded by the Heritage Lottery, which began in early 2018 and



built on the work of the pilot. Including the addition of one mentor per county to help participants progress through the Tir Coed programmes and to exit Tir Coed into apprenticeships, training and paid employment.

The pilot project provided evidence and learning that led the Elan Links project to secure £3m to deliver a large-scale landscape project and up-scale of the Tir Coed activity at the Elan Valley site. The Tir Coed element of this project is worth just under £375,500 with additional funding expected to be generated as additional programmes are developed over the life of the project.

This five-year project is being developed further with additional funding sought to develop regular volunteering. Overall, the whole Tir Coed engagement and training model has developed and progression routes have moved forward as a result of the pilot and the subsequent developments that it led to.

Key learning

The LEAF project was funded by three separate LAGS and delivered in three counties, with separate claims and reporting to each LAG, a single co-operation project across the counties may have been a more appropriate model.

Staff turnover during the project affected continuity of project delivery at times. This has informed Tir Coed re improving their staff recruitment process, particularly in terms of wider advertising. They have also written and implemented a staff wellbeing policy and note that there was significant understaffing in the pilot project which has been rectified in the full Elan Links project which is now in year 2 of delivery.

The staff team has grown enabling additional support for the project coordinators and management team with roles such as administration, accreditation support and marketing, which reduces the work-load and stress level of project staff and helps Tir Coed to keep their staff longer-term.

The logistics of getting people across the site lead to a number of funding bids being developed to enable the purchase of a mini-bus. Tir Coed is awaiting an outcome imminently to see if this will be forth-coming. The purchase and use of satellite phones has been instrumental in ensuring good health and safety practice.

Tir Coed is also looking at ways to be more financially sustainable in the long term, since growing in confidence during the pilots with income generation strategies starting in earnest in 2019.



Projects Details	
Delivered By	Elan Gives Back
Start Date	December 2016
End Date	March 2018
Leader	Theme2: Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains.

Financial Details	
Total Expenditure	£33,720.00
RDP Funding	£26,976.00
Match Funding	£6,774.00