

Xcel Project – Building on Success Final Report

The idea for the project was developed after the success of the original Xcel Project. The idea was to build on all the good aspects of the original project as well as adding value and innovative methods to make the project unique and successful.

There were a number of individuals and organisations involved in the project. In a rural community such as Eskdale it is vital that partnership working takes place. The Xcel Project has a number of partners that it works with to deliver high quality youth work and youth activities.

These partners include:

- D&G Council Community Learning and Development
- Police
- Langholm Primary, Langholm Academy and Canonbie Primary
- Eskdale Sports and Leisure Centre
- Active Schools
- Community Council
- Langholm Initiative
- Moorland Project
- Langholm Playcare
- Centre Stage Theatre
- The Buck Hotel



A picture of the Buck Hoodies pool team that was set-up in partnership with the Buck Hotel.



A picture from the 2010 Summer Programme in partnership with the Eskdale Sports and Leisure Centre.

As well as a number of organisations, the Xcel Project – Building on Success used a lot of volunteers to run the various activities. The Xcel Volunteer Database has steadily built up since the start of 2009. It holds information on all of the volunteers that work with the Xcel Project.

The information is not just about who they are but also what they are interested in helping with. For example, all of the dance leaders that work with the Just Dance group are on the database.

There are currently 20 volunteers on the database, they have all been disclosure checked. The hope for the future is that all groups in the area of Eskdale that work with young people will be able to source volunteers through the database.

All of the volunteers on the database also have access to free training throughout the year. In 2010 they took part in Child Protection training as well as First Aid training.

An awards superstar!

Published at 21:44, Wednesday, 27 October 2010

A FORMER Langholm young citizen of the year has been presented with another award in recognition of his volunteering work.



Jamie Fletcher of Langholm is presented with his Millennium Volunteer award by Liz Forsyth, community health development worker.

Jamie Fletcher, 17, has received the Millennium Volunteer award, which is signed by First Minister Alex Salmond, for completing 200 volunteer hours with groups such as the Buccleuch Centre, Xcel Project, Langholm Initiative and Centre Stage Youth Theatre.

Jamie is no stranger to awards, having previously received the Langholm Rotary young citizen award. As a result of volunteering for a diverse range of organisations, he was asked to participate in the HMI of Education inspection.

Jamie is a keen volunteer with the Xcel Project and has been able to achieve his MV award.

The aims and objectives of the project were:

- to provide more opportunities for achievement amongst young people in the rurally isolated area of Eskdale, through the implementation of several initiatives, identified and achieved in conjunction with local young people and the wider community.
- to realise the social development of young people and enable them to gain a voice and place in society.
- to encourage young people to become active citizens, their increased involvement within the community shall improve the quality of life for those living in the area.
- to facilitate the development of young people through initiatives that allows them to identify and meet their own needs.
- to create informal educational opportunities for young people in Eskdale.
- to improve young people's access to information and services.
- to involve the community with the introduction of an Xcel Volunteer Database. This would result in all clubs and organisations working with young people in Eskdale having access to volunteers.

The total project cost was £80,302.84. The total amount of money provided by Leader was £40,151.42; this was 50% of the total project cost.

The rest of the funding was made up with contributions from the following:

- Langholm Youth and Community Project (applicant organisation)
- John Hammond Trust
- Stoneypath Trust
- Holywood Trust
- Youthbank

The project took place from January 2009 through until January 2011.



During those two years, a Youth Information Centre was introduced into the area of Eskdale as the main part of the project.

Ground-breaking youth project opens next week

Published at 21:48, Wednesday, 18 March 2009

THE new premises of Langholm's youth project opens its doors to young people next Monday from its base in the High Street.

The rooms have been refitted by landlord Andrew Scott.

Funding from various bodies will pay for the rent, heating and lighting, and the tables and chairs, along with the TV, were paid for by the community learning and development department of the council.

The future of the groundbreaking project, set up three years ago, was secured last December, thanks to the new two-year funding package.

Xcel Project was given £40,000 by grant-giving body Leader, half of the amount it needed to keep running for the next two years. Another £10,000 came from the John Hammond Trust and £10,000 from Langholm Youth and Community Project, with funding also from the Holywood Trust and the Youth Bank.

Led by Duncan Elliott, youth development manager, the new base will give Eskdale a building dedicated to young people and a presence on the High Street, creating more interest and gaining more publicity. It will provide a friendly environment where different organisations can meet young people.

Duncan wants to encourage young people to drop in and talk about ideas for new activities or projects they would like to get involved in.

There are a couple of laptops for the youngsters to use so they can go on the internet and there are leaflets on careers, health and other topics as well as newspapers to read. It is also hoped to have professionals come along and give advice on careers and health.

Duncan says he wants to get as many organisations as possible working with Xcel and to have somewhere for the young people on the High Street is ideal.

Youngsters can drop in from 3.30pm to 5.30pm, while adult members of the public are invited to look in from 11am to 1pm if they are interested in finding out more about the project, have any ideas for activities or would like to volunteer.

Duncan says having their own place will make a big difference. He will be more accessible more often, not only for the young people but also for the volunteers.

He said: "It takes a while to get volunteers up and running and we're always looking for people. I'm quite keen on putting volunteers into something they are interested in. That way they'll get more enjoyment out of it." The youth club, which meets on Mondays in the community centre, is sending youngsters to take part in the youth club championships at St Joseph's College in Dumfries later this month. They will compete in various categories, including sports.

In August Langholm is hosting the national play day which includes sports coaching and displays by various organisations. It is hoped to involve local clubs such as the football and rugby clubs.

The Youth Information Centre provided a place where young people were comfortable and relaxed, a place they could call their own. The development of what was once an unused space in Langholm managed to achieve the following:

- provide Eskdale with a building dedicated to young people. A place where young people can feel comfortable and are allowed to be 'young people'. It will contain internet access, an information point with leaflets, a large open plan office will provide a friendly environment where different organisations can meet with young people and discuss a variety of issues.
- give the Xcel Project a presence on Langholm High Street, creating more interest and gaining more publicity for the project and for the young people.
- make the Xcel Project more accessible to the young people and the community.
- be used as an information resource by young people. They can find out what is going on and where, they will be able to pick up leaflets on careers, health etc.
- bring as many organisations as possible together to work with and alongside young people.
- encourage young people to drop-in and talk about ideas for new activities or projects they would like to get involved in.
- encourage adults to volunteer to work with young people, providing them with information to make them comfortable with the idea of volunteering.
- build on the success of the last three years. A lot of hard work has gone into the previous project and great strides have been made with young people in Eskdale. However, there are so many more possibilities and the new building will go a long way towards realising those possibilities.

As well as the Youth Information Centre, an Xcel Project website was set-up. The website provides everyone with a chance to learn a bit more about the project. The website can be found at www.xcelproject.co.uk

It is a place where young people can give us feedback, find out what is going on as well as suggesting new ideas and activities. One of the most important pages of the website is the 'Clubs & Groups' page. It contains all the information on clubs and groups that offer something for young people in the area of Eskdale.



There was a huge marketing promotion of the website with an article in the local newspaper along with 1,000 postcards being produced that advertised the website. The postcards were distributed within all the local schools as well as a number of local businesses.

A marketing promotion was also undertaken for the aforementioned Summer Programme. A booklet was produced detailing all of the activities and trips available and was again distributed within all the local schools. This was done in 2009 and 2010.



The Clubs and Groups page of the website that allows young people and parents to find out exactly what is going in the area of Eskdale.

There are four main activities that have helped form the Xcel Project and keep it popular and relevant amongst young people. These are:

Youth Club

Takes place on a Monday night from 6.30 – 9.30pm. P4 - P6 from 6.30 – 8pm and P6 - S2 from 8 – 9.30pm, the cost for the club is kept at £1 to try and remove the barrier of cost. The club averages 40 – 50 young people every week and the young people have plenty of activities to keep them amused.

Get this! Youngsters pick up club prizes

Published at 21:33, Wednesday, 09 June 2010

THE youth club in Langholm finished for the summer with a presentation evening.



Langholm youth club competition winners are, left to right, Rebecca Hall, Owen Scott, Christopher Tait, Katie McCall and Daniel Winter

Various competitions had taken place over the last few weeks and five of the eight winners attended to pick up their prizes.

The full list of winners are Christopher Tait (pool), Daniel Winter (darts), Owen Scott (table tennis), Rebecca Hall (hockey), Katie McCall (basketball), Robbie Gordon (football), Olivia Cottrill (dodgeball) and Zoe Little (Nintendo Wii).

The youth club is run by the Xcel Project and is open to young people from P4 to S2. It will be back up and running in September.

Community Centre Drop-In

Takes place on a Wednesday night and runs from 7.30 – 9.30pm. The Drop-In is open to young people in S3 and above. It is more structured than the Hang Out with more focused youth work and different activities. Up to 20 young people attended each week and are taken on an outing at the end of each session. The group is run in partnership with CLD.

Buck Hang Out Night

Takes place on a Tuesday or a Thursday night and runs from 7.30 - 10pm. Young people aged 14 – 18 drop in, play pool, darts, listen to music and generally hang out. The numbers vary from week to week with a minimum of 10 and the maximum 20. It is also a place where young people feel comfortable and they can make use of it throughout the week.

Buck Hoodies

The Buck Hoodies came about as a result of the Buck Hang Out Night. The Hoodies compete in the local pool and darts league. Pool takes place on a Sunday night from September to April and darts on a Thursday night during the summer months. This is a great way for the young people to work together and also helps with the perceptions of alcohol amongst the young people.

The fourth Bluelight Music Night was held in Langholm on Sunday 7th March 2010. This was preceded by a free music workshop.

Drumming up support for the Bluelight music event

Published at 21:42, Wednesday, 24 March 2010

THE sound of beating drums opened the fourth Bluelight music night at the Buccleuch Centre in Langholm.



In perfect harmony: Young Langholm musicians get into a rhythm at the free music workshop.

The event rounded off a day of music which had started with a free music workshop run by Soundwave from Workington.

Twelve young people enjoyed drumming, sound recording and making music. They all learned a drum beat that they performed to open the Bluelight event.

There was also an informal meeting to talk about Langholm music group and the involvement of new members.

It is hoped that the group will now go from strength to strength with further meetings and events planned for the future.

The original members of the group were heavily involved in organising the day and helping it to run smoothly.

The Bluelight music night events are for young people aged 11 to 17 and offer a safe environment where young people do not feel under pressure to drink alcohol or take drugs.

They have a Chill Out Zone where they can sit back, relax and chat, enjoy a free non-alcoholic drink, and get access to interactive learning and information on alcohol, drugs, sexual health, volunteering, careers and other youth issues.

The evening was well attended, with more than 40 young people enjoying the live music. The music was performed by young local musicians and singers.

These included Ryan Harvey, Sammy Adgo, Rory Laycock, Daniel Scott, Hannah Cumming and Ama Sulter. There was also a guest DJ and MC from Annan.

The whole day relied on partnership working and it was organised by a number of groups and organisations, including Langholm Music Group, Xcel Project, Dumfries and Galloway Council's community learning and development service, Church of Scotland and the police.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in Langholm Music Group, they can contact Matthew Hinds or pop into the Xcel youth information centre in the High Street.

The music workshop helped launch Langholm Music Group. The group is still in its infancy and has yet to make a mark as such. The hope is to get more young musicians involved and hold regular band nights within the area.

The Xcel Project – Building on Success mainly worked with young people aged 13-18, as a result they were the main beneficiaries of the project. Over 800 people male and female under the age of 25 benefited from the project over the two years.

The final budget worked out very well with a few changes being made along the way. The final spend for the project was £79,114.02. The anticipated spend had been £80,302.84.

There were a few reasons for the difference. The main reason was that it was very hard to judge how much it would cost to run the Youth Information Centre. The cost of electricity, water as well as internet and telephone costs all had to be estimated before the start of the project.

There have been a number of lessons learned throughout the project, the main ones surround feedback from the young people. It has helped so much having a presence on the High Street and the young people being able to just pop in and have a chat. The best feedback opportunities are usually the informal ones. It is so different for the young people growing up now, it is important that we can relate to what they are going through and the way they feel about different things.

Partnership working is vital in a rural area, it is important to build up strong working relationships. This is even more important when you are working in isolation.

The Future

The Xcel Project is now very well recognised in the area of Eskdale as a project that helps young people interact and achieve. The follow on project from Building on Success will keep all of the activities and initiatives that has made the Xcel Project a success while at the same time adding some new and innovative ideas to keep it fresh and interesting.

Project Length; The Xcel Project – Why Try? would run for two years.

Project Set-up; The project would have one full-time Youth Development Manager which would safeguard this post for another two years. There would also be a bank of hours to be used for part-time youth workers who would also be backed up by volunteers. The Youth Development Manager would be responsible for the administration of the project.

Primary Research; Discussions have been held with Langholm Academy to try and get to the young people that have not been living up to their potential, or who have been deprived of opportunities for a variety of reasons. The Xcel Project – Why Try? will work with the school to identify these young people and engage them on the project.

Project Aims; The new project will incorporate the Why Try? training program. By offering a range of activities and opportunities, the Xcel Project – Why Try? will aim to enhance the skills and confidence of the young people and give them a sense of self fulfillment. The young people will take part in the program and once completed they will be rewarded with a weekend residential within Dumfries & Galloway.

The Youth Information Centre will be used as the base for the project. The young people will be able to access the internet for free and keep up to date with what is going on with the project.

Project Goals; The goal of the Why Try? training program is to help young people answer the question, Why try in life? (when they are frustrated, confused, or angry with life's pressures and challenges.) It teaches young people that YES, it is worth trying hard in life and putting effort into challenges with friends, at home and at school. The program teaches young people how to convert challenges and anger into positive motivation. It also stresses that although making good decisions

can be difficult, doing so will help give the young people more opportunity, freedom and self-respect.

The Xcel Project – Building on Success addressed the Leader issue ‘Strengthen community spirit and civic pride’.

Young people are the future of all our communities. By working with them and giving them opportunities to progress, learn and achieve we are going a long way to strengthening our communities for the future as well as the present.

The project has significantly improved the lives of young people within the area of Eskdale and has offered advice and support to a number of existing youth organisations.

The new initiatives have helped attract different young people and unearth plenty of talent within the various activities.

There is a real possibility of making the Xcel Project an integral part of the community. The young people are now starting to take leading roles within the groups with learning and achievement at the centre of this. Everyone is now aware of the Xcel Project and just how important the project is.