

About the programme

Community businesses face unique challenges as they seek to improve the places where we live and work. This programme is designed specifically to support people like you, within these organisations to develop your leadership skills and provide you with the tools to tackle these challenges.

This programme is a unique learning opportunity dedicated to community business, blending training from Real Ideas Organisation (RIO), Sheffield University Management School (SUMS), Royal Society of Arts (RSA), and a host of other experts, with opportunities for raising your organisation's profile and that of the sector.

RIO brings practical experience as a thriving social enterprise, and provider of social enterprise training, SUMS brings the latest global research and practice to the programme and the RSA bring their history of research and expertise in social innovation, and their well-known public platform of ideas for social change.

We want to see community businesses up and down the country thrive and develop. As well as supporting leaders, this programme is helping to raise awareness of the sector with the public, policy makers, investors and funders so that more communities can ask 'what if we ran it ourselves?'

Application process

You'll need to complete the application form by midday on the 15 May 2017.

The form asks why you'd like to be involved, and checks that your organisation is eligible for the programme (see FAQs on the next page).



Additional benefits of the programme

- A year's free RSA Fellowship.
- Participation in the Power to Change alumni network.
- Using the programme as a launch pad for promoting your organisation through writing and speaking events.
- Social media training to help you make the most of your communications strategy.

What will I do and learn?

- The programme will run over six months from June – November 2017.
- You'll attend a two day training session every month.
- Five sessions will take place in London and one outside of London, at interesting community venues.
- Each month we'll focus on different aspects of leadership and development, from business strategy, to understanding community dynamics, to navigating investment and financing.
- Also included is a two day innovation programme which will set you up with an action plan for tackling a challenge or project within your organisation.
- The programme will provide you with a network of people working in community business from across your region, with whom you'll share experiences, knowledge and skills.
- Sessions will be led by experts from community business, traditional business and the third sector.
- You'll become ambassadors for community business and help to enable more communities to get involved.

FAQs

Is there a cost to participate?

Power to Change are funding the programme, so it is free to participants. However, participants will need to contribute towards their expenses for attending the training sessions.

Is my organisation a community business?

The first application form is designed to check if your organisation fits with the Power to Change's definition of a community business as this programme can only support those organisations that do fit this criteria. The form gives you some pointers and short videos of examples of the criteria. You can also find more information on the Power to Change website. Or do feel free to contact us at josie.warden@rsa.org.uk if you are unsure.

How do you decide where the training takes place?

We select venues that are interesting and relevant to community business and leadership, and which provide insight for the participants. In the previous cohort we held training in Devonport Guildhall, the Eden Project, and the venues of two of our participants, Burton Street Foundation and Hamilton House.

Do I need to be a senior member of my organisation?

No. Leadership can be developed in all areas of an organisation. We welcome applications from anyone in an organisation from volunteers to trustees. We ask that your organisation fully supports you taking part.

Can more than one person from our organisation take part and/or apply?

Yes. We are happy for a proportion of the group to be made of up two representatives from organisations. If more than one person would like to apply please get in touch to let us know.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this programme you need to be part of an established community business which can demonstrate how it fulfils these four criteria:

Locally rooted: You are rooted in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs, for example high levels of urban deprivation or rural isolation.

Trading for the benefit of the local community: The business has a clear trading model which sells services or products to people in your local area. Profits are used to deliver local benefit.

Accountable to the local community: This can be demonstrated in many ways (eg membership structure, ownership, broad range of local trustees) but you must have evidence of regular community influence on your business.

Broad community impact: You benefit the community as a whole and can clearly evidence the positive social impact on the broader community.

You'll also need to be based in south, central or east England.

You'll be enthusiastic about community business and passionate about the impact these organisations can have.

[Power to Change's website provides more information on community business and examples of the criteria.](#)

Programme dates

(these are provisional and subject to revision)

June	July	August	September	October	November
14 & 15	11 & 12	15 & 16	12 & 13	18 & 19	28



What our participants say:

"You can't overestimate how much you gain from getting to know a group of leaders from community businesses at a similar stage of development to your own. Finding out how they've tackled challenges you face, how they embed their ethos into everything they do, how they engage their communities – I've found it fascinating."

"This came at exactly the right time for both our organisation and for me personally. I've done a lot of training in the past and it's rare to find something this good: the content, delivery and other participants have been exceptional."

"The programme has enabled me to build on my previous experience and apply the learning as we have gone along. I'm feeling more confident and better equipped to help my community business."

"I'm really excited about the potential for using the techniques we've learnt to get our community more involved in shaping our direction - and I've loved the support and laughter of the group."

 RSA

Contact us:
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Who is running the programme?

Power to Change:

With a £150m endowment from Big Lottery Fund, Power to Change is supporting community businesses to create better places across England.

RSA:

For over 260 years, we have built a powerful network of people who are dedicated to enriching society and shaping the future through ideas and action.

RIO:

We're passionate about solving social problems and by working with individuals, organisations and sectors we harness the power of social enterprise to deliver real and lasting social change.

Sheffield University Management School:

In the top one percent of business schools globally, we use our world-class research to have a positive impact on organisations and society.

Programme alumni

South west cohort participants:
[Onion Collective](#)



South west cohort participants:
[The Ardagh](#)



South west cohort participants:
[Credition Community Bookshop](#)



North cohort participants:
[Giroscope](#)



North cohort participants:
[Burton Street Foundation](#)

