

Explore Programme

Explore, develop and test a social venture idea

What Is It?

The Explore Programme is a practical programme designed to help university-based founders develop an early-stage idea into a clearer, testable social venture concept. Through expert-led workshops, practical tools, feedback and peer support, Explore helps participants understand the problem they are addressing, develop their venture model and design practical ways to test their assumptions with real people.

Who It's For?

University researchers, students and recent graduates with an idea that addresses a social or environmental challenge, and who are ready to explore how that idea could create value and work in the real world.

Key Aims

By the end of the programme, participants will:

- Develop a clear understanding of the problem, audience and stakeholders they are seeking to address
- Create an evidence-informed value proposition
- Explore how their venture could create impact, deliver value and be sustained
- Identify and prioritise the assumptions that need to be tested
- Design practical tests, prototypes or a first pilot to generate evidence and learning
- Develop a clear plan for their next steps and communicate their venture concept effectively

Programme Structure

Workshop 1 – Understand the Problem & Create Value (online)

Participants develop a deeper understanding of the problem they are seeking to address, the people affected by it and the value their venture could create.

Workshop 2 – Design Your Social Venture Model (online)

Participants explore how their idea could create impact, deliver value and develop into a viable and sustainable social venture model.

Workshop 3 – Test the Concept (online)

Participants identify what they need to learn about their venture and develop practical ways to test their key assumptions, preparing them for an initial pilot or validation activity.

Presentation Session (in person regional sessions) Participants present their social venture and initial pilot to a panel of experts. They receive constructive feedback and useful connections to help them progress their idea.



Post-programme support

Pilot Funding

Develop ventures that are ready to test their concept can apply for pilot funding to support the costs of an initial test or pilot. Further details, including eligibility and the application process, will be provided during the programme.

University Support

We work closely with our university partners to help participants connect with relevant enterprise, research, funding and support opportunities in their institution and region.

Events and Programmes

This programme is one part of the wider ImpactU pathway. As their venture develops, participants may have opportunities to access further programmes, events, expertise and connections.

ImpactU Community

Participants become part of a community of social entrepreneurs, university partners and organisations working across the public, private and third sectors, creating opportunities for learning, collaboration and support.

