

# Five tips for more robust and innovative heritage organisations

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Participants at the residential event in June 2023, as part of Heritage Trade Up. Photo: School for Social Entrepreneurs.

Hear from the organisations who took part in our Business Support and Enterprise campaign about how they improved organisational resilience in challenging times.

A thriving heritage sector is one where organisations are robust, enterprising and forward looking.

During this [four-year campaign](#), we supported seven organisations to deliver programmes across the UK: five offered business support and two focused on enterprise development.

They engaged participants through a range of techniques – including group and one-to-one workshops, both in-person and online – to help build confidence, develop business strategies and gain skills in finance.

As the campaign comes to a close, we've collected a summary of learnings and advice from the organisations who took part.



90 organisations took part in Social Enterprise Academy's enterprise development programme.

## Top five tips

### One size doesn't fit all

Think about what makes your organisation unique. Go back to basics and ask yourself questions like:

- What are your core aims?
- What is your staff and voluntary infrastructure like?
- What skills and resources already exist within your organisation?

By outlining these key factors, you can seek development opportunities that make sense for you.

Fundraising was an important element for a participant in [Catalyst Cymru: Broadening Horizons](#), led by Wales Council for Voluntary Action. They developed a fundraising strategy which helped them to secure funding and embed their learnings for the future.

### Put together a business strategy to manage change and challenges



Cause4 worked with small to medium-sized organisations in England to build resilience in the heritage sector.

This does not have to be in-depth. It can be as simple as outlining your core aims and setting a small number of objectives for the year ahead.

Change is a normal part of growth. Having a strategy in place means that you can step back and remind yourself of your organisation's purpose to help you stay focused.

A common concern for participants on Social Enterprise Academy's [Steps to Sustainability](#), was the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the cost of living crisis. By establishing a clear strategy, they felt confident to try new things.

## **Try varied learning techniques**

Keep things interesting by mixing up the ways you and your staff grow together, such as a blend of online and face-to-face workshops, and attending networking events.

The programmes we funded found that participants benefitted from a varied approach, such as one-to-one coaching, toolkits and webinars, which enabled more focused learning.

Find some inspiration by exploring the [free learning resources from Thrive](#).

## **Invest in time to learn from experts**

Getting support from experts doesn't have to be costly and you can start by making the most of online resources, such as watching one of Heritage Alliance's recorded webinars from [Rebuilding Heritage](#).

Thanks to support from experts at Cause4 in [Heritage Compass](#), one participant was able to create a business plan and implement supporting strategies which helped them secure funding from Arts Council England.



School for Social Entrepreneurs engaged participants with a range of development techniques, including networking events.

## **Build cross-sector networks and partnerships**

Reach out to other organisations in your area to discuss common challenges through online or in-person meetups.

Sharing different perspectives may reveal solutions you had not thought of. Building relationships will also build resilience by knowing you are not alone.

Participants in [Surviving to Thriving](#), led by Museums Galleries Scotland, benefitted from an online community space that was set up within the programme.

[Schools for Social Entrepreneurs](#) says: “Creating a network that supports organisations to grow alongside each other, share values and broaden inclusivity, will establish a stronger sector with greater future impact, UK-wide.”

## **Harnessing learnings for the future**

As well as supporting organisations across the sector, this campaign helped inform our [Heritage 2033 investment principles](#).

The outcomes of the programmes, and the resources developed, demonstrate how an inclusive heritage sector is more sustainable. These results are embedded in our investment principles: organisational sustainability and inclusion, access and participation.

We are committed to supporting a resilient sector so heritage is valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.

## **You might also be interested in...**

Investing in resilience

**Business Support and Enterprise Development**

Volunteers at Barnyards Marsh Wildlife Reserve. Credit: Alan Anderson, Scottish Wildlife Trust

**Collaborate, don't compete, to support innovation and drive change**

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[Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy](#)