

Location: Glasgow

Early Years Scotland

Impact: Reducing Childhood Poverty



Background

Early Years Scotland (EYS), originally known as SPPA, has been dedicated to ensuring the best start for every child in Scotland for nearly 60 years. The organisation works with children from pre-birth to age five and their families, focusing on developmental frameworks to support better futures for all children in Scotland. Operating mainly in deprived communities across Scotland, EYS delivers various programmes, including Stay Play and Learn, Baby Massage, and Baby Yoga, aimed at early health, education, and family support. The organisation also engages in professional learning, membership services, and policy advocacy, collaborating with the Scottish Government and other strategic groups to influence policies impacting young children. With a strong membership base and diverse projects, EYS aims to address the needs of children and families, including those in prisons and homeless communities.

What Support did you need from the Accelerate Programme?

EYS sought support from the Accelerate Programme to investigate ways to diversify their income model and explore social enterprise opportunities. The organisation relies on grant funding from the Scottish Government, local authorities, and various trusts and foundations. However, recognising the need for sustainability and reduced dependency on grants, EYS aimed to develop a social enterprise model but required guidance on what structuring and implementing a social enterprise model would look like. The Accelerate Programme provided the necessary support to help EYS identify viable social enterprise activities, such as a pay-it-forward model for baby wellness sessions and a family support package for employers. This assistance was needed to ensure a strategic approach to the new social enterprise and align with the organisation's charitable objectives.

What did the support from Accelerate help you achieve?

The Accelerate Programme helped EYS conceptualise and develop two ideas for the social enterprise model. The first model would involve a pay-it-forward system where parents who can afford baby wellness sessions contribute to funding similar sessions for families seeking support. The second model would offer a family support package to employers as part of their employee benefits, providing parents with access to early years support and resources. Prior to their work with the Accelerate Programme, EYS was looking to hire a business development and impact officer to measure and communicate the impact of the organisation's projects, however, with their new strategy for the social enterprise models, it meant this role could also drive these ideas forward. Making the role even more critical in their future development.

The economic and social impact of the Support

By developing the social enterprise models, the organisation will be better positioned to generate sustainable income, reduce reliance on grant funding and enhance long-term stability. The pay-it-forward model would promote social equity by enabling access to early years services for families who might otherwise be unable to afford them. The family support package for employers helps parents navigate the challenges of returning to work, ultimately benefiting employees and employers through improved well-being and productivity. Through this project, EYS could amplify its reach and effectiveness in supporting early childhood development across Scotland. These initiatives will support families and contribute to broader societal goals, such as reducing child poverty and boosting the economy.