

CASE STUDY

Project LEAD

Location
TOLCROSS, EDINBURGH

What is it?

Lead is a 20-week programme which aims to raise up and release leadership in young people through increasing self-esteem, recognising leadership abilities, and developing self-awareness.



This might feel an odd way to start our story, but Hitler famously said: “He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future.” This is a stark and chilling reminder that we need to train and equip young people well in order to positively shape society. We need to help them be individuals who have the confidence and the character to stand up for what they believe in. We need to prepare them to be citizens who lead and influence others for the good of civilization.

The success of virtually any organisation rests on the quality of its leadership. Whether it is a sports team not winning enough games, a political party in disarray or a school not achieving the needed exam results, the leader is the one of whom questions are asked and blame is portioned. Leadership really matters! Schools recognise the value of leadership but timetables rarely allow for time to invest solely in leadership. This is where the journey of Lead started; we saw the importance of leadership development within young people and wanted to invest in them. In 2015, Lead was set up as a charity based in Edinburgh, to raise up and release leadership in young people, across UK schools, to transform their world. Lead aims to enable students to realise they are all leaders so that they can become better individuals personally, better leaders, and subsequently shape the world they live in. Lead builds confidence and develops skills that will help the students lead in any environment or scenario. Lauryn, a student at one of the leading state schools in Scotland said: “Lead has significantly built my confidence as a person and as a leader; it is so motivational.” Comments like these make the work worthwhile.

At Lead, we want to help schools across Edinburgh and beyond release and harness the leadership potential that is in all students. We’ve seen that investing in young

people’s leadership has positive outcomes on their lives at home, their behaviour and their influence at school and within the wider society. We’ve heard students say that they’ll stand up for the bullied and work harder in lessons. We’ve seen them grow in their awareness of how they can lead and positively influence others in every area of their lives.

Lead offers educational institutions from a vast array of backgrounds 20 one-hour sessions that help students understand and lead themselves and others better and more effectively.

We equip our students with role models, teaching and resources, using input that is often reserved for the highest level of business executives. We encourage our students to experiment with what they have learnt, journal their journey, review their progress and undergo effective reflective practice. Finally, we expect that our students will transform their world through engaging with a variety of contexts with excellent leadership and increased confidence. Recently, we tasked our students to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis. They planned an appropriate response, reflected on the effectiveness of their efforts and how they exercised leadership. Their efforts also influenced thousands of others through a variety of methods including school assemblies, clothing collections, social media and other campaigns.

As a result of the work of Lead, we have seen an increased engagement and input into the life of schools, a mentoring programme developed to help young people in their leadership and career progression, and some students attending our church and Alpha course because of relationships formed. As the Church we need to help shape the future and positively impact every sphere of society, through investing in the God-given leadership potential in all young people.

Values we hope to instil in young people:

- Our leaders are self-aware as they understand their identity, individual talents, gifts and personality.
- Our leaders are transformational and believe everyone can positively change themselves, help others develop for the better and significantly impact their world.
- Our leaders have integrity and understand that well-rounded growth is essential to effective leadership. The Lead programme engages every area of the participant’s lives including their mind, emotions, spirituality and physical activity.
- Our leaders are courageous and believe impacting society and communities is brave, open to experimentation and, at times, failure.

ANDY HARDING

is founder and a trustee of Lead.