

Phil Anderson

Age: 24

Location: Scottish Borders



Main Challenges



Housing & community



Digital connectivity



Transport

Rural Youth Project Involvement

Phil attended the 2018 and 2019 Ideas Festivals and sits on the project's steering committee.

“I was really encouraged by the way that they were trying to inspire young people to invest in rural areas and make a difference where we can”

- Phil Anderson

Background

Phil is an optimistic, music loving, faith fuelled young person.

After growing up on an organic sheep and beef farm in the Scottish Borders, Philip moved to Edinburgh to study. First BSc Agriculture, then a postgraduate in Outdoor and Environmental.

“I loved being involved with sheep and cattle, but I also had a passion to work with you people, so I did a bit of work purely on the farm then moved to be a youth worker.”

Having built his skill set in both rural and urban contexts, Philip's enterprising mindset and solutions focussed attitude, has enabled him to join his three strands of interest together: agriculture, the environment and education.

Passionate about farming, Philip and his wife Mary now have their own farming business, Mainhill Organics, producing outdoor reared, grass fed, organic lamb. Alongside this, both Philip and Mary work part time in inner-city Edinburgh. Mary is developing a charity that champions leadership in young people, whilst Philip works as a youth worker for a local church.

Phil is committed to using outdoor learning as a platform for relational youth work and environmental education. As such, the aspiring social entrepreneur now brings inner city teenagers back to the family farm.

Here, they might be found planting trees and learning about the environment, learning about the farm and the sustainable practices Philip is employing to rear high quality meat or mucking in with one of the many and varied physical jobs that a working farm demands.



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Background

Philip is passionate about sharing the pleasures of rural life with urban young people; as well as providing them with the space to work through potentially difficult emotions and the opportunity to achieve tangible outcomes. Often this can result in a young person seeing themselves in a new light, boosting their self-esteem in other areas of their life.

“We want everyone to feel heard and everyone to feel spurred on!”

Philip is not one to rest on his laurels and is constantly looking for new ways to improve his practice – both in his work with young people and in his farming business. Some of his future aspirations include localising his farms supply chain, cooperative farming and raising up the next generation of young leaders to understand the UK food systems and live out their potential. Philip hopes to play a role in establishing a larger local organic food network.

Philip’s experience in both rural and urban Britain has given him an insight into how important these urban/rural links are, and how often they can be lacking. Making use of technology platforms and initiatives such as ‘face-time a farmer’, Phil has been able to reach out to London school children from the comfort of his sheep barn! He hopes this will help spark young people’s interest in rural life, educate them in where their food comes from and build lasting urban/rural links.

Solutions

1. Gain a fuller picture by getting experience working in both urban and rural contexts – this could help you see opportunities to create links and spot gaps in the market. – also helping to better understand knowledge gaps and develop skills in education.
2. Think outside the box – as flexible working hours become increasingly common in different businesses and organisations – it could well be possible to work and gain experience in two different sectors. Part time farming part time youthwork – youthwork can be face to face and remote.
3. Make use of online platforms to connect urban and rural. Tell people in the city about what you are doing. This captures their interest and educates people about where their food comes from, builds urban/rural connections, and helps potentially isolated rural communities stay connected.




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