

Case Study

Pillar Nonprofit Network

Pillar Nonprofit Network strengthens individuals, organizations and enterprises invested in positive community impact. The Network supports more than 610 non-profits, social enterprises, and social innovators by sharing resources, exchanging knowledge, and creating meaningful connections across the three pillars of non-profit, business and government. This organization believes in a connected network that sparks collaboration and a willingness to lean on each other to help build an engaged, inclusive, and vibrant community.

Pillar's core priorities include: increasing awareness of non-profits and social enterprises as social and economic drivers; supporting non-profits and social enterprises to develop an inclusive workplace; facilitating collaboration by connecting non-profit organizations, business and government; and finding new ways, programs and services to address our community's most persistent challenges. Pillar aims to strengthen individuals, organizations and enterprises invested in positive community impact.

The collaboration with Social Enterprise Institute (SEI) came about when Pillar was in search of a partner with a strong capacity for program curriculum development aligned with Pillar's values. As a service provider, Pillar's major strength resides in its teaching methods and ability to deliver training to the community but required capacity strengthening in curriculum development. When Pillar received funding allowing the delivery of their new Social Enterprise Coaching Program (SECP), they developed a request for proposal and received a letter of interest from SEI that met all their requirements.



Increased Knowledge



Knowledge and Skills Transferred



Greater Access to Investments



Enterprise Sustainability

The quality of SEI's products and services made it an obvious partner to work with, deliver the program and ensure a positive impact for Pillar, the trainees, the social enterprises, and ultimately, the community at large. The partnership met all of Pillar's objectives but also benefited SEI as it allowed for the Institute to expand its service delivery and to scale up to a national level. SEI had an innovative learning platform and quality content but needed local relationships in Ontario to expand its model in the province.



SEI provided knowledge transfer and capacity building in curriculum development to create a program with adequate content meeting Pillar's objectives. It also strengthened the capacity of Pillar's coaches to support their social enterprise clients. The two organizations co-designed the SECP program. SEI leveraged its Steps to Startup Program, which teaches how to plan, build, and launch a successful social enterprise, and Pillar leveraged its on-the-ground training, relationships and experience of social enterprise in Ontario to create and deliver the content to business support organizations. Jointly, Pillar and SEI delivered training in Ottawa and Kingston. After having integrated the appropriate knowledge and adequately applied their enhanced curriculum development skills, Pillar facilitated two additional training sessions in London and Windsor. The sessions furthered their mission of strengthening individuals, organizations and enterprises invested in positive community impact.

IMPACT

The collaboration between SEI and Pillar yielded significant results. Pillar accessed the necessary knowledge in curriculum development required to reinforce their capacity in the delivery of impactful training for the community.

Through the four training sessions delivered, Pillar reached 35 business coaches and advisors. The participants reported feeling fully equipped to support their social enterprise clients. Almost two-thirds of participants (73%) stated to be likely or very likely to apply the knowledge learned to their social enterprise clients.

The knowledge gained by the business coaches and applied to their clients generated a series of positive results. Post-training evaluation data reported greater access to investments for social enterprises, and six out of 16 social enterprises, which started in Pillar's Incubator Program in the ideation or testing phase, progressed to the development stage (i.e. revenue-generating) or growth stage.

GOING FORWARD

Pillar Nonprofit Network is hoping to further their knowledge dissemination through the SECP using the Steps to Startup program and train more business coaches to support social enterprises in their effort to grow. Pillar has expressed the wish to gain more knowledge around social impact measurement through another SEI signature program: The Impact Practice Certificate, a program providing fundamental learning needed to plan, measure, communicate and grow social impact. This would further their collaboration with S4ES and would allow them to support additional social enterprises in their endeavours to grow and sustain.

André Vashist

Director, Social Innovation

"Partnering with S4ES has allowed us to gain relevant knowledge and increase our capacity in curriculum development for the delivery of an impactful program. Our collaboration with SEI contributed to achieving Pillar's objectives in supporting social enterprises to grow and sustain their business."



For more information, please contact:

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