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DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR AN  
UNMAPPED FUTURE



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We often train leaders based on current or past knowledge yet leadership is often about charting a course through unknown waters, an unmapped landscape, the future.

Venbridge worked with their client, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to design a programme for the Health and Care sector in Wales which would create a self-sustaining generation of future leaders, able to accelerate innovation and address some of the most intractable problems in health and care both now and in the future.

Ed Parkes is a Leadership Advisor at Venbridge and this was an exciting opportunity to create something different.

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“I hear time and time again that to generate more disruptive change, generic leadership development just doesn't cut it. The world is more complex, more political, more random than hygienically packaged input and tidy answers and the tangled path from ideation to scaled implementation of innovation is marred by a thousand points of friction.”

This programme was an opportunity to think differently about the knowledge, experience and relationships that leaders in health and care need to navigate the complex future that is ahead of them.

Our mission was to create a rich learning environment drawing on a global network of educators, pioneers from Johns Hopkins University, the Hilary Institute and the Oxford Centre for Triple Value Healthcare, alongside organisations across Wales.

The question we set out to answer was how do we achieve leadership training that's not constrained by the past, but enables our leaders of tomorrow to introduce the sort of disruptive change that's vital for innovation and progress?

As one of our partners in Singapore said:

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“Wicked problems will keep on coming. If we don't do anything different in how we grow our collective capabilities, will we as a society be any better at marshalling a response?”

We challenged many of the conventions associated with development programmes (see next page). In fact, we created less of a development programme and more of an evolving system intervention.

Our future is unlikely to look like our past and the unpredictability of interacting forces means we have to support people to develop more adaptive responses. By stepping aside from controlling moving parts we created space to unlock new ways of seeing, doing and connecting. And by bridging disciplines, sectors, ages and backgrounds the programme is building a network of leaders who have the understanding, capabilities and confidence to invoke and inspire a new wave of purpose driven innovation.

The Climb programme launched in September '21. It is part of the Intensive Learning Academy programme, funded by Welsh Government to build capability and capacity across the Health and Care sector in Wales.

## PREVAILING NORM

## POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE

### STRUCTURED CURRICULUM

Pre-defined by course owner +/- contributors about what participants need to learn, with model of design > deliver > repeat across cohorts

### CLOSED MEMBERSHIP

Binary approach – one is either allowed entry to the programme and becomes a participant, or not: a clear in/out

### LEARNING APPLIED TO WORK-SETTING

‘Provocation’ and input on the programme is then applied to a work-based learning project or real-world setting – to embed the learning: a solution in search of a problem

### ‘LIKE ME’ PARTICIPANTS / HOMOGENIZED ELIGIBILITY

A cohort attracting people of a similar seniority, set of professional experiences – to enable participants to be able to connect around shared realities

### INSIGHTS AND POWER SITS WITH EXPERTS

Subject matter experts have devised approaches and offer insights that are heard, absorbed, assimilated and applied by participants

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLIMB

### SELF/GROUP-DIRECTED

Options for more open and exploratory process, influenced by participants. May still include access to expertise or opportunities –

### POROUS BOUNDARIES

Opportunity for involvement in the programme beyond core participants, for example a community of interest or collaborators

### WORK SETTING INFORMS LEARNING

Live challenges, needs and opportunities shape what is considered by the group: a problem in search of a solution

### PEOPLE I’D NEVER MEET IF NOT FOR THIS PROGRAMME

Using the power of different perspectives, and recognizing the importance of forming cross-boundary networks as a means of challenging ‘received wisdom’

### PARTICIPANTS AND EXPERTS CO-CREATE INSIGHTS

Recognising that each context is unique, participants and experts engage in joint enquiry to generate new knowledge, insights and applications



## CONTACT US

To find out more about the how we co-create development programmes to unlock capability and capacity through boundaryless learning, please contact Jess Lancashire, [jess@venbridge.co.uk](mailto:jess@venbridge.co.uk)