

Sky Blue

/skʌɪ 'bluː/ n. 1. The colour of the unclouded sky at noon

Sky Blue is an online leadership programme for people working on our environmental challenges.

To tackle these challenges, we will need to re-imagine and transform the systems that support our way of life. This will require a multi-disciplinary approach.

We need leaders who can cross the boundaries of sector, generation, professional discipline and belief, and who can build cross sector collaborations that deliver results.

Sky Blue brings together a dynamic group of leaders from around the world, from many different fields, who have a common focus – our environment.

It gives them the cross-boundary leadership skills and broader networks to increase their impact, and a community of practice that enables the exchange of experience, ideas and strategies with their peers.



Why collaboration matters

Collaboration – between sectors, organizations and individuals – is hard.

The different agendas, objectives and motivations of the parties involved mean that they often fail. Or, they may succeed on the face of it, but the original ambition is lost because relationships deteriorate or the priorities of the partners become more important than the collective vision.

Collaborations that tackle environmental challenges are no different; many of the issues are extremely complex and cannot be solved by any one individual, organization or sector, working alone.

The reward for effective collaboration is undeniable; and if we want people and our environment to flourish we need collaboration to work.

Sky Blue gives leaders at the heart of tackling these issues the cross-boundary leadership skills, broader networks and peer support that will increase their chances of success. This will enable them to create the quality of collaboration that is needed if we are to deliver sustainable, and socially just, solutions for both people and nature.

The aim, with this programme as the first step, is to convene a community of leaders around the world who are committed to our environment and who are working collaboratively, across sectors, to create a sustainable future.

100%

feel better prepared to work collaboratively

GABRIEL SCHWADERER, Executive Director, EuroNatur Foundation

“Sky Blue helped me to understand that we can solve the climate and biodiversity challenges on our planet if we all start with local solutions. If we collaborate and understand ourselves as global movement, we will be able to contribute to fundamental change.”



What is Cross-Boundary Leadership?

For 30 years, Common Purpose has developed leaders who can cross boundaries – between sector, specialism, geography, generation, background and belief.

We will bring our cross-boundary leadership knowledge to Sky Blue:

Leading Beyond Authority (LBA)

The ability to produce change beyond your direct circle of control. People who develop this ability are more effective in unfamiliar territory, where the authority (or credibility) gained in their own organization or sector is often not present.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

The ability to cross divides and thrive in multiple cultures. Our simple and empowering CQ framework helps leaders unpack their own culture and confidently work with others.

Of those who took part in Common Purpose programmes in 2020:

93%

feel better prepared to influence beyond their circle of authority

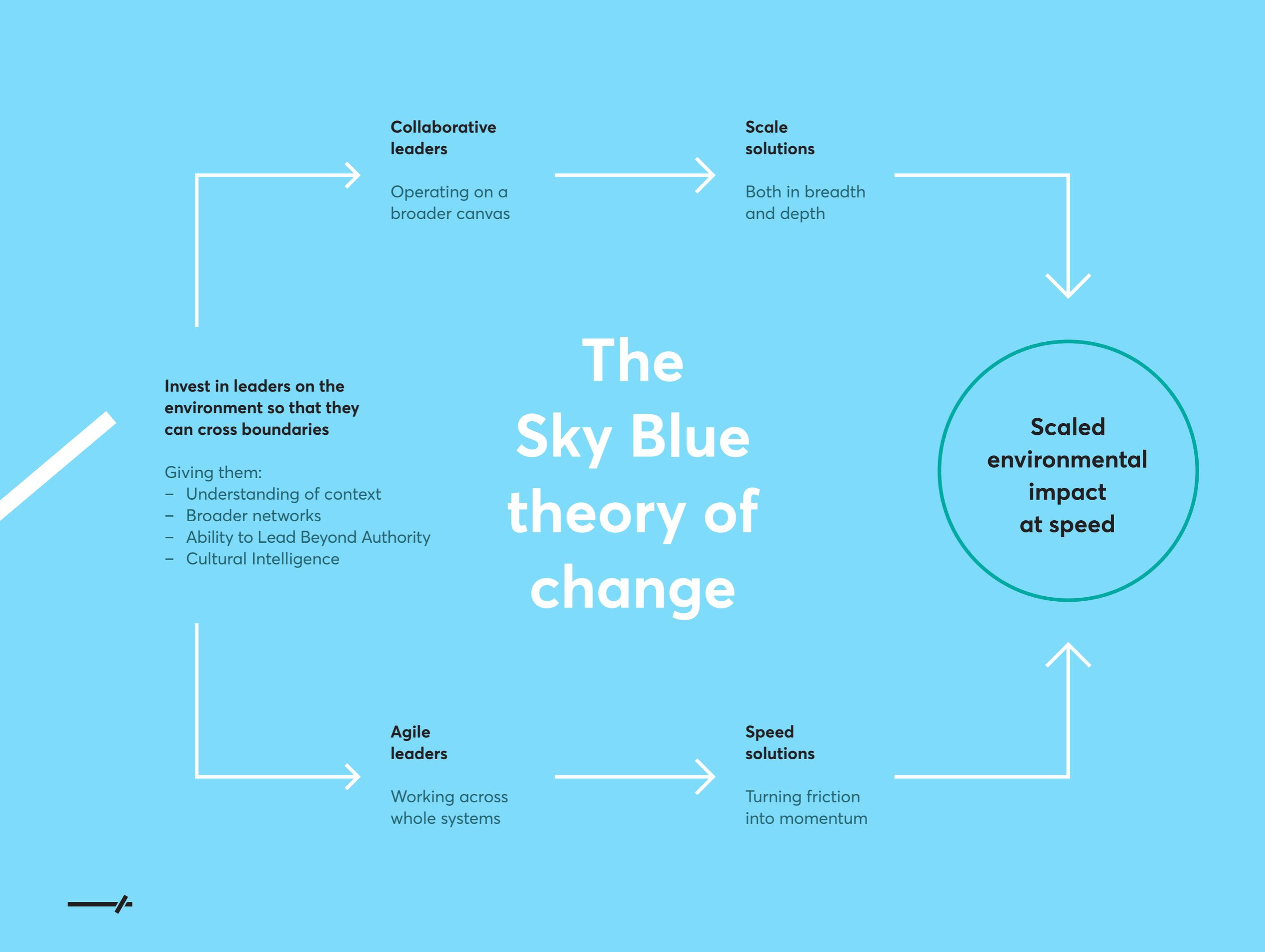
93%

feel better prepared to thrive in complexity

94%

feel better prepared to adjust their behaviour in culturally diverse situations





Collaborative leaders

Operating on a broader canvas

Scale solutions

Both in breadth and depth

The Sky Blue theory of change

Scaled environmental impact at speed

Invest in leaders on the environment so that they can cross boundaries

Giving them:

- Understanding of context
- Broader networks
- Ability to Lead Beyond Authority
- Cultural Intelligence

Agile leaders

Working across whole systems

Speed solutions

Turning friction into momentum



LYNDA MANSSON,
Director General, MAVA Foundation

"We wanted to work with Common Purpose on the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy because of their track record, and their expertise in cross-boundary leadership. It has proved to be a very successful and fruitful partnership. It is hugely important that leaders working in conservation, and the wider environmental movement, are able to work collaboratively with leaders from other fields."



Who can apply?

Here are some of the examples of the fields that participants may be working in. They are examples – there may be many more

Leaders of thought or action (in any sector) whose work addresses (locally or globally) environmental issues and who are:

- Already working on a project, idea, challenge, or issue related to the environment that requires (or will require) them to collaborate with people from other sectors to achieve their goals
- At any stage in their leadership journey. This is an inter-generational programme
- From anywhere in the world

Our definition of 'environment' is deliberately very broad. We want to gather an exciting and dynamic mix of people from different disciplines, geographies and generations. Diversity is important to creativity (and resilience) and we aim to convene a group of people that will inspire, challenge and support one another to develop existing projects and create new ones.



Conservationists/
nature specialists



Scientists



People identifying
new political/
economic models



People developing
new models for
organizations



Legal,
tax experts



Campaigners, educators,
communicators



Circular
economy
social
entrepreneurs



People
working the
land or
the sea



How will it work?

Sky Blue is not like other online courses where people learn, on their own, from people who have the 'answer'. There is no 'right answer' for how to collaborate effectively. We expect that many of the approaches that participants want to explore are new and untried.

Sky Blue is a highly interactive, facilitated experience. Our aim is to be collaborative in our approach with a strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of expertise amongst the participant group. To achieve this, the programme combines:

Online learning platform

Our social learning platform provides programme content including modules on Cross-Boundary Leadership, articles, video and audio content to illustrate programme themes. This also provides a space for discussion and the sharing of views, case studies, and experience across the group.

Live sessions

Inspirational leaders from a range of different sectors share their experience of Cross-Boundary Leadership – the obstacles, strategies and successes – and debate with participants.

Peer Coaching

Participants, working together in small groups, have space to reflect on their challenges, hear new perspectives and develop a community of practice with peers.

Practices

Participants test new ideas and leadership approaches and bring back the findings to share with the wider group.

Sky Blue Founders

We will gather a group of leaders from a wide range of fields and disciplines who share their experience of Cross-Boundary Leadership as contributors and learning mentors.



The Journey

40 hours over 5 months

Programme modules

A mix of live sessions at fixed times and participants learning in their own time via our online learning platform

Setting the scene (3 hours)

An introduction to the programme, fellow participants and the framework for the rest of the programme.

Working in unfamiliar territory (8 hours)

How do we work across boundaries? Explore real-life examples of Leading Beyond Authority in action and how it has brought about change.

Working across cultures (8 hours)

How do we better understand our own culture – and that of others? Developing our Cultural Intelligence to turn potential clashes of culture into sparks of creativity.

Collaboration to transform systems (10 hours)

What are the foundations of effective collaboration across sectors and what do leaders need to do to make this happen? Participants explore:

- how do I need to be? What kind of leadership is required for effective collaboration
- real-life examples of collaboration in action
- how to manage obstacles and roadblocks
- What are the features of successful collaboration?

How do we apply this to our work? (3 hours)

Participants present ideas and projects to one another and share experience, expertise and strategies.

Peer coaching

Live sessions – fixed times (6 hours)

Participants meet in small groups throughout the programme to explore individual challenges with peers. The sessions are guided using a peer coaching approach.

Practices

Participants learn in their own time (2 hours)

Via our online learning platform.



Alumni & the Sky Blue community

Everyone who completes the programme will become part of the Common Purpose alumni – a cross-sector network of over 100,000 leaders from around the world.

Following the first Sky Blue we are working with the alumni to develop a community of practice – where alumni can share ideas and experience and support one another's efforts.

90%

say that the Sky Blue community will help them to make a positive contribution to addressing environmental challenges

ROSSLYN COLDERLEY, England Director, North, Sustrans

"Sky Blue brings together truly inspirational leaders from around the globe, transcending cultures and borders. Our humanity, our humility and our shared ambition binds us into a phenomenal network of people striving to create a better future for the world."



What the participants say

ANA PORZECANSKI, Director, Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History

"Sky Blue has been a remarkable experience and community of like-minded, like-hearted people! It has given me ideas, confidence, inspiration, energy, and the courage to take more risks! I'm already making different decisions."

DUPE KILLA-KAFIDIPE, Founder, Platinum Fisheries Limited

"I came to Sky Blue very excited. The sequence of feelings as the programme went on progressed from excitement to freedom and safety, then deep awareness, some soberness and then empowerment."

Here is what the Sky Blue participants say about their experience:

92%

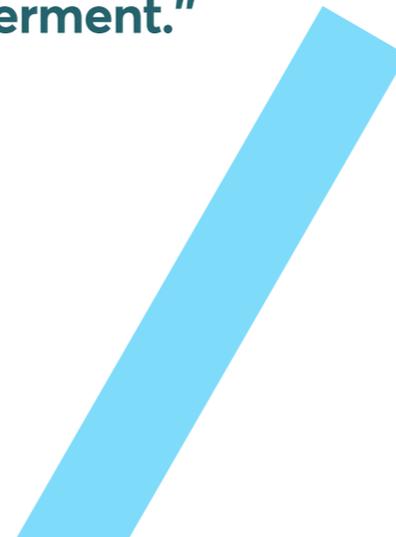
feel more confident in their voice as a leader tackling environmental challenges

93%

feel better prepared to influence beyond their circle of authority

100%

would recommend Sky Blue to another person



87%

feel better prepared to make an impact on environmental challenges

97%

recognize the value in bringing in wider perspectives when making key decisions

96%

feel better prepared to work with people who are different from them



DAVID MILLER, Director of International Diplomacy, C40 Cities

“Sky Blue brings together leaders from all sectors and backgrounds to work collaboratively on our environmental challenges. Building these networks of collaboration is the only way to address our big challenges: Sky Blue is an idea whose time has come.”



Apply



Apply online

BEGINS:

15 November 2021

CONTACT:

If you would like to discuss the programme please contact alison.coburn@commonpurpose.org

WHAT WILL IT COST?

There is no cost to participants. Sky Blue is funded by an independent philanthropist through her foundation, The Heffner Rosenwald Howard Foundation.

LANGUAGE:

The programme is conducted in English. We hope to offer future programmes in other languages.

IS SKY BLUE FOR ME?

This programme is for you if you:

- are working on a project, idea, challenge, or issue related to the environment that requires you to collaborate with people from other sectors
- want to connect with leaders from different generations, fields and disciplines from around the world who are working on environmental issues
- are prepared to bring your ideas, expertise and experience and share them with your peers.

