

RAiSE ENGAGES HALF OF SCOTLAND'S LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A programme which empowers teachers with the confidence and skills to deliver inspiring and motivating STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) learning experiences for primary pupils has launched in the Western Isles.

RAiSE (Raising Aspirations in Science Education) and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have seconded two Primary Science Development Officers (PSDO), Catriona Gilchrist based in Lewis and Harris and Fiona Macgillivray in Uist, Benbecula and Barra. They will develop and deliver professional learning, create STEM networks, and organise community events for the authority's schools. Their work will build upon and provide a central point for the STEM education efforts already underway at the islands' 20 schools.

Catriona said:

"We want to build upon a lot of the great work already underway, and provide a structure which ensures we're all sharing best practice and benefitting from the wealth of STEM professional learning and teaching opportunities which are available.

Fiona added:

"STEM skills are so important in terms of local employment and we want to nurture curiosity and confidence from an early age."

William Macdonald, Director of Education & Children's Services at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said:

"We are delighted to be the next local authority to join the RAiSE programme and recognise that it will bring many benefits to our schools in the strengthening of primary sciences for both staff and learners. We look forward to supporting the development of the project over the next two years."

RAiSE is a programme of The Wood Foundation, Education Scotland, Scottish Government, and participating local authorities. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the 16th authority to embark upon the programme which has delivered more than 50,000 hours of professional learning since 2016.

Gayle Duffus, National Education Officer, leads the RAiSE programme. She said:

"We are delighted to have reached this milestone in our engagement of Scotland's local authorities. To have engaged half of the country in five years and for interest in the programme continue to grow is testament to the commitment to, and appetite for, meaningful STEM learning experiences for our young people. We're looking forward to working with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar."