

# youngsocialpioneers

**Laura Egan**  
**28 years old**  
**North Carlton, Vic**

Laura is the founder of Enterprise Learning Projects (ELP), which creates enterprise opportunities for people living in remote Aboriginal communities to achieve their aspirations for economic participation.

ELP provides a first point of contact for individuals and communities who have ideas that they want to explore and develop into sustainable businesses.

“ELP’s model allows people to come together, select an idea they want to pursue, learn how to develop it into an income-generating enterprise, link it to networks for specialist support and maintain the work for the long-term,” Laura said.

“ELP supports individuals to develop the necessary skills as they need them, ensuring the learning is relevant and appropriate.”

In partnership with remote communities, ELP creates environments where people are able to pilot their ideas in what becomes a ‘hands on feasibility study’. During this process, they are able to learn how a business operates, determine if their business idea is viable and develop the capabilities, confidence and experience to either continue operating their business or explore other ideas through the enterprise model.

Laura first began working in a remote Aboriginal community in 2006, and was astounded at the lack of opportunities for young people to learn, work and contribute to their communities.

She introduced microenterprise as a tool to enable these young people to create opportunities for themselves that were based on their interests and aspirations. The benefits for participants included gaining self-confidence, teamwork skills and a stronger sense of purpose.

Laura’s work in promoting and supporting grassroots microenterprise development in remote Aboriginal communities across Australia has seen her named Melbourne Social Entrepreneur of the Year for 2010.

Laura is excited to be chosen for the Foundation for Young Australians’ 2011 Young Social Pioneers program, a year-long training and development program that supports, educates and equips young social change makers with the skills they need to successfully manage their project or organisation.

“I feel that now is a critical point in my leadership journey, as ELP is about to expand from a one-person organisation to a small team of individuals,” she said.

“Through Young Social Pioneers I’m looking forward to developing my leadership skills and engaging with like-minded individuals in order to help share my vision and project with a broader audience.”

