**The SOSE Spotlight podcast**

**Series 1, Episode 6 transcription – How business can make the world a better place – with Indinature’s Sam Baumber**

**Host – Kenny Paterson**

Hello and welcome to the SOSE Spotlight podcast. Wherever you are in Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish Borders or beyond. If you're a business, entrepreneur, community enterprise or aspiring to be one, this is for you.

We are South of Scotland Enterprise and we're all about helping people in the South of Scotland, to thrive, grow and fulfil your best potential.

Ahead of the global climate summit COP29, today we are speaking to a South of Scotland business which is changing the way we insulate our homes.

Indinature chose the Scottish Borders to be its first dedicated mill, manufacturing circular bio-based insulation for homes and commercial properties.

We find out more about the business

the benefits of being based here in the South of Scotland

What is next for Indinature…

and why they want to make the world a better place.

I'm Kenny Paterson and with me today is Sam Baumber, IndiNature’s co-founder and Chief Operating Officer. Sam has vast experience across business development, strategic leadership, sales and marketing and developing a number of impact led enterprises over a 20-year period.

We'll find out more about this shortly, but first, Sam, welcome to SOSE Spotlight.

**Guest – Sam Baumber**

Thanks for having me.

**Host**

So, first Sam, can we just start with, can you give us a bit of background about how IndiNature was founded?

**Guest**

Well, that came from my Co-Founder Scott Simpson, who'd been working in the community and working with people helping them to save energy in their homes. But he was seeing the fuel poverty that an awful lot of people were living in and really wanted to make a difference and was looking at the fabric of these homes and seeing people living in some very difficult conditions with damp and mould and so on. And so, he went to study at the Centre for Alternative Technology down in Wales and was really looking into bio-based materials to improve the fabric of our buildings.

My background in impact entrepreneurship meant I was often around the world setting up a few different things and I would come home and see Scott, our kids grow up together so we've known each other for a long time, and it was the coming together of those two elements of energy that said, right, we need to make this exist. This isn't made in the UK. There isn't a facility to make this sort of product in the UK at the moment. Let's make sure that that exists, and then Scott did the heavy lifting of those first few years of going through accelerator programmes, bringing other founders together.

We had some great support, Scottish Edge, the climate kick programme at the Enterprise Centre for Carbon Innovation as well. Those kind of things really helped get us going and we brought together a really great group of seed investors through that time, and eventually it was the investment of Scottish National Investment Bank, Zero Waste Scotland and South of Scotland Enterprise that really helped us to establish the IndiNature mill in the Scottish Borders and that is a fundamental piece of infrastructure for the UK to be able to provide this material. So, none of us could have done it on our own. It's taken that whole group of people to build the business over all that time.

So, it's been a privilege this first few years since 2016 when we first started it.

**Host**

Sam, the eye-catching headline of your business is that you're now manufacturing carbon negative insulation. Can you tell us what this means?

**Guest**

Well, the world is all becoming a little bit more climate literate and so carbon negative, it can be a tricky concept, but for us we use industrial hemp, which when it grows in the field between May and August each year within three or four months, it's sequestered carbon into that plant, something like 20 tonnes of carbon per hectare. We take that and we turn that into insulation. So, we lock that carbon into the product, and we lock that product into a building for the life of the building, 60 to 100 years.

So, in the small amount of emissions that we put in from the, from the tractors. In the fields all the way through, the haulage to the emissions at the IndiNature mill it's a very small amount of emissions. The amount of carbon captured in the hemp is more than the emissions we put in to make it. That means that the product is carbon capturing, and we store that biogenic carbon from the hemp in the buildings. It also means that we avoid emitting carbon emissions for the alternative material that would have been used if we hadn't put our material in there.

So, we can help to reduce what's called embodied carbon of a new building or a retrofit, when you're upgrading a building, we can reduce that by these low embodied carbon materials. At the end of life when you take the material out or if you've got wastage, that material can be reprocessed and turned into another product and again keep an element of that carbon locked into the material as well. So, there's a lot of carbon language out there that and everybody's learning how to talk carbon now, but we have a life cycle analysis that tracks the carbon from start to finish and we will constantly improve that.

We have a carbon management plan as well in play to make sure we're constantly improving our own carbon emissions on site and we'll try and communicate that as transparently as possible, so that builders and developers know what they're using in their buildings.

**Host**

And you've talked already about the move to Jedburgh, how beneficial is that to your business? It sounds like you've got a fantastic team there working for you.

**Guest**

Ah, we're delighted to be in the Scottish Borders. The manufacturing heritage here, the textiles heritage means that we've got a great crew of people that have helped to establish that first IndiNature mill in the UK.

We're putting in place procedures and processes, we're learning how to make whole new products and how to use the equipment. So, we're really delighted with everybody that's come together to make a big impact over at Jedburgh, where several hundred jobs were lost only the year before we turned up. And so, for us, we really want to make an impact in the community and if we get it right here, then it's something that that can scale and help to solve challenges on a global scale.

So yeah, we've got an exciting future, I hope.

**Host**

Brilliant. And it's not just your product that's focused on the future of the planet. It's the whole operations of indiNature, from how you source your own materials, the amount of energy you use. You've already touched a little bit on that, but you could explain a little bit more about how important that is to your business.

**Guest**

Absolutely. We're an impact-led business, so we've started out with the mindset that we want to be good for people and the planet, and we bring that into all our decision making at every level as well. And so, in building the IndiNature mill, we're putting in place those first processes which will then make sure that we keep on refining the amount of carbon that we're emitting, our environmental practises, our recycling of materials, all of that is tracked and we track all of our energy use on site. We make sure all of that is being captured and reported on as well. Our funders stay really close to us and make sure that we're operating in the right way. So, we're using Fair Work principles, things like that. And again, it's the government money that has been used to help set this up, so it's really important that we show how that money is used and how that money is contributing to the local economy as well. For us, the impact mapping and the tracking of our impact is vital to the continuous improvement of this company. So for me, it's the future of business that you have the impact of your business in mind as well whether you call it a social enterprise or an impact-led business. That's the sort of business of the future and it's one we're excited to build.

**Host**

You've received support from a number of organisations and funders at different stages of your business, can you tell us a little bit about working with them and the importance of their support.

**Guest**

IndiNature has grown as a result of the fantastic support in the Scottish startup ecosystem right from the start and winning competitions like Scottish Edge and support at the Enterprise Centre for Carbon Innovation on the Climate Kick programme. All of that was vital in helping us to grow the organisation to then address the bigger investment market. We have 44 really supportive seed investors who came in all the way through the COVID period and backed the company. Up until the major investment raise which established the IndiNature mill, which was a combination of the Scottish National Investment Bank, Zero Waste Scotland and of course South of Scotland Enterprise that really helped to ground the company and to get the infrastructure created. Their support has been fundamental in making sure that we've got that place-based impact as well as the impact on climate change and innovating new products and we're incredibly grateful they stay really close to us. Its been a really great relationship over all these years to make sure that we're running the business in the right way. So, it's yeah, it's been a fantastic support ecosystem to grow in.

**Host**

Great, and another bit of good news earlier this year is receiving approval for your product to be used by housing and construction sectors for both new build and retrofit projects moving forward, what difference is this going to make to IndiNature?

**Guest**

This was a fundamental milestone, so Indi-Therm, our first industrial hemp insulation finally achieved, in January 2024, the first ever British Board of Agrement certification for a UK grown and made natural fibre insulation. And that's a huge milestone because it means that new build developers can get insurance on the homes that they're building with this material. And in retrofit projects that have got a Trustmark certification or that are using eco funding like the Energy Company Obligation, Great British Installation scheme, those kind of things, it means this sort of material can qualify for those kind of grants that homeowners might want to access to make this material affordable. So, it's a fundamental unlock of being able to scale this kind of material and it also gives people faith that they are building with quality materials as well. And hot off the press we have just secured the second British Board of Agrement certificate for our new product Indie Breathe Flex, which is slightly lighter. Its got more recycled material in it and should make that material even more affordable for the market at scale. So, all of our other products, they're also made by ISO 9001 standards, and we've put in place all that quality procedure to make sure that any of our products are as good as the next. Its really incumbent on us to make sure that the products that are in the building supply chain are of really high quality if we're going to make really high-quality buildings at the end of it and that people can have faith in those materials.

So, it's been a great process.

**Host**

Good stuff. And finally, Sam, while you're here, we thought we'd try to lean on your experience with our listeners. We've got COP29 on the horizon, with that in mind, I wondered if you had one piece of advice for entrepreneurs, maybe with a sustainable idea, wanting to get off the ground. What would that piece of advice be?

**Guest**

We don't have time. Climate change is right on us. We need every entrepreneur, giving it everything they've got to make businesses work and make those businesses better for the planet and for, in sustainability terms, better for the people around them and their communities as well. So, in my mind, all those businesses should be driving at that sort of vision, but we can't do that alone, so I would say keep your friends and your family close. Keep your support networks around you because it's a tough gig running a business, starting a new one, especially if you're pioneering something and you're trying to change the world and climate change, is a heck of a thing. We've got a planet to cool, and we've got to do it together. So yeah, get your tribe around you and make sure you've got some support for those tough times.

Give it a go and good luck.

**Host**

Thank you. Sam Baumber for coming along today and sharing IndiNature’s inspiring story.

And if you are looking for support with a business idea or community project, 1-2-1 coaching, practical learning, or you’re interested in networking events across the South of Scotland, then please get in touch, and come and meet us.

Our website: southofscotlandenterprise.com

Our email address:

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Or call us on 0300 304 8888. That’s 0300 304 8888.

We’d love your feedback, and please subscribe so you don’t miss our next episode.

I’m Kenny Paterson. Thanks for listening to The SOSE Spotlight. Join us next time for more inspiring stories from the South of Scotland.