

## UWTSD

### Sustainability Champion, Staff

### Luci Attala - Inspiring Change

#### About the project

##### Summary

Typically, sustainable action is represented through calls for changes in consumption behaviours. It is all too often suggested that such behavioural changes will only occur as a result of knowledge about the consequences of our actions. While undoubtedly this approach is having results, unfortunately all too often these changes (even if enforced) are temporary or are depicted as falling short of the mark. Finding value in personal action can be hard when one feels powerless or unable to create change and when there seems so much to do – despite a famous supermarket's line that 'every little helps'! I believe that to inspire genuine and lasting change people need to experience how their actions have made a difference and thus are worth maintaining. Consequently, I work stridently to empower the students to recognise that their actions directly alter other people's lives. This has been achieved by taking students to the 'problems' so that they can feel how their input has led to change. Thus, taking an extremely active, energetic and colourful approach, I aim to inspire behaviour change and therefore empowerment, and in so doing support (and promote) recognition of the vital role the Humanities play with regards reimagining sustainable practices in our shared world.

##### Project partners

The students at UWTSD, The Students' Union and Faculty of Humanities and Performance, The Community Carbon Link, Size of Wales, The Black Line Initiative, Hub Cymru Africa

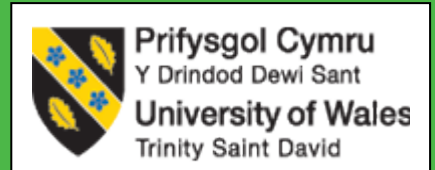
#### The results

##### The problem

The vast and seemingly intractable nature of our current global predicament can lead to a sense of profound powerlessness amongst many people. Solutions are only effective if they are enacted. My aim is to support individuals to recognize the impact and value of even the smallest of actions.

##### The approach

My ambition as a lecturer has always been to demonstrate by example that there is no separation between consumption, choices, action and change – in short that: all personal actions make a genuine contribution for better or worse. Working from the axiom that direct, hands-on experience offers the best route for individuals to



##### Profile

- HEI
- 11,400 students (includes full and part time students)
- 2,125 staff
- Urban and Rural campuses

Category supported by



# Finalist's case study

realise their talents and fulfil their potential, I aim to inspire all students to a full recognition of the worth of their own actions in working towards a sustainable future.

## Our goals

- To empower all students to recognise the value of their own personal contribution and to understand how their actions may be effective in combating climate change and promoting social justice.
- To increase student engagement with sustainability issues including global citizenship, international development, personal 'carbon responsibility', over-consumption and waste reduction.
- To create equal partnerships with communities in the developing world to deliver mutually beneficial, culturally sensitive, environmentally positive outcomes through tropical reforestation and clean, safe water initiatives.
- To make UWTSD the greenest higher education institution in Wales by embedding sustainability at the core of the curriculum, by collaboration with an array of partner sustainability organisations and through a range of climate change focused extra-curricular activities and campaigns.

## Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual powerlessness in the face of the scale of the problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create empowerment pathways that support students to succeed</li> <li>• Give positive reinforcement at every opportunity</li> <li>• Taking students directly to 'the problems' to show them how their actions alter others' lives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable Institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully embed sustainability in the part of the curriculum over which I have authority (anthropology)</li> <li>• Establish substantive collaborative arrangements with an array of sustainability partners</li> <li>• Encourage students to engage as volunteers in sustainability campaigns and fund-raising</li> </ul>

## Performance and results

As part of the TSD INSPIRE agenda, sustainability has now been embedded into the entire anthropology curriculum, including the development of a new undergraduate degree pathway in Applied Anth. The UWTSD Students' Union, *Rooting for Change* (2012) and *Building for Change* (2013) campaigns, which I helped to focalize, raised £8,000 for tropical reforestation and £7,500 to build classrooms in rural Kenya. Our project has been endorsed by the First Minister of Wales (2012 and 2014), was recognized with a U.N. Gold Star Award (2014), received funding to support student volunteers to visit and contribute to our partner international development project on 'the climate change front line' in Kenya, another £26,500 to continue our work that will reabsorb approx. 100,000 metric tonnes of carbon from our shared atmosphere.

Procurement policies of campus partner have been revised towards more sustainability due to a student led initiative originating directly from curricular work conducted on waste and consumption patterns

## The future

### Lessons learned

Inspiring students to engage directly with sustainability issues, in a hands-on fashion is the key to empowering them and enabling them to understand the worth of their own personal actions. We also have learned that building collaboration with a range of green partner organisations is critical to enabling the institution to make the transition to sustainability. For example, UWTSd students will be actively involved with an ambitious new tree planting initiative by our partners, the Community Carbon Link, which will see 500,000 trees planted with 125 Kenyan schools over the coming 3 years.

### Sharing your project

<http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/news/press-releases/press-releases-2014/major-un-award-for-african-carbon-link-project.html>

<http://www.carbonlink.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/communitycarbonlink/timeline/>

### What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

'I would be delighted if the University were to win a Green Gown Award. Such a prestigious accolade would acknowledge our commitment to sustainability as one of our core values and most importantly it would celebrate the excellent work and inspiring work of colleagues and students across the University's campuses.'

Professor Medwin Hughes, DL Vice-Chancellor University of Wales Trinity Saint David

### Further information

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