

# Finalist's case study

## Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)

### Best Newcomer

## reCYCLE: a Glasgow Commonwealth Games Legacy project

### Section 1 About the project

#### Summary

In 2014, Glasgow Caledonian University's Community and Public Engagement Steering Group set the wheels in motion for a Glasgow City Council Commonwealth Games legacy project. reCYCLE trained young people from local organisation, SiMY Community Development, to refurbish and revitalize unwanted bikes. Bikes were then put back into the community to allow young people the freedom to explore Scotland's green spaces. The project supports GCU's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, promoting more active travel and being a university 'for the common good'.

#### Project partners

reCYCLE was a collaboration between Glasgow Caledonian University, SiMY Community Development, The Glasgow Bike Station, Glasgow City Council, TISO and Evans.

### Section 2 The results

#### The problem

Glasgow Caledonian University's Community and Public Engagement Coordinator, Susan Grant became familiar with the good work going on at SiMY Community Development after meeting representatives of the group through the Townhead and Ladywell Community Council. Neil Pratt, Team Leader & Outdoor Activities Coordinator at SiMY identified that not having access to suitable outdoor clothing, equipment and bikes was a barrier for many of their young people to experience the outdoors and be more independent and be able to travel out of their local area for employment and training.

#### The approach

Through reCYCLE, Glasgow Caledonian University enlisted the in-kind support of departments across the university and local businesses to work together in order to help the young people of SiMY. reCYCLE was awarded the Glasgow City Council's Commonwealth Games Legacy Logo and was launched with a donation appeal to staff, students and alumni for their unwanted bikes on Commonwealth Day 2014. Subsequent appeals took place in Evans as part of their trade-in scheme and TISO for clothing and kit. Donated bikes were stripped for spare parts or made roadworthy by the young people of SiMY under the training and guidance of Glasgow Bike Station mechanics. Refurbished bikes, donated outdoor equipment and new



#### Profile

- HEI
- 16,000 part-time and full-time students in the UK
- 1400 staff
- Urban

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maintenance kit was then gifted to SiMY for use by their young people in group and individual outdoor activities.

## Our goals

The aims of the reCYCLE project were to:

- run a donation appeal for unwanted bikes
- set young people on a path to a healthier lifestyle by providing them with at least 15 donated bikes
- promote cycling as an affordable and sustainable mode of transport
- give 15 young people the opportunity to learn new skills to help them maintain their bikes and experience the outdoors
- allow more GCU staff and students the opportunity to get involved in community engagement activities

## Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing bikes, outdoor clothing and kit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donation appeals for quality outdoor clothing and kit and good bikes in any condition went out to GCU staff, students and alumni</li> <li>• GCU's print and design, digital marketing, social media and communications staff helped to promote the appeal</li> <li>• We involved outdoors stores TISO and Evans to extend the reach and outcome of the appeal</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistics of managing bike collections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We secured space on campus where bikes could be safely stored</li> <li>• We enlisted staff and student volunteers</li> <li>• We worked in partnership with a bike recycling organisation - The Glasgow Bike Station - so bikes which could not be refurbished by the young people could be taken away by them and recycled</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at bike workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to running bike workshops at the university, The Bike Station also ran them in the community to ensure as many young people as possible had the opportunity to learn the skills that would allow them to maintain their bikes.</li> <li>• Young people who already owned a bike were able to work on these during the workshop.</li> <li>• We used social media and word of mouth to promote the workshops</li> <li>• We provided the group with new tools and spare parts to allow the young people to continue to maintain their bikes beyond the workshops, supported by SiMY leaders and sharing knowledge amongst peers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project only has a local impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through linking the project with the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Legacy Logo, we had the opportunity for wider dissemination.</li> <li>• Glasgow Bike Station are involved in cycling and maintenance activities across the city and SiMY is now part of this bigger network.</li> </ul>

## Performance and results

reCYCLE received 16 donated bikes from the university community and 11 customer bikes from Evans store in Glasgow as part of their trade-in scheme. Of the 27 bikes received, 15 young people with the help of mechanics from The Bike Station made 18 of them roadworthy. reCYCLE has exceeded our expectations due to the momentum that has been built and carried on by SiMY leaders and the opportunities which have continued for the young people throughout the summer in terms of outdoor skills training, equipment

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donations, bike workshops and sports activities made possible by reCYCLE partners. The wider SiMY group of about 70 members have benefited from having more shared bikes, maintenance kits, tools and outdoor equipment and the project has given the group leaders a new target to work towards. SiMY hope to establish themselves as a community bike hub. reCYCLE is linked to our institutional aims of a cycle-friendly campus and GCU is piloting the Cycle Scotland Cycle Friendly Campus award and has installed public repair stands, additional bike racks and is offering discounts for staff and students on the city-wide public rental scheme, nextbike.

## Section 3 The future

### Lessons learned

- 1 Ensure the project answers a community need which also aligns with the institution's strategic objectives
- 2 Bring committed partners on board from the outset to deliver a lasting legacy for the project
- 3 Have an engaging campaign to get buy-in from staff, students and the wider university community

### Sharing our project

reCYCLE was launched at GCU's Commonwealth Day celebrations on campus. It featured in our quarterly Caledonian magazine that has a circulation list of 2,430 and once a month in the all staff weekly email. The reCYCLE website was set up to support the donation appeal. There were regular updates on the appeal and the project on social media. The film which has been made to document the project will be posted on GCU's Engagement Wheel and will be used by GCU, City Council Legacy Department, TISO and the Glasgow Bike Station to inspire others to recycle their unwanted bikes, work together to help build skills and opportunities for young people and promote cycling for health and wellbeing and sustainable travel.

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

Glasgow Caledonian University is delighted to be recognised for the Green Gown Awards for the first time with the reCYCLE project. The project is an outstanding example of our University's commitment to our social mission, to work for the common good. It was a community engagement initiative that made a real difference to people's lives, and by using refurbished bikes, highlighted the importance of sustainability and healthy living. **GCU Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies CBE**

### Further information

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W (reCYCLE appeal): <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/recycle/> ; W (GCU's Engagement Wheel):

<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/theuniversity/communityandpublicengagement/gcusengagementwheel/>

Twitter: @GCUEngagement