



Green Gown
Awards 2013

Finalist's case study

Dissemination supported by:



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The University of Manchester Facilities and Services

Manchester Veg People- Delivering local organic produce to the University of Manchester.

Section 1 About the project

Summary

Along with a social enterprise, the University of Manchester helped to create the success of a cooperative aimed at getting more organic growers across Greater Manchester to grow and supply veg and eggs to a stable public sector market in Manchester.

Project partners

Manchester Veg People and The Kindling Trust

Section 2 The results

The problem

The University of Manchester with The Kindling Trust wanted to create an opportunity to provide local jobs to people in Manchester, bring organic veg to places where people wouldn't eat organic or perceived it to be too expensive. This was through the University and other public sector organisations. We worked with The Kindling Trust to set up a cooperative which we are members of. This encouraged existing growers to go organic and other people to start growing around Manchester.

The approach

Manchester Veg People is a multi-stakeholder co-operative of local organic growers and buyers who are working together to develop a new model for the local food supply chain. It increases access to local produce whilst creating a larger and more stable market for the growers' produce.

It only sells local, seasonal produce which is sourced within 50 miles of Manchester city centre and is picked to order for buyers the day before delivery. All growers are passionate about what they do and committed to farming in an environmentally sustainable way.

The University of Manchester is a founder member of the co-operative. Which started in 2011 with an approach from the Kindling Trust a not for profit social enterprise working towards ecological and social change. They were looking to link buyers with local growers. The University is one of the largest food buyers in the city. The University Executive Chef met with the growers and discussed what the growers could produce that the University would buy. Manchester Veg People (MVP) was then established allowing the

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Profile

Example:

- HEI
- 40 000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 10 000 staff
- Urban

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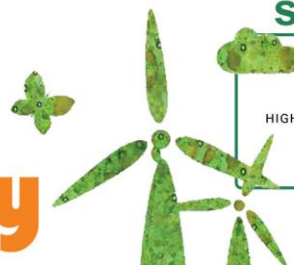
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growers to coordinate supply and demand, minimising waste, strengthening trust and understanding, and eliminating much of the risk for growers.

Within 6 months the first produce was being delivered into University kitchens.

MVP are committed to developing a pricing structure that is based on the actual cost of production for veg, ensuring that growers always receive a fair price for their produce and are not pressured to accept less than what their produce is worth.

Many of the University chef's have visited the farms and seen first hand what MVP is doing. Students have volunteered on the farms to help pick crops and work on the land.

As a result of MVP University cafés and restaurants now have a regular offer of Organic seasonal locally grown vegetables from salad leaves on the salad bar to organic eggs for breakfast or delicious soups.

Our goals

To get organic food into public sector, increase employment around Manchester and make the local food system fairer.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Market	The University is a committed buyer, guaranteeing the growers have a buyer
Weather	This is challenging but we worked on a Crowdfunding bid together to get more equipment that would help the growers tackle this.
The University season	During the summer close of halls and campus, MVP are at their peak produce. This is when produce can be delivered to restaurants and other events around Manchester, which is helping to engage other buyers with MVP and local, organic and seasonal veg.

Performance and results

The amount of spend on veg from MVP.

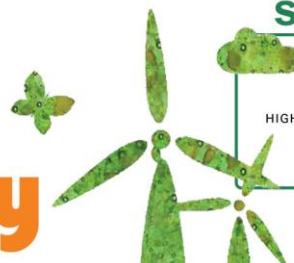
Total Sales to University Outlets	(June 2011 - August 2013)
Cafe Muse	49.67
Christie's Bistro	52.72
University of Manchester FIR - Ashburne	1,365.64



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University of Manchester FIR - Dalton Eil	1,532.05
University of Manchester FIR - Hulme Hall	1,851.51
University of Manchester FIR - St.Anselms	365.05
University of Manchester FIR - StGabriels	522.09
University of Manchester FIR - Tower	589.37
University of Manchester FIR - Tree Court	250.88
University of Manchester FIR - Woolton	914.44
University of Manchester FOC	18,670.31
TOTAL from The University of Manchester:	£26,163.73
Total overall sales through MVP in this period:	£47,822.21

FIR- Food In Residence FOC- Food On Campus

According to MVP "The University is our main customer and that this relationship has been key to growing and developing the MVP model. Without the University's custom and support we would not have been able to get this far". Our Executive Head Chef also sits on the MVP board. If he is unavailable the DSE Sustainability Officer stands in, so there is always representation and commitment from the University.

"Having Manchester University as co-op members of Manchester Veg People has demonstrated that with the with right people on board and the will to make a difference there really are no barriers to larger organisations sourcing locally and sustainably. We have worked with the University from the very start of MVP and their involvement has been key to our success, and our relationship continues to go from strength to strength with the Chancellors collection recently coming on board as well." Katie Brandon (Coordinator for MVP)

"We're delighted to be supplying vegetables to The University of Manchester - they're as enthusiastic about high quality, sustainably grown produce as we are. This partnership has been key to the growth of MVP and it's great to know local, organic food is getting out to as many students and staff as possible." Charlotte Mason (Glebelands City Growers- Sale, Manchester)

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

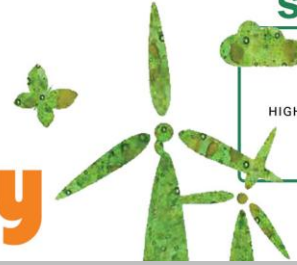
To engage more buyers we first have to explain how the cooperative membership works. This is difficult for people to understand and can put people off. Because of this the University is leading a task force to look at how we brand and market ourselves to more buyers.



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Sharing your project

We have been vocal about the benefits this cooperative has on the University sustainability agenda, employment and the environment in which our produce is grown. This has helped to get us publicity in various places such as the Guardian, The University Catering Organisation, obtaining a food for life award from the Soil Association and for helping us win a Corporate Responsibility Award for our work. We have also been involved with producing a variety of videos to help engage people about the campaign and actively promote the initiative across all our food outlets by using visual images of our chefs in some of the growing sites that MVP use.

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

The Green Gown award was intended to show the success of the project to a wider University audience and that local organic food can be achieved through the means of a working cooperative with a large institution involved. The cooperative works with the University being a member therefore we make decisions as members of how the cooperative works.

Although we felt the judges may not have understood the uniqueness of this project and how it is the first cooperative of its kind with a University we were pleased to at least be a finalist.

Further information

www.vegpeople.org.uk

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www.greengownawards.org.uk

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