

# Finalist's case study

## University of Gloucestershire Students' Union Enterprise

### Empowering Students for Sustainability through Social Enterprise at the University of Gloucestershire



#### Profile

- Students' Union
- 10,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 30 staff
- Rural

#### Section 1 About the project

##### Summary

We aim to grow our Union as a social enterprise hub, acting as advocates for social enterprise as an educational tool with a positive impact. We have 5 of our own social enterprises, providing support for innovation. We provide life-changing opportunities, whilst introducing the wider University community to alternative and sustainable business approaches.

##### Project partners

Funding through NUS and HEFCE, we have also received funding from UNLTD and NACUE for seed funding.

#### Section 2 The results

##### The problem

At an institution where engagement has always been a difficult issue, it was highlighted as a priority to increase student involvement in sustainable activities. This was the basis for our Green Fund Proposal.

##### The approach

After actually asking our students what they wanted we were able to come up with the facts that they wanted to learn about sustainability and they wanted to get real life work experience to improve their skills and make them more employable.

Social Enterprise seemed like the perfect approach for this. The Cheltenham Chilli Company was set up to start with then following the money received from the Students' Green Fund, we were able to set up Core Blimey Juice and Cider, Ooh Beehive (The Bee Project) and create funding streams for students in the county to set up and pursue their own social enterprise ventures and ideas.

##### Our goals

The following are the relevant Key Performance Indicators for the project by the end of year two.

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1. 30 students actively engaged in the Cheltenham Chilli Company, plus campus-wide engagement with the Cheltenham Chilli brand
2. Cheltenham Chilli Company 100% self-funded
3. 20 students actively involved in the Cider Social Enterprise
4. Student produced cider stocked in 1 external venue
5. 100 students attending social enterprise events
6. 5 new student social enterprise ventures funded

## Obstacles and solutions

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|--|--|
| Student engagement                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a finished scheme that students did not have to set up from scratch</li> <li>• Actually asking the students what they wanted (branding, promotion, products)</li> <li>• Making the whole project relevant to students in terms of work and social life</li> </ul>  |
| Communication between university and external partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating clearly what we are trying to achieve</li> <li>• Creating benefits for all</li> <li>• Making projects as accessible to all as possible</li> <li>• Unfortunately this will always be an issue as there is little to no remedy for this as internal or external parties who are unengaged from the start are very difficult to win round</li> </ul> |

## Performance and results

Currently having just gone into year two of the project here is how things are looking in relation to the KPIs set

1. 22 students involved in the chilli company
2. 14 students involved in the cider enterprise
3. Both enterprises combined have provided 3 paid roles
4. 259 students engaged in social enterprise workshops and events
5. Over 650 bottles of cider sold at university venues
6. 3 new student social enterprise venues funded

All projects are going from strength to strength and meeting the KPIs set out for them. New developments keep cropping up along the way such as providing actual paid work for students. To top it all off we won the NUS award 2014 for Enterprise and Innovation.

## Section 3 The future

### Lessons learned

- Make projects engaging/student led.
- Do not get students to start things from scratch, provide a finished product or plan for students to then take on and develop.
- To move away from food related enterprises to provide more variety.

### Sharing our project

- In the students green fund network there is constant sharing of projects and best practice to ensure we are all succeeding and spreading good ideas and initiatives we have had.
- We have been supported heavily by university communications and NUS and have been able to communicate our projects nationally through the media and all of our own social media channels.
- We have found the network we are in and all the sharing we have done around our project to be completely rewarding

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

- To be one of the only students' unions to be finalists in the awards has been huge for us to see our projects being recognized nationally again, especially alongside HEIs who have been doing this sort of work for a lot longer than us.

### Further information

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