



Green Gown
Awards 2013

Finalist's case study

Dissemination supported by:



University of Leicester Social Responsibility Carbon Footprinting in Schools (CFiS)



University of
Leicester

Profile

- HEI
- 22,784 students
- 3,803 staff
- City- Based
- The University of Leicester prides itself on its inclusive approach. UoL is the only Top 20 University that consistently exceeds its targets for widening participation.

Section 1 About the project

Summary

C is for Carbon Footprint! One of the most popular volunteering opportunities with the Environment Team gave student groups the chance to produce carbon footprints for local schools (in targeted areas of Leicestershire) and to teach pupils and staff about climate change. This outreach project has proved highly inspirational with students, schools and pupils alike.

Project partners

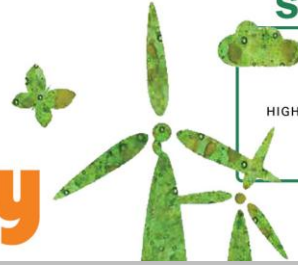
In order to make the project a success, last year we partnered with the University of Leicester's Schools and Colleges Service, the Environment Team as well as Leicester City Council (Energy Team) and local environmental charity Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire (GWLL). Except for Groundwork, who went into voluntary liquidation in May 2013, we will continue these collaborations in the future. The project is also being sponsored and supported by UnLtd, after winning a 'Do it Award' for social impact.

Section 2 The results

The problem

An Ipsos-MORI survey (April 2013) shows that children in Britain are deeply concerned about the impact of climate change, both for their own futures and for those of children in developing countries. The poll, commissioned by UNICEF UK, found that almost three-quarters of young people aged 11-16 years are concerned about how climate change will impact on their lives and would like the Government to do more to combat it. However, considering the recent Government's threat to axe climate change from the national curriculum, the fate of climate change teaching in English schools remains unstable in the future. With 74% children agreeing that they are worried about how climate change will affect the future of the planet and wanting to know how to combat the roots of climate change for a sustainable environment, there has never been a more appropriate time for the growth of this project.

Furthermore, evidence shows that despite the UK Government's commitment to reduce the country's greenhouse emissions by 2050, more than half of UK businesses are still struggling to manage their carbon consumption and prioritise sustainability programmes. The only Government's body providing advice (Carbon Trust) is no longer providing free tailored support for small businesses.



Finalist's case study

The approach

The Carbon Footprinting in Schools programme aims to fill in the gap left by poor educational resources in under achieving schools and show all the children, the leaders of tomorrow, how to combat the roots of climate change for a sustainable future. The project places students into schools in Leicester to produce a carbon footprint for the school and teach pupils about carbon footprinting and climate change.

Secondly, the project will help local organisations, schools, charities, University of Leicester departments and small businesses to reduce their own environmental impact in accordance with government legislation by engaging students to produce carbon footprints for them and train their staff about the findings.

Our goals

Our main goals are to help:

- pupils, who will understand how to manage their own 'carbon footprints' and reduce their environmental impacts as well as widening aspirations to attend university;
- schools, charities, 'hard-to-reach' small local businesses and other organisations (including University Departments), which will be provided with a calculation of their carbon footprint and carbon reduction training taught by trained university students and graduates;
- students, who will gain invaluable experience and employability skills in real world projects;
- the local community, by developing linkages that are likely to create work placements for new graduates in the future.

Obstacles and solutions

Funding is being sought to continue the project and create a model which could be replicated across other HE and FE organisations.	
--	--

Performance and results

The Carbon Footprinting in Schools project was piloted in 2012/13 at the University of Leicester (UoL), where 21 students were placed in 6 under-achieving schools in Leicester and Leicestershire to create a carbon footprint for the school and teach over 250 pupils about climate change.

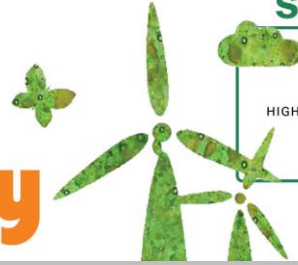
One of the major achievements was that the schools developed a better understanding of carbon emissions and footprinting for the first time. When surveyed three months after the project's completion the majority of pupils had an amazing amount of knowledge on the subject gained through the project. One participating school has identified a loft insulation project that is now due to receive funding from the City Council's Salix fund as a consequence of our scheme.



Green Gown
Awards 2013

Finalist's case study

Dissemination
supported by:



HIGHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL
FOR ENGLAND
hefce

Evaluation from participating students found that 100% of them had developed the following skills that are expected to help them in a competitive job market: communication, problem-solving, organising, technical carbon footprinting knowledge and lesson-planning. Other skills developed through the programme included improved English-speaking (for international students), flexibility, time-keeping, classroom management and listening skills.

Section 3 The future

The main target for the next 12 month is to expand the project from local state schools to trial it in private schools and local SMEs and establish a long term collaboration that will gradually help them meet their legal requirements for reducing targeted greenhouse gas emissions.

The vision for the project is to produce an easily replicable, tried and tested model (at Leicester) and scale it up to a point where other universities from across the UK (and potentially across the globe) will implement this model to achieve carbon awareness and lowered impacts with partner organisations in their own communities.

Sharing your project

With regard to communications and advertising, the Carbon Footprinting Programme collaborates with the University of Leicester's Press Office for promotion. Due to its pilot nature, last year's advertising strategy was kept to minimum costs, but the plan is to invest in web development and video advertising for the year to come. Banners and other sales materials have already been developed to target schools and businesses.

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

Being a Green Gown finalist has been helpful to confirm the value of this project to others and to help to continue it into the future.

Further information

Dr Emma Fieldhouse
Environmental Manager
University of Leicester
Email: ejf13@le.ac.uk

Miss Andra Paun
Programme Manager
University of Leicester
Email: paun_andra991@yahoo.com