

Finalist's case study

Liverpool Guild of Students Social Responsibility Green Schools Project

Section 1 About the project

Summary

Green Schools forms part of Liverpool Guild of Students 'Green Guild' project, with students leading on community outreach. Student volunteers deliver fun and interactive sessions on a variety of sustainability issues and help schools to develop a 'sustainable social enterprise project' in their community. Our students inspire a younger generation to live sustainably, impress partner schools with their project management skills and build community bridges in various areas of Merseyside.

Project partners

Our partners include the school staff from various primary, secondary and sixth form educational settings in Merseyside. The project has been funded by the National Union of Student (NUS) Students' Green Fund, allowing us to provide £100 to each school to kick start their green project ideas. We also work closely with the Educational Opportunities Department in the University of Liverpool to develop new partnerships with schools and include our work in the University's data for widening participation.

Section 2 The results

The problem

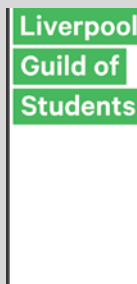
Improving access and participation in higher education is vital for social justice and economic development in the UK, and the Guild shares the University's commitment to engaging with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Merseyside. Green Schools is also providing much needed and resourced sessions that aim to embed Education for Sustainable Development into the schools' curriculum and community activities.

The approach

Working with the Educational Opportunities department, we review and develop our approach to communicating with current and potential school partners. Once in contact with a staff lead in the school, we ask schools to submit their 'green enterprise project' ideas and invite small school teams to the Guild to pitch and plan their projects, awarding them with a £100 grant. Having recruited and trained student volunteers, we pair them up with the school and provide students with the session plan, presentation and materials they will need to support the school project.

Our goals

Green Schools aims to: Influence the learning of students and their future life choices; Widen the experiences of the community around sustainability; Raise aspirations for higher education. We aim to establish strong relationships with 20 schools, and increase the number of partnerships with schools each year.



Profile

- HEI
- 32,000 students
- 4700 staff
- Urban

Obstacles and solutions

Recruitment	Recruitment of schools partners at the beginning of the academic year is a challenge. We have prepared promotional materials of all the Guild outreach projects available to schools so they can choose which project to join. The key would be to follow up with a phone call and offer to meet with staff at their school to discuss the project further.
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Performance and results

Overall, we have worked with 180 children directly on their chosen sustainability topic or green enterprise project. From running eco-events to selling upcycled tea lights, these projects have raised £1000 so far which the schools will be able to reinvest in their green activities. Through whole school assemblies and events which parents were invited to the project reached 3000 community members in total. Within each educational setting we hope that the community has been able to share in the children's experience of the project and pick up some tips and activities for greener living.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

Tap in and join in with the extended school community: Witnessing the wider impact green school projects can have on students' parents and the wider community is a great experience. Schools have a lot of experience fundraising and making partnership links, so as well as creating new ideas for green initiatives, we successfully slotted in and supported existing initiatives (e.g. Fairtrade Fortnight or Summer Fairs) to make sure the project reaches the local community and other local organisations.

Working within a packed timetable: Schools take various approaches to introduce sustainability into their curricular activities, but highlighting curricular links is always going to be useful for teachers. It is also important to make sure volunteers are available and scheduled in for regular activities and sessions, so students will get the relevant work experience they are looking for.

Sharing our project

Our project activity is compiled in an end of year report for internal dissemination and a 'shared learning' has been sent to over 100 'widening participation schools' in Merseyside for 2014-15 recruitment. The Guild is open to sharing experiences with colleagues in the sector. Having engaged with our MP on the project, we will also highlight the schools' visit to the Guild and successful school projects to local and national press.

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

"Winning this award would be a fitting way to thank and congratulate our students for encouraging a younger generation to live more sustainably. Recognition of this fantastic community engagement project would also inspire more students and young people throughout Merseyside to pursue greener ways of living." VICE-CHANCELLOR Professor Sir Howard Newby CBE, BA, PhD, AcSS

Further information

For further information please visit our website: <http://www.liverpoolguild.org/main-menu/volunteer/with-young-people>