



# NUS Students' Green Fund: driving student engagement

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## Speaker(s):

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# Students' Green Fund

Driving student engagement



national union of **students**

**Eco** 

The word 'Eco' is written in a large, bold, dark green sans-serif font. To its right is a logo consisting of four overlapping circles in shades of green, orange, red, and blue, arranged in a diamond pattern.

*by* **BCUSU**

Student Led Sustainability

Grow- Urban gardening  
Ecollect- Reducing waste to landfill  
Create- Upcycling and reusing  
Learn- Creating awareness  
EcoFund- Supporting studies  
CafEco- Mobile engagement

# Renew



MA Arts and Design Second and Third Year Students looking to turn their work into a small business

# Renew



Currently using the EcoFund to upcycle unwanted and unused furniture.

Displayed at the New Birmingham Library



# Renew



# Bin it to Win it

Set up by two students- Ladi and Aaroon.

Environmental Problem: A large amount of plastic coffee cups being thrown onto the ground and not into suitable recycling bins.

Ladi: *'We have developed an incentive scheme where people who bin their litter gets entered into a cash lottery; whereby, the more litter you bin, the higher your chances of winning.'*



# Bin it to Win it



52% of cups entered into our lottery and ethically disposed off.



# Chinese Cultural Day



MA Events Final Project

Educating people on the link between Chinese culture and the natural world.

# Pot of Trix



The motivation behind Pot of Trix Theatre is to educate primary school children about sustainable farming, healthy eating and growing their own vegetables. Part of MA Events.

# EcoGarden

What is it?

Two first year Landscape Architecture modules dedicated to designing an EcoGarden.

A joint design project between the School of Landscape Architecture and students from the School of Health's Growing Compassion Project.

# EcoGarden

How did we do it?

- Getting the right links
- Cherry Picking Courses
- A flexibility on both sides
- Opportune timing
- Positive for both parties



# CafEco





# Roots and Renewal



Students from BCU and a local college learn Portuguese through gardening and role-plays.



# Conclusion

It's good to talk





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# CYCLING 4 ALL



*SUSTAINABILITY  
INCLUSIVITY  
ACCESSIBILITY*



## Engaging with Disabled Students

What we've learned through trial and error



**Students'**

**Green Fund**

ACTIVITIES



# SUMMARY

In the 2013/2014 academic year, Cycling 4 All has engaged with a total of 987 disabled and non-disabled students with 376 cycling

Roadshows

C4A

Wheelchair Rugby

Gardening

Trips

Broader engagement across school children/public and at community events – 5,203 individuals

Engagement with disabled students is still the primary challenge



# Disabled Students

- 10% of the student body
- Increase of ~ 7% per year
- Under represented in sports/societies
- Low engagement with SU
- Marginalisation and inequality exists for disabled students (Vickerman and Blundell, 2010)

# Why?

- Fragmentation of disability provision
- Contracting out of provision
- Lack of social hub
- Accessibility issues
- Fears and lack of understanding

# Challenges of Engagement

- Connecting with individuals
- Lack of a social hub or network for disabled students
- Many students don't think they can participate
- Accessibility and specialist equipment
- Attitudes of non-disabled students and staff

# Engagement tools – what works

- One to one engagement
- Disabled student ownership
- To entice engagement, explain the benefits
- To maintain engagement, demonstrate the benefits
- Keep stats
- Links with Disability Services
- Do not exclude anyone, disabled or not
- **MAKE IT FUN TO BE INVOLVED**

# Keep it fun!





# Engagement tools – what works

- Try everything and think big
- Start before Freshers Fair
- Involve disabled students in all elements of the project
- Shout loudly about your successes
- Involve the community – good for additional funding
- Involve non-disabled students, they have disabled friends
- Provide a physical social space

# Engagement – what doesn't work

- Making wheelchair users feel harassed/singled out
- Don't rely on social media
- Waiting for things to happen
- Not delivering on promises – turns off students
- Focussing on one activity only
- Not having student buy in

# Benefits to Engagement

- Improved self esteem
- Increasing social networks
- Student physical wellbeing
- Entry point to other engagement
- Student led project
- Improved NSS score
- Improved retention

Disabled student engagement is a challenge but is very rewarding.

You can help to improve an individual's university/college experience.



# Wigan and Leigh College Students' Union

The Smart Green Scheme

# Starting from Scratch

- 10,000 students across 5 buildings, serving some of the most vulnerable groups in the community
  - No channel established for learner voice.
- A vision of an effective students' union with sustainability remaining within its core purpose.



# Methods of engagement

Formal and informal curriculum

No culture of clubs/societies/volunteering

# Aims of the project

- To develop an active Students' Union with a strong learner voice across all College locations.
- To develop an understanding of the facets of sustainability (environment, economy, society) amongst staff, students and the wider community.
- To encourage student entrepreneurship through sustainability.
- To promote a sustainable college community.
- To further develop and promote links with the local and global community through curriculum and the Students' Union.

# 6 key principles

The Students' Union hopes to use the Dragon's Den project to promote sustainability with a strong emphasis on community and social justice. This will be achieved by delivering projects according to '6 key principles' of Sustainability.

- Minimising human impact
- Enabling people
- Ensuring fairness
- Reducing waste
- Promoting happiness and positive wellbeing
- Social responsibility

# Community Partnerships

## Community Partnerships

- 'Five Aid' – food waste event launched the Smart Green Scheme. Worked in collaboration with Manchester Friends of the Earth, Fare Share North West and local traders on Wigan Market



# Shaping Education

- Learner Voice
- Student-led projects
- Working with course leaders to embed sustainability



Any questions or good examples?