Student led Green Capital Project: students as catalysts for change

Challenge: mobilise 10% of the population

How do we support students to learn to live sustainable lives?

How can students become global ambassadors for sustainable living?

How do we mobilise student creativity and energy to help transform our city?

Chris Willmore Professor of Sustainability and Law, University of Bristol
Jim Longhurst, Professor, Assistant Vice Chancellor, UWE Bristol

In it for all our futures

Higher Education Funding Council for England
University of Bristol
UWE Bristol
University of the West of England
The Students’ Union
BRISTOL SU
The biggest single sustainability impact of any University is its graduates.

How do we support students to learn to tread more lightly in the lifetime ahead of them?

How do we mobilise student creativity to transform us and our city?

Students as Global Ambassadors: “I learnt to live sustainability in Bristol – we can live like that too!”
Challenge: mobilise 10% of the population

Bristol city:
- 450,000 population and 1m city - region catchment
- City of radical, innovative people
- Vision of inclusive, sustainable city
- European Green Capital 2015
- Students c10% population

A transformational change in student engagement – our city making the change
How?

- **Catalyst**: Bristol European Green Capital 2015
- **PARTNERSHIP**
  - Within: whole institution approach
  - Between: all Universities and Student Unions
  - With the community - Bristol Green Partnership: >800 organisations
  - City Council and Mayor
- **Start up funding**
  - HEFCE
Aim: 100,000 hours of student action in 2015

Students engaged in 100,000 hours of city-community activity for sustainability

Volunteering, internships, placements for sustainability

Over 220 public, private sector, voluntary groups, NGOS, communities

Large and small scale, individual and collective

NOT just one year, but every year
### Outcomes…

- **>8000 students**
- **>126,000 hours**
- **74 years of work**
- **>£1.1 million value**

### What's the point of being in Bristol if you don't join in?

We felt they really got to understand our business and produced a brilliant business plan that is really going to help us going forward.

### It gave me the belief to move to Bristol: I now sell three times as many bikes

It has been fantastic to work with the University as well; lots of people in this area don’t go on to University or have any connections. It has really changed our perceptions.

### It made me feel I belonged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>96% of students felt that:</th>
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<td>Their involvement had a positive impact</td>
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<td>They had an enjoyable experience</td>
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<td>Their activity was worthwhile</td>
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<td>They had been useful</td>
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Celebrate
Give ownership
Have fun!
The Bees and Hive: open innovation

- Holistic seeing role in the whole
- All projects have a role
- Light touch – open innovation
- Accepting failure as natural
- Reduces reliance on individual relationships
- Network outlives individual projects
- Fosters big relationships
- Surfaces & shares
What have students been doing for Green Capital?

- **Cash**: raising money for local charities through recycling
- **National schemes**: FoodCycle
- **Education**: delivering workshops to schools
- **Conservation**: Managing woodlands
- **Researching** tricky problems for SMEs & NGOs
- **Professional input**: NGO Business planning
- **Innovation**: Knitaversity, ParkHive
- **Health**: Obesity prevention
- **Greening Business**: waste and energy audits and green business plans
- **Giving**: over £1 million worth of engagement to the city
The Change Makers

- New permanent award created to **celebrate** and **reward** students efforts.
- Two public award ceremonies a year – over 700 a year – presented by civic leaders.
- Rewarding the city through national awards – here Bristol’s Mayor celebrates with Bristol and UWE winning the UK Green Gown Student Engagement Award.
- Showcasing BGCP – Universities partnership internationally.
External Evaluation:

“the overwhelmingly positive feedback from both students and external community partners.

It was really pleasing to see how useful the students felt, and how much community partners valued their impact and would recommend working with Bristol students to other organisations”
What is Skills Bridge?

Skills Bridge aims to make it easier for organisations and groups across Bristol to connect with both Universities in Bristol on Student-Community Engagement projects. This includes businesses, social enterprises, schools and colleges, local authorities, charities and community groups.

- Online portal – single entry point
- Easier access to engage with both Universities and students
- On volunteering, community based learning, placements, internships
- Maintained in partnership between both Universities and their unions.
- A convenient way to look for people interested in your work
- Case Studies to inspire new relationships
- Common theme: Sustainability in its widest sense – environmental, social, economic, inclusion, social justice, community building....
Engaged learning with the Community in Partnership
Knowle West
Hands On Bristol: Knowledge exchange through live projects in Architecture

skillsbridge.ac.uk/building/hands-on-bristol
Want to set up something similar?
To suggest a project get in touch

hello@skillsbridge.ac.uk

jamie.darwen@uwe.ac.uk
– Student Services, UWE
fiona.hyland@bristol.ac.uk
– Public Engagement, UoB

www.skillsbridge.ac.uk
Transferable Lessons

✓ It works - students and the city win
✓ Fosters student understanding of the city – and the city’s understanding of students
✓ Synergies of scale / holistic view
✓ The importance of a long term and broad partnership
✓ Students don’t have the same ‘power’ baggage as ‘experts’
✓ Students bring new ideas / insights
✓ Continued University investment and Skillsbridge to move it forward

Can we
• recognise students bring more than just muscle?
• give students space to lead?
SPACE to lead
Students and community can benefit

Think big and think open innovation

Fosters university - community relationships

Delivers practical change

But it also challenges us to change
Green Capital Student Capital

- Funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England under Catalyst Fund Grant G04 (www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/catalyst/projects/uwe/)
- To get involved with Skillsbridge: web: Skillsbridge.ac.uk

- To find out more about what the Universities are doing: www.bristol.ac.uk/green (Bristol) www.uwe.ac.uk/studentcapital (UWE)
- To find out more about this National Award Winning Project & view our video see www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/green_gown_awards_2016_student_engagement_unive2 Or www.bristol2015.co.uk/method/european-green-capital/ (see The Bristol Method, Green Capital: Student Capital. The power of student sustainability engagement)
- Follow a range of Bristol and UWE students and Universities on twitter & facebook.