
University of East London

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Model

Find and Fund

Starting Point

The University of East London (UEL) harnessed the UnLtd/HEFCE Awards Programme this year to establish social enterprise as a vibrant component of its wider enterprise environment. The Employability and Enterprise Team led the way, building on its existing expertise and leveraging a range of valuable partnerships to support the implementation of the Programme.

Delivery Approach

UEL's social entrepreneurs were rewarded for their interest with a programme that deliberately set out to build their confidence and capacities. This was apparent in the application process itself, which began with ideas-orientated drop-in sessions that allowed applicants to discuss their ideas, motivations and project outline. A more detailed pitching panel event then followed, executed by the Delivery Team with UnLtd's assistance. In addition to these dedicated pitching events, UEL's social entrepreneurs were also encouraged to participate in E-Factor, the University's most prominent enterprise competition. This year's winner, April Evelyn-Cooper, certainly set an inspirational example, being awarded the grand prize of £6,000 for YumTum - a social enterprise business idea seeking to engage children with healthy eating and culinary diversity.

Challenges

One of the first challenges facing the Delivery Team was how to effectively promote the Programme. This was about more than simply making students and staff aware of the available Awards, but explaining and raising the profile of social enterprise more generally within the UEL community. Colleagues in the Student Union were encouraged to signpost students working on voluntary and community projects to the Enterprise Team to assess their eligibility for support. Colleagues in the Cass School of Education were notified of the programme and were invited

to share this information with their students, particularly those on the BA Social Enterprise course of study. These relationships formed part of the wider process of initiating fruitful conversations between social and commercial enterprise. UEL's Centre of Excellence for Women's Entrepreneurship were informed of the project and supported the dissemination of information about it among the members of its distinct network, again to the benefit of the Programme and the wider social enterprise sector.

Partnerships

The Delivery Team is keen to further develop its knowledge and expertise, and to this end formed partnerships this year with the delivery teams at Liverpool Hope University and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in order to share learning experiences.

Achievements and Successes

Particular highlights were working with students and academic colleagues on the Product Design course, part of the School of Architecture, Computing & Engineering, in helping its own community of social problem-solvers to connect with social enterprise via the Awards Programme. These partners, plus many other supportive voices from a range of disciplines, have been essential in raising the profile of social enterprise at UEL, as well as feeding academic and other expertise into the Programme.

Results

In total, the UnLtd scheme has helped 13 students and graduates to begin their social enterprise journey, and with previous UEL social entrepreneurs winning such accolades as "Future 50 Young Social Entrepreneurs", this Scheme will be the perfect catalyst to assist the next generation of social change-makers.

The Future

The Petchey Centre, UEL's home for student and

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graduate enterprise, has been a driving force behind this development, and over the next year will continue to make itself a home for all social and commercial enterprise activity. Moving forwards, the Enterprise and Employability Team is committed to using this expertise, not only for the benefit of the University's social enterprise community, but also for the purposes of fulfilling its wider mission to enhance the employability and entrepreneurial ambitions of every student at UEL.

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