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## The University of Oxford

### Contact Details

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### Model

Find, Fund and Support

### Starting Point

The University of Oxford has well established programmes in social enterprise in some areas but the concept is relatively new in others. There is considerable expertise within the Said Business School, Skoll Centre, Careers Team and Student Hubs, but other areas are new to social enterprise and the HE Support Programme offered an opportunity to coordinate different areas. Overall, the University of Oxford is well experienced in social enterprise, but new to the nature of the HE Support Programme.

### Delivery Structure

Oxford is primarily delivering the programme through community partnership. Though the Programme is not exclusively targeted at supporting students who wish to start projects in Oxford itself, a large proportion of applicants choose to do so. This has allowed the University and the Oxford Hub to draw effectively on its existing networks of community groups and organisations to direct the services of award winners towards the areas of greatest need in the city.

### Background on Delivery Team

The Oxford Team have a broad range of experience with not for profit and student volunteering. They also have experience of entrepreneurship - both social and general.

### Delivery Approach

Applicants are assessed by an evaluation panel which includes experienced external social entrepreneurs. There are opportunities for applicants to pitch ideas which are over and above those present on an application form.

### Did it go according to plan?

In general the programme has gone according to plan. The number and quality of first round



of applicants was slightly disappointing, and on reflection this may be because insufficient guidance was given to applicants. This means that initial applicants hadn't made the link between their idea and social enterprise. Hence it was determined that more pre-application support was needed. As a result of this the second round of applications, with adapted application forms, produced much stronger applications.

There was less direct involvement from the Said Business School than hoped, but this was due to the timetable of the academic terms and the programme clashing somewhat. Next year, it is anticipated that this will greatly improve.

### Partnerships

The partnership with Student Hubs is essential for the success of the Programme in Oxford. In addition, there is an informal one with Oxford Brookes University, especially with regard to developing regional partnerships for the future. Involvement with UnLtd was also important, particularly with regard to developing networks. Oxford's experience of Enterprise awards is already a source of partnership and collaboration.

### Challenges

The biggest challenge was involving other elements of the University fully, and going forward Oxford hopes to involve additional parts of the University in a more structured way. Working cooperatively with other parts of the University would add considerable value, but even without this, informal relationships could contribute to supporting award holders.

### Milestones

- The decision to commit substantial resources internally was very important.
- The initial training event from UnLtd was an excellent networking opportunity and gave Oxford the ability to benchmark their programme delivery against the approach of

other HEIs.

- A student peer led event, in combination with senior leaders in the University gave award holders a sense of achievement at the end of the Academic Year.

### **Achievements and Successes**

- Mapping programme work to other entrepreneurship programmes offered by the Careers Service.
- Networking Award Winners together.
- Spending all funding fairly comfortably. Ongoing support was key to this.
- Senior buy in was important.

### **Results**

- 3 Build It awards – reflecting maturity of award winners in entrepreneurial journey, as well as 8 Try it and Do it awards
- Total Award Value of £37,100

### **Outcomes and Impacts**

- Oxford were pleased by the extent to which students regarded community relationships with the student body as an important target – something the University wishes to encourage.
- Building foundations for a more developed partnership with Oxford Brookes in the future.

### **Lessons Learned**

- The most important lesson was that clear guidance is needed for student applicants about what they can achieve. Roadmaps for success have been important – pre-application support is therefore key.
- It always takes longer to establish programmes like this than you think.

### **The Future**

- Oxford is hoping to develop a long term relationship with Student Hubs.
- To increase awareness of opportunities for networking amongst SE focussed students.
- To develop a network of SE alumni and current SEs at a local level.
- Providing alternatives to other entrepreneurship programmes available to students.