
University of Salford

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Model

Find, Fund and Support

Starting Point

The University is relatively experienced at finding and supporting Social Entrepreneurs; not least because of its experienced staff team in this area, but also down to it being embedded in a community with a strong history of social and community enterprise. During Phase One of the HE Support Programme Salford was a committed 'Find' partner who successfully supported 10 Social Entrepreneurs to become Award Winners, a number of whom have been mentors for the current cohort of nascent social entrepreneurs.

Given their track record it is not surprising that they have used this to their advantage to enhance their Phase Two programme by building upon their network of Award Winners, champions and mentors to develop successful mentoring and placement activities alongside running the Award Programme.

Delivery Approach

The University of Salford delivered a multifaceted Find, Fund and Support Programme with an overall awards pot of £40,000. This was successfully delivered using a Community Partnership approach and a strong branding of the Programme as the 'Make THE Difference Awards'. The Programme has been delivered from the Student Life Department, which reaches all faculties across the campus and has an overarching focus on student services, careers and employability. With mentoring, local engagement and critical friend support from Unlimited Potential, a pioneering locally based social enterprise, amongst a number of local social enterprises who have assisted.

Placement opportunities with local social enterprises have played a part in the process. This enhances their skills, networks and confidence to run their own social enterprise projects, whilst undertaking discreet pieces of work which will enable the social enterprises themselves to progress.



There is a range of social entrepreneurs, from 1st year students to experienced academics. The Programme has inspired the social entrepreneurs to support each other and to gain confidence by being involved in each other's projects. The experience gained by the individuals undergoing support within a cohort approach, should not be underestimated, and has helped to bolster their own confidence to succeed when times have been tough. The Programme has purposefully targeted students who want to make the difference but perhaps didn't quite know how. Their increased exposure to social entrepreneurs and social enterprise has really assisted their understanding of how to make the difference.

As well as skills development and making a contribution to the local community through their HE Support Awards, The University of Salford offered 8 weeks paid employment for the participants, backed by the University and using HEIF investment. All the HE Support Programme participants who received financial and mentoring support felt that the opportunity to work with social entrepreneurs would enhance their chances of success and all participants saw this as a unique and invaluable part of their Award. So far 8 local placements have been arranged.

Challenges

There have, of course, been a number of challenges for both the participants and the support staff along the way. The challenge of co-ordinating the support for different individuals at different stages of their journey has been a valuable lesson learned. While there are some overarching fundamentals, each participant required space and time to evaluate their experiences to ensure they were moving forward at a challenging, yet comfortable, pace within the overall project timeframe. This is especially true when external factors such as academic deadlines, teaching and research deadlines came into play. The challenge for the individuals themselves has been to turn

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what seemed like a pipedream into a reality and dealing with the pressure of being given “yes’s” where previously they were met with cynicism from friends and colleagues.

taken part in placements with social enterprises as part of a bespoke training and development opportunity.

Other Lessons Learned

The Salford Team have discovered that help and offers of assistance come in a number of ways that were not originally envisaged during their planning for the Programme. This process has identified student champions, senior management champions and external supporters of the University that wanted to get involved and provide invaluable support, at little or no cost. Drawing together disparate support opportunities into a cohesive offer for nascent social entrepreneurs through their Make THE Difference branding has been a critical part of their success, yet not one that they envisaged.

Achievements and Successes

“The success of this project and other similar projects has given a real shot in the arm for the University. During this year we have identified opportunities for further funding of social entrepreneurs, supported the creation of the Centre for Social Business at the University and hosted Professor Muhammad Yunus at the Social Business Summit in May 2013, where a number of our beneficiaries had a private meeting with Professor Yunus to pitch their ideas.” Dominic Martinez, Head of Business and Enterprise, Student Life

Quotes

‘I just want to say thank you so much for arranging the meeting (with Muhammad Yunus). He is one of my personal heroes and it was a dream come true getting to meet him. He took a copy of my business plan!’ Grant Dolan, HE Support Award Winner on meeting Mohammed

‘Scary but I enjoyed that! Boosted my confidence as well which is a bonus.’ Lauren Edmondson, HE Support Award Winner on attending one of our “Do It” panels

Results

By the end of the Phase Two Programme, from over 30 enquiries/applications, 21 Social Entrepreneurs will have been supported, 12 local volunteer mentors will have contributed to the Programme during the Find, Fund and Support stages, as well as helping with localised decision making of award allocation. Nine social entrepreneurs will have

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