Green Capital Student Capital: the role of students in city transformation

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University of the West of England, Bristol and University of Bristol
Bristol in the UK
Aerial View of Bristol
Students: lived lives

- 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?

- Bristol European **Green Capital 2015** as catalyst for change
- Unique **university partnership**
  - Within: whole institution approach
  - Between: Both **Universities** and their two **Students’ Unions** working together
- Bristol Green Partnership: >850 organisations
- **City Council** and **Mayor**
- £250,000 grant from **Higher Education Funding Council for England’s Catalyst Fund** matched by the universities
100,000 hours of student action for sustainability

Students engaged in 126,000 hours of activity benefiting city organisations

Volunteering, internships, placements, and projects for sustainability

Over 400 Public, private sector, voluntary groups, NGOs, community organisations

Large and small scale, individual, and collective

NOT just 2015 but a continuing commitment
Celebrate
Give ownership
Have fun!

I DON'T BELIEVE IN GLOBAL WARMING
What have students been up to during Green Capital?

- **Cash**: raising money for local charities through recycling
- **National schemes**: FoodCycle
- **Education**: delivering workshops to schools
- **Conservation**: Managing woodlands
- **Energy champions**: audits and advice on energy use
- **Researching**: tricky problems for SMEs & NGOs
- **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 award created to *celebrate* and *reward* students’ efforts

- Two levels: **Change Maker** and **Gold Change Maker**

- Three **public award ceremonies** held to-date

- **Over 700** Student Change Makers

- The awards will **continue into the future** with the next Green Capital Change Maker ceremonies scheduled for February and June 2017
Outcomes...

- 8,071 students
- >126,000 hours
- >74 years’ worth of sustainability work
- >£1.1 million value
- Changing student understanding of what it means to live in a city
- Changing citizens understanding of students
- Changing our city for the better

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.

96% of students felt that:

- Their involvement had a positive impact
- They had an enjoyable experience
- Their activity was worthwhile
- They had been useful
Online brokerage platform

“Front of house” for local organisations to engage with students and the universities

Maintained in partnership between Universities

Case studies

Easy and direct contact with the right people

City-wide benefit
Students' Efforts Recognised

Green Volunteer Awards

- UWE’s Elected Student Sustainability Officer Winner “Spirit of 2015 Award”
- UWE Greenspace leaders Winners “Volunteer of the Year 2015”

The Students’ Union at UWE

- Finalist in the EAUC Green Gown Awards 2016 in the Student Engagement Category
Experiences...

Experience: "I found the activity worthwhile"

Experience: "I felt useful"

Experience: "It was an enjoyable experience"

Experience: "My involvement has had a positive impact"
Who’s taking part?

Gender

- Female: 65.5%
- Male: 34.5%

Residency

- UK: 93.4%
- EU: 83.7%
- International: 6.6%

Age

- 18-21: 53.4%
- 22-25: 35.4%
- 26-29: 6.9%
- 30+: 4.3%

Course type

- Full time: 93.4%
- Part time: 6.6%
External Recognition for Green Capital Student Capital

Environmental Association of Universities and College’s Green Gown Awards

- Green Gown Awards 2015. Finalist in the Student Engagement Category
- Green Gown Awards 2016. Finalist in the Student Engagement Category
- Winner announced on November 10th 2016.
It doesn’t stop here

2016

- Skills Bridge
- Change Makers Awards
- Partnerships
  - City-wide
  - Universities and Students’ Unions
- Student Capital becomes integral part of Universities city engagement strategies
- Bristol Green Capital Partnership
Green Capital Student Capital

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Green Capital Student Capital

- Funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England under Catalyst Fund Grant G04
- [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/catalyst/projects/uwe/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/catalyst/projects/uwe/)
- Social media: www.facebook.com/GreenUWE (UWE) www.facebook.com/groups/BristolUniST (Bristol)
- Web: www.uwe.ac.uk/studentcapital (UWE) www.bristol.ac.uk/green-capital (Bristol)