

KnowledgeExchange

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WestFocus Expands Student's Horizons

What is a measure of a project's success? And how should WestFocus approach this, especially as the Consortium's objectives are so diverse and activities are numerous. WestFocus believes that one strong indicator of the real success of the initiative is that it has inspired individuals and organisations to identify and pursue new goals.



Roehampton University Entrepreneurs Club at Bright Ideas 2008

This belief can be illustrated by one student's relationship with WestFocus and the way it has expanded his horizons and opened up a world of new opportunities.

WestFocus entered the life of Andrew Neale, a recent Creative Writing graduate from Roehampton University, when he attended the Bright Futures event in September 2007, organised by WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre. This intensive entrepreneurship programme was 'a real eye-opener' by Andrew's own admission. He says, "Although I'd never studied business before, I always wished that I had done. Bright Futures gave me the confidence to go out and pursue an environmental business idea, which subsequently funded my gap year".

During the 3-day course, Andrew learned about the Roehampton Entrepreneurs Club. All of the WestFocus Universities have an entrepreneurship club or society, which gives students the opportunity to get together

to discuss and develop their ideas. Andrew joined the Club and soon became the driving force behind its many activities and events.

It was at such a networking event that Andrew discovered there was a vacancy within WestFocus for a journalism intern. Feeling that this would complement his degree course perfectly, Andrew was quick to seize the opportunity to gain valuable workplace experience.

Andrew developed marketing material for the Shell Step programme, run within London by the WestFocus University Talent team. Shell Step provides short-term placements for students to work on real projects in businesses of all sizes.

Andrew had considered applying to the Shell Step scheme the previous summer, but had decided not to, as he thought the programme was aimed at business students.

"The first thing I learnt was about Shell Step - and I was devastated to learn that I could have applied for the scheme after all. This taught me to always follow up any interests I have and speak directly to those involved for further information".

As well as working part-time for WestFocus, Andrew had continued to develop his environmental business idea, called Take Advantage. He submitted this idea for the WestFocus Bright Ideas 2008 competition and went on to win a £250 runner-up prize. Through his role within the Roehampton Entrepreneurs Club, Andrew also encouraged other friends and students from his university to apply with several of them being in the running for prizes. This made the experience a lot more fun and sociable.

This was not the end of Andrew's relationship with WestFocus, however. For each Bright Futures course, the Entrepreneurship Centre invites previous attendees to come back as a facilitator. The facilitators help with the organisation and with running the group exercises, they also help the students to feel comfortable and to get the most benefit from the course. Andrew took advantage

of this opportunity. He found that this was a very different experience from attending as a student: "The first time I facilitated I was rather shy because it hadn't even been a year since I was in the same position as the new students but I helped out at every chance I got and helped make the students feel comfortable.

"The second time, I was much more confident. I happily took control of individual situations such as music for the closing session and ensuring the refreshments were ready in time for our breaks.

"I soon realised that a major aspect of facilitation is confidence and simply getting on with it. This is relevant for all aspects of working life and now I can happily and eagerly get involved in any task required of me. Thank you WestFocus!"

Having graduated from Roehampton University in the summer, Andrew is now on a gap year and is going to be spending three months in Africa as part of an exchange programme. When he returns and starts looking for employment, the confidence and skills that he has gained through working with WestFocus will mean he has many more avenues open to him than he could possibly have imagined when he began his degree.



Andrew Neale collects his Bright Ideas prize from Dr David Stokes

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Executive Interview

Julie Powell, Roehampton University



Julie Powell, the Enterprise Manager at Roehampton University, is the newest member of the WestFocus Executive Team following the retirement of Dr Chris Lloyd.

With several years experience of working with WestFocus, Ms Powell is able to provide a perspective on how the emphasis for directing activities has shifted from central WestFocus management to the individual institutions.

"In 2004-06, under HEIF 2, the funding criteria stipulated a central leadership and management approach, so many WestFocus activities were Consortium-led and centrally managed. In the following 2 years, under HEIF 3, however, there has been a shift to a more institutionally-led and WestFocus-supported collaboration focussed on fostering economic and business growth, including not-for-profit enterprise.

"In this time, WestFocus has built a powerful brand and is now recognised as a market leader by the business, academic and student communities. This has allowed the Consortium to develop a number of highly successful collaborations, for example collaborative grants have been obtained with KnowledgeEast, a consortium of Universities in the east of London and Thames Gateway. These include the Engage programme [a knowledge sharing programme promoting university-community connection] and KnowledgeLondon [a network for London's knowledge transfer professionals]. As a result, WestFocus is able to present a regional and broad offering to businesses because of the complementary strengths of the universities in the network.

"As we move into the HEIF 4 funding period, the more institutionally run and WestFocus-supported collaboration is set to continue, maximising the areas which have had most impact.

"The central WestFocus functions, such as the Entrepreneurship Centre and University Talent teams, will continue to deliver the activities they have become known for. These include entrepreneurship competitions and training programmes, national and regional placement schemes, such as Shell Step. Also, the web portal will continue to be the main entry point for employers, entrepreneurs and students.

"Additionally, the Business Creation function will continue to increase their commercialisation activities and produce significant operational economies of scale. The PARK Board will strengthen its relations with the key funders and will focus further on creating a pipeline of new projects and closely monitoring the performance of its current investment portfolio. The Operational Support Group will continue to

share vital commercialisation experience and skills within the University partners, in addition to providing funding for market research".

As a member of both the WestFocus PARK Board and the Operational Support Group, Ms Powell is closely involved with the Business Creation activities.

She says, "The Business Creation arm of WestFocus has been addressing barriers to enterprise start up, economic growth and competitiveness, and providing business support for new ideas or technologies with commercial potential emerging from research programmes. It offers a number of funds, known collectively as PARK funds: Proof of Concept, PARK II Fund and Stimulus Fund, funded by LDA.

"So far PARK has made 129 investments and the money remaining in the two commercial funds is forecast to last until mid-2009. As well as making investments and managing its portfolio, the PARK Board has been responsible for governance and policy. The PARK Funds have been acknowledged by BERR, HEFCE and the LDA as representing good practice.

"WestFocus Business Creation has had a particularly positive impact on the commercialisation process at Roehampton University. There has been a significant shift in the mindset of many academics, who are considering the commercial potential of their research. Roehampton is currently working to increase its portfolio of Proof of Concept projects incorporating science and technology ideas. Students are also able to build their employability skills to improve their career prospects as well as considering careers in small and large companies or even set up on their own".

Another area Ms Powell takes a particular interest in is the WestFocus Social Inclusion Network, driven by Roehampton University. The Network is currently focusing on income generation so that it can become self sustaining and less reliant on Government funding streams. Since its inception, Social Inclusion Network has developed strong links with over 400 voluntary and charity sector organisations and has engaged with many enterprises that had never considered working with a university. Most recently, the network has helped Slough Borough Council in developing a working contract with their voluntary and community sector groups. This involved running workshops with over 200 organisations over a period of four months.

When questioned about the impact WestFocus Consortium has had on Roehampton University, Ms Powell says, "The work Roehampton is engaged with as part of the Consortium is essential for the development of enterprise at the University. The opportunity to tap into the expertise and experience of other universities and businesses is extremely valuable for all members.

"The WestFocus Centre for Knowledge Exchange has been an invaluable resource and the University has received continuing support with the development of entrepreneurship opportunities for students and staff. For example, in the latest Bright Ideas competition Roehampton had a record number of entries and a record number of winning submissions. Over the years, 45 Roehampton students have attended the Bright Futures course, and as a result of this course the University produced an Experiential Learning DVD which will help entrepreneurship educators to teach entrepreneurship. Increasing numbers of Roehampton academics are attending WestFocus events and seminars and learning about the array of opportunities within the networks".

KnowledgeLondon's Great Performance Brings Membership Increase

KnowledgeLondon remains one of the flagship collaborations for the WestFocus Consortium. It is a Knowledge Transfer good practice network run jointly by WestFocus and KnowledgeEast. Together these 2 Consortia represent 15 out of London's 43 Universities.

Membership of KnowledgeLondon continues to increase dramatically, having more than doubled in the last 18 months, including more than 100 new members since May of this year. The total number of participants is now close to 1,000, which is testament to the amount of effort the project team puts into researching and organising the Network's events and many other supporting activities.

Although KnowledgeLondon's contribution to the development and growth of London's businesses is indirect, the Network prides itself on the work it does to enhance the effectiveness of the capital's Knowledge Transfer community as a whole, and the services business can receive from that community.

With 25 events organised in the last 18 months, a state-of-the-art website, a host of newsletters, an online forum and a recent annual report, the network is set to achieve and even exceed its objectives set in February 2007 when the London Development Agency awarded the contract to run KnowledgeLondon to WestFocus and KnowledgeEast.

For more information on KnowledgeLondon, please see the website at www.knowledgelondon.net

New WestFocus Initiative: Project Compact Roadtest

In 1998 the Government established and developed the concept of a Compact between the statutory and voluntary sectors that would define and standardize the working relationship between the two parties in order to enhance partnership working. Following this initiative the Government encouraged Local Authorities and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups to set up Local Compacts. Local Compacts are now seen as a key component in the commissioning, delivery and measurement of local services and therefore have a vital role to play in the quality and management of those services.



Dr Nick Slope, Thames Valley University

WestFocus Social Inclusion Network has been actively involved in assisting Slough Compact Management Steering Group (SCMSG) in developing and establishing its Local Compact. This has largely been concerned with setting up, managing and facilitating a series of active workshops in which the principles and protocols of the Compact have been developed. WestFocus Social Inclusion Network has played a pivotal role in the development of each of the protocols as well as the Compact itself. WestFocus involvement has helped ensure that Slough now has a Compact and nine protocols. For a copy of the Compact and protocols see www.slough.gov.uk.

Shelagh Cuell, Head of Partnerships, Voluntary Sector and Partnerships Unit, Slough Borough Council said, "The WestFocus and Thames Valley University's involvement made all the difference with the development of the Compact, we would not have been able to produce such an inclusive and comprehensive document and achieve the consensus that we have without the input.

"We are justifiably pleased with the outcome and it has been well received outside of the town. There are few outcomes of such partnership working that we can genuinely say were collaborative and agreed by all. It is always difficult to address the power

imbalance and the temptation to provide a tick box response to national initiatives of this type; but with WestFocus and Thames Valley University's impartial guidance we have managed it".

With the completion of the Compact there has arisen the opportunity to develop a diagnostic tool for assessing the effectiveness of local Compacts and associated protocols in a non-confrontational workshop environment. It is planned that the diagnostic tool would then be developed into a commercial package that could be sold and serviced by WestFocus universities.

Dr Nick Slope, TVU, stated, "The project design revolves around researching and writing three case studies based on problems between local statutory bodies and the Third Sector and testing them against local Compacts to see how they might be resolved. It is hoped that this approach will help train up participants in Compact use, promote Compacts wider and allow local areas to test the effectiveness of their Compacts. It is an exciting and innovative approach to knowledge exchange that is building on past success".

The project is expected to last five months, culminating in an open workshop to be held at Thames Valley University. Partners include Thames Valley University, Roehampton University, Brunel University and Slough Borough Council.

For further information please contact:
Dr Nick Slope at nick.slope@tvu.ac.uk
or **Julian Sikondari** at
j.sikondari@roehampton.ac.uk

Bright Futures for Student Entrepreneurs

In early September, the WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre ran the latest Bright Futures course, this time held at Westminster University's Marylebone campus. Held over three days, this course gives students from all backgrounds the chance to develop their entrepreneurial spirit and ideas.

Also attending the course was Chris Rye, WestFocus' IT & Web Content Officer. Here, he gives his perspective on how Bright Futures can give students skills to help them in the workplace.

"As I only joined WestFocus in May this year, I saw Bright Futures as an opportunity to learn more about the work of the Entrepreneurship Centre. Having studied Marketing at university, I had already experienced many of the components of the course, even if only in theory. So, when I saw the course materials on the first day I thought: "I already know all this, what am I going to get out of the next three days?"

"The answer to that question was: "Plenty!" As well as serving as a refresher for the techniques I learnt years ago, it also gave me practical experience of some of those aspects that I have only ever encountered in theory. Along with joining in with the students, I was also able to see the course from an 'outsiders' viewpoint, so I could appreciate how the skills gained will benefit future employers, as well as the students themselves.

"The event started with an opportunity to try our networking skills, as a way of breaking the ice. We introduced ourselves to someone that we had not previously met, and talked about such things as who would be our ideal dinner guest, and what our favourite event was at the Olympics. Even within this half-hour session, it was remarkable how much more comfortable everyone became. It is easy to see how much these skills can be improved through practice.

"This exercise was to serve as the bedrock of the next three days, as there was an emphasis on the importance of networking. We saw how we could draw on the skills and experiences of all the people that we meet in our daily lives, and being able to work together to achieve our goals.

"Other practical sessions covered sales and negotiation skills, team working and presentation. These were all interspersed with theory sessions to ensure that non-business students were familiar with concepts that they would not have encountered on their degree course.

"Indeed, it was noticeable how many of the students were studying subjects other than business. Subjects ranged from arts to medicine, with students from undergraduate to doctorate level. This range of participants demonstrated the point that an 'entrepreneur' is not the same as a 'businessman'; it is possible to behave in an entrepreneurial manner in any setting.



Students taking part in one of the Bright Futures practical sessions

"This was also reinforced by visits from experienced entrepreneurs who told us how they had achieved their successes (and failures!), some of whom had been Bright Futures students themselves. This really brought it home that this was not just a great way to spend three days out of the office, these were real skills that we were being taught, and they could be used to make a real difference in our own futures: at work, in social enterprises and even in our personal lives.

"What this course really showed me was that entrepreneurial behaviour can be displayed in a huge variety of contexts, including as an employee in someone else's company. It also showed how anyone can develop these skills, regardless of their academic background."

STOP PRESS:

Brand Strategy Workshops

The WestFocus DesignPlus network is launching a new series of Brand Strategy Workshops. Building on the success of Brunel University's Design & Brand Strategy Masters programme, the short corporate course is now in its second year.

Designed to help managers understand the importance of design in establishing a successful brand, the series of three workshops will be held at Brunel University throughout the coming year.

For more details see the DesignPlus website: www.designplus.org.uk

WestFocus student makes regional Shell Step final



Diane Elston collects her prize at the local Shell Step 2008 awards ceremony

An ingenious solution to improve working conditions for aircraft constructors won a WestFocus student top place at this year's local Shell Step awards ceremony on 9 September.

Diane Elston, who has completed her second year in Product Design, worked on a project with engineering design company JNDC Ltd alongside Jan Niklewicz, formerly a WestFocus Engineering academic, and Dean Carran, a WestFocus graduate.

"My main project for JNDC was to come up with solutions for internal matting for use when constructing the new wings of a major

aircraft manufacturer," she explained. The working environment within an aircraft wing is often uncomfortable to sit or lie down. It was my brief to come up with a product that could work in this environment and make it more comfortable for workers.

"I produced a product that the client really liked. They have ordered 12 final production versions for testing with a view to ordering larger amounts. As a result of this project I have taken on a year's placement with JNDC".

Diane and runner up Jake Mosse went on to represent West London at the regional final on 17 September. Against strong competition Jake was selected to go through to the national final whilst Diane's disappointment was mitigated by the news that her patent application had been successful.

Shell Step is a national scheme. Now in its 22nd year, the scheme offers challenging eight-week projects to students who have completed their second year, giving them the opportunity to apply their skills in a real business environment. As the delivery agent



for West London and North Surrey, the WestFocus University Talent team managed and coordinated 30 student placements this summer. Of this, a record number of 13 WestFocus students participated, including two from Brunel, five from Kingston, three from TVU, one from Roehampton, one from Royal Holloway, and one from Westminster.

With Shell Step now over for 2008, the WestFocus University Talent team will begin promoting next year's scheme in early 2009.

If you would like the team to run a Shell Step student workshop at your institution please contact **Alison McGregor** at a.mcgregor@kingston.ac.uk for more information.

Bright Ideas can Bring Rewards

The WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre is currently accepting applications from students for the annual Bright Ideas competition. With 20 cash prizes available, including seven top prizes of £1,000 and a special prize for the best healthcare idea, it is sure to inspire student entrepreneurs to develop their most innovative ideas.

Now in its fifth year, the Bright Ideas competition invites students from the WestFocus universities to submit proposals for any new or improved product or service. Students can be from any academic discipline and can enter either individually or as part of a team.

Among the winners of the last competition were Benjamin Tingling and Elliot Coleman, from Brunel University. Their idea was for pre-mixed, bottled cocktails. They have formed their own company, Aristo Beverages, and currently have one product on the market, with more planned for the near future.

After their win, Benjamin said: "The WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre is inspirational for a lot of aspiring entrepreneurs. It hits home that being an entrepreneur really



Brunel students Elliot Coleman (left) and Benjamin Tingling (centre) accept their Bright Ideas prize from guest speaker Trevor Walsh

is a viable career path, not an easy one, but a fulfilling one nonetheless".

In the run-up to the competition closing date of 15 December 2008, the Entrepreneurship Centre is holding a Bright Ideas Masterclass to give students invaluable advice and help with completing the application form. Students will also get tips on how to develop

their existing ideas, or even generate new ones. They will have the opportunity to meet other students and find potential partners to team up with. The Masterclass will be held at Roehampton University on 19 November.

To find out more about Bright Ideas, see the Entrepreneurship Centre website at www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

EthioStar: Working to Relieve Poverty in Ethiopia

The WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre and SIFE are working together to support Alchemy World and enhance the entrepreneurship tradition in Ethiopia.

The EthioStar project aims to provide support and mentoring from a group of UK-based students supported by academics. The Ethiopian students will have a lead contact among the UK students, and all involved will work as a group to develop the entrepreneurial ideas of the Ethiopian students. The UK students will benefit from being part of a social enterprise that is adding value to people's lives.

Earlier in the year, representatives from the WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre travelled to Ethiopia to see at first hand the effects of the project. The project leader for WestFocus, Dr David Stokes, was struck by the enthusiasm of the students: "We were so impressed by the desire of the Ethiopian entrepreneurship students to develop enterprises that benefit not only themselves but all parts of their society.

"They have great ideas and vision and deserve to succeed. But the infrastructure to support new ventures is just not there as it is in developed countries, and there are few role models of successful entrepreneurs locally to inspire them. This is why we are keen to support this project which is driven by an Ethiopian entrepreneur who is trying to develop an entrepreneurial culture in smaller towns and villages and amongst groups that are particularly disadvantaged".

Alchemy World is an NGO registered in Ethiopia. Its aim is to combat poverty through social entrepreneurship, which it is doing through education and support for Ethiopians to become entrepreneurs. Students attend a three year Entrepreneurship School, at the end of which they will have created a business venture, or will have gained skills vital to finding a well-paid job.

SIFE is the world's largest university-based, not-for-profit organisation. It is a partnership between businesses and higher education that develops sustainable projects to create economic opportunity for others. The global network consists of student-led teams within each member university, guided by academic and business advisers.

If you want to find out more about this, or any other SIFE project, please visit www.sife.org



Alchemy World's first business venture in Ethiopia

Reunion Due for Enterprising Businesses

The WestFocus Entrepreneurship Centre recently held the latest session for the Enterprising Business Awards (EBA). Hosted at Raven's Ait, on the River Thames in Kingston, the event brought the latest EBA programme to a close.



Previous EBA winner, Nick Samuel

During the session, several of the participants gave presentations on the progress they had made, and everyone had the opportunity to review the goals they had set at the end of their previous session.

The Entrepreneurship Centre is now currently organising a reunion event to showcase the huge success of the EBA since the programme's launch in 2005. All of the previous winners of the Awards are being invited to attend and discuss how the EBA experience has helped them to develop their businesses.

The Awards offer six-month business support programmes designed to help small businesses grow, including networking forums with other winners and the opportunity to bring a WestFocus student into their business to help with a specific project.

Anna Faulkner, EBA Programme Facilitator, said: "We have received extremely positive feedback from previous winners of these awards. They have appreciated the discussion forums and the opportunity to share ideas and issues with like-minded individuals".

Nick Samuel, of Samuel Estates, one of the previous winners, had this to say about the EBA experience: "The EBA programme provides us with invaluable support and advice from experts and other businesses in the community as we develop plans for future growth. It also enables us to offer a work placement to a WestFocus student, which will help them gain hands-on business experience".

For more details about eligibility for the EBA programme, please see www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

WestFocus ICT Network: Overview of Recent Activities

Two of the groups within the WestFocus ICT Network have been particularly active in recent months, organising five events between them. The ICT Adoption and Use by SMEs Group (Brunel, Royal Holloway, AI Consultants Ltd) was engaged in helping small businesses to make the best use of Web 2.0 resources, and the ICT and Organisational Success in SMEs Group (TVU, Westminster) carried out a project investigating how small enterprises integrate more conventional business support software into their existing organisations to develop tools to assist with this process.

'ICT Adoption and Use by SMEs' continued its programme of 'Punch Above Your Weight' workshops for small SMEs, with 20 delegates attending four events since the beginning of the year. These seminars illustrate best practice in using modern web marketing techniques, including Google Ad-Words, blogging, wikis and social networking, to increase the online footprint of SMEs, especially 1-5 person companies.

The final event also introduced free online collaboration tools, e.g. Basecamp, that can be used to support informal coalitions of SMEs seeking to attract partners for collaborative bidding. The case studies that formed the basis of this work were supported by a WestFocus Project Fund award in January 2008. This material will be included in the ongoing 'Punch Above Your Weight' seminar series and may also form the basis for separate events.

'ICT and Organisational Success in SMEs' ran Sociotech-ID08 in April 2008, a one day workshop to raise awareness of the topic of socio-technical design. The event focused on the well-known, but often poorly addressed, problem of the impact of the adoption of business support software on the existing structure and organisation of SMEs. Held at the British Computer Society offices in Covent Garden, it attracted 25 people from different sectors of academia and industry.

As a parallel activity within the project, researchers from Thames Valley University began to work with a local SME which is adopting SAP One (integrated enterprise resource planning software) in a phased deployment. They assessed the impact and barriers to adoption that the company is experiencing during this process. A core aim of the project is to develop materials to assist other SMEs to incorporate similar business support software more successfully and assess its true costs and value. To find out more, please contact david.wells@rhul.ac.uk

MAKING THE RIGHT DECISIONS: A two year KTP helped Retail Decisions enter the South East Asian market

Knowledge
Transfer
Partnerships



April Yang at Cards Asia 2008 Conference

Retail Decisions (ReD) is a payment card issuer and a world leader in card fraud prevention and payment processing. With an established international presence in Europe, the United States, Australia and South Africa, the company's next venture was to enter the fast-growing South East Asian market.

ReD wanted to develop and implement a market entry strategy into South East Asia based on in-depth market research to build an understanding of both the market requirements and the cultural differences. As a result, the company embarked on a two-year Knowledge Transfer Partnership in 2006 to achieve their goal.

This Partnership received financial support from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme (KTP). KTP aims to help businesses improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board along with the other government funding organisations, including research councils and regional development agencies. KTP is a three-way project between a graduate, a company and a university. The graduate is recruited to manage strategic projects within the

company, while being supported by a dedicated Knowledge Base within the university.

Understanding the importance of having the right skills and expertise to enter the market, the company enlisted the support of the Asian Business Research Centre at the Business School in Kingston University and graduate Associate in Marketing, April Yang.

The result of the project was the development of a market research methodology that helped the business approach a market that was previously considered less than easy to enter. Since undertaking the KTP project, the company has now won a series of prestigious contracts with major companies in both China and India.

Carl Clump, CEO of Retail Decisions said: "The Knowledge Transfer Partnership has been incredibly successful and allowed us to enter a market of which we didn't have a full understanding. Entering such uncharted territory requires careful thought and attention so we wanted to ensure that we got it right the first time around.

"Allowing time for well considered research helped us foster an innovative methodology to our market strategy. Our recent contract wins are testament to the successful collaboration between our workforce and the innovative thinking of April Yang and the Business School".

ReD recently announced the signing of a five year reseller agreement with ChinaBank Payment, a leading electronic payment processor in China.

Such was the success of the KTP programme that April has now been offered a permanent position with the company and will continue to play a key role in the company's Asian market strategy.

KTP is one of a number of knowledge transfer programmes. For more information contact Charlene Edwards, Head of Knowledge Transfer at Kingston University, on **0208 547 8782** or c.h.edwards@kingston.ac.uk. To know more about ReD please contact **01483 728700** or info@redplc.com, or go to www.redplc.com

KnowledgeExchange

Heritage2Health: History Helping to Provide a Healthier Future

Heritage2Health (H2H) is a multi-partner, multi-disciplinary knowledge transfer project established and run by the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences, Kingston University and St George's, University of London, and the WestFocus Health Network. The aim of the initiative is to build strong links between the health, social care and heritage sectors through creating a new network and through the distribution of a range of learning resources, training opportunities and events to enhance the capacity of each to work with vulnerable groups and promote national well-being.

Established in 2005, Heritage2Health initially focused on supporting access to heritage sites for people with functional or activity limitations. The project has now evolved to include participants with any disability or health issue, including mental health, learning disability or physical limitation, as well as carers or those who are socially isolated.

H2H promotes well-being through supporting individuals, families and communities to access heritage sites. Volunteers are recruited through university and community networks, local disability charities, and youth and education services, and participants jointly plan events and evaluate the sites they visit. The events create an opportunity for a 'shared learning' experience between generations, cultures and between paid and unpaid carers.

Since the summer of 2005, four partnership events have been undertaken at six heritage sites with support from the National Trust and English Heritage. Challenging events included

climbing Glastonbury Tor and, most recently, a three mile river walk, ferry crossing and creating an art piece at Marble Hill and Ham House, Richmond. Participants work together in teams to develop and share the challenge and support each other, so the focus is on the challenge not limitations or disability.



Participants at the recent Heritage2Health event in Richmond

Heather Smith, Head of Access for All, commented, "We are really focusing on the health and wellbeing opportunities that our properties offer and this project is helping to develop our understanding of the benefits visiting the historic environment can provide. In this project, people can challenge themselves to go even further than perhaps they thought they were able to and we can learn together how easy or how difficult our sites are to access and how this can be improved... It is also really nice to focus on a project that brings together the National Trust

with other colleagues in the heritage sector, including English Heritage, and the health sector - we can look at accessibility issues together, including training opportunities, so we can move forward together".

In July 2008, H2H piloted site specific volunteer training with the National Trust at Stourhead with students from Wiltshire Further Education College. A partnership agreement is currently being developed with National Trust and English Heritage to support the development of this initiative.

Catherine Bloodworth, English Heritage Head of Outreach (Acting) said, "The ongoing development of this partnership project will provide valuable opportunities to share expertise and resources, building on work that English Heritage regional Outreach Managers are already undertaking to increase opportunities for people with all abilities to engage and participate with the historic environment".

The project was showcased at the International Conference 'All Together Better Health III: challenges in inter-professional education and practice' in April 2006 and is also set to be presented at the 'Environment, Well-Being and Healthy Lifestyle' Annual Conference 2008 organised by the Institute for Environment, Sustainability and Regeneration and the Centre for Sport and Exercise Research, Staffordshire University.

What started as a relatively small support programme has grown into a resource with the potential to benefit thousands of people across the UK.

For more information, contact Theresa Nash, Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences, St George's University of London at tnash@hscs.gul.ac.uk

2008 Calendar of events

Intellectual Property Rights session

18 November - 4pm - 6pm

Kingston Hill Campus, Kingston University

The Entrepreneurship Experience: The Entrepreneur/Intrapreneur

27 November

Kingston University

www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

London Knowledge Transfer Awards

5 December

Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington

www.londonktawards.co.uk

The Entrepreneurship Experience: Learning From Others

12 February 2009

Kingston University

www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

The Entrepreneurship Experience: Opportunity Recognition

26 February

Kingston University

www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

The Entrepreneurship Experience: Making It Happen

12 March

Kingston University

www.westfocus.org.uk/entrepreneurship

For more information about these and other events please go to www.westfocus.org.uk

Should you have any comments or suggestions or have a story to tell please contact Nadia Zernina, the Editor, at nadia.zernina@brunel.ac.uk

WestFocus members:

