



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE STUDENTS IN FREE ENTERPRISE PROJECT FACTSHEET

THINK.ACT.GREEN

Think.Act.Green (T.A.G) aims to increase environmental awareness amongst Victorian secondary school students and empower them through the development of professional skills such as financial literacy, research, analysis and evaluation. With environmental sustainability an issue of increasing local and global significance, Think.Act.Green has established an environmental program in many Victorian high schools to inspire our next generation of leaders to seek sustainable solutions to our environmental problems.

Think.Act.Green has enlisted the support of companies operating in the energy and resources sector to develop a series of seminars, skills-based tutorials, an environmental conference and an inter-school competition. Following a successful pilot project in 2009, nine secondary schools are actively participated in 2010, with a new partnership with schools forming part of the Teach for Australia program coming on board for 2011 and beyond.

The program requires student-led teams from each school to develop a proposal outlining an innovative way they can increase environmental sustainability at their schools. In the final phase of the program, students present their proposals to a judging panel composed of leading business consultants and prominent figures in the environmental and non-profit sectors. The team with the most creative and viable proposal is awarded a monetary prize to implement their project. The 2009 Think.Act.Green winners, Presbyterian Ladies' College, successfully implemented their grey-water system proposal this year that filters water used in their boarding-house showers and disperses it to the nearby school gardens.

The Think.Act.Green program inspires leadership amongst students by encouraging them to engage with important environmental issues, take ownership of and responsibility for their local environment, and gives them valuable exposure to knowledge and experience of being young leaders.



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NEXUS ABROAD

Nexus Abroad is an international development project that assists community organisations in developing countries to become financially independent. The goal is to implement an ethical and socially appropriate governance structure to enable partner organisations to achieve their own mission of empowering local communities. Since 2008, the team has been working on their pilot project with Nectar Home, an orphanage in rural Ghana, which provides food and shelter for children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In December 2008, two SIFE students made the first trip to Ghana to help the community implement a local public transport business. Last summer, three students embarked upon a second trip, with the aim of establishing a board of advisors to oversee the overall strategic direction of the orphanage, and to begin preliminary planning for a volunteer program.

In 2010, Nexus Abroad raised capital to create volunteer accommodation on the Nectar Home site and will be sending over the first group of volunteers to Ghana at the end of the year. By hosting volunteers on site, Nexus Abroad has ensured that all Volunteer Program fees will flow directly to the orphanage. Nexus Abroad has also worked to solidify the responsibilities of the board of advisors whom are due to hold their inaugural meeting later this year.

Looking forward, Nexus hopes to employ a similar model with the Dhad medical clinic in India and the Guardian Angel foundation in the Philippines, thereby creating a network of global social organisations.

Nexus Abroad demonstrates the University of Melbourne SIFE's commitment to driving social change through empowering those in disadvantaged communities and acknowledges our responsibility, as global citizens, to strive for a more sustainable and just world.



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SWITCHED-ON ENTERPRISES

Switched-on Enterprises (SOE) drives societal change through assisting social enterprises to run a sustainable business model, allowing them to increase their capacity to better empower disadvantaged members of the community. The SOE team provides business-consulting services to non-profit organisations, many of who often struggle with the business aspects of their initiatives.

Knowledge is transferred from student consultants to the social enterprise through a number of platforms such as interactive workshops. Various areas of business operations are covered including financial record keeping, pricing, budgeting, inventory management and marketing. The goal of this project is to improve existing business practices, boost competitiveness, and ultimately, ensure the long-term viability of the social enterprises.

By successfully concluding four engagements in 2010 with Riff Raff Catering (Yooralla), Sorghum Sisters (AMES), Challenge Multimedia and Bayleys on Hampton, SOE has generated a lasting impact on the lives of recently arrived refugees and individuals with physical and mental disabilities.

In 2011, SOE IS expanding its operations and engaging new social enterprises. Currently SOE has established engagements with STREAT, a social enterprise that provides supported pathways to long-term employment in the hospitality industry for homeless youth, and Learner Drivers, an AMES operated local driving school that assists disadvantaged members of the community to attain their driver's license, thereby maximising their prospects for employment.

Through these continuing engagements, SOE is actively working to minimise social inequalities through empowering people and inspiring action, one student-led initiative at a time.



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STREET STORIES

Street Stories is a not-for-profit social enterprise that will conduct walking tours of Melbourne led by people from homeless backgrounds. The tours will be marketed to members of the public, with all profits from ticket sales going directly to the tour guides involved.

The project aims not only to provide much needed financial assistance to people who are or have recently experienced homelessness, but also create an opportunity for guides to reconnect with the wider community by sharing their stories and experiences of Melbourne. In turn, the project hopes to foster greater interest and awareness of the varied and systemic causes of homelessness amongst University of Melbourne students and members of the community alike.

A central goal of Street Stories is to facilitate greater interaction between students, the general public and the homeless community. SIFE believes that the best way to break down persistent stereotypes around homelessness is to put a face to the name – to promote meaningful and personal relationships between people who, though they may come from diverse backgrounds, are ultimately part of the same community.

Street Stories will initially take the form of a three-week pilot program run in conjunction with the Melbourne Fringe Festival, September – October 2011. At this stage, the plan is to conduct 3-6 walking tours per week catering to approximately 15 people per tour. The tours will be marketed to University of Melbourne students and staff as well as members of the general public.

Street Stories is bringing about a walking tour with a difference, giving Melbournians the chance to see their city in a new light as they walk in the footsteps of the guides and hear their unique stories.



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IMPRINT

IMPRINT works to encourage the growth of stronger and safer communities in lower socio-economic areas of Melbourne. This is done through creating positive public spaces that will encourage the building of community and discourage negative social trends such as crime.

The key elements of the project include: local resident engagement in revitalising the space; a partnership model involving community organisations, government, small businesses and large corporations all contributing to delivering urban renewal; and a design competition in a third year urban design subject at The University of Melbourne.

IMPRINT is delivering this community project through a partnership with the Moreland City Council in Melbourne's inner North. Working with the Council, IMPRINT has identified two key public spaces - a park in Belair Ave Glenroy and around Brunswick railway station.

Research performed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that adults who reside in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage personally experience more crime and feel more unsafe compared to adults who reside in less disadvantaged suburbs. IMPRINT is assisting Councils in these lower socio-economic regions to provide an urban environment that is pleasant, builds community, discourages crime and makes people feel safe. Environmentally, revitalising public spaces will allow for the creation of more green spaces and the implementation of the latest sustainable design conceptions.

IMPRINT demonstrates the University of Melbourne SIFE's commitment to driving social change in local communities across Melbourne by encouraging residents to take ownership of the spaces around their neighbourhood and transform them into pleasant and safe public places.