



2023 and Beyond

Letter from our CEO

For the past 15 years, Student Hubs has worked in partnership with students, universities, and community organisations to deliver social action activities which not only create meaningful impact for students and communities across the academic year, but which also develop a new generation of graduate leaders who can create lasting impact in the future.

Our activities are place-based, with a focus on deeply understanding the needs of the students and communities who engage with our activities and participate within them. As a result, our expertise lies within crafting student opportunities which support university students to build their confidence, develop their skills and experiences, and enhance their belonging, wellbeing, and university experience, whilst listening to and understanding the social and environmental issues of the community they engage and support within these opportunities.

The higher education landscape has changed dramatically in the past five years, and so have the needs of students and the focus of providers during this time. To meet both the needs of students and our university partners, Student Hubs' model of partnerships is changing. We want to be more agile in our approach, and scaffold support for a range of interventions to meet an institution's strategic ambitions, budget needs, timescales, and plans for growth.

From smaller institutions identifying where to start on their civic journey, to institutions who have been delivering fantastic work and want support to pilot new initiatives, our **Kickstart, Build, Embed framework** looks at how Student Hubs can provide support at every stage of your journey.



Simran Dhanjal-Field

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Over the past 15 years we've worked with...



20,000+ students participating in social action activities



100,000+ students attending training, events & conferences



16,000+ community participants & 1,200+ community partners

Our work has been informed and funded by numerous organisations, including:

GENERATION CHANGE

step up to serve

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED

SPORT ENGLAND

COMMUNITY FUND

Over the past five years, we delivered activities in partnership with:

NET positive FUTURES

Wales Cymru
The Open University Y Brifysgol Agored

Kingston University London

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

University of BRISTOL

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM

University of Southampton

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

YOUTH OPTIONS

Our Strategic Partners and Funders:

Pears Foundation

COMMUNITY FUND

upp Foundation

Garfield Weston FOUNDATION

Allow us to reintroduce ourselves: we're Student Hubs, and for the past 15 years we've delivered high-quality social action activities for university students.

OUR VISION

a society in which **every student** participates in **social and environmental challenges** during their education, supporting them to become **active citizens for life**

OUR MISSION

to **mainstream student social action** within higher education



Being an **active citizen** is important as it supports our sense of purpose and belonging in the world. To us, being an active citizen means that students and graduates feel they can imagine a future that is better than it is now, and that they are equipped with the 'skills for life' to play an active part in designing that future. 'Skills for life' are the core competencies to enact change, and they include skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, and resilience, along with confidence and a strong sense of belonging.

We know the best way to achieve all of this is by **working in partnership** with universities. Universities are fundamental in making this happen. They represent a transformational time and space in a student's life, when they are primed and open to new ideas, connecting with peers at a similar stage as them, and are in a safe environment where they can try things with less pressure and fail with a safety net. Universities play a key role in shaping what these experiences look like, what's available, and how a student might engage with them.



Our Activities



Skilled Placements

Supporting students to harness their skills and act as consultants, these activities champion interdisciplinary collaboration

Read more about the [Social Innovation Programme at the University of Bristol](#)



Community Engaged Learning

Bringing the community into academic teaching, supporting all students to engage with social action

Read more about the [BA Graphic Design Exhibition at Kingston University](#)



Structured Volunteering

Formal opportunities designed in partnership with local organisations, focusing on relationships and insight into social challenges

Read more about the [our flagship programme, Schools Plus](#)



Workshops and Events

Centering student voice and community engagement through skill sharing and research activities

Read more about the [One Community Forum held at University College Birmingham](#)



Case Study: Student

On skills for life

"Initially I felt nervous...but soon found my feet and the more comfortable I felt, the more myself and the girls could open up to one another and make the club as beneficial to everyone as possible. I feel more confident in my ability to be a leader and to communicate with those around me"

On confidence

"My involvement with the Hub this year inspired me to run for a role on the committee... If you had told me a year ago that I would be standing up making a speech as to why I could be good for the role and what I have to offer I would have laughed, but due to the Hub I felt comfortable and confident in giving the speech and confident that I had more to offer to the Hub."

On wellbeing

"[The Hub] has really connected me to the local community as I feel I have learned more about the people that live here, the challenges they face and the support they may need."

"My involvement has impacted my mental wellbeing as I feel so supported and able to communicate with those in the Hub as well as the teachers I have connected to."

On critical engagement

"I had limited understanding of the issue prior to volunteering with the Hub, whereas now I feel like I know a lot more about the community and its needs and how everyone can get involved and make a difference."

On university experience

"The Hub has massively impacted my experience at university as I have met so many amazing people and made so many new friends... I think the project has been so positive and added so much joy to my university life."

Lydia Seed,
Schools Plus Volunteer,
Sociology at University at Southampton

"I went to [a local primary school] to lead an after school club with a handful of Year 6 girls that needed support in their transition to secondary school... When I was in Year 6 I remembered how nervous I was to go into secondary school and I recognise how I too could have benefited from a club like this one"



83% of students agreed participating improved their ability to adapt and overcome challenges (**resilience**) and **81%** agreed that it improved their ability to work with others to make change (**teamwork**)



88% of students agreed participating improved their **confidence** in approaching challenges



78% of students agreed that participating enhanced their **wellbeing**, **68%** agreed they felt a **sense of belonging** in their communities, and **91%** felt they had been introduced to people they otherwise wouldn't have met



89% of students felt they had an increased **understanding of social issues**; **86%** were more likely to do something to tackle them



85% of students agreed participating **enhanced their university experience**

Model of delivery: Working with us



Spark change through training and workshops for students, staff, and social impact organisations - **a quick way to offer something new and see our approach in action.**

Research your communities through small projects resulting in key recommendations for your next steps - **great for adding capacity and expertise to projects.**

Kickstart student and community engagement through medium term projects, including one-off events and activities - **ideal for piloting new initiatives.**

Build upon learnings and existing engagement through large projects delivering social action activities for 1-2 terms - **great to see how a Student Hubs activity could enhance your own offering.**

Embed social action through time-limited Hubs delivering targeted activities at your institution across 3 years - **ideal for delivering on key strategic objectives and building robust, resilient social action activities.**

Case Study: Embed

**Kingston
University
London**

From 2014-2023, Kingston Hub sat within the Careers and Employability team at Kingston University, primarily delivering Community Engaged Learning opportunities which are embedded within the teaching and learning curriculum. We also delivered a discrete range of volunteering projects working with the local community.

Our partnership supported:

- The Careers team, working with 600+ students a year to further the University's aim of making employability experiences accessible and embedded in the university curriculum;
- Academics at Kingston University, with our team using their community expertise to facilitate community partnerships which meet assessment and learning goals across all faculties of the university;
- The Kingston community, providing opportunities to engage with students through tutoring, mentoring, and other activities;
- Students at Kingston University, including our committee of student leaders who receive bespoke training.

“The opportunities Student Hubs creates for students and graduates [are] unusual. In building their partnerships they get under the skin of the institution and understand it, rather than having a one-size-fits-all model. The values of Student Hubs' work and organisation are shared in aligning with the university's values, and your team lives the values in the work they deliver.

Lots of institutions may want a strategy aligning with civic engagement or volunteering, they may need to do something in these areas and don't know where to start, and that's where Student Hubs has a compelling offer. They can help and they do this; this is their space and they know how to get something off the ground, and they can help grow it. If you want something self-contained, they can help. If you don't have the institutional support, they can help get something started.

Ali Orr, Director of Student Development at Kingston University



What we do

ACTIVITIES

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

OUTCOMES

Students

Learn about issues, and themselves

Connect with each other and their communities

Do something to tackle challenges within the framework of our activities

In an environment that is...

Supportive of wellbeing, reflection, and learning

Inclusive, to truly mainstream student social action

Empowering, offering a safe space to lead and grow

And develop their...

Critical engagement with social issues

Wellbeing and sense of belonging

Skills for life, including confidence, leadership, resilience, and teamwork

Student experience within higher education

Communities

Work with Student Hubs and university students through structured volunteering, skilled placements, and in-curricular projects

In a way that is...

Supportive in approach and communication

Collaborative and co-designed

Tailored to their needs

And benefit from...

New perspectives, expertise and energy

Added capacity for new and existing work

Community cohesion with an improved connection with the university

Community Participants

Engage with a range of activities supported by student participants building near-to-peer or intergenerational relationships

And feel...

Safe to express themselves and fail

Supported by student participants

Respected without judgement or criticism

Interested and engaged by the activity

Challenged to try new things

Universities

Engage their student bodies and local communities through structured volunteering, skilled placements and in-curricular projects

Which are...

Collaborative across the university

Place-based, engaging the local community

Inclusive, reaching typically underserved student groups

To support institutions to...

Enable wider strategic goals through close collaboration

Add value to student engagement through learn, connect, do

Support civic and social responsibility with added community benefit and new relationships



Why partner with us?

SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY

Our programmes and activities add to your employability and graduate outcomes offer for students, giving them real-world experiences; embedding them within the communities where they may start their graduate careers; and building their skills for life.

DEVELOP & SCALE BEST PRACTICE

Support the professional development of your internal teams through learning from our pilot activities and expertise as practitioners in student and civic engagement, creating foundations for long-term development and scaled student engagement by your internal staff teams.

BE INNOVATORS

Be part of our network of innovators, university partners who are at the forefront of change and impact for their students, communities, and overall practice as institutions.

BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW

Join our pursuit of fostering active citizenship, where through our actions we are building a future in which students and graduates can imagine our society is better than it is now; where we are creating leaders of the future; and building a better world for today, tomorrow and the decades ahead.

“A lot of this research learning is new to us, it strengthens our community offer ... As we develop our own curriculum it's great to explore these projects and feed into the curriculum, and it's important for the direction of the Conservatoire and aligns with our strategic aims and vision. Student Hubs broadens horizons, bring new ideas, and provides capacity in a really important area that helps engage students with civic opportunities.”

James Warrender, Head of Strategic Partnerships & Enterprise at Leeds Conservatoire

Contact us

If you would like to:

Enquire about our
Hub and Project
Partnerships

Book training for
your staff or
students

Find out more
about our network
and what we do



Email: info@studenthubs.org



Website: www.studenthubs.org



Social media: Find us on all
platforms by searching
StudentHubs



Partner Newsletter:
Click or scan the
QR code

