

Social enterprise: it's a

World

of opportunity ●



Most people think that if we want to change the world, only large companies can make big steps.

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We are convinced that a better future will be fuelled by the strength of millions of communities.

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Because there is nothing more powerful than a determined social entrepreneur with a warm heart, a clear goal, and buckets full of self-confidence.

Because passion and purpose are infectious.

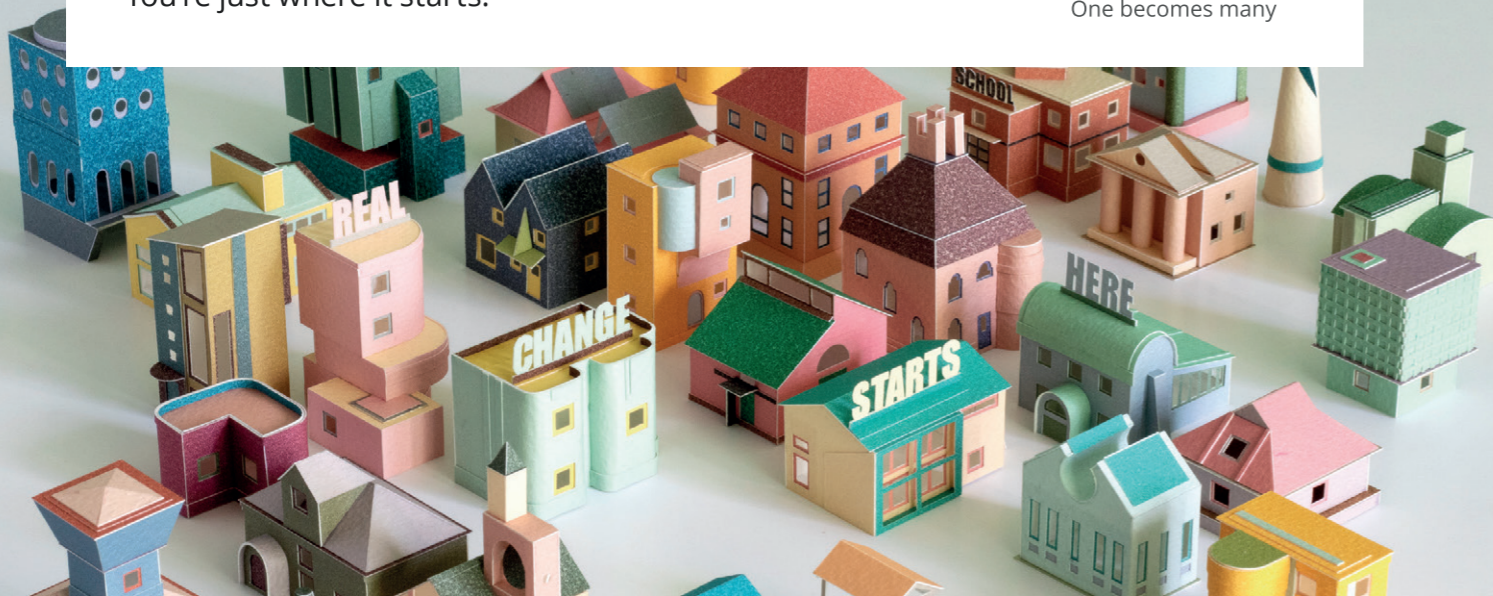
It attracts others and the momentum grows.

One person will become two. Then two becomes twenty and twenty becomes a thousand.

That's the magic happening.

So never think you can't be the one to change the world.

You're just where it starts.



Hello and welcome to the Social Enterprise Academy Schools special edition in partnership with Big Issue.

Here at Social Enterprise Academy, we have been working with changemakers from across the globe since 2004. We believe that now, more than ever, we need social entrepreneurship to tackle the challenges we face as a society. It really is an exciting time to be part of this movement: every day we feel inspired by the people we meet, their passion and ambition to change their communities for the better.

We are working with a record number of adults and young people. And by 2030 we aim to create a fairer society by facilitating 10 million social entrepreneurs globally. We can't do this alone – so it is reassuring to find partners from all sorts of industries who want to impact the communities they are part of in a meaningful way; by developing and mentoring the learners we work with.

This year, our focus is around financial inclusion and social mobility.

The cost of living crisis and the impact this is having on our communities is there for us all to see. I am extremely proud to be able to share with you in the pages ahead some examples from young people around the world, who are making a real impact by creating a social enterprise through participating in Social Enterprise Schools programmes.

I am sure you will be as inspired as I am, and reassured that the future is in safe hands.



Kirsty Lynch,
Head of Social Enterprise
Schools Scotland

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This is the sixth year that Big Issue has worked with Social Enterprise Academy, and we are delighted to once again highlight outstanding social businesses run by school pupils in the UK and internationally. As well as being sold by Big Issue vendors in the regular weekly magazine, this special edition will also be sold by pupils to boost the funds of their school social enterprises, and help to support the important work they do in their communities.

How the Social Enterprise Academy empowers communities to change the world

As we face the huge problems besetting the world today – injustice, inequality, poverty, environmental destruction, climate change – it can be easy to feel overwhelmed, like tackling all of it is impossible... or maybe just above our pay grade. Yet all over the world, millions of social entrepreneurs are taking change into their own hands, plotting a more democratic path to progress.

“Elon Musk isn’t going to solve the world’s problems,” says Social Enterprise Academy (SEA) chief executive Neil McLean. “But millions of social entrepreneurs are, at a community level.”

There are now approximately 10 million social enterprises globally – businesses that, like Big Issue, exist for a social or environmental purpose. They account for 3% of all companies worldwide, according to research published earlier this year by the Schwab Foundation’s Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship.

A global movement

SEA have been at the forefront of that global social enterprise movement for 20 years, working from their base in Edinburgh. The go-to centre for transformational learning, in the last two decades they’ve worked with more than 34,000 adult learners in over 30 countries, empowering them to become agents of change.

Right from the start, they’ve been focused on offering support for three too-often-forgotten skills, says McLean – “development of leadership, development of entrepreneurship, and development of impact measurement”. A big part of their mission has been to make people realise that they are allowed to do something about the problems they see around them.

“We assume far too often that people are not allowed to do anything, because they happen not to have that right qualification,” McLean says. “In a social enterprise context, anybody can address any issue they care about and make a difference. The potential is massive. And we’ve seen some most amazing people do the most amazing things, from the most modest of starts.”

Change agents of the future

With that socially transformative mission at their heart, it is unsurprising that SEA soon expanded to work with the next generation of change agents. Their Social Enterprise Schools programme, a partnership with the Scottish



Lord John Bird, founder of Big Issue, met pupils from Beam Primary School, Barking and Dagenham for last year’s Social Enterprise Academy’s Schools Takeover of the Big Issue outside the House of Lords

Government, launched in 2008 and has now spread across the UK and internationally. This year, it includes schools in Scotland, England, Wales, Malaysia, Australia and Egypt.

From the start, SEA was determined to make space for young social entrepreneurs to follow their own paths. “We thought rather than teaching young people about social enterprise, why don’t we support them and enable them to start their own social enterprise, in their own school, addressing a social issue they care about?” explains McLean. “It’s very much based on that question that they never get asked: what do you care about?”

Engaging with concerns as varied as food poverty, financial literacy, loneliness, deforestation, mental health and sustainability in fashion, there has been no limit to the creativity and ingenuity of the pupils who’ve taken part. They’ve set up school uniform exchanges, nail salons, Fairtrade cafes, mini film festivals and much more – all with profits being ploughed

back towards their social goals. Globally to date, 77,109 young people have had the opportunity to learn new skills and make a difference through setting up a social enterprise.

“We may be young but we are the future leaders of our generation and by taking part in this, we are finding solutions to not just local but also global issues,” says year 10 social entrepreneur Alexis. “Hopefully as a team, a community and a nation, we can change our future for the better.”

As well as benefitting their communities, the young people who take part in Social Enterprise Schools see positive changes in themselves. Their teamwork skills are improved, and their confidence in their own efficacy is boosted – a survey of London schools who participated in 2022/23 found 85% came away believing their ideas make a positive difference, while 87% said they better understood how business works.

It’s a powerful way to equip young people from all sorts of backgrounds with the skills they need to succeed, says McLean, particularly as we continue to face a cost of living crisis and the aftermath of the Covid pandemic. “Both of those things have had massive impacts on communities and young people. And they have disproportionately affected communities that are already impoverished,” he says. “One of the outcomes we think is fundamentally important – and possible – here, is social mobility.”

The big goal

Like the best social entrepreneurs, SEA has continued to innovate since they launched. In 2020, they were named one of the top 100 social enterprises in the UK. In 2022, they joined the World Economic Forum’s Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship, the world’s largest coalition in support of the social innovation sector.

Following two decades of impact, SEA’s plans for the future are equally bold. The Scottish Government has recently asked them to support every school in Scotland to have its own social enterprise. “Which is a challenge”, McLean admits, though with about 58.5% of schools in the country already taking part, they’re very much on their way.

Globally, their aim is even bigger – to create fairer communities by facilitating 10 million social entrepreneurs globally by 2030. McLean feels confident they will do it, and that it will be a big step towards solving the world’s problems. “I believe in social enterprise and I believe in learning,” he explains. “Those two things together, I think, are a massively positive thing for the world.”

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What's new in SEA schools

Social Enterprise Schools projects create innovative and bold social businesses, which fearlessly tackle social issues in their local communities. Here's how they are addressing big issues, from poverty to social isolation, and from mental health challenges to addiction



Ardnamurchan High School, Highlands

It started with music. In 2023, the pupils at Ardnamurchan High School got the opportunity to spend two days in a local recording studio, capturing the sound of their Gaelic-language folk group Sealladh. With 200 freshly minted CDs to shift, they sat down with their teacher Mr MacKay to work out a sales strategy.

"Although there was a shed-load of CDs to sell, in creating a business plan, it was interesting to witness how the definition of 'product' shifted from that of a physical CD to something a little more abstract but profound," says Mr MacKay. "Sealladh and its music became the product."

Coincidentally, not long before the recording sessions, the young band members had attended a Gaelic Careers Day in Inverness, where they met a member of the Social Enterprise Schools team. That chance meeting planted

a seed, so instead of simply splitting the profits from their sales between the band members, they decided to work for a bigger social impact.

"I had no idea what 'social enterprise' meant at first, but it now makes total sense to me," says the band's 15-year-old singer Alasdair MacKay. "I think it's good to put our effort (and the money we've raised) into a project that will hopefully benefit others, not just us."

Located in the village of Strontian, in the north of Scotland, Ardnamurchan High School is in an area with a rich history of

I had no idea what 'social enterprise' meant at first, but now it makes total sense. It's good to benefit others

Sealladh is hitting all the right notes



Gaelic culture and music. The members of Sealladh quickly realised they could use their music to promote Gaelic language and culture, encouraging more people to get involved in that tradition by providing positive role models.

"What started off three years ago as a one-off performance for the school's last day of term talent show has now developed into a fairly established new folk group, which is often invited to play gigs. We've supported well-known bands like Rura, The Paul McKenna Band, Charlie McKerron and Friends, Fras, and the Glenfinnan Cèilidh Band," says Alasdair.

But the best bit of the experience has been breathing new life into the area's indigenous culture. "I like when older members of the community tell us that we're playing and singing songs that they've not heard played for a long time. Particularly in Gaelic, their native language," he explains. "It's nice to be doing something that I enjoy, using a language that I am proud to speak."

It's been amazing to watch the positive feedback roll in from the band's shows – and to sell "lots of CDs" – says Mr MacKay. The school's profile has risen as a centre of music and Gaelic. And for the up-and-coming musicians, it's a first chance to experience being in a band; a first step into making music, giving them the confidence to perform in front of an audience.

"The band's line-up will inevitably change as original band members leave school and move on; and of course, newer and younger pupils will take their place," says Mr MacKay. "But the product – Sealladh – will hopefully remain."

Photos: supplied by Social Enterprise Academy

Bridgend Primary School, West Lothian



If you've ever been out for a walk with a dog, you already know the power of a pet to bring people together. For the young people in Bridgend Primary School, that community connection was a social enterprise opportunity.

Living in West Lothian, in one of Scotland's most deprived areas, they saw their neighbours frequently had pets – but had nowhere nearby to buy the essentials to keep their furry friends happy. The idea for Bridgend Pet Supplies was born.

Stocking treats, accessories for cats and dogs, crocheted pet toys and lots of other useful items, the social business aims to develop the local community. The young entrepreneurs only started in March, but have already won an award at the SEA's Social Enterprise Schools Awards.

"We have made amazing progress. Our enterprise has allowed our pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem," says teacher Steph Stutt. "We held a community event where we invited parents and partners to share our progress and sell our products."

"This has built strong links both with the local community and local businesses who have showed an interest in supporting us."

We have made amazing progress. Our pupils have developed confidence and self-esteem

Success has been a walk in the park for Bridgend Primary School

Photos: Fox & Bear Photography



Mary Russell School, Paisley

Growing numbers of young people are struggling with their mental wellbeing. A recent study found that young people's mental health deteriorated during the pandemic, with increased depression and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

It's an issue pupils at Mary Russell School in Paisley were keen to tackle. At Big Issue, we know that a social enterprise magazine can make real change – and that's just what these pupils did. Their magazine allows fledgeling journalists to talk about issues that matter to them, and profits go towards creating a safe space where their peers can go to regulate their emotions.

"I am proud of seeing how much it has helped people in difficult times," says 15-year-old Amber, head of the project. "The magazine has helped people with their



difficulties and their spelling. I have enjoyed being able to write about my passions, giving the opportunity to my friends to also get involved."

The pupils' passion is "unrivalled" says teacher Greig McLeod, and the safe space is having a huge effect on young people's wellbeing. "The impact has been successful with pupils using it as a space to regulate.

"This is hugely beneficial to the pupils and helps them to have a better experience at school. Pupils have expressed their love for the space and taken ownership of it, adding their own ideas and customising it to their needs."

Ysgol y Castell, Rhuddlan, Denbighshire



It was an eye-opener for pupils at Ysgol y Castell school in Rhuddlan when staff from Ty Golau shelter came to visit. The service in Rhyl provides emergency overnight accommodation and support for people facing homelessness.

"The children recognise that homelessness is an issue for many in our area," says their teacher Gill Mountcastle. "After the visit from staff at Ty Golau, they wanted to help in a practical way."

Eleven-year-old Mitchell was one of the team who came up with the idea of making and selling soap. Money from sales is used to make hygiene care kits, so people have the essentials when they arrive at Ty Golau.

The project was more than just an enjoyable creative endeavour – it was also empowering.

"Making and selling soap was great fun," Mitchell says. "It made me realise that there are issues out there that we can all help with."



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Greatfields School, London

With almost 60% of smokers in England saying they want to quit, according to government figures, electronic cigarettes – or ‘vapes’ – have been lauded as a safer alternative to wean people off the addiction. However, with vapes available in a range of child-friendly flavours such as candyfloss and blue raspberry, they’ve also proven attractive to young people who have never smoked. In 2024, 18% of youths aged 11-17 had tried vaping, according to public health charity Action on Smoking and Health.

The trend concerned the young people of Greatfields School in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, so they created a social business selling hydrovapes, which do not contain nicotine or other harmful substances.

“One of our main goals with this social enterprise was to raise awareness about the vaping epidemic and to get the conversation started about what impact vaping is having on the students in our community,” says teacher Miss T Adeniyi.

“The social enterprise has encouraged students to think about the contents of the vape products they’re inhaling and how much is not revealed to them by the companies who make it.”

Agatha Anta Ferreiro, 15, now sees vaping in a different light. “I have learned about the consequences of vaping and social issues in my community,” she confirms. “Being part of this social enterprise has also allowed me to develop a range of skills including communication, team-working and



Pupils are stepping up to tackle addiction

problem-solving. I have also gained awareness about creating a business.”

It’s been a brilliant way to connect with people who share the same goals, says fellow team member Veerawal Majid, 15. “I’m proud of how far we have come as a team in order to create this enterprise that symbolises our team’s ideas and passion for creating change in our community.”



Great ideas and green fingers are growing connections in Sunderland

products and build relationships with local businesses.”

The Link School Sunderland Legacy Garden has helped its founders connect with other green groups in the area, and their local nursery also uses the garden as a learning space. They make money by selling seed-growing kits, making and selling compost, and growing and selling fruits and vegetables. And profits go back into maintaining the garden.

“I am proud about the fact that we have worked together to do this,” says Aiden, 15.

“The best bit has been harvesting the vegetables when they are ready to eat and meeting new people who have helped us. I want the garden to be a legacy for future pupils so that all can enjoy the things we have enjoyed.”

The Link School, Sunderland

Before The Link School in Sunderland launched their green-fingered social enterprise, the school garden was “a mess and full of rubbish,” admits teacher Gina Nesbitt. But now they have a beautiful – and productive – space to enjoy. Local cafes are even planning to stock food made with the vegetables they grow.

Faced with a lack of green space and difficulty sourcing affordable fruits and vegetables,

the young people had a vision, says Nesbitt. “Students loved their horticultural classes and wanted to turn the school garden into a space where learners, staff and community members could connect and enjoy green space, and learn about horticulture and agriculture.

“They have developed many skills, including how to compost, prepare soil for planting, plant and harvest seeds, how to market

If you are a teacher interested in working with SEA to set up a social enterprise in your school, or a business who would like to join us as a partner, contact us on 0131 243 2670 or schools@socialenterprise.academy

Strength in numbers

Schools against the cost of living crisis

"We are seeing more social enterprises by young people that tackle the issues related to the cost of living crisis, such as food poverty, homelessness, and the increase in costs," says Maya Wenzel, education delivery lead (England and Wales).

But young people involved in Social Enterprise Schools are stepping up to challenge these issues, delivering a huge range of projects with real impact.

Living and learning at the heart of their own communities, young social entrepreneurs are in a unique position to know what's needed.

In Clydebank, a group of young people aged nine to 11 at Carleith Primary School set up Hand in Hand cafe and pantry shop – "a cosy place for the community to come together", providing food and cleaning products at an affordable price. People can buy 10 cleaning or food products for £2.50, or pick up nearly-new uniforms and books.

London's Hilldene Primary School helps families create affordable, nutritious meals with their *Tasty for T£n* cookbook: "With *Tasty for T£n* you get new delicious recipes which cost under £10 for a family of four." All of the recipes are taken from conversations with friends, families and teachers at school.

33.33%
of school social enterprises were set up to tackle the cost of living

My Future, My Success

In the wake of the Covid pandemic, schools have been facing a widely acknowledged crisis in attendance. In the 2023/24 academic year, 20.2% of all pupils in England were persistently absent, meaning they missed around one day of school every fortnight. In Wales it was 29%, in Scotland, 32%. And pupils living in the most deprived areas have lower attendance rates than those in the least deprived areas.

In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, SEA is working with the local authority, NHS, the University of Highlands and Islands and other partners to deliver a pioneering new project. My Future, My Success (MFMS) gives young people who have become disengaged with school an alternative path to get skills and support.

Young people are offered mentoring, access to college courses and the chance to take part in a social enterprise group. It was a game changer for young carer M, who was referred to MFMS from Invergordon Academy in 2022. Her attendance rate was 61%. She was struggling due to anxiety and caring responsibilities for her mother. But with support from MFMS, she was able to start college and attend the social enterprise group at her local youth hub.

By the end of the programme her confidence had grown so much that she set up a market stall at the SEA Awards in Inverness. "Throughout my MFMS journey, I have been able to turn my life around. Now I have a chance at a better future," she says.

'The sky's the limit'

SEA last year launched the James Fairweather Award, celebrating schools

that demonstrate outstanding financial skills. It is named in tribute to James Fairweather, the late CEO of Big Issue Invest and chair of the board of SEA, who sadly died in November 2022 after being diagnosed six months earlier with an aggressive form of brain cancer.

"I think finance needs to be demystified by starting exactly where SEA are starting – small businesses, big dreams," says James's wife Mary Fairweather. "Without even realising it, young people are learning about profit, loss, income, expenditure, which is fantastic at the age of seven. If you inform people, it gives them a better chance to be inspired and really feel that the sky's the limit to their imagination."

Last June Stepps Primary School in North Lanarkshire won the Award for their project Sustainable Sewing – Stepps to Sew the World Together. Inspired by the loss of a much-loved teacher to cancer, the P5 class created bandanas, headbands, medicine, tote and toiletry bags to help people in need. They decorate the bags with different stickers and symbols to promote a positive mental health to help make them feel better during challenging times.

"It is a lovely part of Jamie's legacy," Mary continues. "Every time I go to an SEA awards ceremony, I truly walk away thinking the future is safe in these children's hands."



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Going global to reach a bold goal

Social Enterprise Academy has a bold goal – to work with 10 million changemakers across the world. “When you are aspiring to those sorts of numbers, the international work that we deliver is incredibly important,” says Jess Kemp, SEA’s international partnerships manager. At the heart of those ambitions are the Social Enterprise Schools projects.

“By giving young people the opportunity to explore the social issue they want to address, they develop this burning desire to do something good in the world,” adds Kemp. “We have seen this ring true – loudly! – with young people genuinely taking the lead on solving issues that are close to their hearts. It’s so important for us to be able to see that impact spreading across the globe, as part of our mission to support social entrepreneurs wherever we may find them.”

Young people are ideally placed to identify what matters in their own communities, and to

come up with innovative and enormously varied solutions. “Our schools projects are amazingly diverse. From upcycling fashion projects in the UK, to a fascinating project in Malaysia taking old cooking oil and creating bespoke candles, there really are a wide variety of social enterprises,” says Kemp.

So far, as well as UK-based pupils, groups from schools in Australia, Egypt, Malawi, Malaysia and South Africa have been part of Social Enterprise Academy’s work. But SEA is by no means resting on its laurels. The aim is to add more country partners to their network, explains Kemp.

“For Social Enterprise Academy, diversity is key – the more diverse the network, the richer the conversation and learning is for us all. By creating a network where people can learn, encourage and help to broaden each other’s understanding of how social issues impact others, we can help develop their compassion and active global citizenship.”

Here we round up some recent projects across the international network of Social Enterprise Schools.

Malaysia

About 160 miles south east of Kuala Lumpur, in the town of Parit Raja, a group of Malaysian school children had an idea. What if they could repurpose used oil from their canteen operator to craft eco-friendly soaps and candles? And what if they could use the money they made from selling those soaps and candles to help families in need in their community?

This became Team Herofinity’s successful social enterprise. By applying financial literacy skills, the young people from Sekolah Kebangsaan Parit Raja [National School Parit Raja] were able to generate over RM 2,800 [about £500] in revenue.

Their profits were used to purchase an oil trap to collect raw materials and prevent clogged drains in their school, and similar equipment for a nearby community restaurant.

In 2023, the team represented their country in the SEA’s International Dragon’s Den. Competing in their second language against teams from Egypt, England and Scotland – many of whom were older and most of whom were native English speakers – they came away with the Best Product Award.

Run by SEA’s local partner FINCO, the largest collective impact initiative for corporate social responsibility in Malaysia, Good SENS (Social Enterprise Network for Schools) was developed to address low financial literacy skills among primary school students. Last year was a bumper year for the programme. SK Parit Raja was just one of 43 schools that took part, with 382 students starting 86 social enterprises, and collectively generating a revenue of over RM 75,000 [more than £13k]. Of students who took part, 78.3% said they had an increased understanding of financial literacy concepts.

Australia

In March 2023, the tiny island nation of Vanuatu in the South Pacific was hit by two destructive cyclones in three days. Communities were left reeling. Houses were destroyed and there was serious damage to critical infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals. More than 250,000 people were affected.

The young people in year 11 of Mallacoota P-12 College were determined to help. Living in a small coastal town on Australia’s ‘Wilderness Coast’, they had a close relationship to the sea and thought they could harness that to raise money to help young people who were struggling in the wake of the natural disaster across the water.

Tapping into the local market of surfers, they created Coota Sun Surf Screen, a sun protection product made entirely from natural ingredients. “The students asked the local surf shop if they could set up a display stand to sell it to local surfers and tourists,” says their teacher Rory. “Our local Mallacoota community has Vanuatuans who come to do seasonal work each

Students from Malaysia, Australia and Egypt show their social business ingenuity



We have learned lots about running a business and what it takes to launch a product and make sales

year, so it was great to support a cause that had an impact on their home country.”

Ruben and Tristan, two of the young entrepreneurs, say they are proud to have made a good product that had a valuable social impact. “Our social enterprise journey has shown us the value of collaboration,” they confirm. “We have learned lots about running a business and what it takes to launch a product and make sales.”

Social Enterprise Schools in Australia is delivered by the team at ACRE (Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship), a social enterprise that champions entrepreneurship to rejuvenate rural communities, in partnership with SEA. More than 3,700 young people in Australia have engaged with the programme.

Egypt

Nine-year-old Egyptian social entrepreneur Laila’s earrings are not just an attractive accessory: made from water bottle caps, her Hyper-rings also reduce plastic waste. Her innovative approach combines sustainability with creative design and craftsmanship.

Two 12-year-old changemakers, Pearla and Lamar, create planting kits to promote tree planting and green spaces. Their Sprouts of Joy initiative has transformed neglected areas into vibrant green spaces, educated their community on sustainable gardening, and demonstrated that young people can lead impactful environmental change.

In total 447 students have taken part in the Social Enterprise Schools programme run by SEA Egypt since 2020. They’ve tackled issues including access to education for people from less privileged backgrounds, environmental impacts, recycling plastics, cultural and heritage awareness, developing life skills, and health and wellbeing.

SEA Egypt aims to help more young people like Laila, Pearla and Lamar, working to expand the schools programme with more free places for young learners.

How a social enterprise changed my life

In the 17 years since Social Enterprise Scotland launched its very first projects in schools, the programme has touched thousands of lives. Across seven countries, more than 77,000 young people have been involved in setting up social enterprises, learning valuable skills and making a real difference in their communities. These are just two of those life-changing stories

'The opportunity forced me out of my shell'

Jamie Rankine was a shy primary seven pupil when her teacher first encouraged her to get involved with Social Enterprise Schools. "I didn't really speak to many people. I was really quiet," she remembers.

Pushed out of her comfort zone, 10-year-old Jamie found the role a challenge, but flourished as part of the team of four young social entrepreneurs at Our Lady of Peace in Linwood, just outside Glasgow.

The school serves an area ranked among the most deprived places in the country by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Seeing that many of their peers struggled to afford school essentials, the pupils set up a business to recycle good-quality, second-hand uniforms and sell them on at an affordable price. Their social enterprise quickly



(Above) Jamie, aged 10; (below) now a teacher at her old school



became a lifeline for many families. "It was heartbreaking to see the same families coming back, but at the same time it was good that the support was there. And we could see it was actually making a difference," says Jamie.

The business was also a game-changer for young Jamie, teaching her "invaluable" financial skills "that I can use in real life", and enhancing her self-belief. "That opportunity forced me out of my shell," she says. "Without it I wouldn't be as confident as I am now."

As Jamie went through secondary school, that confidence boost stood her in good stead to face all the new challenges. And when the time came to decide on a career path, she knew she wanted to hold on to that same sense of purpose she'd had through social enterprise. "Without even noticing at the time," she says, "it had been instilled in me that I wanted to do something that was purposeful to other people's lives and helping other people."

Now 24, Jamie has found that social motivation in returning to where it all began. She is now a teacher at her old primary school and is leading a whole new generation to start their own social enterprises. This year, her pupils started a Peace Pantry where families can access foods and household items at a more affordable price.

"The cost of living crisis is getting worse," she says. "Over the years, we've seen a difference – more families need help now."

Aware of how hard it can be to ask for that help, the young people have developed an innovative anonymous "click and collect" system, whereby people can make their orders online and then pick up their goods without having to come face to face with anyone. "It's not stigmatised. It's about dignity. And that was really derived from the kids," Jamie says.

Jamie's class have gone on to present their project at a Social Enterprise Academy Dragon's Den event in Paisley and attend the SEA Schools Awards in Edinburgh. It has all had a huge impact in broadening their horizons, she says, particularly since many of them had never been out of their own area.

"The children have benefitted so much," she adds. "Now they can actually see what they can achieve.

They feel like they're more capable. They might have thought there are limits to what they can do. But they can do a lot more."



'My social enterprise journey is far from over'

Amelia McKibbin's social enterprise journey started in 2018, when she was just eight years old. A primary five pupil at St Joseph's Primary School in Glasgow, she and her classmates created a business that literally knitted their community together.

"We wanted to tackle loneliness in the community, specifically with elderly people," she says. "So we started to learn how to knit with one of our teachers. We got this really chunky wool and we would hand-knit these big chunky blankets. And then we would sell them. It was brilliant. So much fun!"

With the money they made, the young pupils set up a cross-generational befriending and skills-sharing project. They were keen to learn from the elder generation, "so if they knew how

to knit or crochet or something, they would teach that to us. And then we'd go back to our class and teach them."

Amelia became good friends with an older woman named Salma. "She actually told me that she had two sons, and her two sons had died. It was really sad," says Amelia.

"She was like, 'I so love you coming in to meet me because I don't really get any visitors.' That obviously just broke my heart.

"But she was so lovely. She told me all about her life in Glasgow and her childhood. We got to share that. It made me really appreciate my relationship with my nana and that time I had with her."

Amelia came away with a whole set of life lessons – importantly, she says, Salma helped teach her "how to be kind, and the importance of that". But the exchange was certainly not just one way.

"There were a lot of people her age, who I think definitely looked down on our generation," Amelia recalls.

"I think it also opened up a lot of their eyes. Whenever we were so interested in what they had to say, I think their perspective definitely changed."

The project went on to inspire a flowering of social enterprise in St Joseph's that continues to this day. They've even had Social Enterprise Schools visitors come from as far away as Africa and South America to learn from their experiences.

Amelia is now 15, about to start fifth year in high school and already looking ahead to her future plans. "My social enterprise journey is definitely far from being over," she says. "I would like to set up my own social enterprise."

A fan of the dance fitness programme Zumba, Amelia says she'd love to harness that to fuel a social enterprise benefitting young women. "Going into high school, I've definitely noticed the social issues around teenage girls – body issues, self-confidence and all that. I mean, I've been through that a little bit. But also, I've seen that in lots of other girls."

Many of them could use a "big sister" figure to help guide them through those tough years, she says. "I've got three big sisters, and I'd really like to do that for someone else.

"Just be someone who's been through it and can give advice. Because it's a really hard time coming into high school and you're just trying to figure it out."



(Above) Amelia today; (below) with her friend, Salma



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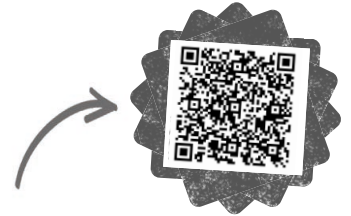
Help us create the next generation of social entrepreneurs!



The stories we have featured from around the world in this Social Enterprise Schools special supplement to The Big Issue show what young social entrepreneurs of the future can achieve with the right inspiration, support and encouragement.

It also shows how communities and businesses can benefit from linking up with amazing creative projects like the ones highlighted here.

Social Enterprise Schools is growing across the UK and further afield. If you are interested in becoming part of our programme on behalf of a business, local authority or other community organisation, we would love to hear from you.



We partner with organisations in a number of ways:

1 Volunteering opportunities for employees.

We use the expertise of partners to support our young social entrepreneurs through mentoring or as a Dragon at one of our Dragons' Den ceremonies, where we offer feedback and funding to teams.

2 Bringing Social Enterprise Schools to your local area.

We can deliver the Social Enterprise Schools programme in a school near you! For example, in your local authority area, in a multi-academy trust or near your office.

3 Sponsoring events.

We work with partners to deliver a range of events with young people across the year, including Dragons' Den ceremonies, our Big Issue Launch Event and our End of Year Awards.



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