



## Conference Summary Paper

**Social Enterprise Mark CIC (SEM CIC) and Cambio: House of Social Change (Cambio) co-facilitated this university focused collaboration conference to bring together the higher education sector and social enterprises to examine The Golden Thread of embedding social enterprise across our higher education institutions.**

The agenda was crafted to provide both a strategic view and practical learning from within a university context. We heard from wide ranging experts and diverse perspectives including those who are leading ESG best practice, looking to lever the benefits of social enterprise status, continually improve student engagement, connect with their local communities, explore supply chain opportunities and showcase HEIs as 'anchor institutions' and employers of choice.

**CONFERENCE DATE:** Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**CONFERENCE LOCATION:** The Pavilion, University of Westminster

We were delighted that this in-person event has been commended by our attendees and would like to include some brief feedback received so far:

***"Absolutely outstanding conference yesterday... making many new connections!"***

***"Really energetic discussion on our table!"***

***"Excellent event.... Great speakers with short talks, lots of networking... Superb hospitality."***

***"A very successful and enjoyable day!"***

***"I really enjoyed the conference yesterday. Lovely to see people in person again and get stuck into really important discussions."***

***"It was a real pleasure to be part of a such a great event."***

With our thanks to all who attended, hosted, spoke, facilitated, contributed, connected and asked questions throughout the day,

**Lucy Findlay, [Social Enterprise Mark CIC](#)**

**Peter Ptashko, [Cambio: House of Social Change](#)**

# Key Highlights

## CO-HOSTS

### **LUCY FINDLAY, Managing Director, Social Enterprise Mark CIC**

- Many universities now recognise their legal, cultural and operational, structures as being those of [social enterprises](#).
- SEM CIC has growing numbers of accredited social enterprises from within the university and HEI sector, including a number that have been evaluated and accredited as [Gold Mark Holders](#) demonstrating excellence and best practice across their organisations.
- The HEI Network facilitated by SEM CIC provides a sector-led forum for universities and HEIs to explore key issues and opportunities for the Education Sector around the Social Enterprise space.

### **PETER PTASHKO, Founder, Cambio: House of Social Change**

- Led the delivery of the original [UnLtd](#) sponsored 'SEE Change' programme championing system development and knowledge exchange over 10 years to 100 English universities, supported and funded by the then HEFCE. Over 5,000 social entrepreneurs were funded and towards £10m of investment secured.
- Continuing support to the HEI sector through the delivery of Cambio's own change management, leadership development and social enterprise coaching and capacity-building.
- SEE Change itself re-launched in 2020 with a cross-section of universities involved, to continue framing the importance of social value and the UN Sustainable Development Goals squarely within universities, leading to this wider collaboration and partnership in-person in Spring 2022.

## KEYNOTE

### **Dr PETER BONFIELD, Vice Chancellor, University of Westminster**

- 21,500 students but everyone is an individual.
- Social justice is part of the University's culture and DNA.
- 1 in 5 students go on to set up their own business, many focus on having a 'social purpose'.
- [SDG](#) alignment also an important part of both university culture and strategic priorities.
- Clarity on the benefits and implementation across the University of being Social Enterprise Gold Mark accredited including quality standards, evidencing social impact, robust, governance, staff and student engagement.
- Development of the London Social Enterprise Hub (due 2024), further enhancement of the Westminster Enterprise Network and a new 'Bringing the Outside In' project. *See GOLDEN NUGGETS for further details.*

## PANEL

ED HUGHES, Director Insight & Engagement – Research England, UKRI

KATE WELCH, Chief Executive, Social Enterprise Acumen

DIANA BEECH, Chief Executive Officer, London Higher

JULIUS IBRAHIM, Founder, Second Shot Coffee

LUCY FINDLAY, Managing Director, Social Enterprise Mark CIC

### *Facilitated questions:*

- **Do you have any specific advice or recommendations on how to engage and promote the social enterprise agenda given current capacity issues, in a rapidly changing world?**
  - ⇒ DIANA: make them good, interesting, engaging for students and focused ‘on’ students.
  - ⇒ KATE: universities need to have a strong understanding of social enterprise.
  - ⇒ LUCY: the ‘golden thread’ is that social enterprise needs to be embedded throughout the university institution.
  - ⇒ ED: students should be engaged to help design the social enterprise activity and culture within the university setting.
  - ⇒ JULIUS: articulate the value students have/will gain by participating in social enterprise activity ie. [Enactus](#) programme.
- **What are your recommendations on how to make things smoother for student entrepreneurs?**
  - ⇒ KATE: We must understand that an entrepreneur is a person, as well as being a business.
  - ⇒ LUCY: Having the funding for social entrepreneurs/enterprises is important.
  - ⇒ DIANA: Planting the seeds of social entrepreneurship early but having them in ‘different pots’.
  - ⇒ ED: It’s important for students to connect with social entrepreneurs and to develop that relationship.
  - ⇒ KATE: Build relationships within universities and social enterprises – [LinkedIn](#) is a powerful tool for this too.
  - ⇒ JULIUS: Place students at the heart of decision-making, not just in meetings.
- **How do we increase the social procurement opportunities and barriers in amongst competing priorities for HEIs?**
  - ⇒ DIANA: Ethics are very important to universities both culturally and for their students, for example work is being done to increase the number of food sustainable options available at different member universities. Therefore, sustainable food catering is a keyway to allow increased social procurement and increase the supply chain opportunities for social enterprises.
  - ⇒ KATE: Social enterprises can/need to come together (form consortia as an option) to respond to demands of university procurement.
  - ⇒ LUCY: Universities need to consider how they procure to ensure social value is achieved – ie. large catering contracts are not the best way to procure local healthy good quality food.

- **General recommendations made included:**

- ⇒ **Student-led.** Students want to make a difference. It is very important for students to be able articulate their social values and for universities to help make a difference
- ⇒ **Strong Leaders.** Universities can and should lead within their communities as part of their values base and civic role. As ‘anchor institutions’ universities can/should demonstrate their responsibility to help nurture social enterprises and support/action build back better (people and planet first).
- ⇒ **Storytelling and sharing Case Studies.** Stressing the importance of role models and peer leaders that can tell and share their stories.
- ⇒ **Partnerships and collaborations.** Universities can and should collaborate more on this agenda, within and outside their own regions where some good work is already underway.

## **ROUNDTABLES**

### **1. Gaining strategic and leadership buy-in within your university. LINDA DREW, Social Enterprise Mark CIC**

- ⇒ Barriers include:
  - Strategic focus of the university ie. Staff, time, change management.
  - Common understanding of language and communication around the term ‘social enterprise’ and what it means.
- ⇒ Opportunities include:
  - Being able to go straight to students.
  - Having a ‘problem solving’ mindset.
  - Using PR and social media to develop local (social enterprise) networks.
  - Storytelling: compelling, impactful, include stakeholders, making it relevant to an internal audience as well as an external audience.

### **2. How social enterprises can gain access and engage with universities. ROBIN BURGESS, Northampton Hope Enterprises**

- ⇒ A ‘duty and need’ for universities to ‘sort itself out’ ie. Engage with the sector.
- ⇒ There is potential for multi-faceted opportunities.
- ⇒ Procurement function in universities is often isolated function, it needs to be easier to access and talk to procurement from a social enterprise perspective.
- ⇒ Recognise the value of developing ‘true partnership’ approaches ie. Social enterprises have much to offer universities.
- ⇒ As ‘Civic Universities’ what can we do, how can we do more? CIVIC UNIVERSITY NETWORK: [Civic University Network – Maximising the civic impact of universities in their place](#)

### **3. Best practice approaches to student enterprise engagement. MARIAMA NJIE-CEESAY, CUSE Launch**

- ⇒ Reduce/remove the jargon for students.
- ⇒ Focus on ‘mission and value’ to engage students.
- ⇒ Understand what students need, and want, ie. ask them.
- ⇒ Work on a co-creation model involving students (do with, not ‘done to’).
- ⇒ Maintain engagement, be consistent.

- ⇒ Champion student engagement with social enterprise and entrepreneurship from the top ie. Vice Chancellor level.
- ⇒ Build networks and engage employability approaches to 'make it real'.
- ⇒ Use the Enactus programme (tried and tested to work for students – example JULIUS IBRAHIM, Second Shot Coffee on panel).
- ⇒ Have University Advisors that know about and can talk about social enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- ⇒ Student Societies can be good engagement platforms to lever.
- ⇒ Micro-credentials and digital badge credits are positive student engagement platforms.

#### 4. Identifying social procurement opportunities for, and with, HEIs. NICHOLA McAVOY, Social Enterprise UK

- ⇒ CHALLENGE TO CONSIDER: Give contracts to social enterprises, why is it so hard?
- ⇒ BARRIERS: Large organisations move slowly and can be hard to change incumbent systems and processes.
- ⇒ Can be hard for large organisations to change suppliers and gain/have proven trust/credibility with new 'different' suppliers.
- ⇒ Policy change needed: can 1<sup>st</sup> tier suppliers be encouraged/asked to engage social enterprise suppliers as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier providers of goods and/or service.
- ⇒ Needs top level champion ie. Head of Procurement. EXAMPLE: Kings College London lead in social procurement strategy, policy, implementation [King's College London \(kcl.ac.uk\)](https://www.kcl.ac.uk)
- ⇒ Consider changing procurement policy to include 10% spend with social enterprises (or similar). EXAMPLE: Catering
- ⇒ Break contracts down into smaller lots to be more accessible for small and micro businesses including social enterprises.

## Golden Nuggets

**University of Westminster** recently secured the [Social Enterprise Gold Mark](#) for a second year. We are now scaling up our existing social enterprise activities, providing new opportunities for students and colleagues that want to create social ventures and collaborate with organisations with a social and environmental mission. This forms part of the '**Bringing the Outside In**' project, funded by the Quintin Hogg Trust, which focuses on building new collaborations with external organisations to support student and recent graduate employability. **PLEASE CONTACT:** to discuss collaboration, please email [collaborate@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:collaborate@westminster.ac.uk)

We are facilitating opportunities for students and recent graduates from across the university to work with local social enterprises through a new graduate consultancy programme. Alongside this, we will be developing a new strand of social enterprise support through **Westminster Enterprise Network**, to support students to create start-ups with a social purpose. These opportunities will be brought together as part of a bigger programme of activities in our new centre for employability and enterprise at 29 Marylebone Road from Spring 2024. **READ MORE:** [Westminster Enterprise Network | University of Westminster, London](#)

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**London Higher** shared their Civic Map platform at the conference. This is a dynamic project which has been compiled in collaboration with London Higher members to showcase and examine the ways in which London's higher education sector works in partnership with multiple key stakeholders across the city of London.

The map shows the many ways in which the institutions work on, and beyond, the 'traditional campus' environment, for example engaging with the capital's businesses or partnering with healthcare providers to benefit local communities and make a positive difference and identifies 'hotspots' of civic engagement.

**READ MORE:** [Civic Map – London Higher](#)

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**Pioneers Post** have a range of resources designed and relevant to the universities and HEI sector and offers special university subscription packages, including access to in-depth articles, videos and podcasts, as well as special guides and publications, with expert knowledge, insight and inspirational stories from social entrepreneurs on the frontline. Various universities worldwide belong to their partners and benefit greatly from using this premium content in their education programmes. **EMAIL:** <mailto:subs@pioneerspost.com>

Pioneers Post offers additional premium content on their website, such as the special features in their [Impact Library](#), which can be accessed through a subscription.

**EDUCATION RESOURCE DOWNLOAD:** [PPQ#8 - Special Guide.pdf \(pioneerspost.com\)](#)

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**Sharing our appreciation to the following organisations who have supported this collaboration conference:**

[University of Westminster](#) | [CUSE Launch](#) | [Pioneers Post](#)

**Full agenda:**

[SEEchange THE GOLDEN THREAD: embedding social enterprise in universities - Social Enterprise Mark CIC](#)