

## Output 02 “Universities for the society of tomorrow”:

### Summary of the University of Northampton’s Changemaker in the curriculum case studies – How faculties can bring about Social Innovation and change.

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### i. Introduction to the University of Northampton curriculum case studies

In 2013, the University of Northampton (UoN) was identified as the UK's first AshokaU Changemaker campus. The recognition of UoN as a Changemaker campus confirmed the university's commitment to act as a catalyst for positive social change. As the UoN continues its commitment to principles of SI, the focus remains: To embed SI values into the curriculum. In 2014, the UoN's Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT) introduced a project entitled: "Embedding Changemaker into the Curriculum (EmbedCM)". A key focus of the EmbedCM project was to develop ways of sharing good practice among staff and students of the UoN, as the university aims to embed Social Innovation (SI) across teaching and learning.

Following on from the document entitled: 'Introduction to SI in HEIs', it is suggested that once a HEI has **articulated their institutional strategy relating to SI = stage 1**; a second stage of developing SI is to **explore SI practices in learning and teaching = stage two**. The purpose of stage two is to identify, share and celebrate evidence of good practice where SI is already explored in programme curricula.

The following thirteen case study examples summarise how the UoN integrated SI into teaching practices during the 2013-2014 academic year. We hope that by sharing summaries of these case studies we might be able to inspire other HEI staff and students to try their own hand at embodying social innovation and social impact into their own practice and institutions.

Outline of case studies:

**ii. Outline of case studies: How faculties can bring about social innovation and change**

**ii.i. Case study one: “Embedding social innovation and social impact across the disciplines: Attributes for Changemaker”.**

Setting:

Case study one addresses the notion of helping individuals incorporate the principles of SI into education. Six principles to help individuals on their journeys towards SI were identified and are listed in Table one below.

*Table 1. Unifying principles for ‘everyone a Changemaker’ (Adapted from Curtis, 2013)*

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1. Believe in a responsibility to make positive changes in society.
  2. Have the power and resources to make a difference (tangible and intangible).
  3. Take initiative to bring about innovative change, local and systemic.
  4. Work with others to maximise impact, working in groups and networks.
  5. Know and live authentically according to one’s values.
  6. Practice empathy by engaging in another person’s world without judgement.
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Outcomes:

- The principles suggest that it is through the development of an individual’s values, beliefs and actions that their ability to impact positively on social change is formed. If the individuals are at a HEI then of course that will also be an influence on them.

**ii.ii. Case study two: “Exploring social issues through art education”** was led by a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education who aimed to connect contemporary art education with the study of social issues in education and links were identified between primary and higher education.

Setting:

UoN students studying Primary Teacher Education explored social issues through the medium of art with primary school students (aged four to eleven).

**Outcomes:**

- The value of this case study was to investigate ways of associating art teaching and learning, the curriculum and current culture, in order to experience the role of moving towards becoming curriculum Changemakers (Heaton, 2014).
- Students learning to become teachers at the University of Northampton were able to use art in their pedagogical practice to explore social problems, (such as conflict, homelessness, environmental issues), within contemporary culture.
- Exploring such issues within their teaching course at their HEI means that these trainee teachers may go on to incorporate social issues within their pedagogical practice.

**ii.iii. Case study three: “Developing a learning tool for local Police and Community Support Officers”** outlines work the UoN undertook with local Police and Community support Officers (PCSOs) to explore SI and community organising.

**Setting:**

PCSOs were identified as primary agents of change within the community and were involved in one day of fieldwork that took place twice a week over a ten week period. PCSOs were introduced to the local neighbourhood and were asked to: ‘map what you saw’. This process identified problems in the local areas.

**Outcomes:**

- PCSOs engaged with different stakeholders in order to share experiences, perceptions of antisocial behaviours.
- An outcome of the exercise included PCSOs comparing their perspectives with the perspective of members of the public (Curtis, 2014).
- The resulting toolkit (<http://lisptoolkit.weebly.com/>) aims to use intensive engagement between the police and the communities that they police in order to make neighbourhood policing more effective, a journey which by ‘co-production’ aims to lead to improved community safety.

**ii.iv. Case study four: “Leveraging professional expertise and liberating choice for career or personal development”** explored two modules (Critical Issues module and the Business Project module) on the MBA+ programme offered by the Northampton Business School.

**Setting:**

A large amount of students on this programme were distance learners with the majority coming from the British Army.

**Outcomes:**

- Over the course of the programme, students learnt that they could utilise their vast prior knowledge and experience in various areas of social impact.
- Students were able to integrate study into their lives and produce quality work that made a difference to their future careers (Hills, 2014).
- Students were able to draw on experiences from their work in the army to make changes to their units or even to change their careers, with their MBA and business plans already drawn up.
- By acknowledging the wealth and breadth of social experience students joining the course possessed, the course was able to work with students and develop greater choices for career and personal development.

**ii.v. Case study five: “Working with schools and communities: A postgraduate module where students undertake a mental health or well-being intervention in a school or community setting”.**

**Setting:**

The MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (MSc CAMHS) is a programme led by practitioners and academics that considers theory and research in work with children and young people. A core module on the programme entitled: “Working with schools and communities” involves students going out and working with schools or communities to develop mental health or well-being.

**Outcomes:**

- The requirement of the module is for students to plan, design, justify an intervention, based on need and consider ethical issues.
- As a result of the module, students benefit professionally and developmentally and in addition, they bring about positive social change to the related schools or communities (Maunder, Fritz and Callaghan, 2014).

**ii.vi. Case study six: “Positive psychology”** explored the notion of positive psychology<sup>1</sup>, which is a concept that resonates strongly with the Changemaker ideal, in the undergraduate psychology programme.

Setting:

While two positive psychology modules were being offered in years two and three of the degree programme (Psychology of well-being module and Motivation and emotion module), a first year positive psychology module was to be introduced.

Outcomes:

- The purpose of this new module was three fold:
  - One, to contribute to the UoN’s Changemaker vision;
  - Two, to provide students opportunity to study positive psychology in years one, two and three of their degree programme, and;
  - Three, to contribute to students’ future careers and progression (Mitchell, 2014).
- The Psychology team found that the Ashoka U Changemaker values and behaviours fitted really well with the module, with concepts like mindset and the idea of students changing themselves and others through the psychological process.

**ii.vii. Case study seven: “GAMEchanger: a game jam for social innovation education”** was a forty-eight hour creative event, during which time staff and students at the UoN designed games together.

Setting:

The focus of the event was to explore ideas surrounding SI and social impact. The event was used as an opportunity for participants to evaluate Changemaker qualities by asking them to self-report the attributes they developed during the event.

Outcome:

- The aim of the creative team-based event was to gain an understanding of how problem-solving activities may develop students’ development of skills for SI and social impact (Alden Rivers, Armellini, Howe, Simmons, Hendrix, Maxwell and Harris, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Positive Psychology is the scientific study of optimal functioning and well-being, also known as the science of flourishing, happiness, strengths, resilience, positivity and optimism (<http://positivepsychologytraining.co.uk/about/>)

**ii.viii. Case study eight: “Photography and Changemaking”** considered themes around SI and contemporary images-making through community involvement.

Setting:

The BA (Hons) Photography programme currently on offer at UoN encourages students to engage with communities and external opportunities.

Outcomes:

- Students are encouraged to create social impact and to also engage others in and through their work.
- With this in mind, the programme strives to create positive social impact in the community.
- By working in partnerships with community-focused organisations and organisations of shared purpose, students raise their awareness of social issues and develop their understanding of positive social change (Leet, 2014).

**ii.ix. Case study nine: “Embedding Changemaker values within a post-graduate part-time module for teachers”** focused on the Master’s degree in Education, and specifically the Dissertation module.

Setting:

The Master’s programme took place typically after-hours (5pm to 8pm) and students often lacked connection to the rest of the academic community.

Outcomes:

- Staff sought to address these issues and approached this in several ways: staff changed the design of the module to create more class time; they developed an online dedicated web area; staff offered stronger links between theory and practice and invited speakers from other areas of the academic community.
- Programme staff focused on embedding Changemaker principles within the module to promote and enhance the student experience.
- As a result of embedding Changemaker principles into the programme, students developed their understanding and were able to relate to the Changemaker values that in turn widened their perspectives (Devecchi, Murray and Preece, 2014).

**ii.x. Case study ten: Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton (URB@N):** An institution-wide initiative where students work in partnership with staff on learning and teaching projects explores a bursary scheme that support opportunities for undergraduate students at the UoN to participate in projects that are centred on learning and teaching.

**Setting:**

Students work under the supervision of an academic advisor in the design, development, data collection, analysis and dissemination of the chosen project. On successful completion, students receive a bursary payment of £500.

**Outcomes:**

- The aim of the projects is to enhance the student experience by bringing staff and students together to face educational issues (Maunder, 2014).
- Feedback from staff and students has been very encouraging in terms of developing research skills, staff and student relationships, and providing students with a voice on their student experience.

**ii.xi. Case study eleven: “Changemaker values within the Foundation Degree Learning and Teaching and the development of a Teaching Assistant TeachMeet event”** outlines the Foundation degree in Learning and teaching programme within the School of Education.

**Setting:**

The aim of the programme is to benefit the lives of children and young people by professionally developing support staff and teaching assistants working in educational settings. The values within the programme are aligned to the Changemaker principles and focus on developing socially responsible and aware individuals. Furthermore the programme aims to equip learners with skills and knowledge to positively impact on children and young people (Jones and Edwards, 2014).

**Outcomes:**

- A ‘TeachMeet’ event for teaching assistants was organised at the UoN’s School of Education in May 2014 in order to share practical experiences of teaching and learning and to discuss any challenges.



• The event was successful in bringing together speakers from learning and teaching organisations to discuss how to develop new opportunities for students and to embed Changemaker principles.

**ii.xii. Case study twelve: “Changemaker Plus Enterprise bootcamp”** details an event that was run in July 2014. UoN’s Business school Senior Lecturer, Gill Gourlay, was successfully granted the Innovation Fund that meant she could run the first Changemaker Enterprise bootcamp.

Setting:

Sixth form students (aged approximately sixteen to eighteen) from Northamptonshire took part in a three-day intensive course that introduced the theme of SI, and encouraged the young people to develop solutions to social issues.

Outcomes:

- During the three days, the young people learnt about social enterprise, met social entrepreneurs, and also had the opportunity to meet and discuss their ideas with local business people.
- The bootcamp concluded with presentations to a panel of judges (both from UoN and external contacts) and the young people presented their social impact ideas (Gourlay, 2014).
- The bootcamp provided many students with new knowledge about SI and as a result, many students left with a strong interest in SI and an area for future study.

**ii.xiii. Case study thirteen: “Embedding Changemaker values within the LLB (Hons) and Joint Honours programmes for Law students”** explores some of the activities that Law students engage with that make positive contributions in the community.

Setting:

Students who join the modules: “Law in the community” and “Legal advice in the community” volunteer an average of six hours per week in a local community. On these modules, students explore legal and social issues in a practical context.

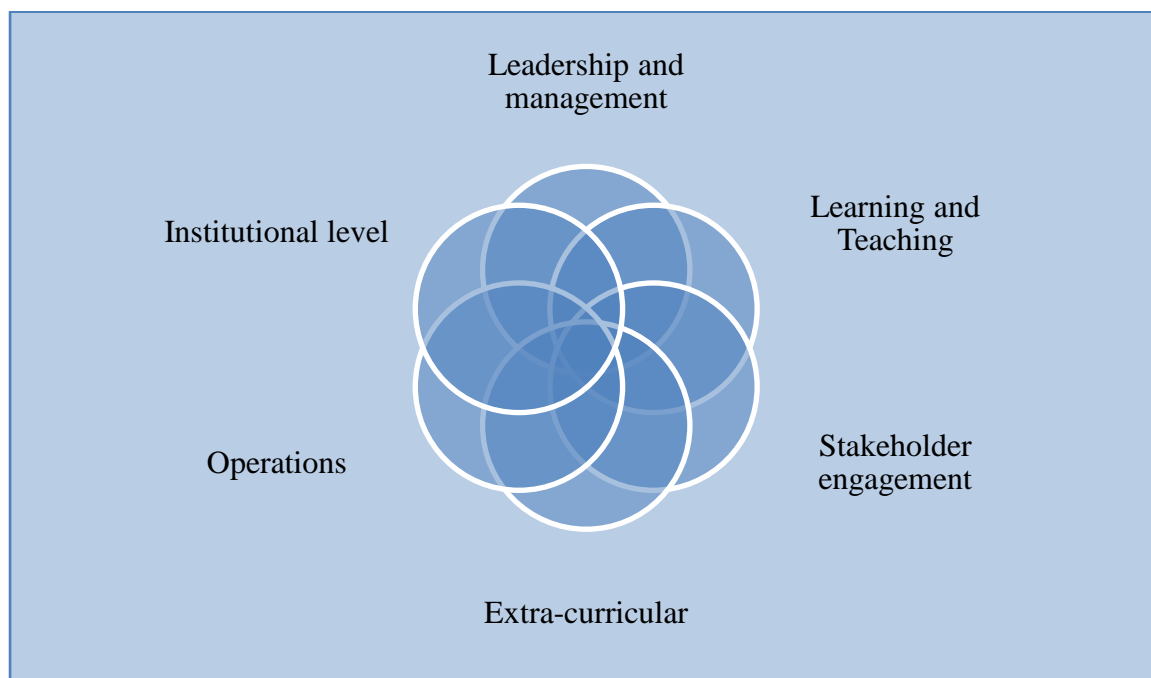
Outcomes:

- The students make a valuable impact on the local community by applying their knowledge in practical situations, thereby learning law by experience (Roberts, 2014).
- By embedding Changemaker values in the Law programmes in this way, students are gaining practical knowledge and making valuable contributions to society.

**iii. How faculties at other HEIs can bring about social innovation and change**

As an institution-wide focus, your HEI can consider **how to share good practice** around embedding SI across teaching and learning.

*Figure 1. Identifying SI in HEIs*



At the UoN, the EmBedCM project focused on identifying and sharing SI knowledge and examples of socially innovative ideas across various areas of the university experience. This formed the booklet: ‘Changemaker in the Curriculum: The University of Northampton: Case studies 2013-2014’. Sharing examples of SI in learning and teaching at the UoN took the form of case studies, however, it is suggested that Stage Two, identified as ‘sharing SI practices’, can take various forms at other HEIs, depending on resources. For example, instead of the project undertaken at the UoN, the HEI could organise and promote a workshop or a conference, where internal and external guest speakers share their knowledge and experiences of embedding SI into the learning and teaching practice.

In preparation for the workshop or project, it is suggested that an initial meeting for the SI meeting group could involve an exploration of the following questions in key departments within the HEIs. The results of the questions could assist a HEI to identify evidences of good practice to be shared institution-wide.

Table 2. How to identify SI in HEI departments

Institutional Narrative	Leadership	Learning and teaching	Extra-curricular	Operations	Stakeholder Engagement
What are the existing best practice examples?	What is the breadth and depth of the leadership on social innovation?	Where can social innovation be identified on the curriculum?	What is the range and level of engagement in social innovation, beyond the curriculum?	What is the current social impact of the key operations?	What is the wider ecosystem in which the HEI operates?

### Further consideration for HEIs looking to promote existing SI practices

1. Consider SI practices within and outside of the HEI. Are there programmes in place that have contact with local communities? For example, does the teaching programme have contact with local schools and nurseries? Or, do students on the nursing or legal programmes work with people in the local communities?
2. If so, reflect on the social impact beyond the HEIs, and consider external stakeholders as a source of potential collaboration.
3. Also, consider students present and past, for example, have any students been inspired to work in socially innovative business settings?
4. Resource-wise, it is suggested that this conference/workshop is administered professionally in order to document the learning outcomes to create a central point of reference and to create a both an audit trail and commitment for future collaborations around embedding SI into learning and teaching.

Further information, on all of the case study examples outlined above, can be found in the following document:

Alden Rivers, B., and Smith, J. (Eds) (2014) 'Changemaker in the Curriculum: The University of Northampton: Case studies 2013-2014'. *Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, University of Northampton.