

Five university teams win funding from Sodexo to tackle food insecurity

3 years ago



A Dragon's Den-style competition involving 85 students from 26 universities throughout the UK was held by the [Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation](#) in partnership with social enterprise and educational charity Enactus UK.

Three of the teams included students from Sodexo client universities; Coventry, Northumbria, and University College London (UCL).

For the fourth time, Stop Hunger and Enactus partnered on its 2022 Incubator Competition. The competition, which was held in October, aimed to encourage innovation and entrepreneurial actions for students that creates a better world by empowering women and fighting food security in the UK and Ireland.

To kickstart the competition, each team was invited to a virtual learning session joined by Stop Hunger charity partner, FareShare. The session was designed to help the student's innovative design process and maximise their creativity to yield the biggest social impact. 15 Sodexo colleagues volunteered their time and expertise to serve as the students' mentors during the session.

In the end, five Enactus student teams from universities including Northumbria, Sheffield, Southampton, York and the London School of Economics and Political Science were selected to participate in an entrepreneurial-style pitch event at Sodexo's UK head office. The event saw each of the five teams present to a select panel of judges, including the Stop Hunger Foundation's trustees, to secure funding for their project.

The students were expected to demonstrate how their project supports Stop Hunger's mission, what

impact it would have to beneficiaries, and how they plan to progress moving forwards. The event's judges and attendees also had an opportunity to offer advice to any challenges facing the projects.

Laura Brimacombe, Business Development Director for Schools & Universities and the competition's organiser, commented:

"To say I was impressed by the Enactus university team entries is an understatement! The students really spent time understanding their target beneficiary groups' needs and exploring interventions which give people a hand-up rather than a hand-out. It's incredibly refreshing to see, and they couldn't have got there without the coaching of the Sodexo volunteers."

The event concluded with all five projects receiving some funding from Stop Hunger from a pot of £3,750. The projects all had a lot of potential for addressing food insecurity and promoting women's empowerment.

Gareth John, Chair of Stop Hunger for the UK and Ireland and European Director of Legal, was a judge at the pitch event and added:

"Each of the final teams showed true entrepreneurial spirit by finding ways to reduce their impact on the environment, as well as tackle food insecurity and the wider barriers to escaping poverty. The Stop Hunger trustees, and I are very much looking forward to seeing how the funding and mentoring we've invested enables the student's projects to make a positive difference."

Sodexo's partnership with Enactus UK began in 2019 and reinforces its Social Impact Pledge and commitments to offer mentoring, career advice, internships and job opportunities to students.

Amy Brereton, Chief Operating Officer for Enactus UK, said:

"The Enactus programme uses experiential learning to support and develop the next generation of responsible leaders through the development of socially minded enterprise opportunities. Our mission alongside our partners is to be recognised as a leader in developing a national network of sustainability minded young leaders who will go on to have a head for business and a heart for the world."

Stop Hunger will continue to guide each of the projects over the coming months and will check in to see how things are going. The goal is to scale up the programmes and have a beneficial effect on local communities across the UK. Sodexo volunteers will continue to mentor the university students in the future.

Sodexo's Stop Hunger Foundation is active in 40 countries around the world. In the UK and Ireland, Sodexo volunteers work alongside charities and organisations, donating time, skills and money to tackle hunger; support good nutrition, and promote life skills in local communities.

Since 2010, the Stop Hunger Foundation has donated more than £3.4 million to charities tackling hunger and malnutrition.