



**NATURE POSITIVE**  
— UNIVERSITIES —

# **STUDENT ACTION:** **FUNDING FOR NATURE BASED** **ACTIVITIES**

A case study for developing outdoor spaces in  
educational establishments.



*Abigail Kos*

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# 5 Key Learnings

I have worked towards restoring the polytunnel and wildlife area of my secondary school (and now workplace) for over 7 years. In this time, it has been necessary to come up with multiple income streams for the project, in order to support the clubs and lessons that operate there.



1

Work out what it is you want to achieve through the activities you plan. Where possible, **make your objectives SMART** - Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Timely.

2

Make progress towards your goals, ensuring you **record developments** by taking photos or keeping notes. As you do this, also note the equipment it would be either useful or essential to have.

3

Search for funding sources. This could range from **fundraising** activities to **selling produce** from gardening activities to staff or students. Local gardening centres are often willing to provide **vouchers** if you can show the impact your actions will make, or have been making.

4

Make sure to search for **relevant grants** - a few examples of these are given later. If possible, talk to your establishment's sustainability or environment department about whether there is, or could be, a **budget** for activities such as yours. Equipment wishlists will be useful here.

5

**Demonstrate positive actions** and funding outcomes to those who have funded your project- they are more likely to provide this again in the future if you do.

# Examples - our funding opportunities:

Some funding opportunities the area I maintain has had, for inspiration.



## Selling produce

- This increases the visibility of your project whilst raising funds from surplus production.
- It also gives people access to sustainable produce which may otherwise be unaffordable or inaccessible

## Annual budget allocation

- Checking with the financial department of your institution if there is a budget for the areas you are looking to work on may allow part of this to be allocated for your project.
- For example, in the past our yearly budget has bought a mini greenhouse for seedlings inside the polytunnel.
- The budget does not have to be big to make a huge difference - we would have to sell 500 cucumbers a year for the equivalent of our £250 budget.



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Some funding opportunities the area I maintain has had, for inspiration.



GrantsOnline

## Obtaining grants

- These can range from monetary funding to provision of chosen equipment packages.
- These often run once a year or for set intervals so keeping track of when applications open and close is useful.
- Saving answers to application questions to change or add to in the future can help save time.

## Funding boosts from your institution

- Showing the progress you are making and getting noticed can allow funding boosts for specific needs. For example, 2 years ago the school provided the polytunnel and wildlife area with £5000 of funding.
- This enabled several positive actions to improve the quality, safety and usability of the area.
- New raised indoor and outdoor beds were created, including a wheelchair accessible one inside.
- Guttering and water butts were added for much needed rainwater harvesting.
- Equipment was purchased for the construction of an irrigation system.



# Top tips and successes:



# ASDAN

Starting in September, a qualification for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities has begun, which uses the area.



Use free, readily available materials to begin with.



Bee orchids, a protected species in the UK, have started appearing in the area.



Opportunities for supporting wildlife, such as accepting frog spawn (regardless of pond quality) can enhance the biodiversity of a location for low costs.



The area has been used to teach about biodiversity, for example through capture, mark, recapture experiments on garden snails.

# Some of my favourite moments:



Creating our pallet seating area



Spreading joy with flowers



The area when I started the project in 2019



Free sample strawberries which got us the £5000 funding



Intense bramble removal

*“People often use the phrase ‘time is money’. I don’t agree with this view for the most part, however when it comes to funding, the time you spend on a project makes all the difference for the monetary inputs you can gain.”* **Abigail Kos**



We’d love to hear about your projects or anything you decide to do after reading this document. You can contact us through the Nature Positive Universities website [www.naturepositiveuniversities.net](http://www.naturepositiveuniversities.net) or via email on [emily.stott@biology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:emily.stott@biology.ox.ac.uk) and [hollie.thompson@biology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hollie.thompson@biology.ox.ac.uk)



You can also contact Abigail directly via email [Abigail.kos@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Abigail.kos@yahoo.co.uk) or connect on LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/abigailkos/>

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