

School of Geography

Green Impact Newsletter

May 2013

Welcome

Green Impact is an environmental accreditation and awards scheme run by the National Union of Students, bringing staff and students together with their wider communities to enable and showcase positive changes in environmental practice. This newsletter outlines some of the ways in which the School of Geography has been 'going green'. Our Green Impact team is represented by members of academic and support staff, as well as postgraduate and undergraduate students. The team has been busy filling in an online workbook whenever we complete a small but tangible 'greening' action around the School. Each action scores points which are logged in our workbook and improves our position in a league table of participating Schools and service departments in the College. Our efforts will be audited by a student in June.

Travel

The Green Impact team is committed to helping reduce the School's environmental impact by promoting **sustainable travel**. Changing the way we travel will help the UK achieve our emissions reduction target, currently a 60% CO₂ reduction by 2030. One of the best ways to do this is to travel **by bike**. As well as being the most energy efficient, fun and healthy way to travel, biking to Queen

Mary can also be really enjoyable thanks to the Regent's Canal path that connects the University with the wider parts of London. Queen Mary offers a **tax-benefit scheme**, enabling you to pay for a new bike in monthly installments whilst saving through tax and NI exemptions. If you are considering cycling to University, but fear that your naturally perspiration-happy sweat glands will let you down, the School has its own **shower facilities**, located on the first floor next to Sven Lukas' office, for all to use. The Queen Mary Sustainability team have also just built a new bike rack directly outside the Francis Bancroft building, to go with the other bike storage rails near Mucci's, for you to tie your bike up securely.

For longer journeys where cycling isn't possible, the Green Impact team would like to encourage all travelling members of staff and student to consider **alternative ways** to reach their destination, such as the Eurostar or a shorter flight followed by a train, to also help reduce your environmental footprint wherever possible! However, if you are intending to travel to an external meeting, we would also like to encourage you to use **Skype** or telephone communication as an environmentally-friendly alternative to travelling, that saves not only time and money but also our carbon footprint.

Waste & Recycling

Green Impact follows the waste hierarchy model for reducing waste (see figure 1).

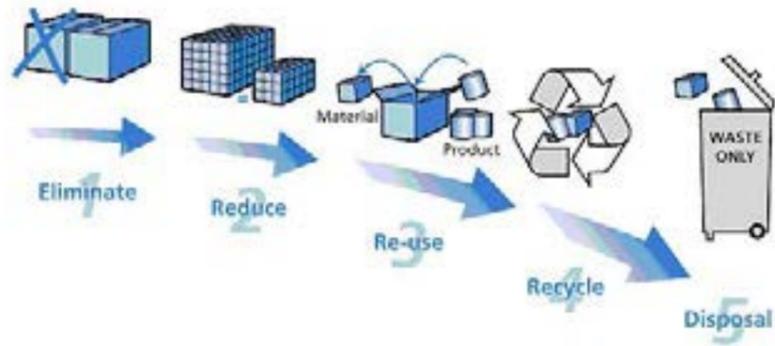


Figure 1: Waste hierarchy (schoolsagainstwaste.co.uk, 2013)

You can help by taking actions such as:

- **Eliminate/Reduce – Saving paper**

Do not print unless essential, and if printing is essential then print double sided and preferably print more than one page per side of paper. Instructions on how to set your computer for double sided printing by default are on the wall next to the printers that are compatible. There are also instructions next to the photocopier showing how to make double sided copies.

- **Re-use – Disposal of unwanted items**

Rather than binning old items, first consider whether they are suitable for sale on sites such as ebay or for giving away to charity shops or through sites such as <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TowerHamletsRecycle/> or <http://groups.freecycle.org/towerhamletsfreecycle/posts/all>

- **Recycle – Paper, cardboard and plastics**

There are recycling bins located in the kitchen and on the 2nd floor near Jigar's office. Details of which materials can be recycled are shown on each bin.

- **Recycle – Batteries**

There is a battery recycling box located outside Simon Dobinson's office in the geography labs.

More ways in which you can have a Green Impact

- Switch off lights when leaving a room empty
- Use tap water at meetings instead of bottled water. Provide reusable cups and glasses instead of disposable ones at your meetings.
- Make use of the school's videoconferencing facilities or use skype as an alternative to travelling to external meetings.
- Use the stairs instead of the lift whenever possible.
- Switch off PCs and monitors at night.
- Ensure that laptop docking stations, personal printers and mobile phone chargers are not left on unnecessarily, especially at night and at the weekend.
- Use your room thermometer and let estates know if your room gets too hot or cold.
- Keep the temperature control on the fridge at a low setting.

Vegetable allotment

As part of the Queen Mary Sustainability Action plan, the College now has an allotment space on campus. The School of Geography has an enthusiastic team of staff and students planting up one of the raised beds. After a slow start due to the cold spring we can look forward to crops of onions, garlic, beetroot, carrots, lettuce, peas, pak choi, chard, runner beans, courgettes and tomatoes.



The School of Geography vegetable allotment plot, pictured in early spring 2013.



Wormery

Throughout the College, staff are encouraged to recycle paper, bottles and cartons using existing recycling facilities. In Geography we have gone the extra mile and have a wormery to recycle food waste. This provides free compost for office pot plants and the allotment, as well as liquid plant food which can be drained from the base of the wormery.



The School of Geography's worms get a wiggle-on, recycling some of the food waste from staff tea breaks and lunches.