



student action on world poverty and the environment

British Environment And Media Awards 2007

Speech by Robbie Blake, People & Planet, who received the Award for Best Campaign 2007 – for the Go Green Campaign and The Green League 2007.

I am proud to receive this award, not on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the thousands of passionate, dynamic, driven students who make up our network.

As an exclusively student organisation, we have a vision for Britain, and a vision for Education in our society.

Our student members are clear about the need to transform our society and our economy into a low carbon one – and to really get to grips with the challenge of climate change.

We have a vision that education, and our vast higher education sector, can and should lead the way in the transformation to a truly sustainable society.

With their large tracts of land; the vitality and energy of their students; the expertise of engineers, scientists, economists, managers and environmental professors on campus; their reach into the heart of local communities and political power; and their international connections – our university campuses could be the sites of blazing innovation in tackling the biggest challenge our society faces.

But government, university leaders, and the higher education bureaucrats have all shown a dearth of initiative on this. So it has been up to students to step in. And we have!

In the Go Green campaign, you see an example of students making hugely positive impacts on their campuses. Nottingham University, Warwick, LSE, Portsmouth, Manchester Met, and a whole host of other universities are now on-track to transforming their environmental credentials, directly because of pressure from our students. And The Green League 2007, which publicly ranked universities on their environmental performance, has magnified that grassroots action ten-fold.

People & Planet is a small organisation. The Green League 2007 was put together on a tiny budget, with only half the time of an intern and a handful of dedicated volunteers. And look what we've achieved! I am proud that People & Planet truly is the most cost-effective campaigning organisation in the country!

I'd like to single out the support the Times Higher Education Supplement has given us in publishing the Green League 2007. Without them, we clearly would not be on this platform today.

It was the support of this respected, authoritative national newspaper that turned a grassroots campaign into a truly hard-hitting one that is affecting national policy.

And so I think that, in this British Environment & Media Awards 2007, this demonstrates the tremendous power and positive influence we can have, when grassroots campaigning can join with high quality media!

Thank you very much.