



An Ingenious case study

A Year of Awareness – Engineers Without Borders UK



The aim

Told through the lens of the Engineers Without Borders UK (EWB-UK) volunteers, A Year of Awareness gave engineers a creative platform to communicate their experiences of taking part in engineering projects in developing communities worldwide.

The project aimed to develop and support a number of passionate and inspiring engineering students who were interested in communicating the value of their profession.

“Engineers are sometimes reluctant to embark on a public engagement activity, because they don’t know how to or they are unclear how it will benefit them directly. A Year of Awareness gave engineers focus. It provided a structured creative platform, with clear goals, to help them convey their experiences and objectives to specific audiences.”

Andrew Lamb, Chief Executive, EWB-UK

About the project

The core of the project was the staging of a nationwide photographic competition in the summer of 2007 for engineers to submit photographs they took while working in developing countries.

Many of the photographs showed EWB-UK volunteers working on engineering projects to deliver clean water and improve sanitation and electricity supply to rural communities, which often lack the engineering infrastructure required.

Twenty photographs were shortlisted, which were displayed in 15 different exhibitions across the UK including the universities of Brighton, Cardiff, Bristol, London, Glasgow and Manchester.

To promote the project, 50,000 leaflets and flyers were also produced.

In addition the *Ingenious* funding was able to cover a second exhibition at each of the university societies and supported a bespoke training course in event management to the EWB-UK volunteers who organised the exhibitions.

Approximately 1,500 EWB-UK members, 5,000 other university students (many of whom were not engineers) and 200 academics saw the exhibitions.

Grant holder:
Funding type:
Activity type:
Level of funding:
Project period:

Engineers Without Borders UK
Ingenious Public Engagement Grant
Photography competition and exhibitions UK-wide
£15,400
2007 / 2008

How did it go?

Exit surveys showed that the exhibitions successfully demonstrated how engineering can help tackle world poverty.

The online photographic competition gallery received 6,000 hits and throughout the project EWB-UK established contact with other key organisations.

Three of those involved in the project now deliver training for staging public events to other EWB-UK members.

As a result of the photographic exhibitions, other universities not involved in EWB-UK have contacted the organisation to get involved in its activities.

EWB-UK also learned how to manage national campaigns of this nature. As a result they have restructured and made their organisation much more effective at understanding what their engineers do.

"It has been energising and inspiring to see our engineers share their work and show people what engineering means to the one billion people in slums worldwide and how engineering can and does really make a difference to people's lives."

Andrew Lamb, Chief Executive, EWB-UK



Best bit?

The exhibitions were attended by engineers and non-engineers at all stages of their careers. Seeing EWB-UK volunteers and chief executives of non-governmental organisations mixing with people from varied backgrounds, from undergraduates to accountants, was incredibly valuable for all involved.

What next?

The photographs have continued to reach new audiences as EWB-UK has received requests from other organisations to use the images in engineering journals, magazines and advertising campaigns. EWB-UK is hoping to run the competition again, with plans to expand it into next year.

"Those who volunteer with Engineers Without Borders UK will join different companies. We hope that given time, this will keep engineering at the heart of the development agenda. There is a change happening and we will have been a part of it."

Andrew Lamb, Chief Executive, EWB-UK