

The making of a social enterprise called MyBnk

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The idea for MyBnk started when I was at school, disillusioned with the over theoretical nature of learning and frustrated at having so many ideas and so little I could do with them.

As I grew up and started to study and work in international development in amazing places like Zimbabwe and Bangladesh I realised how micro finance was a ladder to self sufficiency for the poor. In essence micro finance is about unleashing enterprising ideas - my idea was budding.

Coming back to the UK I found many people my age facing spiralling debt, the majority of adults being financially illiterate (myself included of course), more people in the country getting a divorce than changing banks and a staggering 150,000 young people growing up believing that an ISA is an Ipod accessory! At this point it all started to make sense to me; the need was evident and my idea ever more untameable. That's when I met the dazzling Michael Norton, author of 365 Ways to Change the World.

A few inspiring conversations later MyBnk began. MyBnk, a seed I planted almost two years ago has grown into an exciting award winning social enterprise. MyBnk has created the first ever FSA friendly, youth led banking scheme run by young people for young people, allowing them to save and take out interest free loans for the setting up of enterprising activities. This is accompanied by high-powered assemblies, workshops and projects on ethical banking, money management and ideas generation.

Our innovative educational services are designed to increase young people's financial and enterprise capability, as defined by the Department for Children Schools and Families. MyBnk works in secondary schools, colleges and youth groups.

In year 1 of running MyBnk I did a lot of work in my sleep. MyBnk would find its way into every one of my dreams. Don't get me wrong there was nothing esoteric or unworldly about these dreams; on the contrary they were ridden with detail, process led and rather bureaucratic, business as usual! I do however remember having had two wholly creative dreams that led to vast innovation.

I am now approaching year 2 of running MyBnk, the team has grown to seven people and we have worked with over 2100 young people. Whilst it is now a rare treat to dream of MyBnk (thank goodness!) as I tube it to work I know that together with the team and with the young people involved in our projects, everyday we will learn something new and more importantly do something with it. It's a Joy!

For more information about MyBnk, please visit their website - <http://mybnk.org>