

**#IDEAS
MEAN
BUSINESS**

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN



Prince's Trust

**YOUTH
CAN
DO IT**

Innovate UK

**Introducing
the young
innovators**

Innovate UK is part of
UK Research and Innovation

Forewords

Sam Gyimah

Minister of State for Universities,
Science, Research and Innovation

It's my pleasure to introduce the winners of Innovate UK's young innovators' programme.

The Ideas Mean Business campaign has been hugely successful in reaching a more diverse audience. It demonstrates that new ideas can come from anyone, regardless of their background.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are committed to investing an additional £7bn in R&D to 2022, the largest increase in public R&D funding for 40 years. This investment, as well as our commitment to invest 2.4% of GDP in R&D by 2027, will see a huge boost for our inventors and innovators across the UK.

From artificial intelligence to clean growth, from mobility to supporting an ageing society, there's never been a better time to encourage the UK's developing talent pool and engage them in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills.

Their ideas also reflect some of the most important challenges facing society and the economy, as outlined in government's modern Industrial Strategy.

Stephanie Rolando's homesharing idea will help older people enjoy quality of life, Adam Land has a vision for natural, sustainable buildings, while Adam Root is aiming to cut the flow of microplastic into the oceans.

The future will be driven by younger generations, and over the following pages, you'll see exactly how bright it could be.

Dr Ian Campbell

Interim Executive Chair, Innovate UK

Jennifer Rubin

Executive Chair, Economic and Social Research Council and Executive Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, UK Research and Innovation

To ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of research and innovation, it is vital that we nurture the talents of tomorrow, ensuring that every part of the country powers our collective success.

UK Research and Innovation has, at the heart of its vision, a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The organisation's position at the forefront of knowledge development will enable this vision to take a strategic lead.

We know that without diversity, innovation suffers. However, research into the inclusivity of innovation has shown that we're not doing enough to widen the pool yet. Work such as Innovate UK's successful Women in Innovation campaign, and now Ideas Mean Business, are essential to bring new ideas, passion and expertise into the innovation ecosystem.

In partnership with The Prince's Trust, we are delighted to introduce our first cohort of young innovators and wish them every success on each of their journeys. We can't wait to see where they go.

"The future will be driven by younger generations."

SAM GYIMAH



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THE STORY SO FAR



The current picture

In 2017, Innovate UK and The Prince's Trust commissioned YouGov to carry out independent research with 18- to 30-year-olds who were not in employment, education or training, or in a form of insecure or under-employment. The report explored attitudes towards innovation and entrepreneurship, and found that:

- **2 in 5** young people surveyed (39%) had ideas for products and services they think they could sell
- **54%** would like to run their own company
- **82%** view the business sector as difficult to access
- only **8%** would describe themselves as entrepreneurial

“The underlying problem appears to be a lack of knowledge about what support is out there. We're delighted to be working in partnership with Innovate UK because with the right support from organisations like ours and from government, there is no limit to how much these young people can achieve.”

Lindsay Owen, Director of Policy and Evaluation at The Prince's Trust

Finding the young innovators

In response to the report's findings, Innovate UK launched a campaign in partnership with The Prince's Trust to find the next generation of innovators: Ideas Mean Business.

The campaign launched at a pop-up coffee shop in London. Deborah Meaden, 19-year-old millionaire entrepreneur Ben Towers and business ambassadors exchanged coffee for innovative ideas and provided attendees with business advice.

The campaign then went on the road, sharing advice with aspiring young innovators in Cardiff, Birmingham and Newcastle.



The programme

Over 12,000 people got in touch to find out more about the young innovators' programme.

150 attended 11 regional innovation events across the UK and online, where they received innovative business advice, and guidance on applying for support through the programme.



"I found the event really inspiring. The speakers were inspiring and there was a guy who was a similar age to me who had set up his own music business. It was good to see other people really going after stuff and it working out."

Angela McCauley,
young innovators' winner



Supporting innovative ideas

24 winners were selected from across the country to receive:

- one-on-one coaching from an innovation champion
- funding to support development of their business
- an allowance to cover living costs

"The programme isn't just about money – there is mentorship on offer as well. One thing I've been struggling with is connecting with people in the industry, so having a mentor for guidance will help a lot."

Joshua Akorah, young innovators' winner



We held
11 regional
innovation
events across
the UK.



Travelling in style

Leah Bertram from Swansea is developing a range of luggage with customisable inserts, designed and made in Britain with a sustainable focus.

27-year-old Leah says that for her, starting up hasn't been easy. She's had to work 2 jobs, and people have constantly questioned whether she can turn her idea into a business. For Leah, applying to the young innovators' programme made her see that her idea can be a reality, and helped her to push the boundaries of her confidence. The programme has already helped her to develop how innovative her idea is, and research her target customers.

In 5 years' time, Leah sees herself running a successful global brand and aspires one day to open a creative academy for young people.



LEAH BERTRAM

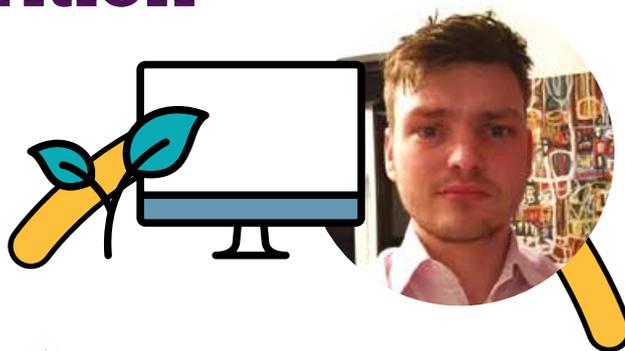
"When I was applying for the award, I thought 'why not? What is the worst that can happen?'"

Redefining nutrition

Newcastle-based entrepreneur Ross Davies is looking to set up a centre where food can be grown vertically to make best use of space.

The 29-year-old also plans to deliver food to stores that is still growing – to ensure it’s the freshest it can be. The end result is that we’ll get more nutrition out of the food we eat.

Ross has been researching his idea for a few years and plans to grow his produce in biodegradable material and sell it with the root and shoots intact, which will allow for a much longer shelf life of 12–15 days.



“I want to disrupt the way produce is grown and make it more economically and environmentally viable.”

Haircare that cares

Fortunate Frizell, 26 years old, was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in Canterbury. Along with her business partner and twin brother Favourite, Fortunate is creating a “one-stop shop for black women’s haircare needs.”

Fortunate’s idea didn’t come from a lightbulb moment. Instead, it came from personal and traumatising experiences, which forced her to find “unique solutions” to her own hair problems.

When she was 14 years old, Fortunate suffered burns on her scalp from chemically relaxing her hair. The hydrogen peroxide used in the hair-straightening process left Fortunate with alopecia, a condition that can cause permanent damage to the hair structure. After this experience, Fortunate started to develop her own haircare products, which she says are ‘made specifically for women of colour’. From there, Fortunate’s brand was born: Filda London.



“Major brands aren’t addressing the fundamental issues. We’re approaching things differently.”



One-stop sleep shop

29-year-old Amy Paris is the founder of the London Sleep Company. Amy's inspiration came when she was working in a stressful job that made her miserable, which had a serious impact on her sleep. It was then that she was inspired to create a solution – the London Sleep Company.

Colchester-based Amy describes her idea as a 'one-stop sleep shop' that will be based online. Once launched, her website will offer information, resources, and eventually products, to promote better sleep. Amy says: "I want to look into things that we can implement backed up by research and science – issues like lights in technology, temperature, and diet."

In 5 years' time, Amy wants to be working in partnership with airlines, hospitals and hotels – places where she says sleep is crucial.

AMY PARIS

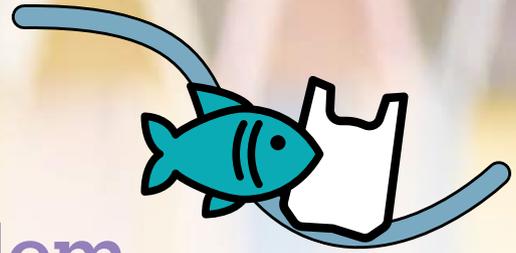
"Other people's input generates the best ideas."



ADAM ROOT

"I believe strongly in designing products to solve problems."

Helping to solve the ocean's plastic problem



Based in Essex, 27-year-old Adam Root is the founder of Inheriting Earth, a sustainability-focused product design company.

Adam was inspired to take action against ocean plastic pollution 5 years ago, when he attended a week-long event about the issue in Bristol. "The ocean is such a passion of mine," says Adam. "I really wanted to help and I felt like I had the skills and the ability to do something."

After the event, Adam sat down and wrote a list of the ways plastic was getting into the ocean, then designed solutions for each. One problem stuck out to him: microfibres – tiny pieces of plastic that enter the water system when we wash our clothes. After entering the ocean, they're eaten by plankton and other small organisms, before making their way back up the food chain.

He's designing a filter system that will remove the fibres during the wash cycle and stop them being drained away.

"It's something that's really grass-roots," says Adam. "So many people think the problem is too big – I want to help people to feel like they can do something."

Adam says that in 10 years' time, he wants to be a major leader in ocean plastic reduction.

Below: Adam with his filter system



Charlotte Badkin



When Sheffield-based Charlotte Badkin graduated university and found herself hunting for both a job and place to live at the same time, she decided to combine the 2 and get into property renovation. The problem? Current search engines don't make finding development properties easy.

The 23-year-old's idea is to create a commercial property search engine that focuses on development properties for those that can't afford to buy a house that's ready to go. Charlotte's idea could help thousands of young people trapped in poor rental properties – this is the problem of her generation, and she's found a way to help.

Claire Skelton



Claire Skelton's idea for using old jewellery-making techniques to make new pieces combines traditional techniques with modern sensibilities about sustainability. The 24-year-old's focus is on making sure nothing is wasted.

Originally from just outside Belfast, Claire learned about contemporary jewellery on an Erasmus programme in Finland. She now melts down gold and silver dust that occurs when filing or cutting metal, to create contemporary pieces of jewellery. "I put the focus on every little speck," she says. "It's about reforming every last bit of gold or silver dust into a gem just for you."



Ryan Mcqueen



Ryan Mcqueen was working for a natural health products company when he came up with his idea: Vita Voucher.

The 28-year-old from London asked 250 people if they'd be interested in using newly-qualified service providers if they were heavily discounted. 80% said yes. Then Ryan surveyed 50 health professionals who had recently qualified, and found that 70% would be willing to offer discounts to help market their business and find new clients. From that point Ryan knew there was something in his idea to provide the public with discounted vouchers for health, fitness and wellness services.

"This is all about making a healthy lifestyle affordable."

"I didn't really think there would be any support for some guy just making a game by himself in his bedroom."

JOSHUA AKORAH



Game changer

Growing up in Livingstone, Scotland, Joshua Akorah spent hours playing video games. But as he got older, he started to play them less and less, feeling that a lot of games lacked emotional intelligence. "The games that were on the market felt gratuitous," says Joshua. "You're just gunning down hundreds of people, and you're perceived as a war hero."

Joshua was inspired to develop his own game: *The Valentine Watch*. Set on a fictional island off the coast of England, the game's story is based on crime and punishment. The player is the island's only police officer, settling disputes and punishing offences. The story adapts depending on the player's choices.

"I think that if it's received well, it could really mark a change in the sorts of stories we see within video games. I want to push a message to the industry that there should be more human stories and emotional connections within games."



From the ground up

‘Business and life’ partners Adam Land and Niaomh Convery founded From the Ground Up, an enterprise which aims to build and support communities through natural building, a method of building with organic materials and traditional methods.

The pair were inspired by their experiences working in a refugee camp in Greece, where they ran carpentry and tailoring workshops. “We saw how giving people something to do brought them out of themselves,” says Adam. “They had fled their homes and gone through trauma, and this was a way to be creative and productive.”

Back home, Adam and Niaomh have started to use their knowledge of natural building to equip UK-based refugees with new skills, to help them to contribute to society and improve their wellbeing. Their first project is working with a group of adult refugees in Plymouth and a group of young refugees in London through the Red Cross. “It’s about looking towards the future – these people know they are going to stay in England and want a way to work and contribute to society,” says Adam.

Adam and Niaomh look forward to the business support that the package will provide. “The business side of things is all new to me – I’ve been putting a lot of effort into learning it but it’s not my background, so some support would be really useful.”

ADAM LAND

“ In 5 years we see From the Ground Up becoming a completely self-funded business.”

Commission your own artist

Fernando Mariano wants to match art lovers with up-and-coming artists that can offer an affordable personal commission – whether it’s a musical composition or a painting – so an original art work is within the reach of more people.

It will also help artists by providing more reliable work opportunities through the 29-year-old’s art collective UnFinished Works. The goal is to have a hub of artists from all disciplines to work with clients to produce highly personal art.

Fernando was born in Brazil but has a long history in the arts and first moved to the UK to study musical theatre. He describes his idea as tailoring artwork to individuals: “it will speak about them in every detail,” he says. “From colour to shape, from sound to movement. Think of it as the ultimate selfie.”



Artistic innovation

After finishing her degree, Angela McCauley wanted to take a break from academia and find a way to flex her creative muscle.

“It was then that a friend of mine decided to shut down their haberdashery,” she says. “They gave me a lot of fabric that would have otherwise been thrown away – this led me to my idea: using reclaimed and repurposed fabrics.”

She now plans to start a business filling handmade items like cushion covers and bags from recycled materials which will allow people to support sustainability and local craft makers.

Living in rural Northern Ireland, Angela spent the early days developing her idea in isolation, and as a result she also wants to start teaching workshops on how to sew and make things to help bring together local communities.

Electric fitness

20-year-old Sylvester Ologbenla's product will use pain-free electrical signals to help athletes recover from injuries.

“Until recently, I was on the path to becoming an athlete. I'd gone to America to play basketball on a scholarship at Miami University, but this dream ended when they said they didn't have enough money to fund an international student, so I had to go home to London.

“When I got home my mum told me I couldn't just sit around all day, so I decided to pick myself back up and I remembered: back at school me and a friend used to play every sport together; rugby, football; everything. Then one day, my friend tore his anterior cruciate ligament and has never been able to play sport the same way. When he said he couldn't run as fast as me anymore, I said: I'll make something that means you'll never have an excuse again.

“I'm now studying physiotherapy in Lancaster – it all started from that joke, but it's set me up for another route in life.”





“ I love the idea that you can just have a thought and turn it into reality.”

STEPHANIE ROLANDO

A room of your own

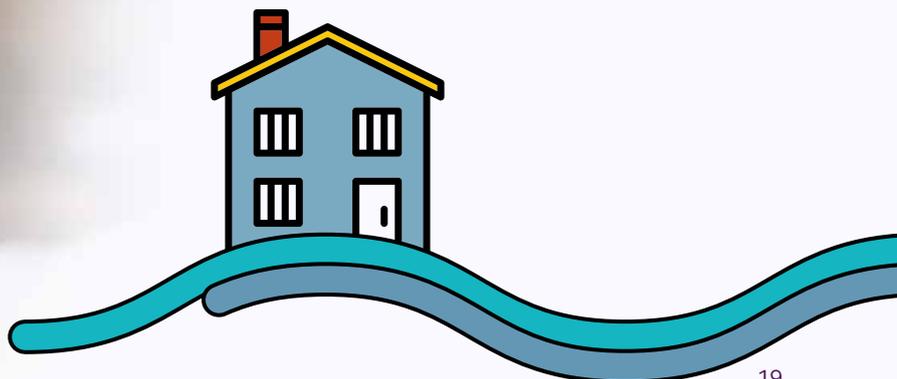
23-year-old Stephanie Rolando is the founder of Room for Help, a homesharing service that matches people with a spare room looking for help around the home with individuals looking for affordable accommodation.

Stephanie was inspired by her struggle to find affordable accommodation when she moved to London. “Our generation is screwed,” says Stephanie. “So many people can’t afford rent, and even if they can they end up in a cycle – paying rent to have a job in London and having a job to pay rent.”

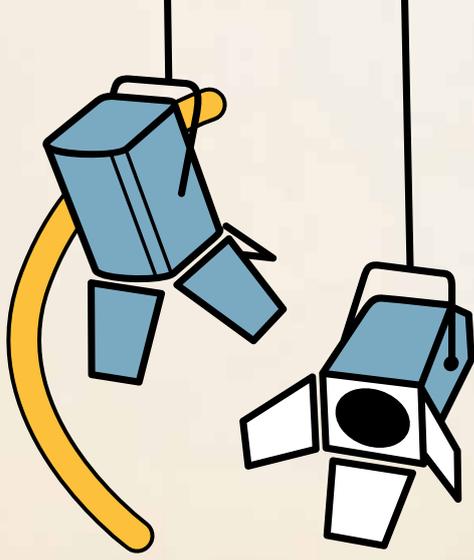
After researching her options, Stephanie discovered homesharing, where a tenant helps out around the house in exchange for accommodation.

Stephanie has been working on Room for Help for a year, and has 3 homeshares up and running. One pair have been living together for over 3 months; Nicola who’s in her 30s, and Anne who’s in her 80s. “They’re loving it,” says Stephanie. “I’ve had so much positive feedback.”

After attending a Regional Innovation event, Stephanie was inspired to apply. “I loved the idea that you can just have a thought and turn it into a reality. From listening to other peoples’ businesses ideas, and hearing their success stories, I thought ‘let me give it a go – you never know.’”







Backstage pass

With a background in theatre, 30-year-old Londoner Carolina Jobb knows the tools and accessories that are needed backstage – and how hard they are to come by.

“When I started working backstage in the theatre I couldn’t find a good utility belt to hold things I needed close to hand, like scissors and safety pins. So I made one myself. When I wore it, I was constantly asked where I bought it, and that’s when I realised that there’s a market for this.

“The worldwide film and theatre industries are huge, so my ultimate goal is to have an international brand known for selling high-quality, beautiful products for backstage.”



Recycle your productivity



As adults we're able to make our own choices over sustainability, but what about when we're at school?

The seed of Yagmur Masmaz's idea was first planted when she looked at her school equipment and realised she didn't know anything about where they had come from. Had the paper in her notebook been bleached? Were her writing materials made using child labour?

Now 22, Yagmur has created GreenBook – an erasable whiteboard notebook with customisable, reusable pages. The pages themselves are made of paper with a thin layer of plastic – Yagmur herself has used the same GreenBook for 2 years avoiding using single-use paper or materials and has detailed extensively how the product fits into the circular economy on her website.

She's hoping the programme will help her extend her product range.

“Living a sustainable life doesn't have to be difficult or expensive.”

“It's been useful to learn what innovation really means.”



Sustainable creativity

Paula Strahl wants to create a womenswear brand with a conscience. Called Paulula – Latin for little coat – her brand will feature high-quality products that are made to last, and more importantly don't exploit people or the environment.

Paula studied fashion design at university in Wales. “I was inspired by a film called The True Cost about the working conditions and exploitation in the garment industry,” says 21-year-old Paula. “It really stuck with me and put the desire in me to be more considerate of the environment.”

After university, Paula began researching brands while looking for a job in the fashion industry, but she found few brands that produce sustainably, so she decided to start her own by experimenting with offcuts and turning leftover material into new designs.



Driving change

19-year-old George Howell is the founder of Ideal First Car, a service helping younger drivers to access better quality cars and cheaper insurance.

George had the idea for his business at college, when he started making money helping friends to buy their first cars. “The thing that I didn’t like was seeing people being ripped off,” said George. “Your first car’s important – it’s the first step towards adult freedom with no more parents or public transport. I’m against traders that see a teenager not knowing what they’re doing so they sell them anything no matter the safety – that’s what I’m fighting to change.

“The first year was really tough. The number one challenge I faced was my age.”

In 10 years’ time, George sees Ideal First Car challenging market leaders and expanding into new areas. He says his focus is on growing the company sustainably, attracting new customers and investors.

GEORGE HOWELL

“I don’t think people started taking me seriously until I was 18.”

“I’m doing this myself, making mistakes and figuring things out.”

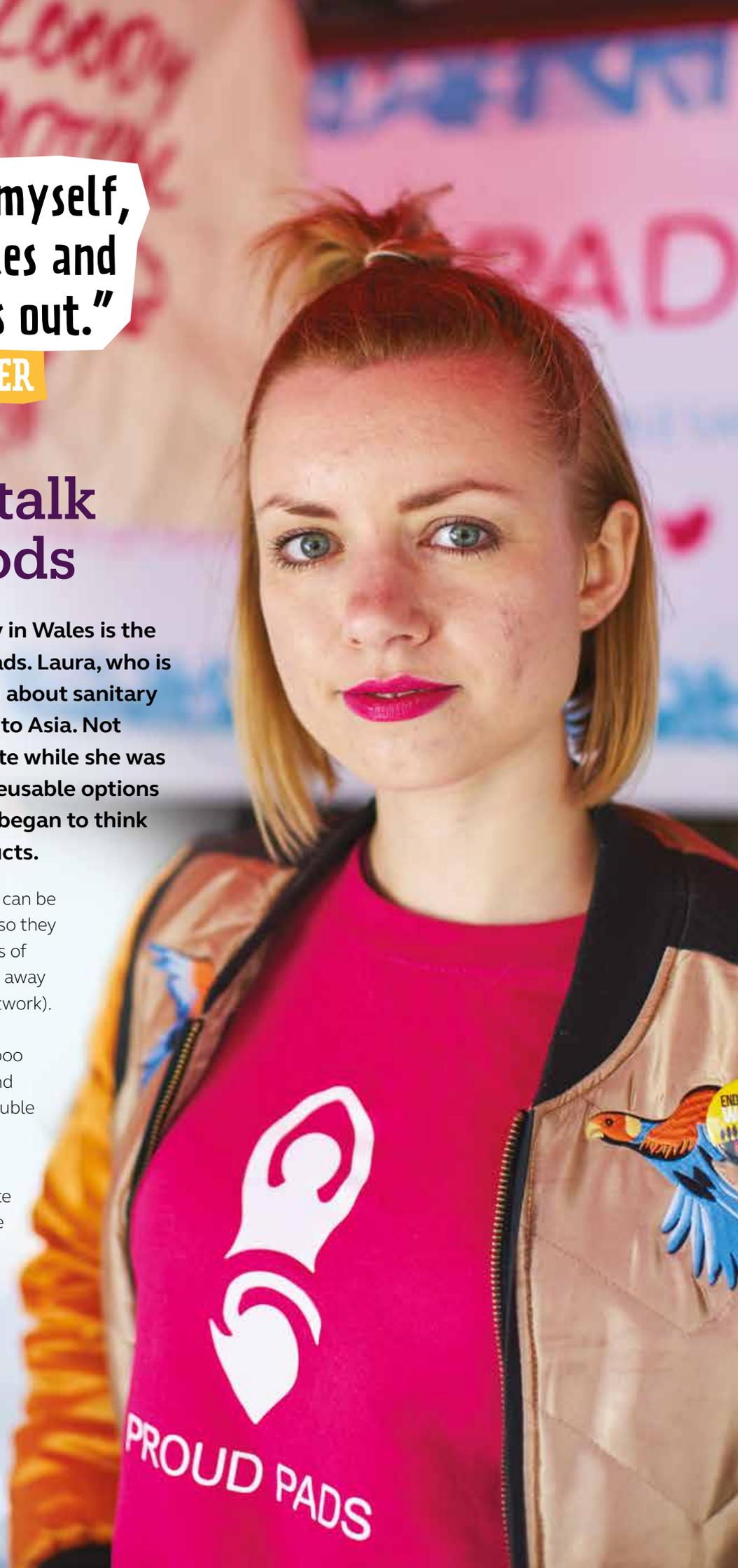
LAURA NIEHORSTER

It’s time to talk about periods

Laura Niehorster from Sketty in Wales is the founder and CEO of Proud Pads. Laura, who is 27 years old, started thinking about sanitary options while planning a trip to Asia. Not wanting to contribute to waste while she was away, Laura took a range of reusable options with her. During her trip, she began to think of ways to improve the products.

Proud Pads are sustainable pads that can be washed and reused for up to 5 years, so they could help reduce the 200,000 tonnes of sanitary products that the UK throws away (source: Women’s Environmental Network). Laura makes the pads from fleece impregnated with charcoal and bamboo so they’re antibacterial, anti-odour, and easy to wash. The pads come with soluble bags, so they can be put straight into the washing machine once used.

Laura hopes that her idea will promote conversation around periods. “They’re a normal bodily function,” says Laura. She also hopes that Proud Pads can help end period poverty. Laura says that for those without access to products, getting their period could mean not being able to leave the house.



An all-natural solution



23-year-old Shada Jenkins is from London, where she currently works as a hair stylist. Since the age of 16, Shada has been developing her own haircare products made from entirely natural ingredients.

“It started when I was in school. I wanted to wear my hair in its natural afro state, but it was always dry and I couldn’t find a product to fix it.” When Shada started looking into why this was, she realised just how damaging the ingredients in the product she was using were.

So Shada developed her own solution – a serum made from completely natural ingredients. “I used it on myself for a while and saw how it responded to my hair – it was flourishing. Then I introduced it to my clients and got their feedback – and that’s how it started.”

“Going to the regional innovation event was the moment I knew I wanted to develop this further.”

Switch up



Laurie Freeman is a born entrepreneur. He grew up in the Oxfordshire countryside and his first venture was selling stick insects to fellow classmates.

Now the 28-year-old wants to create a non-alcoholic drink that uses an old US recipe for switchel – a healthy beverage containing apple cider vinegar.

The idea taps into an interesting trend – it’s been reported in the last few years that drinking alcohol has become less important to young people. “I don’t always want to drink alcohol,” said Laurie. “But in a pub, your choices are often high in sugar and uninspiring.”

Laurie hopes his brand of drinks will give people this healthier alternative while out socialising – the combination of apple cider vinegar and ginger is said to be good for the gut.

A perfect match



Emily Woodhouse is on a mission to revolutionise the recruitment industry.

After graduating from university and moving back to Devon, Emily struggled to find a job. After she attended a business-hosted ‘find our talent’ event, Emily concluded that the graduates and skilled people and the companies looking for them weren’t finding each other.

Emily describes her idea – Collaborate – as “LinkedIn crossed with Tinder”. Users work together by sharing opportunities to find the best matches for everyone. “It’s a bit like a card game,” says Emily. “You have two ‘piles’ of job cards – ones recommended to you by other users and the system, and a random pile. You simply swipe left to reject, or right to save.”



Winter warmers

Hannah Akinbode came up with her idea due to the frustration of trying to find warm gloves that are also fashionable. She suffers from Raynaud's syndrome – a condition where blood flow is reduced, typically in the fingers.

“I want to create fashionable, heated gloves. I hate winter because gloves are never warm enough. I have come across heated gloves when I've been skiing, but they're clunky and not practical for everyday use.”

Hannah is currently conducting research into the materials that could solve the problem.



Three heads are better than one

Rawan Abu-Ishira (26), Amur Anzorov (24) and Tawfiq Abu-Khajil (22) are the founders of Halalivery. The trio met at the University of Nottingham's Ingenuity Lab, where they were working on separate start-up ideas.

“We all just clicked,” said Rawan, “we were talking about how start-ups work, and the challenges. Then we started talking about a new idea for Nottingham that could be expanded to the UK as a whole.”



Tawfiq added: “The idea came from personal experience – we struggled to find halal food in Nottingham, and as students we didn't have the time or resources to travel far. We sent a survey out asking if people were having the same problem, and most replied that they did. We also did a lot of market research and found that there wasn't a solution out there.”

Rawan, Amur and Tawfiq now have 11 team members working part-time alongside them in the lab. “It's been so important that we have a diverse team – not just the 3 of us but all 11,” said Tawfiq. “When you come to the lab and you sit with the team, you see one point from 11 different perspectives, which helps so much with ideas and will help us to grow.”



Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas.

We connect businesses to the partners, customers and investors that can help them turn ideas into commercially successful products and services and business growth.

We fund business and research collaborations to accelerate innovation and drive business investment into R&D. Our support is available to businesses across all economic sectors, value chains and UK regions.

Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation.
For more information visit innovateuk.ukri.org



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Telephone: 01793 361000

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