

The Chicken Project: school-wide international development initiative leaves a lasting legacy

In collaboration with BEFSA, a charity that works to reduce poverty in South Africa through education, students at The Cherwell School in Oxfordshire set up a unique, sustainable enterprise linking communities and classrooms all over the world.

Often in South Africa young people must choose between following a career either in business or in agriculture. The Chicken Project aimed to sustain skills in both these fields by setting up a range of fully functioning chicken farms.



The project has 4 ambitious phases...

	Business	Agriculture
Phase 1	Initial keeping of chickens for egg sales	Crop trials to discover best varieties to grow in local conditions.
Phase 2	Building of a 2 nd shed for containing and rearing birds for sale	Seasonal crop cultivation with small scale local community
Phase 3	Purchasing of incubators to assist with rearing and hatching	Expansion of phase 2
Phase 4	Construction of full scale, industrial sized chicken shed. Employment of local people to run farm.	Farmers market, selling seeds and goods from previous phases. Employing local people.



'People very often underestimate what children can do. They can make a massive difference, and all they need is the vehicle to give them that thrust forward.'

Julie Stuart-Thompson,
Assistant Headteacher,
The Cherwell School

Funding and gaining support

Students have run ongoing fundraising activities to cover costs., including selling hand-made jewellery; running refreshment stands at school events; and growing and selling organic vegetables. They also presented at a local Masons group in Aylesbury and provided a cooked lunch service for school staff during INSET days.

'In this country we're so lucky with what we have—giving acts as a great equalizer in society, and it also helps to improve the world we live in.'

Student, Year 11

Major achievements

The group has now provided resources for libraries in four South African schools; set up a training centre to train villagers in how to care for the chickens; and invested in generators and freezers to ensure the chicken farms are sustainable.



To date students have raised an impressive £1,500 to support their business venture and have launched their first farm in Cameroon. They received the Giving Nation Challenge Award at HM Treasury in 2014.