Citrus Saturday is a refreshing lesson in fun, fulfillment and financial reward for young entrepreneurs.

Josh, Andrew, Daniel and Oliver set up their first business, Albalous’ Juices, on 2nd July 2011. On their one big day of trading, the entrepreneurs achieved a profit of over £100. They were thrilled with the result. “I didn’t know much about running a business before but after this my knowledge had developed much further,” says Josh. For he and his partners, all from William Ellis School, were just 14 years old, and they made their money by selling lemonade on one of ten stands set up in various locations in Camden by pupils from schools across the borough. They had taken part in the first-ever Citrus Saturday (www.citrussaturday.org), an initiative set up by UCL Advances, one of the partners in the Open Innovation Project, to encourage young people to consider becoming entrepreneurs.

Tim Barnes, Director of UCL Advances – the university’s centre for entrepreneurship – and the originator of the initiative, says: “Citrus Saturday is a fun, absorbing and – most importantly for the kids – financially rewarding day of setting up a lemonade stand. It is modelled to be as much like running a small business as possible and will hopefully give them a taste of how rewarding making a living this way can be.” Through a series of workshops and exercises, young people learn how to set goals, develop a business plan, establish a budget, seek investors, provide customer service, save for the future and give back to the community – not to mention earn money for themselves.

Citrus Saturday is inspired by Lemonade Day in the US: following its inception in Houston, Texas in 2007, Lemonade Day is currently in 28 cities, with plans to grow to 100 US cities and a million stands by 2013. Like its American forerunner, Citrus Saturday’s success depends on parents/guardians, teachers, youth leaders, volunteers and charity workers entering into the spirit of the occasion with as much enthusiasm and energy as the children themselves.

As Camden’s largest employer, UCL plays an important role in the community; every year around 600 students take part in charitable projects. UCL’s Volunteering Services Unit (VSU) recruited, vetted and trained 20 volunteers to lead the young people through two workshops, where they tried out different citrus recipes; learned about planning, budgeting and selling; and built and decorated their stands. Tracey Williams,
Head of Learning Support at William Ellis School, says: “The boys were thrilled to be invited to the university, where they were treated as adults – something that is not possible in a school setting.” The students also accompanied the teenagers on Citrus Saturday itself.

Maria Stanoniu (BSc Mathematics and Statistics) had worked with children in her home country of Romania. She was looking for volunteering opportunities after finishing her final exams, and found the concept of Citrus Saturday “new and interesting”. She says: “Our role was to support and encourage our team members – without doing any of the work for them. It was important that they achieve the goals themselves, otherwise they would not get the most out of Citrus Saturday.”

The design of the programme and the commitment of the volunteers meant that teachers and parents/guardians had ancillary roles to play, encouraging the young people to sign up for Citrus Saturday. Many teachers and family members chose to get more involved, though, and supported the young people by turning up on the day to buy a glass of lemonade or two.

The legacy of Citrus Saturday has lasted far longer than a few hours’ frantic selling on a hot summer’s afternoon. Teachers have noticed that taking part in Citrus Saturday boosts a child’s confidence, helps them to think creatively and even get along better with their classmates. Tracey Williams says: “At school, children have a chance to do well at their studies or sports. For children who don’t fit into those categories, Citrus Saturday gives them a chance to shine at something else. A couple of the boys who are regarded as disruptive in class proved to be very good at motivating a team or engaging with the public.”

Many student volunteers will go on to become teachers after graduation, and gained invaluable experience working with young people. Others will be able to add their participation in Citrus Saturday to their CV when they come to look for a job. Moreover Josh, now 16, is keen to become a volunteer to help him gain at a place at university. Participants who reach 16 are encouraged to volunteer in the future – this is a key way to develop the programme, with mentors from past years’ participant groups working alongside next year’s budding young entrepreneurs.

Following 2011’s successful pilot, Citrus Saturday went UK-wide and beyond in 2012, with similar events taking place in Edinburgh, Somerset and Dublin. Tim Barnes hopes to introduce the concept to the rest of Europe within two years, by which time Citrus Saturday will have become a self-sustaining charity. “It’s the legacy of the funding from Interreg, without which we could not have come this far. What better tribute to the value of a programme like Open Innovation than to be able to go on without it?” he says.
About UCL

UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top-ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

www.ucl.ac.uk

About UCL Advances

The centre for entrepreneurship at UCL, UCL Advances, offers training, networking and business support for staff, students and external entrepreneurs to encourage and enable new enterprises to get going. Unique in the UK Higher Education sector, its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries, and currently delivers over 30 activity programmes.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Public Outreach

UCL is committed to supporting the creation of start-up businesses in a range of ways, including enabling younger people to find out about starting their own business. UCL Advances created Citrus Saturday to give teenagers a chance to learn about business-basics including budgeting, product design, customer services, sales and advertising – they then get the chance to create their own business making and selling lemonade to the public!

Any organisation can use the Citrus Saturday template to run the programme for their young people and each year a group of UCL students run one for local children – it’s a great chance for the young people to come into UCL and interact with the staff, students and facilities. They are treated as adults and get to use the university buildings and resources while attending a series of workshops to learn the business-basics and then as a base for their lemonade businesses.

This is a novel and engaging way to reach out to communities that wouldn’t naturally interact with UCL, giving the local young people a chance to do something fun, rewarding and unique.

www.citrussaturday.org

About Student Engagement

UCL is keen to help those students who are entrepreneurial to develop their ideas further. This is supported through the UCL Advances’ Student Venture Program, – a complete programme of support for UCL students that wish to start a business. It includes access to training, mentoring, one-to-one business advice from our in-house advisor, access to loans and grant funding and the use of our Hatchery space.

UCL Advances’ commitment to supporting start-ups extends to younger teenagers through the creation of Citrus Saturday, which we developed to enable young people to learn some business-basics and experience starting and running their own business. Any organisation can run a Citrus Saturday programme and each year a group of UCL student volunteers runs one for local children – it’s a great opportunity for UCL students to learn more about working with young people and engage with their local communities. The volunteers receive training in food hygiene and working with children, they then help run a series of workshops to teach the basic business skills required, then help the teenage entrepreneurs create and run their own drinks businesses, making and selling lemonade to the public. The Citrus Saturday programme runs just after the UCL exam season ends, so it’s a fun and rewarding start to the summer!

www.ucl.ac.uk/studentventures
www.citrussaturday.org