SOAS 60-Second Interview – UnLtd projects

Name(s)
Jayni Gudka and Carolynn Look

Photo of interviewee/logo

Project Title and Description
Ourglass UK

Ourglass UK is a kitemark certification that will be used by companies and consumers as a reference for ethical advertising. Similar to how Fairtrade helps consumers make decisions about which coffee to buy, we want consumers to be able to support companies that showcase Britain’s diversity in their media campaigns. We believe that techniques such as photo-editing, glorification of size zero, sexualisation and overemphasising gender stereotypes leave many people feeling vulnerable and inadequate for not fitting in with uncontested images of what the media considers "normal" and "attractive". We think that it is time for this to change, and with your support we hope that we can help make this change happen.

SOAS – What are you studying/did you study, involvement in societies/projects etc.?
Jayni is studying for an Msc in Asian Politics, and Carolynn is working towards her BA in Chinese and Development. Both of them show a strong interest in Asia, often discuss issues of development and feminism, as well as share a passion for art. This is a passion they hope to express through their project, giving every aspect of it a creative touch.

Date of graduation
September 2014 (Jayni)
June 2015 (Carolynn)

Why did you decide to apply for the UnLtd Funding?
The idea was born at the Social Enterprise Bootcamp, during a brainstorm about how an enterprise could tackle the issues of unnatural portrayals of women in advertising and the media.

We decided to apply because we saw true potential in our idea. Both of us are constantly coming up with ideas on things we would like to do in the world, but when we thought of Ourglass, we knew that it would be feasible and have an impact.
How did SOAS help?
SOAS brought us together and provided us training. Whenever we have a question or are stuck in a rut, we feel like we can get advice from our advisers at SOAS to help us move forward.

What do you hope to achieve through your project?
We hope to help shape a world in which not only “sex sells”, but in which companies see the profit in marketing more ethically, and in which we can allow every person to be seen with dignity and considered beautiful. The media influences us a lot, and if we only see exaggerated images of what people should look like, this is surely not healthy for society and individuals. Our projects aims to make everyone feel accepted, ‘normal’ and attractive.

Future plans?
We hope to take Ourglass forward and explore more possibilities with social enterprise in the future, perhaps focusing on similar problems in Asia.

Any tips for students who want to start something?
Brainstorm as much as possible. It’s really helpful to write down any idea, no matter how crazy, and then sort through them later. Working with someone else through these ideas might make a really crazy idea possible, and you may end up with something really unique!

Facebook/Twitter/Linkedin/website address for the project
www.ourglassuk.org
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www.twitter.com/ourglassuk