# The Real World Project 2015

## Key Points

- Authentic participatory project based pedagogies engaged students directly with a number of local businesses and corporations as they sort to respond to the recent implementation of the Welsh Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which is underpinned by sustainable development goals.
- Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales were advisors to the Welsh government during the consultation period of the Act, they acted as 'middle men' in advising students and linking them to their own corporate clients offering students the opportunity to address and respond to an impressive range of important sustainability issues faced in the real world.
- Highlighted the broader social, economic and environmental contexts in which the discipline and profession of Graphic Communications exists.

## Who?

The Real World project is a Level 6 BA Graphic Communication (BAGC) project designed to provide students with a supportive environment for developing the creative agency needed to address the intellectual and vocational challenges of designing in the real world.  The live brief is set by a client in discussion with BAGC staff.

## Why?

Cardiff Met has recently collaborated with Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales in a number of small scale sustainability oriented networking projects. The burgeoning collaboration between the two organisations in combination with the recent enactment of the Welsh Wellbeing for Future Generations Act provided a stimulating background against which students could engage with a range of real world sustainable development concerns as confronted by various regional organisations and corporations. The Act was an obvious source for developing an authentic live project based learning experience for students since the Welsh Government has led the way internationally in designing and implementing legislation that actively places responsibility on public bodies (along with an associated voluntary charter to which private corporations can sign up to) to work with the principle of sustainable development as an underpinning tenet in organisational decision making and activity. Students were involved in a highly contemporary project at the global vanguard of sustainable development legislative processes and their implementation (for example the Welsh Government has been consulted by the United Nations on how legislation of this type can be implemented elsewhere). As such the project enabled students to glean a key insight into the far reaching nature of sustainable development and its influence on environment, community and economy whilst also developing key professional skill sets required within the graphic communications industry such as client communication, notions of personal professional identity and public relations campaigning.

## How?

Cynnal Cymru linked CSAD students to a variety of their corporate clients who sought to consider the impacts and opportunities offered by the implementation of the Welsh Wellbeing for Future Generations Act with particular relevance to the Act's stated 'wellbeing goals' as they affect across the nation of Wales. Cynnal Cymru's clients were each linked up with a student group (of approx. four students) and asked to pose design briefs for challenges or campaigns related to the Act and its potential impact upon their organisation. As such students engaged directly with a broad range of highly authentic and contemporary sustainable development oriented challenges faced by real world corporate clients. The types of companies were varied making for a diverse range of projects in which the student groups were involved and allowing for a broad cross section of peer learning as students reported back their discussions and project development allowing for insight and cross fertilisation of ideas by students.

## Outcomes

The experiential value gleaned from the project was of a key benefit to learners in a number of fields: insight into the far reaching nature of sustainable development and its many facets; recognition of the key relationship between sustainable development and their own discipline and potential professional identities; demonstration of the rationale for encouraging behavioural change; identification of the relationship between sustainable development and economic and social considerations.