

Face 2 Face with Climate Change



David Mansell-Moullin, a graduate on the One Planet MBA, led a project with the Students' Guild's Students' Green Unit which took a creative approach to raising awareness around climate change. Combining David's skills and expertise from his MAs in Geography and Photography, and his work as a sustainability and environmental consultant, The Face 2 Face with Climate Change project is a photographic exhibition in the University of Exeter's Forum, featuring a series of striking black and white photographs of climate scientists from the Exeter region, bringing people 'Face 2 Face' with those at the forefront of tackling climate change.

David felt motivated to begin the project upon discovering how actively involved Exeter's scientists are with leading climate change research and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

He explained:

"Exeter is now a global hub for climate change thinking... During my first week on the University of Exeter's One Planet MBA course I heard that Exeter has the highest number of IPCC authors working on the 5th Assessment Report of any city in the world. I was amazed by this fact and that so few people, either in Devon or further afield, are aware that Exeter has this depth of climate change research and knowledge. This led to the question 'How could this be communicated in an interesting and engaging way'? Drawing on my artistic, photographic and sustainability background the idea for the Face 2 Face with Climate Change exhibition was born."

The project received funding from the Students' Green Unit, a department based within the Students' Guild, who are able to provide support and mentoring through the Green Fund - a partnership of 26 student unions funded by HEFCE and supported by the National Union of Students. The Students' Green Unit enables students to lead the change by creating their own innovative projects on the theme of sustainability.

David believed that it was vital that the research of the IPCC reports was shared in a creative and engaging way as climate change is a challenge we all face. His idea for a visual representation of the work of the IPCC scientists was recognized by the Students' Green Unit as an exciting opportunity for a project.

Featuring twelve of the leading Exeter IPCC authors, the final photographs were subtly overlain with texts from the IPCC reports, visually demonstrating the ideas that each scientist has dedicated their working lives to generating. These are the raw form of the very ideas that come to shape the public's perception of climate change.

The Face 2 Face exhibition was planned to coincide with the launch of the IPCC Synthesis Report on 31 October 2014. It was showcased for 6 weeks in Autumn 2014 and will be displayed in various locations in the South-West over the coming year.

David commented:

"The Face 2 Face with Climate Change project was my first major photographic exhibition in the UK and will be a valuable body of work to include on my website and CV...On a personal level, the project led to many fascinating encounters and conversations with the climate change experts that are based in Exeter. It also provided a means to become more directly involved in University activities, primarily through the Students' Guild's Students' Green Unit, and to offer something back to the University whilst I was studying on the MBA. In terms of raising awareness of climate change and the work of the IPCC, the interest the project generated has exceeded my expectations. Not only was I granted a prime place to exhibit the work for 6 weeks in the University Forum, but the project will also be displayed at the Met Office in Exeter, the Sidmouth Climate Festival, and has been shown on a number of web-based platforms."

The project's outputs are numerous; in addition to David's work being seen by a wide audience of students and climate change researchers, the project has gained attention from the local press and community. The project also provided David with fantastic opportunities for networking; Face 2 Face allowed David to meet and talk with a range of climate change experts, and forge excellent working relationships with staff working in the Students' Green Unit and the Arts & Culture department. While the project has been a fantastic career step for David, the project's impact among students and researchers lies at the heart of its success; David's photographs were distributed on A5 postcards at the IPCC conference in May, bringing the project to the 500 academics, scientists and local community in attendance.

The project has also received some exciting media attention, available to view at the following links:

<http://www.exeterguild.org/greenunit/face2face>
<http://www.artandsultureexeter.co.uk/event/696/face2face-with-climate-change>
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_416273_en.html
<http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/igov/face-2-face-with-climate-change/>
<http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk/Westcountry-s-dynamic-dozen-face-climate-change/story-24514565-detail/story.html?00>