The Go for Green project was an Old Vic New Voices education and community project that took place between January and May 2008.


Go for Green involved students participating in workshops designed and delivered by professional drama educators and the production of a large-scale new play, *Branded*.

*Branded* was performed to audiences, for free, at The Old Vic and brought together professional theatre makers and emerging talent.
The project had four clear aims

1. To engage young people in schools with environmental issues surrounding consumption, including the environmental impacts of manufacture and supply of goods, waste and recycling through interactive workshops and a new community play.

2. To produce an education pack, suitable for KS2 and 3 students, for distribution to 5,000 schools encouraging teachers to use drama and offer resources for further learning around the Go for Green themes.

3. To produce an engaging new play at The Old Vic, involving theatre professionals, and volunteers, drawn from young people and members of the community in London, exploring the environment, ecology and consumerism and offering a rewarding and inspiring creative experience, including skills and personal development, to all participants in the project both voluntary and professional.

4. To build successful partnerships with a range of organisations to deliver a high quality project with minimal environmental impact.
Go for Green worked with the following schools and over 900 students directly: Julians Primary School, Telferscot Primary School, Furzedown School, Brandlehow Primary School, St Anne’s (RC) Primary School, Wyvil Primary School, St Joachim’s School, Britannia Village Primary School, Oxford Gardens Primary School, Glenbrook Primary School, All Saints School, St Joseph’s Primary School, Rotherhithe Primary School, John Stainer Community School, Holy Trinity Primary School, St Michael’s CE School, Allen Edwards School, English Martyr’s School, Ursuling Prep School, Merton Abbey School, Copland Primary, Barshare Primary School, Drumoyne Primary School, Ursuline Primary School, Hill’s Trust Primary School, Logan Primary School, Cairhill Primary School, Govan School, Cumnock Academy, Greenmill Primary School.

Steve Winter, Jennifer Fordham, Bryony Roberts and Jack Murray devised workshops in collaboration with the Ela Stevenson, Education Officer from Adventure Ecology. Each school received one or two workshops in school. The workshops used a range of drama games and exercises to explore waste, recycling and environmental impact of everyday items purchased by students. The workshops also enabled students to develop teamwork, listening and acting skills in an inspiring and fun environment.
The workshops were very successful, providing an engaging and inspiring atmosphere in which to learn about environmental issues. In combining the expertise of professionals at Adventure Ecology and The Old Vic, both the content and delivery of the workshops was excellent. The partnership with Adventure Ecology also enabled students to access additional web-based resources to extend their knowledge around the subject area and engage in practical activities through the Match 'n' Act programme. Participants found the workshops fun, inspiring and interesting and reported increased knowledge around environmental themes. Teachers felt the workshops were relevant, engaging and well delivered. 3,000 students were given free tickets to attend a performance of *Branded* at The Old Vic. This included students who had participated in the workshops and students from other schools. Students attending ranged from year 5 to year 13 (aged 9–18) and for many was their first experience of theatre. *Branded* was visually exciting, engaging and relevant to the lives of the young people who attended, providing an exciting introduction to theatre and an enjoyable way to explore environmental issues.
2. To produce an education pack, suitable for KS2 and 3 students, for distribution to 5,000 schools encouraging teachers to use drama and offer resources for further learning around the Go for Green themes.

The resource pack was created to enable Go for Green to reach the widest possible audience and provide a legacy for the project. The pack is designed to make it easier for teachers working with Key Stage 2 and 3 students to deliver high quality lessons about environmental issues surrounding consumption, including the environmental impacts of manufacture and supply of goods, waste and recycling using drama techniques and activities.

The pack features detailed activity and session plans, equipping teachers with the confidence to deliver the games, and unique activities that were used in the workshops. All the activities have clear curriculum links so teachers can ensure that activities have real purpose and measurable learning outcomes. The resource pack also features an interactive guide to teaching drama, presented by the workshop leaders, who are both professional actors and drama educators.

A series of short films provide step-by-step guidance about how to deliver drama activities, enabling teachers to develop their skills and confidence in an accessible way.

A short ‘page-to-stage’ documentary about the project, including footage of Branded, provides supporting material to inspire classroom work and ensure a greater number of students access the original production.

The pack will be produced in a printed version for distribution to 5,000 schools and made available through the London Grid for Learning and on the Old Vic New Voices website.

The resource pack makes it possible for the initial investment in the project to benefit a greater number of teachers and students than the workshop programme was able to reach.
This was a fantastic opportunity and I have really enjoyed being part of it // working on such a huge stage; it's taught me what's required physically & vocally // I loved and relished every moment and I just don't know how it could have been better // meeting so many brilliant people from all walks of life // working on the Old Vic stage has made me feel like all my dreams are within my reach // I'm not afraid to make bold choices // I have gained so much confidence in dance and as a performer // I just felt really supported by everyone all of the time // choreographically, the style was something so different. It required a lot of focus to get it right, an invaluable new skill.

I am more aware of, and open to, new disciplines within the performance industry // I have higher learning and respect those performers of a discipline that is not like my own and find the fusion of many talents and styles can make for great and exciting theatre // the history of the theatre makes you feel incredibly humble and the staff and crew create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for both performer and audience // my time at the Old Vic was positive and allowed me to work with people that I may never have worked with had it not been for this project // I found myself opening out a little and becoming more fluid in my movements throughout Branded.

The best thing about Branded was the hip-hop dancing and the funny bits // the best thing was how all the situations connected together // they were real issues // it seemed that it actually happened. The characters really acted it out how it would have been outside // the best bit of Branded was when they were protesting for no third runway and all of the feeling and the atmosphere // it helped you think about what is going on in the world // the amazing dancing and use of media and the fight scenes // made me think of what I buy // it was funny but serious at the same time. I loved that the play had a moral issue in it // it was interesting and made me want to know what happened. It felt so real.

A very powerful production with lots of energy that the audience engaged in and interacted with // for many of the students that I brought it was the first time they had seen a piece of theatre. This was a fantastic opportunity for them. They were using ideas in their own work // it was fast paced and slick, visually excellent but also covered significant issues relevant to the children's lives which kept them interested // a very powerful comment on global green issues // it was a great opportunity for students to work to industry deadlines, be part of a creative team, meet & work with people from various disciplines & backgrounds. All students came away from this project with a real sense of achievement.
Branded was commissioned by Old Vic New Voices and written by award-winning playwright Simon Brent. Branded follows the journey of Treads Shoe Company and its charismatic leader Benjamin, and the people who design, make and wear its environmentally friendly shoes around the world.

The Branded company was directed by Matt Wilde and Aletta Collins, supported by a professional production team including a choreographer, assistant directors, sound designers, lighting designer, set and video designer and filmmaker. The production also made use of multimedia, incorporating a range of video into the design of the show. A six-week rehearsal period culminated in five free performances on 1–3 May at The Old Vic for a total audience of 5,025. The audience included students from local schools and colleges, community groups from Lambeth and Southwark and the general public. The performances were supported by volunteers from HSBC who worked as a front-of-house team, ensuring the audience had an enjoyable experience. Branded involved 101 volunteers from the community who took on a variety of roles including actors, dancers, musicians, singers and backstage crew. The volunteers were aged 17–50, from a huge range of ethnicities, 32% were in full-time education, 33% were in full-time employment, 51% were self-employed and 5% were unemployed. The performers, who were selected after an extensive audition process, were able to benefit from working with leading industry professionals in a world-renowned venue.

This unique experience enabled the volunteer performers to develop their skills, increase their confidence and participate in the creation of an exciting, major new work.

Branded also included a collaboration between students at Hackney Community College, The Old Vic wardrobe team and Junky Styling. With the expertise of the Junky Styling team in transforming second-hand clothes through high quality design and re-cutting the students created contemporary costumes for a huge cast.

The collaboration with the professionals at The Old Vic meant they could understand the specific demands of producing costume for theatre.

The finished result was visually stunning and enabled the students to develop new skills in design and production, increase their understanding of design for performance and contribute to their design portfolios.
4. To build successful partnerships with a range of organisations to deliver a high quality project with minimal environmental impact.

Go for Green developed a number of effective partnerships to ensure the successful delivery of this ambitious and large-scale project.


These partnerships harnessed skills, knowledge and resources to ensure the successful realisation of the project, adding value to the participants’ experiences and ensuring the highest possible standards were achieved. The partnerships also made sure that individual partners were able to meet their objectives in reaching new audiences, effecting change around environmental issues and supporting the community through involvement with the Go for Green project.

The aims of Go for Green match the HSBC Commit to Change policy for example, meaning the project linked directly to HSBC’s aims to support environmental and educational initiatives in a creative and engaging way. The legacy of the project, through the resource pack, ensures that the investment in the project reaches the widest number of beneficiaries.

Investment from The City Bridge Trust enabled the delivery of the Go for Green schools’ workshops, meeting the trusts objective to support the environmental education of Londoners. Through engaging students in creative learning opportunities that enabled them to explore environmental themes the workshops provide accessible opportunities to increase their knowledge. The workshops encouraged students to share their knowledge and take action, asking friends or family members to match these actions. This ensures that the project reaches the widest number of people. The resource pack also supports the education of Londoners through engaging with the widest possible audience.

The partnership with Adventure Ecology ensured that the information used to develop the content of the workshops, and inspire Branded, was accurate and relevant. The partnership also encouraged workshop participants to act on their new knowledge by signing up to Adventure Ecology’s Match ‘n’ Act programme. Workshop participants were encouraged to identify an act that would make a positive change to the environment and then encourage a friend or family member to match this action. The Adventure Ecology website also provides participants with the opportunity to explore themes in more detail, ensuring that Go For Green leaves a legacy for those students who wish to continue to explore the themes of the project.

The partnership with Terra Plana gave the Branded cast the opportunity to wear ethically sourced and environmentally sustainable footwear for the production. In linking to the key story of Branded, it was an excellent showcase for the Terra Plana brand and enabled access to new audiences. In working with Junky Styling, Branded costumes were created from recycled clothing, supporting the Go for Green ambition of having minimal environmental impact.

All partners were key to the success of the project and their generous support ensured the success of this ambitious venture.
The following feedback was gathered from children, teachers, performers, crew and professionals which shows how much the project was valued by everyone involved, and how it has affected change in their attitudes towards green issues.

The schools’ workshops were very successful with 88% of students enjoying them. 69% of students thought they were fun, and 68% found them to be interesting. 71% of students felt they learned about the effects of climate change, and 86% felt they had learnt more about how waste can damage the environment. 62% of students said the workshops had taught them about the effects of what they buy has on the environment and on other people’s lives. 78% of students learnt more about what they can do to help the environment.

As part of the workshops, 35% of the participants committed to a specific act that they would ask a friend, family member or other students in their school to match. These pledges included turning off the tap when brushing teeth; not leaving the TV on standby; recycling as much as possible; using less paper and switching off lights when not in the room.

Teachers were also very positive in their feedback. 94% rated the workshop content as good or excellent and 100% rated the workshop leaders’ skills and rapport as good or excellent.

When considering the performance of Branded, 90% of teachers thought it was good or excellent. 70% of students thought the performance was interesting and 50% said it made them think about what they could do to protect the environment.

Participants in the community play were also asked about their experiences of the project. 80% felt they had developed skills in their chosen field and 52% thought they had learnt new skills in general. 62% of volunteers felt that their confidence had improved and 52% said their views on environmental issues had changed through their participation in the project.

To encourage environmental awareness was a main aim of the show, not only for the audience watching, but also in the Branded company themselves. 43% of the company felt that their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues had increased and the same number said they had been inspired to recycle more and reduce energy consumption through participating in the production. 81% of participants rated the experience of participation in the project as good or excellent.
The Go for Green project was very successful. This can be attributed to a number of key factors:

**Building effective partnerships**
The Old Vic New Voices project team built partnerships with a range of key organisations whose objectives matched those of the project. This ensured that the partnerships supported the delivery of an excellent project, meeting the needs of all those involved.

**Quality of the project team**
Go for Green brought together high calibre, skilled and experienced professionals from a range of disciplines to ensure that all the work was of a very high standard.

**Striving for excellence**
The Old Vic New Voices team ensure that excellence in creative practice and practical delivery are central to the way they work. In setting high expectations for everyone involved in the project, and providing appropriate support, professionals and participants were challenged to reach their full potential.

**Leaving a legacy**
Through the resource pack, engaging participants with partners’ activities and in providing skills development for professionals and participants, Go for Green is able to have a lasting impact.