

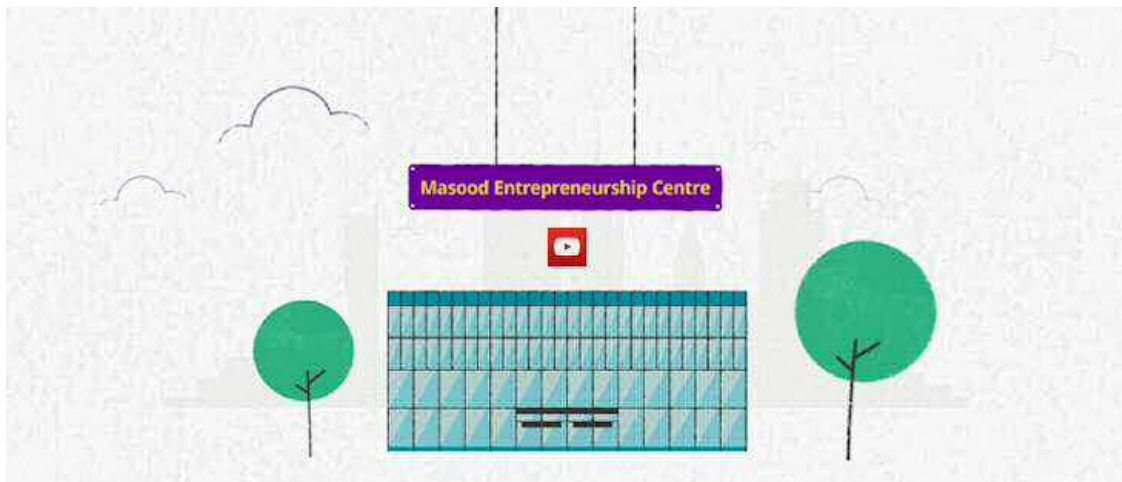
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Masood
Entrepreneurship
Centre

MEC Update

Issue 4 | 10 March 2021



Welcome to the latest [Masood Entrepreneurship Centre](#) newsletter...

MEC News

The Eli and Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Award 2021: express your interest



The Eli and Britt Harari Enterprise Award competition, in association with Professor Sir Andre Geim, is now open to all students, postdoctoral researchers, and recent graduates of The University of Manchester. This annual competition, managed by the Masood Entrepreneurship Centre, encourages new ideas for graphene based enterprises.

Graphene, a two dimensional carbon material, is a game-changing UK discovery and its properties make it one of the most important breakthroughs in recent memory. Graphene is a wonder material, with incredible electrical, with incredible electrical, mechanical and thermal properties.

Prizes of £50,000 and £20,000 will be awarded to the individuals or teams who can best demonstrate how their technology relating to graphene or other 2D materials could potentially be applied to a viable commercial opportunity.

[Find out more](#)

University Entrepreneurs Grant Winner



Congratulations to Dr. Mohammad El Hajj, recipient of the University Entrepreneurs Grant 2021!

The University Entrepreneurs Grant is part of the Educate North Awards, a regional awards ceremony for FE and HE institutions.

Two of the Entrepreneurs Grant finalists who had presented business plans to be scrutinised by the judges Phil Hodari, CEO of The Pilot Group, and Dr. Jacob Salder of the Masood Entrepreneurship Centre, the awards' official patron - are from the University of Manchester - Dr. Mohammad El Hajj and Riddi Viswanathan. Mohammad and Riddi had previously been supported by MEC in developing their business ideas through the Start-up Visa scheme.

Mohammad discussed his his award winning plans in an interview with the SmoothNorthWest radio station.

Hear from Mohammad

[Keep up-to-date with the latest MEC news here](#)

Spotlight on



Care Homes Trial Biometric Certification for COVID Testing

The Warren Manor Day Care home in Blackpool has become the first in the UK to demonstrate an inclusive biometric certification system, which does not rely on smartphones, to ensure the safety of residents, staff, and visitors.

The EN-Covid passport solution, funded through a Government-backed Innovate UK grant, is a collaboration led by Enduring Net, a not-for-profit privacy specialist previously supported by MEC in last year's ASPECT Success Accelerator programme designed to help social scientists with innovative and marketable research ideas to get the training, support and funding to transform their ideas into a business or social enterprise.

The technology captures finger vein biometrics to enable secure, identity-enabled transactions, confirming identity as well as recording COVID-19 test status, giving a robust, secure, and fraud-proof system to ensure the safety of residents and staff.

Enduring Net, along with its collaborative partners in Blackpool and Fingo, have built a digital passport system that essentially all future 'track and trace' systems could be built on. Using the blockchain based SSI framework, the system not only encrypts the data used, it also complies with GDPR and EU data privacy laws in knowing where the data is at all times with the ability to delete that data instantly on request or by the individual themselves.

Manchester University Professor Ser-Huang Poon, [Enduring Net](#) founder and Project Lead commented: *“The toll on the care sector has been devastating. Working with [FinGo](#) and [Blockpool](#), [Enduring Net](#) wanted to create a digital passport that could help ease some of the pressures on the care sector and protect the most vulnerable. We’ve created a digital passport that provided certainty of results and, vitally, lets individuals have control over their personal data.”*



[Find out more](#)



Entrepreneur Changing Youth Lives Through Dance

Christina Taylor, a former Manchester University MEnt. student, was recently featured in the American business magazine [Forbes](#). Christina is an entrepreneur who has spent over a decade using dance to help transform the lives of young people. She founded a dance company [Aim Sky High](#) in 2013 to help socially mobilise children and young people and address social issues through the medium of dance. [Aim Sky High](#) has gone from 23 children initially to over 200 in the performing arts school and the company works with an average of 500 school children a week. The school boasts current European and World Streetdance Champions.

The company also provides additional free of charge community dance sessions in the deprived areas of Greater Manchester.

In June 2019, Christina then stated the [Aim Sky High Talent](#) agency to manage young creative talent.

[Read more](#)



International Women's Day

International Women's Day is celebrated around the world on 8 March every year and in 2021 the theme of the day was #ChoosetoChallenge.

For the Northern Power Women Live event, the University of Manchester alumna and founder of Generation Purple Riddi Viswanathan shared her journey helping the representation of migrants and international students in corporate workplaces.



The TiE Women network's aim is to embrace, engage and empower women entrepreneurs across the globe – irrespective of the size of the enterprises, origin, standing or background. They are currently promoting the TiE Women Global Pitch Competition.



[Find out more](#)



Budget 2021

MEC's Dr. Rob Phillips, Senior Lecturer in Enterprise, commented on the recent Budget and how it might affect the self employed and SMEs.

[Read more](#)

Competitions, awards and events

Graphene Hackathon

The Graphene Hackathon - a student-led initiative - is a free virtual event that offers you an initial opportunity to discover what the graphene hype is all about, develop an idea and then pitch your idea for cash prizes. The event aims to unlock your inner-entrepreneur by providing a dynamic space for rapid learning, failure and innovation, allowing you a chance to rethink the traditional product development process.

The Graphene Hackathon takes places in the week of **26 - 30 April 2021**. Places are limited, so register now before the final deadline of **Friday, 9 April 2021**.

[Register](#)



Value Proposition training session for our budding



entrepreneurs

Thursday 18 March, 9.30am-12.30pm.

Understanding the Value Proposition of your product is essential to make sure you are developing a product that is needed by the customer/end user and to convince your potential business development partners that the market opportunity is attractive and relevant.

The aim of this course is to provide you with the skills needed to identify and understand the key value proposition of the product you are using as the basis for a new business.

Please note the cohort size is restricted to a maximum of 20 so [register](#) now to secure a place.

[Register](#)

Grow Your Start-up Business Through PR

Friday 12 March, 12.00-12.45pm.

MEC are one of the sponsors of the entrepreneur network [TiE UK North](#). A forthcoming event in the TiE Entrepreneur Series features Alex Bell, the Director of BellPress Public Relations and Communications, a consultancy he founded at the start of 2021. He most recently ran a communications agency in Manchester. His journalism career has spanned 10 years where he has been a specialist business reporter covering Manchester's residential and commercial property boom, the oil price slump, the business of sport, politics, global conferences and has run his own opinion column in Britain's largest and best read regional news publisher.



Alex has now partnered with [TiE UK North](#) to cover topics of interest with a special interest in early stage businesses. Please register to attend **by email** to: hello@tieuknorth.org.

Vita Student Big Talks: Brand Edition

Thursday 18 March, 6.00pm.

You're invited to join key-note speakers, Huib Van Bockel and Q&A panel guest Jeremy Schwartz.

Huib van Bockel is founder of TENZING, a 100% natural energy drink company. Huib served 8 years at Red Bull as Head of Marketing for Europe and played a key role in the transformation of Red Bull from an energy drink company to a mass media giant. Huib is now seen as one of the new marketing thought leaders and has been voted one of the Top 100 CMO's by HotTopics, one of the Top 100 marketers by Campaign Magazine and one of the Top 100 Innovators by Marketing Magazine. Award winning marketer, author and world-class entrepreneur.

Jeremy Schwartz is the inventor of Coke Zero, served as CEO of The Body Shop and Pandora as well as Managing Director of L'Oreal and is now Chair of the Board for plant-based consumer goods company Good Hemp.



[Register](#)

Women In Science webinar

Our Enterprise Business Development Manager, Dr. Laura Etchells was delighted to speak as part of the [North West Biotech Initiative Women in Science](#) event last month focusing on career opportunities for Women in STEM. If you missed it you can watch it now:



[Watch the webinar](#)



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