



Picture this....12 December 2012

Interviewer:	So Josie, I understand your organisation has just scooped the prestigious 'Save the Planet' award. We are broadcasting this interview live across the globe so can you please explain to our audience what this means.
Josie:	Sure, Greig. The 'Save the Planet' award is sponsored by several governments across the globe and offers a prize of £1 million for the most innovative project designed by an international youth group. The group has to design and implement a project that will make a substantial contribution to the 'the 22 nd Century Earth' agenda - fully engaging businesses, the public sector and other key partners. This is the first year the award has been given, and the Rainbow Network was up against almost a thousand other groups! You could say that competition was extremely tough!!
Interviewer:	Wow, cool! How long did the project take and how did you finance it?
Josie:	The delivery of the pilot project took around a year, though in reality we have been working on this for around three years. The project cost £250,000 and all the money came from global corporations and local government grants – we weren't too choosy!
Interviewer:	OK, Josie. Let's not keep our audience in any more suspense – tell us a bit about your group and your winning project.
Josie:	<p>Right Greig. The Rainbow Network formally came together around 2 years ago although several of us were already doing work in this area. We were sick and tired of what was happening to the planet and really fed up about not having a voice in what was going on. In September 2009, I read an article about how close humans were to destroying the planet and for the first time in my life I was actually scared about the future – hell, I was scared that I didn't have a future!!</p> <p>We came together first of all on Face Book. A mixed group from around the world who actually cared about the future and were prepared to do something about it rather than wait for the powers that be to give us permission. Although we came from 6 different countries, we all noticed how many other young people we knew seemed oblivious to what was going on, preoccupied with the latest mobile phones, which actor was banging who, whether a size zero was really the way to go, you know!</p>
Interviewer:	Yeah – I know what you mean!! I changed my iPhone twice last year...
Josie:	Jeez, Greig! I need to talk to you off-line about that one! Anyway... back to the project. The more we looked at it, the more we realised what a blinkered existence we were all living. I'm not saying that I wasn't interested in all the things my friends were, that I didn't spend hours chatting stuff on-line, that I wasn't interested in the latest fashion, the soaps, buying the latest mobile, Netbook etc. Of course I was. But after I read that article and joined Leap Frog, it's like my eyes became open and I



	knew then that I could never go back. I know this sounds crazy, but it was a bit like that film the Matrix when Keanu Reeves wakes up and realises that he was living in an artificial 'reality' and once he woke up to this, he could never go back to it, and so he led the fight to wake up others and help set them free.
Interviewer:	Wow, heavy! Are you saying that all of us under 18 are like the slaves in the Matrix? Oblivious to what's going on around them and being fed rubbish to keep them quiet?
Josie:	Hmmm... no, I wasn't saying that, Greig - but it's an interesting thought, isn't it!! I think there is an element of 'control' being dished out by governments, educational and religious institutions, the media and global corporations that is designed to keep people of <u>all</u> ages in their place, but let's leave that for another interview another time shall we!?
Interviewer:	Point taken! OK, so, tell us about the project, Josie.
Josie:	I won't bore you with our marketing strategy and the days and weeks we spent trying to persuade the big companies to sponsor us – you can read all about that on our website. Sometimes it was hard to keep going. Most members of the Rainbow Network are either at school or college so it's not like we could work on this 24/7, but what we do all share is our total commitment to taking action and making a difference. I know this sounds dramatic, but we are talking about life and death here, Greig.
Interviewer:	I'm beginning to see that, Josie...
Josie:	Anyway, we realised that one of our key strengths is in networking, with finding allies in all walks of life; any age any race, any creed etc. We have a clear vision and sound core values and know this fight has to be fought together. We understand that finding common purpose and working in partnerships is key.
Interviewer:	You make it sound like a war!
Josie:	Sorry, Greig, but I can't think of any battle or war that has ever been fought that is as important as the survival of humankind...
Interviewer:	True. So, back to the project...
Josie:	We thought long and hard about this and regardless of the 'Save the Planet' competition, we decided that we would take action anyway. The reason we engaged with the award, even though we were initially quite sceptical about their motivation, was that we thought we could generate some really good publicity and big companies would also see something in it for them – and give us money!
Interviewer:	Yeah, so why did they give you money?
Josie:	As I said, one of our key strength is in networking. We hooked up with any group or person that was engaged in this agenda; did lots of blogging, twittering - you know -



	<p>whatever it took to get people's attention. Once we got the media's and politicians' attention, companies were queuing to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem – simple really!</p>
Interviewer:	<p>You make it sound so easy!</p>
Josie:	<p>Not at all – it was incredibly hard work, and the Big Boys only joined in when they saw no alternative. Our job was to get them to this position as quickly as possible!!</p>
Interviewer:	<p>What about governments?</p>
Josie:	<p>They also saw the inevitability of it all. It's like a runaway train – gathering a momentum of its own. Our project wasn't a new idea. As I say it was prompted by an article I read way back in 2009. 9th of the 9th 2009, actually! Some guy called Gary Scholz with a call to action – it really caught my attention. So anyway, our project decided to focus on the transformation of the education system. Sounds kind of scary, doesn't it? Who the hell did we think we were? A bunch of 'kids', taking on one of the most powerful institutions on the planet! Drastic times sometimes require drastic action though, don't you think?</p>
Interviewer:	<p>No arguing with that!</p>
Josie:	<p>The project itself had several strands. We connected with teacher training colleges to influence their curriculum; we sat on government advisory boards, examination boards. There was a whole strand of work dedicated to changing the status quo. We linked up with other groups who were dedicated to changing things – people already part of the system but who wanted to change it. We had a steep learning curve ourselves, I can tell you, but fortunately we had a lot of allies across the world who were keen to join us once the train started rolling.</p> <p>A whole other strand of work was around the empowerment of young people: this scared me most actually!! How could we share our thinking with other young people, get them hooked, persuade them to take action without turning them off or thinking we were patronising them or spoiling their fun! This is where big business and the media came in. God knows how, but we persuaded them to start changing their advertising and marketing strategies. It took a long time but they eventually saw what was in it for them, and what would be the consequence of being left behind – they soon jumped on the train. Government pressure and financial incentives also helped grease the wheels of course!</p>
Interviewer:	<p>So attitudes of young people started to change because of a change in approach of the media and business?</p>
Josie:	<p>In a small way, yes, but there was much more to it than that of, course. Also it wasn't just <u>young</u> people's attitudes we were trying to influence. There was also work to be done with parents, carers, teachers, religious bodies – so many groups as you can imagine! The work has only just started really.</p> <p>As I said, we spent a lot of time in influencing the educationalists and politicians. As</p>



	<p>a result of this stream of work (and this is what we got the award for) the educational system in the pilot schools and colleges in the participating countries radically changed. Hard to believe that this journey has only taken 3 years, isn't it? Can you imagine... young people with real influence over the content of the curriculum, the way it's taught, when it's taught... a level of accountability by the system to young people themselves, that has <u>never</u> previously been experienced.</p> <p>Did this approach have an impact upon 'educational attainment' within the pilot sites? You betcha!! Make no mistake, Greig, future global leaders are coming out of these schools!!</p>
Interviewer:	Incredible! So where can our audience go to learn more about the pilot schools and colleges and the work you're doing?
Josie:	They should check out our website – it has lots of pictures and videos of the pilot sites and also lets people know how they can get involved.
Interviewer:	Well, thank you, Josie, and good luck with your work. By the way, how are you going to spend the £1 million?
Josie:	<p>It sounds like a lot of money doesn't it, but it's really just a drop in the ocean. In fact, I think I'm going to put pressure on Keanu and his mates to give us some more money - LOL!!!</p> <p>Actually, we'll probably spend some of the money on e-marketing and publicity so we can extend and strengthen our global network; maybe get some famous people to publicly endorse our work.</p> <p>There is so much more work to be done not just mainstreaming the work started in the pilot schools and colleges, but also in promoting good quality education in the countries that aren't engaged.</p>
Interviewer:	So, Josie, what do you see as your biggest challenge in the next phase?
Josie:	Sustainability, Greig – keeping the thing rolling and gathering further momentum! Apathy is our most dangerous enemy. We need to persuade all those do-gooders that it's time to stop talking about change, get off their arses and do something about it NOW: don't wait... take action TODAY!!!
Interviewer:	So to all you cool dudes watching or listening to this – you've heard the message loud and clear. Are you up to the challenge? Its decision time, friends: make no mistake; if you miss this train, then there just might not be another one....

NB. Yep, there's no fooling you - this is actually a fictional account! However, it just might describe what could be if only we would wake up and smell the decaf NOW, before it's too late...

Janice Joannou, Rainbow Consultants,
 Email: Janice@RainbowConsultants.org.uk
 Web: www.rainbowconsultants.org.uk