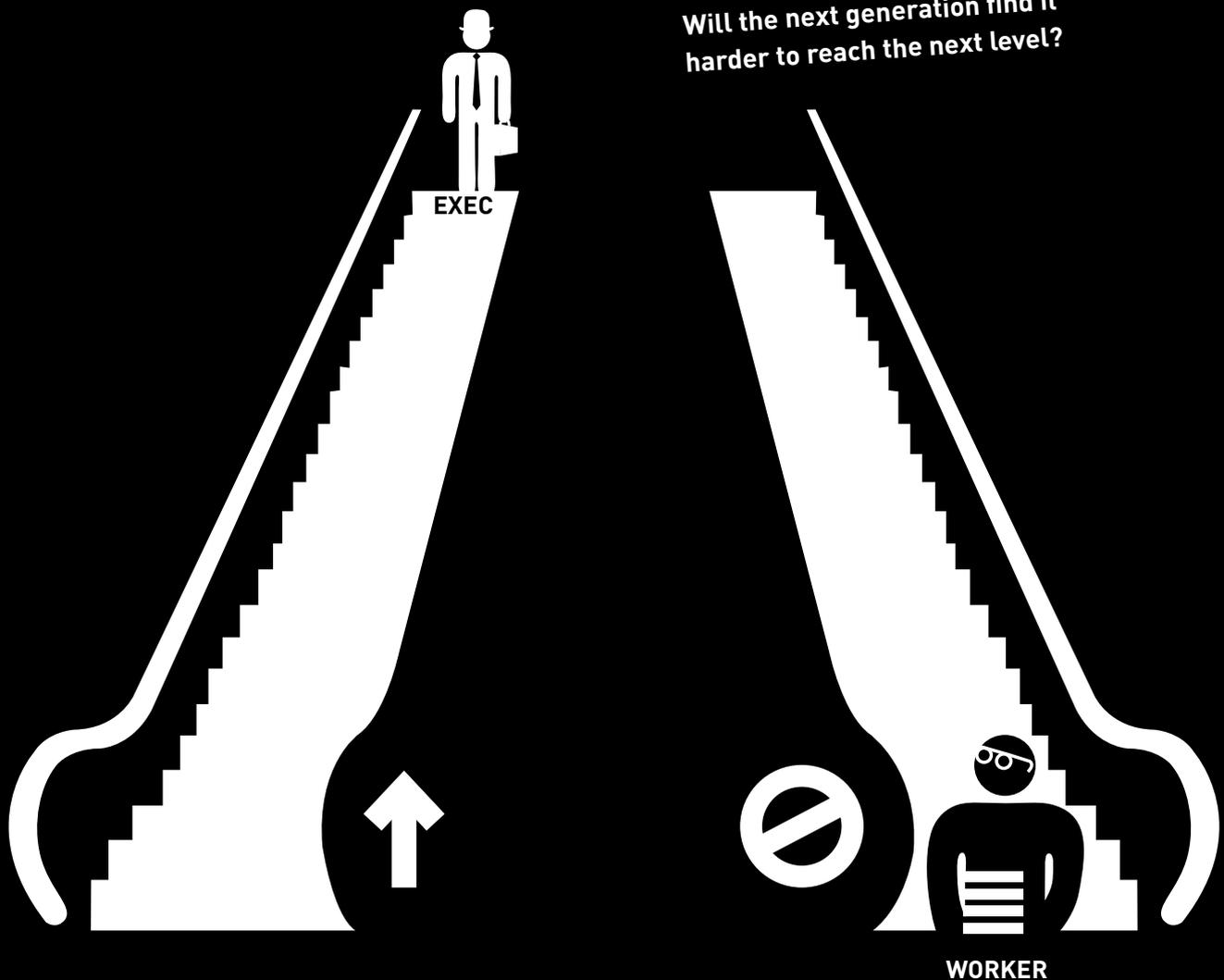


# the new idealist

Current affairs  
Science  
Psychology  
Ethical technology  
Global perspectives

## DOWNWARDLY MOBILE?

Will the next generation find it  
harder to reach the next level?



**THE STUDENT ROOM/** Will students ever trust the Lib Dems again?

**INTERNATIONAL DIARIES/** Life in New Orleans & The Microloan Foundation in Malawi.

**HAVE YOU HEARD OF?/** Interview with David Johnston, Chief Exec of the Social Mobility Foundation.

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## Editorial Team

**Managing Editor**  
 Lydia Andal



**Student Editor**  
 Mariana Cerqueira



**Designer**  
 Julie Thomas



# Welcome



Welcome to the launch edition of **The New Idealist**, a brand new magazine established to deliver a new style of current affairs, debate and entertainment for those involved in the not-for-profit, university and political fields, as well as those who like an intelligent read.

This issue focuses on a theme which is often unmentioned in our everyday life, yet impacts all of us in different ways. There are several ways to look at social mobility; you can consider the widening gap between the rich and the poor (an area which is extremely well researched with mind-bending statistics in the book "The Spirit Level" by Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson), or the ability for your generation to achieve a greater standard of living than that of your parents. All points of view are covered in two magnificent articles by our contributors in The BIG Debate section.

In The Student Room we canvass the views of university students on their opinion of the Lib Dems following the tuition fees U-turn and hear from a student reporting on the rise of university "ghost towns" as more students look to save money by living at home to complete their degrees.

As a magazine with an international focus, we look at how technology has helped to revolutionise the fortunes of the poor in villages throughout Malaysia and have some interesting diaries from our contacts in New Orleans and Malawi.

On an individual level, for those of us struggling with life and career choices, the Six Steps to Personal Fulfilment guide is a useful workshop to help separate the wood from the trees.

In our travel section we look at how to make the most of a visit to London on a budget and conclude with some final thoughts from the Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation.

We welcome your thoughts and feedback on anything to do with the magazine at [mail@thenewidealists.com](mailto:mail@thenewidealists.com)

**Lydia Andal**  
 Managing Editor

the new **idealist**

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE FOR US?

We would like to extend a large thank you to all of our contributors for this issue: Gareth Davies, Steven McCabe, Stephen Tall, Christie Fraser, Clifton Harris, Jack Kazembe, Mary Lucas and Professor Mike Hardy OBE.

We are always interested in topical contributions in the areas of current affairs, science, psychology, ethical technology and history from university academics, not-for-profit organisations and political commentators. If you have a relevant topic you think might be of interest for a future issue please email across a brief synopsis and a short bio to [mail@thenewidealists.com](mailto:mail@thenewidealists.com) (we will respond to all enquiries).

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## ABOUT THE NEW IDEALIST MAGAZINE

If you are wondering how we have packed such a lot into a magazine with such a small page count, it's because we don't carry any adverts. We publish the magazine for free both in print and digitally so that cost is no barrier for anyone who wants to read the magazine. We are ad-free because we want to establish the magazine and publish a wide range of topics free of advertiser influence.

If you have enjoyed reading the magazine and would like to support us, please download the next issue from [www.thenewidealists.com](http://www.thenewidealists.com)

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## VACANCY: MANCHESTER OR LONDON BASED FREELANCE DESIGNER WANTED

We are looking for an additional graphic designer to help put the magazine together every quarter. **Pay:** Peanuts, **Print Deadline:** Always tight. **Design Credit:** Huge. Must have print magazine/newsletter design experience and live in or near London or Manchester. If this dazzling offer is of interest please email in a CV, PDF portfolio or a link to your online portfolio (no large attachments via email though thank you) to [mail@thenewidealists.com](mailto:mail@thenewidealists.com) and we will be in touch.

## Something to think about...Technology

### MOVING UP: Improving social mobility in Malaysia through digital classrooms

When the Malaysian government decided to take action to improve the social mobility and life opportunities of its young people it decided upon a historic and innovative educational initiative.

Its solution was to provide a virtual learning environment and 4G internet access for use at every one of its 10,000 state schools, bridging the gap between the different areas and ethnically diverse populations which make up its modern day society. While about 90 per cent of Malaysian children attend school, which is mandatory for all 6-15 year olds, there are huge disparities between urban and rural regions of the country. UNICEF estimates that more than 72,000 Malaysian children under 15 live in difficult conditions, with children in rural areas hardest hit and less likely to attend school.

In an effort to level out this educational playing field, the Malaysian government launched the **1BestariNet** project to deliver countrywide installation of high speed 4G broadband internet. With this in place it then brought us in to provide our tablet-based learning platform to every one of its 10,000 state schools. This connected 10 million users to our 'Virtual Learning Environment' (VLE) – an internet operating system that gives students and teachers virtual access to education resources such as lesson plans, tests and worksheets.

In this way we are giving every child equal access to the same technology, high quality resources and content, regardless of their abilities and any geographical or socio-economic barriers. A child in a poor remote area has the same access as a child from a wealthy city. The skills learnt through technology do not even necessarily have to be academic. The technology also offers the opportunity to develop vocational skills, for example instructional videos on construction or agriculture. Everyone is able to benefit, no matter what their ambitions or future career paths may be.

The system has the additional benefit of raising teaching standards by supporting collaboration between high and low performing schools, sharing best teaching methods and resources. The Malaysian government is confident that its initiative will have a significant impact on social mobility for a whole generation of children as their improved education leads them to better jobs, health and overall improved quality of life.

Each issue we will bring you a feature on a new development or reflection in the areas of science, technology, history and philosophy. This issue to tie in with our Social Mobility theme, we look at how technology helps improve the lives of school children in Malaysia.

As Nelson Mandela once said; 'Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world'.

Following successful installation of our new learning platforms, we are now working to make adoption of the technology as simple and non-threatening as possible. FrogAsia trains and mentors staff from 351 selected 'Champion Schools' on the implementation of Frog, under a 40-week 'Transformation Programme'.

The emerging markets are a key area of expansion for us and we plan to develop this work in Asia still further. While in Western countries it is not easy for governments to purchase countrywide products in this way – resulting in a rather piecemeal approach – where countries are starting from scratch and are able to purchase a system in the way that Malaysia has done, we offer a relatively inexpensive way of making a vast difference to the future of the country.

Improving social mobility in this way means that a child's life chances are not dictated by the circumstances of their birth. In the not too distant future, it will be possible for anyone, anywhere on the planet to have a really great education.

Gareth Davies is Managing Director of Frog which he co-founded in 1999. [www.frogtrade.com](http://www.frogtrade.com)



# The BIG debate



Stephen McCabe

## IS THE COALITION GOVERNMENT DOING ENOUGH TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL MOBILITY?

Have you noticed an increasing gap between the rich and the poor? Is society moving backwards instead of forwards? What is the government doing about it? We're not sure so we asked two people with in-depth knowledge of the subject to shed some more light on the issue for us.

The problem of encouraging social mobility for those from low-income backgrounds is the by 'what means' question?

Education is the way to liberate both minds and people. So, therefore, all that is required is to invest in education and everything will be fine. Sadly, as has been found by successive governments, it is not that simple.

Education has been a contentious topic for decades and, of course, still is.

There used to be selective education which, as critics pointed out was elitist though advocates point to its power in enabling 'bright' children from poor backgrounds to progress into very senior professional positions in organisations.

I strongly suspect that the current Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, would be a big supporter of selection.

Gove is a 'poster boy' of social mobility and was brought up by adoptive Labour-supporting parents, and won a scholarship to an independent school which enabled him to go to Oxford and become president.

He believes his reform of education will provide children with the same opportunities as he had though change has been achieved without consultation and will result in teaching by rote and the memorisation of facts.

The speed at which academy schools opened under Gove may be seen as fundamental to his belief that bypassing unionised teachers resistant to change is the only way to assist disadvantaged children.

Context is important and it should be remembered that the period between the end of the second-world-war and the 1970s in Britain was characterised by economic growth and a belief that the future was bright.

Those deemed not capable of entering selective grammar schools could look forward to jobs in technical and commercial occupations and support from employers to attend local colleges to attain City and Guild qualifications.

But recessions of recent decades have established a gulf between the 'haves' and 'have nots'.

For the 'have nots' poverty has created hopelessness and what is commonly referred to as 'poverty of aspiration'; something New Labour identified as an urgent priority resulting in vast amounts being spent on both facilities and teachers.

## the aim is clear: to reduce the attainment gap and enable everyone to get on in life

The coalition government inherited an economy which, they argue, needed urgent cuts.

Besides, they argue, the previous governments under Blair and Brown were far too profligate with public money and the results inconclusive.

It is a fact that current economic circumstances have significantly reduced opportunity and jobs that once would have gone to school leavers aged 16 with minimal qualification are now likely to be taken by graduates.

A degree is no longer seen as a guarantee to success so it is hardly a surprise that those who have least – the poor – are even less motivated to strive to amass debt through going to university.



We are into a 'vortex of decline' and what is especially worrying is that the gulf between those who believe in education and those who are, at best, indifferent, is widening under the coalition.

As a consequence social mobility is being undermined by the belief that education is pointless because advancement is limited.

Recent research by Mark Taylor and Tina Rampino who are based in the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex shows that young people who develop a sense of hopelessness pass this belief onto their children.

As a consequence the problem of social mobility becomes endemic.

This research is resonant with the annual report produced by The Resolution Foundation 'Essential Guide to Squeezed Britain' which demonstrates that the number of families on low to middle income is increasing and that this group struggle to cope financially which causes them to have less optimism than ever.

Any effort by the coalition government to increase social mobility is hardly helped by the widely held perception that the cabinet is made up of privileged millionaires who attended the best schools.

So advice to parents experiencing social deprivation to encourage their children to work hard at school and go to university, in the process racking up debt with no guarantee of a job won't be well received.

For such people getting through from week-to-week is tough enough already. Recent announcements of cuts to benefits will only make poverty of aspiration even worse. Knowing this and recognising the long-term consequences of reduced social mobility the current government should commit itself to substantial investment.

It should reread the white paper published in January 2009 by former Labour Minister Alan Milburn who chaired a commission on how to assist the disadvantaged.

Some in government might argue we cannot afford Milburn's recommendations. But can we afford the human consequences of the cuts caused by austerity? The current government clearly believes in encouraging social mobility but it needs to do more to positively encourage those who are most affected by increasing poverty.

If they don't we'll simply become even more unequal.

**Dr. Steven McCabe is an Economist, Business Lecturer and Director of Research Degrees at Birmingham City Business School.**

**VERDICT: NO**



**Stephen Tall**

**IS THE COALITION GOVERNMENT DOING ENOUGH TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL MOBILITY? ▶▶**

**Social mobility: it's a phrase much-beloved by politicians from all three parties. Who, after all, can possibly disagree with the fine sentiments of Nick Clegg in his social mobility strategy paper <sup>(1)</sup>**

Let me ask you another question, though: when did you last hear anyone unconnected with the Westminster Village — an 'ordinary voter' — talk about social mobility? It doesn't even rate a mention in Ipsos MORI's polls <sup>(2)</sup> tracking the issues of concern: unsurprisingly, the economy comes top.

This chasm between how the Government talks about the principal goal of its social policy and the concerns of the public is in itself a problem. But perhaps more telling is the way all parties are happy to engage with social mobility as a smokescreen for the debate that still matters more: how is inequality best tackled?

Before we address that question, though, let's be clear about our definitions. The extent to which you're able to do better than your parents were — what's termed absolute social mobility — may simply be a function of economic growth or technological change. How likely it is you'll be able to move up (or down) the social or income ladder compared to others is what's known as relative social mobility. The political focus is on the latter measure, as Nick Clegg's white paper makes clear.

In other words, the Coalition's priority is delivering equality of opportunity. The drive has been, therefore, to improve the education of the poorest in society. The reason why is not surprising. A five year-old child living in poverty today is already the equivalent of eight months behind their better-off peers in terms of cognitive development. And this gap between children from rich and poor backgrounds increases throughout their time at school.

One of the Lib Dems' top priorities at the 2010 general election was the introduction of what's known as the 'pupil premium', significant new funding targeted at low-income pupils.

Implemented by the Coalition, it will be worth up to £1,300 for each eligible child by 2015. The aim is clear: to reduce the attainment gap and enable everyone to get on in life.

But equality of opportunity cannot stop at 18. The Coalition's higher education reforms in England, though undoubtedly controversial and politically costly to the Lib Dems, mean the poorest 30% of university graduates will pay back less overall than under Labour's fees system while the richest will pay more. Potential students seem to have noticed: application rates from disadvantaged areas hit their highest level ever in 2013 <sup>(3)</sup>

Vince Cable has also emphasised the critical importance of adult education citing his own family experiences <sup>(4)</sup>. And beyond formal education, apprenticeships have been expanded, with almost half-a-million created in 2010-11, two-thirds more than in Labour's last year in office.

**recessions of recent decades have established a gulf between the 'haves' and 'have nots'.**

In its own terms, then — delivering equality of opportunity — the Coalition is doing a lot. The big question is whether improvements to the education system will be enough to advance relative social mobility, the Coalition's stated aim.

The evidence suggests not. As Oxford professor John Goldthorpe has highlighted relative social mobility remained broadly static for most of the twentieth-century despite all the changes thrown at the education system. And in his neutrally scholarly way he had laid down a serious gauntlet to politicians of all stripes <sup>(5)</sup>. This, at last, gets to the heart of the issue: inequality.

There has long been a tension between the liberal goal of equalising opportunities and the social democratic goal of equalising outcomes. The Coalition has explicitly prioritised the former, both through its education and training measures and by preferring to incentivise work through cutting taxes for the low-paid rather than increasing benefits for low-income groups.

These policies may well deliver on promoting absolute social mobility, stimulating economic growth and ensuring the next generation can live a better life than their parents.

By themselves, however, they are unlikely to deliver the relative social mobility Nick Clegg promises: your background will still continue to exert an unfair influence on what you're able to do in life. To paraphrase the deputy prime minister: "Patterns of inequality will continue to be imprinted from one generation to the next."

The Coalition Government's focus on education — in particular the education of the poorest — is to its credit. But if it wants to encourage relative social mobility it is going to have to tackle an issue it prefers to skirt around: delivering a more equal society. There really is no alternative.

**Stephen Tall is Co-Editor of LibDemVoice.org, a Research Associate at the liberal think-tank CentreForum, and also writes at his own site, stephentall.org.uk**

**He is on Twitter @stephentall.**

**VERDICT: MAYBE**

<sup>(1)</sup> April 2011 Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers (Dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

<sup>(2)</sup> March 2013 Issues Index (Ipsos-mori.com)

<sup>(3)</sup> Ucas.ac.uk

<sup>(4)</sup> Cass Business School Speech (Cass.city.ac.uk)

<sup>(5)</sup> The Goldthorpe Social Mobility Paper (Spi.ox.ac.uk)

**HAVE YOUR SAY:**

**WE WANT TO KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS TOPIC!**

Do you think the government are doing enough to close the gap between the rich and the poor? Vote

**"YES", "NO" or "MAYBE"**

in our online poll at

**www.thenewidealist.com**

# The Student Room

## STUDENT EDITOR COLUMN

I can't see myself not coming to university. It was an essential time for me to grow, learn and figure out things. Unfortunately, the 'best time of your life' comes at a very high price nowadays, as one year of university can now cost up to £9,000.

Students do not seem to be forgiving, as you'll see in our 'A pound for your thoughts' section – six out of ten claim they will not trust the Lib Dems again, three say 'maybe' and only one says 'yes'. The tuition fees U-turn scarred them for life – after all, the Lib Dems endangered a life-plan that everyone thought sacred, but their reputation seems to have gone down with it.

The effects of the raise are visible on campus, as Christie tells us in our feature. Less students and less life in a place where everything is supposed to scream 'we are young'. Numbers confirm what Christie sees in her campus and it's not just that students are now fewer, they are also choosing to live at home if they have the chance, according to Luke at the University of Manchester Students' Union. This raise appears to have more consequences than everyone originally thought and it seems to be all on the Lib Dems. As Viola puts it: 'I voted Lib Dem and all I got was 9K tuition fees.'

### Mariana Cerqueira Student Editor

Mariana is a final year undergraduate at The University of Manchester



# A ~~PENNY~~ POUND FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

We asked 10 students from the University of Manchester for their thoughts on the following and gave each one of them a pound in return. The results are as follows...

## Q. Will students ever trust the Lib Dems again after the tuition feed u-turn?



A. 'BROKEN PROMISE'  
Beth Lacy - French and Russian



A. 'WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST SOMEONE IF THEY'VE ALREADY LIED.'  
Hugo Barthorp - Religion and Theology



A. 'THEY'RE A COALITION SO I UNDERSTAND THEY HAVE TO COMPROMISE.'  
Josh Grime - Economics



A. 'ONCE A POLITICIAN GOES AGAINST THEIR WORD, YOU LOSE FAITH IN THEIR POLICIES. THEY WOULD HAVE TO DO A LOT OF WORK TO REGAIN THIS TRUST.'  
Kyri Levendi - Language, Literacy and Communication



A. 'IT'S THE FIRST TIME THEY HAVE POWER AND THEY WASTE THEIR OPPORTUNITY.'  
Natalia Ghorcy-Mehasi - Politics and International Relations



A. 'TO BE CONTROVERSIAL' :)  
Nazmul Ali - Maths

A. 'THERE'S NO POINT IN MAKING PROMISES IF THEY'RE NOT GOING TO STICK BY THEM.'



Olivia Connelly - Economics

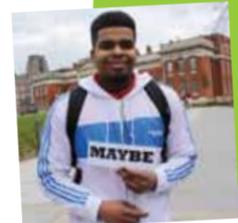


A. 'MAYBE WHEN ROLES IN PEOPLE'S LIVES CHANGE BUT NOT AS A STUDENT.'

Sam Jones - PhD in Ancient History

A. 'I VOTED LIB DEM AND ALL I GOT WAS 9K TUITION FEES.'

Viola Hazlerigg - Criminology



A. 'IF A FEW MEN AREN'T PART OF THE PARTY ANYMORE, MAYBE I'LL VOTE FOR THEM.'

Abubakar Mohamed - Maths

**"Manchester Uni has seen roughly 400 fewer students this year, with the 9k fees we've seen more students live at home rather than go into halls this year. Whilst the student union would rather 9k fees weren't charged, we're working with the University to ensure that there are a wide range of bursaries available to students that need it so that they're not put off applying to University."**

Luke Newton, Education Officer at University of Manchester Student Union (UMSU)

# OVERALL VERDICT: NO!

## STUDENTS STAYING IN: The Rise of the University Ghost Town

When my mates and I got back to Manchester Uni this year, we couldn't wait to see how the newest students were celebrating their first Freshers' Week. Like many students, we treasured the curious mix of fond but embarrassing memories that had been forged two years earlier during our own first weeks away from home. Heading down to Manchester's famous 'student city', Fallowfield, we expected to walk into a seven day long non-stop fun marathon. What we found looked more like the opening scenes of 28 Days Later.

Instead of pounding music, laughter and the squeal of brakes as buses brought yet more loads of revellers, discarded leaflets promising great nights out rustled in the wind. Instead of being jostled in big queues we shivered alone in the cold. Instead of huge crowds of young people meeting new friends, swapping stories and attempting seduction, a few stragglers shambled aimlessly around us. What had happened to the first years? Our first guess, naturally, was a particularly virulent strain of freshers' flu. But further investigation revealed that the post-apocalyptic atmosphere was actually a result of government action; specifically the student fee rises.

While the effect of raising fees on admissions and graduates has been debated to death, there's been less discussion over the impact on the actual experience of university. Manchester, at least, has changed dramatically. When I first applied two-and-a-half years ago, the Fallowfield campus was renowned as a party environment where it was almost impossible to study seriously. Therefore it was the most popular choice for students looking for accommodation and quickly filled up. This year, a huge fall in demand has left three of its residential blocks deserted.

The most likely reason for the drop is greater numbers of students choosing to live at home and commute to university rather than spend even more on living in halls. A survey by the insurance company LV= (Student exodus could leave university cities 'ghost towns' by 2020) gives some dramatic statistics. In March 2011, just before the fee rises came in, only about 21% of full-time students in the UK lived at home. By 2020, they estimate it will have skyrocketed to 52% of younger students and 47% of the overall student population. The survey reads in parts like an end-of-times prediction. It foresees a dramatic 'student exodus' which leaves formerly lively university cities reduced to 'ghost towns' (Newcastle is set to lose 52% of its students in ten years). As entire areas are vacated, 'crime and criminal damage will increase... and many properties will become vacant and even derelict.' The change from a busy urban environment to a landscape that resembles your favourite dystopian horror film will certainly affect the way that students experience university. The other massive difference brought on by £9,000 fees is a change in attitude.

The new students don't want cheap alcohol and lie-ins; they want brains. Another survey by the UNITE group (Higher Fees See Rise in "Savvy" Students), showed that people starting university in 2012 were overwhelmingly looking to spend their tuition wisely. To quote: '86% viewed "hard work" as more crucial to their experience than "hard partying," while 83% said that they would opt for an "academically-demanding" rather than "laid back" atmosphere.' The majority of these young people will be graduating with tens of thousands of pounds worth of debt, and their priority is finding a job that is worth the financial setback caused by not going into full-time work straight away. A focus on the academic side of university, along with living with parents, seems like a sensible option.

Some might even see this experience of university as an improvement; it's no secret that many communities have gotten fed up with drunken students who take full advantage of being away from their parents' gaze. But that parental gaze can also prevent young people from ever becoming fully independent. That LV= survey noted that 48% of students who did live at home agreed that they felt less involved in university life. For a shy person like me, university forced me to speak to new people from all different backgrounds.

Confidence and an appreciation for the views of others are just as important in a job as an excellent academic record, if not more so. There's also nothing quite like the feeling of successfully cooking your own spaghetti bolognese; more than worth the scraping out the charred remains of the first three attempts. As Martin Lewis has said (Student Loans Mythbusting), 'winning at higher education is about far more than just how much you earn afterwards'. The traditional experience, where a young person 'goes away' to uni and focusses as much on socialising as studying, is by no means the best for everyone. But it would be a shame if that option were to become obsolete.

**Christie Fraser** is a third year history student at the University of Manchester.

 You can follow her on twitter @ChristieFraser2



86% VIEWED "HARD WORK" AS MORE CRUCIAL TO THEIR EXPERIENCE THAN "HARD PARTYING," WHILE

83% SAID THAT THEY WOULD OPT FOR AN "ACADEMICALLY-DEMANDING" RATHER THAN "LAID BACK" ATMOSPHERE.'



# INTERNATIONAL DIARIES

NEW ORLEANS JOURNAL BY CLIFTON HARRIS



Since this is my first post for this publication I want to introduce myself to the readers and give you all some insight on my perspective. My name is Clifton Joseph Harris III. I was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. I live in the most beautiful and unique city in the world, which can also be the most frustrating and challenging city. There is no place I would rather be and I will defend this city and its people against anything. At the same time, I also lost my grandmother, family homes, and my neighborhood to Hurricane Katrina. Rebuilding and recovery has been a tough road at times so every now and then the city deserves my anger. It's a relationship that's always changing.

I'm a parent in the New Orleans Public School system, which is more like three different systems operating independently since the state took over after the storm. In a few weeks my 9 year old daughter will be taking her high stakes exam to determine if she can move on to the fifth grade. No matter how well your kids appear to be doing in school, you can't relax until testing is over. One bad day can destroy years of confidence building. I'll have a lot to say about the educational system in the coming months.

For the past eight years, I have written a blog called Cliff's Crib. It's my personal therapy tool and the way I express myself. With the rate which blogs come and go, eight years is ancient in blog years. I don't know how I've kept it going so long with my short attention span. Some nice people even thought I deserved an award a few years ago. Writing is my hobby and a passion for me. I hope you enjoy what I have to say. If you get a laugh every now and then as well as a better understanding of what it's like in our post Katrina world then my work here is done.

Currently, I am the systems administrator of the homeless client database for the New Orleans area. New Orleans is second in the United States in the rate of homeless people based on statistics from 2009-2011 (Report Places New Orleans' Homeless Rate at Second in the Nation: Times Picayune). While second in the nation isn't good, we've made a lot of progress in bringing the number of homeless down over the last two years. We are in the process of doing our annual homeless count for 2013 and I really hope the numbers from this year and last take us out of the top three.

*I LOVE WHAT I DO AND I WORK WITH DEDICATED AND WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO SACRIFICE A LOT FOR THEIR CLIENTS*

but if we didn't have any homeless anymore I would be happy to find another job.

Right now New Orleans is relaxing after hosting two major events over a three week span. We had the first week of Mardi Gras which is the calmer week of the season because it's usually more of a family event than the second week, when the bigger parades hit the streets. The Super Bowl week was in the middle of the usual madness and we handled that with no problems. We did have that issue with the lights going out during the game. The media was tripping but I didn't see the big deal. When my lights go out they stay out for hours. The Super Bowl lights were back on in thirty four minutes.

After the Super Bowl was over it was time for the last week of Carnival and Mardi Gras day. It was special for me since my parents were in town from their post Katrina home of Memphis Tennessee. If Mardi Gras season was year round I think my mom would have already moved back to the city.

**Clifton Harris** is a lifelong resident of New Orleans and currently resides in New Orleans East with his family. Cliff is an Information Systems Coordinator that assists case managers and nonprofit organizations with providing services to the homeless in the city. Cliff writes his blog: [cliffscrib.blogspot.co.uk](http://cliffscrib.blogspot.co.uk) where he focuses most of his writing towards social and community issues. **Visit [www.thenewidealist.com](http://www.thenewidealist.com) to see photos of Clifton's hometown**

# INTERNATIONAL DIARIES

## JACK KAZEMBE IN MALAWI

My name is Jack Kazembe. I work for MicroLoan Foundation in Malawi. MicroLoan is a microfinance charity with a social mission to significantly reduce poverty. We currently operate in Malawi and Zambia. We give small loans and business training to poor women in rural areas enabling them to work their way out of poverty.

Malawi is divided into 3 regions; north, centre and south, which are further sub-divided into 26 districts. We have branches in 19 districts, spread across the country, which are managed by a Regional Office in each of the 3 regions. I live in Mzuzu in northern Malawi, where I work as the Regional Manager for the North and supervise 6 branches. Each branch has a Branch Manager, and several Loan Officers that deliver the loans and training to approximately 300 women each.

**MICROLOAN FOUNDATION GIVES BUSINESS LOANS TO GROUPS OF 12 TO 18 WOMEN WHO SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN THEIR BUSINESS ENDEAVOURS.**

Loans start as little as £8, but average £50, allowing women to set up and maintain small businesses such as market stalls or tea shops. We deliver on-going training and mentoring to the women we work with, in how to market their business, managing profits and savings, how to increase sales, and much more. Once loans are repaid, they are recycled and made into more loans.

Currently, Malawi's economy is struggling, with inflation at about 30%, meaning that cost of living is increasing a lot, so we are working in difficult times.

Many of the women we work with find it increasingly difficult to afford food, and their households are experiencing hunger.

The increased profits from their businesses as a result of the loans and training, enable them to increase spending on food, and other vital things like their children's education.

Today is a Monday and I am at a branch in Karonga district, 240km from my office in Mzuzu City. I am here to check how the branch is doing. First, I check a sample of Loan Officers' files in which group loan documentation is kept (we have 22 Loan Officers in the northern region) including loan approvals and recording of repayments.

Together with the Branch Manager I then proceed to visit a sample of groups. There is usually singing upon arrival at a group to show that we are welcome. Each group gives themselves a name; this is Hope Credit group. I then begin checking their books, interviewing some of them to check if a Loan Officer visits them regularly and if the Branch Manager has ever visited them; I also check on recent training they have received. I also observe the relationship between the group and the Loan Officer. Then the time comes for feedback from the group, where they will suggest improvements or changes they want to see made to training or loans offered. This helps us improve the services we provide to the women we work with, as we understand that they know best what they need.



Ileen

## A Success Story: Ileen, the enterprising journey from hut to home

Ileen was the first recipient of a loan in her district. She was just 21 years old. That was ten years ago. She lived in a small mud hut and kept a few chickens.

Her loan started her off as a serious businesswoman. She bought more chicks from a supplier in the town, fattened them up and sold them in the market after six weeks, for 1,000 Kwacha each to the stallholders, or for 1,300 Kwacha direct to customers.

These days she rears 70 at a time and plans to increase that to 100 when the new building has finished. She is now on her twentieth loan cycle. That helps her to finance the new larger room for the chickens as well as a storage container for the chicken food.

Then with her savings she is building a new bathroom and kitchen for herself and, importantly, an electricity supply for her home. Next year it will be a concrete floor too, she hopes.

That, however, is only the start of it for this enterprising young woman. She goes regularly to Zambia to get a supply of pots, water bins, food warmers and cotton wraps which she then sells to locals in her village or in the market. Then there are the pigs, which she rears together with a neighbour.

Looking to the future, her next plan is to build another house on her land and then rent it out. From a few chicks to burgeoning property developer in ten years is quite a journey anywhere, but especially in the middle of Malawi.

Lastly, I randomly select women to collect information for the Progress Out of Poverty Index: this is a form of Social Performance Management, and allows us to collect information to ensure we are achieving our social mission of improving women's poverty status. By the end of the day I have managed to visit two more groups. Back in the branch office I hold a meeting with staff to feedback my findings and together draw up an action plan for improvement and follow up.

**WE ARE INCREDIBLY PROUD TO BE WORKING WITH OVER 25,000 WOMEN IN MALAWI. I SEE FIRST-HAND THE HUGE IMPACT THE SUPPORT HAS ON THE LIVES OF THE WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

I have seen households that could hardly afford three meals in a day, turning things around. I have seen women who have never had savings at all, saving as much as £150 of their own. I have seen women who lacked confidence in talking about their problems at home, standing up in a group to talk about them and assist or counsel others in a similar predicament. I have seen female-headed families building up enough income to pay school fees and medical expenses for their children. I have seen women buying pieces of land to build houses. I have seen women graduating from MicroLoan Foundation to stand on their own as their business has grown so much they no longer need our support. This is our aim; to see women build sustainable routes out of poverty.

Jack Kazembe is a Regional Manager for the MicroLoan Foundation in Malawi.

[www.microloanfoundation.org.uk](http://www.microloanfoundation.org.uk)



If you live outside of the UK and would like to contribute your own international diary please get in touch with a link to your blog: [mail@thenewidealist.com](mailto:mail@thenewidealist.com)

All photos © Elizabeth Handy

# Coaching workshop

## SIX STEPS TO PERSONAL FULFILLMENT...

Welcome to part one of our brand new Coaching Workshop series, designed to help you find simple ways to improve your life and feel more fulfilled. We start with **Integral Development Coach Mary Lucas** who will help you identify what obstacles may be preventing you from experiencing the life you aspire to.

### Part One - Current Situation

What is the main obstacle or challenge you are currently facing?

One of the main considerations in the decision to take on a programme of collaborative self-development is determining the crux of the issue or issues we want to work with.

Some of us have no problem in defining the yawning gaps in our competence to live life that require urgent attention but most of us have just a vague idea. Commonly we find ourselves in one of three states.

#### Which state do you identify with most?

- I know I'm headed in the direction I want but I keep running into obstacles on the way.
- I know where I want to go but I can't see how to get there.
- I have no idea where I want to go but sense its time to do something differently because what I'm doing sure as hell isn't working!

The exercises that follow are designed help you explore the opening for creating the life you choose.

A good way to participate in this workshop is to record your reflections in a journal each day and give yourself a week to reflect and record the observations you make.

As always when we are stepping into the unknown the best dictum is to 'start where we are'. This means right here, right now! It means calming our mind so that we can connect with the wisest part of ourselves which lies beyond the ceaseless chatter and admonitions of our restless minds.

### STEP 1: FINDING STILLNESS

When we breathe consciously we calm our nervous system. Our body can relinquish tension and we quiet our mind. In this process draw your attention to your breath and body. Relax any tension in your muscles and try to bring yourselves into awareness of your experience of the present moment.

- Sit up straight in your chair and close your eyes.
- Take three deep, slow breaths
- Feel your feet flat on the floor, your body on the chair
- Notice your breathing for a minute or two
- Slowly open your eyes

Throughout your exploration you can use this exercise to return to your breath and body when you need to clear your mind to find the answer within yourself.

### STEP 2: FINDING THE OPENING FOR LIVING THE LIFE YOU CHOOSE

#### Making Decisions

Finding out how we are orientated to making choices and the effect of this can show us how we create certain patterns of experience and behaviour in life.

Think over the last few hours. During this period of time:

- How did you decide what to do?
- What connections can you see between the basis of your actions and the consequence of your actions?

#### How Happy Are You?

Being curious about our relationship to happiness can be very revealing. We discover just how happy we are or not and how dependent we are on random occurrences and on things outside ourselves for our feeling of happiness.

#### Consider the following:

- What do expect will make you happy today?
- What beauty do you see in your world today?
- What is your world founded upon today?
- In what new ways can you express yourself today?
- What did you feel gratitude for today?

#### Creating Your Life

The choice is ours; life can either be 'what happens to us while we're making other plans' or we can create the life we want. The first step is to start where we are and take a look at how creative, and proactive, we are being with our life right now.

- What new ideas do you have this week?
- Around what are you directing your life this week?
- How do you see your future?
- What are the events, circumstances, and people that you made the most difference with this week?

#### Comfort with Emotions

Discovering our emotional range and those that we find difficulty with can tell us a lot about potential areas for development.

- What emotions did you feel most strongly today? How could you tell?
- What emotion did you feel most comfortable with today?
- What emotion did you move away from?
- What effect does your comfort with different emotions have on your life?
- What specific possibilities in your life in your work and relationships would open up if you had more capacity to feel and express a wider range of emotions?

#### Investing Your Life

To create the life we want we first need to make an inventory of the life we've got and the ways we are currently investing our time energy and feeling. Gradually we begin to become aware of our patterns of habitual engagement.

- What event, person, or activity did you invest most in today?
- How did your decision about how you invested your life come about?
- What emotions contributed to your decision? What feelings did you ignore in making your decision?

#### Now consider the patterns of your engagement:

- What patterns do you notice in your life this week?
- What people, activities, events are filling up your life this week? Are you consciously choosing this or just falling into it?
- What people, activities and events did you neglect this week? Are you consciously choosing this or again just falling into it?

What actions will you take from what you learned in this exercise?

### Moving Forward in Life

To move forward in creating the life we want we have to become more aware of how our actions are contributing to the creation of the life we are experiencing.

- What actions did you take today to move forward in how you want your life to be?
- What outcome or outcomes did you produce by your actions?
- What actions did you avoid taking?
- What were the immediate and long term consequences of your avoidance?

Finally, what things are you feeling more confident and certain about since doing these exercises?

What actions will you take tomorrow to have your life be what you want it to be?

**Mary Lucas is an Integral Development Coach, Creative Mentor and Creativity workshop facilitator. You can email her at [mary@integralgenius.com](mailto:mary@integralgenius.com)**

Tune in next issue for step two of our Six Steps to Personal Fulfillment where we look at what might be missing from your professional life and how to manage your career-related hopes and fears.

Make sure you don't miss out: Subscribe to the digital issue for free at [www.thenewidealist.com](http://www.thenewidealist.com)

## THE SIX STEPS TO PERSONAL FULFILLMENT...

### Part One - Current Situation:

What is the main obstacle or challenge you are currently facing?

### Part Two - Professional Life:

How to manage your career-related hopes and fears.

### Part Three - Family & Friendships:

How to make the most of your social life.

### Part Four - Making a difference:

Are you using your skillset effectively?

### Part Five - Personal Goals:

Do you know what you want from your life?

### Part Six - Action Planning:

How to make change happen.

# Something for the weekend

## VISIT LONDON ON A BUDGET



London is a contrarian city which means different things to different people. For those who live in London this is a place which invokes fierce loyalty, a place of hustle and bustle, life and love. For those who want to find out what London means to them without breaking the bank, here are some top picks to start your London adventure.

### THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

The science museum houses exhibitions of present and future science and technology and is The UK's most popular destination dedicated to science, technology, engineering, medicine, design and enterprise. Welcoming over 2.9 million visitors every year the museum has plenty of interactive exhibitions to dazzle those who wander the halls. Located right next to the National History Museum, it is possible to explore both in one day making this is a key destination for those looking to discover London.

**Price: FREE - donations welcomed**  
**Web: [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk)**



Making the Modern World Gallery

Credit: @The Science Museum

### BRING THE COUNTRY TO THE CITY AT OSTERLEY WEEKEND 13TH + 14TH JULY 2013

Heralded as a 21st century village fete in the city, the annual Osterley Weekend brings life to the grounds of the one of the last surviving country estates in London. Osterley House is a Tudor estate with a spectacular mansion surrounded by gardens, park and farmland. With a range of activities including a fun fair, mini farm, archery, dance and music workshops and a range of food and drink stalls there is something on offer for everyone.

**Price: FREE**  
**(charge applies to visit the main house)**  
**Web: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park)**

Osterley Park Weekend



Credit: Osterley Park ©National Trust Images/Arnhel de Serra

### BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE MEDIATHEQUE

For those who love TV and Film the British Film Institute Mediatheque is the place to spend a relaxing Sunday afternoon. Visitors can simply log on at a viewing station and enjoy highlights from the BFI National Archive, the world's greatest and most diverse collection of film and television. From home movies to feature films, documentaries to kids' TV, a quick glance at the films available includes classics such as "1984" and "The 39 Steps" as well as a vintage 1 minute short from 1899 (yes it is over 100 years old) entitled "Upside Down or The Human Flies". Whether you have 20 minutes or 2 hours you will be guaranteed to find the old, the new, the familiar and the unusual here.

**Price: FREE**  
**Web: [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)**



BFI Mediatheque



Viewing Booth

Credit: BFI Mediatheque © British Film Institute

### AN EASY NIGHT AT THE EASYHOTEL

Located within 15 minutes' walk of The Science Museum and Natural History Museum and only five tube stops away from Piccadilly Circus, the easyHotel South Kensington is perfect for travellers on a tight budget. If you are looking for a no-frills, low cost hotel room in a central location and you don't mind the luminous orange walls which mark the "easy" brand then this is an excellent option for those priced out of the main London hotel market.

**Price: From £45 per night for two people sharing a double room with shower. Reasonably priced extra facilities are available including TV remote rental (£5 per 24hrs) and Wi-fi (£5 per 24hrs).**



### LONDON BY NUMBERS

- Population Size:** Around 8 million
- Number of Hotels:** Around 1,000
- Number of Pubs:** Around 7,000
- Number of Mainline Stations:** 17
- Number of Underground Stations:** 270

## Have you heard of... ... the Social Mobility Foundation

Every issue we will bring to your attention an interesting charity that you may not otherwise have heard of. This issue Lydia Andal, Managing Editor met with David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation.

### When and why was the Social Mobility Foundation established?

The social mobility foundation was established in 2006 because the professions it targets are places where ability alone doesn't get you in or they are professions in which too often who you know is more important than what you know.

### How did you get involved with the Foundation?

I went to school in East London with a 20% GCSE pass rate and that was before they included English and maths. My mum had left school at 16, my dad at 14, I was helped by an organisation to be the first person in my family to go to university. I then volunteered for that organisation for three years as an undergraduate and then ran it for three years when I finished, and I have stayed in that sort of world ever since.

### Can you give us some examples of the kind of firms you are working with?

JP Morgan, RBS, Ernst and young, and these are firms that are hot graduate destinations. They are places that undergraduates are very keen to join and that are hugely oversubscribed.

What's interesting is that people who are more senior, 20 years at their firm in their profession, say that the firms they work in were a lot more diverse at that time. You could get into the firm if you didn't have a degree, you could get into the firm if you didn't go to a particular university or come from a particular school and now there's a feeling that they're recruiting robots or lemmings or people who, apart from very minor differences in hair colour are identical to the people they're taking every year.

And of course they thought that's a real business problem, because you want to be able to be competitive, you need new ideas, you need to reflect your client base and simply taking people from a very narrow section of society, which all the research indicates (that) people in the professions that they're joining are coming from a higher and higher household income, so we're going in the wrong direction.

### Can you give us an example of someone that your organisation has helped?

I think I'd start with a young lady called Georgina who was in our 2006 cohort. She grew up on and still lives in an Council Estate in Peckham with her mum, her dad died when she was very young, 13. She did very well in her GCSE's but she said "from my background you can get onto (a law firm on) the high street, you can't get into the city without connections". So we placed her with an international city law firm when she was 17 in the middle of her A levels. The firm then sponsored her through university and she is now a Trainee Solicitor at that firm. When she qualifies in two years her salary will be £60k+.

### (In December 2012 David was appointed to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Parliamentary Commission). What do you think the Coalition government has got right about social mobility?

It's the first government to make social mobility a central priority, to have a core strategy of social mobility.

To have a very high profile member of the government (the Deputy Prime Minister), push that forward.

To establish this Commission which was recommended by the last government.

### What are the key areas you think the Coalition should be looking at to enhance social mobility?

I think the Coalition has picked important areas to focus on and I agree with a number of things that it's doing, but I think sometimes the emphasis could be better.

Schools have been given a statutory duty to provide careers advice which of course is vital, but they're not doing it. The Pupil Premium (which provides schools with money to improve the outcomes for children from low income backgrounds), it's a great idea, it's a great principle, but schools aren't using it in the way they ought to be.

They devolved the responsibility for outreach to universities, but the problem is universities are focusing their efforts on bursaries and financial support where actually the biggest barriers are feeling it's 'not for people like you'.

I think they've definitely chosen the right areas to look at, but sometimes the translation of the policy doesn't go as we might hope it did.

If you would like to find out more or support the Foundation visit [www.socialmobility.org.uk](http://www.socialmobility.org.uk)



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**Next issue...** What's more important IQ or EQ? With computers and mobiles able to process and remember most things with ease, does raw intelligence still matter in the digital age, or is emotional intelligence the key to success?

We ask the experts to decide... **Next issue out in August.**

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