

ASPIRE: FINDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS

An invitation to support student innovation



Our history

Since 2015, ASPIRE (Accelerator Space for Innovation and Responsible Enterprise) has helped thousands of students and graduates explore entrepreneurial skills and turn bright ideas into successful ventures. Established with philanthropic support, ASPIRE has grown into a thriving hub for enterprise, creativity, research and ambition.

More than 4,000 students have taken part in ASPIRE programmes across Canterbury and Medway. Over 60 new businesses have emerged, many of them addressing social, environmental and technological challenges. With guidance from University of Kent alumni and access to professional networks, ASPIRE gives students the practical experience and confidence to take their first steps as entrepreneurs.

The founding gift which launched ASPIRE is coming to an end. We now seek renewed philanthropic investment to build on this success and ensure future generations benefit from its impact.

Why ASPIRE matters

The world needs people who can turn ideas into action. ASPIRE enables students, graduates and researchers to do just that, combining imagination with commercial awareness to create enterprises which improve lives. Behind every idea is a person with the drive to make a difference – here are just a few of their stories:



Danika Hossain and Arshia Bhatnagar

Co-founders, Bhangra Blends

Danika and Arshia co-founded Bhangra Blends, a premium ready-to-drink cocktail and mocktail brand inspired by the bold flavours of South Asia. The idea grew from their experience working in bars, where they saw a lack of authentic, flavourful drinks reflecting their heritage. Through ASPIRE, they refined the business and went on to win the programme's pitching finals. Since then, Bhangra Blends has developed a strong brand and reached hundreds of customers.

// ASPIRE was a huge source of support for us at the start of our entrepreneurial journey, giving us the confidence to leave university and fully commit to building our business. //



Natasha Hayworth

Founder, Cakeybakeydoodah

Autism Studies graduate Natasha connected with ASPIRE during the pandemic, aiming to use baking to support people with autism and learning disabilities. With mentoring, guidance and funding, including a Santander start-up grant, she built a social enterprise. Today, Cakeybakeydoodah is thriving, with Natasha running the venture full-time, delivering inclusive workshops which build confidence, skills and community participation.

// ASPIRE gave me the confidence to believe my idea could become something real, I wouldn't have had the courage to take that step without them. //



Emay Enemokwu

Founder, Jehucal

Emay always had a clear ambition – to build a globally recognised fashion brand. Through ASPIRE and the Business Start-Up Journey, he launched his luxury streetwear label Jehucal in his first year and it quickly developed into a serious venture. Today, Jehucal is a six-figure global brand, worn by high-profile figures including actors and Premier League footballers. He now gives back by mentoring others to see entrepreneurship as a viable path.

// I don't think my brand would have grown so quickly if it hadn't been for the support I received through the ASPIRE programme. //

Opportunities for support

Join us in supporting ASPIRE to help more students turn ideas into action. Your gift will expand access to entrepreneurship, create lasting impact and strengthen connections between the University and wider community.

Philanthropy has driven ASPIRE's success so far. We now seek sustained, multi-year investment to ensure stability and grow the programme. We welcome both leadership and targeted gifts – every contribution makes a difference.

£185,000 – Transformational Leadership Gift

Fund ASPIRE in full for one year, supporting delivery, mentoring, funding and outreach.

£75,000 – Business Start-Up Journey

Fund our flagship entrepreneurship programme, enabling students from any discipline to build the skills and confidence to launch new ventures.

£50,000 – Specialist Industry Accelerator

Back a themed accelerator in areas such as science, sustainability, digital innovation, health or the creative industries.

£25,000 – Global Alumni and Mentoring Network

Build a global community of alumni entrepreneurs, connecting students with founders, mentors and investors.

£15,000 – Innovation Grants Fund

Provide early-stage funding for founders to test ideas, build prototypes and run pilot projects.

£10,000 – Masterclass Series

Deliver a year of expert-led sessions with founders and industry leaders.

£5,000 – Community Outreach and Access

Support a cohort of the Be Your Own Boss programme, widening access to underrepresented communities.

Up to £5,000 – ASPIRE General Fund

Give flexibly, allowing us to direct your support where it is needed most.

Your generosity will sustain a programme which is already changing lives, advancing innovation, supporting new ventures and enabling students to build a better future. We would be delighted to discuss how you can get involved. giving@kent.ac.uk.



Exempt status The University of Kent was established by Royal Charter in 1965 and is an exempt charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 1993.



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