



Advance Practice students Rajesh Kondela, Haritha Narayanan, Sahith Mulagapati, Diya Sunny and Purnachander Reddy

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## Northumbria students inspire schools and colleges in national eco challenge

**Northumbria University students have joined forces with TV architect George Clarke's MOBIE charity to support a national challenge to find new ways to make homes more energy efficient.**

The Ministry of Building Innovation and Education – known as [MOBIE](#) – was established by Clarke in 2017 to inspire young people to revolutionise the way we think about homes to drive change in future.

Northumbria University and MOBIE joined forces almost five years ago to drive innovation in designing and delivering homes for the future.

Through this partnership, students on Northumbria's [Construction Project Management with BIM Advanced Practice](#) Master's course were asked to develop some new tools to educate and inspire young people for MOBIE's national [EcoFix Challenge](#) with partners Grimshaw and Mace.

The EcoFix Challenge encourages pupils aged between 12-19+ years, including young professionals, to find new ways to upgrade homes or repurpose old or vacant buildings to help to make them more energy efficient.

Live industry projects are a key element the Advanced Practice course, helping students to boost their employability and tackle real industry challenges.

A group of international students from India worked to create a series of interactive webinars to help pupils and teachers to develop their competition entries. The webinars cover a range of built environment topics, including house design, sustainability, eco towns and emerging technologies, with leading international construction sustainability expert Dr Brian Edwards contributing to the series.

The webinars are now [live on the MOBIE website](#) for schools and colleges to use as ready-made off-the-shelf lessons with engaging learning resources for students.

As a result of the quality of their work – described by MOBIE's Head of Education, Gerry Ruffles, as being “unbelievably fantastic and professional” – the students have been invited to help judge the national competition.

Student Haritha Narayanan explained: “We knew that pupils in many schools and colleges entering this competition would have a broad range of knowledge of building processes, so we decided to create a series of short webinars to help them to complete their award submissions. These covered topics from the evolution of housing to what sustainability is and how we can retrofit old houses to make them more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

“We have been so pleased with the response we have had for them. The fact that MOBIE published them on their website as an official guide for entrants was fantastic. We are so excited to be asked to help judge the national finals and meet the team at MOBIE.”

Mark Southgate, Chief Executive of MOBIE, said: “The EcoFix Young Persons’ Radical Retrofit Design Challenge was all about saving home energy, saving precious natural resources and saving our planet. We asked young people to explore what it takes to make our homes more energy and resource efficient, to reduce the cost of heating and lighting and to emit little or no carbon emissions to help protect ourselves against climate change.

“The brilliant videos created by these talented students really helped young people understand the issues that we face in retrofitting 27 million existing homes in the UK and some of the possible solutions. This amazing resource will be useful for a long time after the challenge.”

Michelle Littlemore, Director of Advanced Practice for Architecture and Built Environment at Northumbria University, added: “Our students have shown amazing skill in designing these educational webinars, sharing their passion for sustainable construction with younger audiences, inspiring them to become involved.

“Their work has been exceptional and many people have told me that they feel it is of commercial industry standard.

“I’m sure pupils and teachers will find them an invaluable learning resource.”

Any schools or colleges interested in [using the webinars](#) can access them on MOBIE’s website.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Northumbria’s [construction-related courses](#) can sign up to attend the University’s forthcoming [open days](#).

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