



University of Brighton

**Community
University
Partnership
Programme**

'The Pink Pavilion' by Kristen Grbec, Natalia Natuka, Tina Jenner & Shirley Hart.

Community University Partnership Programme

'Defining in the doing'

A guide that shares how Cupp has developed 2003-13

July 2013

Community University Partnership Programme

‘Defining in the doing’



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WEEK 1

2nd March

1000 LE...
[Drawing of a person with glasses]

HEART DATE
[Drawing of a heart]

EYES
[Drawing of a face]

Love hope, love
smile and a love
silly thought

Cupp's background and history

The Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) at the University of Brighton, established in 2003 and now in its 10th anniversary year, spans a particular period which saw the emergence of community engagement as a priority for universities in the UK and internationally. Started as an externally funded project at a time when there was little attention given to engagement in the UK, it evolved during a significant period of development and change in the Higher Education sector when the purpose of universities has been brought increasingly under debate.

Like many of the 'new' universities in the UK Brighton has a long tradition of involvement with its local community in the form of providing vocational and professional education for its teachers, social workers and health professionals. The quality of its education has always been partly dependent on the quality of relationships with professional bodies and local institutions. David Watson, the then Vice Chancellor was approached by a US philanthropic trust with the invitation to develop a business plan visioning what a UK 'engaged university' might look like.

In Europe there was a greater tradition of Science Shops, emerging as a model in Dutch universities in the 1970s and providing a mechanism through which community members could commission and make use of academic research. This model allowed research questions with local significance to be undertaken, often free of charge, by students and academics as part of their normal workload.

Internationally, UNESCO committed universities to involvement in local, regional and national development through the World Declaration on Higher Education in 1998 (UNESCO 1998), while in the UK the Green Paper, written in response to the Dearing Review (DfEE 1998) linked university learning to the promotion of active citizenship. By 2001 the Association of Commonwealth Universities had cited engagement as an imperative for Universities in four separate spheres:

- Determining the University's purposes and priorities
- Relating teaching and learning to local and global issues

- Dialogue between researchers and practitioners
- Taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens (ACU 2001)

All four of these elements are important in the Brighton story and have emerged at different stages in Cupp's history. An invitation to experiment in order to find out what would work in a British University, and to 'define in the doing' what such a model might look like, was a luxury that may not be available in a different economic era.

The initial period

The business plan prepared for the project identified two main aims:

- To ensure the University's resources (intellectual and physical) were made fully available to, informed by and exploited by its local and sub-regional communities
- To enhance the community's and university's capacity for engagement and mutual benefit

The early phase of Cupp involved extensive discussions with community partners and academics in order to determine expectations and to identify potential ways of working together. There was a concern not to be seen as yet another funding body with its own distinct priorities and with the importance of 'doing and developing with' rather than 'delivering to'. In order to test out models of working together Cupp launched three pilot projects which indicated many of the priorities for future work, these included :

- Addressing social exclusion
- Connecting with areas of university expertise
- Prospects for sustainability beyond any initial funding

Cupp developed a brokerage role working with four strategic themes.

- Community Research and project development
- Access to education for excluded groups
- Releasing student capacity for community benefit

- Higher Education learning opportunities for people working in and with communities

In order to ensure that the needs of the different partners were taken equally into account Cupp developed a joint governance structure through a steering group which was chaired by university senior management and included joint university and community membership. The governance structure was important in overseeing project development and negotiating differences in language, resources and power imbalances as new partnerships began to emerge. It also kept the university in touch with changes in policy and priorities within the Community and Voluntary and Public sectors and the context in which most of our partners worked. Throughout the four years of the Atlantic Philanthropies project Cupp was able to work with over 100 academics, respond to 800 Helpdesk enquiries, establish 70 partnership projects and involve 300 students in community activity through their taught curricula.

Changing national and international priorities

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The early years of Cupp saw a change in the broader policy environment. HEFCE, the Higher Education Funding Council of England, extended its priorities for knowledge exchange beyond that of purely economic engagement and became interested in activities that also contributed to social well-being. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) supported the development of a Science Shop that looked at the role of Higher Education in responding to local research requests, and in 2008 the Beacons for Public Engagement, supported by the Research Councils, were established across the UK with the intention to promote public access to science and research. Cupp benefited from this in terms of additional funding for a Brighton and Sussex Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) and a facilitating role in a demonstrator project working with nine universities across the South Coast (The South East Coastal Communities Programme).

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), based in Bristol and managed jointly by the Universities of Bristol and the West of England, took a lead role in sharing best practice nationally. While some of their aims reflected those of Cupp they were additionally concerned with

promoting public access to science as well as activities that were mutually beneficial and created a manifesto of public engagement which all UK institutions were encouraged to sign. Cupp was able to contribute to some of the materials developed for the website www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/beacons

The Brighton and Sussex Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE), with funding of nearly £1m, was able to provide financial and capacity support for the development of new experimental partnership projects between 2004 and 2009. BSCKE projects included work with children and families, food growing projects, support for a city wide needs analysis for LGBT communities, research into suicide within the LGBT community and a project linking pharmacy students with older people to help understand their medication. For a full list of projects see:

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/community-knowledge-exchange/bscke.html>

The South East Coastal Communities Programme (SECC) included Brighton and Sussex Universities working together to develop four separate thematic areas and provided an opportunity to work with Wenger's model of Communities of Practice (1998) as a mechanism for community university partnership working. The thematic areas included

- Older people
- Young people and families
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT)
- Disability

It also provided experience in larger scale evaluation of the impact of partnership working and during the SECC project Cupp experimented with different evaluation models, include REAP, a model developed at the University of Bradford that looks at developments in Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnerships.

For further information see www.coastalcommunities.org.uk

Collaboration with another institution in the same city

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Throughout the early project period Cupp explored different ways of collaborating with other universities, including Sussex University - a different institution in the same city. As a neighbouring university, rich in human and intellectual resources, it was apparent they were seen as one and the same by much of the community. While working with the culture and practices of a different institution presented additional challenges, it was clear that this made sense from a community perspective and where possible enabled us to better respond to local needs. The SECC programme provided an opportunity for further collaboration with nine universities across Sussex, Kent and Hampshire based in different cities.

Move into the mainstream of the University

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When the initial funding period for Cupp came to an end its work had already become established across the university and its locality. The University's new Corporate Plan (2007 – 12) made a strong commitment to *'engagement with the cultural, social and economic life of our localities, region and nation... and with the practical, intellectual and ethical issues of our partner organisations'*. Social engagement had become a part of the strategic direction of the university with strong senior management support. This in itself was felt to be invaluable to the future success of our work, along with funding for a team of five FTE staff to work across the institution. Having senior management support with engagement in the corporate plan enabled Cupp to move from an experimental project to embedding our work into mainstream university activity. During this period a Business and Communities Committee was established to receive progress reports on Cupp and other third stream activity and the Department of Economic and Social Engagement (EASE) was created as an administrative structure to house Business Development Managers and the Cupp team. As well as providing a long term home for Cupp it facilitated links between different

aspects of engagement and helped to encourage joint working.

Second strategic plan and commitment to introduce engagement into all undergraduate courses

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The 2013 - 2015 Strategic Plan, came at a time of great upheaval in UK universities. The shift from public to private or individualised funding of university undergraduate courses led to a greater focus on the student experience, higher demands on the time of academics (who, as a result were less available for exploratory work) and a concern across the institution with student retention and employability. The scarcity of funds for public and voluntary sector activity also put a great deal of pressure on our partners, with some organisations closing and others restricting their focus to fund raising activities, service provision and survival. This has impacted on our work in a number of ways: Partners have less time to spend on their involvement with the infrastructure of Cupp, while academics have less time to gift to community partners in responding to enquiries or short term research projects. We have begun to make more use of post graduate student expertise in carrying out smaller research projects but the increase in post graduate fees – coming on top of a high student debt may threaten the number of post graduate courses the university is able to run and the availability of students to take on such work. The range of requests coming in to Cupp includes more wanting support with funding bids, marketing strategies or writing business plans. We have responded to these challenges with a number of recent developments which include:

- Dealing directly with enquiries through the Cupp team, signposting these across the university to either academics or students, depending on the level of response they require. Post graduate students are increasingly encouraged to consider taking on a live research request as part of their dissertation and visits are made to different departments to give presentations on the range of projects in hand
- Broadening the range of post graduate courses we work with on live research projects by asking

course leaders to invite us to make a presentation on dissertation days or providing teaching input on different research modules

- Including the opportunity for engagement in all undergraduate programmes. We are working through course leaders and undergraduate co-ordinators to provide support in developing modules with engaged content or offering one of our generic cross university modules as an option in their programmes
- Developing a second cross university module in-Social Enterprise and Business planning. This will be available to a broad range of students in their third year and will require them to produce a business plan for a social enterprise as part of their assessment. While some students may want to create a business plan for a new initiative of their own, others will take the opportunity to work in an existing local organisation and benefit from the experience of working with them while producing something they can use

Currently Cupp works in five overlapping programme areas:

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The Cupp Helpdesk

The idea for a Helpdesk was included in the original business plan for Cupp in 2003, and was developed through a needs assessment with community partners. Its intention was:

'to support members of the community and community groups to carry out their own research and/or access University expertise. This is likely to be a 'virtual' desk in terms of the connections to the range of University expertise, but will have a human face in the form of a helpdesk officer who can navigate and negotiate within the University in support of community contacts.' (University of Brighton, 2002).

Over time the function of the Helpdesk expanded to include any enquiry directed to the university both from external partners and internal colleagues seeking cross departmental contacts. Its function became to broker contacts and respond to development needs within community partners which included, but was not exclusively linked to, research.

Its role currently is:

- To promote mutually beneficial partnerships between academics, students, voluntary and community organisations, social enterprise and public sector organisations and the communities that they serve, for mutual benefit
- To act as a point of contact for university personnel and students wanting information on specific community and voluntary organisations for research and teaching purposes
- To enhance the capacity and skills of voluntary and community organisations to undertake research activity
- To address social exclusion through enhancing the research capacity of voluntary and community sector partners

The helpdesk has responded to a broad range of enquiries, from facilitating evaluations to brokering research and providing access to university resources. It has also hosted drop-in research support events for organisations to come into the university with specific questions, and occasional Community Research Forums, which provide the opportunity to discuss common research themes and to develop communities of common interest. These are often co-chaired by a key person from an interest group and an academic. As the money to pay for senior researcher input has become scarce the urgency with which partners needed a response to their request has increased. Increasingly, requests are met through directly targeted support or student involvement or staff giving time through the university's staff volunteering scheme.

While most academic and community partners would acknowledge the existence of tensions arising from power sharing, the Cupp Helpdesk is a practical example of the way in which bridges can be created between universities and local communities. A key part of the university's support to community partners involves ensuring that they, and not solely university academics, are taking a significant leading role in the development of partnership projects.

Student Community Engagement

Student Community Engagement (SCE) is the term we have adopted at the University of Brighton for all work undertaken by students in community settings as part of their accredited curriculum.

Activity Buddies Project



This can include a practical task or project or a piece of community based research carried out either for or with a community organisation. For students this experience contributes both to personal development and academic learning.

SCE involves a range of experiential, community based projects in which undergraduates undertake part of their learning within a community setting and fits with Cupp's key philosophy of mutual benefit and knowledge exchange. It differs from work placements (where students are often passive observers of a role they hope to move into in the future) and volunteering programmes (where students give their time voluntarily for what are often routine tasks). Projects are concerned with the development of civil society and with addressing issues of marginalisation and social justice.

Cupp started with a cross university generic module providing accredited community based work through a series of essays and reflective assignments which encouraged students to link the theoretical aspects of their courses with real world experience in a not-for-profit organisation. An annual matching event is held in which local partners are invited to come in and present projects to students from the different Schools and a data base of opportunities is accessible through the university's student volunteering service. Opportunities range from providing one to one mentoring in a prison, or supporting a children's holiday scheme, to tracking hedgehogs on a conservation project or designing a bespoke aid for a disabled person. Further information about the module can be found on <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/student-community-engagement/students/cpd-module.html>

In addition, some tutors have used the module to provide accreditation for a group project in which all students from a particular cohort participate. Group projects have included a photo and a drama project with a secondary school or making a documentary video for a community group.

Cupp also provides support to Schools to develop new modules that include community engagement and involvement and is currently developing a new module on models of social enterprise. Over time we have found that to work well an engagement programme needs to:

- Identify projects that students can comfortably undertake and that the local community needs
- Match students with projects that reflect their interests and skills

- Ensure that student projects are manageable, that learners are active, have sufficient responsibility but remain safe
- Provide opportunities for people to develop real and equal relationships with each other

Student Community Research (SCR) now forms one element of the student community engagement programme. We work largely with post graduate students who already have some experience of a research project and who are able to attract the support of an academic supervisor to oversee their project. Cupp keeps a data base of student research opportunities and will attend a first meeting between a student and the organisation hosting the project in order to ensure agreement over the scope and timing of the project, health and safety and relevant ethics procedures and the format for and ownership of research outcomes. A copy of the research agreement form which we encourage partners to complete before embarking on a research project can be found on:

http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/images/stories/Static/student_community_engagement/SCR_agreement_form.pdf

Generally, it is preferable to assess students through their own documentation of their work rather than through the project itself, and to find ways of adapting or modifying requirements on research processes which are delayed or curtailed. Many SCE projects are assessed on a reflective evaluation of the experience or a critique of the way in which the project was conceived.

Community Knowledge Exchange

Community Knowledge Exchange (CKE) describes activities that bring together the knowledge and practices of local communities, voluntary organisations, practitioners and university academics to share their different understandings and perspectives on issues of common interest. This is most commonly realised through project work together and generally happens a stage after the early connections and links that might be made through the Helpdesk. By recognising the value of different types of knowledge and different partners to work together our projects aim to share knowledge in ways that enhance the understanding of each partner and make a positive difference to the areas in which we live and work.

A key principle of such CKE is mutual benefit - being able to identify in what ways working together through an exchange might have good outcomes for the range of interests and participants involved. Commonly, this kind of working means contributions can be made to meeting local community needs and bringing real issues into teaching and research. It is also important that CKE represents what are also the broader intentions of Cupp:

- The equal status of different types of knowledge
- Working together to identify and meet common needs in a sustainable way
- Addressing inequalities and disadvantage
- Building enduring relationships between local communities and the university

This has included developing a 'Communities of Practice' approach. Communities of Practice are informal learning groups that bring together practitioners from different areas around a shared passion (for further information see http://www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm)

Communities of Practice is an approach to collaborative working theorised by Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave in 1991. They have been described as informal learning groups that bring together a range of stake holders in order to get a rounded understanding of a particular issue or profession from a range of different perspectives. They are particularly concerned with the sharing of practice between members who can be involved with different levels of intensity at different times. This has been seen as a useful model for community university partnership working as it values the different perspectives and different kinds of knowledge that each of its members brings. A Community of Practice does not attempt to formalise the group into a particular structure of mode of working and recognises those participants who are at the centre and those who remain on the periphery all have something to contribute to the understanding of a shared passion.

See http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/images/stories/Static/materials_and_resources/Developing_CoP_Article.pdf

Since 2010, our 'On Our Doorsteps Programme' has been the main way to realise these CKE ambitions. Driven by the question of how community

university partnerships can make a difference but also how the university might be a 'good neighbour' this programme represents an opportunity for everybody within the university to get involved in local community action. It also means we focus this activity within communities close to the University of Brighton's campuses. Staff and students co-lead projects with communities, volunteer in activities, publicise and donate to our programme and bid for seed funds to support local action.

The seed fund aims to support six new partnerships per year and academic and community partners must apply together for these 'start-up' funds together. We think small is beautiful.

Approaching partnership working like this enables a focus on relationships and ideas with full support from the CKE programme and the Cupp team that is proving successful. We have already, for example, supported projects that raise the visibility of community needs with statutory and other local agencies and projects to build social capital through community participation. We actively support partners through these processes, offering space and resources to lay the foundations for longer term relationships that generate enduring impacts over time.

Research and Development

Cupp has also prioritised the writing and publication of material related to community engagement and to supporting other universities in setting up their own local partnerships. We have worked with the National Co-ordinating Centre in developing their 'Toolkits for Engagement' (NCCPE website) and are members and co-founders of The Talloires Network (www.Talloires.org) and signatories to the Manifesto established in 2010. We have also supported universities internationally in short term engagement projects (Senegal, Bosnia) and host visits from around 30 different organisations every year.

Cupp can offer advice in the following areas: strategic planning; community based research; curriculum development; project development; partnership building; impact evaluation; identifying community priorities and navigating the university.

Many of our resources can be found on the Cupp network: www.cuppcop.ning.com) or our website: www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/materialsandresources

Partnerships with universities in Bosnia and Senegal

Between 2006 and 2008 we worked with a university in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina to look at the role community engagement can play in healing some of the divisions left behind in a city following a period of ethnic conflict. Students took on roles within local voluntary organisations that contributed to the rebuilding of the city and enabled them to deal with issues of identity and difference. These initiatives were embedded into their courses in the longer term and also contributed to them developing work related skills and moving on to employment.

Between 2008 and 2010 we worked on a two year partnership with the University of Dakar in Senegal to develop a post graduate programme involving community engagement. Placing graduate students in villages in Senegal we looked at how the skills and knowledge they had acquired at university could be extended in the field and contribute to a post graduate qualification.

The project was funded by the British Council programme for Africa and culminated in an Africa regional conference.

critically on and analyse their work. However, while REAP provides a useful conceptual framework for mapping data, not all projects have the capacity to collect this data themselves (Hart and Northmore 2011). Despite its attempts to be accessible to community partners the language used in it can prove a barrier, as can the division it sets up between community and university, when in actuality many academics see themselves as part of both groups.



Access to Art Project

Assessing the impact of our work

The University of Brighton is committed to trying to understand the extent of the engagement work it undertakes and its impact on the communities it works with. Cupp has worked with a number of different approaches to try and measure that impact, including REAP (Pearce et al., 2007), developed by the University of Bradford, as well as asking for regular feedback from partners working with our students. REAP represents Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnerships and seeks to capture the 'public good' generated by a clear commitment to engagement. The Externalities element in the Bradford tool aims to measure 'the economic value of activities of a societal nature' (Pearce et al., 2007, pp. 5-6). A key advantage of REAP is that it is very practical: it is designed to support all those involved in community engagement activities partners and to reflect



Stephanie Tyrell -MA Art Project with Scope

Audit of community engagement

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In the year 2006 – 7, in response to the Strategic Plan, Cupp was asked to undertake an audit of engagement activities which involved agreeing definitions (what constitutes engagement and what is outreach and widening participation) and encouraging Heads of Schools to complete an audit questionnaire with their own staff. Despite a strong intention on the part of the institution to gain a realistic understanding of the extent of engagement work, those involved in it felt activity was under-reported and that any accurate assessment would be difficult. Rather than periodically repeating the audit, it was decided a better way forward was to develop a monitoring system using the university's Customer Relations Management system (CRM), and alongside this a series of publications celebrating success.

The customer relationship management system and celebrating through stories

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The CRM system is currently at a pilot stage but intended to highlight the value of the social engagement work across the University, support strategic choices to be made and demonstrate impact. This is a long-term project with the aim of embedding the monitoring system in individual Schools and Faculties.

In addition, two publication initiatives aim to make the university's social engagement activities more visible through celebrating case studies of project work. These include a published series of case studies and a web-based self-publication system working with Community 21 (www.community21.org) and available to both university staff and community partners. The aim is to create a visually attractive, accessible series of social engagement case studies with a guided search facility and a potential data source for the university's social engagement activities with the capability to capture basic monitoring data. Stories will take a person-focused approach i.e. projects will be presented from the perspectives of different key

participants (i.e. student/graduate project, staff volunteer, academic researcher, community partner) and aim to span a range of specialist fields.



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Communicating with Cupp

Cupp communicates through the following mechanisms:

Email update with news of opportunities and events. Sign up at: **www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp**

The Cupp Network, a social networking site: **cupp.cop.ning.com**

A twitter account: **<http://twitter.com/cuppbrighton>**

Through email: **cupp@brighton.ac.uk**

Telephone: **01273 64 3004**



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