# Learning to make a difference 2

Case studies that link University of Brighton and its local communities
University of Brighton Community University Partnership Programme

# Contents

# Foreword

Cover picture: Collaborative image by Kelvin
Burke, Rocket artist, and Jo Offer, senior lecturer in
inclusive arts.

This selection of case studies provides a deep insight into the ever widening range of the University of Brighton's social engagement activities and of our links with our local neighbourhoods and communities.

Each year our students and staff engage in an increasingly diverse set of projects in partnership with local and regional community groups, many of these supported by the expertise and experience of the staff of the university's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp).

Now in its second decade, Cupp has directly overseen nearly 200 such projects and has enabled the University of Brighton to considerably enhance the fulfilment of its core commitment to meet the social and economic needs of the region in which it is based. This commitment has characterised the work of the university and its antecedent institutions since its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century and is at the heart of our current (2012-15) Strategic Plan.

Our specific aim as regards social engagement is to work with communities both to apply existing skills and knowledge and to develop and test new knowledge for public benefit. We and our local and regional partners seek to develop sustainable learning communities that can have both immediate and long-term impacts on everyday lives across a wide range of areas of social and cultural life.

The 10 case studies provided here illustrate this breadth of application – and also a breadth of mechanisms and approaches.

They reflect our coastal location in work with the Hastings fishing industry. They are concerned with positive support for families under pressure. They show the value of creativity and the arts – in writing and speaking – and in photography. They address issues of homelessness in support for Emmaus and Nightstop. They show work that is restorative and healing – in occupational therapy student placements and in the charity, Grow. Above all they share a common aim to achieve positive change in the lives of the communities within which the university is situated – communities, let us not forget, of which many thousands of university staff and students are themselves already long-standing members.

It is a characteristic of the University of Brighton approach to this work that we use a great diversity of methods, each adapted to the needs of the case. This includes staff volunteering, student volunteering, assessed student undergraduate and postgraduate placements, participatory research, participatory evaluation, creative projects, international partnerships and many more. And this principled eclecticism is reflected in the rich variety of styles of reporting and narratives of the case studies themselves.

I hope you find these case studies informative, enjoyable and instructive. But I also hope you all, whether students, staff, alumni, community partners or casual readers, will be inspired by these narratives to consider what is possible to achieve with skill, imagination and a common sense of purpose.

Then indeed it may be your story that we are able to feature in a future collection such as this.

That is how we all can learn to make a difference.

**Professor Julian Crampton, Vice-Chancellor**

# COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

# Community Research and Evaluation Gateway

Brighton lecturers Mary Darking and Carl Walker talk about their work with three local community organisations. They discuss the outcomes of the project and consider the value of community-university partnership in general.

Community-based organisations play a vital role in raising awareness and taking action to address some of the most challenging issues faced across the world.

By directly experiencing the consequences of policy action (or inaction), resourcing levels and social change, they keep in touch with the circumstances of local people.

However, many community organisations have little time to spend reflecting on and sharing what they know, and few established channels through which to relay it.

## THE PROJECT

Funded by Cupp's On Our Doorsteps programme, the Community Research and Evaluation Gateway project brought us together with three community organisations collectively known as the East Brighton Gateway Partnership (EBGP).

We aimed to develop an awareness of the understanding that community organisations have of their members and localities, and of the potential significance of the information they hold for service planning, commissioning and delivery.

To achieve this, we worked to share and understand the ways in which the EBGP used their data and information to:

- apply for funds
- support the development of the partnership
- seek new approaches to involving present and prospective community members
- communicate the value of the partnership to local universities, health and social care services, and the local authority.

We organised a series of action learning workshops that allowed us to share our skills in collecting and presenting data and to think about the significance of the data available.

For example, we used the EBGP's data on health and wellbeing to understand how engagement in adult learning tends to create a 'ripple effect'. This refers to how adult learners experience incentives to make life changes in a number of different areas rather than just one.

The findings suggest that, instead of evaluating adult learning in terms of individual targets relevant to specific funders, we should look at how a series of opportunities and new connections can combine and develop to promote positive change in people's lives.

## MOVING FORWARD

By the end of the project, we arrived at the shared view that there are clear advantages to building the capacity of community organisations and universities to cooperate. Together,

we are better equipped to promote awareness of, and collectively shape action to address, the pressing social challenges of our times.

However, the project also left us with a number of questions to consider:

- How can more people become involved in deciding how data relevant to their needs is used and represented?
- Who owns and has the right to access the information that community organisations collect?
- What are the research and evaluation skills and resources that community organisations need?

We addressed some of these questions in two workshops in December 2014, titled 'Making the Most of your Data'. The workshops were organised in partnership with Cupp, Community Works and the School of Applied Social Science. They were an opportunity to explore monitoring, evaluation and impact through peer support, and to discuss the practicalities of putting together a data management strategy.

As we plan further workshops, we hope that community organisations will continue to lead the way in telling us how they want to share knowledge of their community engagement.

# The Grow Project

Grow is a charity that helps people with mild to moderate mental health issues by putting them back in touch with nature. Members take part in eight-week 'seasons' where they go for walks and complete group activities in the Sussex countryside. The University of Brighton worked with Grow to evaluate their work so far.

The Grow Project was a collaboration between the directors of Grow (Julie Wright and Jo Wren) and a psychologist and psychotherapist at the University of Brighton (Matt Adams and Martin Jordan).

The aim of the partnership was to produce an evaluation of Grow's work to date, one that established how the initiative has supported participants in their wellbeing and recovery from psychological distress and illness. We hoped that this would enable Grow to secure future funding and development.

The partnership was also committed to developing a knowledge exchange. In practice, this meant the university sharing its expertise in theory and research with Grow, and the directors, volunteers and participants of Grow sharing their experience and knowledge with the university. This would help to establish the volunteer role within Grow as well as volunteering links with the University of Brighton.

## EVALUATING SUCCESS

The project produced an evaluation report that demonstrated the various benefits of Grow for its members, who reported an increased sense of positivity, nature-connectedness, autonomy, belonging and social identity. The relationships between individuals, and between those individuals and the natural setting, were vital to this success.

We distributed copies of the evaluation report at a public launch

event in January 2014, which we used to:

- introduce green outdoor care and therapy
- share the outcomes of the project with the local community and potential partner organisations
- publicise Grow to potential participants and volunteers.

We also shared the report with previous and current participants of Grow to give them further insight into the value of the programme.

## MUTUAL BENEFITS

The partnership has helped Grow to develop structurally and financially. It is now an independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with Big Lottery funding in place until 2016. It has also started to provide more long-term support through drop-in days at Stanmer Park, which have helped to create a greater sense of community as they tie in with other local projects in foraging, outdoor music-making and shelter building.

There is always a waiting list for Grow Seasons and referrals come from a variety of sources, which seems to indicate that the name is becoming known.

Over the next couple of years Grow will be looking at ways to secure alternative funding – including some from the private sector – and our research will act as invaluable evidence that the charity is a worthy investment.

> The partnership has helped Grow to develop structurally and financially.

The outcomes for the university have also been positive. Grow directors and participants have contributed towards the undergraduate applied psychology programme for the last two years, as Martin and Matt incorporate their own experiences with the project in their teaching and research.

The two lecturers have continued their relationship with Grow and will feature the evaluation report in an upcoming book on ecotherapy.

You can find out more about Grow at **www.growingwellbeing.org.uk**.

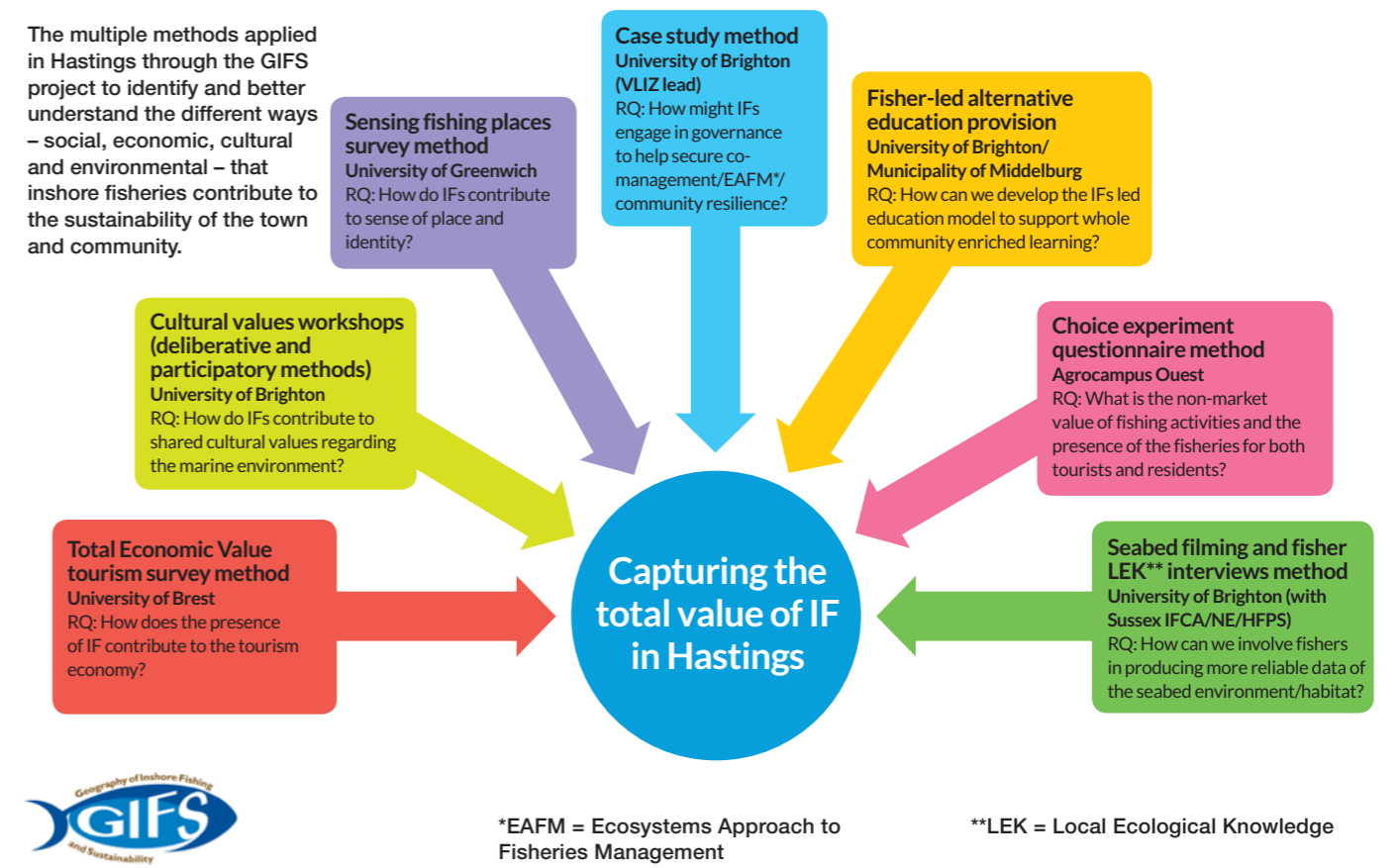# Hastings fishing community: Co-design and collaboration in research



01

Hastings is home to the largest sustainable beach-launched fleet in the country, but fuel costs, quotas and an ageing population have threatened this historic industry. Efforts to counteract economic decline were rewarded in 2010/11 when the town secured Axis 4 funding to form a Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), a partnership between fisheries actors and other local private and public stakeholders. Below, Jo Orchard-Webb (research fellow in the School of Environment and Technology) and Esther Brown (economic and social engagement manager for the University of Brighton in Hastings) describe our contribution to the partnership.

The University of Brighton has worked with the Hastings fishing community through the GIFS (Geography of Inshore Fishing and Sustainability) project and as a stakeholder partner in the FLAG to understand the different ways – social, economic, cultural and environmental – in which inshore fisheries benefit the town.

GIFS aims to establish the importance of inshore fishing across the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. The project used a range of methods, including surveys, case studies and interviews, to capture the value of inshore fishing in Hastings.

Community members took a central role in project partner meetings, fieldwork exercises and workshops, and were integral to identifying the focus and scope of research pilot activity. This put them at the heart of the research and ensured the impact and knowledge exchange were far-reaching.

The multiple methods applied in Hastings through the GIFS project to identify and better understand the different ways – social, economic, cultural and environmental – that inshore fisheries contribute to the sustainability of the town and community.

**Case study method**
University of Brighton (VLIZ lead)
RQ: How might IFs engage in governance to help secure co-management/EAFM*/community resilience?

**Sensing fishing places survey method**
University of Greenwich
RQ: How do IFs contribute to sense of place and identity?

**Fisher-led alternative education provision**
University of Brighton/Municipality of Middelburg
RQ: How can we develop the IFs led education model to support whole community enriched learning?

**Cultural values workshops (deliberative and participatory methods)**
University of Brighton
RQ: How do IFs contribute to shared cultural values regarding the marine environment?

**Choice experiment questionnaire method**
Agrocampus Ouest
RQ: What is the non-market value of fishing activities and the presence of the fisheries for both tourists and residents?

**Total Economic Value tourism survey method**
University of Brest
RQ: How does the presence of IF contribute to the tourism economy?

**Capturing the total value of IF in Hastings**

**Seabed filming and fisher LEK** interviews method**
University of Brighton (with Sussex IFCA/NE/HFPS)
RQ: How can we involve fishers in producing more reliable data of the seabed environment/habitat?

*EAFM = Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management

**LEK = Local Ecological Knowledge

## WORKING TOGETHER

The project has enabled the Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society (HFPS) to build cross-border partnerships and develop a knowledge exchange network with the six GIFS partners as well as a range of actors in other European fishing communities, resulting in the sharing of ideas, resources and solutions to challenges in building sustainable communities.

We collaboratively examined the role of the fishing fleet in enriched whole community learning, which led to the development of educational resources and a curriculum mapping exercise. These resources support the fleet's alternative education provision, which focuses on sharing their knowledge with schoolchildren, chefs and the general public – work that highlights the importance of sustainability and provides a much-needed alternative income stream for local fishermen.

Working with Natural England, Sussex IFCA and the university, the local fleet also helped capture accurate seabed data using underwater cameras suspended from their fishing boats. This approach enabled a more effective and equitable inclusion of fishermen in the science behind the conservation process.

## WIDER IMPACT

A true and equal approach to partnership has helped build capacity within both the university research team and the fishing community regarding the collaborative identification of research needs and the development of context-sensitive research methods. These skills and

the partnership experience have encouraged partners to engage in a more inclusive data collection approach that enhances the value of local ecological knowledge. Importantly, stakeholder participation has resulted in shared ownership of the research and project outputs, so the findings are now more accessible for use in local planning.



02

1. University of Brighton and Hastings Fleet representatives research scoping visit to Horizon Educatief, Ostend (Source: Johanne Orchard-Webb, 2013)
2. Fisheries-led education: HFPS Net Hut education resources carrier created as part of GIFS (Source: HFPS, 2014)

# Shifting the odds



Boingboing is a community interest company that uses resilience research and practice to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds. They also provide opportunities to learn resilience techniques through forums, workshops and online materials. Kim Aumann, involved since 2004, considers her long-term connection with the project and what has been achieved so far.

Having always worked in the third sector, it's clear to me that the cards don't get dealt fairly. Too many people experience social exclusion and have little access to the opportunities we should all enjoy.

So when, back in 2004, I heard that Professor Angie Hart and colleagues were exploring the notion of resilience, my ears pricked up. At the time I was managing Amaze, a support charity for parents of disabled children, and was eager to see if resilience research could translate into practice for families to use in regular everyday ways.

What mushroomed from this beginning was a whole community of researchers, academics, practitioners, parents, commissioners, young people and onlookers, all trying to blend participatory research and practice development to build the resilience of those having a tough time.

> **What is resilience?**
>
> • According to the developmental psychologist Ann Masten, resilience is the 'positive adaptation to adversity despite serious threats to adaptation or development'. She also describes it as 'ordinary magic'.

## A DECADE LATER

10 years down the line, I think we've made a significant impact. We have engaged literally thousands of people in the pursuit of learning about resilience and secured funding from a myriad of sources to deliver projects that track down ways of building it. A monthly Brighton-based resilience forum helps to manage and sustain interest by attracting new and old attendees, and we have just launched a second forum in Hastings with help from Cupp.

In addition, we've written a couple of books about resilience including one with and for parent carers, published our ideas in journals to add to the international debate, and designed a parent support course that is now used in four local authority areas. We've also produced resilience handbooks in collaboration with young people and kinship carers, and built a website for collating resources and documenting project work for other people to use.

Establishing boingboing as a community interest company has laid a strong foundation for an ongoing partnership with world leaders in the community sector. It has also provided a structure from which to negotiate and sustain our projects into the future.

## HARD WORK

I wouldn't want to give the impression that community-university work is simple. People come and go and we have had minor and even major disagreements along the way, which have disrupted continuity and left us rather deflated at times.

Although we have always been committed to knowledge exchange, it hasn't been easy for us to attract new academics, even though supporting PhD students has been a successful strategy. Funding cuts to the third sector have made it difficult to secure organisational interest, and

the situation only improves when new funding makes it worthwhile for local and national groups to partner with us.

Also, some of the more recent 'boingboingers' are independent students or workers, which can pose issues for embedding resilience work across systems and aligning it with other aspects of people's lives. These issues can get in the way of our objective to spread the ideas being developed beyond those directly involved.

## NEW PROJECTS

In spite of these issues, it's important to remember that challenges are opportunities to problem solve, and new projects allow us to test what we've learned about working together.

The Imagine project brings the practice-based ventures of five European countries to the table, while our collaborative work with YoungMinds, the National Lottery and the £75million Headstart initiative helps to build children's resilience via local communities and schools. We also have plans for co-design work to represent resilience in artistic and digital formats.

Almost without realising it, we have built a sustained community-university partnership. With a bit more time, we might be able to leave a legacy that is not dependent on the individuals who set it up.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

It's really hard to change the odds when things are stacked against you, but this community of practice includes a host of people with a passion to share and combine their different areas of expertise – to work out how to use and develop resilience ideas to change those odds after all. And I think that's what keeps it going.





1. Boingboing Artist in Residence, Lisa Buttery, charts our co-production
2. 'Partnerships thrive when you think about what you want', 'What people said they could give'

# STAFF AS
# VOLUNTEERS

# Emmaus Brighton & Hove:
## Working together to end homelessness

Graham Davis works for the University of Brighton as an IT manager and has been a trustee at Emmaus Brighton & Hove for 18 months. Here he describes his work with the organisation.



Emmaus provides homeless men and women with a home and full-time work in a safe and supportive community. One of my ambitions was to actively get involved with the Companions – the people who live and work in the community after a period of homelessness. As part of the university's staff volunteering programme, I've been able to contribute to the introduction of wireless Internet technology throughout Emmaus'

accommodation and also by forming a social book club.

I was keen on developing a partnership between the University of Brighton and Emmaus that focused on student engagement. I met with staff from the Active Student Volunteering Service, who provided great help and advice around student and staff volunteering opportunities and procedures. We collectively met with the chief executive of Emmaus

and were able to start two exciting projects involving students from the university.

### RECYCLING AND RESEARCH

The first project centred on recycling unwanted clothes and other goods from the university's halls of residence at the end of the academic year. The university's environmental group worked together with Emmaus and were able to recycle some 750 bags of clothes and 80 beds from an old accommodation building. Emmaus managed to reuse, recycle and sell most of the items to further support their community.

The second project involved research into the social side of life in the community and was conducted by one of our MA students – Bruno De Oliveira – who volunteered for the project.

Bruno produced a detailed report that he presented to the Emmaus board of trustees. He had been able to interview a number of Companions on a one-to-one basis anonymously, which resulted in honest and open feedback in the report. The trustees took the findings on board and used them to inform the content of Emmaus' five-year strategic plan.

**You can read more about Bruno's research on page 22–23.**



### WORTH OUR WHILE

As a regular visitor to the Emmaus community, I've been fortunate to meet and get to know many of the Companions and often receive positive feedback, which makes volunteering valuable and enjoyable.

If I can make a small contribution to improving the wellbeing of people who may have lived on the streets for many years, the effort is worth it.

> The trustees took the findings on board and used them to inform the content of Emmaus' five-year strategic plan.

(Above) **Volunteers and Companions pose for a photograph at Emmaus Brighton & Hove**

# Sussex Nightstop:
# A spare room and a social conscience

Mark Price is assistant head of the School of Education and a key figure in our economic and social engagement activities. Here he explains his work with the community project Sussex Nightstop.

The Nightstop model is simple – those who have a spare room are trained to act as hosts to homeless young people, offering them an evening meal, bed and breakfast. The young people are homeless sometimes through a temporary breakdown of relationships with parents, and sometimes through a combination of circumstances that leaves them with nowhere to sleep for the night.

A good friend told me about the scheme, which she'd heard about when trying to find accommodation for her son's friend, who was sofa-surfing at the time. There was no such provision in Sussex, she said, so would I like to help set some up?

The hosts are a whole bunch of different folk – some younger, some older, some with children of their own – but all are incredibly positive about their experience and have great stories to tell.

My favourite is about a young woman who, having already used Nightstop before, arrived on the doorstep of a couple hosting for the first time. They were apprehensive about getting it right for their first 'Nightstopper' and when they opened the door, their nervousness must have shown. Straight away, the young woman said: "Hi, I'm Nancy. Don't worry – I'll show you what to do!"

## PARTNER INVOLVEMENT

I've been chair of the organisation since it was set up in 2009 and a couple of years ago my role was recognised through the university's staff volunteering scheme. This gave me a great opportunity to talk about Nightstop with colleagues – and recruit some new hosts!

The way we dovetail Nightstop into the statutory professional services (education, social services, housing etc) is key to our success; for me, it reflects the type of civic and community partnerships the University of Brighton is rightly proud of.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It has taken time for us to set up this provision for young people and in some ways this has been our greatest challenge. Some of our initial supporters and stakeholders wanted us to establish the service immediately, but the process of recruiting, training and supporting hosts is not a fast one – and we have to get it right.

At the same time, it's a very simple model and people tend to understand the idea behind it very quickly. In our first full year of operation, we provided 86 bed nights, and last year this figure had

risen to 769. A 900% increase over four years isn't bad going!

Of course, the ongoing challenges are the obvious ones. We need to continue to recruit and train more hosts to provide more bed nights for more young people across more of Sussex… and we need more money to do that. But my experience is that, generally speaking, people's hearts are open and the enthusiasm of hosts is contagious. And now I feel like I can make a difference too.

If you're interested in volunteering for Sussex Nightstop, please visit **www.sussexnightstop.org.uk**.

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## A 900% increase over four years isn't bad going!

# Volunteering at Oak Grove College

Nick Rodgers is a business development manager at the University of Brighton. From 2011 to 2013, he volunteered to create growth opportunities at Oak Grove College in Worthing – and the school is now reaping the benefits.

Oak Grove College is a special education needs (SEN) school that provides a diverse education for 239 pupils aged between 11 and 19. It caters for statemented pupils with a wide variety of needs and from both a rural and urban setting.

The school faces an ongoing challenge in preparing its students for the workplace and providing them with appropriate work experience. This difficulty is particularly pronounced in the sixth form, which now consists of 70 students.

Traditionally the school has had some links with local employers, mainly in the horticultural sector. But in recent years suitable work experience opportunities have become scarce as local employers instead use apprenticeship programmes to recruit and train school leavers. There is also an element of competition with mainstream schools for work placements.

## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

I started voluntary work at Oak Grove College through the staff volunteering scheme. My role had three distinct phases:

1. Working with senior managers to prepare and adopt a funding strategy for both the school and the parent-teacher association (PTA)
2. Using grant funding to provide a work-like experience for pupils within the school setting

3. Teaming up with local employers, parents and staff to overcome the barriers in providing work experience

The funding strategy identified a range of local and national funders that had criteria wide enough for the school to have a reasonable expectation of receiving a grant. It also established 10 funding streams relevant to both the school and PTA and provided a framework for the organisations to develop projects and activities to exploit these opportunities and enhance their revenue.

However, providing work-like experiences for students had the greatest impact. The school has used its open space well, building polytunnels and greenhouses to grow flowers, herbs and vegetables that are then sold to the public. This provides not only a working environment for students but a regular income for the school as well.

Another priority for 2013/14 was the funding and building of an outdoor kitchen to extend the working environment from horticulture and retail to catering and food preparation. This would provide additional learning experiences and volunteering opportunities for both students and other young people in the local area.

## REWARDING SUCCESS

Towards the end of the school year, Oak Grove College expressed their gratitude by nominating me for the university's Community Engagement Award. The citation read:

"Nick Rodgers has been an invaluable support over a period of years in our fundraising activities. Under his guidance we have had much success in achieving awards for outdoor community projects. Without Nick's help, we would not have been able to secure and maintain relevant programmes of learning for our complex special needs students."

Recognition of my work in the community was both a humbling and motivating experience. The staff volunteering scheme provided a great opportunity to use my skills in a different setting, learn from others and use the experience and knowledge gained at the university to benefit the community with great effect.

Last year finished with a Big Lottery grant of £9,800 to purchase the materials needed to build the outdoor kitchen area. The kitchen will be ready in spring 2015 and serving food to the public in the summer.

# STUDENTS IN THE
# COMMUNITY

# Behind the Scenes:
## A global art project at the University of Brighton

Lola Odessey Waters is an Environment and Media Studies BA(Hons) student at the university. Her Behind the Scenes project was part of 'Inside Out: The Global Art Project', a worldwide art movement dedicated to transforming messages of personal identity into works of art.

For my second year Community Engagement module, I wanted to challenge the simplistic representation of universities with logos. The idea was to put faces on a few of the cogs (people) that enable the university to function and show appreciation for their work.

Through portrait photography, the project called on participants to stand up for what they believe in. Each sitting was an opportunity to communicate their ideas and values to the rest of the university (and the world). I photographed cleaners, dinner ladies, students, admin workers, technicians, lecturers, Students' Union staff, shopkeepers and librarians.

Example statements that participants wanted to convey were: "Nowadays money speaks louder than politics", "Don't stereotype me" and "To my daughter, she is close to my heart".

### MAKING IT PUBLIC

When I had 19 portraits, I applied to the Students' Union for funding so I could turn them into 110x90cm posters. When they were ready, I pasted them up with the help of friends on to the gloomy brick walls of the Watts building.

Pasting the portraits outside was meaningful. I wanted to modify assumptions about art being precious and belonging in galleries. The pasting was done overnight and had a surprise effect on the Moulsecoomb community – the next morning, smiling faces had appeared!

The posters stayed up from mid-January until June. Over time they degraded, showing the impermanence of paper and glue, but even with wear and tear they remained visually interesting. At the end of the project, each participant received a copy of their portrait with their statement on the back as a souvenir.

I believe this project was a success on the inside and out. I met people who the university relies on but who beforehand were faceless. I photographed them and we exchanged ideas. The posters on the walls of Watts embellished the building, created a wider a sense of community and encouraged members of the university to recognise and respect their students and staff. Behind the Scenes took art outside the gallery and made it accessible to anybody passing by.

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK

My work was very well received by lecturers, university employees and students alike. I am grateful to all participants (many of whom are not in the portraits) for making this endeavour achievable. The project was highly rewarding and I hope to work again with photography, identity and communities to share meaningful ideas from the bottom up.

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Behind the Scenes took art outside the gallery and made it accessible to anybody passing by.

(Right) **Nine portraits of students and staff at the University of Brighton**
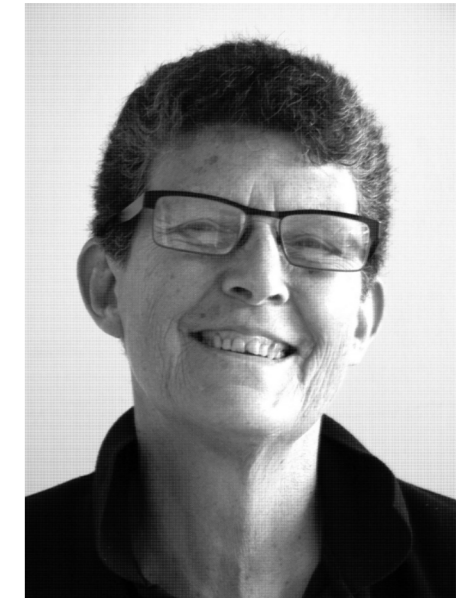
# Exploring the sense of community at Emmaus Brighton & Hove

Bruno De Oliveira has been a student at the University of Brighton since 2009. After completing his bachelor's degree in Applied Psychology and Sociology, he went on to study for a masters in Community Psychology – a subject that uses community participation and social change to help understand and promote mental wellbeing. Here he describes his research on life at Emmaus Brighton & Hove.

Emmaus Brighton & Hove is a homelessness charity based in Portslade and part of an international movement to tackle poverty and homelessness. As part of my masters in Community Psychology, I worked with the Companions (residents in Emmaus' accommodation) to explore the sense of community that the charity provides.

I found out about the organisation through Cupp and spent some preliminary time there to get a feel for it. This was my first real-life experience as an interviewer and I was concerned about getting it right, but Dr Paul Hanna was there to give me the necessary support.

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Between December 2013 and April 2014, I carried out questionnaires and in-depth semi-structured interviews with members of the community after developing both sets of questions in collaboration with Emmaus. 25 out of 48 Companions took part.

The project findings suggest that the strong sense of community at Emmaus is based on the fact that the Companions have a clear understanding of what

the organisation is about. One interviewee, reflecting on the solidarity among the Companions, said: "Yes… It should be more at the core of what Emmaus is all about. We all had it hard and we have come here, so let's not forget where we came from."

Given the variety of ideas about how solidarity could be encouraged in the community, one aspect seems to stand out: there is a need to have ongoing campaigns with some kind of incentive or recognition for those who take part. Some examples of the projects that the Companions support are: a Soup Run on the seafront; giving sleeping bags, warm clothing and footwear to local charities working with rough sleepers; and maintenance projects at Brighton Voices in Exile and Off the Fence.

In addition, providing opportunities for Companions to neighbour up makes an important contribution to increasing their sense of community following homelessness. This can in turn foster their well-being and increase housing stability.

The research also indicates the significance of the mental health support that Emmaus provides, where members act as a source

of strength to one another. A solid sense of community is as important to help people overcome homelessness as more obvious factors such as access to housing, economic stability and facilitating control of substance abuse. Emmaus gives the Companions a place to live and an opportunity to work and gain skills through its social enterprises.

> ❝
> The strong sense of community at Emmaus is based on the fact that the Companions have a clear understanding of what the organisation is about.











Finally, the research shows that Emmaus Brighton & Hove provides a setting where people in that community can move from a condition of oppression and disempowerment to one where they can work together to fight social oppression. Their well-being is a result of liberation and empowerment that manifest in solidarity and social action.

## SHARING THE RESULTS

I agreed to present the report findings to the Board of Trustees, which was very rewarding because

the Trustees will use the report to bring improvements to the charity's services. To see my research develop from an initial meeting to a report that is useful for the organisation is why I am studying Community Psychology – to be an active researcher striving towards social change.

**Bruno is now studying towards a PhD in Community Psychology at the University of Brighton.**

1. Folly flowers
2. Beatrice and Daniel in the polytunnel
3. Van crew
4. Loading the Emmaus van
5. Russell, Arna and Nick on the sofa
All images are courtesy of Emmaus Brighton & Hove.

# Occupational therapy role-emerging placements



Tracy Szekely is a senior lecturer and practice placement tutor for the University of Brighton's occupational therapy courses. She qualified as an occupational therapist herself in 1985 and completed her MSc in 2005.

Occupational therapy students at the University of Brighton attend five practice placements and have to complete 1,000 hours to qualify and register with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Role-emerging placements are those that occur in places where there is not an established occupational therapy role. They have been an option for our students since the course's inception in 1994.

In 2011 it became compulsory for the MSc students to do a

placement outside the statutory services, followed by the BSc students in 2013. The majority of our 60 students now complete this penultimate eight-week placement in an emerging role setting, resulting in many collaborative projects with community organisations including:

- homeless day centres and hostels
- residential and nursing homes
- physical disability charities and day centres
- young people's projects and schools
- mental health hostels

- sheltered housing facilities
- a podiatry clinic
- mother and baby services
- a prison
- an inter-generational dementia project.

University research has identified role-emerging placements as significant in helping students to develop their professional identity and confidence. They now feature in occupational therapy courses across the UK.

## AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Students normally go on these placements in pairs for seven weeks, after they have completed a one-day-a-week induction for five weeks. This gives them the opportunity to complete their induction and negotiate their placement plan with an on-site supervisor.

During this time students have the opportunity to attend university-based action learning groups to discuss assessment and intervention issues. Each student receives one hour of supervision each week from both their on-site supervisor and an occupational therapist, who is normally a clinician but can be a university occupational therapy tutor.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There has been much success with these placements. Projects on homelessness have seen a decrease in evictions and challenging behavior, and nursing placements have led to a decrease in falls.



In addition, since role-emerging placements have become compulsory, students have received very positive feedback from interviewers regarding their ability to articulate their professional skills and identity.

Some students have even been confident enough to apply for jobs in emerging role settings for their first post, for example in mental health hostels, young people's charities and special educational needs schools.



### What is occupational therapy?

"Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation.

"The primary goal is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. This outcome is achieved by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to, or by modifying the occupation or environment to better support their occupational engagement."

(World Federation of Occupational Therapists)

> " University research has identified role-emerging placements as significant in helping students to develop their professional identity and confidence.

1. Apple pressing group
2. Tree of Progress in life skills group
3. Making props for a play

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