



University of Brighton



Learning to make a difference: the University of Brighton and its local communities

University of Brighton Community University Partnership Programme

Contents

Foreword

Professor Julian Crampton

Community perspectives

The mutual benefits of partnership: Sussex Pathways

Adrian Martin

Benefits and challenges of a university partnership:

3VA – voluntary action in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden District Council

Adam Chugg

Staff as volunteers

Cultivating sustainability: Falmer vegetable garden
and the University of Brighton food co-op

Lucy Dance

Behind-the-scenes support: Amaze

Lisa Mitchell

Students in the community

From banking to football: the community engagement module

Martin Clayton

Inclusive arts: an action-based research project

Natalia Agote Urquia

The peerless pier: Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust

Kate Cheyne

A grassroots opportunity for growth: Grassroots Suicide Prevention

Kerry Dowding

Academics in community partnerships

Traveller policy under the spotlight: Brighton & Hove Traveller Scrutiny Panel

Aiden McGarry

The Tuesday Group: ethics in performance

Bobbie Farsides and Sue Eckstein

Health and community learning: The Bridge Community Education Centre

Helen Stanley

A community partnership with no community? Afghan migrants in Brighton

Nichola Khan

Tools to build better neighbourhoods: Community 21

Nick Gant

Foreword

This collection of case studies represents a snapshot of the University of Brighton's social engagement activities, work that links the university to our local communities.

Every year, university staff and students undertake a wide range of projects in partnership with local communities. Many of these are supported by the university's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp).

In its ten years of operation Cupp has directly supported over 150 partnership projects and each year over 300 students undertake community activities as part of their studies. On top of this, many more community-university partnership projects have been established without direct input from the Cupp team. For some projects the university provides funding and for others we offer staff or student assistance to manage, develop and deliver projects.

Social and community engagement is at the heart of what we do as a university as our recently agreed Strategic Plan 2012–15 attests. We will continue to work with communities in producing and applying new knowledge. Building on our already substantial base, our teaching and learning will provide opportunities for all undergraduate students to have the opportunity to contribute to activities outside the university.

Our partnerships with local and regional bodies will continue to help develop sustainable learning communities that sustain policy development. Our aim is to promote positive change in the lives of communities of which we are part, underpinned by the principles of mutual benefit that helps ensure that useful activity can continue in the long run.

These thirteen case studies demonstrate this engagement from the perspectives of the different partners involved: community, voluntary and public organisations, staff volunteers, students, graduates and researchers.

The diversity of activities they cover is impressive, ranging from theatre and the arts, to community planning, from chairing a local authority scrutiny panel, to mentoring ex-offenders, to supporting vegetable growing and working with a local voluntary organisation on its management policies. The case studies also highlight some of the challenges involved in this work and the importance of individual enthusiasm and commitment to its success.

In acknowledgement of this the university has recently established an Excellence in Community Engagement award, which recognises outstanding professional and personal commitment to community engagement by a staff member.

I hope that students, staff, alumni and community partners will be inspired by these stories to develop new partnerships committed to co-working for the benefit of local communities, and teaching and research at the University of Brighton.

Professor Julian Crampton, Vice-Chancellor

Community perspectives

The mutual benefits of partnership

Sussex Pathways

Adrian Martin, Director of Sussex Pathways, explains how a single student volunteer can make a very significant contribution to an organisation's achievements. At the same time, the organisation can give its volunteers invaluable real-life experience and opportunities to expand their skills.

Sussex Pathways is a charitable organisation providing a social mentoring scheme to empower offenders to make positive life choices. It employs 3.5 paid staff members and supports approximately 50 volunteer mentors and a further 10 other volunteers.

Role of our mentors

Volunteers mentor people for six weeks before, and up to six months after, their release from prison, supporting their resettlement into the community. They also mentor those sentenced to a community order for six months in the community.

By training and supporting volunteers from the community to support offenders to settle back into their neighbourhoods and make positive life choices, Sussex Pathways contributes towards social and financial inclusion, reducing re-offending and promoting safer communities.

Partnering with the university

The partnership between the university and Sussex Pathways has grown significantly over the past few years. Students volunteer as part of the university's Community Engagement module, and this has been of enormous benefit to our organisation.

The power of one

One student remained committed to Sussex Pathways after completing our four-day core training course in 2010 and has volunteered with Sussex Pathways ever since. Not only has she successfully managed a number of mentoring partnerships, she has also volunteered in other areas of our work.

She supported our training programme by sharing her experiences with new trainees, provided administrative support to our office in HMP Lewes, and most recently has been involved in a pilot project supporting and supervising a group of volunteer mentors.

Giving opportunity to potential

Sussex Pathways recognised her qualities and potential and was able to offer her opportunities to broaden her experience and skill base.

The student worked tirelessly with some of the charity's most high-need and complex cases and has achieved significant results, including supporting an entrenched alcohol-dependent ex-offender who was street-homeless and unwilling to engage with any support services.

Through her persistent, professional and caring approach, she was able to encourage the individual to change his perspective and build a level of trust that has enabled him to access residential detoxification and rehabilitative services. Without her tenacity and with the service providers involved, this outcome would not have been achieved.

Translating potential into impact

The student's work has empowered ex-offenders to make positive life choices and refrain from committing crime. She has motivated and inspired new recruits, and by participating in our pilot programme to support a small group of community volunteers, she has helped to reach a broader range of people who want to engage with the charity's service.

Sussex Pathways has been successful in supporting offenders to resettle into their communities and the volunteers who work with us are the lifeblood of our organisation. We have recently established a service user group and are about to launch short interventions, giving people improved access to mentoring services in the community.

Without student volunteers and our partnership with the university, none of this would be possible.

www.sussexpathways.org.uk/

Benefits and challenges of a university partnership

3VA: Voluntary Action in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden

Adam Chugg, Chief Executive of 3VA, reflects on his experience of working with the Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) and how it allowed his organisation to identify relevant expertise within the university.

I started working at what was then the Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services (EAVS) in 2008. As a council for voluntary service it works with local groups through support, advice and training, and helps the sector to network and have a voice locally. EAVS was very involved in partnership working and through membership of the Eastbourne Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) I was first introduced to the University of Brighton Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp), which was an invaluable way into the labyrinth of the university.

A local resilience action plan

Our first piece of joint work with Cupp was on the Local Resilience Action Plan for East Sussex. This tried to measure activity in the voluntary and community sector. The National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS) funded the project and Cupp found a researcher who provided academic input. The project developed into an assessment of the impact of the early recession on the local voluntary sector.

The co-production approach worked well with Speak Up, an East Sussex forum for voluntary and community sector representatives, bringing voluntary and community organisations together as part of the

consultation and helping produce the final report.

Working with the university helped ensure that the results of the work were taken seriously by local organisations, the local authority and other funders. Nationally, NACVS adopted the approach as a model of good practice.

3VA was formed in 2009 when Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services joined forces with South Downs Council for Voluntary Service to create the Council for Voluntary Services for Eastbourne, Lewes District and Wealden. The close relationship developed between the university and EAVS has continued with 3VA.

The potential of neighbourhood management

3VA has been involved with the university's On Our Doorsteps programme in Eastbourne and is working on a project looking at the potential of neighbourhood management. Eastbourne introduced a neighbourhood management initiative to three areas of the town in 2010 to enable the local community to have a greater say in what happens. The project will strengthen this initiative by highlighting recognised models of good practice in neighbourhood management and strengthening links

between local community groups, the Local Strategic Partnership and the university.

Students have also been involved, working with Speak Up to help run its annual conference for voluntary sector organisations in East Sussex.

Challenges of partnership

There are challenges in working successfully with the university. A major one is geographic: our nearest campus in Eastbourne is isolated from the parts of the town where most voluntary and community groups are working. Many of the degree courses at Eastbourne are focused on health and social care professions which is not always the best fit with community needs, although there has been some innovative work with older people who can also be a great resource for the university. Finally, the development of an organisation like 3VA is very organic which does not easily match with the university's academic and research needs.

Nevertheless, the relationship is genuinely positive: students bring a sense of energy to Eastbourne; university staff have been fantastic people to work with and have a real commitment to the community. We hope to continue working closely with the university at every opportunity. www.3va.org.uk

Staff as volunteers

Cultivating sustainability



Falmer vegetable garden and the University of Brighton Food Co-op

Lucy Dance was a programme assistant at the university's School of Education. Through the staff volunteering scheme, the university supported her volunteering in establishing a vegetable garden on Falmer campus and promoting the University of Brighton Food Co-op. It's all part of the Sustainability Action Network, which aims to make the university a better place to work and study for staff and students. Besides introducing people to the benefits of local, seasonal produce, the projects have had the unplanned benefit of increasing interaction between different departments.

Falmer vegetable garden and the University of Brighton Food Co-op

I was delighted when the staff volunteering scheme was launched as I've been a keen volunteer with several local charities and community groups for many years. I initially applied to the scheme to visit vegetable projects across Brighton to find out how to start the vegetable garden on the Falmer campus.

Preparing the ground

I visited several projects including Fork and Dig It at Falmer, London Road Community Garden, and Brighton and Hove Food Partnership's garden in Preston Park. My colleague and I secured funding from the Health Promoting University project (which awarded small grants to the Environmental Action Networks), Springboard and Active Sussex.

With the support and financial backing of the university's Estate and Facilities Management department we approached Brighton and Hove Wood Recycling Project who built us four beautiful raised beds. We sourced very high quality organic soil from less than a mile away at Brighton Community Compost Centre and got staff and students involved in donating vegetables. We bought two compost bins from Mid Sussex Wood Recycling Project for our plant waste and hope to expand this into a composting scheme for kitchens on campus.

Gardening action

We have a weekly session at the vegetable garden where volunteers water, plant, dig, share ideas and get outside for an hour away from their computers. We have all learnt a lot about growing vegetables and running a community gardening project. The unpredictable weather has meant that some vegetables have grown more successfully than others. We had delicious beans, peas, fennel, courgettes, chard, lettuce and many varieties of herbs. Our sweetcorn and leeks were less successful and we have green tomatoes ripening on our office window sills.

One volunteer is studying at Plumpton College and advises us on growing techniques. She suggested and designed a system to get water to the roots of our tomato plants using plastic bottles which brought them back to life. The vegetable garden is on the side of a hill so the plants have no protection against the wind. We had been considering planting a hedge or constructing a bamboo fence to offer some protection, but after advice from Brighton and Hove Food Partnership we have decided to monitor the site over a whole year of seasons. A downside to a barrier against the wind is that the garden would be less visible and possibly less accessible.

Now the garden has been established we will focus more time on marketing and developing an online presence via Twitter and a blog. We hope to attract more students who live on campus to get involved and then register as a student society. We also have plans to install a water butt and some signs.

Staff at the Falmer campus getting involved in the vegetable garden:
(left) preparing bean canes;
(above) planting herbs.



The University of Brighton Food Co-op

I also used some of my staff volunteering hours to extend the University of Brighton Food Co-op to Falmer campus. The food co-op promotes healthy, local, seasonal foods through providing fruit and vegetable boxes each week on campus and selling health foods. I started by holding an open meeting on campus to gauge interest in the scheme. From this meeting I worked with two volunteers to set up the scheme and advertise it across the campus. We carried out a survey and found out that the majority of people were interested in local cheap produce so we sourced a supplier and ordered some vegetables!

We supply up to 60 vegetable boxes of local, good quality produce to students and staff every Thursday for £3. Volunteers run the stall, doing an hour each to help with dividing the vegetables into boxes, handing out boxes, signing up new members and taking orders. Each week there is a real buzz around campus about vegetables and the scheme has got people talking between departments and schools.

Involving staff and students

All members of the food co-op are required to help for one hour a month as this is what makes the food so cheap. Most people are very happy to get involved and some even say it's the highlight of their week! We have looked at reasons why people don't volunteer, which include lack of time and not being available to help on the stall. We now encourage people to help with ordering, writing recipes or helping with finance, which can be done at times to suit them.

Our future plans include involving more students on the management committee, signing up new members and holding events to increase awareness of the effect our food has on the environment.

I am now moving to a new post with Sustrans, the pioneer of safe cycling routes in the UK. Setting up a vegetable garden and food co-op was really important in my career development. It gave me skills in managing projects as well as experience in behaviour change initiatives, both essential for my new job.

www.brighton.ac.uk/sustainability/campus/food/

Behind-the-scenes support

Amaze staff volunteering scheme

Lisa Mitchell has put her HR experience to work for Amaze, a local charity that supports parents of children with special needs. An administrator in the university's Economic and Social Engagement department, Lisa has benefited from the charity herself and welcomed the opportunity to share her skills, while at the same time applying them in a new sector.

I have worked in human resources, training and managerial positions for many years. The staff volunteering scheme really appealed to me as I was keen to use my skills outside of the university and experience working with specialist staff in the charity sector. I responded to a request for HR help in Amaze's newsletter and saw it as a great opportunity to give something back.

Amaze in our community

Amaze is a one-stop shop spanning all issues concerned with children's educational, social and emotional development. It offers information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special needs in Brighton & Hove. It is the main umbrella organisation in the city representing the interests of children with special needs from a parent's perspective. Amaze is supported by a core team of staff and a large pool of parents and carer volunteers.

As a parent who had received support from Amaze, I was impressed by their professionalism and dedication. Any parent of a child with special needs will tell you that there are periods of isolation. You have to deal with situations for which you have had no previous experience or training, and it can be very challenging.

Gains for Amaze

Amaze had already been affected by government cutbacks and was struggling to continue to provide a desperately needed service with less resource and fewer working hours. Any small organisation has to deal with finance and personnel matters, and when it does so much good for so many people it is essential that resources are directed to the right places. Its employees can't be forgotten either, and it is important that policies are compliant and refreshed from time to time.

By getting involved I was able to help relieve the burden and give a fresh perspective on issues. I had many interesting debates and conversations with the assistant director, and our endeavors culminated in us updating a range of Amaze's policies, including the volunteer's agreement.

My personal gains

I found the volunteer experience extremely rewarding. It enabled me to step out of my comfort zone and get involved in activity that was restricted at work by grade and authority.

It broadened my understanding of the challenges facing voluntary organisations in the current economic climate, and it gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my knowledge, enthusiasm and motivation.

My voice was heard and respected, and that gave me additional confidence in my abilities. I plan to continue to volunteer for Amaze and, as I understand them better, I can provide a broader level of support.

Amaze was delighted that it could make much quicker progress in developing its policies than it otherwise would, and it also enabled the organisation to gain an external perspective in relation to its procedures.

I would urge anyone to get involved in volunteering. We can all tend to be rather self-effacing, but you will be surprised how useful your skills can be to others. And if this type of volunteering feels too much like a busman's holiday, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities out there.

Happy volunteering!
www.amazebrighton.org.uk

Students in the community

From banking to football



The community engagement module

Martin Clayton was a business student at the university and vice president of the Students' Union. It was his experience of working within the Students' Union and the university's community engagement module that combined to give him the skills to move into a community-focused career that he loves.

Having left a management position in the Royal Bank of Scotland, I joined the University of Brighton in 2008 at the age of 19 to study for a business management degree. I'd like to say I made this choice based on determination and ambition to succeed in the cut-and-thrust world of business, but in reality, I was just bored at the bank. I saw three years' studying and clubbing as better than sitting in front of a desk worrying about account numbers every day.

I was an average student in the first year of my studies. I had to resit a couple of exams over the first summer due to overexertion on the social side of university and my second year followed suit academically. It was in my second year, having become at ease with my surroundings, academic routines and friends, that I began to expand my horizons and capacity for experiences away from books.

Engaging with my own community

I got involved in the Students' Union newspaper as an editor. Then, for the fun of it, I ran in the elections to become a vice president of the Students' Union, to represent 22,000 students at the highest level within the institution as well as amongst political leaders both locally and nationally. After a fortnight of sleepless nights and constant repetition of my campaign principles, I won.



I was Vice President of Campus and Communications, responsible for students on every campus and within each of their local communities.

I quite liked that.

In fact, what I had not anticipated was that I loved it. For every small debate that related to a student on campus or within the local community I had a role to ensure that students were represented fairly and their issues dealt with.

As the vice president role is a full-time position within the Students' Union, I changed my study pattern to part time in order to juggle both. My business grades began to develop. Being a trustee of the SU, a £2.3m operation, I was able to apply principles learnt in the classroom directly to a business.

Theory into practice

Splitting my final year into two part-time years, I took advantage of a module outside of the Business School. I took the community engagement module, run by the university's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) within the School of Applied Social Sciences.

Students on the module undertake practical projects with local community and voluntary organisations. It gave me an understanding of the theories and principles that, unbeknown to me, were influencing my SU work all the time. I was able to critique social and community theories and analyse organisational models. This allowed me to approach each partner organisation appropriately in order to represent students effectively. As an SU officer, fighting to achieve change for students, it was vital to understand these concepts in order to achieve my goals.

In 2012 I was also involved in organising a national student-led conference in Brighton, supported by Cupp, for students interested in making a difference in their local communities.

Taking my skills into a new community

I left the University of Brighton, graduating with a Business Management BA and leaving behind two successful years working with, in my eyes, one of the most innovative environments I have ever had the pleasure of being involved in.

I now work for Lewes Community Football Club, a cooperative football club run and entirely owned by the local community. I am responsible for ensuring the local community is at the heart of the club and the club is at the heart of the local community. This includes offering and maintaining initiatives for kids, teenagers, community groups, fans, local businesses and, with any luck, hundreds of new owners becoming the lifeblood and long-term future of the club.

As good as it feels to be working in an organisation that works specifically for the local community, it is essential that we are financially able to survive and grow, so the business degree is certainly coming in handy.

Unlike the bank, I now work in an industry that I am incredibly passionate about, doing things that I didn't know even existed until I got involved in Cupp and the community engagement module.

www.lewesfc.com

Martin Clayton (right) with **Malky Mackay**, Cardiff City manager, on a training session at Lewes before their match with Brighton & Hove Albion. Above: Lewes Community Football Club teams

Inclusive art



An action-based research project

Natalia Agote Urquia, postgraduate student on the Inclusive Arts Practice MA, shares how her research project gave her the opportunity to explore and develop her research together with her participants. It strengthened her research skills while facilitating a process that was truly inclusive.

I am a student in the second year of the masters in inclusive arts at the University of Brighton. According to senior lecturer Alice Fox, inclusive arts can be defined as 'supporting creative opportunities between marginalised and non-marginalised people through artistic facilitation and collaboration as a means of challenging existing barriers and promoting social change.'

Alongside my own creative practice I have been working with marginalised community groups in India and the UK for the last 10 years, including older people, children in care, refugees, street children and adults with learning disabilities. In the second year of the course we are required to organise and facilitate an action-based research project. This is intended to be a vehicle for self-reflective investigation, refining our practice, while undertaking mutually beneficial work with marginalised community groups or individuals.

A joint exploration

My vision was to organise an inclusive project for women with learning disabilities that would promote expression, equality and knowledge exchange between the participants and myself. I wanted to facilitate an environment in which they would play a key and active role in influencing the creative processes and direction – informing and contributing to the research as active participants instead of passive subjects.

The university ethics committee responded positively to my proposal and the research was further supported by the university's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) which identified funding for the work through the Springboard grants programme.

The project started at the beginning of September 2012. We met once a week at the Phoenix Studios in Brighton to make art together. We have been using ourselves and our experiences as the starting point for much of the artwork, exploring together how the creative process can be a non-verbal vehicle for dialogue and expression.

A space to experiment

Our latest work has been a series of paintings on Perspex based on important people in our lives. Works such as the important people pieces are concept-based; we centre on a theme collectively and then portray it in our own individual ways. This method of working allows us to collaboratively explore different aspects of ourselves and our identities both as individuals and as a group.

Within the sessions we also give ourselves the space to experiment with a more process-based approach, relieving us of the necessity of having to constantly convey a message and work within a theme. We have a fabric tablecloth that we work on top of and re-use each week. It collects the drips of our paint and the rings from our coffee cups.

We don't protect it from getting smudged, stained or dirty. As well as being a medium that passively records our processes by collecting the marks of our art-making, the tablecloth has become the canvas for a collaborative process-based piece on which we simply draw when we feel inspired to.

Initially we all drew on our respective sides of the table where we were sitting, but as the weeks have gone on we have moved around it and the lines have organically blurred between where one person's artwork ends and another's begins. It's a continually accumulating, truly collaborative piece for which we can all claim equal creative ownership.

Growing as a researcher

One of my challenges as a researcher has been to negotiate the fine line between directive and non-directive facilitation, balancing the need to hold the framework of the investigation and align it with our chosen themes, while at the same time giving participants the space and creative freedom to express themselves.

The participants and myself have adopted a creative language that is primarily non-verbal with which we collect data, evaluate and represent our opinions, and this serves to put us on an equal platform. Because of the participatory methodology of the project our aims and focuses are in constant flux, shaped and re-shaped by the group during the journey of investigation.

The group's active role in influencing our creative developments gives the participants a greater claim of ownership over the research and its outcomes, helping to balance out the power dynamic between participant and researcher.

The project finished in December 2012 with an exhibition of the exciting work that we produced. Not only is it important that wider inclusion and access to the arts is provided to excluded minorities, but it is also key that the work created is supported to filter into the mainstream visual culture as the arts have the power to increase the visibility of marginalised groups in wider society, serving to challenge preconceptions and trigger social change.



(Top two) Creative representations of important people in our lives.

(Bottom two) Artful ways of knowing: We draw on the tablecloth during the sessions.

The peerless pier



Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust

By doing project work on the redevelopment of Hastings Pier, architecture students benefited from engaging in a live project, while the community gained fresh insights through the students' creative approach. Kate Cheyne, a senior lecturer at the School of Art, Design and Media describes the project.

The architecture course is always looking to advance collaborative ways of working and engaging with industry, communities and other agencies on live projects. This enables our students to develop the skills that will equip them for the modern professional practice, developing in response to the needs of the changing landscape of clients, communities, developers and policy-makers.

Providing students with the opportunity to reflect on a brief to provoke ideas is one thing but we wish to offer more than this to our students and to see how their work could have a benefit to or influence on the local community.

Last year we set an overall brief to students around the dynamic coastline and its future. They explored the south coast landscape and its relationship to the townscape, analysing and mapping the use of these spaces, and examining how this has changed over time.

Setting the scene

Last year also saw Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust (HPWRT) being formed by local residents to look for solutions to regenerate Hastings Pier. The university began discussions with HPWRT as they were engaging architects and consulting with the Hastings and St Leonards residents and businesses.

We asked our students to reflect on the renovation and on the redesign brief that the trust had provided to their commissioned architects, dRMM.



We set up a talk for the students where the project architect and project engineer presented their own understanding of the needs of the pier and the community along with their ideas.

This gave the students the confidence to be brave with their own proposals. The controversial balance between use, purpose, visual presence, meaning, commercial viability and built structure provided a rich variety of responses that provoked much thought and debate. Analysing Hastings' relationship with the coast fed into the final proposals along with understanding its urban development on the seafront.

Inspiration from live projects

The students made a series of encounters along the promenade, setting up events that created a lively engagement with the public to better understand their rapport with the pier and the promenade. These initial conversations led to a diverse and challenging set of uses for the pier.

These included an open university, a mortuary, a bird sanctuary, a fishing community, a retirement home, a seaweed farm, a shipbuilder's yard, a council debating chamber, a refuge for the homeless and, a favourite, a re-enactment centre for the Battle of Hastings.

These are just a few examples showing the originality of ideas that can be drawn from students unconstrained by the immediate practicalities of industry. Running design projects that are engaged with an existing brief or question, benefits both the students and the live project. It adds a better understanding of the project for both by coming from two different angles – raw creativity versus the reasoned and the informed.

Ideas for Hastings Pier by Jess Lyons (left) and Holly Crosbie (above), third year architecture students.

Generating history

As the relationship developed it was agreed that the consultation data, the quality and variety of ideas, models and drawings the students developed would make a thought-provoking exhibition in Hastings and also become part of a visual archive for HPWRT and the Hastings community.

HPWRT funded the exhibition and used the students' work to exhibit and communicate the actual dRMM proposed plan before submission to the Heritage Lottery.

The HPWRT and the university jointly promoted the event which was held at Trinity Studios in Hastings town centre. The exhibition resulted in an increased awareness of proposed plans for the pier and gave the students the opportunity to showcase their work outside of the degree show. It was picked up by BBC News and featured on their website as a visual story. This gave the students a wider audience for their work and makes them believe in the relevance of their ideas to live projects.

Simon Opie, CEO of Hastings Pier and White Rock Pier Trust, said "We are really pleased to be able to bring this exhibition of the University of Brighton students' work to Hastings. It shows clearly how the pier can be an inspiration for creative thinking and a great learning opportunity at the same time. It is vitally important that the pier engages directly with young people and can attract as many of them as possible to be avid supporters. We hope that the local community will come and share these amazing dreams of what a twenty-first century pier can be and find out the actual plans."

Postscript: Hastings Pier has since been awarded £11.4 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the university continues to be involved in the regeneration work.

A grassroots opportunity for growth

Grassroots Suicide Prevention

Kerry Dowding made the transition from student to a professional career in the third sector through her experience-based postgraduate certificate in Community Enterprise. Equipping her with invaluable skills and experience it also gave her the chance to share her expertise with Brighton-based charity, Grassroots Suicide Prevention.

In spring last year I took part in an experience-based postgraduate certificate course arranged by the Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp). I spent time at a Brighton-based not-for-profit organisation called Grassroots Suicide Prevention which provides suicide intervention and mental health awareness training to the local community. Whilst on my placement I was supported through action learning sets at the university to achieve a postgraduate certificate in Community Enterprise.

Working on value-adding projects

During my time with Grassroots I worked on three main projects: the redesign of course evaluation forms; reaching a higher quality standard of monitoring and evaluation; and qualitative research into how a mental health awareness course de-stigmatised mental health issues. I also helped with a number of other relevant projects such as creating a social media strategy for the release of a new suicide-awareness film.

Kerry Dowding raised money for Grassroots by having her dreadlocks cut off.

I considered the project a safe space for myself as a recent graduate to practise and grow my professional skills. The organisation was very good at finding the balance between nurturing me as new talent and acknowledging my existing abilities, resulting in the most productive outcomes for both of us. As someone who doesn't like to be micro managed, I thrived within the supportive but autonomous space I was given, especially with the peer support and learning through the university.

As with many people in my situation at the time, the question of whether I would be able to financially support myself during the course was a primary concern. However, the course fees were paid and I was able to work two days a week at another organisation, which over the three months was practicable for me. This meant that I could gain further experience in the voluntary sector.

A career investment

In terms of career pay off, the benefits of taking the course have outweighed the costs. Thanks to my experience and first-class qualification, I gained a full-time job in the third sector as soon as I left my placement.

My relationship with Grassroots has also continued to develop, as I play a role in the organisation through fundraising, helping out where I can and most recently becoming the youngest trustee of their newly formed charity. The benefits have been huge for both of us.

For someone like me, who wanted to follow a not-for-profit route for their career, this course was the perfect option. Having a safe space to develop skills is vital wherever you want to be, and between Grassroots and the university I felt able to make the transition from a student to a professional person. I would recommend these placements to anyone who can take them. As young professionals we get taught all the theory of making it in the workplace, but these placements give you what you need in practice, and for that I'm very grateful.
www.prevent-suicide.org.uk



Academics in community partnerships

Traveller policy under the spotlight

The Brighton & Hove traveller scrutiny panel

By chairing the Brighton and Hove traveller scrutiny panel, Aidan McGarry, a politics lecturer in the School of Applied Social Science contributed to the development of local council policy, drawing on his years of research on traveller communities. The process resolved a highly contentious issue, making gains for local travellers and winning an award.

My research has focused on the political participation and representation of Roma communities across Europe, and I was approached, via the Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp), to act as an independent chair of a scrutiny panel that would inform the creation of the city's new traveller strategy. It was felt that the current approach was not working for either locals or travellers, including those who reside in the city year round. The new strategy needed to be created through an informed and rational debate, addressing contentious issues head-on including the decision to create a permanent site in Brighton.

Hearing from all sides

Three local councillors made up the scrutiny panel and we were supported by the council's scrutiny team. We heard evidence from over 30 people, including travellers, local residents, MPs, the editor of The Argus, policy advisors, advocates for travellers, council officers and support workers.

Our main findings were that travellers are one of the most marginalised groups in the city and experience acute discrimination when attempting to access services such as health, housing, education and employment.

The most significant and controversial finding was that Brighton & Hove should create a permanent site for travellers, which we believed was necessary to address marginalisation, break down prejudices, and facilitate integration.

We spoke to residents at the transit site in Horsdean. One mother highlighted the positive impact that having a permanent site can have as her son can attend school and make friends.

One of the main challenges we faced was ensuring that the panel could listen to evidence in a safe, neutral environment. We decided to hold closed evidence gathering sessions which were recorded. We also had to hear from all sides. Our responsibility was to remain calm and considered throughout, which I found difficult on several occasions.

A successful outcome

One of the key successes was drawing attention to how the issue is reported in The Argus, asking the editor to clarify how they report on travellers. This led, indirectly, to a change of practice with The Argus presenting positive stories about and from travellers.

The scrutiny team told me this had been one of the most successful scrutiny processes, given the contentious nature of the topic, and when I presented our findings to the council and answered questions I did so knowing that the process was fair, well-informed and balanced.

Our findings were approved by the council when it voted in plenary. Finally, the panel was awarded with a national prize for innovation by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

A refreshing experience

I found the experience to be incredibly rewarding, allowing me to apply my expertise as a researcher to a real-world issue. It was refreshing to put my knowledge to good use and I have been encouraged by the outcome. The work was challenging but I was supported throughout by the university and by the scrutiny team.

I have been able to draw on this experience to inform my research as well as my teaching and would encourage anyone to get engaged in such activities; after all the university is a vital part of our city and we have a duty to share our knowledge to improve the lives of all its residents.

Health and community learning



The Bridge Community Education Centre

Galvanised by the possibility of funding through the university's On Our Doorsteps programme, Helen Stanley, Assistant Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery saw a joint opportunity for her nursing students and for the learners at The Bridge Community Education Centre. Developing and presenting health information in a community setting both challenged her students and gave participants at The Bridge the chance to learn about relevant health topics.

I was introduced to the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) after a general staff meeting in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. I was looking for a new direction, but was not sure what and the idea of giving something back and working outside my university ivory tower comfort-zone appealed.

Trusteeship

I attended a workshop where various charities pitched to potential new trustees and I met up with Jayne Ross, CEO of The Bridge Community Education Centre in Moulsecoomb who I felt shared my philosophy on education of releasing potential whatever a student's background.

I joined The Bridge as a trustee and, shortly afterwards, there was an opportunity for funding through

Cupp's On Our Doorsteps initiative. The Bridge is on the Moulsecoomb estate, less than a mile from the Falmer campus. It is an area of high deprivation and met the criteria of being on the doorstep of the university. I decided to write a bid with Sofie Franzen, student volunteer at The Bridge, and we were successful. Beginner's luck perhaps, but we were commended.



Designing a community course

The project aims were for students taking the postgraduate certificate in Health and Social Care Education (PGCHSCE) to gain an in-depth knowledge of a community learning context through observation and participation in course design.

For the community learners, it was about gaining access to relevant and up-to-date health topics, with the longer-term impact of making some contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of the families of service users and the resultant reduction in generational cycles of poverty and poor health.

The students received an introductory workshop on community engagement delivered by Sofie and myself as part of a course design and planning module. The nurses were from diverse backgrounds (mental health, neonatal, prison service and care home) and they devised a health and wellbeing workshop for The Bridge.

Health checks and healthy eating, all part of the workshops presented by nursing students at The Bridge.

Twenty participants took part in the workshop, shopped for healthy foods, were given information on understanding food labelling and took part in an alcohol awareness quiz. There were also some gentle exercise activities using the Wii.

Developing student skills

The students found the experience inspiring and stimulating and they developed mutually beneficial relationships which built on their capacity for education, teaching and research. Two participants were identified as having hypertension and referred to their GP, one signed up for further personalised support for health issues, and two signed up for the exercise class for over 50s offered in the next term.

Overall, this contributed to the mission of the university, developed the students' capacity for, and disposition towards, social responsibility and added value to their campus-centered study. Students developed personal and community learning in a real-life situation. This was reported in The Bridge and university newsletters, The Argus, and the Graduate Programme in Health and Social Science web pages.

The students later presented their experiences, which they described as having the wow factor, at the Centre for Learning and Teaching Annual Conference in July 2012. They have also been asked to present their reflections to students in the School of Applied Social Sciences.

Sofie Franzen from The Bridge said: "The partnership with the nursing students has been a rewarding experience, both for participants at The Bridge, who enjoyed a very informative morning, and for the staff team who saw the nurse practitioners develop an in-depth understanding of community work. The nursing students effectively communicated key health messages to a diverse audience with a wide range of learning and health needs. The sessions were fun and interactive and gave everyone involved a valuable learning experience".

For myself, I have had further ongoing support from the Cupp staff volunteer programme, developing links with the University of Sussex. I have also made links with the new stadium football charity, Albion in the Community, and was able to attract the first team coach, Charlie Oatway, to become a patron of the Bridge, as he has written his autobiography about his struggles with literacy. www.thebridgebrighton.com

The Tuesday Group

Ethics in performance

Ethics in performance is a programme of collaborative events run by the ethics team at the Brighton and Sussex Medical School. In 2012 they presented The Tuesday Group, a play that drew its dialogue from ten years' of notes taken at support meetings held for dying patients. Performed by medical students, the play is part of a programme to support a holistic approach to medicine and to share and explore relevant issues more widely in the city. Bobbie Farsides, Professor of Clinical and Biomedical Ethics and Sue Eckstein, lecturer in clinical and biomedical ethics brought The Tuesday Group into being.

For three nights during the 2012 Brighton Festival a small theatre above a typically quirky North Laine shop became the venue for a play entitled The Tuesday Group. Written by Sue Eckstein, the play was directed and performed by Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) students. With minimal staging and simple costumes these young people managed to transform themselves into a group of people of varying ages brought together because they were each facing the end of their life.

The real people behind the story

The Tuesday Group was originally written as part of a European Commission-funded project headed up by Bobbie Farsides, BSMS's Professor of Clinical and Biomedical Ethics. She commissioned Sue to write a play based upon the notes that had been taken during patient support group meetings at a well-known London hospice.

The notes covered a period of ten years, during which time a succession of patients came together once a week to share a cup of tea and a safe place to voice their thoughts and share their experiences of living with a terminal diagnosis.

Inevitably the groups' membership shifted over time, with people becoming too ill to attend and eventually dying. Even within the five weeks covered by the play we see the way in which people can come together and form meaningful bonds, only to then face the reality of loss.

Transforming notes into drama

An experienced playwright and novelist, Sue nonetheless found this project particularly challenging, and says that she initially underestimated how long it would take to transform the notes into a credible drama. Because of the need to stay true to what people had actually spoken about and how they had behaved and interacted – as revealed by the social worker whose job it was to record the meeting – Sue wasn't able to easily use standard dramatic devices.

She also needed to quash some of the expectations her audience might have had that were not borne out in the notes – for example, very sick people spend very little time discussing their symptoms and medication, possibly that is more a trait of the worried well. Perhaps the biggest surprise for audiences has been the amount of humour found in these encounters.

When the play was originally written, the characters reflected the demographic of the hospice that had generously shared their notes with the project. The shift to Brighton meant a slight adjustment was needed and the resulting characters clearly resonated with audiences both during the festival and at earlier performances at the medical school. The authenticity of the play proved particularly striking for those with first hand experience of caring for the dying and the final performance of the year came at the end of Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust's annual End of Life Care conference in June.

Inspiring better health care

The Tuesday Group was only one of the events in the BSMS Ethics team's new series entitled Ethics in Performance. Brighton is an exceptional city in terms of its artistic life and BSMS has always sought to tap into this, particularly given the commitment to educate well-rounded doctors with an holistic approach to medicine and health care. By inviting poets, graphic artists, playwrights, actors, filmmakers and historians into the medical school, students have been challenged and their education has been enriched.

Medical students perform *The Tuesday Club*, a play based on notes taken at patient support group meetings at a hospice. Picture: Malcolm Tan.



More importantly, by making these open events and ensuring that they take place outside normal working hours, new audiences have become aware of BSMS's contribution to the culture of the city.

As the Ethics in Performance mailing list grows, our community gains an insight into the broadening scope of modern medical education whilst at the same time being entertained and enriched by high quality performance and art.

Detailed information on all past and forthcoming Ethics in Performance events can be found at www.bsms.ac.uk/research/our-research/medical-ethics/ethics-in-performance.

A community partnership with no community?



Afghan migrants in Brighton

Nichola Khan, senior lecturer at the School of Applied Social Science has been exploring how the university and Afghan migrants in Brighton could work in partnership, an endeavour complicated by the lack of any formalised Afghan community.

In 2011 the University of Brighton awarded me a social engagement sabbatical to explore mutually beneficial forms of partnership between the university, local government and Brighton Afghans.

My background in anthropology and critical psychology, long-term friendships and fieldwork amongst local Afghans cautioned me against relying on categories such as culture, trauma security or asylum.

These carry assumptions about migrants or asylum seekers which may marginalise, disempower, infer individuals are more determined by culture than they are, or that researchers know best. Therefore I avoided asking what can the university or local government do to help Afghans, or how can local government best engage this marginalised community.

Instead, I queried: what interactions, accommodations and resistances to being engaged are at stake? What outcomes do Afghans desire from this engagement, and what potential does a community-university partnership offer to achieve these outcomes? How can my research contribute to local policy-making on migrants? Given there are no links between Brighton Council and any formalised Afghan community (hence the title) the project was developmental, just a beginning.

Afghans living in Brighton

Recent decades of war in Afghanistan have marked major migrations of Afghans into Europe. Over 56,000 Afghans reside in the UK. Afghans themselves estimate there are around 300 Afghans in Brighton not captured in official census data. Many claimed asylum during the Taliban regime (1994–2001). Afghans work in kitchens, shops, take-aways, carwashes, and hotels, as barbers, security guards and labourers. Many became entrepreneurs, exemplifying capitalist success rather than instability. Approximately 80 Afghans are registered taxi drivers in the city.

Although Brighton Council provides many services for migrants, Afghans have strong support networks – so why bother? They reject the category refugees, and the host country which is pursuing simultaneous military and humanitarian agendas in the context of the fourth Anglo-Afghan war in Afghanistan.

Additionally, attempts to form Afghan community organisations have reproduced longstanding social-political conflicts found in Afghanistan. By contrast, informal networks cut across antagonisms and formal politics, emphasising the strategic ways Brighton's Afghans are building community cohesion.

Suspicion has troubled the partnership. Nonetheless, we introduced Afghans to council-run meetings for agencies working with migrants, and compiled and distributed (via taxi-drivers) over 100 leaflets highlighting changes to housing benefit policy and immigration law.

Building trust

I spend considerable hours filling forms, writing letters, CVs and applications, and gathering advice for individual Afghans, activities which build trust. Additionally, I am conducting fieldwork on my research interests which consider what everyday movements such as taxi driving, road-trips, picnics and family visits might reveal about larger movements of Afghan migration, settlement and exile.

These activities have revealed some potential for community-university partnership work in two areas. First, sport is one medium local government seeks to support for vulnerable migrants and address diverse mental health, societal and cultural problems.

Yet Afghans reject council-run football teams for refugees and asylum seekers. Instead, around 30 taxi drivers play regularly in a local park (pictured left). To them, football means (in their own words): love for sport, freedom through the body, confidence, happiness, a chance to calm the mind, work harder, feel united, manly. All Afghans are friends here. It's peace!

Via these small encounters they manage integration, progress and peace on their terms. As their sessions – and interactions with the council and myself – became more established, some small shifts occurred. Planning an all-Afghan local football tournament, several friends approached the council to help them secure a venue. Plans were additionally floated for a football match with the University of Brighton.

Second, in a series of interviews I explored some limits to psychological studies that over-exaggerate the trauma of war and displacement, whilst neglecting ways in which mental health is influenced by globalisation, labour migrations, cultural transformation and the ways migrants manage their economic-cultural-familial obligations in a very modern world.

Those interviewed located suffering as much in the unfulfilled promises of progress and liberty, as in the traumas of the lost homeland. The findings may interest clinicians developing understandings of mental health amongst Afghans outside Afghanistan, as psychiatric criteria of global health policy also migrate globally. They have produced plans to collaborate with local policy-makers, and researchers and NGOs working with Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Here, Brighton Afghans' insights will themselves migrate as they feed back on developments.

In summary, peace, progress and integration go beyond the notion of Afghans as deserving objects of assistance by local government programmes. Whilst the university can contribute valuable research and intellectual insights, in Brighton these enterprises should be subordinate to – and should consult with – more autonomous ways in which Afghans pursue community, identity and post-migration settlement.

Around 30 Afghan taxi drivers play football regularly in a local park. In their own words: it represents love for sport, freedom through the body, confidence, happiness, a chance to calm the mind, work harder, feel united, manly, all Afghans are friends here. It's peace!

Tools to build better neighbourhoods



Community 21

Nick Gant, principal lecturer at the university's School of Art, Design and Media, describes his involvement in Community 21, an online platform that makes sustainable neighbourhood and community-led planning easier and more effective. Its development drew on expertise in a number of different academic departments.

In spring 2012 the Localism Bill came into effect. Intended to enable communities to take the lead in defining their own future, it is a serious change in public policy. The National Planning Policy Framework also engages new legislation geared towards local empowerment and bottom-up planning of community development through the process of statutory planning exercises known as neighbourhood plans.

As the newly appointed architects and planners of their own communities, under localism citizens of all types are seemingly offered equal participation in how their community will look in the future. But how will communities act on this new power and opportunity, and what tools and skills will they need to do it?

A tool for planning and participation

Community 21 is a major funded partnership initiative between the University of Brighton and The Rural Community Council Network, led by Action in Rural Sussex. It was founded by myself and Teresa Gittins, Deputy Chief Executive of Action in Rural Sussex.

Community 21 is an online tool designed to enable communities to undertake community-led neighbourhood plans efficiently and effectively, and help ensure inclusive participation under the localism agenda.

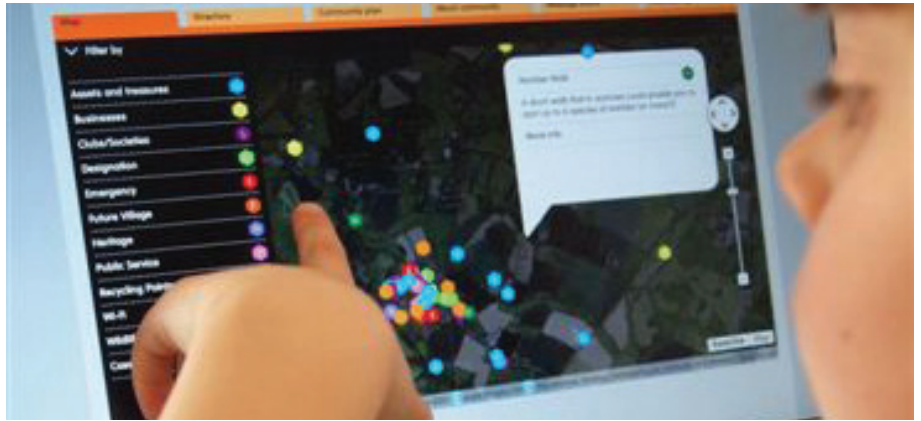
It enables the mapping of community assets and also functions as a community-to-community social network that facilitates learning between communities about a whole range of issues. For example, the university's Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) is developing a project using Community 21 to publish case studies of social engagement online.

Sharing sustainable expertise

Once considered the triple bottom line of sustainability, society, the economy and the environment are also pressures driving communities to seek resilient solutions. Rural communities are especially vulnerable to the historical trends of centralised services and, as landlocked islands, issues of transport, fuel, water, food and energy provision are all concerns of the sustainable twenty-first century community.

By applying a whole host of expertise in these areas of sustainable development the university has supported communities alongside Action in Rural Sussex.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff from a range of subjects – including architecture and design, spatial planning, water, food and energy, environmental and social science and geography – have been able to engage with real communities in a mutually beneficial exchange of expertise and local knowledge, facilitated by the Community 21 system and network.



Envisioning the future

There have been a number of collaborative exercises funded by the likes of DEFRA, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which have used the system to engage young and old in envisioning how their communities might evolve sustainably using technology, and to form community energy and water plans.

By tackling needs that have meaning and value locally, sustainability is being championed and delivered, often inadvertently, by communities themselves supported by the tools and collaboration opportunities that Community 21 provides.

The project was piloted in May 2011 with eight volunteer communities across three counties and was independently evaluated. The evaluation emphasised the value and need for such a system to increase efficiency and effectiveness of planning by helping communities to undertake participatory planning and execute self-determined actions whilst sharing knowledge with neighboring communities, local authorities and service providers.

Expanding beyond Sussex

Community21.org is about to go into its next phase of development, enabling it to be used throughout East and West Sussex.

To date, Action in Rural Sussex has undertaken at least one community-led planning exercise with 70 per cent of all communities across East and West Sussex and will use it as the tool of choice for community plans.

The National Network of Community Councils has endorsed the project, which will enable it to be rolled out across other counties across England following phase two of development.

Local authorities are pursuing the possibility of using the system as an interactive management tool to save money in consulting their customers. Urban wards and regional authorities have also shown interest in using the system, and a range of partner organisations and projects have used it to map their work promoting sustainability and local activism.

Corporate businesses have also acknowledged the potential to promote their social responsibility work which, often hidden on individual websites, can now be promoted within the beneficiary community's own web-space, maximizing impact and awareness.

Community 21 provides a platform from which the university can grow its partnerships through mutual values and understanding whilst tackling some of the most pressing issues that face society.

www.community21.org

**This publication is available
in alternative formats on
request.**

This brochure was printed in June 2013.

**Community University
Partnership Programme**
University of Brighton
Room 108 Mayfield House
Falmer, Brighton
BN1 9PH

email cupp@brighton.ac.uk
telephone (01273) 64 3004
international code (+441273)

MC/RVSJ/0613/V1/200

www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp