University of Brighton
Community University Partnership Programme

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From engagement to impact: researchers, community organisations and mutual benefit

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1. The work of Cupp at Brighton
2. Overview some of the theory behind university-community co-working
3. Some dilemmas about co-working on a programme level
4. Tips about how establish healthy partnerships in practice – from a university and a community perspective
5. What might the future hold for this work
6. How this all relates to research impact and community benefit
7. Comments and discussion
Cupp Aims

– Ensure that the University's resources (intellectual and physical) are available to, informed by and used by its local and sub-regional communities

– Enhance the community's and University's capacity for engagement for mutual benefit

– Ensure that Cupp’s resources are prioritised towards addressing inequalities within our local communities
Cupp snapshot 2003-2013

- Helpdesk - 1810 enquiries from community organisations
- 3000 plus students involved in community projects as part of study
- 121 community knowledge exchange partnership projects funded – involving 533 project partners
- A dozen active communities of practice (for example: deaf community, young people and resilience, lesbian and gay community)
- Structured links with community organisations through co-ownership of governance, co-delivery of projects, co-production of research
Ladder of participation – Arnstein 1969

1. Manipulation
2. Therapy
3. Informing
4. Consultation
5. Placation
6. Partnership
7. Delegated Power
8. Citizen Control

Nonparticipation
Tokenism
Citizen Power
Social innovation

- “a new idea that works in meeting social goals” (Mulgan, 2006)

- Or, “social innovation is a process of change emerging from the creative recombination of existing assets (from social capital to historical heritage, from traditional craftsmanship to accessible advanced technology), which aims to achieve socially recognized goals in a new way” (Manzini 2007)

- Social innovation can be top-down, bottom up or hybrid (Manzini 2007)
Etienne Wenger:

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” (http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/06-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf, 2013)

See also mobilising knowledge in community-university partnerships: what does a community of practice contribute? Hart, Davies, Aumann, Wenger, Aranda, Heaver, Wolff (www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsoc21)

Hart, A. and Wolff, D. Developing local "Communities of Practice" through local Community-University Partnerships, Planning Practice & Research 21 (1) 121-138.
Co-production

- Production characterised by co-ownership throughout research.

- Power to establish, deliver and disseminate a project is shared between researcher and user/practitioner/ governmental or private authority/community.

- See Ducrose et al Towards Co-Production in Research with Communities
Some key dilemmas in developing community university partnership programmes

- Managing change in the university: top down v bottom up
- Working with the external environment: grass roots v intermediary organisations
- External focus: communities v publics
- Relationship with partners: mutuality v service/charity
- Strategic intention: delivery v brokerage
- Communication: digital v face to face
1. Be able to describe your project in a paragraph or a 5 min conversation, even if it is an early idea rather than a worked through plan.

2. Have a think in advance what you might want from the university.

3. Think through what you can offer a university too, doing this may help you clarify what you want and can help ‘equalise’ the relationship.

4. Find out if the university has a service to help you find your way around.

5. Your local university may not have an official entry point and you will have to find a sympathetic academic.
How to find your way around a university and get your project going

UK Community Partner Network [www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/community-partner-network](http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/about/community-partner-network)

- 6. Check with your local voluntary sector support organisation whether they have contacts at the university.

- 7. Before initiating contact spend 30 minutes looking at the university website trying to understand what its teaching and research strengths are.

- 8. Find out if the university has a written policy of working with community partners.

- 9. You may have a number of local universities. Bearing in mind the above questions you might want to assess which one is likely to suit you best.

- 10. Some of this information will be easy to find, but some will not. Try not to be put off. Even if your first contact with the university isn’t promising, there are often other parts of the university that might be able to help. Once you find a potential partner, thinking about how to set up a good mutually beneficial partnership is your next step.
Principles and values

- Aspire to equitable partnerships with local communities.
- Establish a shared language
- Consider the needs of marginalised and excluded communities as well as the mainstream
- Develop an effective long term strategic approach
- Communities, like the university should not be treated as if they are homogenous
Universities working with local communities

Process

- Assess and utilise the specific University asset of knowledge and expertise.
- Analyse local community needs, requirements and expertise.
- If responding to a specific request from a community organisation, consider whether the university has the skills to respond to the request.
- Develop appropriate internal infrastructures to support community partnerships.
- Develop mutual goals for social and economic impact of the work for both university and external audiences,
- Develop project work, networks or communities of practice
- Develop an evaluation framework as early as you can.
Universities working with local communities

Things to bear in mind

- Don’t assume that the community is waiting to be ‘rescued’ or that there is a lack of information, skills and resources within communities as a whole that are waiting for academic input.

- Both parties may need to be persuaded of the value and potential of partnership working.

- Take spatial issues seriously.

- Don’t let definitional problems stop you in your tracks. Committees and working groups don't always help.

- Use community – university brokers who can work across different cultures and in different languages.
Universities working with local communities

Tips

- Set up links that fit with the strengths of the university.
- Think local.
- Begin work with people who want to work with you.
- Emphasise getting on and doing things
- Find creative ways around university processes
- Academic language can put people off so use it carefully.
- Develop the ability of staff to communicate and build relationships with diverse communities
- Secure funds to buy academics and community practitioners out.
- Providing library cards and access to desk space can help community practitioners feel more at home
10 down 10 to go!
A study to produce a plain language, practical vision of an ideal future of community university partnerships

- Part of engaged futures (NCCPE) and ESRC Imagine project
- Futures literature review
- Symposium in July 2013 with 80 people: community partners, academics, students, university managers, community-university brokers
- 20 interviews with people from Canada, USA, Ireland, Netherlands and UK
- Creative writing exercise to produce ‘ideal day in realistic future’
Main findings: Aspects of an ideal day in a realistic future

- Flexible location to promote accessibility
- Enhanced role for students
- Reciprocity and co-production
- Interdisciplinary working - dealing with the big societal problems
- Excellent research
- Community based research valued
Secondary findings: aspects of an ideal day in a realistic future

- National/International dimension
- Use of online tools for engagement and learning
- University role defined - contributor not leader
- Social impact of work measured and made visible
- Losing the distinction between identities
Other interesting ideas that emerged

- Clear costing and subsidy models so community can understand and access
- Tipping point of more academics initiating activity rather than doing stuff as a result of management push
- Dissemination formats that suit non-academic styles so community partners can be involved
- Partnership ready tool which identifies and reinforces effective partnership working, clarifying expectations and being open minded to differences
- Visiting community teachers to be properly paid
- Change to speculative and wasteful grant application processes - proper co-working space for development
Research and community partnerships – some questions

- Can local community university partnerships produce ‘excellent research’?
- ‘Impact’ – a one way street that devalues practitioner/community knowledge?
- Is knowledge mobilisation the best approach – still top down?
- Community partnerships as knowledge exchange - pipeline for ‘proper’ research?
- What is the engagement strategy for your research?
Contact and follow up

Twitter: @cuppbrighton

Cupp network: For blogs, news and discussion. Free to join but need to register www.cuppcop.ning.com

Cupp website: details of our work and sign up for email newsletter http://about.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/

Community 21: digital mapping of community university partnership projects

http://community21.org/partners/cupp/