

***Integrating the human value of research through public
engagement – impacts for civil society***

University of Nottingham Catalyst Final Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

A sense of social responsibility and general improvement drove the founding of the University of Nottingham in 1881, when it aimed to provide for the educational needs of working people of Nottingham. This ethos continues with engagement with our publics being central to much of what we do with the University developing robust community engagement networks through its Community Partnerships team.¹ Since its inception in the early 2000s, the team has led on the development of nationally-recognised staff and student volunteering and placement activities,² the creation of a strategic approach to community and public engagement, institution-wide, relationship building with key partners such as the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and has become a recognised thought leader on public engagement.³ The priorities in its Catalyst Project were to broaden public engagement with research, including strengthening links with harder-to-reach communities, building on a strong track record and its early adoption of the Manifesto for Public Engagement in Spring 2011.

Key achievements

The Catalyst project initiated and nurtured conversations concerning public engagement with research throughout the institution and supported a range of pilot activities to address the programme's objectives (see under 'Strategic Priorities' below). They show that the principle of strategic level embedding as recognised in the Edge Tool has been critically supported by the Catalyst programme.

- In 2013, a staff Public Engagement Survey revealed a diverse range of activity undertaken by academic and administrative staff across the University. This followed an earlier benchmarking exercise in 2008 and enabled the application of social value indicators which had been developed as a framework in 2009. More than 150 staff were identified as active engagers and received direct invitation to share practice at an Engaged Engagers event and at subsequent public engagement with research events. (SP1)
- Over 200 staff answered a call for involvement in taking research topics and events '*on tour*' using community venues. (SP1)
- A contact database was developed consisting of over 400 community organisations. (SP2, SP3)
- A number of ground breaking events occurred in the early part of the Catalyst programme, including a public research event called Brain Matters – which brought together third sector and community partners with researchers and health care practitioners to look at the impact of brain injury, dementia and stroke. A further event - in September 2012, featuring input from Paul Manners, Director of the NCCPE and the looked at the Social Sciences as a route to working in the third sector. (SP3, SP5)

¹ <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/community/generalpublic/generalpublic.aspx>

² HEA "007 Volunteering Team of the Year.

³ The University of Nottingham was one of the first Universities to sign up to the NCCPE Manifesto on public engagement <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/manifesto-public-engagement/signatories/university-nottingham> and we have been cited by the NCCPE as being an exemplar of good practice.

- In 2015 a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) was delivered via the Futurelearn Platform with over 9000 learners being involved with research into public perceptions of shale gas extraction. (SP3)
- A Partnership Fund supported a range of pilot activity resulting in valuable lessons for the individuals, organisations and the University. (SP1, SP8)
- Public Engagement with Research activities are now formally embedded in Performance Review processes and the Workload Framework Model with public engagement in research acknowledged as part of promotions criteria. (SP4, SP8)
- Processes are now in place to collect data evidencing public engagement with research activity. (SP5, SP6)
- A series of Best Practice in public engagement with research training events brought together community and university participants who produced checklists of issues to be addressed in public engagement with research strategy and contributed to the creation of a set of tools – video materials, best practice case studies etc. (SP1, SP2, SP3)
- Sharon Clancy, formerly Head of Community Partnerships, and Brigitte Nerlich (a long-standing member of the Catalyst Steering Group) were part of a thought leader group convened by NCCPE to examine the creation of a new open access academic journal - Research for All - for researchers and community practitioners on public engagement, in October 2014. (SP2, SP5)

Key Learning

- High level champions are critical to effecting change throughout the University, its systems, structures, approaches and ethos.
- Engaging 'hard to reach' communities is not just about removing obstacles but about developing new messages, materials and vehicles to attract new audiences. It is clear that staff often need help in making this happen.
- Making it easy to access small amounts of funding to try ideas can create ground breaking change, providing excellent opportunities for learning and nurturing longer-term, productive relationships. Community engagement, and especially work with harder-to-reach communities, requires long-term investment, trust building and engagement.
- It is important that public engagement with research activities, and particularly those targeting harder-to-reach communities, do not default to aspiration-raising and widening participation activities.
- MOOCs have the potential to enhance public engagement in research across a range of communities.
- Providing brokerage between the university and external community organisations is intensive, time consuming work and successful engagement is largely dependent upon the strength of personal contacts and relationships. The University may best support these by providing forums for relationships to form and practice to be shared.
- Inflexible University systems - web protocols, corporate branding, finance systems - can throw up practical challenges to public engagement.
- Enthusiastic internal champions need to be supplied with budget, tools, encouragement and rewards. Public engagement in research may now be part of promotions criteria but staff will need to see it actually happening to believe it. This will obviously take some time to feed through and become part of the institutional story.

- The reorganisation of the University's Senior Management Team (in 2015) with the bringing together of Research and Graduate Services and the Business Engagement and Innovation Services under a single PVC portfolio will enable the University to use its significant resources to develop further and support its PE engagement activities, which are an increasing priority at the University of Nottingham.

Distinctiveness and context of the project

The University of Nottingham was one of eight institutions successful in securing funding to pilot public engagement as part of the Public Engagement with Research Catalysts project of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) 2012-15. The initiative was directly aimed at creating an institutional culture for public engagement with research.

A sense of social responsibility and general improvement drove the founding of the University of Nottingham in 1881, when it aimed to provide for the distinct higher educational needs of working men and women in Nottingham. The University continues to be fully committed to the City of Nottingham and believes it is essential that staff and students are part of this local, and the larger, global community. The Strategic Plan for 2010-15 and the recently launched Global Strategy 2020 both prioritise the importance of social responsibility and citizenship.

As stated above, the University was an early signatory to the Manifesto for Public Engagement promoted by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, which provides a framework for understanding Public Engagement (PE) and how it is best embedded in Higher Education, through our people, processes and practice. Its commitment to the RCUK's Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research was emphasised in the University's Catalyst project proposal,

'This has at its heart the idea that engaging with the public should be part of the role of researchers in any discipline; to improve the quality of the research and its impact, widen research horizons, enhance communication and influence skills, build new partnerships and ultimately support social change and the public good.'

The challenge for the University was highlighted in a report *Public Engagement at the University of Nottingham* prepared for the institution's Science, Technology and Society Priority Group.⁴

'While the university has a history strongly rooted in the local area and the mission statement stresses the importance of local communities, funding partnerships with private businesses as specified in the vision statement are the preferred method of engagement and outreach.' p.13

The HE-BCI 2013 survey⁵ demonstrated that the University of Nottingham is in the top five universities for the largest number of business research sponsors and that the share of

⁴ Cornelia Lawson, University of Nottingham, Report prepared for Science, Technology and Society Priority Group, Public Engagement at the University of Nottingham, 20 October 2013

⁵ Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/kes/measureke/hebci/>

research links to SMEs is larger than that of most similar sized research universities in England. Conversely the survey indicated that the University appeared to provide fewer social outreach events and to be involved in fewer partnerships with community and civic actors than other universities, despite the work of committed staff and the Community Partnerships team.⁶ Offset against the findings of the internal Public Engagement Survey⁷ (2013) – which showed a huge range and variety of public engagement activity across the University - there appeared to be a mismatch. The latter found a robust spirit of public and civic engagement:

' ranging from activity with charities and the third sector, the local authority/ies, museums, galleries, secondary and primary schoolsan active and passionate drive to engage with the public in terms of the research process and for finding creative ways to disseminate findings to the public.'

It was clear that the activity lacked full co-ordination and that its emphasis was, in the words of one of the Project Steering Group, *'public engagement, not public engagement with research.'*

The University's approach to the Catalyst Project was therefore seen as an attempt to redress the balance signalled in its title, *'Integrating the human value of research through public engagement – impacts for civil society.'*

In framing the University of Nottingham response to the RCUK Catalyst call, and in dialogue with Research Graduate Services, we proposed to focus on developing/enhancing the PE activities of four University Research Priority Groups and activities that draw on capabilities across a broad base of fundamental research and core disciplines, while encouraging interactions at the interface between disciplines. The four selected for the initial focus of our Catalyst activity were: the Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Social Sciences; Energy and Sustainability; Clinical Translational Research and Operations in a Digital World.

To assess achievement the project also aimed to create a social impact measurement framework which would ask questions of the range of stakeholders with whom the University works about their perceptions of our work and its impact.

Our approach to developing the Catalyst bid and its subsequent implementation catalysed cultural change in itself. This included the establishment of an Internal Research focus group, to share expertise and to consider how to transfer PE practice across disciplines. This resulted in the proposal to use research engagement processes and models from health-care research - where the needs of patient user groups are translated into new research questions - and the dialogue based model of engagement used in discussions with the third sector and social enterprises, to develop new PE activity. Therefore, the focus group proposed a structured response to PE - with third sector and civil society organisations, the health user community and difficult to reach groups and the wider public.

⁶ According to the survey only 10% of Nottingham University's staff are involved in activities with community and civic partners, which represents a share in the bottom third of the university table.

⁷ Jackie Goode, Report on Staff Public Engagement Survey 2013.

Innovatively, the 'public' was defined in three ways, to marry across to the RKT Strategy themes, and were:

1. Health users and communities, including patient user groups (Clinical Translational Research and Operations in a Digital World)
2. Third sector/civil society organisations and social enterprises as a route to disadvantaged and harder to reach communities (Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Social Sciences and previous)
3. Citizens and service users - 'the person in the street' - engagement through arts, sports, local authority engagement, schools and the teaching community (all - the Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Social Sciences; Energy and Sustainability; Clinical Translational Research and Operations in a Digital World).

All three target publics included recognition of citizen engagement through technology and information exchange - we also considered how an on-line community would support the exchange of research ideas and contacts. We also undertook to communicate with people from different 'public' groups in different and audience-appropriate ways.

Strategic priorities

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement's definition of public engagement (PE) makes clear the necessity for PE, in its various forms, to be embedded across the span of University activity, at a strategic level, and not bolted on to research activities:

'Public engagement describes the many ways in which higher education institutions and their staff and students can connect and share their work with the public. Done well public engagement generates mutual benefit, with all parties learning from each other through sharing knowledge, expertise and skills. In the process, it can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the sector's relevance to, and impact on, civil society'.

Our strategic aims within the Catalyst programme were directly aligned with the NCCPE 'Pathways to Impact for PE'⁸ which are: (1) Public access to knowledge; (2) Public access to facilities; (3) Student engagement; (4) Widening participation; (5) Encouraging social and economic regeneration; (6) Institutional commitment and (7) Staff engagement. The purpose was to explicitly stimulate additional PE activity and to help embed culture change in relation to public engagement with research, through:

- SP1: Encouraging and supporting researchers, staff and students at all levels to become involved in Public Engagement and rewarding them for their efforts.
- SP2: Exploring and developing concepts of PE. By this, we were focusing on mutual exchange and dialogue which makes central the need for consultation with local people,

⁸ <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/plan-it/funding/public-engagement-and-pathways-impact>

schools and colleges and community groups who interact with the university, in terms of both interests and geography. Concepts of PE were to include citizenship, volunteering and community-informed research.

- SP3: Developing a Community of Practice (CoP) network that would build capacity for PE by sharing best practice, communications and workspace developments, training; events and awards honouring PE best practice.
- SP4: Effecting a strategic commitment to PE - exemplified in the review of workloads and annual review processes which sought to acknowledge and reward researchers and staff involved in PE activities.
- SP5: Measuring the quality and impact of PE with research activities, by the use and further development of a social impact model and tool, working with NCCPE, with input into REF/impact discussions; developing excellence in PE training.
- SP6: Supporting the development of a robust monitoring system for Public Engagement and associated performance indicators.
- SP7: Linking with other HEIs - the University of East Anglia, Derby and Birmingham - building on experience to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of PE with research.
- SP8: Embedding PE in our planning, people, resources and infrastructure across all academic disciplines and professional services. In addition, as stewards of valued cultural resources - including the parklands, historic buildings and our rich heritage asset collections - we have a duty of care to ensure these are preserved and shared widely.

Overall approach to culture change

To ensure long-term impact and real sustainability our approach focused on forging pathways into harder to reach communities, a demographic that does not traditionally engage with HE, rather than the standard user demographic, who could often be delineated as middle class and educated. This included the aim to go out into public spaces - sports stadia/pubs/retail outlets/arts venues. By these means - and an increased profile internally for PE with research, as well as workload modelling to allow for a focus on PE - we aimed to access an academic/research community who might not think that PE is their responsibility or who believe that only other academics would be interested in their field of research.

Community Partnerships and Research and Graduate Services utilised an inclusive approach to developing the PE plan for this application. This included establishing an internal Focus Group. Our intention was to share expertise and to consider how to transfer PE practice across disciplines. This resulted in agreement to use the NCCPE Beacon project's 'Involve' consultation⁹ process to engage better public groups in research dialogue. This focuses on three stages - Engagement, Feedback and Evaluation and is

⁹http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/nccpe_bridging_the_gap_brochure_0_0.pdf

considered to be a model that should be widely used across other disciplines and communities.

Governance and staffing

The project was based in Community Partnerships which plays a key role in outreach activities at the University of Nottingham. When the project started in April 2012 this was deemed to be the most appropriate place for the project to sit although with the significant development and growth in the University's Business Engagement and Innovation Services (BEIS) unit since 2012 provides the university with an opportunity to reflect on whether Community Partnerships is the most appropriate place for PE activities going forward.

A two tier governance structure was established which included a Strategic Advisory Board that meet twice a year with membership drawn from the University and civic partners, e.g. Nottingham Citizens, Nottingham City, the Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) and One Nottingham. A mentor/adviser with experience of leading the University of East Anglia's Beacon for Public Engagement was appointed to provide an external and impartial view of programme delivery. The SAB met twice following commencement of the project chaired by the Principal Investigator and provided useful insights and thoughts on the overall aims and objectives of the project. Ideally it would have been useful to have had more regular meetings of the SAB but it proved difficult to get people to commit time to these activities. Where we had greater success was external input to more themed events around for example, dementia, brain trauma etc where people not only believed they had something valuable to contribute, but where they also believed they would benefit from being involved.

A Project Steering Group met four times a year throughout the project, and more frequently in the initial stages of the project. Membership was reviewed at the outset to reflect the *'right range of different research interests from the university'* and included the Head of Community Partnerships, Project Manager, Head of Research Outcomes (RGS), research staff from Faculties of Science, Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine and Health Sciences and East Midlands Academic Health Science Network (Nottingham University Hospital Trust), Centre for Chinese Migration Studies - an interdisciplinary research centre, and the Centre for International E-Portfolio Development for expertise concerning online community platforms. Several members left during the project but a core group attended consistently and provided practical support including decisions on allocations of Partnership Funds.

There were direct reporting lines from the project to the University's Executive Board and the Vice-Chancellor through the Principal Investigator, PVC for Human Resources, Access and Community (and more recently PVC Academic Planning) and also through the Head of Research Outcomes.

Critical to the implementation of the plans to embed PE across the research community was the creation of the Catalyst team which included a project management post and a project administrator. A major role for the project manager post was to create the mechanisms by which best practice relating to PE research could be shared and communication catalysed and also to ensure the development and delivery of the governance structures and Community/ies of Practice. The post was a University of Nottingham Level 5 (equivalent to a lecturer position). Alongside the Head of Community Partnerships, the Catalyst programme of work created the need for additional administrative support, this was originally estimated as a University of Nottingham level 2

working at 0.5fte. This role rose to a full-time post owing to the increased levels of administration and support required by the project, particularly the Partnership Fund aspect of the project.

The Head of Community Partnerships, the Project's key champion, left the University half-way through the project in December 2013 to start a PhD in the School of Education on PE with research and while she continued to provide support and advice to the PI she was not involved in the overall management of the project. Members of the Steering Group were unanimous in stressing that the project felt this loss very keenly because she had driven the submission of the project bid; was a passionate advocate for the University accessing hard-to reach communities and had strong, historical and established networks in the university and with community organisations.

Impact

Measuring impact – key numbers

- 621 Public Engagement Survey sent to all staff (approximately 7000) and completed by 9%. This highlighted high levels of staff engagement with the PE agenda, but also the fact that many people don't fully understand the role that they are playing and has helped shaped the development of training materials on PE activities that were developed by the Project (for more details see appendix three).
- 150 Staff received direct invitation to share practice at Engaged Engagers event and other subsequent events.
- 200+ Academics and researchers expressed interest in contributing to Nottingham on Tour
- 400+ Database of community organisations.
- 43 Community and university participants attended 'Best Practice in Community Engagement' activities
- 81 Applications to the Partnership Fund, 57 internal and 24 external.
- 9146 People engaged in the Shale Gas MOOC from over 90 countries.
- 614 Participants on Graduate School public engagement with research training/development activities

Impact Framework and Analysis

RCUK Aims & Objectives	Catalyst Objective	Possible Activities	Evidence of Change	What we would do differently
Strategic commitment to public engagement	PE built in to training, staff development and institutional systems	Training Communities of Practice PE built into research applications	Effective Communities of Practice – on-line (In a Fishbowl) and training (Engaging the Engagers etc). New Graduate School training / development activities in PE (614 participants)	Expanding training in PE as part of doctoral training programmes Creation of a public engagement forum (internal)
Integration of public engagement into the core activities of HEIs, including measuring quality and impact of public engagement with research activities	Application of the Social Impact tool and creation of Best Practice guidance on social impact with research through REF templates	Surveys on public engagement as part of a benchmarking approach; KPIs in Strategic Plan Social indicators – linked with REF Impact (public)	Processes are now in place to collect data evidencing engagement with stakeholders including public engagement activity and fed into the algorithm that determines HEIF allocations. This action alone may demonstrate an increase in activity	Greater application and use of the social impact framework/tool as part of benchmarking processes, institution-wide
Reward and recognition of researchers and staff involved in public engagement	PE built into workload modelling for academic staff PE built into promotions criteria and annual Professional Development and Performance Review process for academics	Through work of PVC – with Catalyst information – to create a culture change in promotions and workload for academic staff	Public Engagement with Research activities are now formally embedded in Performance Review processes and the Workload Framework Model with public engagement in research acknowledged as part of promotions criteria. The Vice Chancellor’s Award supports excellent public engagement activity.	This was largely achieved and the change is still taking effect. This is a very positive advance for the University. We will continue to monitor to determine whether the changes made have impact.

Encouraging and supporting researchers and staff at all levels to become involved (e.g. by building capacity for public engagement amongst researchers)	Creation of CoPs to facilitate debate and dialogue Gaining buy in through promotions and workload management Clarifying and promoting the PE 'message'	CoPs – on-line and actual Training and support activities (see above) On-going links with NCCPE in refining REF public engagement template	More dialogue and debate about public engagement, catalysing a great deal of exiting energy and enthusiasm	A more systematic and joined up approach to training Importance of an internal best practice forum
Creating networks within institutions to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported	See above	See above	See above	Creation of a PE website; further work on NOOCs, MOOCs and sharing of best practice materials
Contribution to a wider network supportive of public engagement with research including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE community	Work with Beacons project – UEA Engagement with other Catalysts via NCCPE Coordinating Network	Mentoring and training – co-development with UEA Best Practice guidance from University of Manchester / Metropolitan University Establishing links with Universities of Derby, Sheffield and Lincoln	Strong relationships established with NCCPE and a national reputation for pioneering work on social justice/PE in the early phase of Catalyst	Creation of a regional Russell Group forum bringing together learning and skills connected with Ongoing community/public forum, catalysing on huge appetite for research engagement Moving beyond family-orientated activities

Edge Tool – our position on the spectrum

PURPOSE - Clarify your **PURPOSE** for engaging with the public

Mission - Create a shared understanding of the purpose, value, meaning and role of public engagement to staff and students and embed this in your strategy and mission.

- Between **Developing** and towards **Gripping**

Developing - Public engagement is referenced sporadically within the institutional mission documents and strategies, but is not considered a priority area

Gripping - Public engagement is clearly referenced within the institutional mission and strategies and the institution is developing an institution-wide strategic approach.

Catalyst has enabled us to move closer to Gripping

Leadership - Support champions across the organisation who embrace public engagement

- Between **Developing** and **Gripping**

Developing - Some of the institution's senior team act as informal champions for public engagement

Gripping - Some of the institution's senior team act as formal champions for public engagement.

Catalyst has helped move us from Developing towards Gripping and recent changes to the University Executive Board (UEB) with five new Faculty PVCs sitting on the board and a single (rather than two) PVCs overseeing Research and KE should strengthen our position significantly. This is important as it ensures capacity to support and develop PE activities moves from a single senior leader to being embedded across the senior leadership team. The University has also appointed a Director of Public Affairs who works closely with UEB and is a strong advocate of PE.

Communication - Communicate consistent, clear messages to validate, support and celebrate it, and ensure open and two-way communication with members of the public and community organisations.

- **Gripping**

Gripping - Public engagement frequently features in internal communications, but rarely as a high profile item or with an emphasis on its strategic importance.

This is still a developing area and credible academic routes, like the new public engagement research and practice journal, Research for All, will help improve this.

PROCESSES - Invest in **PROCESSES** that support good quality engagement

Support - Co-ordinate the delivery of engagement to maximise efficiency, target support, improve quality, foster innovation, join up thinking and monitor involvement and impact.

- Between **Gripping** and **Embedding**

Gripping - Oversight and co-ordination of public engagement has been formally allocated (e.g. to a working group or committee) but there is minimal support and resource to invest in activity.

Embedding - The institution has a strategic plan to focus its co-ordination, a body/ies with formal responsibility for oversight of this plan, and resources available to assist the embedding of public engagement.

There are a number of recognised and supported networks – Catalyst has helped to create supported networks and these needs to be resourced to continue

Learning - Provide opportunities for learning and reflection and provide support for continuing professional development and training.

- **Gripping**

Gripping - There are some formal opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in public engagement.

This has been most recently developed through the Catalyst Best Practice project and is also resourced and supported by the Graduate School, for researchers and post-graduate students The Graduate School now offers training / development opportunities in PE with research, including the Research Showcase, 3 Minute Thesis, writing a press release, science outreach programme, engaging with journalists and being an engaging researcher. During the Catalysts programme, 614 postgraduate researchers have participated in these sessions.

Recognition - Recognise and reward staff involvement within recruitment, promotion, workload plans and performance reviews, and celebrate success with awards or prizes.

- **Embedding**

Embedding - The University has reviewed its processes, and developed a policy to ensure public engagement is rewarded and recognised in formal and informal ways.

Catalyst, and specifically the work of the PVC, has had a significant impact in this area. PE is now included in Promotions Criteria and is also included in the annual PDPR process. Work in this area is also recognized via the Vice-Chancellor's achievement award

PEOPLE - Focus on how effectively PEOPLE are involved and supported

Staff - Ensure that all staff – in academic and support roles – have opportunities to get involved in informal and formal ways.

- Between **Developing** and **Gripping**

Developing

There are opportunities for staff in a handful of faculties or departments to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties.

Gripping

There are structured opportunities for many staff members to get involved in public engagement; but not in all faculties or departments. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.

The Catalyst programme has enabled wider debate about what constitutes meaningful staff engagement, beyond volunteering, and has stimulated the wider engagement of academic staff.

Students - Proactively include and involve students in shaping the mission and in the delivery of the strategy, and maximise opportunities for their involvement.

- Between **Gripping** and **Embedding**

Gripping

Many (but not all) students have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.

Embedding

All students have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement.

Whilst not the key focus of the Catalyst project, learning from the Catalyst informed the development of the Nottingham Advantage Award Public Engagement and Citizenship programme for students and post graduate researchers were involved in the delivery of research with, and for, many of the community organisations engaged in the project.

Public - Invest in people, processes and infrastructure to support and nurture the involvement of individuals and organisations external to the institution.

- Between **Developing** and **Gripping**

Developing

Some attempt has been made to analyse community need and interest; and to begin to tackle access issues to open up the institution and its activities to the public.

Gripping

The institution has committed resources to assessing community need and interests, and to using this insight and feedback to inform its strategy and plans.

The Catalyst programme has helped form a clearer understanding of 'public/community', engagement with the third sector, health service users and professionals, amongst others. Further training and institutional agreement on a strategic approach to PE is still developing.

Partnerships

Partnerships established were robust from day one of the Catalyst programme, and included links with the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community sector (ARVAC) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) at a national level. At a more local level, positive relationships with the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services, One Nottingham, the City and County Councils were further developed through the involvement of these agencies on the Strategic Advisory Board.

The Head of Community Partnerships had a strongly established relationship with NCCPE and had spoken at a number of the Engage conferences and acted as a 'thought leader' in developing social impact measurement tools with NCCPE. She had also developed links with the Beacons projects, and particularly with the Head of PE at the University of East Anglia, Julie Worrall (now Bounsford), who had led on the successful Beacons project there. The Head of CP and Julie developed the initial Catalyst training programme for the University of Nottingham and Julie became the Beacons mentor to the Nottingham Catalyst.

The Catalyst Project Manager was part of the Catalyst Coordination Network and attended meetings throughout the project life, also hosting one of the Network meetings at the University of Nottingham.

Internally, the Project Steering Group maintained connections across a range of academic areas throughout the Catalyst programme and the Graduate School, Professional Development and the Research Graduate Services were partners in the project from the beginning.

Stories of Change

Sarah O'Hara, PI

My journey has been on two levels: firstly as a researcher and secondly as a senior manager in a research intensive university. With respect to the former I have always been comfortable engaging with the public as part of my research agenda and early on in my career I made the conscious decision to focus on applied research which involved working with and involving the public in the work that I was doing. At the time this was a gamble as research of this nature was viewed as being 'second rate' by many in the research community and I was advised that this might be 'career suicide'. Yet while I have always engaged the public in my research I have never particularly thought about it in a critical way. For example, one of my

current research projects focusses on Public Perceptions of Shale Gas Extraction, at an early stage in the project I spoke to a range of stakeholders in both the US and the UK to find out what the issues and concerns of those for and against shale gas extraction were. While these stakeholders are often members of the public they are also individuals who have an interest in the subject. The Catalyst project has provided me the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which I engage and how this can be broadened and deepened. As a result I developed a MOOC focusing on shale gas politics and science that was delivered via the Futurelearn platform over a four week period in February 2015. Over 9000 people participated in the MOOC from over 90 countries and as well as learning about shale gas part of the course involved learners undertaking research on public perceptions of shale gas in their local area and amongst their networks. Their findings were then fed in to the online discussions and debates and as such these individuals went from being passive consumers of research knowledge to active participants in the production of knowledge. Although this approach needs further development and refinement it is clear that engaging the public in research via MOOCs and other online fora has significant potential.

Although the University of Nottingham has long encouraged public engagement, and the Community Partnerships team existed before the award of the Catalyst project, it is fair to say that such activities were not recognised in any formal way. As such it was largely those individuals who firmly believed that engagement with the public was something that we should be doing who took the time to pursue these activities. The Catalyst project has provided me with the ammunition I needed to be able to change our approach to PE at the institutional level. For example, PE activities were included in the University's workload framework which was launched in 2014 and can now be formally acknowledged in an academic's workload. Moreover, I have been able to get PE activities recognised in both our promotions criteria and annual Professional Development and Performance Review process for academics and importantly PE activities are now recognised via the Vice-Chancellor's achievement award. These changes, while relatively small, can have a significant impact on the way colleagues view and participate in PE activities and over the last few years I have seen a significant shift in the way academics engage with and talk about PE activities with a growing number seeing this as an important part of what they do.

Steven Rawlinson, External Partner – Consultant

As a freelance consultant I have worked with many organisations in the voluntary and community sector, together with the Higher Education sector. Together with a colleague, I worked on the Catalyst programme in its latter stages, looking to identify and develop case studies around best practice in community engagement with academic research. My independence allows me to view projects, their activity, outputs and outcomes from a number of different perspectives, although my personal experience can shape initial approaches to undertaking an assignment. In the case of Catalyst I had already had some positive and some not so positive experience from the Roberts-funded Social Enterprise Internship Programme, also developed and hosted by Community Partnerships prior to Catalyst, where student internships were created in voluntary and community sector organisations to research potential ideas around social enterprise; one of my post-doctoral researchers produced a fine piece of academic work but without any engagement with the local community at all. I have to admit that I had a perception, amongst others, that

academia and academics were as guilty of doing things to people and communities as local authorities and national government can be.

My journey in undertaking the assignment, including elements of evaluation and impact, changed that perception.

The first part of the perception, that Universities do things to people and communities, was modified. Through a series of structured interviews and discussion groups with academic and community based beneficiaries, it was established that a significant difference had been achieved by very small amounts of grant funding – oiling the wheels was a phrase often used – and this resonated with my earlier experience working in regeneration.

Another perception that changed was my understanding of 'The University'; and whilst some Catalyst participants saw the establishment as a single entity and a block of real estate, there was a significant shift to understanding that the University was populated by people and was a community in itself. In my mind, and in the context of identifying best practice, this was a seed of cultural change, where thinking small and working collaboratively brought about better outcomes because they are relevant to the wider community in which the University stands.

A third perception to be challenged was the role, and potential role, that communities had in shaping the research agenda of Universities. Spreading the net wider than Nottingham – although staff and communities in Nottingham were saying similar things – revealed that community and public engagement is taking place to create partnerships tackling social and economic problems in which research may support that activity rather than the converse, where partnerships are created to enable research - a problem-centred approach to development of solutions if you will.

On reflection there is more, however, my journey takes me right up to membership of the Board of trustees of a national charity, ARVAC, the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector, where I felt my learning could be best expressed.

Lessons learned

General

- There was a need to balance 'inward' and 'outward' looking activities and pay attention to both.
- High level champions are critical. Having the PVC and Director of Research Outcomes on the Steering Group helped to link the project into wider university agendas. Conversely, the loss of the Head of Community Partnerships (who had played a pivotal role in developing the bid to Catalyst) half-way through caused the project to lose some momentum and direction. Although new staff were recruited to the project it took time for activities to be restarted and flagged the need to ensure that skills development is more broadly developed to avoid single points of delay or failure.
- The project intended to develop a social impact tool for measurement/metrics. This was not achieved, except in the early stages of the Public Engagement review/survey. This was partly because the expertise was lost with the departure of the Head of Community Partnerships, who had, however, left a robust set of tools and had trained and developed the CP team in using them. Arguably, the Project Manager did not herself have the skills or capacity to continue with this strand of work. There are, however, a range of

established tools such as NCPPE's Edge Tool¹⁰ which may be useful to use in the future more widely across the University, together with benchmark comparators with similar institutions, which was the original objective in working with the UEA Beacons partner.

- Integrating activities with University systems was challenging on different levels. For instance marketing to harder to reach communities is unlikely to be achieved through material on the University's website; paying internal applicants Partnership Funding monies proved problematic and time consuming in some instances and putting material for internal attention on the University's Workspace was deemed, by some, to be unhelpful in terms of conveying messages around public engagement. However, one important area for development – the creation of a Catalyst/PE website - did not take place during the Catalyst programme, despite being an important objective for the PI, and should still receive attention, perhaps as part of the suite of activities connected with the development of the University of Nottingham Open On-line Course (NOOC – see Sustainability section).

Accessing hard to reach communities that do not normally engage with HE

- Different communities and 'publics' need help and guidance to engage effectively with the University. Unsuccessful external applications to the Partnership Fund were largely the result of the authors not knowing how to couch their request in the terms required. Any future brokerage role needs to build on this need and create guidance and surgeries on how to apply.
- Nurturing personal contacts and relationships are extremely important for marketing and developing new audiences for public engagement with research.
- Effective marketing is not just about removing obstacles for 'harder to reach' communities, but about developing messages, materials and vehicles that will attract and reach new audiences for research. The University website has not have been designed with these in mind and can be inflexible and predominantly one-way communication of messages. University staff need greater assistance with conveying messages externally.
- Providing brokerage between the university and external community organisations is intensive, time consuming work. *Nottingham On Tour* involved a substantial amount of administrative work on the part of the project staff to play matchmaker between university staff and community organisations. Whilst optimistically it may appear to be a simple matching process between university staff and interested organisations with a venue, a range of practical issues including timing, location, advertisement etc have to be resolved. This requires adequate resourcing.
- Whilst over 200 academics and researchers suggested ideas for 'Nottingham on Tour', many of those that actually took place looked similar to Widening Participation events primarily engaging children and families. As an experiment this raises questions about their appropriateness – and the level of guidance participants received. This could also be a result of the influence of the Catalyst Project being based in Community Partnerships (and without the leadership/guiding ethos of the Head of Community Partnerships) who have had a focus on community engagement activities *per se* rather than public engagement with research. We would question whether it worked to mix raising aspiration and public engagement with research activities and such issues might bear

¹⁰ <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assess-with-edge-tool>

further exploration and more explicit training for staff wishing to engage with PE activities.

Transferring Public Engagement good practice across disciplines to encourage greater academic participation

- It is not just academic and research staff involved in public engagement with research activities; administrative and support staff often conduct a large share of the work and therefore it is important to ensure that access to training and support is made more widely available. Moreover allowing colleagues in all job families a limited amount of time to undertake such activities is important.
- Activities like the Public Engagement Survey and organising forums for sharing practice are ways of discovering and connecting people across the University. The Project did not need to initiate all activity itself, but could support and amplify that undertaken by others (e.g. Call for Participants, a platform developed by Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham to encourage public participation in research studies and Screens in the Wild, a University of Nottingham, UCL collaborative project utilising media screens located in urban spaces.)
- The Project had health users and communities including patient user groups as one of its areas and patient involvement in research is well embedded. This provided an exemplar for other disciplines, although it was acknowledged that other subjects might need to be more imaginative to achieve similar levels of involvement.
- The Partnership Fund provided opportunities for different disciplines and areas of the University to work together on projects with calls making it clear that we encouraged cross disciplinary working.

Recognising and rewarding public engagement activity - workload modelling, performance review, events and awards

- Enthusiastic internal champions need to be supplied with budget, tools, encouragement and rewards. To nurture both them and less enthusiastic staff there has to be some kind of hook – does it bring in more money, more students, change the perception of the University in the wider community? Will it ensure better quality/relevant research and development researcher and transferrable skills.

Increasing the amount of public engagement activity from programmes of funded research

- Something like the Partnership Fund could act as a good training ground for Impact Case Studies for the Research Excellence Framework as they provide an opportunity to initiate and nurture partnerships, take small risks and develop stories.
- Participating in activities like *Nottingham on Tour* and making applications to the Partnership Fund provide staff with practical experience and learning on how to engage publics with research including timing, locations, vehicles, languages etc.

Impact

Our conclusion is that impact essentially thrives through dialogue and communication. It requires commitment, belief, dedicated and passionate staff and persistence.

"You are going to have a thousand different conversations with a thousand different people, and not everything will come to fruition, but the dialogue is so critical. Not everything comes to a project or a tangible outcome. It's being around the table, supporting people. It's about 'what's in it for them, how does it benefit their research and teaching', because that's the core work. You can only do it by talking to them and not by sending out loads of emails and documents and protocols."

Julie Worrall, Project Director UEA Beacon for Public Engagement and Catalyst Mentor/Adviser

Sustainability Plan

There is growing recognition amongst academic staff at the University of Nottingham that there are significant benefits to engaging the public in research and that such engagement can be vital to ensuring that research has impact. Given this fact it is important that the Catalyst project has a legacy, not only in terms of ensuring the data and information collected during this project is archived in a way that it is easily accessible and the Best Practice materials developed as part of the Catalyst project are available to all staff and will be placed in a University of Nottingham Open On-line Course (NOOC), which is effectively an internal MOOC. The potential to use these materials, together with outcomes from other Catalysts, as well as learning from HEIs such as the University of Manchester, Manchester Met, alongside community organisations such ARVAC and NCVO to create a MOOC is high, and should be explored so that the learning gained from this project is spread more widely.

Supporting PE activities and engaging our publics in research is an ever increasing priority at the University of Nottingham and a recent reorganisation of the University's Senior Management Team with the bringing together of Research and Graduate Services and the Business Engagement and Innovation Services¹¹ under a single PVC portfolio will enable the University to use its significant resources in this area to develop further and support its activities in this area.

We are also recommending to the University that the Partnership Fund be continued, as it is clear that very small, easy to apply for grants have been extremely effective in promoting the PE agenda.

Through the involvement and leadership of the Head of Research Outcomes, public engagement with research is now recognised as a key element of 'Impact' and as such, is integral within Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) funded by EPSRC and ESRC. Currently there are eleven projects supported by the IAAs that include substantial PE elements, ranging from engagement with targeted groups/communities through to a wide public audience. Lessons learned from the Catalyst programme feed into the delivery of the IAAs, will continue to influence the development of 'Pathways to Impact' in grant applications, and will help shape the development of impact case studies for a future Research Excellence

¹¹ The University of Nottingham currently employs over 140 people in these two units.

Framework. For REF2014, 27% of the submitted impact case studies from the University of Nottingham included substantial PE elements and this is expected to increase in the future, therefore it is vital that outcomes from the Catalyst programme are incorporated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Sustaining the conversation - internally and externally

- Maintain a physical resource and repository for the Catalyst learning -
This project initiated conversations concerning public engagement with research across the institution and with community organisations. The records of those conversations are contained in flipcharts produced by participants at events; in Partnership Fund applications; the surveys and Nottingham on Tour proposals, Best Practice materials etc and can be used to continue to shape activities and policy. It is important not to lose the memories of those conversations or the outcomes, such as the database of community contacts, which will very quickly lose its value.
- Forums for continued engagement -
It is important to find ways to continue the conversations. Universities can sometimes underestimate the reputational damage that is done when they start talks with potential partners outside the academy only to drop them when funding ceases. An internal public engagement network is vital, and shared meetings with community bodies works very effectively and can lead to genuine co-production of research.

Training new researchers

- Joining up training -
Much progress has been made in this area, but further consideration is required to identify ways of joining up appropriate forms of training and delivery and this work continues within the University's Professional Development Unit and the Graduate School. The Best Practice programme at the end of the Catalyst project brought together University staff and community colleagues for joint training and by this means, two-way learning was greatly facilitated.
- Learning from each other/Citizen learning -
New researchers and existing staff learn most by meeting others from different contexts and disciplines and it seems sensible to connect professional development with bringing people together through something like a community of practice forum perhaps twice a year. For example, we trained over 100 university staff and external partners through a series of workshops on best practice in research in the community in 2013/14. This was reinforced by Best Practice workshops and training in December 2014/January 2015. They showed that practical experience is one of the best means of learning about public engagement, offered through activities such as those fostered by the Partnership Fund. These sorts of experiences can help academic Schools to properly value and cost public engagement activities for the purposes of REF Impact Case Studies.

Partnership Funding

- Pump priming monies for innovation and experimentation -
The Partnership Fund allocated £45K over three years which seems a small amount of money with potential returns on many different levels. The concept of the Fund offered a high degree of autonomy, largely unhampered by internal bureaucracy, to try out new ideas and relationships. It was strongly emphasised that making an application was an important training ground and step towards developing Impact Case Studies for REF.

Rewards and Promotion

- Public engagement in research is now acknowledged as part of promotions criteria and is now included in the annual appraisal for academic staff and it will inevitably change and shape the institutional culture around PE. But, like recognition of teaching before it, this will obviously take some time to feed through and become part of the institutional story.

Defining public engagement with research and *what's in it for the publics?*

- Institutional level clarity about *public engagement with research* -
A continuum or ladder of engagement was suggested which moved from profile-raising activities to participation in a research study to 'truly' engaging publics in helping to design research from day one - defining priorities, helping to produce documents or being co-applicants on research proposals. This builds on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1967) which moves from consultation, through to citizen control, and which ties in with current thinking about co-production of research.
- Understanding community needs and gains from research -
Different communities do have to have reasons to engage and it is perhaps worth remembering that one of those reasons may be that they want to engage with the University 'as expert'. The value of the activity to a particular 'public' may lie in a desire to provide robust evidence for a funding application or to turn a business idea into commercial reality and it is important in exploring new and different approaches not to lose sight of what the University does well.
- New means of raising funding -
There are different ways of funding research emerging. The Guardian reported on 3rd January 2015¹² that the public were '*giving millions to pay for science research*' using crowd-funding platforms like petridish.org and drawing attention to the lively discussion taking place on its website.¹³ Dr Didier Schmitt, a scientific adviser to the European Commission, was reported as saying,

¹² Guardian, Saturday 3 January 2015 p.16

¹³ <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/02/crowdfunded-science-scientists-fund-research>

'In the case of projects competing for public funding, crowdfunding is a measure of citizen interest and could be used to help decision-makers and experts in their final choice.'

Recommendations for Funders

- Given the fact that the public funds RCUK activities, applications for funding from RCUK should outline the means by which the public are engaged in the research.

- This could be within the Pathways to Impact section of the application. This way, applicants have to think out about PE and if they do not intend to engage or there is a reason why it is impractical for them to do so, they should be encouraged to think about the potential beneficiaries of their research in their pathways to impact.

Recommendations for HEIs

- Of vital importance is the need for universities to work together to provide learning, understanding and materials connected to Public Engagement, within the Russell Group and beyond. The work of NCCPE in bringing these conversations together has been crucial.

- Added to this, groups of universities should work together to provide online materials in order to share good practice and innovation and to avoid duplication of effort and energy.

- PE training should be part of doctoral training to ensure that it is embedded within the research culture of organisations going forward.

Appendix one- Case Studies ofActivities

Keith Bound, PhD researcher

Department of Culture, Film and Media, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies

What was your experience of the engagement activity that you received Partnership funding for?

Excellent as I had a great deal of support to ensure my application was to a high standard and met the needs of the Catalyst partnership fund criteria.

How did the public/community you engaged with your research benefit from this engagement activity?

They took part in a film experiment study at the University; upon completion of this they received a certificate in acknowledgement of their participation in University research and also £5.00 contribution to travel expenses.

Tell us more... My research study is a film experiment where participants watch 32 short horror film clips which depict different types of conflict between protagonist and antagonist. Participants had their skin conductance recorded while watching the film clips, while after each film clip they provided feedback and a short interview at the end of the experiment to describe their experience of suspense in horror films. However, the main focus of the study was to identify participants' anticipatory stress patterns to three different narrative structures from eight horror films, and use the findings to develop a biometric model of suspense and propose a physiological approach to film studies. To gain public engagement in my research study I contacted BBC radio Nottingham who responded by interviewing me twice on the morning show and have invited me back to give them a summary of the results from the study. This PR activity created interest from the general public to take part in the study. I also staged a one day staff event at the Orchard Hotel which is located on the University Park campus and also worked with Broadway Cinema in Nottingham to recruit participants through their Facebook Mayhem film festival page

Please provide three words or short phrases that sum up your overall experience of this activity.

I found it very rewarding to involve members of the public in my research as it gave them the opportunity to engage in a novel activity. The participants were so enthusiastic and helpful, and really enjoyed the process and experience.

Would you have been able to complete your engagement activity without the Partnership Funding?

No

Did the Partnership Funding improve your engagement activity?

Yes

Do you have any other comments to add about your experience? Only thank you to the partnership funding committee in approving my application. Really appreciated.



Case Study Two

Best Practice in Public Engagement with Academic Research

The Core Centre, Calverton (Nottinghamshire)

The 'Core Centre' is a registered charity and 'Community Hub' running educational and leisure courses for the local community and surrounding areas. The Centre also provides employment support services and a weekly outreach service for the CAB.

The CORE Centre, located in Calverton, Nottinghamshire, was established in 1994 originally under the name of Oasis in response to needs of the Calverton community following the pit closure of 1993. Since then, its aims have been to develop local people's employability, life skills and to enhance the life of the community through training, advice and community services.

The Core Centre's aspiration is to respond to current needs and offer something for all the diverse sectors of the local community. It is important to point out here that the Core centre has been attracting beneficiaries from surrounding villages and urban areas like Arnold, Mansfield, Blidworth, Woodthorpe, Hyson Green, Mapperley and Oxtun, between others.

The Core Centre approached Community Partnerships for help with research based around ***'Shaping the future services of a Community Hub (Education Centre)'***

They secured a 100 hours Research Project undertaken from September to November 2012 which included a comprehensive valuation of current service and educational course provision; identification of future services and courses required by the Community; assessment of opportunities to engage with wider customer base e.g. local businesses, and people requiring basic skills.

In collaboration with the PhD researcher, it was decided that the study was going to explore three main areas: First, diagnosis of the community needs in Calverton, looking at some basic social indicators and community activism, exploring what the surrounding community would like CORE to offer as services over the next few years. Second a general evaluation of the last three years, looking at some of its achievements and the perception that current staff and service users have of the centre, and thirdly to look in detail at aspects of the operational practices of the organization like its marketing strategy (including advertising, website and the layout of the reception area) and to explore ways of improvement of current services.

The Core Centre management i.e. paid and unpaid staff and volunteer trustees were engaged in the co-design of the research project and vitally were engaged in the process of its development and eventual production. This was achieved through project supervision provided by paid staff together with feedback on progress against the research brief at management and Board meetings.

In turn, feedback from the Core Centre included:

- Being impressed with the scope of candidate's work, both in terms of satisfying the project brief but also advising on how best to position the organisation re: future Big Lottery bid; a major source of funding (5 years);
- They were also impressed with the success of 'researcher in residence', the University coming to them, and that Centre users were interviewed as part of their 'drop-in' activity;

At the researcher interview/selection stage organisation indicated their pride in working with Nottingham University; credible and trusted institution; quality of research importantly confirming this view. In terms of public engagement this carried an important and powerful message to the host organisation and to the University, cementing the notion of co-design and co-production.

Pamela Castro -- Sociology and Social Policy -- PhD Sociology and Law

Case Study Three – External Organisation

Best Practice in Public Engagement with Academic Research

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – Public Involvement Programme

“Comprehensive evidence base; Expert input; Public involvement; Independent advisory committees; Genuine consultation; Open and transparent process; Equalities considerations; Regular review”

This case-study is based on discussions with a member of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – Public Involvement Programme, and is based upon the approach to public and patient involvement that they have developed and adopted. NICE is independent and since 2013 its remit has been to develop national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. It seeks to achieve this by developing relationships with NHS England, Public Health England, Social Services, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Local Government and, importantly, by engaging with the public and communities, typically through the development of partnership working with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations.

How does NICE work?

NICE uses independent, authoritative and evidence-based guidance to ensure quality and value for money. Underpinning the approach are published processes and methods which include detailed manuals for clinical guidelines, public health, technology appraisals and social care, statements on Social Values and Judgments and the NICE Equalities Objectives and Programme 2013-2016.

NICE Policy on Involving the Public

NICE aims to develop, transparent, accountable and effective procedures for involving the public and patients and to ensure that patient and public perspectives are represented in NICE processes and products. To achieve this NICE have a formal ‘patient and public involvement’ policy which has the following key principles:

- Those most directly affected by NICE guidance should have the opportunity to contribute to its production;
- That involvement is at the level of the individual;
- That organisational/representational involvement is important;
- That there are opportunities for engaging children and young people;
- That the process of engagement has outputs and outcomes for public and community.

The Public Involvement Programme, therefore, supports the involvement of service users and the public in all NICE work programmes, and Advises NICE on methods of involvement,

Identifies public participants (organisations and individuals) and **provides information, training and support for those who get involved with NICE** (individuals or organisations).

How does NICE involve the public?

There are a number of structures used, including - Registration of stakeholders who are consulted at key stages of NICE work, with occasional consultation with specific target populations ; the establishment of NICE committees and working groups which engage with individual service users, carers or community members with relevant experience; promoting NICE guidance and putting it into practice through provision of information for the public and through the development of community and voluntary sector activities; the establishment of Citizens Councils where members of public advise on society's values.

Stakeholders are organisations who are registered with NICE because they have an interest in the topic, or they represent people whose practice or care may be directly affected by a guideline or quality standard. Stakeholders can also be national VCOs for people who use health and social care services, their families and carers, and the public as well as local HealthWatch and local organisations that have no national group to participate on their behalf or organisations that fund or carry out research.

Research input from stakeholders and the public into the NICE process

This includes local social values; impact of a health problem, assessment of outcomes; views on what helps or hinders using a service or living a healthier life; identification of risks, benefits and acceptability; service delivery preferences (place, time etc); information, communication and support needs; equality issues and considerations. The scope of the process, incorporates principles of co-design and co-production planning for the future by facilitating recommendations for further research.

What does NICE get out of this?

- Information about real life – living with conditions/disabilities, effects of treatment, use of interventions;
- Information that they can't get through any other source;
- Challenges to presumptions about what people want to achieve;
- The outcomes that matter to the people that matter;
- In short – **everything that's missing from the academic research!**

Appendix Two -Evaluation Strategy

Social Impact

The Community Partnership's social impact model and tool kit takes the form of questionnaires based on a matrix of questions. The outputs help create a framework for examining a baseline level of knowledge, understanding and skills for students, staff, social enterprises, public contacts etc. These elements can be assessed at the beginning of a project and re-examined at its end to help determine distance travelled. Therefore, they can help demonstrate change related to several of the pathways to impact indicators, as defined by NCCPE, public access to facilities; student and staff engagement. As Community Partnerships found during initial research into the range of potential models for examining public/community engagement and its potential benefit, many stop at the financial impact of engagement and others only look at very specific types of public/community engagement, such as volunteering. The most common issue, however, with existing models is that they do not consider the impact from the perspective of the communities receiving support. This is precisely what we were aiming to do in our evaluation, by attempting to create a social impact measurement framework which asks questions of the range of stakeholders with whom we work about their perceptions of our work and its impact.

Defining what we meant by 'community' in the context of 'community engagement' was therefore an important starting point for the research and, in our case, was defined as being relatively diverse and from both an internal and external perspective e.g. internal community - staff and students, external community - community organisations, members of the public, local residents, third sector bodies and public sector partners.

We know there is a general perception that public engagement is, de facto, a 'good thing' but it has often been poorly defined. Most people are comfortable with the idea of community engagement as a means by which social capital is built, i.e. the building blocks or glue by which society is bound together. We can also talk relatively confidently about the value of corporate social responsibility, recognising the organisational impact on local communities and the value of 'giving back' and working for mutual benefit.

The bottom line, however, is that it is no longer seen as sufficient to simply assert the value of public/community engagement without being able to demonstrate some of its impacts, particularly during a period of acute economic difficulty. This is as true for the University sector as it is for community partners, at a time when traditional perceptions and definitions of what we mean by community engagement and social impact are being challenged and broadened and funding is much less certain.

Interestingly, both the previous Labour and Coalition governments flagged their allegiance to the concept of 'social return on investment' (SROI). This approach was developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis by translating social outcomes into financial measures and calculating the social return. It is an impact measurement framework designed to promote the inclusion of all stakeholders in the process. Such an analysis is not restricted to one financial number, but seen as a framework for exploring an organisation's social impact, in which monetisation plays an important but not an exclusive role. Therefore, SROI is

predicated on a number of important values, worth considering in a public sector context, though it has largely been taken up by the third sector. The core values include involving stakeholders, as stated, as well as being transparent and only claiming demonstrable findings.

We have defined social impact as being about the kind of interventions which can make a difference over time in terms of skills and knowledge and as being about the type of connections which survive beyond isolated public/community engagement activities or volunteer turnover. In line with SROI, we also recognise that all engagement activity comes at a cost — at the very least the cost of creating opportunities for this kind of activity and the material costs that attend on this, such as staff time and resources (internal) and community members' time and energy (external).

The framework focuses on bridging' bonding and linking capital' allowing for consistent data collection by building qualitative 'signposts' into individual projects and research which will help with future evaluation.

- Bridging, bonding and linking as forms of social capital are defined below:
- Bonding capital — refers to cohesion and connectedness within a community
- -Bridging capital — refers to the levels and nature of contact and engagement between different communities
- Linking capital — recognises the engagement and relations between community and voluntary organisations and resource agencies and policy makers. In the context of this study, the Linking capital dimension is explored in relation to any formal or informal links between the University and a community or voluntary organisation, or a school.

A further measure of Staff engagement can be audited through a yet to be developed communities of practice rubric where we will benchmark who is involved in what kinds of practice with whom and how and then evaluate this again after a period of time.

As a measure of cultural capital, public access to knowledge will be logged via events such as public lectures, YouTube hits, Café Scientifique etc, together with the numbers of public attendees at events. This can also be supplemented by participant response studies/evaluation. Widening participation has its own set of existing, pre-established measures.

Appendix three – Evaluation Report

EVALUATION REPORT – Created by Jeanne Booth

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM CATALYST PROJECT APRIL 2012 - MARCH 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Nottingham is one of the top five institutions for links with business including SMEs. The priorities of its Catalyst Project were to broaden public engagement with research, including links with hard-to-reach communities.

Key achievements

The project initiated and nurtured conversations concerning public engagement with research throughout the institution and supported a range of pilot activities.

- A Public Engagement Survey was sent to all staff, completed by 9%, and revealed a diverse range of activity undertaken by academic and administrative staff.
- From this survey over 150 staff were identified as active engagers and received direct invitation to share practice at an Engaged Engagers event.
- Over 200 staff answered a call for involvement in taking research topics and events 'on tour' using community venues.
- A contact database was developed consisting of over 400 community organisations.
- A Best Practice event brought together community and university participants who produced checklists of issues to be addressed in public engagement with research strategy.
- A Partnership Fund supported a range of pilot activity resulting in valuable lessons for the individuals, organisations and the University.
- Public Engagement with Research activities are becoming formally embedded in Performance Review processes commencing at professorial level.
- Processes are now in place to collect data evidencing public engagement with research activity.
- Learning from the project and that of other organisations and academic research has been brought together by a 'Catalyst Best Practice Project' to provide content for future training including a University Moodle.

Key Learning

- High level champions are critical.
- Engaging 'hard to reach' communities is not just about removing obstacles but about developing new messages, materials and vehicles to attract new audiences. Staff need help with these.
- Making it easy to access small amounts of funding to try ideas can make amazing things happen, provide great opportunities for learning and nurture longer term productive relationships.
- Take care that public engagement with research activities and particularly those targeting hard-to-reach communities do not default to aspiration- raising and widening participation activities.
- Providing brokerage between the university and external community organisations is intensive, time consuming work and successful engagement is largely dependent upon the strength of personal contacts and relationships. The University may best support these by providing forums for relationships to form and practice shared.
- Inflexible University systems - web protocols, corporate branding, and finance systems - can throw up practical challenges to public engagement.
- Enthusiastic internal champions need to be supplied with budget, tools, encouragement and rewards. Public engagement in research may now be part of promotions criteria but staff will

need to see it actually happening to believe it. This will obviously take some time to feed through and become part of the institutional story.

CONTENTS

1. Background.
2. Purpose of this report and methodology.
3. What happened and who was involved?
Key findings: management and operations; programme delivery.
4. What has changed as a result of this activity and what has been learnt?
5. Sustainability issues and recommendations.

1. BACKGROUND

The University of Nottingham was one of eight institutions successful in securing funding to pilot public engagement as part of the Public Engagement with Research Catalysts project of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) 2012-15. The initiative was directly aimed at creating an institutional culture for public engagement with research.

The University is one of the top ten research intensive institutions in the UK and an early signatory (Spring 2011) to the Manifesto for Public Engagement promoted by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement. Its commitment to the RCUK's Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research is emphasised in the University's project proposal,

'This has at its heart the idea that engaging with the public should be part of the role of researchers in any discipline; to improve the quality of the research and its impact, widen research horizons, enhance communication and influence skills, build new partnerships and ultimately support social change and the public good.'

The challenge for the University was highlighted in a report *Public Engagement at the University of Nottingham* prepared for the institution's Science, Technology and Society Priority Group.¹⁴

'While the university has a history strongly rooted in the local area and the mission statement stresses the importance of local communities, funding partnerships with private businesses as specified in the vision statement are the preferred method of engagement and outreach.' p.13

The HE-BCI 2013 survey¹⁵ demonstrates it is in the top five universities for the largest number of business research sponsors and the share of research links to SMEs is larger than that of most similar sized research universities in England. Conversely the survey indicates the University provides fewer social outreach events and is involved in fewer partnerships with community and civic actors than other universities.¹⁶ Nevertheless an internal Public Engagement Survey¹⁷ indicated a wide variety of public engagement activity across the University,

¹⁴ Cornelia Lawson, University of Nottingham, Report prepared for Science, Technology and Society Priority Group, Public Engagement at the University of Nottingham, 20 October 2013

¹⁵ Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/kes/measureke/hebci/>

¹⁶ According to the survey only 10% of Nottingham University's staff are involved in activities with community and civic partners, which represents a share in the bottom third of the university table.

¹⁷ Jackie Goode, Report on Staff Public Engagement Survey 2013.

' ranging from activity with charities and the third sector, the local authority/ies, museums, galleries, secondary and primary schoolsand active and passionate drive to engage with the public in terms of the research process and for finding creative ways to disseminate findings to the public.'

In the words of one of the Project Steering Group, the internal survey had however considered *'public engagement, not public engagement with research.'*

The University's approach to the Catalyst Project might therefore be seen as an attempt to redress the balance signalled in its title, *'Integrating the human value of research through public engagement – impacts for the civil society.'*

The project priorities being:

1. Accessing hard to reach communities that do not normally engage with HE.
2. Transferring Public Engagement good practice across disciplines to encourage greater academic participation.
3. Recognising and rewarding public engagement activity - workload modelling, performance review, events and awards.
4. Increasing the amount of public engagement activity from programmes of funded research.

This was to be achieved through creating a Community of Practice to build on existing activities and increase the momentum of culture change through a programme of activities in relation to public engagement with research. The 'public' was defined in three ways:

4. Health users and communities including patient user groups
5. Third sector/civil society organisations and social enterprises as a route to disadvantaged and harder to reach communities
6. Citizens and service users - 'the person in the street' - engagement through arts, sports, local authority engagement, schools and the teaching community.

To assess achievement the project also aimed to create a social impact measurement framework *'which asks questions of the range of stakeholders with whom we work about their perceptions of our work and its impact.'*

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT AND METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared November 2014-January 2015 to capture learning from the project and to support production of the final report. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Steering Group, internal and external project participants. Documentation and data including minutes, promotional material, end-of-year reports, Partnership Fund applications, case studies, evaluation surveys and reports were also considered to collate information concerning:

- Background to the project and the University's aspirations for public engagement.
- What happened and who was involved.
- What worked and what didn't work so well?
- Any unexpected surprises - pleasant and otherwise?
- Emerging good practice and critical success factors
- Stakeholders' ideas for enhancement.
- Issues and recommendations for future development.

In addition project records and materials have been considered in the light of the Edge Tool, developed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, to help assess how well institutions support public engagement.

3. WHAT HAPPENED AND WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Management and operations

The project was based in Community Partnerships and funding began in April 2012. A two tier governance structure established:

- A Strategic Advisory Board to meet twice a year with membership drawn from the University and civic partners including Nottingham Citizens, Nottingham City, Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) and One Nottingham. A mentor/adviser with experience of leading University of East Anglia's Beacon for Public Engagement was appointed to provide an external and impartial view of programme delivery. The SAB met twice following commencement of the project chaired by the Principal Investigator, PVC for Human Resources, Access and Community.
- A Project Steering Group met four times a year throughout the project. Membership was reviewed at the outset to reflect the *'right range of different interests from the university'* and included the Head of Community Partnerships, Project Manager, Head of Research Outcomes, research staff from Faculties of Science, Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine and Health Sciences and East Midlands Academic Health Science Network (Nottingham University Hospital Trust), Centre for Chinese Migration Studies - an interdisciplinary research centre, and the Centre for International E-Portfolio Development for expertise concerning online community platforms. Several members left during the project but a core group attended consistently and provided practical support including decisions on allocations of Partnership Funds.
- There were direct reporting lines from the project to the University's Executive Board and the Vice-Chancellor through the Principal Investigator, PVC for Human Resources, Access and Community and also through the Head of Research Outcomes.
- There was a six month delay in appointment of the Project Manager (title: Public Engagement with Research Manager) partly because the notification of the award of the grant was not received until mid-March 2012 with a start date of April 1st 2012 and then the process of coding the grants, and going through the formal HR processes for recruitment. Once the post was offered the successful candidate was also required to serve their notice on their current job. Moreover, the Head of Community Partnerships, the Project's key champion left the University's employment half-way through the project in December 2013. Members of the Steering Group were unanimous in stressing that the project felt this loss very keenly because she had driven the submission of the project bid; was a passionate advocate for the University accessing hard-to reach communities and had established networks in the university and community organisations.

Programme delivery

Public Engagement Survey & Report

A survey was conducted in February 2013. It was sent out with a covering email from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and was completed by 621 staff (<10%return), most of whom were involved in some form of public engagement activity. Key findings reported by the authors were:

- a wide variety of activity including with charities and the third sector, local authority/ies, museums and galleries, secondary and primary schools. Staff were providing skills, advice on research, acting as trustees, delivering open days and lectures and all predominantly on a voluntary basis
- Staff from all 'job families' were involved with the majority coming from Research and Teaching (328) and Administrative, Professional and Management (183). Most R&T staff engaged were level 5 (29.9%), APM – level 4 (23%), Technical Services – level 3 (60%), Operations and Facilities split between levels 2 and 3 (33.3% respectively)
- Most were giving 1 - 9 hours a month to public engagement activity
- Most did not have public engagement formally recognised as part of their role and of those who became involved regardless, 28% felt it was rewarded or recognised whilst 19.5% felt it was not.
- There is evidence of an active and passionate drive to engage with the public in terms of the research process and for finding creative ways to disseminate findings to the public
- Whilst most respondents were uncertain how the university could better recognise public engagement, a substantial number argued that it could be better supported
 - through rewards and/or incentives
 - by counting towards assessment of performance and for promotion
 - by provision of training and/or guidance
 - through embedding in job roles and/or workload
 - by provision of financial Support e.g. for room hire/administration/activities
 - by better marketing and co-ordination

The survey and report indicated a variety of public engagement activity, mostly under the radar of any central notice, co-ordination or support. Two of the fifteen questions specifically addressed public engagement with research. The first asked whether respondents involved the public directly with the research process and of the 563 respondents, just over 25% said they directly engaged with the public in the research process. Their activities included consultation with community groups and organisations (23), surveys with the public (14), focus groups and workshops (36), experiments (6) and a non-specified 'other' (23).¹⁸

Public engagement training

Following the survey, work began early in 2013 to put Public Engagement training in place for staff. Although training was already provided centrally, this focussed on media training. Plans were formulated with Professional Development and the Graduate School to develop a '*Public Engagement Driving Licence*' to be piloted in January 2014. This was targeted at all staff, including non-academic staff with 'public engagement with research' responsibilities. Initial pilots of 'Public Engagement with Research' training took place with PHD students and early career researchers with five half day sessions encompassing: Best Practice in PE, The PE Concordat, Organising a PE Event, Communicating with Different Publics, Identifying Publics, Entertaining an Audience, Involving the Public in Your Research, Working with Schools. This was delivered in the Spring term of 2014 with the Graduate Schools Science Outreach Programme forming the basis of the pilot programme.

Content of the 'Public Engagement with Research' programme currently includes:

- Facing the journalists: communicating your research through the media
- Interactive storytelling for public engagement (optional)
- Planning for public engagement
- Evaluating public engagement activities
- The enterprising researcher

¹⁸ Report on Staff Public Engagement Survey 2013, Sharon Clancy and Jackie Goode.

- Using social media for public engagement (optional)
- Writing a successful press release

Whilst discussions continued throughout 2013 with the Graduate School, Widening Participation Team and Professional Development, including exploration of on-line delivery, the 'joined up' public engagement programme suggested by the *Driving Licence* concept has not come to fruition within the timescale of the Catalyst project. The main reason given is that the *Driving Licence* was to be aligned with an Institute of Learning and Management (ILM) project management qualification and there have been some delays in the ILM certification of Professional Development. However it is understood that the Driving Licence concept is still in the pipeline and Professional Development and the Graduate School will continue to develop this together as part of the Catalyst legacy of 'public engagement with research' training.

Best Practice in Community Engagement 5/12/2013

This event brought university staff together with staff from Nottingham City and County Councils and a diverse range of community organisations including the Council for Voluntary Services, the police, the Women's Centre, churches, local radio etc. The event was advertised through Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services email newsletter which has a circulation of over 2000. 43 people attended with 17 from a range of university areas including faculties, students union, Access and Communities and the Pro-Vice Chancellor. Flipcharts from the event evidence very useful discussion of issues concerning perceptions of research; barriers to engaging with hard to reach communities and some possible solutions and further ideas for collaboration. It is unclear how they were utilised following the event but they remain as a useful starting point for discussion of these issues.

Community Forum and database

The project compiled a database of 400+ community organisations representing a variety of publics and interest groups.

Areas Covered	Service Types	Publics represented
<p>Nottingham: Arnold, Aspley, Bakersfield, Basford, Beechdale, Beeston, Bestwood, Bilborough, Bobbersmill, Broxtowe, Bulwell, Carlton, Cinderhill, City centre, Clifton, Forest Fields, Gedling, Hucknall, Hyson Green, Keyworth, Kimberley, Lenton, Mapperley, The Meadows, Nuthall, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Radford, Sherwood, Sneinton, Southwell, St Anns, West Bridgford, Wilford, Wollaton</p> <p>Nottinghamshire: Brinsley, Calverton, Coddington, Edwinstowe, Mansfield, Newark, Rainworth, Retford, Shirebrook, Stapleford, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Worksop</p> <p>Other: Belper, Derbyshire Derby, Derbyshire Ilkeston, Derbyshire Lockington, Derbyshire</p>	<p>Advice and counselling Alcohol and drug rehabilitation Art Back to work, life skills Business support Care and support Children & Youth Conservation Education Faith Farmin g Food and catering Gardening and allotments Health & Wellbeing Housing IT Support Mentoring Music Networking, fundraising Personal budgeting Radio station Sports Storytelling Theatre productions</p>	<p>Black and Minority Ethnic groups (many are general), but also specifically; African, African Caribbean, Asian, Asian Women, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Malawian Women and Children, Malayalee, Pakistani, South American, Zimbabwean</p> <p>Adult Learners Carers Children Christian faith Deaf Elderly Ex-offenders Health Conditions Hindu faith Homeless Learning Difficulties LGBT Mental Health Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers Muslim faith Parents and Families Physically Disabled Self-employed Sex Workers</p>

Risley, Derbyshire Leicester, Leicestershire	Training Transport Volunteering	Sikh faith Terminally Ill Veterans Women
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'Of this 400, over 100 have expressed a direct interest in engaging with research at the University. These organisations can provide ready audiences for public engagement purposes, ranging from health-focussed groups, special interest groups, BME groups, disability organisations, migrant interest groups and rural populations.'

The intention was to provide a matching service between researchers and the organisations for public engagement purposes and there was some testing of this approach in the *Nottingham on Tour* programme covered below.

Engaged Engagers Forum 9/1/2014 - *developing an internal community of practice*

This Forum was arranged to bring together pro-active public engagers to share experiences, build networks, explore best practice and support for public engagement.

'We anticipate identifying key public engagement ambassadors through this forum who will act as points of contact in each faculty.'

Direct email invitations were sent to over 150 staff identified through the survey and 43 signed up to attend. Attendees felt the turnout at this event was low, and that this evidenced the low profile public engagement had at the University, *"Look at the numbers of people who are here today – it shows there's obviously a problem in getting people from UoN to engage outside."* However, it compares well with attendances at central training events generally and the presentations and flipcharts produced demonstrate wide-ranging discussions which attendees may have shared with other colleagues. It is not clear whether there was any further follow-up to this event although it signalled a potential start to building an internal community of practice.

In a Fishbowl - *exploring an idea to develop and support online community of practices*

Working with a local digital media company the Project explored an innovative approach to public engagement. This was to trial an online experimental community of practice forum around the theme, firstly, of dementia.

'Utilising a platform called 'In a Fish Bowl' University research staff would have the opportunity to talk about and engage the public in their research as it happens. They can disseminate findings and interact with community groups, organisations or interested individuals. This is a particularly interesting platform for engagement with Carers of dementia patients who are home-based and limited in their ability to attend public events at the University due to caring responsibilities. This platform will integrate social media tools including Twitter, Facebook and Linked In, as well as weekly blogging by the researchers.'

Unfortunately technical issues dogged the pilot and in March 2014 and the developer failed to deliver a product that was easy to use and robust enough. Following several attempts to get the software to

work this aspect of the project was dropped. Most members of the Steering Group expressed the view that a lot of time had been wasted pursuing this but lessons had been learned concerning:

- difficulties connecting innovative technologies to institutional systems.
- technology alone could not be relied upon to nurture discussions between academic researchers and publics, human facilitation was required.
- Working with small enterprises can be risky and at times they are unable to deliver what they promise.

As funds that were designated for this piece of work were re-directed to the development of the MOOC on shale gas supported by the FutureLearn platform and this proved to be a much more effective and robust way of engaging with the public.

Nottingham on Tour

Nottingham on Tour was an experimental project 'to provide new and exciting platforms for public engagement with research.' A study was conducted during summer 2013 examining the feasibility of taking lectures and research 'on tour'. The study identified academics and researchers who were already conducting public engagement activity or would have an interest in becoming involved with the Nottingham on Tour initiative. These individuals were asked to provide brief outlines of what they could deliver. External community groups and organisations were then canvassed as potential hosts and audiences for the proposed 'tour' and this activity contributed to development of the database of community contacts referred to above.

Over 200 academics and researchers expressed interest in becoming involved and 55 confirmed topic titles and short abstracts for use as part of the tour concept. Submissions were received from all five Faculties with most Schools represented. There was an enthusiastic response from the community organisations too with 20 venues offering space, more than half at no cost. Ideas of a tour bus and taking '*Nottingham on Tour*' to community events and festivals were also explored.

'The basis of this experimental project is to increase the level and variety of public engagement with research ...particularly with communities and publics that seldom or never engage with research in Higher Education. In bringing together a multidisciplinary panel of academic and research staff, early career researchers and PhD students the project aims to deliver a series of passionate and engaging talks, public lectures and activities to Nottingham's wider public audiences, as well as providing platforms to encourage researchers and staff opportunities for engagement.'

Feedback from the *On Tour* Steering Group led to allocating a theme to each month of the pilot programme starting in May 2014.¹⁹ However despite the initial enthusiasm, getting firm submissions and commitment proved harder than expected. Getting audiences also proved difficult and some university participants felt there was little practical and/or marketing support for the overall idea or their individual activity.

'It seems not to be possible to use the University website or other corporate vehicles to promote similar activity so it is too buried from external eyes.'

Several also commented that it proved difficult or a hassle to receive reimbursement for monies paid out for associated expenses.

In June 2014 RCUK fed back on the Catalyst end-of-year report noting with interest,

¹⁹ May, The Mind, June, The Body, July, Nottingham Life, Sept, Climate & sustainability, Oct, World War I commemoration.

'the new strand of activity 'Nottingham on Tour' ... though the role of public engagement with research within the 'Tour' was unclear, and we would like to request more information on the aims and activities of the 'Tour'.

At the time of writing it has not been possible to identify all of the events using the 'Nottingham on Tour' banner or the number of attendees, but the sample on the Catalyst section of the University website illustrates a range of community venues.²⁰

Title	Venue
Unwinding Snail Shells	International Community Centre
Schizophrenia research	International Community Centre
Bones and Bodies	Caunton Dean Hole Community Centre
What Does the University of Nottingham Do?	St. Anns, Nottingham
Interactive research demonstrations	Lenton Abbey Fun Day
Interactive research demonstrations	Splendour Festival Wollaton Park
Cave Archaeology	Jacksdale Community Centre
Small-scale Biomass Gasification	Bolsover Assembly Rooms
Our DNA - is it largely just junk?	Sutton Community Academy

These events are largely concerned with raising the profile of research and particularly engaging children and families. Some of the audience might be inspired to seek greater involvement in research activities, particularly in the longer term. However it is difficult to see much distinction between these and some of the aspiration raising activities organised by Widening Participation team and the language used in marketing materials is very similar.

There is an example of one of the events below drawn from interview with the principal organiser,



WHAT DOES THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM DO?

- Nottingham On Tour - 28/6/2014

This event was led by the Patient and Public Involvement Manager in the HIHR Nottingham Hearing Biomedical Research Unit and run in partnership with Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, the NIHR Nottingham Digestive Diseases BioMedical Research Unit and the Nottingham Respiratory Research Unit.

It was conceived as an event in the style of a 'marketplace' showcasing research from the different areas through a series of interactive displays. The public was to be invited to drop in and talk to the research staff. The aims of the event as expressed by the team were to :

- raise awareness of our research activities
- increase knowledge of how research is conducted and how it impacts lives
- provide opportunities for two-way dialogue between researchers and public
- promote the idea of taking part in research as

²⁰ <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ontour/events.aspx>

participants

- encourage members of the public to get involved with the research units in future

The Catalyst staff 'matched' the idea to 'INTOUniversity', a charity based in St. Ann's, an area of multiple disadvantage in the city. The charity offered their premises and to promote the event to the schools and children they worked with. For them it provided another opportunity to raise the aspirations and support their aim of widening participation to HE.

The organisers' feedback on the event was that it was well-received but it was uncertain *'whether the audience suited our requirements, as we mostly carry out research and PPI with those over the age of 18.'* Around 30 people attended, mostly children with their carers who obviously appreciated the opportunity...*'Very good idea, me and my children have enjoyed ourselves and learnt a lot'*, and were interested in careers, *'I think the educational journey from 16+ to researcher should have been outlined'*.

However it does appear that the original aims were subsumed and talking to the teams suggests a number of reasons for this:

- The match was made with a charity concerned with widening participation rather than, perhaps, an organisation interested in health issues.
- The University organisers said that, not having done anything like this before, they had trusted the more experienced charity to know more about marketing, location, timing etc.
- The marketing materials distributed are directed at children and families. Although there was information directed more at adults on the University website this was buried four levels down and it unclear how anyone would know it was there. The organisers reflected that there did not seem to be marketing of 'Nottingham on Tour' or individual activities and they felt they needed greater assistance with this.

Partnership Fund

A key element of the project was a Partnership Fund of £15K/year for three years to enable and support public engagement activity. Grants of up to £500 for internal academic/research staff and external community organisations were allocated by a small panel drawn from the Steering Group, and initially an external community representative. This could be used for:

- pump priming monies for public engagement activities across all Schools/Faculties
- forming partnerships
- expenses for volunteers
- payment for research postgraduates
- materials budget for Schools/PE contacts
- to support organisations to take forward actions resulting from research.

The Fund was advertised internally and externally through the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services. There were 81 applications in all, 57 internal and 24 external. 80% of the internal applications were successful and just under 60% of the external applications. Members of the allocating panel commented that the standard of application was quite poor at the commencement, particularly from external organisations, who did not really know what might be appropriate to apply for. This gave rise to the idea of running some sort of event to help organisations understand how they might engage with the University and what might be appropriate.

Internally, the panel felt that the good response from University staff and the process of making an application was an important training ground for developing Impact Case Studies for REF. Small

amounts of money helped to support test-beds, run pilots and nurture relationships that could prove valuable and productive in the longer term. The point was made that the average gestation time for a sizeable research project is 11-12 years and this Fund provided an opportunity to make a start, test things out and take small risks with minimal prospects of financial or reputational damage.

The 'light-touch' application process for the Partnership Fund was appreciated, '*I knew that there was rigorous scrutiny behind it, but the process itself was admirably hassle-free,*' which encouraged applications from staff and departments with less experience of research applications. As such it provided a good introduction to staff who might then go onto make an application to the Impact Accelerator Accounts to be launched in April.

The funding paid for a range of activities including: hosting exhibitions; archival research; preparing research proposals; oral history interviews; establishing a youth advisory group for a research study; a location media bootcamp for cultural and heritage posts; research dissemination events. Whilst some of those interviewed for the evaluation expressed concern at the extent to which funds were used for public dissemination of research findings rather than active engagement with research, feedback from successful applicants illustrate a range of outcomes including learning *how* to engage with different communities and relationship to REF Impact Case Studies.

'The Nottingham Hearing Biomedical Research Unit organised a research showcase at the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society. The event was modelled on a scientific conference, with researchers presenting research posters and short talks, followed by an opportunity to ask questions. All talks and discussions were facilitated by British Sign Language interpreters. Researchers covered topics such as how research is planned, conducted and disseminated, and also which areas we are researching and the many ways it is possible to get involved with the research process. We didn't know what to expect, or how the event would be received. The activity we planned had not been attempted previously, and to our knowledge, no one has ever tried to engage the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society in such a way. There was a good attendance, the audience was highly engaged and feedback was good. We hope to make the research showcase an annual event.'

'It worked better than we had dared hoped! Extremely successful and worthwhile from our point of view. The process of constructing the model also had a benefit that wasn't intended at the outset: by inviting colleagues from across the School of Biosciences to help us build, we improved community links within the School too.'
Hounsfield Facility, Sutton Bonington Campus.

'The St Anns community is best linked via community radio and you need to cultivate local involvement rather than expect people to respond to social media or internet based publicity. So we learned a lot about trying to reach different communities in the city.'
Arts, American and Canadian Studies lecture series on Martin Luther King

'I would have carried out the work without the support of the Catalyst Fund ...funding it myself. Given the increasing value that the University places on this sort of engagement (forming a key element of an impact case study for REF 2014) providing practical support for this sort of activity through schemes like the Catalyst programme is vital for future engagement strategies.' Archaeology

The following examples illustrate how easily available small sums helped participants to:

- try out new ideas with little risk
- try working with new partners internally and externally
- give academics and researchers practical experience of putting applications together, running projects and discussing their work with different publics

- contribute to development of larger projects and substantial funding bids

A MATTER OF BEAUTY - An exhibition <http://matterofbeauty.wikispaces.com/home>

This was an exhibition organised by a small group of postgraduate students from the School of Physics and Astronomy and Chemistry and an artist, currently a research intern with the Horizon Digital Economy Research Institute at the University of Nottingham. They proposed,



'An alternative and fascinating way of looking at the most important discoveries in Particle Physics and Astronomy, playing with connections, tensions and differences between these disciplines and Visual Arts.'

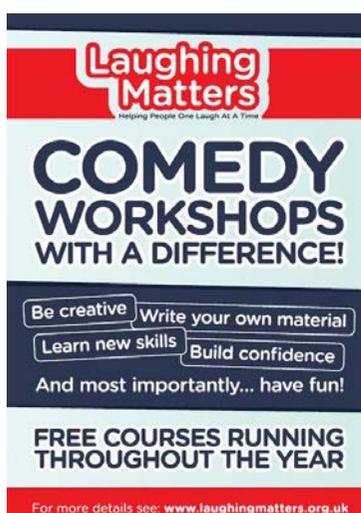
The exhibition was held at a gallery in the centre of Nottingham 15-19th October 2013. Admission was free and accompanied by a diverse range of presentations, outreach talks, dance and music performances in the evening (documents and video can be accessed from the website).

The funding was used for hire of the gallery, promotional materials, printing and framing. A member of the team was present in the gallery throughout the opening hours,

'there was always someone there so that even if a visitor's first impression was of visual images, if they wanted to take that step forward and understand the scientific concepts, someone was there to answer questions.'

Between 20-30 people attended each evening and the organisers estimate that around 50% were known to them and most of the remaining were people already associated with the University. The exhibition had been promoted mainly on the campus through posters and university radio but also through social media, Facebook and Twitter accounts. This was the first time any of them had been involved in organising such an event and they had learnt from the experience. For instance they realised they might have taken feedback from the audience and that they would like some training in outreach, marketing and using the media.

LAUGHING MATTERS - research into impact of comedy workshops

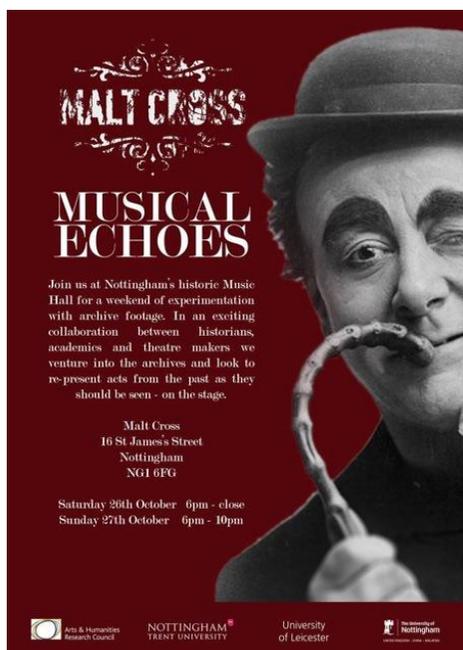


Laughing Matters is a Nottingham-based social enterprise providing free comedy-based workshops aimed at improving participants' confidence, self-expression and communication skills. Participants include those with past addiction problems, mental health issues and young people leaving care. The idea was conceived by two alumni of the University of Nottingham, one of whom is currently undertaking a postgraduate business course. The enterprise had developed links with the Institute of Mental Health in the School of Education and the Social Futures Integrated Research Group.

They applied for funding to support research to help them raise the profile of the enterprise and prove the benefits of attendance to funders such as angel investors, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the local council. Specifically support from the Partnership Fund would fund: a Nottingham University student to carry out research into the impact their courses had on individual service users and the local community, 4 service user engagement events and leaflets providing information about the impact.

Their feedback on the Partnership Fund was extremely positive. The research report had helped them to secure work with Framework, a Nottingham-based homeless and vulnerable people charity and there was a possibility of developing it further with a view to publication in the International Journal of Humour Research.

MALT CROSS - research to enhance visitor engagement



Malt Cross is a Christian charity and cafe bar based in a Victorian music hall in Nottingham city centre. They had successfully secured AHRC funding for a collaborative project with English, History, Computer Science and the Horizon Digital Economy Research Institute at the University of Nottingham. This was to explore uses of digital technology to enhance the visitor experience. They applied for Partnership Funding to work with academic staff and support a student to locate film footage of performers at the music hall in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Projection was used to site the footage in their original context within the building and an event, Musical Echoes, was run bringing the material to life.

Audience feedback has been used to further develop the visitor experience and the Malt Cross CEO strongly believes the project assisted them to secure £1.38m Heritage Lottery funding to renovate the building. In addition the collaborative team were approached to work with the Theatre Royal in Nottingham in a similar way with a view to another substantial Heritage Lottery funding bid and are working with other heritage venues to share their experience. The CEO said, *'Our partnership with the University is ongoing now and we feel able to approach different departments - if we don't know who to*

- we can always phone and ask.'

She stressed it was 'a two-way' partnership with Malt Cross providing volunteer and work experience for students and both her organisation and the University being open to new projects that utilise their complementary strengths and interests. An outcome of our interview was an introduction to the Business Manager in Bio-Sciences to explore a research and design project for a commercial product.

Awards and Rewarding Public Engagement

A Vice-Chancellor's Achievement Awards scheme has been in operation since 2011 and makes reference to, *'activity which has had a noticeably positive impact for students, staff and local community.'*²¹ A number of recipients had been recognised for public engagement and outreach activity so although there was talk, early in the project, of establishing a specific Award for Public Engagement with Research, it was decided there was already sufficient recognition within these Awards.

With the Project's Principal Investigator initially having responsibility for Human Resources and Access and Communities as part of her portfolio as Pro-Vice Chancellor, the project was well-positioned to stimulate change in the Professional Development and Performance Review (PDPR) processes and the Workload Framework Model. Currently the Framework provides for up to 10% of

²¹ <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/registrar/registrars-office/vc-achievement-awards.aspx>

academic time for Citizenship Activities and at Professorial level (Grade 7 and above), the PDPR Guide suggests evidence of demonstrable activity might arise from;

- Research partnerships, knowledge transfer, collaborations and networks
- Public and/or cultural engagement, and/or to policy development in public institutions leading to changes in practice
- Sustained track record of success in knowledge creation and transfer to improve the performance of business, commerce, and/or industry, as illustrated by contract, licence and/or consultancy income.

Two of the Steering Group referred to *Public Engagement with Research* activities as now being formally embedded in Performance Review processes and part of promotions criteria, but it has not been possible to allocate evidence other than that above. Even with formal processes it is probably that stories of recognition will need to travel and become more familiar to staff.

4. WHAT HAS CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THIS ACTIVITY AND WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT?

It's about dialogue,

"You are going to have a thousand different conversations with a thousand different people, and not everything will come to fruition, but the dialogue is so critical. Not everything comes to a project or a tangible outcome. It's being around the table, supporting people. It's about 'what's in it for them, how does it benefit their research and teaching', because that's the core work. You can only do it by talking to them and not by sending out loads of emails and documents and protocols."

Julie Worrall, Project Director UEA Beacon for Public Engagement and Catalyst Mentor/Adviser

The Background (section 1 above) highlighted HE-BCI 2013 survey²² as demonstrating the University is in the top five universities for links with business including SMEs but has fewer partnerships with community and civic actors than other universities.²³ The Catalyst Project therefore chose to take a particularly challenging approach to public engagement with research by prioritising accessing hard-to-reach communities, a point made in interviews by three members of the Steering Group,

We have tried different things but not really tackled the specific audiences in the business plan. It is difficult to navigate and broker relationships between university and community - Nottingham on Tour is an example of this. It has mostly been reliant on personal relationships - enthusiastic champions are needed.

However, as Julie Worrall's comment suggests, achievement in three years against progress project objectives ought perhaps to be assessed in terms of the number and range of conversations it started from a particularly low base.

Some key numbers

621 Public Engagement Survey sent to all staff and completed by 9%.

²² Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey conducted annually <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/kes/measureke/hebci/>

²³ According to the survey only 10% of Nottingham University's staff are involved in activities with community and civic partners, which represents a share in the bottom third of the university table.

150	Staff received direct invitation to share practice at Engaged Engagers event.
200+	Academics and researchers expressed interest in contributing to Nottingham on Tour
400+	Database of community organisations.
43	Community and university participants attended 'Best Practice in Community Engagement'.
81	Applications to the Partnership Fund, 57 internal and 24 external.

Other principal achievements

- Processes are now in place to collect data evidencing engagement with stakeholders including public engagement activity and fed into the algorithm that determines HEIF allocations. This action alone may demonstrate an increase in activity.
- The 'Catalyst Best Practice' project has investigated and brought together learning from the project and that of other organisations and academic research to provide content for future training including a University Moodle.

Lessons learned

General

- There was a need to balance 'inward' and 'outward' looking activities and pay attention to both.
- High level champions are critical. Having the PVC and Director of Research Outcomes on the Steering Group helped to link the project into wider university agendas. Conversely, the loss of the Head of Community Partnerships half-way through caused the project to lose some momentum and direction.
- The project intended to develop a social impact tool for measurement/metrics. This was not achieved, partly because the expertise was lost with the departure of the Head of Community Partnerships but also because the University may have been at too early a stage in developing activities and its own approach to public engagement with research. There are a range of established tools such as NCPPE's Edge Tool²⁴ which may be more appropriate to use together with benchmark comparators with similar institutions.
- Integrating activities with University systems was challenging on different levels. For instance marketing to hard to reach communities is unlikely to be achieved through material on the University's website; paying internal applicants Partnership Funding proved problematic and putting material for internal attention on the University's Workspace was *'a waste of time.'*

1. Accessing hard to reach communities that do not normally engage with HE.

- Different communities and 'publics' need help and guidance to engage effectively with the University. Unsuccessful external applications to the Partnership Fund were largely the result of the authors not knowing how to couch their request in the terms required - and how should they know this? It's not just about training University staff to engage with publics but vice versa.
- Nurturing personal contacts and relationships are extremely important for marketing and developing new audiences for public engagement with research.
- Effective marketing is not just about removing obstacles for 'hard to reach' communities but about developing messages, materials and vehicles that will attract and reach new audiences for research. The University website has not have been designed with these in mind and can be inflexible and predominantly one-way communication of messages. University staff need greater assistance with getting messages across.

²⁴ <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assess-with-edge-tool>

- Providing brokerage between the university and external community organisations is intensive, time consuming work. *Nottingham On Tour* involved a substantial amount of administrative work on the part of the project staff to play matchmaker between university staff and community organisations. Whilst optimistically it may appear to be a simple matching process between university staff and interested organisations with a venue, lots of practical issues including timing, location, advertisement etc have to be resolved.
- Whilst over 200 academics and researchers suggested ideas for 'Nottingham on Tour', many of those that actually took place looked similar to Widening Participation events primarily engaging children and families. As an experiment this raises questions such as was this outcome appropriate? Or expedient? Or the influence of the Catalyst Project being based in the Access and Communities team? Did it work to mix raising aspiration and public engagement with research activities? These might bear further exploration.

2. *Transferring Public Engagement good practice across disciplines to encourage greater academic participation.*

- It's not just academic and research staff involved in public engagement with research activities; administrative and support staff often conduct a large share of the work.
- Activities like the Public Engagement Survey and organising forums for sharing practice are ways of discovering and connecting people across the University. The Project did not need to initiate all activity itself but could support and amplify that undertaken by others (eg. [Call for Participants](#) , a platform developed by Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham to encourage public participation in research studies and [Screens in the Wild](#) a University of Nottingham, UCL collaborative project utilising media screens located in urban spaces.)
- The Project had health users and communities including patient user groups as one of its areas and patient involvement in research is well embedded. This provided an exemplar for other disciplines although it was acknowledged that other subjects might need to be more imaginative to achieve similar levels of involvement.
- The Partnership Fund provided support for different disciplines and areas of the University to work together on projects.

3. *Recognising and rewarding public engagement activity - workload modelling, performance review, events and awards.*

- Enthusiastic internal champions need to be supplied with budget, tools, encouragement and rewards. To nurture both them and less enthusiastic staff there has to be some kind of hook – does it bring in more money, more students, change the perception of the University in the wider community?

4. *Increasing the amount of public engagement activity from programmes of funded research.*

- Something like the Partnership Fund could act as a good training ground for Impact Case Studies for the Research Excellence Framework as they provide an opportunity to initiate and nurture partnerships, take small risks and develop stories.
- Participating in activities like *Nottingham on Tour* and making applications to the Partnership Fund provide staff with practical experience and learning on how to engage publics with research including timing, locations, vehicles, languages etc.

Value for money

The Catalyst Project received £375,000 over three years with just under £300,000 of this from external funding. The evaluator was asked to look specifically at whether this might be considered value for money. When the Steering Group was asked to consider this question, the comparison drawn was to a conventional research project which, with one post-doctoral researcher, might cost £300K over three years. A minimum outcome from such a project might be a research paper that might count towards the REF. To date there have been no research papers produced directly as a result of the Catalyst Project although there are suggestions of several potential papers in the Partnership Fund applications. Had the Head of Community Partnerships remained in post, it is possible that the project might have produced at least one although publication opportunities are limited. However, as has been expressed above and suggested by the Head of Research Outcomes, the project has been a catalyst for a number of activities, partnerships and relationships which may lead to more substantial research outputs over the longer term, remembering that the standard gestation time can be around 12 years. Set against this context the project may prove to be very good value for money indeed.

The evaluation of the Beacon Projects on public engagement warned, *'Don't underestimate the cultural differences between higher education institutions and potential collaborators outside the sector'* and one of the community organisations interviewed expressed their shock when they were told the normal costs of a university research project while attending the Community Forum. It truly did seem *'a different world'* and difficult to reconcile £100K/year against the small amounts available through the Partnership Fund (£500/project) and what those achieved.

Finally, one of the Steering Group considered whether it cost more *'not to do stuff than to do things'*. So, the question might be whether it would cost the University more not to attempt public engagement with research. Given the growing emphasis on evidencing public engagement, making inroads, learning from experience and moving forward might be money well spent.

6. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Keep the conversation going - internally and externally

This project initiated conversations concerning public engagement with research across the institution and with community organisations. The records of those conversations are contained in flipcharts produced by participants at events; in Partnership Fund applications; the surveys and Nottingham on Tour proposals and can be used to continue to shape activities and policy. It is important not to lose the memories of those conversations or the outcomes, such as the database of community contacts, which will very quickly lose its value. Most important is to try to find ways to continue the conversations. Universities can sometimes underestimate the reputational damage that is done when they start talks with potential partners outside the academy only to drop them when funding ceases. Fortunately the personal contacts often continue talking but internal staff need to feel encouraged and supported to do so.

Training new researchers

The project began consideration of a *'Public Engagement Driving Licence'* to complement and 'join-up' training already provided centrally but currently focussed upon media activities. Further consideration is required to identify appropriate forms of training and delivery and it is understood that this work is underway. Hopefully the intelligence referred to above and in this report can help to identify areas that

would be useful to researchers. In addition, virtually all of those interviewed stressed that they learnt most by meeting others from different contexts and disciplines and it seems sensible to connect professional development and bringing people together through something like a community of practice forum perhaps twice a year.

An interesting point made in the interviews was that new young researchers are growing up used to the kind of open forums and conversations supported by social media. It was argued that they are aware of potential scrutiny and challenge from outside the academy and this alone may impact upon institutional culture as these tools are used to inform, engage and hold individual researchers and institutions to account. (Whilst the project's trial of *'In A Fishbowl'* did not work out, it was an attempt to experiment with some of these tools.) RCUK refers to this in their Public Engagement with Research Strategy,²⁵

'we are responsive to the changing relationship between research and society. For example the emerging opportunities provided by the rise of social media, increasing openness through open access, open data and connections to open policy making.'

Any training will need to include equipping new researchers to operate in the context of this changing relationship with the connections between researchers and citizens becoming stronger and more closely entwined. Indeed the opportunity may be that more of the future supply of researchers arises from or becomes involved citizens.

Finally, a strong message from the project is the value of practical experience and experimentation supported by initiatives like the *Partnership Fund* and *Nottingham on Tour*. The point was made also that these sorts of experiences would help academic Schools to properly value and cost public engagement activities for the purposes of REF Impact Case Studies.

Partnership Fund

The Partnership Fund allocated £45K over three years which seems a small amount of money with potential returns on many different levels. The concept of the Fund might be seen as analogous to that many large companies provide to 'skunk works' - groups given a high degree of autonomy and unhampered by internal bureaucracy, to try out new ideas and relationships. It was strongly emphasised that making an application was an important training ground and step towards developing Impact Case Studies for REF.

Public Engagement Office

Throughout the project documentation there are references to establishing a central public engagement office as in some other institutions such as University of Central London. There the Public Engagement Unit helps UCL staff and research students find funding from external organisations for projects that will make groups outside the University more involved in UCL research and teaching. The idea of a central office matching university and community interests lies behind the two-pronged approach to *Nottingham On Tour* and development of the community database. However, just as with a dating agency, the algorithms might suggest a match, but on the meeting, the chemistry may not be there.

There is a tension with a central office with responsibility in that, as much of the project experience shows, it is the strength of personal contacts and shared interests that contribute most to effective public engagement. The potential for shared interests arise from the work conducted by the

²⁵ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/publications/RCUKPERStrategy.pdf>

researchers in the sections, departments and faculties and this argues for public engagement ambassadors closer to the work. It may be that a central role is not about doing the matches but about providing environments that facilitate matches to be made, such as organising forums that bring people together and helping to make research more visible from outside. The Aberdeen Catalyst Project apportioned some of their funding for developing the role of public engagement ambassadors in each faculty and it may be useful to consider the learning from this activity.

Rewards and Promotion

Although Public Engagement with Research may now be acknowledged as part of promotions criteria, like recognition of teaching before it, staff will need to see it actually happening to believe it. This may take some time to feed through and become part of the institutional story.

Defining public engagement with research and *what's in it for the publics?*

Definitions of *public engagement with research* was referred to frequently in conversations between and with project participants. A kind of continuum or ladder of engagement was suggested which moved from profile-raising activities to participation in a research study to *'truly'* engaging publics in helping to design research from day one - defining priorities, helping to produce documents or being co-applicants on research proposals. Perhaps another thing the project has learnt specifically about public engagement with research is that it can encompass all these things and not in a linear fashion. In the end it is about developing and nurturing relationships based on shared interests and this takes time and quite often it is a dose of serendipity that starts it off when future colleagues find themselves sitting together and start to talk.

However different communities do have to have reasons to engage and it is perhaps worth remembering that one of those reasons may be that they want to engage with the University 'as expert'. The value of the activity to a particular '*public*' may lie in a desire to provide robust evidence for a funding application or to turn a business idea into commercial reality and it's important in exploring new and different approaches not to lose sight of what the University does well.

Furthermore there are different ways of funding research emerging. The Guardian reported on 3rd January 2015²⁶ that the public were '*giving millions to pay for science research*' using crowd-funding platforms like *petridish.org* and drawing attention to the lively discussion taking place on its website.²⁷ Dr Didier Schmitt, a scientific adviser to the European Commission, was reported as saying,

'In the case of projects competing for public funding, crowdfunding is a measure of citizen interest and could be used to help decision-makers and experts in their final choice.'

One of the Steering Group pointed out that there are three main reasons the University has largely focussed upon nurturing its successful relations with businesses - to identify sponsors, donors or as a marketing tool. Citizens, community organisations and the 'hard to reach' have not really been considered as strong routes to these but maybe it's an area worth further exploration.

Disseminating, using and building upon best practice

The 'Catalyst Best Practice' project was commissioned in Autumn 2014 to identify best practice from the project, from other organisations and from leading academic research. A number of common themes emerged from interviews with University and community Catalyst participants including:

²⁶ Guardian, Saturday 3 January 2015 p.16

²⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/02/crowdfunded-science-scientists-fund-research>

- the need for, and value of, co-design of research prior to its co-production
- the importance of the Catalyst Partnership Fund in ‘oiling the wheels’ of relationships between the University and the wider community
- University ‘culture’ sometimes militating against effective engagement and “the University appearing more as a collection of buildings rather than a community of academics”.

The project went on to consider practice in Nottingham in comparison with Manchester, through work conducted with the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations. This part of the study identified examples of effective engagement and co-working within and between these three organisations. Examples of cultural and organisational differences between Nottingham and Manchester include:

- establishment of an independent ‘Office for Social Responsibility’ within the University of Manchester
- active development of community partnerships by Manchester Metropolitan University
- development of shared training for academic and non-academic research practitioners

Such approaches incorporated core beliefs that, ‘*healthy, diverse and inclusive communities make a fundamental contribution to people’s quality of life and living conditions*’²⁸ and ‘*people’s experience is intellectual property, has a value and needs to be recognised as such*’. The Best Practice project concluded that these notions could be imported from the Manchester ‘model’ into the University of Nottingham, but that whilst case study content and pilot training etc. could be a legacy from the Catalyst project, cultural change would only be achieved by positive messages and actions ‘from the top’ of the organisation.

At the time of writing the Best Practice project has not yet reached completion and its findings are being tested through a survey of over 500 practitioners across the UK. However key issues to address in developing a culture of best practice are emerging as:

- **effective communication** between university and the community
- **ease of access** to the community by the university and vice versa
- enabling **co-design and co-production** of research projects by both the university and the community
- understanding of **university processes** by the community; understanding of **community priorities** by the university
- **engagement of students** in co-production, particularly in the communities in which they live as student
- being **in the community and of the community** – where issues of the community become the issues of the university.

These and other issues are being underpinned by case studies and academic research within, and external to, the University of Nottingham to provide core elements of (video-based) best practice guidance content for the University ‘Moodle’ and a pilot training session.

Conclusion

The overall tone picked up from talking to members of the Steering Group in the penultimate quarter of this project was a little downbeat. There was a feeling that some momentum had been lost half way through as senior staff left or changed roles. But from an outside view, it does look as though

²⁸ ARVAC - Association of Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector

despite these difficulties, a range of activities, experiments and conversations were initiated that can be built upon to continue to shape and increase public engagement with research.

Three particular issues seemed to be emerging that may be important for future conversations:

1. The contribution public engagement might make to securing research funding initially and to developing the Impact Case Studies that account for 20% of scores under the REF. There were mixed views, with some people suggesting this provided some urgency to engage with different publics and others suggesting that, given the difficulties evidencing and measuring impact, it is expedient to focus upon traditional engagement with industry. This is obviously a strategic issue and already raised as part of University planning,

*' While continuing to strengthen and build our engagement with business and industry, we also need to expand into a broader portfolio of external partnerships. External collaborations with a range of sectors (public, private, voluntary) will be key to future success.'*²⁹

Further discussion might continue development of social impact measures and explore the significance of alternative forms of funding research such as crowd-funding.

2. How the University and surrounding communities work together to tackle important social issues. Several people mentioned the founder, Jesse Boot, and the founding principles,

*'In each succeeding age (the University) will spread the light of learning and knowledge and will bind science and industry in the unity that is so essential for the prosperity of the nation and the welfare of our fellow citizens.'*³⁰

This raised issues concerning the contribution the University makes to the well-being and prosperity of their neighbours and the training and development of researchers as engaged citizens in the communities they live in. These issues are particularly echoed in the work of the Catalyst Best Practice project and activities in Manchester. Possibly the ideas of universities as anchor institutions in local economies; devolution and local democracy suggest further reasons for collaboration.

3. Finally the links between research, attraction of students and furtherance of high quality teaching are often debated. Several interviewees highlighted evidence that an increasing proportion of young people are becoming involved in activities that contribute to social change (the success of Teach First was cited as an example) and might regard a university actively pursuing public engagement with research as offering an experience closely aligned with their own values.

²⁹ University of Nottingham Global Strategy 2020

³⁰ Sir Jesse Boot 2nd June 1928 cited in University of Nottingham Global Strategy 2020