



**University of Brighton**

# **IGNITE: ONE PROGRAMME, A WEALTH OF INSPIRING STORIES**

**Finding and fostering  
community–university partnerships**

**University of Brighton UKRI report**



# CONTENTS

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Summary                              | 4  |
| <b>CHAPTER 1 IGNITE: BACKGROUND</b>  | 5  |
| Q1. Context                          | 6  |
| Q2. Overall approach                 | 7  |
| Q3. SEE-PER 1 synopsis               | 8  |
| <b>CHAPTER 2 IGNITE: DEVELOPMENT</b> | 9  |
| Q4. Introduction                     | 10 |
| 4.1 From SEE-PER 1 to 2              | 10 |
| 4.2 Aims and Objectives              | 10 |
| 4.3 Principles                       | 10 |
| 4.4 Practices                        | 11 |
| Q5. Project inputs                   | 12 |
| 5.1 Role of resources                | 12 |
| 5.2 Learning                         | 13 |
| Q6. Assumptions and context          | 14 |
| 6.1 Starting out                     | 14 |
| 6.2 Evolving                         | 15 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>CHAPTER 3 IGNITE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE</b>                                 | 16 |
| <b>Q7. Activities and Outputs</b>  | 17 |
| 7.1 Ignite programme   | 17 |
| 7.2 Programme development  | 18 |
| <b>Q8. Outcomes and Impact</b>   | 20 |
| 8.1 Engagement and impacts   | 20 |
| 8.2 Dissemination  | 21 |
| 8.3 Social learning  | 21 |
| 8.4 Theoretical contribution and conceptual impacts                          | 22 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 IGNITE: PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES</b>                            | 23 |
| Ignite! Worthing - improving the wellbeing of children                       | 24 |
| Microplastics and Chichester Harbour   | 26 |
| Making the arts more accessible  | 28 |
| Our City - Community solutions to the housing crisis                         | 30 |
| Moulsecoomb and Bevendean - Our voice  | 32 |
| Clothes on our back - diversifying the curriculum                            | 34 |
| Loneliness and the Living Lab  | 36 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>CHAPTER 5 IGNITE: BACK TO THE FUTURE</b>                                  | 38 |
| <b>Q9. Sustainability</b>  | 39 |
| 9.1 Institutional  | 39 |
| 9.2 Sectoral   | 40 |
| <b>Q10. Final thoughts</b>   | 42 |
| <b>Q11. Senior leadership reflections</b>                                    | 44 |
| <b>Q12. Talking points</b>   | 45 |
| Culture change: Enabling and respecting multiple forms of knowledge exchange | 45 |
| Challenges: Supporting co-production to challenge power                      | 45 |
| Successes: Widening partnership involvement                                  | 46 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>13. Appendix - SEE-PER 1</b>  | 47 |
| 13.1 Context   | 47 |
| 13.2 Our SEE-PER 1 challenge   | 47 |
| 13.3 Our activities  | 48 |
| 13.4 Our findings  | 49 |
| 13.5 Integrated value model  | 50 |
| 13.6 Suggested criteria  | 50 |
| 13.7 Learning from the project   | 50 |

# IGNITE SUMMARY

**Community-university partnerships make a difference. They enrich teaching and can offer innovative ways of engaging communities with research but, just as importantly, can give tangible benefits for local people. We know because at the University of Brighton we have run a longstanding research programme to create new knowledge on how to undertake co-produced projects of reciprocal benefit to communities and universities. We have used this knowledge to develop Ignite – an innovative project for developing new community-university partnerships in just 12 months. Funded by UK Research and Innovation, Ignite consists of an incubator model for finding and fostering new partnerships including seed funding. Additionally, it has a framework for supporting research and community partners in their first year of working together, including those new to co-production.**

Commencing in October 2018, the Ignite project has resulted in seven new partnerships with outcomes that far exceeded expectations. One found glass

microfibre pollution in oysters – the first in the world to discover this – and is working collaboratively to understand the community implications and work towards solutions. Another, used a novel methodology to train local people as participatory researchers who went on to co-produce a study on the arts and wellbeing in an area with high deprivation. They are now being used as a best practice case study by the local authority and are in talks with a housing developer about building a local arts centre; this was as a direct result of the co-produced research undertaken during the first few months of the new partnership. A third partnership mobilised key stakeholders to identify what can be done to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. In their coastal town, self harm amongst children and young people is higher than the national average. This has resulted in parents coming together with a range of professionals including teachers, GPs, NHS commissioners as well as politicians to find community solutions.

**Ignite – one programme, a wealth of inspiring stories**

## UKRI STRATEGIC SUPPORT TO EXPEDITE EMBEDDING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH – SEE-PER

The SEE-PER call sought to help enrich and embed cultures within HEIs where excellent public engagement with research (PER) is supported, valued, rewarded and integrated within institutional policies and practices. The first year of this programme ran from October 2017 to October 2018. Two types of approach were funded:

‘Embedding change’ proposals that sought to enhance and embed an institution’s approach to supporting PER, building on the learning from the Beacons for Public Engagement, RCUK PER Catalyst and Catalyst Seed Fund programmes:

- Birkbeck College, University of London, led by Professor Miriam Zukas
- Heriot-Watt University, led by Professor Gareth Pender
- Keele University, led by Professor David Amigoni
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, led by Professor Dame Anne Mills
- NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, led by Dr Nick Wells
- University of Lincoln, led by Professor Carena Lewis
- University of St Andrews, led by Professor John Woollins

‘Challenge’ proposals which addressed a specific challenge in supporting PER effectively, and which expanded the existing knowledge base about ‘what works’ in effectively supporting PER:

- University of Brighton: developing an incubator model for creating and sustaining community-university partnerships, led by Professor Tara Dean

- University College London: exploring how to make PER fundamental to the university’s efforts to address global societal issues through cross-disciplinary research, led by Professor David Price
- University of Bath: examining the challenges associated with training and professional development for public engagement, led by Professor Jonathan Knight
- University of Southampton: tackling barriers to professional development in PER and developing a robust educational framework for such activity, led by Professor Simon Spearing
- STFC - Laboratories: investigating the take up and provision of PER training, led by Dr Neil Geddes

In May 2018, the SEE-PER projects were given the opportunity to apply for a second year of funding to embed and expand upon work done in the first phase. Ten of the twelve projects received funding to extend for a further 12 months, and the programme concluded at the end of 2019.

UKRI appointed the NCCPE to co-ordinate this work, ensuring learning was shared across the projects, and that evaluation was used strategically to inform and assess the value of the SEE-PER initiative.

Further learning from the SEE-PER initiative can be found in the ‘Support Engagement’ section of the NCCPE website.

## CHAPTER 1

# IGNITE: BACKGROUND

*"CUPP's Ignite is an outstanding example of how we think learning has to happen in the twenty-first century. Where people come together, engage their uncertainty with each other, pay attention to what each other are saying and develop new ways of doing things together...It's challenging the traditionally accepted view that knowing is held by the university and applying is held by the community... [Instead in Ignite] we are all applying, learning and researching together. That's the essence of what I have been working on for the last thirty years."*

Etienne Wenger-Trayner - internationally renowned social theorist and co-founder of 'communities of practice'

# Q1.

## CONTEXT

**The University of Brighton has a long history of working in the arena of Public Engagement with Research (PER) and community-university partnerships. Its Community-University Partnership Programme (CUPP) was formed over 15 years ago. Partnerships are one of four core values as set out in the University of Brighton's strategy 'Practical Wisdom'. The University's Research and Enterprise Strategic Plan, led by Professor Dean, states: "Through partnerships, we engage in the co-production of research and enterprise that addresses strategically important questions, has the potential to generate impact and is of value to society".**

The University of Brighton's distinct approach to community-university engagement aims to mobilise and combine university and community knowledge and experience to build sustainable communities and address social inequality. It provides a range of tangible benefits to our local community partners at the same time as benefiting the university by adding richness to existing teaching and impact to our research programmes. For further information see (<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/business-services/community-partnerships/materials-and-resources/index.aspx>). In addition to the recent UKRI funding, the research work of CUPP has been funded by many different sources over the years including AHRC, ESRC, and the international Talloires Network.

CUPP has won many prestigious awards for its work including from the Times Higher Education, MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship and the University Association for Lifelong Learning Award. CUPP has also generated influential publications including the book *Community-University Partnerships in Practice* (2014). Since 2016, the world leading social theorist Professor Etienne Wenger-Trayner has been working with CUPP at the University of Brighton producing his new groundbreaking book on social learning spaces. Cambridge University Press will publish this in 2020.

Critically, the work of CUPP has been underpinned by co-production with community partners. Together we have explored different ways of working, how communities of practice can support our collaborations and the need to find suitable research methods. This body of work has resulted in significant contributions to knowledge – both theoretical and empirical – that has attracted international interest in how we co-produce research of reciprocal benefit to communities and universities. The Strategic Support to Expedite Embedding Public Engagement with Research (SEE-PER) funding has been vital in enabling CUPP to continue to innovate by exploring new models to enhance public engagement with research. It also has been a highly valuable opportunity to work in depth with UKRI and the NCCPE, as well as with other universities who were part of SEE-PER. The SEE-PER programme is also important for CUPP in continuing to share our knowledge both nationally and internationally.

# Q2.

## OVERALL APPROACH

- The SEE-PER 1 work (Appendix A) identified seven thriving community-university partnerships, reflected on what made them successful, and identified training and support that could further strengthen them.
- This work identified an important gap: the need for an incubator model that could support finding and fostering new community-university partnerships for quality public engagement with research (PER).
- Critically, this incubator model had to be sensitive to the current resources constraints of universities for public engagement and partnership work but just as importantly, the limited time and funds that communities have to devote to such work.
- The SEE-PER 2 programme enabled CUPP and community partners to collaborate to pilot Ignite – a 12-month incubator model for partnership formation with a focus on tackling social justice and sustainable communities.
- While Ignite draws on the University of Brighton’s extensive experience of developing community-university partnerships, it is the first time it has run such a programme. As CUPP and the community partners treated Ignite as a research project, the programme has generated a set of rich data and knowledge.
- CUPP will share this knowledge with other research institutions not only through workshops, such as at the recent Engage Conference, but also through an interactive online guide co-produced with community partners that will include case studies, films and a systematic account of how to run the programme.

This report includes quotes from transcripts of the interviews undertaken and self-evaluation forms completed by all seven Ignite partnerships. As they are not from individual people but the partnerships, we have not included names. Where this report uses ‘we’, it is referring to CUPP at the University of Brighton.



# Q3.

## SEE-PER 1 SYNOPSIS

**Our challenge was to explore how we could support mature community university partnerships by developing a long-term platform for Public Engagement with Research. Whilst there are a myriad of ways to keep good work going, due to limited resources, these are not always clearly articulated and supported.**

Community partners are facing multiple pressures - not least the challenge of finding funding to keep them afloat against a backdrop of increasing demands and funding cuts. Finding time to undertake work beyond core roles is increasingly difficult. Meanwhile, academics are facing changes to the higher education policy landscape and the challenge of finding time for PER whilst producing high quality teaching and research. Different contexts, but both are resulting in pressures on community-university partnerships and how to maintain them in a changing environment. In order to explore how mature community-university partnerships could develop a long-term platform for Public Engagement with Research, we co-produced a range of activities and:

- Updated the map of University of Brighton community-university partnerships
- Produced a typology of established community-university partnerships



- Explored an integrated value model for community-university partnerships
- Ran a support programme for established partnerships.

Further details of SEE-PER 1, including our findings and learning from this project, are in Appendix A.



## CHAPTER 2

# IGNITE: DEVELOPMENT

*"The partnership of an academic researcher, community partner and local people carrying out research was absolute gold dust when it came to presenting these findings to stakeholders. We are also now talking to a developer about the possibility of a dedicated arts space in our local community and how our work can inform the city-wide arts strategy."*

Ignite Partnership - Making the Arts more Accessible

# Q4.

## INTRODUCTION

### 4.1 FROM SEE-PER 1 TO 2

The SEE-PER 1 project was critical for us on many levels. Firstly, it facilitated the leadership input of our Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and ensured SEE-PER 2 was closely linked to institutional aims and strategic goals for partnerships and impact. In particular, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) ensured alignment with the Research and Enterprise Strategic Plan 2017-2021 that includes stated objectives focusing on social partnerships, working with communities and public engagement. Secondly, it enabled the PVC to quickly understand the issues arising from the project and articulate these to other senior leaders at the University. Thirdly, SEE-PER 1 highlighted the need not only for a support programme for established partnerships, but also the need for an incubator model to ensure new partnerships are being created. Finally, it provided much needed resources; we would not have been able to undertake this work without the research council funds.

Even with the University of Brighton's considerable experience of community-university partnerships, without concerted attention we are very aware that new ones will not emerge to provide the pipeline for the future. The additional SEE-PER 2 funding enabled us to build on the first project to create a new incubator model for finding and fostering community-university partnerships. The successful follow on SEE-PER bid also resulted in the recruitment of a permanent Development Manager for CUPP to design, develop and deliver the Ignite programme and produce online materials for sharing knowledge with the wider PER sector.

### 4.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the University of Brighton's SEE-PER 2 project was closely aligned to the SEE-PER call. The project focused on partnership formation as a platform for delivering quality PER and the creation of a guide for research institutions. Given this, our key objectives devised with our community partners were to:

- Produce a model for finding and fostering community-university partnerships over 12 months.

- Use this model as a platform for developing quality PER.
- Pilot this model at the University of Brighton across a year.
- Collect evidence from the pilot using different research methods.
- Turn the data into a guide that can inspire and inform other research institutions about finding and fostering new community-university partnerships.
- Communicate the process in a way that is engaging and accessible both to individual partnerships but also to the wider sector.

### 4.3 PRINCIPLES

To deliver the aims and objectives we developed a set of principles. These were based on our experience at CUPP of delivering community-university partnerships, as well as reflecting the aims of the SEE-PER call and experience and learning of our year 1 project. These principles are:

- Setting up an Ignite Advisory Group made up of community organisations as well as those from the university, including a PhD student.
- Opening out the Ignite programme to as many academics and community organisations as possible by running an open competition.
- Offering, where needed, to try and match community organisations with researchers.
- Giving advice to potential applicants where appropriate, eg. discussing proposed partnership or reading draft proposals.
- Ensuring advice was given by the Development Manager, who was not part of the Advisory Group that selected the seven Ignite partnerships. The Development Manager could thus act as a critical friend.
- Making seed funding available to enable the partnerships to carry out some initial co-produced activities.

- Enabling community partners to take part by paying for some of their time from the seed funding. In our experience at CUPP, this is a key principle of developing a community-university partnership and is increasingly important as organisations face funding issues.
- Using researchers' research and scholarly time on the Ignite programme to maximise the seed funding for developing the partnership. This was only possible as the projects were highly focused and taking place over a matter of weeks.
- Encouraging knowledge exchange both between the partners and across the Ignite programme by establishing three open learning spaces over a six-month period.
- Finding ways to easily communicate this programme both for the individual partners but also more widely within Higher Education eg. developing a simple four-stage process, producing a set of films and an online guide.

## 4.4 PRACTICES

### Starting out

The initial period of developing the incubator model was very tight; we only had a few weeks to develop a structure given the need to spend the UKRI funds in just six months. However, as highlighted before, this was possible as we were able to evolve a set of aims and objectives that drew on our learning and experience.

Firstly, we started out by establishing an Ignite Advisory Group of University researchers and community partners that included representatives from the Trust for Developing Communities, Bevendean Cooperative Pub and Community Works. It was possible to do this in weeks not months, as it was based on a steering committee for SEE-PER 1 and we simply had to in-fill people who were not free to continue. This group was also chaired by the Principal Investigator (PI) for the SEE-PER research programme – Professor Tara Dean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). This group played an important role by helping us clarify our understanding of the aims and objectives for SEE-PER 2.

Secondly, we wanted to give a name and strapline to the project that was meaningful for its primary target audience – public engagement practitioners in Higher Education – and captured the aim of the programme. With input from the Advisory Group, we settled on: Ignite – fostering community-university partnerships.

Thirdly, we used all our available resources to launch an open call for the Ignite programme; this included launching it through different internal channels as well as using our external community networks.

Fourthly, we took our principles and produced a four-stage Ignite programme. During delivery, the aims and objectives of the stages have further evolved in cooperation with our community partners. Initially, stage 3 was 'Establishing' which would have drawn on the development programme we developed for SEE-PER 1. However, given how new the partnerships were (some had only met each other weeks before) the development stage was in fact premature. Instead we replaced it with 'Evaluating', given the importance of gathering evidence as to what worked and what did not for both the partnerships themselves, as well as for other research institutions through the Ignite Guide.

Given this, we have specified the following four stages based on our experience:

### Stage 1 Exploring

This stage is focused on exploring the potential for a partnership and whether it could yield mutual benefits for community partners and researchers. It is focused on an open competition whereby researchers and community partners co-produce a proposal. Advice is offered by the Development Manager along with exploring potential matches for community organisations looking for researchers. The submitted proposals were then considered and voted on by the Ignite Advisory Group. In this pilot programme – seven partnerships were invited to take part in Ignite.

### Stage 2 Experimenting

This stage allows partners to experiment with their partnership, drawing on their £4000 seed money and in-kind contributions over a six-month period. In the Ignite pilot, this co-delivery of activities took place over a six-month period. Where needed, the seed money also provided funding for the time of the community partner. Over this period, CUPP was also available to discuss activities and advise where needed.

### Stage 3 Exchanging

Given the importance of knowledge exchange to the first SEE-PER project, we wanted to ensure that this was also embedded in the Ignite programme. This took the form of three 'social learning spaces' which were an opportunity for the partners to share their knowledge with each other. Each learning space was facilitated by CUPP. There are also various knowledge exchange outputs from films to articles, which will feature in the online Ignite Guide to be published in the second half of 2020.

### Stage 4 Evaluating

Evaluation was embedded into the Ignite programme. It also took various forms from research observations of the social learning spaces to self-evaluation forms. This data offers insights for the individual partnerships but also for sharing the learning with other research institutes.

# Q5.

## PROJECT INPUTS

### 5.1 ROLE OF RESOURCES

- The funding from SEE-PER, as well as the prestige of being supported by UKRI and NCCPE, has been vital for developing an incubator model to find and foster community-university partnerships.
- This funding has worked hand in hand with the University of Brighton’s commitment to the programme. It employed a permanent member of staff to devise, develop and deliver the programme.
- The support of Professor Tara Dean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) has been vital. She has played an active role in steering and shaping the Ignite programme. She has also been instrumental in ensuring the programme has a presence amongst senior colleagues at the University.
- Being able to call on a number of leading academics has also been vital in helping CUPP to develop a theoretical basis for Ignite, as well as informing practice in particular:
  - Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Professorial Fellow, who is an internationally renowned social theorist and consultant, and co-founder of the concept of communities of practice. With CUPP, he helped to develop and facilitate three social learning spaces for the partners.
  - Phil Haynes, Professor of Public Policy and a leading scholar in complex systems, has provided academic oversight of the project. Additionally, he captured data in the three social learning spaces as a participant observer, as well as helping to develop and facilitate the three social learning spaces.
- We have also been able to draw on Professor Andrew Church, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), who has been actively involved with CUPP over many years.
- Equally important has been the ability to call on our community colleagues in developing the practice of the Ignite programme as well as informing the theory. This co-production

was provided by the Ignite Advisory Board that included three leading community organisations, in addition to academic colleagues.

- The seven Ignite partnerships were also an invaluable resource in developing the incubator model through their experience of the programme over 12 months. We have captured their insights through the social learning spaces, interviews and a self-evaluation form that offered them the opportunity to reflect on their experiences.
- We have been fortunate that academics have been able to support the programme as part of their research and scholarly time. However, it was vital that we could offer our community colleagues some funding towards the time they need to co-produce and co-deliver their Ignite partnerships with the researchers.
- Funding has enabled some of our longstanding community partners to be involved in the Advisory Group and to help co-produce the Ignite programme, including the selection of the seven partnerships. This was vital to the successful development of the programme.

### 5.2 LEARNING

Devising, developing and delivering the Ignite programme has been resource intensive, in effect it needed a full-time person for the last year.

However, because the UKRI funding supported us in developing the incubator model and the University of Brighton is now giving CUPP time to develop an online guide, the programme should require less resources in the future. We will have produced a blueprint that not only we can follow but any other research institution can also benefit from. This is not to say that the programme will require minimal resources. As highlighted previously, several elements requiring a range of resources were key to the success of the programme. In particular, seed funding to support the partnerships as well as resources to run the programme including an Advisory Group and a series of social learning spaces.



While the programme needs financial and time commitment from the higher education institution, the evidence we have gathered has highlighted that this will be rewarded amply by the new partnerships that have been formed, the activities they have taken so far and the range of mutual benefits to communities and the university.

Other learning insights include:

- The seed funding encouraged a high quality of applicants that resulted in strong mutually beneficial partnerships and a range of projects - a number of which were innovative.
- The Ignite funding enabled a number of new community partners to become actively involved in developing partnerships with the University. This would not have been possible without the funding.
- Prior knowledge and working closely with community partners has informed all the work so far. This is the 16th anniversary year of CUPP and this experience has provided invaluable in terms of running this innovative programme and producing the online Ignite Guide.
- We have valued the input of SEE-PER colleagues, for example, the paired telephone calls facilitated by NCCPE. We were particularly delighted that Paul Manners and Sophie Duncan attended our first Ignite event. Sophie also helped our thoughts in developing an Ignite Guide by participating in a meeting chaired by Professor Dean.

# Q6.

## ASSUMPTIONS AND CONTEXT



### 6.1 STARTING OUT

Many of the assumptions we had at the start of the Ignite programme were founded on years of experience in developing community-partnerships, as well as the more recent knowledge gained from SEE-PER 1. These assumptions included:

- Community partner involvement in all stages of the project is essential, including preparing future funding bids.
- The university is a complex system.
- Community-university partnerships can add considerable value. This is particularly across four 'domains of value': research; teaching; knowledge exchange and social.
- Time is constrained for academics - it can be hard to find time for community partnership work with a busy teaching schedule and research commitments.
- Time is also constrained for community partners. They can often only take part in partnership activities if there are funds to contribute toward their time.
- When given the opportunity and support, many academics and community partners value highly community-university work and see it as offering many benefits.
- While we have many experienced community-university researchers, we also need to be mindful of continuing to encourage academics new to this area of work.

- Given the increasing demands on researchers and community organisations, partnerships can be harder to navigate.
- A programme for finding and fostering community-university partnerships needs to be underpinned by co-production and knowledge exchange in order to bring about mutual benefits
- The programme offers the potential to strengthen relationships between the individual partners, but also with CUPP as a central university service.
- We set out with an assumption that resources are tight for community partners but our experience of running Ignite is that it is even harder than we predicted. To ensure genuine co-production it was vital that seed funding was available to offset some of the considerable time that the community partners gave to the project. Many of the partnerships were only established because seed funding was available.
- In addition, it was important to appreciate that a 'community partner' comes in all sizes and shapes. Some were long-established organisations, others much smaller operations – some of the partners were employed, others were volunteers. Given the different contexts, it is important that the partners have space to discuss the sustainability of the partnership and the implications of this going forward for time and money.

## 6.2 EVOLVING

- What we learnt from the Ignite project is that while universities are complex in their work processes, the individuals involved in the new partnerships were more focused on building their relationships in this early stage, rather than being concerned about the wider institution.
- Initially we assumed we would run a community of practice focused on partnership working across six months of the programme facilitated by the co-founder of the concept Etienne Wenger-Trayner. However, what evolved was something different to this. Given how busy all the partners were, there was no indication that a community of practice would develop a life of its own outside of the Ignite events. Instead, the sessions evolved into a 'social learning space' a more fluid, less rule-bound concept also developed by Etienne Wenger-Trayner and the focus of a new book in 2020.
- However, as we were fortunate to have Etienne's support on this project he also used the sessions to share some of the ideas behind a community of a practice and two of the partnerships went on to form their own (Worthing and Hangleton & Knoll). Going forward, we would start with creating a social learning space rather than a community of practice as this seems more appropriate to this early stage of fostering partnerships. In our experience, many partnerships say they will establish a community of practice but find that they can be time consuming. Starting with developing social learning spaces is an alternative approach and these can develop into communities of practice in future when appropriate. The partners recognised the need for a space to share learning as important but discovered that finding the time to devote to this was challenging, given competing demands. To reflect this, we reduced the hours of the social learning space.
- The project was specifically designed to fit the institutional context of the University as it was based in CUPP and aligned with the Research and Enterprise Strategic Plan and led by the PVC (Research and Enterprise). The community partners on the Steering group were all involved as the project related to their institutions' priorities.

## CHAPTER 3

# IGNITE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*"From the start, the project has aimed to co-develop research on plastic pollution, to better understand community needs, perceptions and requirements; Ignite ...enabled us to hold a very much more ambitious symposium, which helped in drawing in significant academic figures, regulators, businesses and influencers ...It also raised the visibility and profile of the issue, linked people and underpins future funding bids."*

Chichester Harbour and Microplastics Ignite Partnership

# Q7.

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

**Enabling public engagement with research was the backbone to the Ignite project. The activities and outcomes of the seven Ignite partnerships demonstrate this. Given the importance of the partnerships, we have dedicated Chapter 4 to highlighting the key activities and outputs, plus outcomes and impact of the seven partnerships.**

In order to generate activities and outputs to embed public engagement with research, we devised a four-stage approach to finding and fostering community-university partnerships as briefly highlighted in Chapter 2. As indicated previously, these stages were not set in stone. Ignite was devised as a pilot incubator model to see if it is possible to produce a set of partnerships that can deliver public engagement with research in a short space of time. As the year progressed and we worked closely with the Advisory Group and the seven partnerships, so the four stages evolved. Below we summarise some of the key changes and comments from our partners:

### 7.1 IGNITE PROGRAMME

#### Starting out

**“The partnership was formed through the Ignite call and would not have existed without it. This (connected the researcher and the community partner) for the first time, enabling us to develop our existing work/goals collaboratively to mutual benefit.”**

- Established a community-university Ignite Advisory Group.
- Launched an open call for the Ignite programme through internal and external communication channels.

#### Stage 1 Exploring

**“The opportunity to be able to embark on a project through CUPP Ignite funding meant that our partnership was formalised and made real with very tangible aims and outcomes to achieve. In all honesty, this project would never have happened without Ignite...”**

- Ran an open competition to select new partnerships.

- Matched and brokered partners for new community-university partnerships.
- Offered advice to partners to co-produce proposals for Ignite.
- Supported the Advisory Group in their selection of seven partnerships.

#### Stage 2 Experimenting

**“The seed funding helped us to experimentally develop the community research pilot. This would not have been possible otherwise; we were able to fully engage the (community) researchers in developing the project with the partnership. We were also able to offer them compensation for their time. The funding provided a focus for the project that we would have been unable to create without it.”**

- Administrated the seed funding.
- Met with all the partnerships to discuss activities.
- Mentored individual partnerships or partners where needed.

#### Stage 3 Exchanging

**“The workshops CUPP offered gave time and space to share best practice and think through challenges with our project. (The film) ...has also provided us with crucial dissemination and promotional resources.”**

- Knowledge sharing within the partnerships using face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, emails and group meetings.
- Knowledge sharing between the partnerships through holding three social learning spaces – facilitated by Professor Etienne-Wenger, Professor Phil Haynes, David Wolff and Dr Nicolette Fox.
- Produced an Ignite YouTube film for five of the partnerships. In two cases this medium was not appropriate due to the sensitivity of the issues being tackled – namely loneliness and mental health of primary school children.

- We will be producing case studies/articles on each partnership for the Ignite partners. We are also producing an online Ignite Guide. This will offer step-by-step guidance to producing a 12-month programme to find and foster community-university partnerships. It will include inspiring stories of change from the partnerships in the form of video clips, films, and case studies.

#### Stage 4 Evaluating

**“The Ignite events enabled us to learn from the best practice of others and to mobilise the communities of practice concept in connection with our research. Ignite also enabled us to better document the project and communicate our learning to others, eg. through the project video.”**

Evaluation was embedded into the Ignite programme from the start this included:

**Social learning spaces.** Professor Phil Haynes was a participant observer. Based on his notes from the events, he analysed data, and subsequently fed this back to the group to check his observations.

Ignite films. While these were primarily developed as a communication tool, they also offered a summative evaluation as they involved checking in with various partners over a six-month period through a series of interviews. On top of this, the production of the rough edits of the films offered another way of checking our understanding with the partners. The partners had an opportunity to feedback their thoughts on the films before final edits. All the partnerships were pleased with the end product.

**Self-evaluation forms.** These were filled out by the partnerships two months after the end of the Ignite programme to give some space for reflection. The quotes included in this report are taken from these forms.

**Interviews.** We were planning to conduct follow-up interviews after the end of the programme. However, given the rich data we have collected over the course of the programme, and the detail provided in the self-evaluation reports, we did not think we would gain any further insights. Given how busy the Ignite partners are, we have decided not to pursue these additional interviews.

## 7.2 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The four-stage approach of Ignite was central to embedding our public engagement with research activities through a set of successful partnerships. Critically, we adapted the stages as the programme evolved, reflecting input from the Advisory Group, partnerships and ourselves at CUPP.

In **Stage 1**, we found that most academics who contacted us during the open competition had community contacts. Also, this was often true of the community organisations that contacted us, but not always. As CUPP no longer has a Help Desk, we needed to find a new matching and brokering system for Ignite. We developed a two-tier system. Firstly, we used our own knowledge of community organisations and academic researchers to see if, in the first instance, we could explore a potential match for people who had contacted us looking for a partner. Secondly, where we did not have knowledge of a suitable academic partner, we approached the relevant heads of schools for their suggestions. This combined approach was a successful and a time efficient way of finding out whether there was a suitable match for developing a community-university partnership. Out of the seven Ignite partnerships, three were found in this way; they had never met each other before the introduction from CUPP. Equally successful was the offer of advice to potential Ignite partners including help with preparing their proposal. We ended up with a high calibre of applicants.

As highlighted before, we initially thought that **Stage 2** – experimenting with the partnership – would be followed swiftly by Stage 3 – establishing the partnership. In the end, the experimentation phase took over. The partnerships put more time and resources into this phase than we expected. For example, the Marking the Arts More Accessible partnership originally planned to just train local people as participatory arts researchers. In the end, having completed the training the residents were also keen to carry out their own research project. Also, having completed the programme, we now see the establishing phase as a potentially separate programme drawing on the learning from SEE-PER 1. As we highlighted before, some of these partners only met as a result of Ignite and needed much longer to experiment with their partnership



through a set of activities that could draw out the mutual benefits. What we also learned during Stage 2 was that some partnerships needed more help than others and keeping the CUPP door open for advice was important. This was in addition to support given through the three social learning spaces.

**Stage 3** - exchanging knowledge - also evolved over the course of the Ignite programme. We initially assumed we would develop a community of practice amongst the Ignite partners. In the end we realised that the partners were too busy to take on another role given the time they were devoting to their partnerships plus attending the Ignite events. We were very fortunate to have Etienne Wenger-Trayner to help us develop the events as well as facilitate them. The three events evolved into a much more informal 'social learning space' where there was a chance to share knowledge but no expectations that the event would evolve into a community of practice.

However, by having Etienne help facilitate these sessions it was also possible for him to share learning about what a community of practice can look like and how it can be helpful. Two of the partnerships went on to use this concept in their Ignite work with other partners.

While evaluating Ignite has been considered throughout the programme, once it ended we realised it needed to be a stage in its own right. We have highlighted Stage 4 not only for public engagement professionals who want to evaluate a community-university partnership programme, but also for the Ignite partners so they are able to benefit from the evaluation process. Thus, we are using the Ignite programme to produce a set of case studies as well as films that the Ignite partners can share within their communities and other stakeholders, as well as future funding applications.

## Q8.

# OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**As highlighted in the last section, enabling public engagement with research was the backbone to the Ignite project. The activities and outputs of the seven Ignite partnerships demonstrate this. So too do the outcomes and impacts that the partnerships generated, not in years, but in just a few months. Chapter 4 summarises what has been achieved so far, although we anticipate that this is only the start of the impacts that they will achieve. Beyond this, similar to the last section, we have taken a step back and looked at the outcomes and impact of the Ignite programme drawing on partnership examples where relevant.**

## 8.1 ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACTS

The most substantial outcomes and impacts of the Ignite partnerships were their successful dissemination of applied research into the public sphere covering issues that are of relevance and importance to local communities. Chapter 4 demonstrates many examples of innovative community engagement, here we highlight four:

### 1. The Microplastics in the Chichester

**Harbour** project disseminated findings about the fate and effects of plastic particles in the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding National Beauty. This inspired academics and students to think of new ways of researching the likely consequences of this pollutant on marine life and its origins. This public engagement also began to facilitate local debate and interventions in the environment between different stakeholders including boat owners, fisheries workers, clothing companies, regulators and local politicians. They debated the most realistic way forward for limiting pollution and the researchers have been successful in securing a small amount of research funding to start a new phase of research to create impacts by finding solutions to the GRP (Glass reinforced polymer) contamination, created by boat repair activities.

### 2. The Hangleton and Knoll project for Making the Arts More Accessible

in a deprived community in Hove has started an important conversation with local people about the arts. This was a conversation started by residents trained in participatory arts research. They discovered the

arts are highly valued locally but most of it seen as low status activities such as crafts. A key finding from the research was that local people would like to have a centre for the arts locally – in part, because it is so expensive to go into the centre of the city and because of the importance of art activities to improving wellbeing. This research has created impacts as key stakeholders are now seeking to increase community involvement in the arts in deprived communities and its role in supporting a range of health issues. What is more, the partnership research has initiated a conversation between the community partner and a housing developer about the potential for a dedicated arts space locally. The community partner described the combination of academic support and research carried out by local people as ‘gold dust’ in terms of convincing key stakeholders in the city to act on the findings.

### 3. The partnership which focused on the Housing Crisis in the city

involved engaging local people and academics from other countries in exploring these issues and coming up with solutions. Their partnership impacts were significant as they resulted in securing from the city council two areas of valuable land for community housing in a city where space is at a premium. Not only this, but they have also secured cross-party support for finding an additional eight sites of public land for community housing. The activities have also been used to provide evidence for a significant research funding bid.

### 4. The Worthing Ignite! project

has also been ambitious in its public engagement. Holding two events to explore the mental health of children in a town with high levels of teenage self-harm – the partners have ignited a local movement to address these issues. They have generated interest and support from professionals including GPs, headteachers, councillors and NHS commissioners, alongside parents and carers. They have not only set up a professional stakeholders group to take up these issues but also a community of practice to explore different solutions for supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing. Already they are getting interest from other areas of the country wanting to find out how they could ignite support about these issues in their localities.

## 8.2 DISSEMINATION

Films featuring interviews with Ignite partners and their different activities are important forms of public engagement. They offer easily accessible and highly professional information on University research and its direct and applied relevance to the general public and specific communities of place and interest. Two of the films were shown at the recent Engage conference sparking interest from a range of delegates and a desire for links to the other films and more information on Ignite. In addition, we will be producing a set of engaging case studies for each partnership. All of these will be featured within the online Ignite Guide.

## 8.3 SOCIAL LEARNING

The three Ignite 'social learning spaces' constituted the main embedding activity, alongside additional project support from CUPP where needed. These spaces added value to the experience of developing community and public engagement by facilitating networking and shared social learning. The community and academic delegates attending were able to identify similar challenges and operational issues, and explore how best to address them through changes to their activities and outputs. Importantly, this was undertaken in collaborative and open spaces where problems and solutions could be discussed across the partnerships.

One outcome of the development days was the generation of substantial and significant insights into the way that the Ignite partners developed their partnerships and undertook community and public engagement. These research findings indicated...

1. The importance of key people and relationships in the interaction between the University and its community partners. These 'network nodes' become established over time as crucial in maintaining the university-community relationship. This was primarily because of their own values, professional interests and interpersonal skills. The risk is that there are not enough of these people going forward or that the community and/or University does not give them enough recognition in their role and they become prone to overload. In general it was observed that these 'network nodes' were likely to be doing other primary roles in their own organisation and so could all too easily have their focus on public and community engagement diluted.

2. The contribution that community partners make to enable the University to realise its social responsibility to the local and regional community.
3. These partnerships support the University's commitment to key social values like widening participation and sustainability, and to delivering on these partnership objectives as expressed in their own mission and strategy.
4. The usefulness of soft structures that are less formal. For example, the kinds of forums used by the Ignite partnerships allowed informal communication and knowledge sharing between academics and community members. These forums built value-based commitments to knowledge development and research. Such commitments might not emerge in traditional formal committee structures where there would be much emphasis on traditional role boundaries and mechanistic approaches to costing. These more creative, informal structures allowed for innovation and very creative approaches about how to resource research and projects. The partners were generous with their time because of a strong commitment to the work identified, but also because the activities were undertaken across a short time frame; a few months, not years.
5. There were opportunities to further mainstreaming student involvement and engagement given the strong positives for students when being invited to take part in supporting these community projects.
6. Not only were students an important resource for these projects but also they derived considerable learning and benefits when involved in the Ignite projects. This adds value to their University education.
7. There was a need to focus on the sustainability of Ignite projects going forward so that the learning and public engagement could continue to grow.

## 8.4 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION AND CONCEPTUAL IMPACTS

### Communities of practice and social learning

During the first Ignite development day, the communities of practice concept was presented by Professor Etienne Wenger-Trayner – the international author, expert and pioneer in this field. Community of practice was offered as one theoretical lens through which the Ignite partnerships could share their learning and maximise the combined benefits. Etienne explained how communities of similar interest can come together to benefit from social learning and deal with the uncertainties of applying knowledge in practice. A community of practice view of competency in practice could be distinguished from a traditional view of competency that puts the emphasis on fixed skills and the certainty of outputs if these skills were applied. Rather, the community of practice view was that practice needed to engage with uncertainty, where a mix of skills could be used in differing ways and the outcome was not necessarily highly predictable.

However, in the end what evolved was a set of three ‘social learning spaces’ that offered a more informal environment and less time commitment than a community of practice. They also offered more flexibility for a partnership that is recently formed. However, a number of the delegates reported back how useful it had been to learn about communities of practice. As one community partner commented, ‘A community of practice provides a unique space to reflect on what is of value’. Two of the partnerships went on to use the concept in their Ignite activities.

### Understanding systems management of complex projects

The University and community partner delegates were introduced to a systems approach to partnership management during the second social learning space, by Professor Philip Haynes. The focus was predominantly on system processing and activities, but also how these connect with system inputs, environment and outputs and outcomes. Exercises were completed on system description (mapping), system theorising (what are the most important aspects, currently in the system) and where might be the best place to intervene and instigate change. The partnerships then gave some feedback on their current situations in regard to project system processes and activities. The outcome was that insights were gained into:

- Improving communication and information with volunteers and stakeholders.
- Simplifying complex processes.
- Modifying the timing of key Ignite events – for example shorter hours.
- Adapting outcomes and the understanding of project outcomes.
- Leveraging more resources and generating capacity.
- Finding the right organisational boundaries for project activity going forward.

These insights into complex systems and communities of practice will lead onto conceptual impacts through articles and papers co-produced by academics and their community partners. These will benefit a range of academics and community partners engaged with these fields of research.

## CHAPTER 4

# IGNITE: PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES

At the heart of the Ignite programme was an experiment to see if it would be possible to find and foster a set of sustainable community-university partnerships in less than a year; it succeeded. Partnerships that, with very little money and time, carried out high quality community engagement with research bringing mutual benefits, in spite of competing demands on community partners and academics. In the following seven brief Ignite case studies, we highlight some of the key activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts achieved in just over six months in 2019.

# IGNITE! WORTHING – IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN

**Lead community partner: West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF).  
Plus Adur and Worthing Community Works**

“This project has been loved by West Sussex County Council commissioners, District Council leaders, strategic leads in schools, GP practices and local GP networks in Worthing and also in other areas notably Crawley and Bognor Regis. It is going to be very easy to keep this project going and replicate good work in other ideas.”

“This is one of the most exciting projects WSPCF has been involved in (and we have loads) and definitely the most creative partnership where we have all worked in real co-production, co-designing and co-delivering everything. WSPCF has never experienced anything like this! Advice to other groups; definitely get involved in a university partnership. It adds credibility and respect to the community organisation. It opens new doors and opportunities to different stakeholders in a community around an issue. New skills are learnt in facilitation and presentation. Lend credence to community partner independent and impartial outlook.... It's great fun!”

## KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Carried out a literature review on children’s emotional wellbeing including local data.
- Showcased great things already happening in the community across a broad range of places – GP Surgery, Community Housing Project, Town Council, Wellbeing Therapists, Mental Health Provider.
- Held two town-wide multi-stakeholder events, including parents, carers, teachers, GPs, commissioners, service managers, district councillors, therapists and town dignitaries who have identified a need to take action to support children’s emotional wellbeing for Worthing.
- Started a multi-stakeholder mental health prevention group that will sustain the work of the project and is focused on a whole community approach to tackling the drivers of poor mental health in children and young people.
- Led the development of a community of practice made up of people who want to share knowledge around these issues and take action together to support children’s emotional wellbeing.
- Created impact by developing new relationships with strategic health commissioners, town council and other community partners.
- Developing a pocketbook guide for local parents and carers on how to support children’s emotional wellbeing, plus a list of local resources.
- Presented partnership project at various events including a GP-School meeting.
- Presented findings at a community psychology conference.



# MICROPLASTICS AND CHICHESTER HARBOUR

**Lead community partner: Chichester Harbour Conservancy.**

**Other Partners: Friends of Chichester Harbour, Chichester Harbour Oyster Partnership Initiative, Sussex Inshore Fisheries, Chichester Harbour Federation**

“Well obviously ... our expertise is totally different to the university's expertise, and we wouldn't have known where to start trying to understand what is going on here.

So, it's been fantastic, and their willingness to come here and do the research, and put in lots of hours at difficult times, early starts, late finishes, all kinds of weather, and their dedication has been impressive. And the combination of ...us both helping each other out, has really given a much better result for both organisations.”

“We're going to look at the glass fibres, ... because that is a completely novel domain where there is no research, there are no publications on that, and we really want to see where is that coming from, is it seasonal, how much harm does it do to the already stressed oyster population that is present here in Chichester?”

## KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- The partnership has co-produced groundbreaking research by discovering that local oysters have ingested high levels of glass microfibers. This finding not only has significant local implications, it may also have important impacts globally.
- The partners now need to explore where the fibres are coming from and the impact they are having. For example, whether they are a significant factor in the reduction of oysters in the harbour causing the fishery to be closed last season.
- The partners held a symposium on the issues of microplastics in Chichester Harbour, which included local people, regulators, politicians, academics and businesses.
- The event was live streamed and received widespread publicity and requests to present the findings to other organisations.
- Research funding has been obtained to ensure the sustainability of the project for the next two years.
- Future research will continue to look at these issues, including with students, and create impacts by exploring solutions to the problems identified.



# MAKING THE ARTS MORE ACCESSIBLE

**Lead community partner: Hangleton and Knoll Project (HKP).  
Other partner: Brighton People’s Theatre**

“The local authority is using the work as an example of good practice in the City, and it will be featured at the Brighton & Hove Cultural Summit in 2020.”

“Ignite provided the financial support and connections to make the research and sharing of learning happen. The drivers pre-existed the project – in terms of Hangleton and Knoll’s Project aims in understanding and investing in local arts practice and Helen’s aims in developing/ applying collaborative arts resources; but Ignite funding was fundamental to enabling this research and to shaping it in this way. Even if they did exist, it is unlikely that alternative sources of funding would have enabled the project to take place in such a collaborative or in-depth manner.”

## KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Trained eight local residents in basic research skills using arts-based ‘collaborative poetics’ research methodology (Johnson et al, 2017, 2018, 2019).
- The community researchers were able to use this learning to develop a questionnaire to understand better, how members of the community perceived the arts.
- With over 100 responses, they found that almost all the respondents were keen for a local dedicated arts space to engage in arts activities, but also to build relationships, reduce isolation, network and improve wellbeing.
- HKP was able to begin moving towards the development of a dedicated local arts space and are currently seeking to secure a space at the Downsman site.
- Impact will arise from pledges to support local arts provision obtained from Brighton Dome, Brighton Festival and local council.
- The processes and outcomes of this partnership will feed into the ‘Brighton & Hove Cultural Framework’ and the Arts and Creative Industries Commission.
- Presented findings at a community psychology conference and to students.
- Enabling two funding applications to local authorities and charities from community co-researchers to ensure sustainability of the project.
- Enabling a funding bid under the local authority funded third sector investment programme
- The project helped to support the development of the Collaborative Poetics research method and resources, and to evidence the efficacy of these through a case study that will benefit academic researchers in this field.
- The local authority is using the work as an example of good practice in the City, and it will be featured at the Brighton & Hove Cultural Summit in 2020.



# OUR CITY

## COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS

**Lead community partner: Brighton and Hove Community Land Trust.**  
**Other partner: Brighton & Hove City Council**

“Through hosting a series of collaborative workshops, we co-produced a bid worth c.£750,000 which will be submitted to the ESRC. If this is successful, it will enable us to develop the collaborative relationship in the long term...”

“The election hustings provided an opportunity to discuss the benefits of and difficulties facing community-led housing in the city with representatives from all political parties... and as a result secured a promise for eight sites on which to develop community-led housing.”

“Through discussions with the Head of the School of Humanities, we have begun the development of a more applied humanities programme, provisionally entitled Social Innovation, which will teach students a range of skills and provide opportunities to work with community partners to tackle a range of urgent global social challenges.”

### KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- In the run up to the local elections, the partners hosted a hustings that resulted in cross-party support for community housing.
- Secured from the council two new sites for community housing and cross-party support to find a further eight.
- Recruited an ESRC-funded PhD student to work on the history of co-operative housing in Brighton.
- Held an international conference with academics working with community partners to address the housing crisis in their localities.
- Set up an international network of academics working with their communities to address the housing crisis and sustain the project work.
- Held a local event for communities on community-led housing in Brighton.
- Developed a significant research funding bid to sustain the work of the project.



# MOULSECOOMB AND BEVENDEAN – OUR VOICE

**Lead community partner: The Trust for Developing Communities.  
Other partner: The Bevy Community Pub**

“TDC is continuing to work with the community and use the lessons from the interview findings such as the importance of trust relations and access to services locally to inform our work. We will liaise with UoB about our work and seek opportunities where we can work together. This might be through student placements, attending networking sessions, participating in strategic planning reviews, attending training sessions, and AGMs.”

“This project was the first community project that the researcher had undertaken as a lead, being an Early Career Researcher. This project enabled the lead research partner to gain valuable experience in both community research and in being a Principal Investigator ...As well, it gave the opportunity to be mentored by another researcher who has a lot of experience in community research. Finally, the project has enabled strong links to be built between the University and the Trust for Developing Communities.”

## KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Developed a community researcher framework as a community-owned method for ensuring voices in the area are heard.
- Six community researchers, along with the partners, co-designed an interview schedule that invited community members to reflect specifically on moments when they needed help or advice.
- Sixteen resident interviews were then conducted by the community researchers.
- Three key themes emerged from the research. Firstly, the role of connections, including social and informal support, for community resilience. Secondly, improving ways that community members can access information and advice. Finally, how services engage and support local people, including more accessible, local organisations.
- A community and a stakeholder event, including with service providers, was held to share this knowledge and discuss next steps.
- Funding is being sought for future activities activities to sustain the project. This will include developing a protocol with local people for community consultations, as well as taking action on community identified priorities that can have a positive impact on the neighbourhood.



# CLOTHES ON OUR BACK

## DIVERSIFYING THE CURRICULUM

**Lead community partner: Diversity Lewes.**

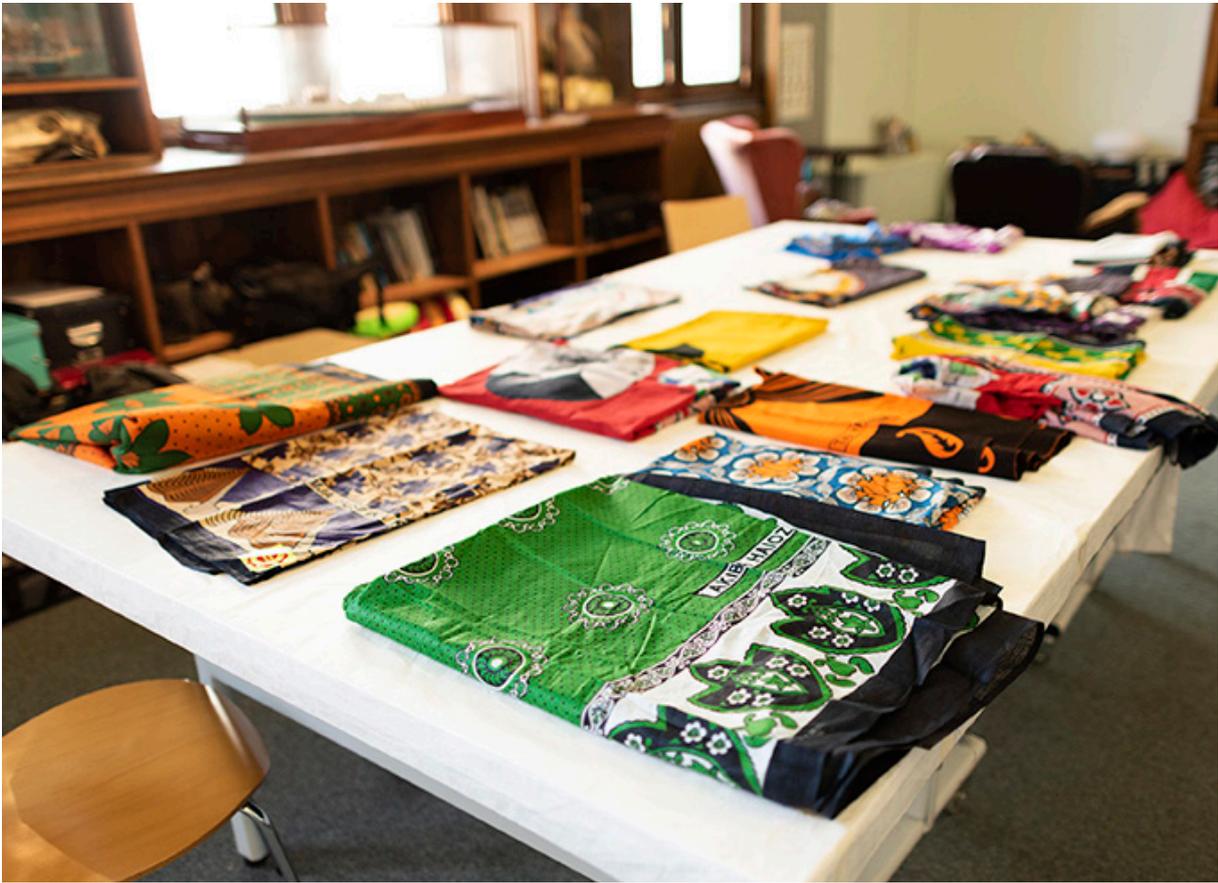
**Other partners: Brighton & Hove Black History Month Group, Brighton Museum**

“Diversity Lewes is deeply concerned about this national issue and approached the University of Brighton to develop pedagogy that drew on the expertise of Diversity Lewes in co-developing a series of workshops at Brighton Museum that wanted to engage members of the BAME community in Sussex and university students and staff with archival material housed at Brighton Museum. Just as importantly, feedback from the workshops would be used to inform a creative practice teaching module that built on concepts of diversity and inclusion and identified BAME experts to teach on this module.”

“The Clothes On Our Backs project was a collaborative project between Diversity Lewes, a charity set up to challenge racism in Sussex, the University of Brighton and Brighton Museum. The aims of the project were to respond to findings from the National Union of Students’ (NUS) report, ‘Race for equality’ that identified continuing, unresolved issues around Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) student participation within Higher Education. Student dissatisfaction was highlighted with 42% of BAME students who took the survey stating they did not believe their curriculum reflected issues of diversity, equality and discrimination...”

### KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Ran workshops with Brighton Museum using their archive of Khangas.
- Set up an interdisciplinary network with combined expertise to devise and write a new University of Brighton course module.
- Presented at a conference and co-authored a chapter in a book on Utopias for Routledge.
- Held two events in Black History Month (one at the University and one at the Brighton Dome).
- Now working with two new PhD students who will continue and sustain the work of the project.



# LONELINESS AND THE LIVING LAB

**Lead community partner: The Bevendean Cooperative Pub (The Bevy)**

“As a result of the Living Lab workshops, we have supported the set-up of a new activity for local people. We are also in the process of developing, with a local company, the trial of a digital health device to provide the opportunity for home bound citizens to participate remotely in one of the events organised at the Bevy.”

“Ignite has played a very important role in both linking together the partners and guiding the initial development of the project. What this has meant is that we have been able to fulfil our key objective of setting up a Living Lab at a community pub – the first we know of – to work with local people in co-creating solutions to loneliness with local people.

What was remarkable is that this took just 12 weeks not 12 months as on a previous project because of how well the Bevy is connected to its community and the trust it has built up.”

## **KEY ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS**

- Developed a Living Lab consistent with the aim for “User-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings” (European Network of Living Labs - <https://enoll.org/about-us/>).
- In the past, it took the researcher 12 months to establish a Living Lab. Working with a community partner, it has taken only 12 weeks as part of the Ignite programme.
- This, as far as we know, is the first Living Lab to be established in a community pub.
- Ran sessions to explore loneliness locally including identifying key volunteers – the ‘Community Connectors’.
- Trialled a new community group.
- Working with company Kraydel (<https://www.kraydel.com>) on a protocol for trialling a telecommunication device to engage isolated citizens that will help sustain the project and partnership.



## CHAPTER 5

# IGNITE: BACK TO THE FUTURE

*"As with any project, success was about meeting our aims, keeping the funders happy, and learning something new about ourselves, our ways of working and the subjects that interest us. More broadly, success for the partnership is about learning from one another, learning to work together effectively (embracing true collaboration), and using this work to make a difference to others. We have met all of these criteria and indeed exceeded our expectations."*

Partnership: Making the Arts More Accessible

# Q9.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 9.1 INSTITUTIONAL

At CUPP, we know how much is involved in forming community-partnerships underpinned by co-production and offering mutual benefits. Through the Ignite programme we have been successful in creating seven new partnerships. The partners have had a chance to explore mutual benefits by collaborating with each other to devise, develop and deliver a co-produced project. They have also taken part in three social learning spaces to reflect on and share their insights of working together. They are now exploring how to continue working together including seeking additional funding.

As we have highlighted earlier, the outcomes so far from the Ignite programme have far surpassed our expectations and will have impacts on the University, the partners and the wider university and community sectors. At the outset, given the tight timescales, we were concerned about being able to attract enough applicants let alone deliver a range of projects that have already started to make a difference across many different domains.

The partners have also exceeded their own expectations. Chapter 4 highlighted not only the many and wide-ranging activities they have undertaken and the impact this is beginning to have, but also gives an indication of the next steps they are taking to develop their partnerships. It also provided evidence of how the Ignite partnerships have developed sustainably. For example, research-funding applications, community funding bids, the development of ongoing stakeholder groups, cooperating with the private sector and the work of PhD students.

The seven partnerships that have been developed over the last year are significant for the University. Yet as an institution we are also aware that these are far from established partnerships. SEE-PER 1 identified three different established partnerships: 'mature'; 'rising star' and 'emergent'. 'Mature' partnerships are defined as PER partnerships that have reached the level of being an impact case study for the REF. 'Rising stars' are those that have formed effective partnerships and starting to deliver outcomes. 'Emergent' partnerships are those that have been through a seed funding process and have potential to develop. While the Ignite partnerships have elements of both a rising star and an emergent partnership, they are still newly formed partnerships and need

to continue to work together to sustain themselves in the future, as well as secure new funding. The evidence we have collected so far is that the partnerships are looking for ways to continue working together, as well as starting to look for other funding.

We have outlined four different areas of activity where we will continue to work with the partnerships to support their evolution. These activities will also continue to create wider impacts in the university and community sector.

#### 1. Finding future opportunities to extend knowledge sharing

The CUPP Development Manager co-produced a one-hour Engage Conference workshop on the Ignite programme with the community and research partners for Making the Arts More Accessible. The organisers were keen for the partnership to consider running a participatory arts workshop at a future Engage Conference. In addition, the community partner and a local resident who had been trained in participatory arts methods were invited to present their partnership work to University of Brighton students. We will look for other opportunities to work with the Ignite partners to further spread their work in the university and community sectors, over and above the considerable knowledge exchange activities being undertaken by the partnerships as highlighted in Chapter 4. For example, the stakeholder group for the Worthing Ignite project will continue to share knowledge within and beyond West Sussex, aiding the further development of their partnership.

#### 2. Continuing to collect evidence

The partners have all been supportive of the need to collect evidence demonstrating the reach of their Ignite partnerships. This includes interviews across the programme, the production of the films and a self-evaluation form two months after the completion of Ignite to get the latest data on the partnerships. In addition, for a number of the partnerships research will continue due to student involvement for example, in the Chichester Harbour and Clothes on our Backs partnerships.

### 3. Turning evidence into outputs for partnerships

The Ignite films became a method for conducting summative evaluation as we checked in with the partners at various points during the programme. They are also important for knowledge dissemination through the Ignite Guide. However, it was also crucial that they added value to the partnerships. The partners have reported how useful the films have been, for example, being shown at a community AGM, showcasing the partnership work to the local authority, as well as shared at conferences and for funding applications.

### 4. Seeking additional funding

We have colleagues in our Research and Enterprise Team at Brighton who are familiar with the Ignite partnerships and are actively seeking suitable funding and will work with CUPP to support any applications. As indicated in Chapter 4, the Chichester Harbour Ignite project has already been successful in a research funding bid, and other Ignite partnerships are also currently exploring different funding possibilities in which CUPP will be included to support the project.

### 5. Further development support

We are offering all the Ignite partnerships a free consultancy workshop to explore their values and develop a value framework. This is possible because we have teamed up with the internationally renowned Values and Sustainability Research and Enterprise Group at the University of Brighton that is part of one of the globally significant research hubs funded by the UKRI/DFID Global Challenge Research Fund.

### 6. Future Ignite partnerships

Given the success of the Ignite programme we are hoping to run another in 2021 or 2022. However, this will depend on resources in a very uncertain climate since COVID-19 and we are exploring what funding might be available to support a new set of community-university partnerships.

## 9.2 SECTORAL

The Ignite programme has been a valuable journey over the last year and we have been delighted to share our experiences with a range of sectors and learn from others through SEE-PER.

### 1. Conferences

We are keen to share our learning more widely with the sector. For example, we were delighted to be chosen to run a 60-minute workshop at the Engage Conference. Importantly, it was introduced by the University of Brighton's Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tara Dean, who is the Principal Investigator (PI) for the SEE-PER project and chair of the Advisory Group. We believe that it was absolutely vital that the SEE-PER programme insisted on a Pro-Vice-Chancellor as a PI given the importance of engaging with senior HE leaders. However, we are fortunate that Tara would have been the PI without the requirement. The workshop was full, generating significant interest in the Ignite programme and resulting in a list of contacts keen to receive the Ignite Guide and view our films.

### 2. Ignite films

We are finalising production of five films. Once approved, they will be available on the CUPP section of the University of Brighton website and YouTube. We will also be making them available to UKRI and NCCPE to use.



### 3. Ignite Guide

The Development Manager has been given time to design, develop and deliver the Ignite Guide with a planned launch at the Bevy Community Pub in Brighton, one of our Ignite partnerships.

The guide will be available both as a PDF and online and aims to inspire, inform, educate and engage individuals and institutions interested in community-university knowledge partnerships. Specifically aimed at professionals working in the HE sector, it will highlight how to develop such partnerships, as well information on the Ignite programme for those wishing to adopt some or even all of it. It can also be used by community sector partners to demonstrate the mutual benefits of community-university knowledge partnerships.

It will be a resource that can be used to argue the case for more investment in this area of work by showing accessible and engaging case studies of new community-university partnerships. It will also include video clips of university and community partners explaining why they got involved in the partnership and how it evolved.

The University of Brighton is investing significant resource into this guide and we are keen to share it with as many people in the sector as possible. We will work with UKRI and NCCPE to promote it widely.

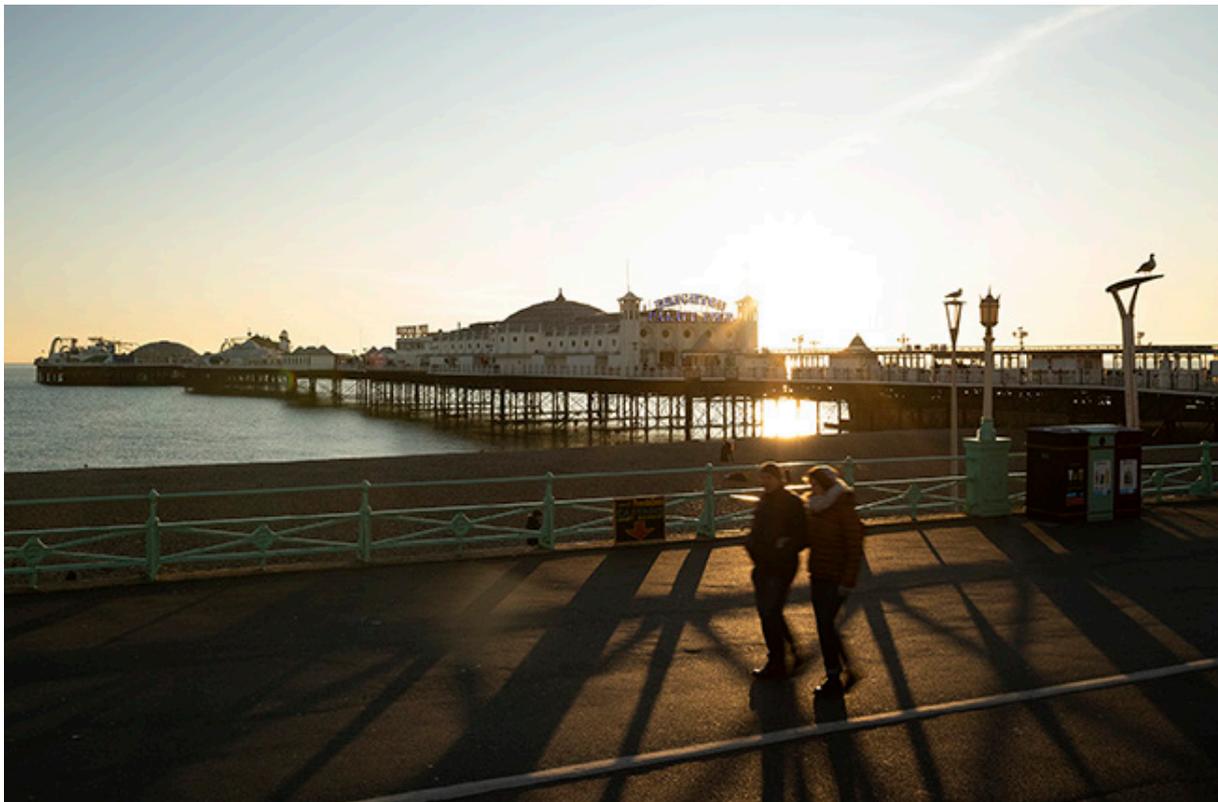
# Q10.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

**CUPP may have many years of experience but we did not know if it would be possible to run a programme to find and foster a set of community-university partnerships in under a year. We were fortunate that UKRI gave us an opportunity to devise, develop and deliver a pilot programme that proved that this is, indeed, possible. What is more, the partnerships undertook a set of ambitious activities, which, in only a few months, started to have an impact locally, are likely to be sustainable and, in some cases, have an even wider influence. Innovative community and public engagement has been at the heart of these activities. This would not have happened without the funding of UKRI and the support of NCCPE. This enabled us to turn this pilot into a research project that can not only inform what we do at the University of Brighton, but also enable other Higher Education institutions and the community sector to share our learning.**

Encouraging partnerships to form in just a few months was ambitious in itself but the influence they have had in this time was far beyond what we expected. Many of the partners felt the same as highlighted in the quote at the start of Chapter 5. What has been achieved is most definitely more than the sum of the individual parts. Another significant feature of the programme was the breadth of partnership interests addressing issues of deprivation and marginalisation – from improving children’s mental health to finding solutions to the local housing crisis and exploring why people do not trust local services.

However, alongside breadth, the programme also offered depth. The partners carried out training with local people to equip them to become participatory researchers so they could conduct research into arts provision. They worked together to discover high levels of glass fibre pollution in oysters. And they worked as equal partners to write a chapter of a book reflecting on partnership working and diversity issues within Higher Education.





Of course, you do not need an Ignite programme to develop a community-university partnership. We have many partnerships that have been established long before Ignite came along. However, what Ignite offers is a way of kick-starting a set of new partnerships and importantly giving them the chance to learn from each other during those vital first few months after being formed. It also offers community organisations an opportunity to find a research partner to help them tackle important local issues, while enabling researchers to extend the impact of their work. Importantly, it also offers a way of ensuring we have a constant supply of community-university partnership in the pipeline.

The feedback we have received from the Ignite partners is that the first three stages were crucial to their development - exploring, experimenting and exchanging of knowledge. The evaluation stage has generated rich data for analysing the impact of the programme. In addition, it offers data for the individual partnerships in going forward, for example for funding bids.

### Recommendations

We have three broad recommendations for HEIs, funders and NCCPE. Our recommendations are supported by the voices of our partners:

1. Ensure mutual benefits - from the start partners must clearly state the benefits they are hoping for from the partnerships and regularly evaluate that these are being achieved.

"Joint concerns were central throughout the project. We designed a project which fitted closely with our pre-existing agendas and work patterns."

2. Be sensitive to issues of power - unequal power relations are a major challenge and it is important to have regular learning opportunities where these can be discussed and their consequences addressed.

"The project actively challenges configurations of power in HE by creating and valuing co-devised pedagogy and co-authored research that addresses issues of power and control within the field of co-production (Bell & Phall, 2017)."

3. Be flexible - community partners and universities face regular ongoing challenges in their operating environments. Funding for public engagement must allow flexibility, especially for community partners, to adjust partnership activities during the course of the project.

"Be prepared for the unexpected and bend when you need to. Plans will change. Things will take longer than planned. Participants will drop out or not play by your rules. This is the nature of collaborative working, and can lead to valuable lessons/insights. Equally, be attuned to the unexpected outcomes and benefits that can come from this kind of work, and remember to record them."

# Q11.

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

**When I applied for my current position as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), I did what most of us do when considering a post. I spent many hours navigating the University's website and reading about the University more broadly, using other sources. I soon became aware that community engagement has been part of the University of Brighton's DNA. CUPP was established in 2003 and has won seven national/international awards in 10 years which is an astonishing track record. A year into my new job, I was delighted that this area of work was added to my portfolio and I have learned a tremendous amount about working with community partners and this project has been central to it.**

I want to reflect on my experience of what I think are three essential ingredients for good community-university engagement and partnership.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, is demonstrable mutual benefit. Here I cannot emphasise the word 'mutual' enough, and its ongoing influence on long-lasting partnership. If the relationship is lopsided, one partner will eventually bow out. The tension here defines the metrics of success and the benefits to both organisations.

Secondly, there must be supportive and engaged staff at both community and university level. Of course, the support and engagement cannot operate in a vacuum of the organisations' strategic goals. Strategies which prioritise community and public engagement very quickly become 'strategies put on the shelf - SPOT' if the staff do not buy into the activity. Equally, staff supporting this engagement in the absence of the institution buying into it will not yield a rewarding experience for staff. At Brighton, because of our historic commitment to community engagement, we have many passionate and active staff but with almost a totally new leadership team at the University, this aspect of our strengths was almost overlooked. As a member of the University Executive Board, I very much saw my role as integral to raising the profile of community engagement and the staff involved. This project has been a significant enabler for us to achieve this end.

The final key ingredient is 'sustainability'. We have to be comfortable that building successful partnerships is not immediate and will evolve over time. They need initial financial support in terms of staff time and other resources and need nurturing to be sustainable. A community partnership is not just for Christmas...

Professor Tara Dean – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)

# Q12.

## TALKING POINTS

### CULTURE CHANGE: ENABLING & RESPECTING MULTIPLE FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

“We shared knowledge within the project team via face-to-face meetings and emails, and in workshops. This was a flexible and evolving method of interaction, which enabled us to be responsive to one another whilst working within limited time/resource constraints. We shared learning with others through a final sharing of learning event, which brought in local residents, the local authority, commissioning arts organisations, and community groups across the City...The Ignite events enabled us to learn from the best practice of others.”

Through Ignite, the UKRI funding has had numerous institutional influences. However, one of the most significant influences has been the role of knowledge sharing. Critically, knowledge sharing emerged in different places and in different forms – from a self-evaluation questionnaire to the production of a poem in the case of one partnership. What was important was that knowledge sharing organically evolved as the programme unfolded alongside the development of relationships both within and between the partnerships and with CUPP. What was common to this process were opportunities to reflect on how best to share knowledge but also the freedom to experiment and be creative.

The individual partnerships worked out how best to share knowledge amongst themselves and the social learning spaces enabled them to do this with other Ignite partners. Knowledge sharing also occurred between CUPP and the partners – both individually and as a group during three development days. The filmed interviews and the production of the Ignite films were also critical, as were the final presentations given by each of the Ignite partnerships to the rest of the group.

This rich exchange of knowledge using different opportunities and mediums has been vital to iteratively developing the Ignite model for finding and fostering community-university partnerships. Just as importantly, it has underpinned the success of the partnerships and how they have achieved so much in such a short space of time. As one of the community

partners wrote: “CUPP initiated the partnership and hosted a set up meeting near the start of the project. CUPP also ran three developmental events during the project. This helped develop our own partnership as well as understanding and knowledge of other partnerships in the CUPP Ignite programme; the latter was helpful for thinking about future research opportunities.”

Below are further points raised by the partners concerning knowledge sharing, in their own voices:

#### Importance of appreciating different forms of knowledge

“For researchers: Community partners have skills, knowledge and expertise which is different to yours and is irreplaceable/invaluable... For community partners: Trust yourselves! You have a wealth of (often unacknowledged) expertise. A successful community-university partnership can bring this to the attention of others and help realise its full potential.”

#### Being creative in how you share knowledge

“The research and the film has been shared directly with the local authority’s Executive Director of economy and culture, raising the profile of, and support for, the work.”

#### Looking at different ways to capture learning

“Ignite also enabled us to better document the project and communicate our learning to others, eg. through the project video.”

### CHALLENGES: SUPPORTING CO-PRODUCTION TO CHALLENGE POWER

“Co-production has an important role to play in rethinking and remaking the world for the better. The recent ‘turn’ to co-production in UK academia offers possibilities to academics and communities interested in working together to further the aims of social justice (Facer & Enright, 2016)”

Like many other projects, Ignite was not all plain sailing. Facing different challenges was key to iteratively developing the programme and we used these as an opportunity to learn and evolve the Ignite model both for delivering the local programme as

well as developing the guide. We recognise that key challenges in developing community-university partnerships centre around power differentials and the importance of co-production in addressing them.

All seven partnerships have highlighted how important co-production was to developing a community-university partnership. It is not necessarily an easy objective to achieve but an essential one if the partnerships are to flourish.

Here are some additional key points raised by the partners in relation to co-production:

#### **Ensuring mutual benefits**

“Joint concerns were central throughout the project. We designed a project which fitted closely with our pre-existing agendas and work patterns.”

#### **Need for flexibility**

“Be prepared for the unexpected and bend when you need to. Plans will change. Things will take longer than planned. Participants will drop out or not play by your rules. This is the nature of collaborative working, and can lead to valuable lessons/insights. Equally, be attuned to the unexpected outcomes and benefits that can come from this kind of work, and remember to record them.”

### **SUCCESSES: WIDENING PARTNERSHIP INVOLVEMENT**

“My confidence and sense of worth has grown since being involved in this arts research”  
community arts researcher

This quote is from an Ignite community researcher. She is now considering an access course to enable her to go to university as she so enjoyed her experience of training and researching with the Marking the Arts More Accessible partnership.

A number of the Ignite partnerships worked in disadvantaged communities and with people who were not familiar with higher education. What is more, by training local people as community researchers there was an opportunity to reach out to people who are not familiar with higher education research.

One community researcher explained how as local people they could gain trust: “When you say ‘research’ people are frightened. Because they want to know ‘what research?’ They ask: ‘Is it to do with services?’ I had to spend a long time talking to them, telling them what was said. It has to be step by step. We have to help confidence grow.”

This partnership project was so successful that the Trust for Developing Communities are currently exploring how elements of it could be useful elsewhere in the city: “Community research has great potential to inform our community development support as part of asset mapping and needs assessments for areas. This enables priorities for service delivery to be informed by the aspirations of a diverse range of community members.”

By working so closely with communities, the partnerships were also able to reach out not only to individuals but also to organisations. For example, Ignite! Worthing involved parent and carers as well as headteachers, GPs and NHS commissioners and many other local stakeholders.

Ignite also sought to widen participation within universities. An important rationale for Ignite was to not only find and foster a set of partnerships, but also to encourage academics new to community collaborations to take part in the programme.

Just under half of the Ignite partnerships involved researchers being mentored by academics experienced at co-production and community collaborations. All three reported back at how much they enjoyed this experience and how valuable it was. For example, one had an opportunity to lead as the Principal Investigator. Another has teamed up with a community organisation to look for funding to extend the participatory arts training of local people to an area of Brighton in the top ten percent of the most deprived in the country.

Here are some additional key points raised by the partners in relation to partnership development:

#### **Importance of dedicated time**

“Ignite gave us focused time to spend together, building relationships and sharing knowledge organically.

#### **Importance of funding to support community participation**

“For funders, invest in this kind of work, and in the relationships that underpin it. This means financing the time of community partners and participants in full (as well as that of academics).”

# 13.

## APPENDIX – SEE-PER 1

### 13.1 CONTEXT

The University of Brighton was selected by RCUK to join its SEE-PER – Strategic Support to Expedite Embedding Public Engagement with Research – funding programme.

The University of Brighton has had longstanding success in connecting its research with the public and communities for impact. In the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 the University was ranked 27<sup>th</sup> for Impact, and its approach to engaging with communities and the public underpinned this. Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, there has been consistent support for our Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) and its innovative and successful approach to partnership working via the investment of infrastructure and expertise.

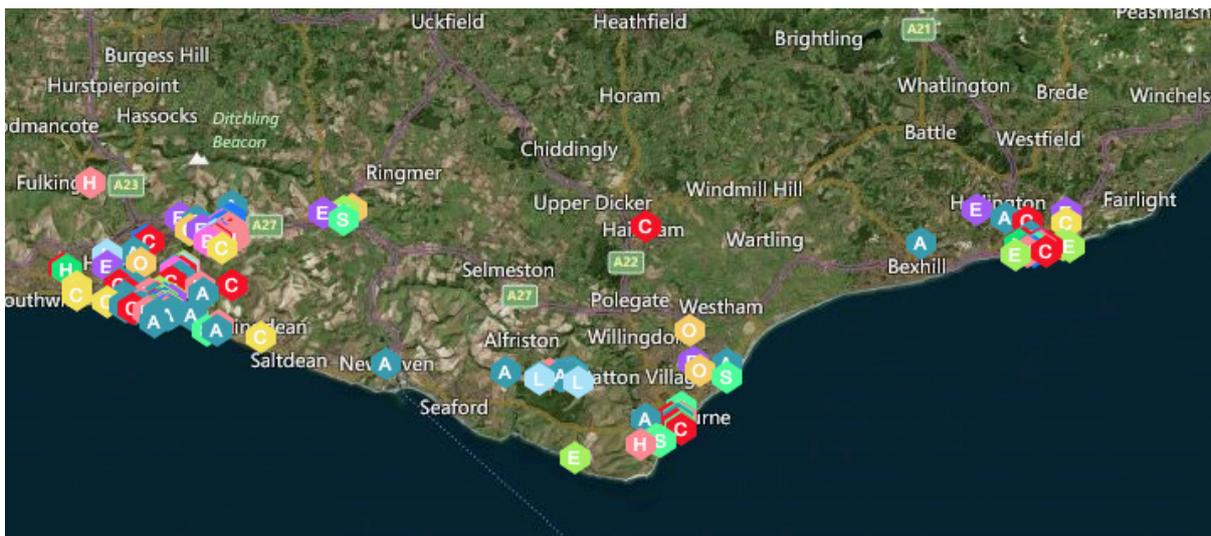
### 13.2 OUR SEE-PER 1 CHALLENGE

Our challenge was to explore how we could support mature community-university partnerships by developing a platform for Public Engagement with Research. Whilst there are a myriad of ways to keep good work going, these are not always clearly articulated and supported. Community partners are facing multiple pressures – not least the challenge of finding funding to keep them afloat against a backdrop of increasing demands. Finding time to undertake work beyond core roles is also increasingly difficult. Additional pressures on community-university partnerships have also arisen from the rapidly changing higher education policy landscape and the tensions facing academics wanting to deliver PER whilst producing high quality teaching and research.

Research has also highlighted some of the issues facing academics wanting to undertake partnership working. For example, Franklin et al (2001) interviewed academics from 15 universities worldwide. They found that the ‘Publish or Perish’ academic culture was a barrier, and that problems can arise with “the relationships that should be established between the spin-off firm and its mother university”. Rasmussen and Borh (2010) identified

that academics need implicit or explicit backing from the university to be able to decouple from traditional university tasks. Over the last five years there has also been a growing number of staff in universities who are developing as social innovators and entrepreneurs, often on the back of PER. The UnLtd/HEFCE programmes alone have supported over 1000 staff in universities in England to develop social ventures. The SEE Changemaker network contains 30 universities across several regions, who share learning and approaches to supporting social innovation and entrepreneurship to improve their practice, keep it on the strategic agenda and secure resources to strengthen support for social innovators and entrepreneurs to create value and impact on and off campus (see Campus Communities).

Our experience at University of Brighton highlights how much can be achieved when university researchers and community partners are supported in working together. One of the most successful partnerships involving the University of Brighton, Boingboing (see [www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk)), has become a community interest company. Its work on resilience was singled out in an evaluation of ESRC-funded Knowledge Exchange initiatives as the only project to result in the creation of a social enterprise. However, many other partnerships have not chosen this route, for example remaining part of the university or partner organisation



### 13.3 OUR ACTIVITIES

In order to explore how mature community-university partnerships could be supported to develop a long-term platform for Public Engagement with Research we undertook a range of activities:

#### Community-university partnerships map

We started out by updating an earlier map we had produced of partnerships between the University of Brighton and local communities. We now have 224 projects mapped and written up at <https://community21.org/partners/cupp/>. This was an important dataset in helping to understand more about mature partnerships as well as identifying those who may want to take part in a pilot support programme.

#### A typology of partnerships

Our work at CUPP has made us aware of different maturities of partnerships characterised in this project as ‘emergent’, ‘risings stars’ and ‘mature’. Mature partnerships are PER partnerships that have reached the level of being an impact case study for the REF. Rising stars are those that have formed effective partnerships and starting to deliver outcomes. Emergent partnerships are those that have been through a seed funding process and have potential to develop. The current project has allowed us to identify some of the barriers facing the maintenance of the partnerships at the different stages.

In surveying our updated map of partnerships, it became clear that this could be organised in a number of ways. In order to enable us to make useful distinctions between the support that might be required by partnerships we developed the following typology:

- Partnership is wholly managed within the University as part of research and/or teaching delivery. No partnership agreement and external partners are treated as a ‘supplier’ of individual pieces of work.
- Partnership is jointly managed via formal agreement, which sets out payments and services on both sides.
- Partnership is managed via a new form of joint organisation. There are many ways this can be achieved, but assuming it is a not-for-profit venture, Community Interest Company is often the form chosen.
- Partnership is wholly managed by external partner and University input is that of a supplier of services.

#### The Partnership Support Programme

By mapping our community-university partnerships, we were able to select seven to take part in a pilot Partnership Support Programme that included the following:

#### Community of practice

Over the course of three meetings the lead partners from each partnerships met as a community of practice. This involved exploring the following:

- The individual strengths of the partnerships.
- What barriers are faced and how they might be overcome.
- What consultancy support partnerships would like to draw down upon using the funds provided by the SEE-PER project.
- What good practice can be codified for use by other partnerships at University of Brighton and beyond?

### Learning Exchange Day

In addition, to the community of practice events, CUPP held a Learning Exchange Day that focused on three key issues that had been raised by the partners:

- Forms of partnership and community ownership models.
- Communications – telling your story.
- Resourcing and financing your partnership.

The model of delivery was a presentation from an outside consultant who was paired by a university member of staff. This ensured that the partners had access to external expertise, but also to balance this with the knowledge of University of Brighton employees. At the Learning Exchange Day, we also had presentations from internal and external experts on community-university partnerships and how they relate to value as described by research, teaching, knowledge exchange and social with a view to see if we could establish an integrated model.

### Areas for development

With each of the partnerships, we co-designed an asset and needs analysis to identifying potential areas for development. This was followed by tailored support for each partnership from a range of experts.

The majority of partners needed support in the following thematic areas:

**Partnership governance development** – from scoping the possibilities to implementation plans. It was key to define the options that could be taken and consider the ambitions, sustainability pathways, roles and capacity of people involved.

**Income generation approaches and sustainability plans** – for some this involved defining products and services or creating a funding and bid development strategy. For others, this involved developing a Theory of Change, or business or growth plans.

**Legal support to define roles, protocols and ownership of assets as well as support to incorporate** where that is appropriate in the longer term, once initial awareness, university/partner guidelines and good practice examples have been considered.

**Marketing and communications** are relatively strong across the group, however they could be enhanced by developing key messages for diverse audiences, clarifying and communicating social impact and value, and developing strategic and media communications.

**Social value measurement** is a theme that is of growing interest to all and of particular critical relevance to some.

In addition, relating to the academic domain two further areas were identified as important for the partnerships. Firstly, the need to consider curriculum development as well as teaching and learning alongside knowledge sharing. Secondly, the impact, challenges and opportunities for REF. For example, potential REF impact case studies arising from the partnerships. The SEE-PER project highlighted the importance of creating time to discuss and share learning on what a case study might look like.

## 13.4 OUR FINDINGS

### Benefits of the programme

Via an evaluation exercise, the project participants identified the benefits of the CUPP Partnership Support Programme as follows:

- **Working together with peers.** Considered to be the strongest aspect of the programme, this was an opportunity to share learning and receive support and was highly valued.
- **Practical support to develop the work.** Partnerships welcomed the opportunity to work on specific areas that were important to them. Community partners noted that receiving payment for their time was key to enabling them to get involved.
- **Valuing of the work.** Many of the partners were pleased that the existence of the programme provided an acknowledgement of the importance of the work. One researcher commented that it was a “Recognition and institutional validation of the social and cultural significance of co-created research with community partners”.
- **Better understanding of culture, strategy and operations of University of Brighton.** Both academics and community partners found it useful to understand more about these areas. In particular, researchers noted that they had achieved a better understanding of the role of professional services.
- **Learning about the external environment.** Participants value finding out more about HE frameworks but also about the development of social value as a concept.
- **Spending time with partner developing the work.** A number of participants mentioned that finding time to get to know each other better was hard to achieve, but the project enabled this process.
- **Contributing to university strategy.** The opportunity to contribute to university strategy was also welcomed.

### Suggested improvements

- **More time, more planning.** Participants found aspects of the programme too rushed and would have liked a map of the entire programme now that it has been run once.
- **Build this into CUPP seed funding programme.** Participants wanted to see a continuous programme from seed funding into partnership development. They considered that many of the sessions would have been useful at an earlier stage.
- **Changes to the programme.** Some minor changes to the content were suggested with more on social value and the HE environment.
- **Make the programme more welcoming** to non-academics by encouraging more plain language and smaller groups.

## 13.5 INTEGRATED VALUE MODEL

### Background

Our exploration of an integrated value model for this SEE-PER project builds on the work of others including the NCCPE. In an evaluation of a CUPP seed-funding programme, the following areas of value were identified for these partnerships: research, student involvement, community benefit and developing neighbourliness. In a discussion document for NCCPE Hart et al (NCCPE Research Synthesis: No 1) identified seven dimensions of social engagement in an early briefing paper:

- Public access to facilities
- Public access to knowledge
- Student engagement
- Faculty engagement
- Widening participation
- Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement
- Institutional relationship and partnership building

## 13.6 SUGGESTED CRITERIA

Following our discussion at the Learning Away Day, we considered what value frameworks should include.

For example, what evidence is there that the work of the partnership (now, or expected in the next two years) will:

- Support research impact, as identified in the REF?
- Impact upon teaching and learning, as identified in course evaluations/TEF?
- Meet knowledge exchange requirements?

Future research could further develop this to create a model of value by which our PER partnerships can be judged. It needs to both reflect the complexity of partnerships, but also be accessible so it can be used by partners to guide their current and future work together. It will also need to connect with the established frameworks for each domain e.g. REF for research, rather than inventing something new.

The SEE-PER project has confirmed to us the sheer complexity of the world in which community-university partnerships are operating. In our considerable experience at CUPP, this is both an asset and a challenge. On the one hand, it can enable partnerships to make pragmatic choices about which value domain is likely to be most fruitful, however, given the complexity involved, it may be difficult to see beyond certain domains (e.g. research) to appreciate the value other areas can also give. We think this is an area ripe for further research given its importance in underpinning community-university collaborations and high quality PER.

## 13.7 LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

### Major points

A major learning point was how, with relatively modest funds, this project enabled much needed conversations and activity to take place. In addition, the requirement to have a Pro-Vice-Chancellor as the Principal Investigator was essential in sharing these conversations across the university and amongst senior leaders. Staff time provided by the funding and the match has been of critical importance, without which, progress would not have happened. Funds for community participation have been crucial

to enable our community partners to be involved in the Advisory and PER partnerships work. External consultants brought in key expertise in revenue generation, marketing and legal forms of partnership, which we paired with key members of professional services staff to ensure knowledge from outside, can be embedded. We have also had very useful input from other universities. The NCCPE programme facilitated valuable contributions through the paired interviews and group meetings, and other input has been enabled via expert consultancy paid for using SEE-PER funds.

### **Additional findings**

This project also enabled us to both confirm and develop our understanding of practice in building community-university partnership. This included the following findings:

- Community-university partnerships are often at different stages and have different needs accordingly.
  - Emergent partnerships need dedicated support to create the pipeline for future success.
  - Core needs of partnerships are: what organisational form to use; telling their story/ evidencing impact; resourcing their work; managing university complexity; achieving mutual benefit.
  - There are many different options for partnerships and some may best be wholly or mainly managed within the university rather than taking other forms such as a community-led organisation or a hybrid community-university partnership organisation.
  - For those partnerships that become separate to the university, thought needs to be given to legal forms, as there are many options that will suit different situations.
  - Often partnerships evolve where the IP cannot be solely attributed to the university and these partnerships, particularly where the knowledge is co-produced, can be drawn on by the university to evidence its knowledge exchange, rather than knowledge transfer, approach.
  - A 'value model' that addresses the complexity of the benefits produced (research, teaching, knowledge exchange, social) is required.
- Governance involving key stakeholders needs to be in place that assess the value of the partnerships. This should include University senior leadership, community partners, engaged academics, students at different levels and professional services staff.
  - Marketing, Finance, HR and Information Services, Estates have approaches/protocols that do not always align with this work. Partnerships can struggle in getting what they need from key professional support services because of both the rules that these services work to and the lack of attention to the interface between each. Navigating the internal university system is a major piece of work for these partnerships.

Dr Nicolette Fox  
Community-University Partnership Programme (CUPP)  
Watson Building  
University of Brighton  
Brighton  
BN1 9PH

[www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp)  
[cupp@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:cupp@brighton.ac.uk)  
+44 (0)1273 643004

With thanks to Willie Robb for photography: [www.willierobb.com](http://www.willierobb.com)