

Social Engagement by London's HEIs

Agenda and Notes from Project Panel Meetings

June 2009

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Agenda for First Panel Meeting

Meeting to be on Thursday 7th February 2008
Venue: Room ST275, Stewart House, 32 Russell Square London WC1B 5DN.
Time: 14:00 to 15:30 hrs
Purpose of meeting: <i>Discuss project and initial stages of work plan</i>

1. Apologies

Please notify apologies to Paresh Shah (email to paresh.shah@londonhigher.ac.uk)

2. Welcome by the Panel Chair, Professor Geoff Petts. *Guide time 14:00-14:05.*

3. Introductions. *Guide time 14:05-14:20.*

Professor Petts (GP) will invite all Panel members to introduce themselves and speak briefly about their particular interest in and/or aims for this project.

4. Chair's Opening Remarks. *Guide time 14:20-14:30.*

GP will highlight the project aims and delivery requirements

5. Presentation by Paresh Shah. *Guide time 14:30-14:45.*

Paresh Shah (Project manager) will provide a Project overview, including an initial work plan

6. Discussion of work plan and draft Survey questionnaire. *Guide time 14:45-15:15.*

Members will be invited to discuss the project, comment on the outline work plan, and to contribute ideas and suggestions on the project itself and on the indicated process and deliverables.

7. Any Other Business. *Guide time 15:15-15:30.*

- Members will discuss whether it would be useful to invite additional members to join the Panel.
- Date and time for next and future meetings.

Notes from First Panel Meeting

1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the discussions held during the first Panel meeting. Action points which require information from Panel members are highlighted at the end of each section.

2. Discussions

The meeting centred on exploring the range of activities which the project could focus on. Besides contemplating topics, aspects such as how to gather evidence, assess impact, highlight “success stories” and ensure community associations/groups are involved.

3. Project topics

It was agreed during the meeting to produce a list of areas/topics which could potentially be addressed by the project in conjunction with the areas mentioned in the grant and preliminary discussions (Skills, lifelong learning, socially disadvantaged groups, children and young adults; public space)

List of potential topics

- Student and staff volunteering; examples/categories, processes involved, student aspirations/enthusiasms, student unions, drawbacks (e.g. “not cool”), staff extra-curricular activities, HEACF fund
- Civic values/citizenship; “internal” ethos of HEIs as foundation for “external” staff/student interactions with communities
- environmental/sustainability issues; e.g. climate change, HEIs non-political (drive changes in institutional and individual behaviour?); also wildlife conservation and gardening for mental well-being [both not mentioned explicitly in meeting, PS]
- Sense of community in London; students identify with “campus” area or college not the city, London as a series of villages, differences between students in halls (predominantly from outside) to students living at home?, “studentification” of areas
- unique position of London; world city, financial capital but social exclusion, refugee communities/ethnic diversity higher in London than elsewhere
- assessing impact; as with voluntary/“third” sector, how can HEIs show value for money in social/community engagement?
- widening participation; hard-to-reach groups, also links with schools/academies/trusts, FE-HE links and social impact

ACTION: Panel members are requested to add any topics which are not on the list above. These will feed into questionnaires and interviews.

4. Draft Questionnaire

The draft HEI questionnaire was not sufficiently flexible to adequately “capture” HE-social impacts.

ACTION: A revised version will be drawn up by PS to be piloted at King’s College, Kingston University and University of the Arts.

5. Next Panel meeting

A suitable date in June to be identified for the next meeting in order to discuss findings from interviews and questionnaires.

ACTION: Panel members to notify PS of possible dates for an afternoon meeting.

6. Other items

PS will arrange dates with individual Panel members and/or suitable contacts to discuss social/community engagement activities .

Agenda for Second Panel Meeting

Meeting to be on Wednesday 18th June 2008
Venue: Room ST275, Stewart House, 32 Russell Square London WC1B 5DN.
Time: 09:30 to 11:00 hrs
Purpose of meeting: <i>Discuss interview phase of project and future plan</i>

1. Apologies

Please notify any other apologies to Paresh Shah (email to paresh.shah@londonhigher.ac.uk).

2. Welcome by the Panel Chair, Professor Geoff Petts *Guide time 15 minutes*

3. Presentation by Paresh Shah and Discussion *Guide time 45 minute*

Overview of work to date, meetings to arrange and discussion on work for next three - five months. Members are asked to make contributions during the presentation.

4. Agreed actions *Guide time 15 minutes*

5. Any Other Business *Guide time 15 minutes*

i) Date and time for next meeting in November

Notes from Second Panel Meeting, 18th June 2008

1. Introduction

This is a an overview and summary of discussions held during the second SILH Panel meeting. Action points are highlighted at the end of each section.

2. Presentation and Discussions

A summary of the procedure and main findings from interviews at various HEIs and organisations was provided. Gaps on employability/employment and elderly/retired groups was discussed. Preliminary “mapping” needs to be completed and validated with feedback. Information on why HEIs carry out social outreach activities should be explored.

Strategies and coordination of social/community outreach activities seem to be fragmented within HEIs. Units in some HEIs are based within Marketing and/or Student Recruitment.

Project outputs should provide a balance between recognising examples of “good practice” but also identifying gaps/issues for further study. “Good practice” appears to be concentrated around projects and individuals.

The main role of HEIs is teaching and research - social/community benefits from HEIs are a consequence of activities by students and staff, largely motivated by social conscience.

One “inward” looking output from the project could be the need for better coordination within HEIs of social impact work. Any “outward” looking elements??

ACTIONS (PS to follow up)

- Address gaps on employability/employment and elderly/retired groups by information from individuals/organisations (previously identified and also to include London Skills and Employment Board and GLA Older People Group)
- Information on purchasing policies designed to support local businesses should be obtained (e.g. UoL suppliers consortium; any others?)
- Preliminary “mapping” to be completed and validated with feedback
- Opinions on motivations for social outreach activities to be solicited from HE outreach/liaison staff (limited number of contacts known to PS)

3. Community Viewpoints/Focus Groups

The necessity and practicalities in following the project timetable on focus groups and Town Hall meetings was debated. It was agreed, because of many uncertainties, the best approach was to commission an opinion poll from a professional organisation of a sample of the general public using questions agreed by the Panel.

Results from an opinion poll should provide issues to be explored in appropriately designed focus groups (again outsourced), supplemented by interviews with experts (e.g. borough officers).

An opinion poll should:

- be carried out in early October 2008 with a report by mid-October

- include stratified sampling with variables such as income, ethnicity, gender and age (any others? e.g. social class, number of children)

Focus groups should:

- be planned for November 2008
- debate findings from opinion polls and from issues identified by the Panel

Panel members should receive the opinion poll report in good time for a meeting to be held at the end of October to decide issues for focus groups.

ACTIONS (PS/Panel members)

- Obtain costings/timescales from opinion poll companies such as Omnibus, Ipsos Mori, YouGov, National Centre for Social Research, National Opinion Polls and Social Community Planning Research.
- Panel members to contribute to compilation of opinion poll questions (August)
- Obtain costings/timescales from focus group organisers

4. Next Panel Meeting

A suitable date in late-October needs to be agreed to discuss findings from opinion polls and next steps.

To assist Panel thinking about focus groups, a short presentation is requested on the BTCV participatory evaluation project "Changed Places, Changed Lives", <http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/changedplaces>.

ACTION: Panel members to inform PS for October dates for extended meeting.

Agenda for Third Panel Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday 30th October 2008
Venue: Room ST275, Stewart House , 32 Russell Square London WC1B 5DN
Time: 09:30 to 12:30 hrs
Purpose of meeting: Discuss opinion polls and future plans

1. **Welcome by Panel Chair, Professor Geoff Petts** *Guide time 10 minutes*

2. **Presentation by YouGov plc on opinion poll results and discussion** *Guide time 60 minutes*
Overview of opinion poll findings, implications for London HEIs and issues to address in next phase of work

3. **Presentation by BTCV on focus groups and discussion** *Guide time 45 minutes*
Overview and philosophy for the “Changed Places, Changed Lives” project conducted by BTCV

4. **General discussion and planning for Phase 3 (Focus groups and Expert Opinions)** *Guide time 50 minutes*
 - Aims
 - Methods
 - Project brief
 - Timetable
 - Agreed actions

5. **Any Other Business** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - i) Date and time for next meeting in February

6. **Apologies for absences**
Please notify apologies to Paresh Shah (email to paresh.shah@londonhigher.ac.uk)

Notes from Third Panel Meeting

Presentation of YouGov online survey results highlighted lack of perceived benefit or interaction by elderly, children and young adults with HEIs. Older people and economically inactive (unemployed/at home) are less likely to use HEIs.

How can social “offer” or HEI benefit be better communicated? This lack of communication also involves children and parents with respect to schools outreach/schools liaison.

Flow and progression between schools – FE – HE needs to better coordinated?

However, lack of awareness of HEI benefits may be related to “audience” – online survey was of general public but likely to be better awareness and perceptions of HE where HE activities are targeted, e.g. schools involved in ambassadors schemes, AimHigher programmes; prisons with HE research projects

“Changed Places, Changed Lives” involved impact assessment of BTCV-sponsored activities involved focused participatory discussions:

- concentrated on eliciting feelings, perceptions, future needs in selected projects.
- “voices”, quotes, emotional journey, wellbeing, feeling valued, learning from each other

estimate social return on investment by BTCV is £4 return for £1 investment --- what is it for London/UK HEIs?

Focus groups for SILH project - areas for questions:

- why do we need your help? (HEIs and social interactions/outreach)
- perceptions/attitudes of HEI activities
- draw up lists of categories of activities to ask what future needs might be

Need to think about future HE role as well – demographics/rise in elderly population, hence not just schools and business/knowledge transfer.

Organising focus groups:

Sufficient budget present, need to consider target groups such as single parents, BAME etc. and recruitment from different socioeconomic groups (esp. lower income groups)

explore benefits of HEIs as well as gaps/weaknesses

also obtain information from expert opinions – e.g. teachers, lifelong learning networks

Action

PS to develop project brief and invitation to tender documents for approval by Panel and then request expressions of interest from market research organisations.

Focus group organisation, research and reports to be completed by March 2009.

Agenda for Fourth Panel Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday 12th March 2009
Venue: Room B204, Brunei Gallery , Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG
Time: 09:30 to 12:30 hrs
Purpose of meeting: Discuss Ipsos MORI findings and future plans

1. **Welcome by Panel Chair, Professor Geoff Petts** *Guide time 10 minutes*

2. **Presentation by Ipsos MORI on stakeholder interviews and discussion groups.** *Guide time 60 minutes.*
 - Overview of findings and implications for London HEIs

3. **General discussion and planning for final reports.** *Guide time 60 minutes.*
 - outline sections/headings for a **main report** on findings
 - materials to include – mapping, opinion polls, discussion groups
 - overall conclusions
 - strengths, “good practice”
 - weaknesses, gaps to address
 - possible further work

 - report on **case studies** / communication of existing activities
 - possible topics
 - format for case studies, length, photos, quotes

 - format for **web resources** including inks to HEI / project webpages

4. **Dissemination activities.** *Guide time 30 minutes*
 - London Higher AGM and Plenary, June 23rd 2009
 - Roehampton civic engagement conference, May/June 2009
 - specific conference / meeting in Autumn 2009?

5. **Any Other Business** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - i) Date and time for final meeting in May.

6. **Apologies for absences**

Please notify apologies to Paresh Shah (email to paresh.shah@londonhigher.ac.uk)

Notes on Fourth Panel Meeting

Overview of Ipsos MORI findings

Difficult to achieve intended demographics for some of the focus groups because of problems in recruitment.

HEI activities in social impact/engagement not well understood in focus groups, sometimes uncertain why they are being done.

Some classifications possible from the various discussions, e.g. lifestage but not age important in attitudes/perceptions of HEIs.

Little or no information on “political” significance of HEIs as centres of intellectual/academic freedom contributing to local and national debates affecting society.

Communication of social impacts of HEIs could involve target schools, civic/community participation and services to (local) business.

Of most importance is communication on schools liaison – all groups thought this important and vital.

London's HE sector

Not explored specifically in focus groups were concepts around “London is different”, pace of life, numbers of HEIs etc. However, difficult to know if audiences able to provide information on this – depends on experiences of living outside London and being aware of possible differences in HEIs in and out of London.

London perceived to have more part-time students than other cities, certainly has more ethnically diverse students (and staff?) compared to other UK cities.

Are students/public using HEIs as part of overall set of facilities (covering arts through to part-time study) in London compared to outside London where one or two HEIs dominate the city and these HEIs are well known to provide certain facilities/services?

One observation is “more people are ‘in’ universities but not ‘of’ them” – uniqueness of HE/HE study less nowadays compared to 15-20 years ago.

People move to London not just to study or go into HE.

SILH reports

Need key recommendations, should perhaps ask why should London HEIs be involved in social impact/engagement?

Concepts:

- **HEIs as places of “trust”** especially in a recession brought about by market-driven ideologies; HEIs offer independent neutral space for debate, whether local or national/international issues; HEIs as sources/examples of civic values and responsibility;
- **Terminology on social impact:** SILH project not measuring or assessing “impact” – other terms more appropriate for use in reports such as social contribution, social agenda or social engagement.

Agenda for Fifth Panel Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday 27th April 2009
Venue: Room B204, Brunei Gallery , Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG
Time: 10:00 to 12:30 hrs
Purpose of meeting: Discuss project reports and future plans

1. **Introduction by Prof. Geoff Petts and Paresh Shah** *Guide time 5 minutes*
2. **Overview by Ipsos MORI on final report** *Guide time 45 minutes.*
 - revised report and key messages
3. **Other national projects and potential further work.** *Guide time 15 minutes*
 - update on HEART project (5 mins)
 - update on CUPP conference (2-3 April 2009) and Beacons project (5 mins)
 - possible work on measuring social “impact” (5 mins)
4. **Draft of June launch report.** *Guide time 30 minutes.*
 - finalise overall conclusions, recommendations and figures
 - London HEI strengths, “good practice”
 - London HEI weaknesses, gaps to address
 - numbers of copies and approximate publication costs
 - set deadline for text and figures
5. **Research Report.** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - Reports on “mapping” (to be done), online survey (YouGov) and discussion groups (Ipsos MORI)
 - set deadline for mapping report
6. **Dissemination activities.** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - London Higher AGM and Plenary, June 23rd 2009
 - dissemination through media – e.g. Times Higher (press release)
 - abstract for Roehampton conference (separate paper)
 - any others?
7. **Any Other Business** *Guide time 5 minutes*
8. **Date and Time for Final SILH Project Panel Meeting**
 - June 4th, from 09:30, Room B203, Brunei Gallery, SOAS
 - Agenda tbc

9. **Apologies for absences**

Please notify apologies to Paresh Shah (email to paresh.shah@londonhigher.ac.uk)

Notes from Fifth Panel Meeting

Ipsos MORI final report

Focus groups – open to a “story” on how London’s HEIs are carrying out social/community activities, especially in schools liaison.

Need for efficient targeted communication strategies was also emphasised in the YouGov online survey report.

Pan-London promotion would work alongside “local” efforts by HEIs.

SILH reports

Research/Technical report – possibly include section on where they may be discrepancies between YouGov and Ipsos reports. However, two different approaches/methods, not exhaustive sample sizes from all possible demographics, so bound to be some discrepancies.

Part-time student numbers – need to consider postgraduate as well as undergraduate

Staff – mostly full-time but are many older staff part-time?

HEIs have multiple roles, not just ivory towers, continually assessed.

Community – also multiple, not just one “homogeneous” entity, some of the public not sure whether HEIs should be involved in engagement/outreach work.

HEART project (part of ESRC-sponsored consortium)

Feedback on London “case study” done by OU Milton Keynes: community perceptions indicated HEIs remote, not embedded within area, also problem of initiative overload from HEIs.

CUPP Conference, 2-3 April 2009

Community-university partnerships programme at University of Brighton

Conference celebrated recent achievements, useful contacts made with NCCPE (Beacons project centre) and staff at various UK HEIs involved in community engagement, schools liaison etc.

Problem of defining and measuring “impact” – issues not just confined to SILH work but also being faced in other, more longstanding, projects.

Agenda for Sixth and Final Panel Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday 4th June 2009
Venue: Room B203, Brunei Gallery , Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG
Time: 10:00 to 11:30 hrs
Purpose of meeting: Discuss project reports and dissemination activities

1. **Introduction by Professor Geoff Petts** *Guide time 5 minutes*

2. **Social Engagement reports** *Guide time 45 minutes.*
 - final draft of launch report and key messages
 - technical reports for website: mapping report, YouGov report, Ipsos MORI report
 - Panel Meeting notes for website

3. **Dissemination activities** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - London Higher AGM and Plenary, June 23rd 2009
 - dissemination through media – e.g. Times Higher (press release)
 - possible conference / meeting in Autumn 2009
 - any others?

4. **Case Study/ Best Practice booklets** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - A5 booklets on schools outreach, “community cohesion”, physical and mental wellbeing (sports/arts), business services and research and society
 - information from HEIs, outreach and media officers
 - standardise numbers of entries per HEI, word limits, images, quotes

5. **Project webpages** *Guide time 10 minutes*
 - reports, case studies
 - links and resources to other sites

6. **Any Other Business** *Guide time 10 minutes*

Apologies for absences

Please notify apologies to Paresh Shah

Notes from Sixth and Final Panel Meeting

Launch report for 23rd June

Is 10% a good or poor level of engagement by the public for use of HEI services and facilities? this serves as a baseline for pan-London studies if there is no prior data.

Patchiness in knowledge of social engagement activities by the public.

Higher figures may be possible with individual HEIs asking questions on specific activities in a local area (e.g. dance classes/Greenwich; sports/North London).

Schools liaison section – should also mention FE liaison and widening participation activities for “working class” children.

HEI projects covering urban regeneration, wellbeing and sustainability – also need to consider “value” of open space, city farms, food production, healthy eating and overcoming “food deserts” (inner city areas where cheap nutritious food is hard to obtain through e.g. closure of local shops/out of town supermarkets not accessible by public transport).

Taking up Recommendations in Report

Implementation of recommendations could involve identifying certain HEIs as “champions” which would take up suggestions and eventually help evaluate them. Some of the recommendations could also overlap with possible activities planned by the SHELL project at London Higher.

In run-up to 2012 Olympics, EU recently declared 2011 as “Year of the Volunteer” with funding available for projects. Could combine HEI-social engagement activities with this initiative.

London Higher AGM on 23rd June

Brief presentation of project findings, also look into providing interviews/information to education correspondents from national press.

Follow on activities

Possibilities include exploring links with Beacons project in London and the national centre; contacting “thinktanks” exploring sustainability and wellbeing; also contacting student-led organisations and unions concerned with community engagement.

EU-funded PURE project has 15 regions for study of HE “third stream” work including the Thames Gateway area. Recommendations and findings could be made available to PURE project coordinators.