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## University-community engagement at Liverpool Hope University: building social capital in the inner city?

Working Paper 4 “University learning with  
excluded communities” project

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

There is an increasing recognition of the importance of societal contributions made by the higher education sector. In the transition towards a knowledge-based economy and a learning society, universities are key learning and knowledge institutions. Universities perform a range of different roles with respect to knowledge, being involved in its creation, editing, circulation, storage, replacement and challenging. The fact that knowledge-creation and innovation are increasingly interactive processes has brought universities into contact with an increasing number of partner organisations, and the increasing salience and value of university knowledges means that there are an increasing number of stakeholders actively demanding a say in what universities should be doing.

At the same time, one of the key challenges for the knowledge economy is social exclusion (Byrne, 1999; Academy of Engineering, 2007), which is to say the growth of an increasing segment of the population who are disconnected from the interactions, relationships and networks which characterise knowledge-based societies. These communities exist at the margins of society, either actively discriminated against or suffering from the disappearance of their traditional rationales with nothing to replace old industries and patterns of social organisation. Exclusion brings with it a raft of social, economic and political problems, from increasing welfare bills to social tensions and even the possibility to create a sense of political crisis.

Moulaert *et al.* (2000) characterise this social exclusion as comprising two main facets, namely external disintegration and internal fragmentation. External disintegration arises from a disinvestment in communities which have lost their place in the knowledge economy – as external places no longer seek their resources, people in such places lose their contacts with and knowledge of wider society. Internal fragmentation can be conceived of as the disintegration of the institutions associated with the industrial society, and a failure of new institutions to emerge in the absence of strong economic imperatives. These two factors can self-reinforce to give a sense of hopelessness in these places that there is little that can address these problems, and re-engage them into the mainstream networks and relationships of contemporary society.

At the confluence of these arguments is a suggestion that there might be a role for universities to actively engage with excluded communities as stakeholders to ensure that knowledge generated meets their needs. In so doing, universities improve the quality of their research by working closely with these excluded groups, and utilising their knowledges as they might when working closely to the needs of other societal stakeholders such as businesses, government or the non-profit sector. At the same time, engaging with those communities might stimulate processes of societal learning that in turn address both the problems – disintegration and fragmentation – which constrain the future prospects of such excluded communities in the contemporary world. There appears therefore to be the potential for very positive outcomes in universities engaging with excluded communities, and indeed an argument that such community engagement should become a core mission for the higher education sector.

To better understand the contribution of higher education to driving processes of social inclusion, it is therefore necessary to develop detailed understandings of how universities work with such communities, the respective benefits that such collaboration produces, the dynamics of such interactions, and to ask whether it does indeed re-engage these communities by re-engaging them externally and mobilising them internally. This working paper reports findings from a detailed case study of one such institution, Liverpool Hope University, which in the last decade has placed a great deal of emphasis in its community engagement activity. The working paper seeks to understand the significance of that engagement activity in terms of its contribution to community social capital in excluded communities around the city of Liverpool. From this, the working paper seeks to understand how university-community engagement can contribute to addressing the challenge of urban exclusion, and whether the contributions made have a wider societal significance reflected in terms of university institutional missions and the expectations placed by society on the university system.

The working paper places this case study within a wider theoretical framework seeking to create a link between the development of human capital and co-learning processes between universities and excluded communities. The paper begins by setting out a theoretical framework, and explaining the background and the methodology to the case study. The paper then provides some historical background to Liverpool Hope University, the city of Liverpool, and provides a synthetic overview of the Liverpool Hope (LHU) engagement model. The model characterises LHU's engagement as comprising four 'pillars' which overlap and interact within the university itself, and the paper explains the various pillars, their elements and the learning processes which they support. The paper then concludes by reflecting on how university-community engagement can become significant by changing the position of communities within their wider local contexts as well as changing the orientation of the university towards the *idea* of community engagement.

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This working paper is the fourth in a series of five project working papers, which covered a theoretical review of engagement, an international review of community engagement, a survey of three UK regions, and two other case studies associated with Napier and Salford (forthcoming) Universities. The authors would like to thank the interviewees who gave their time and permission to assist with the research, and point out the usual disclaimer that any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fundamental to understanding university engagement with excluded communities is understanding why universities might choose to engage. A traditional conception of universities is that they deliver teaching and research as their core missions, and that they may undertake other activities for other reasons that make sense within their own particular contexts. There is uncertainty as to whether there is sufficient coherence within activities currently emerging for it to be considered as a novel mission for universities, or whether it remains a series of externalities which emerge in a more or less uncoordinated way. This chapter presents a theoretical framework in seeking to understand the significance of university-community engagement as a solution to the problems of social exclusion.

In this chapter, we explore the reality of university engagement as one of many missions for universities in an increasingly overloaded managerial environment. The key conundrum for university-community engagement is how can community engagement compete with larger, more central missions. Of course the answer to this is not straightforward, and engagement has emerged in practice in many different ways in many different situations, namely that **engagement is an emergent mission**. However, a number of common themes can be discerned, in terms of the common drivers for engagement and common barriers hindering the development of effective engagement. Reflection on the interplay between these drivers and barriers allows a better understanding of the scope and the impact of the engagement mission in the wider higher education landscape.

### 2.1 THE DYNAMICS OF THE NEW SOCIETAL COMPACT

It is clear that societal expectations of higher education are changing. The example of student fees illustrates this – up until the age of the truly mass higher education experience, there was a belief that the general societal benefits of higher education justified fully subsidising higher education for students. However, mass higher education has made that option prohibitively expensive, and at the same time social atomisation has made it possible to develop an argue for the individual benefits that accrue to the holders of higher education. A mix of pragmatic financial concerns (rising costs) as well as a broader social shift (atomisation) have changed the relationship between universities and society from that of a public good towards an increasingly marketised commodity.

In order to provide a background to understand the changing drivers on the societal compact, this relationship of expectations between society and higher education (*cf.* 2.2), in this section we reflect on broader issue of the societal compact. The term is used to describe an implicit bargain between society and higher education, which will be mediated through a range of institutions dependent on context, at a variety of degrees of remove. In the UK (England), the Treasury, DIUS, HEFCE, learned societies, charities (most notably Wellcome), the NHS and regional development agencies all have a stake in defining this societal relationship on the basis of their own interests, and the way their stakeholders stimulate their development.

The key issue here is that universities exist within relationships of funding and accountability that require them to respond to these stakeholders, and the changing position of these relationships results in the shifting societal compact. Understandings



of these contributions have become increasingly nuanced, moving away from a 'linear' model of knowledge transfer with universities undertaking blue-skies research, and transferring it to firms and other societal institutions which exploit that knowledge. The paradigm of knowledge transfer has evolved to that of knowledge exchange, where universities and other key partners come together with their own knowledge capacities, interests, questions and challenges, and work collectively to create new knowledge, products, processes, technologies and solutions.

Yet, at the same time, there are signs of societal dissatisfaction with the way universities contribute to their host societies. Governments have reinvented the idea of the public research laboratory into the model of the public-private research institute, co-ordinating societal efforts to exploit existing knowledges. In the UK, the Energy Technology Institute is one example of a large scale research activity seeking to provide social benefits, in which universities are taking a secondary co-ordinating role with the emphasis lying on relevance and business leadership. The long-term nature of university research and short-term pressures in the credit crunch have exacerbated this trend of emphasising the societal importance of immediately relevant findings over the longer-term development of societal knowledge bases.

Barnett (2000) refers to the expectation that universities produce societal benefits in return for their privileges and public funding as the 'societal compact'; in the 1970s, this compact was grounded in universities as independent, autonomous and slightly detached institutions contributing to a democratic society. The current expectation seems to be evolving into universities as engaged, inter-dependent, and accountable institutions contributing to a more competitive and sustainable society. Increased interest in engagement can be regarded as a reflection of this evolving societal compact, and therefore considering the dynamics of this engagement provides a practical lens through which to consider the changing institution of university in the context of the new knowledge economy.

A final point worth reiterating at this stage is that this is strongly rooted in a network model of governance where inter-dependent organisations hold one another to account. In that sense, the societal compact is rooted in a notion of **inter-institutional network accountability** rather than a **direct democratic societal accountability** or the previously dominant model of **producer-led peer accountability**. The consequence of this is that whilst universities are accountable to a group of external stakeholders, those stakeholders are not individuals within society, but rather institutions who make claims upon universities on the basis that they represent or articulate a societal interest.

## **2.2 THE PROBLEMATIC OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY**

### **2.2.1 Social exclusion and exclusionary practices**

The phenomenon of social exclusion is not a novel one: it is a widespread phenomenon of cultural anthropology that particular groups in a society face systematic discrimination which undermines their life chances whilst making that exclusion seem natural or even justified. At its broadest definition, social exclusion can be regarded as a systematic disadvantaging within social resource allocation mechanisms in ways which become self-reinforcing and self-justifying without necessarily having a more coherent underpinning rationale. Social exclusion can be

regarded as a process of restriction, limiting access to markets such as labour and housing, to collective social welfare provision, or to education, to groups based on a collective rather than individual considerations.

In some cases, exclusion can stimulate positive responses and mobilisations from within those communities which create new, alternative institutions which substitute for those exclusionary activities. One of the most dramatic examples can be seen in the case of the Netherlands, where between 1890 and 1930, various ‘pillars’ were deliberately constructed. These pillars representing different social groups – protestant, catholic, socialist and liberal – encompassing schools, unions, political parties, broadcasters and social clubs to ensure that no one faced social exclusion at a time of dramatic social change. However, the more prosaic reality is that such situations are exceptional and that much exclusion can be self-reinforcing and lead to a process of societal segmentation where particular groups are held at the margins of society.

A good example of this can be seen in places where there are strongly exclusionary housing markets, which can see the weakest members of societies pushed to the fringes of the housing ladders (Stoeger, 2009). This can restrict their access to housing to expensive, short term and vulnerable rental contracts in locations not of their choosing. This in turn can prevent them finding good, stable employment, and with high rents and proportionally high travel costs can prevent them accumulating capital to secure a better housing market position. Frequently enforced moves of house further undermine their social and family connections which could otherwise provide access to informal welfare services. This example shows how housing market exclusion can in turn drive other kinds of exclusion and create a self-reinforcing process of lock-in, with communities unable to challenge their social marginalisation.

However, the emergence of the knowledge economy has given the issue of social exclusion a degree of added salience, because of the increasing importance of knowledge to the production process. At an individual level, this can mean that exclusion from adequate education (through being restricted to access to low-aspiration or vocational schools) can create a lifelong hindrance in terms of accessing suitable employment opportunities. For communities, particularly those dependent on traditional livelihoods, this can mean that their residents find themselves subjected to a spectrum of exclusionary market and social welfare practices as their rationale for existence disappears and at the same time this creates the impression that there is some kind of justification for those exclusionary practices.

Both Byrne (1999) and Moulaert (2000) talk of places of social exclusion which have emerged as a consequence of the radical economic upheavals of the last thirty years, as the certainties of the Fordist age have given way to the post-Fordist, post-industrial age. It is worth unpacking the idea of the ‘global age’ to highlight a number of challenges which have come together to destabilise a range of communities which had previously been well established and intensify exclusionary pressures. The first is globalisation and increasingly intense inter-place competition, which in particular adds to pressures of labour market insecurity for all but those with in-demand knowledge-intensive skills, Reich’s ‘symbolic analysts’. Secondly is the shift from government in territorially-bounded hierarchies to governance in looser stakeholder-networks, which can drive political exclusion for those individuals who do not aggressively mobilise to uphold their own interests in decision-making networks. Thirdly has been the erosion of the welfare state and the rise of workfarism providing

access to social services through markets, which raises the risk of exclusion from collective consumption for whilst additionally entrenching labour market segmentation.

The stability of the Fordist settlement created a mass workforce guaranteed social inclusion and access to welfare services, whilst the flexibility of post-Fordism has created a huge increase in vulnerability and ultimately to social exclusion. At the same time, a shift in the macro-policy perspective from demand-side to supply-side management has created a situation where the returns for public investment in these places are so low that they can hardly be justified, with the result that public investment has a regressive effect, creating ever sharper boundaries between successful world-city regions and a fragmented archipelago of excluded communities. A lack of inflow of investment and resources can cut these places off from the wider economy, further locking them into this pattern of underinvestment and underperformance, and further restricting their citizens' access to critical societal resource allocating institutions.

*Table 1 Processes of social exclusion*

<b>Allocation mechanism</b>	<b>Exclusionary process</b>
Labour market	Short-term, flexible, vulnerable contracts with limited benefits and opportunities to save. Welfare contracts enforcing long hours in return for welfare payment, no capital formation
Housing market	Restriction to remote, undesirable parts of city with limited service provision, poor accessibility, hidden costs of transport, caring responsibilities. High rents for poor quality housing limiting saving and housing market progression; 'red lining', negative equity.
Education provision	Discriminatory access requirements based on existing pupils or residence base – inner city schools. Limited progression and participation through education system, access only to part-time, low-cost higher ed.
Access to transport	Transport network goes through, not into, area, bringing all costs and no benefits. Poor public transport raises commuting times and reduces opportunities to networks with people in other suburbs.
Health services	Restriction/ rationing of service provision even where theoretical entitlement exists. Shift from public health to emergency health measures, limited preventative/ elective activities
Kinship ties	Fragmentation of coherent family units across urban area reducing opportunities for interaction and informal provision Emphasis on household survival strategies reduces opportunities for capital formation and pooling at family level.

Governance networks	Political representatives excluded from decision-making venues because no interest in constituency.  Community voice excluded from governance networks because seen as being pathological or unreasonable.
State violence monopoly	Retreat of police from problem areas, increased costs and pressures of criminality  Territorial profiling and emphasis on enforcement rather than welfare functions of law services.
Production networks	Failure to benefit from employment created through local investments in infrastructure and inward investment  Limited workforce progression from informal-local sector to formal-external sector.
Private services	Low levels of services for high costs through <i>de facto</i> monopoly situations (e.g. water provision)  Reliance on informal services
<b>Financial services</b>	Failure to benefit from cost reductions for secure payments –(e.g. direct debit discounts); time and monetary costs of up-front payments.  Reliance on doorstep lending and exclusion from formal credit markets, reducing opportunities for capital formation.

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### **2.2.2 Social exclusion as a territorial process: socially excluded communities**

The impacts on the community can be quite devastating because of the human consequences of this exclusion. In the first instance, those with the wherewithal to leave do so, and so there is a kind of centrifuging effect, distilling the excluded and further exacerbating their problems, by further reducing their access to socialised resources and undermining social capital. The second issue is that the lack of connection of these places leaves them unable to assert their right as communities to particular socialised assets, and public investments can be slow coming in turning around the private disinvestment. Thirdly, compounding the two previous issues, is that these communities become regarded as problems requiring external solutions rather than communities with their own assets and strengths – as well as problems – who can become partners in governance structures developing new solutions to these problems.

This can lead to very different types of communities experiencing similar types of social exclusion under these modern conditions. As well as particular groups which may face systemic discrimination, such as ethnic minorities, elder communities or young people, there are also more territorial groupings which emerge as places of exclusion. Particular places within cities have functioned as spaces of exclusion, sometimes reflecting ethnicity-based exclusionary practices ('ghettos') or more functional divisions (inner city areas). Moulaert highlights that there are particular kinds of places outside of cities whose rationale for existence has disappeared whilst leaving the residents without ready access to urban-based services necessary for

modern economic success, including the UK's former seaside resorts, fishing villages, rural and peri-urban mining and steel production villages, and old industrial towns.

Even for those within cities, who should be able at least to readily access social welfare services and urban assets, the global economy has produced new kinds of exclusionary processes and practices. In particular, the rise of the public-private partnership as new form of governance mechanism is particularly potent in excluding the voices of local residents from consultation mechanisms. Cameron & Coaffee frame this in terms of a sense of revanchism within urban regeneration projects, reclaiming derelict places from the 'socially excluded' for the 'gentle citizenry' [*de gegoede burgerij*]. This further adds to the problems of these communities by imposing new forms of exclusion on them, reducing their stability and preventing them from forming social, housing and other forms of capital.

Critiques of gentrification that fail to address the needs of those residents are long-standing and it is only the form of these governance arrangements – public private coalitions which exclude residents – which are in a sense novel. The issue with gentrification is that it is a spatial fix for the problems which arise in particular places without addressing the underlying processes of exclusion which give rise to these communities. This makes these problems intractable and difficult to address, and in recent years there have been manifestations of dissatisfaction with deep-seated urban exclusion in a series of riots in developed economies, from the North West of England in 2001, Paris (2007) and the Netherlands (2008). Riots represent a profound problem of legitimacy for governments and can help to place the exclusionary barriers which these places face back onto the political agenda.

Ensuring continued political legitimacy for governments will be a serious challenge in the coming century as there are a series of major challenges which will have to be addressed which will require substantive collective action to address and solve, including demographic ageing, climate change, resource scarcity and water access. Solving these problems will raise substantial challenges of equity and fairness within national borders and may lead to a questioning of the legitimacy of national governments. Urban inclusion is a similar challenge, because there is the risk that problems of urban exclusion might further fragment political cohesion at a time of mobilisation around developing large scale solutions to these grand challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore there is a pressing need to develop real solutions to these problems which address both the exclusionary processes and the physical manifestations of exclusion to ensure continued social cohesion.

### **2.3 THE DOUBLE BIND OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION: REENGAGING COMMUNITIES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY**

This raises the question of how to address the challenge of social exclusion by addressing the exclusionary processes which cut off these communities from the societal mainstream. Understanding exclusion is difficult because of the inherent equity problems within exclusionary practices, which justify manifestly unfair behaviour in terms of an abstract rationale, such as the efficiency of markets or the pathology of excluded communities. This raises the question of why excluded communities do not mobilise themselves to politically contest the processes of exclusion, improve their own situations and reintegrate themselves into the societal mainstream. Moulaert (2000) notes that part of the phenomenon of social exclusion is

that being externally excluded undermines the necessary internal cohesion to mobilise and challenge their political-economic placing through exclusionary processes.

Moulaert makes a conceptual distinction between two distinct elements of the experience of social exclusion. Firstly, they are disconnected by exclusionary practices and processes from wider economic, political and social structures which severely limit community opportunities. In competitions for scarce public investment, these communities may be directly excluded from investments, or investments may be configured to ensure that they are excluded from the private benefits of infrastructure investment development (e.g. through employment on building projects, from ownership of the assets (e.g. houses) built, from benefiting from improved accessibility (lack of motorway junctions or high-speed train stations). Challenging these exclusionary practices is difficult because of the pre-existence of governance coalitions ready to justify their practices as well as the time limited opportunities for contesting exclusion from investments.

The point is that what creates the preconditions for these communities external exclusion is that they fail to mobilise and successfully contest the decisions, networks and norms which frame their exclusion as acceptable and even necessary. Byrne (1999) notes that a key characteristic of such communities are that they are also internally fragmented, and have little capacity to challenge these external structural weaknesses to improve their own situations. This means that there is not the socio-cultural base on which to develop an 'urban social movement' with the capacity to challenge the decisions taken by outsiders and ensure that the community does have equitable access to social market services and is seen as a suitable space for outside investment that contributes to local growth as well as producing local exploitation.

The issue hinted at by both Moulaert and Byrne is that these two pressures are mutually reinforcing, and are two symptoms of some underlying problems. One way to conceptualise this problem would be of an absence of effective social capital. The idea of social capital was raised by Putnam to understand the self-organising capacities of groups to achieve both internal goals, but also to engage with external agents and their agendas to achieve collective goals. Bordieu has also noted that one of the key features of social capital is that – in common with other forms of capital – it provides the owners of that capital with the power over other types of capital. Therefore, the possession of social capital conveys a particular kind of power, which in the context of social exclusion, allows a contestation of exclusionary processes.

Putnam makes a distinction between internal (bonding) social capital and external (bridging) social capital. Internal social capital is the capacity for a group of individuals to work together effectively and to generate responses to particular situations, effectively a kind of self-governing capacity. External social capital is the ability to work within networks to identify the needs, vulnerabilities and resources of other actors and engage with them within these networks to achieve shared goals, or better put, to maximise ones own goal achievement whilst making sufficient concessions to others to allow them to achieve their goals.

A critical point here made by writers on social capital is that it is both transitive activity, that is to say that it exist in relations to others, and performative, in that those relationships continually have to be renewed in order to carry their value (Burt, 2000). The issue therefore in terms of social inclusion can be that these communities have lost their linkages both internally and externally, reducing the ability of individual

community members (nodes in these social capital networks) to access the capital of others. This is depicted in figure 1, which indicates both of these impacts.

Figure 1 The dual fragmentation of excluded communities in the knowledge economy

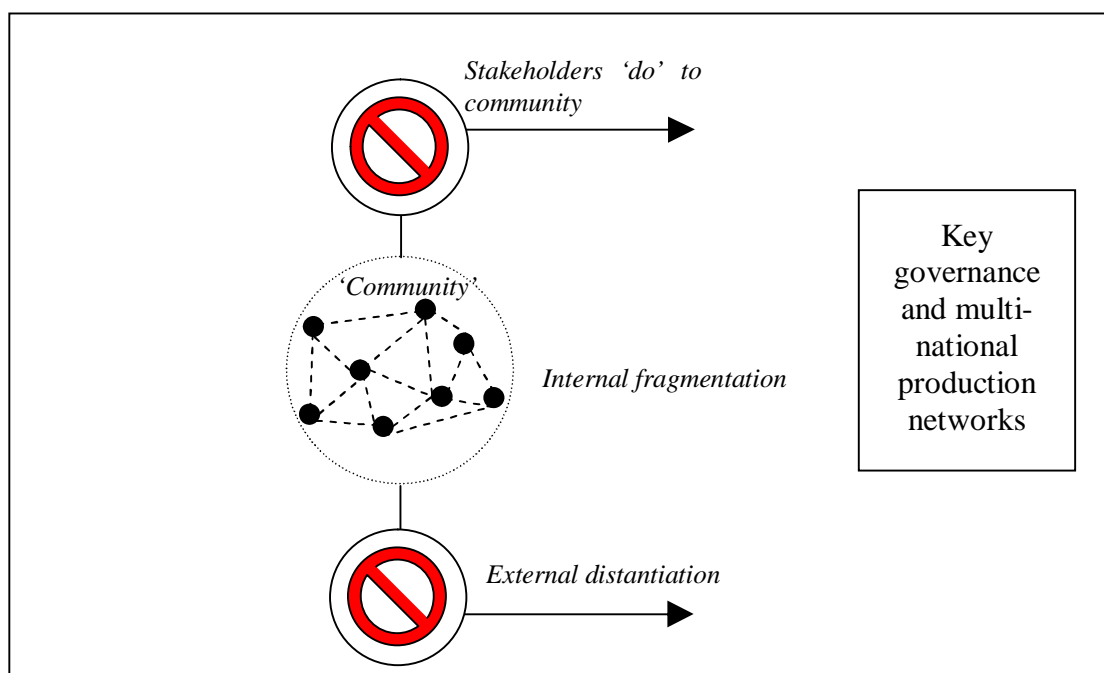


Figure 3 above attempts to make this distinction clearer through a graphic representation, which highlights three problems. Firstly, these communities are cut off from multi-national production and investment markets – they suffer from market exclusion which forces them to the fringes of labour markets. Secondly, these communities are cut off from governance networks which allocate public resources which provide places with the capacity to alter their own situation. Thirdly, these places are internally fragmented which prevents them from asserting themselves within either production or governance networks, and hence reinforces their relatively weak, excluded positions. This raises the question of what can begin a process of positive change to address this situation, given a lack of agency internally and a lack of interest externally.

## 2.4 UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: SHARED LEARNING FOR RE-ENGAGEMENT

The starting point for this project is to ask whether universities can play such a role, and in particular by engaging with excluded communities, universities can help a process of social capital accumulation in those places which addresses those problems. It is important not to underestimate the scope of the change involved in addressing the trajectories and positioning of these excluded places within wider political economies. However, it is fair to ask the question of whether working with universities can help (people in) these places to address particular exclusionary practices which reduce their opportunities for self-mobilisation and political activism.

There is a clear heuristic, building on the idea that universities working with those communities offers a 'global pipeline' which (in the language of Bathelt *et al.*, 2004) restores a sense of local 'buzz' and economic vibrancy to these places, developing

social capital to reconnect these communities to their wider societal milieu. There are clearly situations in theory and practice where universities could help communities build both bonding and bridging social capital. This might be an ongoing process, where a university engages to improve the access of a particular to internet access (both around infrastructure and training). Alternatively, it might be related to a particular local environmental issue threatening a community where a mix of advocacy and consultancy see the communities' interests better articulated and represented in external policy-networks (Cox, 2000).

A graphical representation of a heuristic for this process is provided in Figure 2 below, which highlights two situations. The first is one in which a community is excluded both in terms of being cut-off and disintegrated, and has no capacity to work with the university. The second is an 'ideal type' situation, where through working with the university, the excluded communities has addressed the problems identified above, in terms of internal cohesion, attracting external investments, and being taken more seriously by external political actors within governance networks. However, this heuristic for a change is not the same as understanding how that change can come about, nor in terms of building an understanding of the necessary changes to alter the situation.

Drawing on social network theory (e.g. Dassen, 2010), it is possible to identify a number of configurations which universities might play in improving the position of these excluded communities. In social network terms, such communities are surrounded by 'structural holes' and indeed face 'structural holes' within their community networks. There are a number of processes which universities might contribute to in improving the connectivity of these excluded communities:-

**Bridging:** the university connects members of the excluded community through the university networks to external actors, and via the university, the excluded community can access novel resources, and better represent its position within governance networks.

**Building:** the university connects members of the excluded community through the university networks to external actors, and over time, the community develop direct links to those external actors to better represent their positions and interests within governance networks.

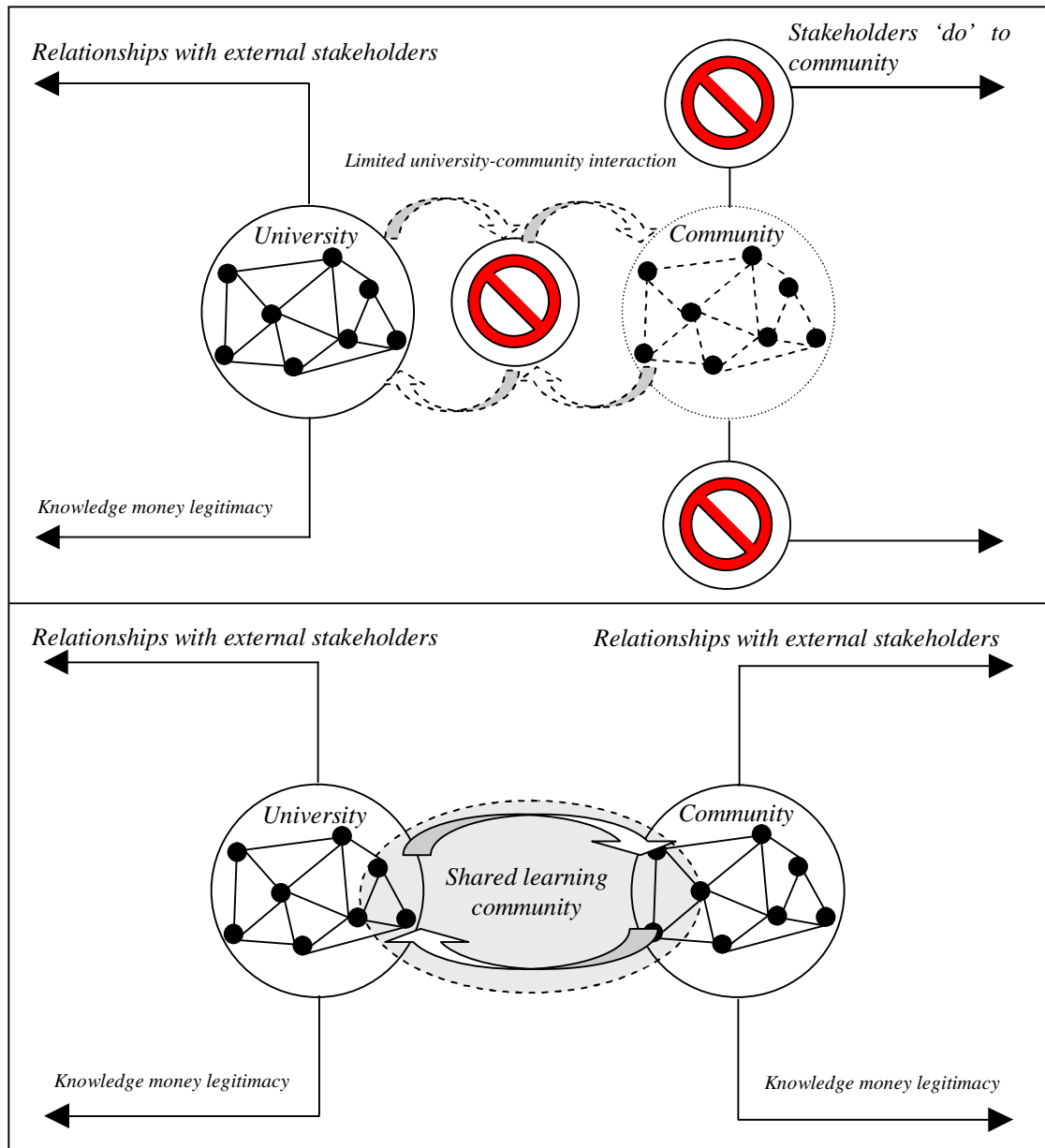
**Bonding:** by two community members working with the university, they come to know one another, and therefore have better mutual links, creating links **within** the excluded community.

**Strengthening weak ties:** the university develops a link to partners of community members, and in doing that, ties the community members more closely to their external partners, and increase the power of the community partner over the external actor.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Order Building:** the university develops links to third party actors which are then brought into the extended network of the community, and to which the community then has the opportunity to develop direct relationships.



Figure 2 A heuristic for university-community interaction improving community situation within its local political economy



The critical issue here is how that collaborative working addresses the problems of social exclusion affecting the community. Gunasekara (2006) made a distinction between university's generative and developmental regional contributions. Generative contributions were the provision of community services which were relatively simply absorbed within the regional system, whereas developmental contributions were those which changed the nature of regional innovation and governance systems. This suggests that the focus for the research needs to be developmental contributions from universities.

This implies that the interaction with the university had encouraged the community to work more co-operatively, developing internal social capital (bonding social capital, in the language of Putnam). This bonding capital gave the community a coherence which in turn made it more demanding of other political institutions, and improved its local position. We can identify from social network literatures that there are a number

of processes by which universities and excluded communities working together can create linkages that improve the connectivity of the excluded communities, which can be taken as a proxy for improving their inclusion (*cf.* Dassen, 2010). These are shown in figure 3 below<sup>1</sup>.

- **Bridging:** the university connects members of the excluded community through the university networks to external actors, and via the university, the excluded community can access novel resources, and better represent its position within governance networks.
- **Building:** the university connects members of the excluded community through the university networks to external actors, and over time, the community develop direct links to those external actors to better represent their positions and interests within governance networks.
- **Bonding:** by two community members working with the university, they come to know one another, and therefore have better mutual links, creating links **within** the excluded community.
- **Strengthening weak ties:** the university develops a link to partners of community members, and in doing that, ties the community members more closely to their external partners, and increase the power of the community partner over the external actor.
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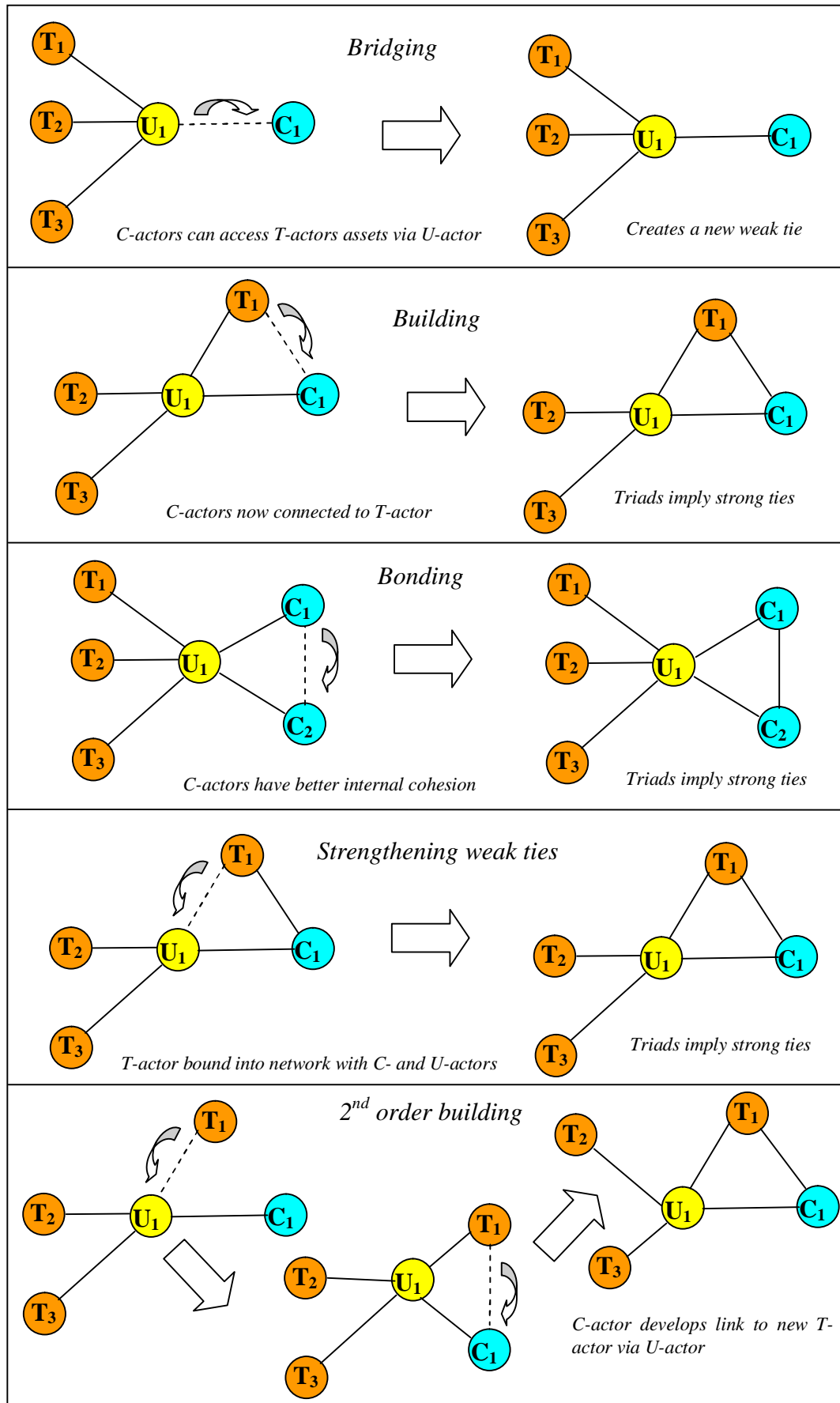
This nevertheless offers a model – or at least a heuristic – of how universities and communities could interact to increase the social capital of excluded communities. By engaging in shared learning activities, the actors create relationships which connect excluded communities to societal actors via the university. The idea is that this interaction benefits these communities by giving them greater capacity for self-determination and autonomy. They have relationships directly with these actors, reducing their reliance on external experts for improving their fortunes.

There is of course the risk here in assuming that this relationship-building process is simplistic, and ignoring the power relationships which undoubtedly influence the network dynamics. Nevertheless, considering which types of relationships universities can assist in building can understand how universities build the micro-foundations for the reintegration of socially-excluded communities within these broader (meso-scale) local political economies. This theoretical and conceptual discussion raises the opportunity that universities could work with excluded communities to improve their structure exclusion. However, this raises the question of how that might take and the kinds of empirical testing of that possibility that could take place. This is addressed in chapter 3.

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<sup>1</sup> The key to this diagram is that U are university actors, T are third party actors and S are actors in socially-excluded communities.

*Figure 3 The network building processes reintegrating excluded communities*



### **3 INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDY & METHODOLOGY**

The heuristic above suggests that a university and excluded community work together for some reason, and in the course of that collaborative working activity, the community develops social capital. This social capital both bring the community closer together, addressing internal fragmentation, but also makes them more demanding and sophisticated in dealing with external partners, addressing their external fragmentation. This suggests that if university/ community interaction could stimulate learning processes, which are inherently social activities, then this may augment those communities' bonding and bridging social capital. This suggests that to empirically explore whether that is indeed taking place, there is a need to establish a number of key elements in this process.

- There is collective learning between the university and the socially excluded community
- The collective learning helps build social capital within the community
- The social capital which builds up helps to address the particular problems of exclusion facing that community.

There are several steps necessary to establish that some particular university-community engagement project has made a positive contribution to addressing social exclusion, namely that collective learning has taken place, that collective learned has build bonding and bridging capital within the community, and that has increased the community's power to contest exclusionary processes. For the first step, we seek to understand the dynamics of the interaction between university and community, and the processes of social capital that this drives. For the second step, we use Bordieu's assertion to deduce that increased social capital within excluded communities will allow those communities to exert greater influence over other forms of capital, notably those from outside the community. The final step will be to identify how that influence in turn reduces the functioning of these exclusionary practises.

#### **3.1 COLLECTIVE LEARNING**

There is an increasing recognition of the social nature of 'learning', which is an increasingly important economic function because of the increasing importance of innovation and creativity to driving economic growth and rising welfare levels. Gibbons *et al.* (1994) characterised the new environment for knowledge production as 'Mode 2' in contrast to the linear knowledge creation of mode 1, in which universities undertook blue skies research, and transferred it to industries who created new products which then diffused out into markets.

Although they acknowledge that the change has been more of a shift of tendency between the two poles than a simplistic binary shift, Gibbons *et al.* were amongst the first to capture the essence of contemporary innovation as a means of bringing diverse and heterogeneous knowledges together to create solutions to problems that meet needs. They characterised innovation as a 'team game' in which various actors combined knowledges together whilst also devising meta-governance arrangements (self-organising) to establish which knowledges and which partners should be involved.

Their notion of innovation as a ‘team game’ hints at the social – and socialised – nature of knowledge production, particularly because even within a team playing towards the same ostensible goals, different players have not only different capacities, but also different motivations for playing in the game. It is under these circumstances that the issue of governance becomes important, as a means of ensuring that there is a broad constituency of support for the goals being pursued. But this social nature of knowledge production – its interactive and path-dependent nature highlighted by Kline & Rosenberg (1986) also raises an additional challenge for knowledge production, which is that knowledge is not readily transmitted and transferred between actors.

The most basic distinction was made by Nonaka (1994) who distinguished between codified and tacit knowledge. Codified knowledge can readily be written down, transmitted and readily becomes ubiquitous, whilst tacit knowledge is based on relationships and understandings and requires inter-personal contact for its transmission. Gregersen and Johnson (1995) made a further distinction between know-what and know-why – factual information and deductive rules – as codified knowledge, and know-how and know-who – the knack of a skill and governance skills – as tacit knowledge. Typologies of transmission mechanisms have been developed, placing learning-by-doing and learning-by-networking as tacit transfer mechanisms alongside traditional knowledge-absorption mechanisms.

Boschma (2005) makes a useful point that what governs the capacity for transmission for types of tacit knowledge is the relative proximity between the actors. This proximity may be geographical (such as within clusters and industrial districts), but may also be organisational (within a single company), cognitive (with similar educational and professional backgrounds), social (related to similar status) and institutional (having a mandate to work closely with particular other groups). A key element of knowledge transmission is building the necessary proximity between two actors which in turn facilitates future interactions, and that is a profoundly social process based on developing common understandings and frames of reference.

Bringing these two issues together, in the perspective of Mode 2 knowledge production, interactive innovation processes require at least two kinds of learning, one set of learning related to the problem domain, and one set of learning related to the proximity of the participating actors. However, the point about socialised theories of learning is that the distinction is to some extent artificial, because the two kinds of learning operate in parallel and are mutually reinforcing: if partners can develop shared solutions, then the sense of success can reinforce collaboration, whilst if proximity cannot be built up, then there is little chance of genuinely mutual collaboration to solve problems.

In this project, we have used the theory of a community of practice as a means for understanding the dynamics of the socialised learning processes (*cf.* Wenger, 1998). He observed a number of workplace situations where teams worked together to develop shared solutions to complex problems, and he found that knowledge of shared solutions built up, but became embedded into the social life of the community. Applying an anthropological lens to the working of these communities he found that accessing the knowledge required becoming a member of the community, which in turn brought ‘initiation rites’. Members had status within the hierarchy, with new members joining in the periphery and moving to the core of the community over time as they acquired the necessary social skills and knowledge to themselves initiate other

members. These communities were privileged places both for the *acquisition* as much as the *generation* of new knowledge useful for solving the collective shared problems.

The social dimension of the community was extremely important and became partly-formalised into things like shared social routines, prestige, status, artefacts and the stories that people told about the life of the community. Yet the social life of the community extended beyond the formal demands of the problem-solving, and it acquired a degree of autonomy from the problem domain as the community developed an independent social life. The practices, routines and bonds developed to solve particular work-place problems were also the foundation for friendship relationships, and the artefacts, stories and hierarchies of the community of practice extended beyond the work sphere into the private lives of the participants.

### **3.2 ...ACROSS INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES...**

Wenger's idea of communities of practice were derived from very detailed studies of single organisations where participants were closely focused on working together to address complex working problems. With the increasing nature of inter-organisational working and the increasing prevalence of partnership models for the delivery of particular economic outputs, this raises the question of whether communities of practice could build up across institutional borders.

Benner (2003) identified that in the extremely vulnerable world of ICT work in California, a set of independent contractors developed a message board system to exchange ideas, work opportunities, identify collaborative partners, and also to bring a human dimension to their work. He coined the phrase 'network of practice' to describe the situation of a virtual community of practice going across institutional boundaries to a group of people facing similar problems and interacting and collaborating to address those problems.

There is a need for a natural caution in applying the idea of a community of practice or network of practice too readily or too liberally without demonstrating empirically that there is in practice an independent social dimension to the life of the community that transcends the immediate functional pressures. In asserting the existence of a network of practice there is a need to establish the independent social life of the community across the institutional borders. This requires asking the question of whether the grouping has a distinct community life with hierarchies, initiation rites, shared stories, progression within the community, artefacts, accepted ways of doing things, and a social life beyond the functional tasks that the community activity is woven into?

One attraction of the idea of networks of practice is the intuitive connection between socialised learning across boundaries and the development of different kinds of proximity – cognitive, organisational, social – between the participants, thereby increasing future capacity for collaboration. The question of future capacity is an integral part of the social capital that builds up in particular circumstances, and what is critically important is the extent to which that social capital genuinely allows partners to challenge and contest what larger scale structures compel them to do. In the fields of cross-border planning, Haselsberger & Benneworth (2010) have looked at the extent to which cross-border planning communities have built up and been able to challenge national epistemic communities and valuations of their respective places. They were unable to find convincing evidence that these cross-border planning

communities had built up substantive capacity which could make these challenges, reinforcing the importance of not imposing a community of practice framework on situations which do not necessarily justify it.

It is particularly important to be careful when considering the relationships between universities and excluded communities, and in particular their potential to work together as partners on joint enterprises. In the first working paper in this series, we identified that there are a range of barriers which prevent or at least hinder universities and excluded communities together. In part these arise because of the huge disconnect between the types of institution each is – universities are large, powerful and institutionalised corporate actors, whilst excluded communities typically encounter large institutions in their policing rather than through their citizenship and welfare functions.

At a more concrete level, universities and communities do not necessarily have the correct fit of skills to work together, and the university may indeed perform exclusionary practices as part of its work routine. An example which is salient in the context of the Liverpool Hope University example is a university with a campus in an excluded community that physically separates itself from the community to protect staff, students and buildings, but which at the same time sends out an extremely discouraging message for community groups. At the same time, universities may be drawn to more formalised organisations which purport to represent the community interest in ways which are more immediately recognisable by universities. In figure 5 below, we bring together some of the barriers which can inhibit collective working between universities and communities (drawn from Working Paper 1) which indicate the natural resistance which might inhibit these actors working together effectively for collective benefit.



Figure 4 Barriers which inhibit from universities and communities from engaging with each other

University	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement not compulsory</li> <li>• Absence of institutional strategy</li> <li>• Absence of engagement manager                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffusion of responsibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of dedicated funding stream                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentives to lure students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Core funding ignores engagement</li> <li>• Other funders do not demand engagement</li> <li>• No career structure for engagement</li> <li>• Engagement seen peripheral hobby                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do ‘research on a community’                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of subject knowledge</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Physical distance from communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of ‘roots’ in communities</li> <li>• Community do not make demands                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community seen as a ‘problem’</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Third parties divert university activity</li> <li>• Other funders buy research ‘on’ communities</li> <li>• Global networks favoured over local links</li> <li>• Excluded communities avoided/ ignored</li> <li>• Town/ gown tensions create student enclaves                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enclaves ‘turn off’ non-trad local students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Difficulty of rewarding student engagement</li> <li>• Engagement not fit into professional curriculum                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalisation of engagement routes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of leaders to sit on boards/ committees</li> <li>• Lack of capacity to mobilise around issues</li> <li>• Misunderstanding of university capacities</li> <li>• Invisible barriers put communities off engagement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal structures exclude communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engagement projects have high staff turnover</li> <li>• Community skills mismatch with project demands</li> <li>• Communities lack knowledge absorptive capacity                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual activists not repeatable learning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exclusion from professional engagement discourses                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of individuals wanting to engage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engagement helps cleverest to leave community</li> <li>• Engagement driven by experts not local learning</li> <li>• Absence of individuals with ‘feet in both camps’</li> </ul>

Source: Working Paper 1

### 3.3 UNIVERSITIES CREATING NEW COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE...

This refines the question originally posed to consider whether universities and excluded communities can come together to create communities of practice which in turn represent social capital for these communities, which allows those communities to appropriate the embodied labour of others and hence improves their position within a local political economy. In Phase 1 of this research project, we undertook a survey of 33 institutions in the North East and North West of England, and Scotland, to explore where they were engaging with excluded communities, and as part of that, sought to identify where there was genuinely shared learning activities taking place between universities and communities. This survey unearthed a very few examples of where this was happening at an institutional level, and even at the departmental or individual level, there were relatively few experiences of collective learning between universities and partners. The OECD Centre for Higher Education Research and Innovation (CHERI) in 1982 produced a categorisation of the kinds of activities which universities could undertake to engage with communities (in contrast to the separate activity of business engagement). With each of the services associated with university-community engagement, it is also possible to identify where there are opportunities for collective learning between universities and the excluded communities.

*Table 2 a typology of university services for (excluded) communities*

<b>Way of providing service</b>	<b>Mechanism for delivering service</b>	<b>Opportunities for collective learning</b>
University puts facilities at community disposal	Use of equipment, premises, laboratories, laboratories Using teachers and students to make direct contribution Drawing on community in delivering occupational, vocational training (e.g. nursing, law, planning)	Community builds up links with academic staff and can offer interesting student projects and placements
Execution of orders placed by community	Offering training as occupational, continuing education or cultural University receives a payment from community for delivery of a service A near private contract between the buyer and the vendor	Learning how to use the university, get the best out of the services, conditioning the university to be a good, willing client
Analysis of needs of community	The university comes into the community as an outside expert The university provides services for the community with some reference to an 'order' by the community	Community generates a better sense of group interests, priorities, budget-setting and needs.
Analysis of problems at request of community	University engages at community request in developing solutions University has the autonomy and freedom to suggest a range of solutions away from overarching pressure.	Positive reinforcement that the community problem identification works well, good existing capacity
University delivers a solution for community	The university delivers a service for the community which is compatible with its institutional status	Harder to identify where collective learning takes place.

*Source: after CERI (1982)*

There are various kinds of ways that universities and communities could work together collectively and circumvent the barriers in figure 5 – universities teaching higher vocational courses may have to provide learning experience and placements helping educate professionals who will have to deal with communities with these problems in their future professional life. In order to generate a steady stream of placements and projects for students, university staff may develop stable links with excluded communities and begin processes of co-creation of knowledge; these linkages may also develop into consultancy, research, public knowledge and expertise functions, with an in-depth exchange between universities and communities.

Although these opportunities may exist, the critical issue as far as this research project is concerned is whether those learning opportunities create social capital. To establish this fact, we will consider whether the learning opportunities have produced socialised learning in the form of identifiable communities of practise. The question is whether there is a definite community has formed which has *created distinctive knowledge* which is only easily *acquired by participating in the community*. The primary focus for the empirical research is exploring the contention of whether there are indeed genuine learning communities emerging which are having a developmental effect on these excluded communities *collectively*, as opposed to the provision of particular *individual* services which may assist the recipients but which do not challenge the exclusionary practices and processes constraining those communities.

### **3.4 ...AND REPOSITIONING EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES IN THEIR LOCAL POLITICAL ECONOMY**

The final element of the method concerns how to understand whether the engagement and co-learning processes have successfully repositioned the excluded communities within their own local political economies. In 2.2.1 we highlighted the key processes of social exclusion which come together around particular communities to exclude them from contemporary societies. We therefore choose to define a developmental contribution from the universities in terms of engagement as addressing one or more of those processes on a recurrent basis so that the outcomes are systematically less exclusionary for the communities concerned.

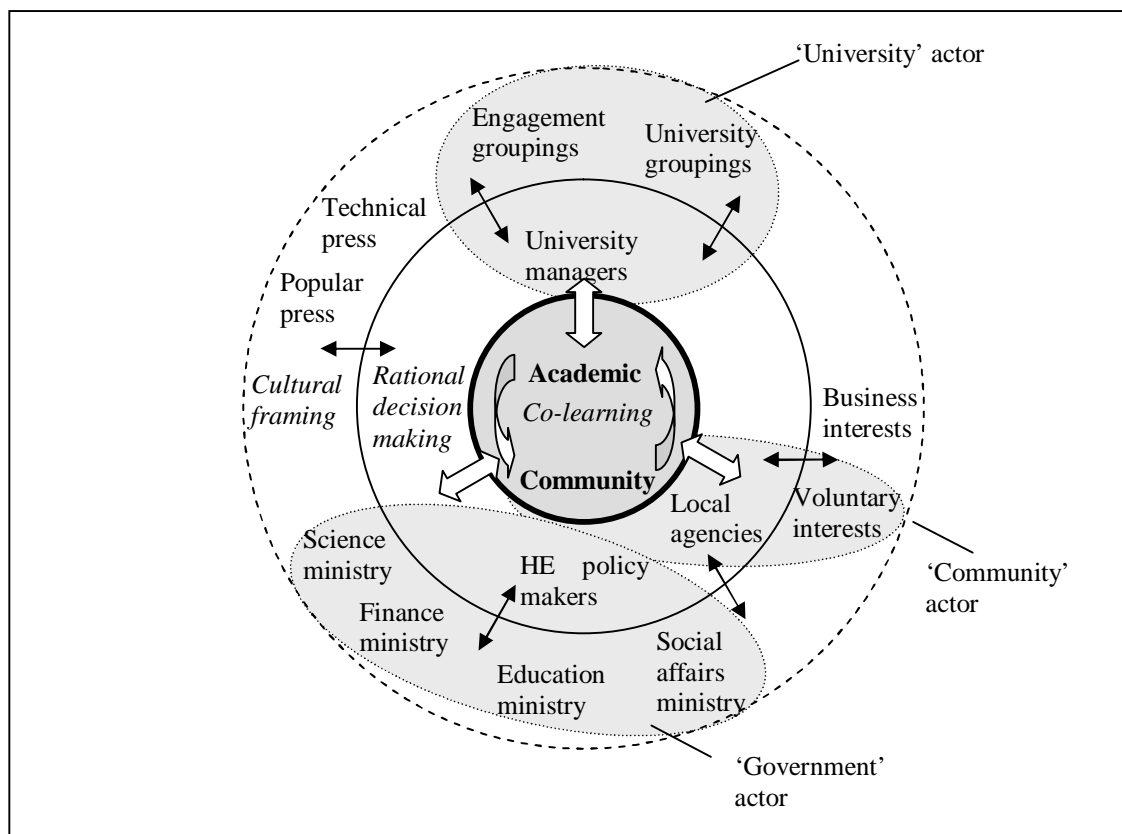
We argue that this can have a structuration effect, repositioning these communities within the local structures which create the positions of exclusion. The basis for the model is that engagement is a difficult process to initiate and sustain in practice, because it depends on building engagement activities that meet the needs of a range of partners. At its core is a set of co-learning activities between individual academics and community members, with clearly defined shared interests and needs. The university actors in effect use the community as an interesting laboratory in which to extend their studies, whilst the community learn about themselves in the process of generating new knowledges about their situation, and that improved knowledge helps to strengthen their societal position.

There is then a second set of interests whose relative alignment shapes how easy it is for their principle actors to achieve their tasks. The particular policies and structures created by universities to support community engagement shape the environment within which the principal actors are able to create these new activities. Likewise, the direct decisions taken by higher education funders can create incentives and reward outcomes by those active in community engagement. There is an interaction here between universities and policy-makers – eye-catching university instruments can

shape the way policy-makers think about university-community engagement, whilst direct stimuli can initiate new policy experiments by universities.

There is then a third set of interests which condition how effectively successful engagement activities are able to flow outwards and drive strategic transformation within universities and communities. There are many actors active in this field within the university, community, government and society. The culture of acceptance within universities determines how effective it is for strategic direction and policies to embed engagement within core university activities. The wider rhetoric of the societal compact and relative valuations for university missions by government (often outside the science ministry) may shape the kinds of arguments that universities feel able to advance. Societal pressures from parliament, non-governmental organisations or pressure groups may in turn compel universities to produce some kind of collective response or statement of activity (such as the Kellog report).

*Figure 5 A stylised model of the embedding of university-communities engagement within rational decision-making and cultural framing processes*



The fairly well-understood process of co-learning is one element of university-community engagement, albeit a critical one. That co-learning is embedded within a layer of rational/ direct policy-making which shapes the wider environment for community engagement. That rational policy-making is in turn embedded within a wider, and more fluid culture of competing pressures and interests which determine the kinds of visions that universities and policy-makers have for engaging with excluded communities. It is not therefore sufficient to only study the co-learning process – what is also necessary is to explore in more detail how this co-learning diffuses outwards and influences rational policy-making, and how that in turn interacts with two critical discourses, university engagement (framing how key actors

conceive of appropriate university missions) and social inclusion (framing the latitude for self-determination given to local communities). A stylised depiction of this is given in figure 4 above.

This influencing process involves a rescaling of activity, from micro-scale activities where actors come together and generate social capital to meso-scale changes in the nature of wider social processes by changing the rational policy decisions taken by a range of actors, and then the wider cultural contexts within which community engagement and social inclusion takes place. This means that the small scale activities have successfully exerted influence at higher levels, and suggests that the social capital has therefore demonstrated its value as capital by ‘appropriating social energy’ as Bordieu puts it, and seeing the interests of communities taken seriously at higher levels. There is therefore a need to understand this upscaling process whereby individual activities produce broader societal changes. Our model is that small activities can be considered to make a difference to particular situations if they have an observable effect at higher levels, that is to say that they become incorporated in the way that higher level actors consider issues.

### **3.5 THE LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY**

The basis for the report that follows has been a very detailed case study of the Liverpool Hope University situation, exploring the various contact points that exist between the university and excluded communities around Liverpool, exploring the extent to which those contact points allow co-construction of knowledge and co-learning, and whether the resultant social capital created has improved the position of the excluded communities within their local political economies. The methodological background for the case study is a critical realist ontology, which accepts that a social science method cannot produce perfect knowledge of a situation.

The aim of the method is to use detailed triangulation of evidence in a consistent way to highlight critical consistencies and relationships that allow the articulation of a set of stylised facts which help to establish the significance of particular empirical phenomena and their relationship. The aim of the case study is therefore to produce a stylised set of facts about the situation, and the relationship between those facts, which aim to provide a better reflection of the underlying reality than a simple narrative. These are presented in a synthetic narrative which aims to make explicit the nature of relationships and avoid creating implicit relationships through textual or temporal juxtaposition.

The case study involved two phases of research. The first phase was a survey of community engagement activity at LHU as part of the survey of the 33 institutions already mentioned. For each of the 33 institutions, we sought to interview at least four people at each university, a senior manager responsible for engagement, someone involved in the practice of engagement, an academic involved in engagement, and someone involved in student engagement. However, Liverpool Hope University responded to a request for an interview with a senior manager by arranging a programme of visits based around the Cornerstone Campus (*qv*) in Everton, supplemented with a single interview of a higher education researcher with experience of senior management from the main campus. That visit to Cornerstone included a field visit (Feb 08) to some of the Urban Hope (*qv*) off-campus projects which LHU had mobilised. The first phase research therefore involved eight interviews of between 20 minutes and two hours with academics, senior managers,

engagement professionals responsible for engagement at Liverpool Hope University, as well as a community theatre group located at the Cornerstone Campus. Subsequently, we approached the former Principal of Liverpool Hope University College (*qv*) who was at that time Vice Chancellor of Leeds Met University, who provided a further three hours of insight into the management decisions taken in making LHU an engaged institution. This material was synthesised along with a certain amount of ‘grey literature’ into a confidential project fiche, which along with the other 32 formed the basis of the material synthesised for the phase 1 report (*cf.* WP3). Parts of the fiches from four other universities (Liverpool, John Moores, Edge Hill and Chester) have been used to explain the wider background for community engagement in Liverpool and Merseyside (*cf.* 4.3.3) and some interviews from other institutions have been used in understanding the changing pressures on higher education more generally (*cf.* 4.1.1).

That first visit to the Campus conveyed a sense of great potential in terms of what we were told about community engagement, and therefore it was decided after the first phase was complete to undertake a second phase detailed case study of Liverpool Hope University. The starting point for that was that a senior manager at LHU arranged a further one day site visit in which he and the researcher met with a number of people involved in community engagement at the university, including a number of outside organisations involved in the engagement activity. The purpose of this second meeting was to make introductions for a cascade of research which then attempted to look in more details at the points, activities and places where Liverpool Hope University.

After this meeting (November 08), a number of activities were identified for more detailed analysis, including West Everton Community Council, Music in the Community, Community Drama, Collective Encounters, the Liverpool Weekend Arts College, the Service and Leadership Award and Urban Hope. A set of interviews were arranged with participants in these activities to try and identify collective learning and collective learning communities retrospectively. For three of the activities (LWAC, WECC and Collective Encounters), a total of five non-participant observation visits were arranged to try to observe social learning processes in action, and where possible to interview some of the community participants, or to at least speak informally to them. This included following the Community Theatre youth group to Edinburgh, where they were performing together with a Scottish youth theatre on the Fringe, and observing both the last day of rehearsals and the first of two performances.

In phase 2 a total of 19 further ‘elite’ interviews were undertaken, as well as a further 17 shorter (15-30 minute interviews) undertaken during site visits, and five non-participant observation sessions. The interviews were written up on the basis of contemporaneous notes whilst the non-participant observation sessions were written up retrospectively (within 24 hours of the sessions) as field notebooks.

The challenge of the LHU case study has been the size of the activity, and in particular the existence of a coalition of interest in community engagement from the centre to the periphery of the university. There are clearly very strong learning connections between the various border activities where engagement is taking place, the university’s strategic centre, and the core university units (the faculties). In that sense, the case study from an institutional perspective allows a good understanding of how thinking about engagement evolves within an institutional setting subject to a

huge range of exogenous pressures. Our heuristic for the situation is that there are a set of loosely couple learning communities around the university, that are in turn connected to a centralised 'engagement' community, which is itself coupled to the university's strategic decision-making activities.

It is worth making a point about circumspection in this report. In the course of the research, the people we interviewed were both extremely generous and candid about the situation at Hope. Yet, the interviews have been undertaken with a general offer of confidentiality and anonymity. That has necessarily led us to make compromises in what we have been able to say, both in order to preserve confidentiality, but also to avoid the risk of breathing new life into historical struggles. It is always a risk of case study work that one overly identifies with the subjects being studied, and that is a problem that we have wrestled with in writing this report.

But our natural sympathy to what we have seen at Hope, and our desire in this report to offer a constructive understanding of what they have built up there is also built upon an admiration for the unselfconscious nature of their openness as an institution. The first visit to Hope was remarkable – the Campus Pro Vice Chancellor tasked the campus manager with finding a few people for me to speak to, and without the campus manager necessarily explaining in any detail what they were supposed to say, these individuals all conveyed a great sense of dynamism and willingness for engagement. The writer concerned having individually undertaken nine other institutional case studies, he confirms that this was the most impressive of the institutions he explored and without detracting from their achievements, what Hope had achieved was in its own way peerless.

We therefore acknowledge that we are trying to present a balanced case study of Hope, with sufficient information to establish the synthetic model we develop, whilst simultaneously respecting the desire of individuals for privacy. In what follows, we attempt to synthesise the diverse narratives, arguments, beliefs and facts we were presented with into a rational explanation of the situation in which the key stylised facts and lines of force come to the fore. In the course of synthesising and stylising, it is necessary to compress and tidy up the 'messy' stories we heard in the course of our research, and what may in the following sections seem clear cut should not obscure a much fuzzier and contested reality encountered within the university, within particular engagement activities, and with the community partners with which the university worked in seeking to achieve its engagement mission.

## **4 OVERVIEW OF LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY AND ITS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Liverpool Hope University received permission from the Privy Council to use the University Title in 2005, but the history of LHU dates back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the growth of education and the need to train teachers to work in schools, an evolution led by Church foundations. Serendipity led three such colleges to locate in the Liverpool suburb of Childwall and in 1973, following the 1972 James report into the future of Higher Education, these three institutions merged to form a single college. However, it was not until the consequences of the 1989 Further and Higher Education Act became clear in 1994 that there were strong competitive pressures for the various foundations to come together and operate the college as a single entity. Since that time, there has been tremendous pressure on LHU to reform its educational offerings, its scientific context and reaffirm its Christian mission in the context of a very different market for higher education. The university website explains its current mission thus:-

“Liverpool Hope University is an ecumenical Christian Foundation which strives:

- to provide opportunities for the well-rounded personal development of Christians and students from other faiths and beliefs, educating the whole person in mind, body and spirit, irrespective of age, social or ethnic origins or physical capacity, including in particular those who might otherwise not have had an opportunity to enter higher education;
- to be a national provider of a wide range of high quality programmes responsive to the needs of students, including the education, training and professional development of teachers for Church and state schools;
- to sustain an academic community, as a sign of hope, enriched by Christian values and worship, which supports teaching and learning, scholarship and research, encourages the understanding of Christian and other faiths and beliefs and promotes religious and social harmony;
- to contribute to the educational, religious, cultural, social and economic life of Liverpool, Merseyside, the North-West and beyond.”

<<http://www.hope.ac.uk/abouthope/pages/mission.htm>> <Accessed 11th February 2008>

The merger of the three institutions marked a turning point in the evolution of the institution and also marked the start of a number of initiatives seeking to use engagement activities as a unifying theme for the university. Engagement became a way of demonstrating the value of LHU as a neighbour, of accessing resources to fund an ambitious modernisation programme, of recruiting and retaining students, of enriching the curriculum and intensifying the scholarly setting for academic research. At the same time, from LHU’s perspective, this imbued ‘engagement’ with a number of expectations and demands that it was supposed to be able to deliver for a range of stakeholders, and tied perceptions of engagement to the success or failure of particular concrete activities, strategies and ultimately individual decisions. LHU’s engagement mission is as much influenced by its need to survive in a competitive yet regulated market for higher education as the historical inheritance of its ethical missions.



## **4.1 LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Elford (2003) presents a detailed history of the emergence of the constituent colleges of Liverpool Hope University and their merger into a single institution in 1979. This section reprises his narrative and places it in a larger context of the growth of higher education in the UK and the emergence of hard divisions between colleges which became universities before the 1970s, those polytechnics which became universities in 1992 and those which followed the much harder post-1992 route to university status. Liverpool Hope University found itself on the wrong side of a split between those colleges which became universities or polytechnics and those which remained as colleges until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and found themselves having to go through a convoluted process applying for degree-awarding powers.

### **4.1.1 Institution change in the British HE sector in an age of growth**

Higher education in the UK went through its first substantial growth period in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, prior to which period it had been restricted to the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and the ancient Scottish institutions (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews). The University of London was founded in 1810 as a means of breaking the stranglehold of the established church over the pedagogic direction of higher education, and Durham University was likewise established in 1832 to provide access to higher education to those outside the South East of England. Alongside these universities, a huge number of colleges were created to educate the increasingly highly-skilled workforce demanded by the industrial revolution and to create an engineer-entrepreneur class to develop the national industrial base; these colleges emerged lagging the formation of learned societies and institutions where skilled people gathered to share their learning. These technology, and latterly medical colleges tended to be located near centres of large employment and population where there were demands for such skills, such as Newcastle or Dundee.

Over the same period, a separate set of colleges emerged in response to the increasing demands for universal basic education. The Anglican Church had been at the forefront of creating universal provision of education, and also played a lead role in the establishment of colleges to train the teachers necessary to work in these schools. In some of these colleges, as the Trevelyan reforms to the Civil Service worked through, and demand for highly trained civil servants also emerged, they also began developing courses to provide civil service education. Chester University is an example of a college that acquired both teacher and civil servant training before its emergence from university status.

The modern university system in the UK emerged in the period from 1890, with the establishment of the large civic universities, to 1922 with the formation of the University Grants Committee providing transparent funding to the sector. At this time, a number of former technical colleges became universities, with the large provincial universities all dating to this era including Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield. A number of these colleges entered into federal arrangements with existing universities, including Dundee, Newcastle and Liverpool and over time evolved into full university-level institutions, Newcastle receiving its Royal Charter and independence from Durham University in 1963.

The first big wave of college mergers came in the 1960s, as a consequence of the Robbins report into the future of higher education. The formation of the Council for National Academic Accreditation (CNAA) in 1965 was undertaken to allow the

creation of a number of polytechnic institutions (called Central Institutions in Scotland) offering degrees validated by an external body (rather than being reliant on a neighbouring institution). The emphasis of the Robbins-era was on increasing access to higher education in academic disciplines, and these polytechnic institutions had a much broader focus than education alone, so many colleges providing education training remained outwith the merged system, although many did indeed merge with universities and polytechnics.

These changes meant that by the end of the 1960s, much teacher training was in the hands of very small institutions (with hundreds rather than thousands of students) at a time when the future appeared to favour massification. The Rose Commission of Inquiry recommended the closure of many of these colleges and the concentration of teacher training in fewer, larger colleges, polytechnics and universities, and a shift from the degree of B.Ed. to more B.A. courses. This changed the landscape of teacher training dramatically, notably for those institutions which did not have a very specialised focus, particularly in the fine and performing arts. Those colleges which survived then faces the challenge of the 1989 Further and Higher Education Act, which disbanded the CNAA, converted the largest polytechnics into universities and left the remaining colleges as colleges of higher education.

For those that did not become universities in 1992, there were separate processes to apply for degree awarding powers and university title, and the accessibility of these processes varied considerably with the political wind. In the late 1990s, in response to media criticism about the so-called ‘polyversities’, and Labour’s concern to be seen to be hard on education standards the Department for Education instructed HEFCE (the successor to UGC) to dramatically tighten the criteria for university title, requiring research degree awarding powers, a minimum size and breadth of subject area. From 2003, the criteria were once more relaxed, allowing institutions whose research degrees were accredited by other institutions to be given university title subject to having a sufficiently scholarly atmosphere that informed institutional pedagogic practices and culture.

#### **4.1.2 Liverpool Hope as an emerging college of higher education**

The story of Liverpool Hope as told by Elford broadly follows the contours of the evolution of the UK higher system over two centuries from a closed and ecclesiastical system to a mass, open lay system. Elford traces Hope’s history back to the formation of the Warrington Training College in 1844 by the Chester Diocesan Education Board, to educate the teachers necessary for the growing industrial education movement. Warrington Training College moved to Childwall, in south Liverpool, in 1930 and renamed itself St. Katharine’s in 1938. The second of Hope’s constituent colleges was Our Lady’s Training College (Notre Dame), which opened on Mount Pleasant – home to both Liverpool University and later to Liverpool Polytechnic - in 1856 to provide a broad-based liberal education for women. The third college was Christ’s College, which opened in 1964 as part of the ongoing expansion at that time of Church teacher training colleges, fortuitously located on Taggart Avenue, in Childwall, opposite St. Katharine’s College.

St. Katharine’s was a Church of England college, whilst Our Lady’s Training College was run by the Sisters of Notre Dame, and Christ’s had been established by the Catholic Education Council. All three bodies therefore had links to their Diocese and Archdiocese respectively, and benefited from the good links between Bishop

Sheppard and Archbishop Worlock respectively. In the wake of the Rose Review, Elford relates how the three established Interim Federal Academic Council which arranged the three institutions awarding bachelors degrees in association with Liverpool University, as well as a joint committee to discuss the possibility of full Federation.

These proactive discussions were given an added imperative when the Department for Education served both St. Katharine's and Notre Dame with closure notices as part of a widespread rationalisation of teacher training education. Elford notes that the three institutions decided to push for a full merger to ensure their full survival, and were greatly helped by a delegation of the Bishop and Archbishop to the Department of Education promoting the merger as a chance to create a single ecumenical college of higher education in Liverpool. The merger took the form of the formation of a single college with two foundations, an Anglican foundation on the site of St. Katharine's and a Catholic foundation on the site of Christ's. Notre Dame disposed of its holdings on Mount Pleasant to Liverpool Polytechnic, where today they are the administrative headquarters of Liverpool John Moores University.

All three of the original trustee bodies, the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Catholic Education Council and Warrington Training College retained their interest in the new institution, and agreement between all three trustee bodies was necessary to achieve change. Elford argues that this was a great asset in ensuring the merger did operate as a merger and not a takeover, and provided guarantors for a genuinely ecumenical institutional ethos. The sale of the Mount Pleasant site provided some funds to invest in the Childwall sites, and the governors agreed on a policy of no compulsory redundancies at the time of the merger, which slowed down the institutional evolution, particularly in terms of the shift from B.Ed. to B.A. degrees. Although staff numbers fell in the first five years of the merger from 240 to around 200, in 1985, the September intake was around 400 students, when they needed around 1,500 students to balance the costs. This financial shortfall provided the backdrop to the 1980s crisis, which was in trying to make the shift from being three specialist teacher training colleges towards becoming a single more generalist institution.

The newly merged college took the name the Liverpool Institution for Higher Education from September 1979, and set about the business of trying to build a single institution in the context of three sets of governors and two sets of Church interests retaining their distinct interests on the single governing body. There was a gradual merger of services and activities on the site, until by 2003 Elford noted that the only duplicated services were the chapels, with the two in Childwall being added to by the newly acquired Jesuit St. Francis Xavier's church at the Everton campus. The first Rector of LIHE was Professor Jim Burke, a metallurgist from Swansea, who stayed until 1995, and guided the institution through the slow merger; the prevalent culture at the time was very conservative, and even through merger, the different colleges retained their distinctive personalities (different degree days and even different colours) within the LIHE structure.

The next major shock for LIHE was the 1989 FHE Act, which eliminated the binary separation between universities and polytechnics, but at the same time entrenched the divide between universities and colleges. LIHE was clearly on the lower side of the boundary, with 1800 students in 1988, a very limited range of degree subjects offered, and the absence of a strong research culture (in part because of the relatively low turnover of staff dating back to the zero redundancies policy). There was clearly a

risk that at a time of very rapid growth in the sector (and falling unit payments per student) that the relatively anonymous LIHE would fail to attract sufficient students to ensure its survival.

At this point, the separate structures of the two subordinate colleges became more of a hindrance to the survival of the institution, and upon the retirement of Professor Burke, the Governing Body realised that a substantial change was necessary in the leadership in the University to drive forward the necessary changes, and confront the vested interests of the two colleges, whose head each held *ex officio* the two Pro Rector positions, entrenching the separation of the two colleges at the highest institutional level. The Governing Body therefore decided to appoint a new Rector with the specific responsibility to complete the merger, and build a single strong institution capable of surviving in an increasingly competitive marketplace for higher education.

## **4.2 THE PRESSURES OF MERGER AND ENGAGEMENT AS A 'UNIFYING FORCE'**

Professor Simon Lee was a professor of jurisprudence at Queen's University, Belfast, who had a background in Catholic legal philosophy. He had written the book *Believing Bishops* about how religious leaders operate politically, he was involved with the People's Commission (the Upsahl Commission) in Northern Ireland and had sat on the Northern Ireland Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights. His appointment was made because the Governing Body sought a candidate for the Rectorship who could ensure LIHE's survival by embedding it firmly in the community, creating a strong institutional image and positive awareness of it through the positive representation of its Christian values. Implicit within this was a need for the institution to transform its community engagement activities, and make them more central to its image. His period of Rectorship marked the point at which Hope evolved from LIHE, and its three constituent colleges, into a coherent institution, laying the foundation for the award of university title in 2005, and the appointment in 2006 of Baroness Cox as Foundation Chancellor.

### **4.2.1 The emergence of Liverpool Hope University 1995-2003**

The first element of the transformation was the adoption of a new name, and the Governing Body meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1995 agreed the name "Liverpool Hope University College", rejecting the staff suggestion of 'Trinity', which cynically alluded to the three-in-one nature of the institution. This name did raise problems for the institution, although from an unanticipated direction, not related to the use of the name Hope. In the late 1990s, the Department of Education challenged the use of the name University College by a number of HE Colleges. Hope took this decision to judicial review, under the guidance of Professor Lee, and won the decision, which allowed them to become a full university, following their granting of Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2002. Hope received their Royal Charter in 2005, shortly after the arrival of the following Rector in 2003, and founding Vice Chancellor, Professor Gerard Pillay, allowing them the use of the University name in their title.

The name Hope had the advantage of being ambiguous, having a meanings on a number of different levels ranging from the abstract through the symbolic to the concrete. On an abstract level, the idea of 'Hope' suggested working together for a better future rather than wishing for something better to come along, and allowed for

the naming of projects and activities with a double meaning, saying both that the university college were involved, and that they were working towards a better future (*cf.* Urban Hope, Network of Hope). The Bishop and Archbishop at that time had just published a joint autobiography called “with hope in your hearts”, which also alludes to the Liverpool FC anthem. There are ecumenical overtones as Hope Street in Liverpool is the street that connects the Catholic and Anglican cathedrals (although named after an 18<sup>th</sup> century merchant). There was a Hope College in Holland, Michigan founded by Dutch Calvinists who used the Anchor of Hope in their coat of arms, suggesting that the name could work.

The second main change that came was a substantial unification of the campus around the concept of a village park which was integrated into the surrounding areas. One of the more curious effects of the merger had been that each of the two remaining colleges was surrounded by large walls, both facing onto Taggart Avenue, with each college having its own signage in the original colours, stating the original name. The philosophy behind the change was to give the institutional change a physical manifestation, and to literally rebuild the renamed Liverpool Hope into a single institution with a feeling of coherence. The Childwall Campus was renamed as Hope Park, and given a single brand, using the neutral red colour.

#The campus has gradually been reorganised around ‘the pathway in the park’, a transverse granular pathway linking the chapel, student union, chaplaincy and library, with the university paying for a pelican crossing across the streets. The walls around the two sites were lowered to give the impression of a coherent campus with a single spatial logic, although the road remained an important community thoroughfare (see picture 1 below). The campus redevelopments were necessary because much of the estates budget had been absorbed by the need to rationalise provision from two into one and then there had been a huge pressure on the estates development budget to generate savings to create a new library. The Sheppard-Worlock Library was completed in 1995 at a cost of £5.4m, and the financial concentration necessary to complete the scheme had created a significant backlog of campus development work remaining, and this became integrated into the drive for a coherent campus. The latest building to be completed is the Foundation Building, which hosts the student services section, an important element of assisting with completion rates.

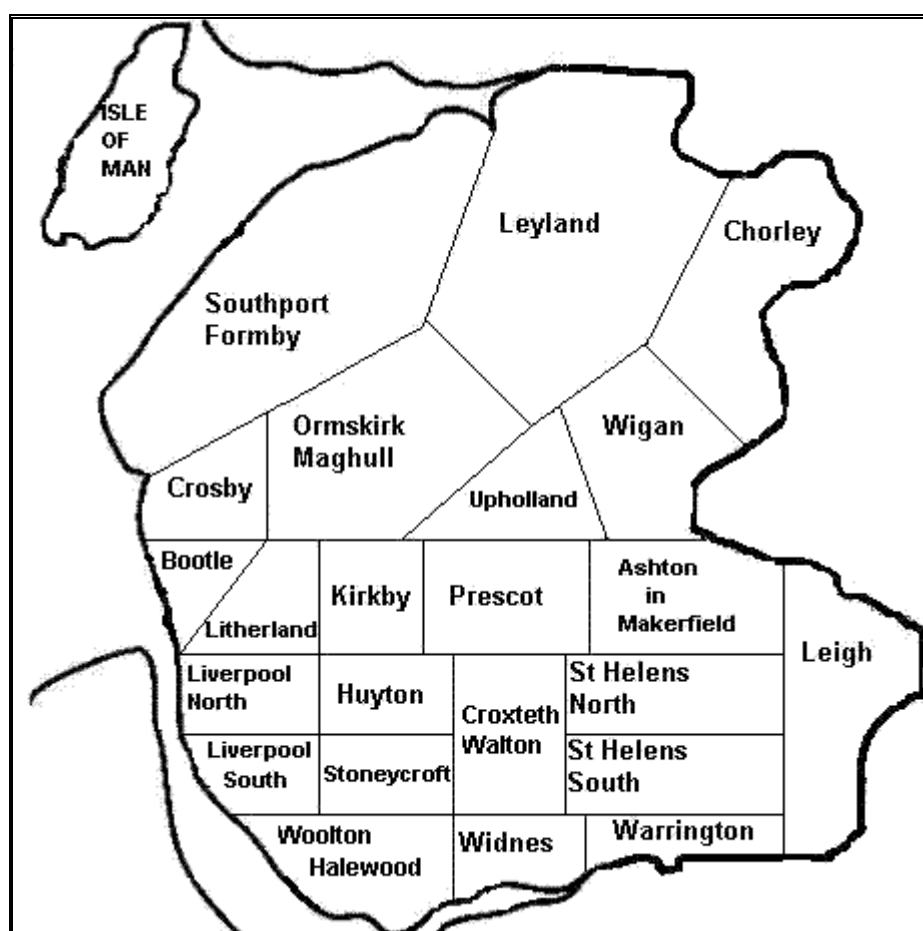
*Picture 1 A view down Taggart Avenue, April 2009, showing the Foundation Building*



A third key element of the rebuilding process was in increasing student numbers at a sufficiently quick rate to allow for increased investment in the physical estate, the development of new courses and the building of a stronger community mission. The Hope name provided the university with a good branding opportunity, and a series of activities were undertaken to build the ‘brand’ and to assist with recruitment. A CD was produced, “Ripples of Hope”, from the artist Julie Gold. When the Richard and Judy Show relocated from Albert Dock in Liverpool to London, Hope opened an internet café there “Hope on the Waterfront”, the idea being that it was open seven days a week in a tourist area with university information on the screens. There were events held there, so James Jones was invested as Bishop at “Hope on the Waterfront”. In 2003, a history of the institution was published by Liverpool University Press “The Foundation of Hope” (Elford, 2003). All these activities sought to create a sense of dynamism and unity that moved the institution away from the LIHE era into a mass-era University.

One final notable element in this period was the creation of the ‘Network of Hope’ in 1999, an attempt to bring higher education to towns which did not have their own university or college by providing higher education through links to the Catholic 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges in the Archdiocese (Kelleher *et al.*, 2003). The idea was driven by HEFCE’s interests in increasing the physical scope and coverage of HE provision, with Hope being awarded additional student numbers for these places on the basis of Widening Participation activities. As well as the Merseyside area, the Archdiocese includes parishes in Lancashire and Greater Manchester. The network at its extent covered Catholic 6<sup>th</sup> forms in Wigan (St. John Rigby) Blackburn (St Mary’s College), Bury (Holy Cross College), Stockport, and 2 in Manchester. The Network of Hope provided initial teacher training and Certificates of Education in Combined Studies, with around 2000 students passing through the programme to date.

Figure 6 The parishes of the Archdiocese of Liverpool



<http://www.archdiocese-of-liverpool.co.uk/parishes/index.htm>

The period of rapid growth brought with it a number of financial challenges, including the already alluded to need to increase campus capital spending after the concentration on the Sheppard-Worlock Library in the preceding decade. A second challenge was a set of retention and completion issues associated with the attraction of students from non-traditional backgrounds, and the risks that HEFCE would claw back some of the teaching grant because of non-completion. The third was that from 2000, Hope commenced the development of an entirely new campus in inner-city Liverpool, a development whose final phase commenced early in 2009, and which for a time made the university liable for the upkeep of an old but listed Church building, St. Francis Xavier's in Everton.

#### 4.2.2 Engagement as a common institutional thread

From 1995 onwards, Hope faced the challenge of trying to build a new institutional culture at the same time as ensuring institutional survival by substantially increasing student numbers. The magnitude of the change that was to come was substantial, increasing from around 1,800 students in 1995 to 5,100 full-time and 2,500 part time students a decade later (2006). As well as the additional student numbers acquired for the purposes of Network of Hope, the university increased student numbers through traditional recruitment, increasing the amount of recruitment taking place outside the immediate institutional catchment area of Merseyside and the North West of England. Hope at this time initially followed a strategy in common with many of the less

research-intensive universities, and concentrated on a mix of lowering entrance requirements for students, creating new courses and creating unique features as the basis for wider recruitment.

Hope has been very active within Widening Participation programmes as a means of increasing Merseyside recruitment by working closely with local schools to create pathways into higher education for non-traditional learners. As a result of the financially stretched situation of the university college, Widening Participation activity has been predicated upon being able to access additional funding sources to pay for the activity, and as well as the Network of Hope (*qv*) funded through HEFCE Additional Student Numbers, Hope was also able to attract European Social Fund resources for developing more inclusionary recruitment approaches. These two activities formed the bulk of Hope's contribution to the AimHigher (Widening Participation) partnership in the Merseyside region, and also highlight the point that Community engagement was actively pursued by Hope as a means of generating access to the necessary resources to expand the institution.

The period 1995-2003 was a period in which Hope hugely increased its community profile, both to improve its recruitment from the local catchment as to increase the willingness of local partners to provide it with access to substantial investment resources. In 1996, Hope, along with the other two Liverpool universities, Liverpool and John Moores, were awarded the Freedom of the City of Liverpool, in recognition of the contribution they made to the life of the city (*cf.* 4.4). During this period, Hope endeavoured to increase its participation in regional projects, initiatives and programmes as a means of bringing in additional resources to the university.

The awarding of Objective 1 status to Merseyside in 1997 (having a per capita GDP of less than 75% of the then-EU average) brought with it substantial public sector resources available to the university sector, and the creation of a regional development agency for the North West in 1999 provided institutions with substantial funding available to match European funding. Objective 1 status continued to the end of 2006, and under the +2 rule, resources were available until the end of 2008. Community engagement was a very important means to justify requesting these resources, and critically the university's profile fitted very well with the idea of community engagement. Therefore community engagement became bound up with the various targets and outcomes stipulated for Hope in these public investment programmes, and so achieving successful community engagement became a part of justifying public investments.

The advantage about community engagement was that it genuinely played to the strengths of Hope, which had for a long time had other activities which embodied an activist ethos. Hope One World was established in the mid 1980s (Newman, 2009) as part of what became Hope's Education Deanery, and provided academics to developing countries to improve the quality of their teacher training. It was established as an independent charity in 1996, but retained a close connection to the university, receiving campus office space and with staff allowed to use work time to undertake the development projects. The charity developed close links to the educational charity "Strategy for Success" Childrens Villages, where it provided staff to train their teachers as well as relief cover for those teachers as they were being training. Hope One World won a Queen's Award for Higher Education in 1997 at the time sending around twenty people annually to India to help with educational CPD. Hope One World has since been reconfigured as 'Global Hope', and is accessible to



students across the university who demonstrate their commitment to volunteering by completing the Hope Service and Leadership Award (*qv*).

The big challenge for community engagement in this period was the parallel effort within the university to build a genuine research culture, necessary for the granting of taught degree awarding powers, itself necessary to justify the university (and university college) title. It is fair to say that much of the work done around community engagement took place below the higher education phase, with Network of Hope being a 'HE in FE' project, and Widening Participation efforts emphasising developing links with schools for recruitment purpose. There has been a continual tension between those who desire building a more cloistered academic environment and bringing the community into that environment at the academic level, and those who have sought to develop links with the community across the levels of interest to the community. The balance that the university has chosen to struck has varied both over time, and across the different areas of the university.

Arguably the biggest change to happen in the university in terms of community engagement has been the development of a new campus in Everton, in North Liverpool, a campus with a specifically community focus. The massive expansion of Hope from 1994 onwards, and in particular the expansion of popular areas in performing and fine arts led very quickly to the Hope Park campus becoming overcrowded. The Worlock-Sheppard library had been the focus for campus development efforts for the preceding five years, and therefore there was a need for a development to take place as quickly and as cheaply as possible. One possibility was for the university to take over space developed as part of public sector regeneration project, whilst another was for the university to seek grants for a new campus in an area eligible for regeneration finding. The mix of financial and community engagement pressures came together and created the impetus which led to the development of the Cornerstone Campus, a dedicated space for the arts and humanities, in Everton, one of England's most deprived wards.

A final issue for the university was its status as a university college; the 1989 Act made the designation 'university' a restricted term for those institutions with a Royal Charter conforming to guidance provided by the government of the day. After 1992, the Government was concerned at the devaluation of the term 'university', and therefore set the barrier extremely high for those institutions wishing to become universities. In particular, as already noted, they needed to have a critical mass of size, disciplinary breadth and teaching to be undertaken by those active in scholarship in research, with an enriched environment beyond classroom-based learning. Community engagement became part of the claims made by Hope in demonstrating the enriched nature of its student experience. Indeed, in 2002, Hope was awarded Taught Degree Awarding Powers following a detailed scrutiny and peer review by the Quality Assurance Agency; in 2005, Hope was granted its Royal Charter, and took the name "Liverpool Hope University". In September 2009, following a further two year peer review and scrutiny process by the QAA, Hope was awarded Research Degree Awarding Powers reflecting the strong and ongoing progress which the university was making in developing a research culture.

#### **4.2.3 The development of the Cornerstone Campus**

From the mid 1980s as the federated LIHE changed into the unified Liverpool Hope University College (1995), Community Engagement went from being a component of

a general Social Mission for an ecumenical Christian fellowship to being a specific distinguishing and unique feature of Liverpool Hope. From 1997, the availability of European funds through the objective 1 programme meant that engagement also provided a means for Hope to update its campus and other facilities by co-developing them with communities and placing them at their disposal. A variety of pressures came together in the general idea that Hope could expand its facilities outside the Childwall campus, access European Objective 1 and North West Development Agency regeneration funding, and use that as a base for an expanded Widening Participation mission.

The creation of the new campus site therefore was a process through which community engagement became an important element of Hope's mission. This is not to say that the community engagement undertaken by Hope was purely functional and only done because of the availability of funds. Rather, the availability of funding meant that community engagement could be embodied within strategic university projects that significantly shaped the nature of the university into the future. This happened through the creation of a new 'engagement' campus in the heart of inner-city Liverpool which also brought the university eligibility for a range of grants to fund the development, and which helped address the pressures which rapid expansion had brought.

Through their contacts on the Governing Body with the (catholic) Archdiocese, university senior managers became aware of the fact that the Archdiocese had a set of problems caused by a surfeit of properties with net negative values (i.e. requiring substantial renovation works) that they were looking to dispose of. A search of the property base revealed that the site of St. Francis Xavier's in Everton would meet all of Hope's needs in terms of being in an inner city area as well as being a very impressive and coherent site. The St. Francis Xavier's site comprised three main buildings, a Jesuit church, a Presbytery and the former site of the St. Francis Xavier's College which had moved to Woolton in 1961.

The School building had been rebuilt to plans drawn by leading Catholic architect Henry Clutton, with space for 500 pupils, and a Great Hall to act as a meeting place for Liverpool's catholic community, with space for 2000 pupils. An extension was built in 1908 on the site of the demolished school, on the Salisbury street side. The school site had been redeveloped by the LEA and reopened as the SFX Bilateral School, closing in a reorganisation in 1974, having various temporary uses including a proposed demolition in 1991 (Heery, 2002). By 2000, the Church was still active, and the Presbytery was in use as a social club for West Everton. The university bought the whole site for £1, although it had a net negative value of -£1/2m, with the requirement that they take over the responsibility for the refurbishment and maintenance of the Church.

*Picture 2 View down Salisbury Street, Jan 2009, showing 1877 school, 1908 Extension and St. Francis Xavier's Church.*



The university decided to purchase and develop the site as a location for its fine and performing arts activities, and created a new Deanery (faculty) for the site, the Deanery for Arts and Community. Although this Deanery was subsequently renamed the Deanery of Arts & Humanities, this naming could be seen in some of the campus signage and signals the centrality of the idea of community engagement to the site (see picture 3a below). The Humanities activities have remained to this date located at Hope Park, and the Deanery is split across the two sites. The project development was divided into four phases, corresponding to student accommodation, the school development, the Great Hall and a Community reach-out space. In picture 3b below, the St. Francis Xavier's Church is clearly visible reflected in the entrance to the main Cornerstone building.

*Picture 3a-b The original signage for the Cornerstone Campus; the entrance to the Cornerstone Campus (both March 2009)*



The first phase to be developed was the student accommodation, which became named Gerard Manley Hopkins Halls, as the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins was once a priest at St. Francis Xavier's church. This was relatively easy to finance because as a student halls building, the bank was willing to lend to the university secured against the rental stream. The building consists of four wings each of three storeys around a central quadrangle, comprising 192 student rooms. The building faces onto Shaw Street, which is itself a red light district and which has police notices warning against kerb crawling. It was very challenging for the university to create an environment which parents bringing their children to university for the first time would not find intimidating. The Block was subsequently sold to Cosmopolitan Housing Group, a registered social landlord, who currently manage it as a student accommodation block.

*Picture 4 Phase 1 of the Cornerstone Development: Gerard Manley Hopkins halls*



Phase 2 involved the refurbishment of the old school building and its conversion into a space appropriate for its goal of arts in the community. The site houses both fine arts and performing arts activities, and therefore needs both workshop/ studio for fine arts disciplines and rehearsal and practice spaces for performing arts spaces. Two distinguishing features of the phase 2 development were the Entrance Gallery and the Great Hall. The Entrance Gallery provides exhibition space and has a bar which can be opened during concerts and exhibitions, and access to the ground and first floors is open to the public. The Great Hall has been refurbished to improve its acoustic properties and value as a performance space, the floor being raised one storey and an ICT suite added to the rear.

*Picture 5a-b views inside Cornerstone: a. the Entrance Gallery, b. the Great Hall*



Phase 3 was the refurbishment of the Church, which came with a £1/2m grant from English Heritage. The Church required serious work to bring it up to modern building regulations, including rewiring and heating, and because the refurbishment was being undertaken by the university rather than the Church, they were not eligible for many

of the grants that the Church could have received. The Church had been built from Oxford Limestone which was deteriorating rapidly because of the presence of nearby arterial road routes. The Church was subsequently handed back to the Archdiocese with an endowment of £1½m, which removed the responsibility from the university of maintaining a building not part of its core estate. As part of the refurbishment of the estate, Hope removed the Presbytery building, which had included an undercroft which had been in use as a social club for the nearby Everton community.

Phase 4 is the development of a shared use building with performance spaces but also accommodation for Hope's community partners and community access space, the Centre for Music, Performance and Innovation, originally planned for opening in Winter 2009. This brings together a HEFCE Strategic Development Fund grant promoting improved Widening Participation and Community engagement, along with NWDA regeneration grants and ERDF Objective 1 grants, each with their own set of targets and outcomes demanded. There were significant difficulties for Hope in joining up the various funding sources into a project cash flow, in part because of changes in the arrangements for the European funding, and ground breaking for Phase IV only took place at the end of 2008, one year after the announcement of the grants had seemed secure.

*Picture 6 The phase 4 development of Cornerstone Campus, July 2009*



Phase 4 of the Cornerstone Campus was completed at the end of 2009, after the completion of the research, and was opened early in 2010. The main Campus has been open since 1999; the first students arrived on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1999 with the first two development phases complete. The site lies to the very south of West Everton, immediately to the north of the city centre, adjacent to the hospital, although separated from the city centre by a six lane dual carriageway. To the north of the site lies Everton Park, created in 1990 after the clearance of a large number of slum

terraces from Everton Brow. Shaw Street and Salisbury Street both run northwards into West Everton, with the Friary Church (qv) some ten minutes walk to the north.

Some quarter-mile to the east of Cornerstone is Scotland Road, the main arterial road running through Everton and connecting the city to the Mersey Tunnel, and further to the west lies the cities Northern docks. Immediately to the east of Shaw Street lies the Collegiate Building, a former Anglican seminary, redeveloped by Tom Bloxham's Urban Splash company as high-quality urban flats. This gives the campus a degree of isolation from its immediate surroundings, both in Everton and the City Centre, and gives the main lawn a quadrangle feeling. A view across the campus is portrayed in Picture 7 below.

*Picture 7 A view from Salisbury Street across the campus space, January 2009*



Picture 7 shows that the Cornerstone Campus at that time embodied the same open and coherent campus philosophy as Hope Park, attempting to integrate the university into the community by allowing the community free access to the site. This free access has been extremely problematic, not least because of the fact that Shaw Street is a kerb-crawling area (see Picture 7), and immediately opposite St. Francis Xavier's church is a drug treatment facility. There have been periods when the campus has had problems with thefts from the campus, and there is an ongoing problem with drugs paraphernalia being deposited in the university grounds.

Picture 8a-b View down Shaw Street between Hope and the Collegiate, November 08



There are at the time of writing progress in enclosing the Cornerstone site to prevent these problems as part of the proposals for the Phase IV development. Nevertheless, the decision to attempt to respond to these problems whilst remaining on site demonstrates how important the Cornerstone Campus is to the university, and the fact that it is a campus which is home to a great deal of the community engagement activity highlights how the Cornerstone project has built community engagement into Hope's institutional fabric. Nevertheless, there are discussions about acquiring another campus space away from Everton, emphasising the point that the university engages with Everton because that is where it is located but its local engagement footprint covers the whole city, and as an ecumenical Christian institution, it is also interested in engagement and social justice globally (*cf.* Global Hope).

#### **4.3 THE WIDER ENGAGEMENT CONTEXT: EVERTON, MERSEYSIDE AND THE NORTH WEST**

One of the pressures for Hope to engage arises from the fact that it is located in Liverpool, one of the poorest regions in the UK, and has one campus located in one of the two poorest wards in the country. Its natural catchment area covers much of Merseyside, which has significant problems in terms of the progression of its schoolchildren into higher education, as well as large numbers of children growing up in families with no experience of higher education. Understanding the dynamics of engagement by Hope therefore require both an understanding of its natural catchment areas, but also the local political economy of Liverpool and Merseyside which have considerably shaped the current situation.

##### **4.3.1 The economic conditions of LHU's catchment areas**

The contrast between the socio-economic situation of Hope's two main campuses (Hope also has student accommodation located elsewhere in Liverpool) could not be



more contrasting, which also profoundly influences the contacts that they have with their local communities. Childwall is one of the more affluent parts of Liverpool, a 1930s outer suburban location in the south of Liverpool, close to where the M62 approaches the city. Everton is one of the poorest communities in the country, located near to the city centre, but cut off from it by thoughtless 1960s road traffic planning, and suffering from the collapse of the neighbouring docks as a source of employment; Everton has been hit very heavily by the withdrawal of services along with the loss of population, including schools, medical centres, shops and public houses. However, the relationship with both communities on one level operates in terms of managing the nuisance that a university brings to its neighbours through parking problems, construction traffic and misbehaving students.

The city of Liverpool has its origins as a port city on the Mersey, originally serving as a gateway to bring cotton in and to export Lancashire textiles. With the industrial revolution and the boom in trade from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Liverpool became a booming port city, with significant employment in handling the movement of goods from sea to land and *vice versa*. As a port city, it also acted as a point of entry for successive waves of immigration, including notably for Irish immigration in the 1840s and a decade later to new Commonwealth immigration. Immigration and economic prosperity in a port city came together to stimulate the growth of huge slum estates in the inner city areas adjoining the northern (Everton) and southern (Toxteth) docks areas, and from the 1950s onwards, the city council resolved to deal with these problems through a huge programme of slum clearances.

In common with slum clearance programmes across the north of England, they were at best partially successful. There was a huge decanting of population in the 1950s and 1960s into suburban estates at the edge of the built-up area, such as Croxteth and Norris Green. This had the effect of reducing the population available to live in inner city areas, and undermined the vitality and the viability of these inner city communities. Although there was some refurbishment of municipal properties as well as mass demolitions, the high cost of those refurbishments and the desirability of relocating people to newly built estates have cast a blight over inner-city areas to the north and the south of the city. At the same time, falling population has seen a retrenchment of public services in these places which have made them less desirable as family residential areas, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of decline in the inner city areas.

The problems faced by these places are a complex mix of low employment opportunities and rates, poor educational performance and provision, poor health and sickness, and low rates of capital formation (e.g. home ownership). However, one of the hallmarks of the Liverpool situation is that there is a very strong tradition of self-organisation, albeit one which has not necessarily been in tune with public sector interests over the years. Although there has been very strong pressures on these communities from an out-movement of population and disinvestment in physical infrastructure, community and voluntary groups have not been passive in the face of these actions. The Eldonians are an example of a community protest group in Liverpool that have evolved from a response to plans to clear 1920s housing in Vauxhall to a community co-operative housing who are now significant players in the Liverpool housing political economy (Romano, 2004). In the West Everton area, where the Cornerstone campus is located, there is a long-standing tradition of community activism.

The Merseyside region was badly affected by deindustrialisation in the 1980s and 1990s, and from the 1980s it has been the poorest region in England, attracting special government attention to try and reverse the resultant problems. Part of the problem has been the fact that it is adjacent to the Greater Manchester conurbation, and the success of Manchester has reduced the attractiveness of Liverpool as a location for new businesses and investments. At the same time, its outlying districts have also suffered from the loss of a distinctive industrial identity with the decline of their manufacturing industries. They suffer problems very similar to those of Liverpool albeit without the benefits of the urban location (see table 3 below). There is a good tradition of co-operation within the city-region which is at least partly a consequence of the Metropolitan county which existed for a decade (1974-1986) and which left a number of residual bodies managing planning, transport and other functions dependent on territorial co-operation.

Merseyside also benefited from 1997-2008 from the availability of Objective 1 funding, which provided significant levels of resources, over £200m annually for investment in the regeneration of Merseyside. Unlike in adjoining Objective 2 regions, where the money was largely used to continue funding existing activities, the sheer scale of the resources have allowed them to be used to stimulate a series of experiments and to try to create a critical mass, to rediscover a purpose for the city of Liverpool and the Merseyside region in an increasingly post-industrial economy. As a consequence of European enlargement, those funds are now largely exhausted, and the signs from central government is that they will not be replacing these funds with national funding via the regional development agency.

Although Merseyside is a very poor region, it has been since 1998 part of the wider North West region, which is one of the more successful UK regions, particularly in comparison to its immediate neighbours Wales, Northern Ireland, the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber. With a per capita GDP around 90% of the UK average, and 7m residents, the region is one of the more competitive regions, and its capital city, Manchester, is regarded by some to have the potential to emerge as a northern growth pole able to counter the economic success of the South East, and provide the basis for a general economic revival across the North of England.

*Table 3 The GDP index of sub-regions (NUTS3) in the North West, 2006*

	<b>GDP Index (UK=100)</b>
UKD11 West Cumbria	63.5
UKD12 East Cumbria	63.5
UKD21 Halton and Warrington	118.5
UKD22 Cheshire CC	108.1
UKD31 Greater Manchester South	112.6
UKD32 Greater Manchester North	68.5
UKD41 Blackburn with Darwen	77.6
UKD42 Blackpool	65.6
UKD43 Lancashire CC	83.9
UKD51 East Merseyside	66.9
UKD52 Liverpool	92.1
UKD53 Sefton	60.1
UKD54 Wirral	55.9
<b>North West</b>	<b>87.3</b>

*Source: Eurostat*

In part because of its size, the North West is an extremely mixed region, with some parts very affluent and performing well, and others with entrenched economic problems. Manchester is the region's capital, and to the south and west of Manchester, running into Halton, Warrington and Cheshire, there is a very affluent sub-region. The city of Liverpool is the second major growth pole for the region, although its natural hinterland of Sefton and the Wirral represents quite extreme poverty. Lancashire is relatively affluent, with the exception of Blackpool, which has suffered from the collapse of its seaside tourist industry and the failure of a viable replacement economy to emerge. Although Cumbria appear to be an extremely poor county, the raw figures hide a clear east-west split between the sparsely populated rural area and the very badly depressed coastal areas of West Cumbria and Barrow.

The key challenge for the region as a whole is in finding an effective way for the main growth poles, Manchester, Liverpool and Preston to generate wealth and critical mass to drive forward their urban hinterlands, at the same time as rediscovering an economic purpose for the remote rural localities, particularly West Cumbria, Barrow and Blackpool. Critical to achieving that is in ensuring that the main urban centres become places where residents of the outlying areas are able to accelerate their life chances through education and employment, making them into 'escalator' city-regions for the region as a whole.

#### **4.3.2 Liverpool's recent civic ambition and its universities**

The other dimension of the community narrative for Liverpool is the evolving civic culture which has shaped the space for university-community interaction, and has also critically shaped the organisational space within which excluded communities in Liverpool have been able to operate. Liverpool has in common with many of the provincial cities of England a strong tradition of urban leadership, and the city has long taken a pro-active role in seeking to shape the evolution of its urban fabric. The city had until recently a tradition of corporate paternalism, with the Port Sunlight suburb being created in the Wirral as a flagship 'garden suburb' to house the employees of Lever Brothers (now Unilever). The city council had also become an important landlord, until very recently the largest in a city with very high levels of rental properties.

The city came to national attention for the wrong reasons in 1981 following riots in the Toxteth suburb in South Liverpool, the subsequent Scarman inquiry finding that racial profiling by police in their stop-and-search practices had inflamed a volatile situation arising from rapidly rising youth unemployment. This placed Liverpool on the national policy agenda, leading to a special task force being created for Merseyside, and subsequently in 1994 to Merseyside having its own Government Office to ensure the successful delivery of regeneration projects. Despite this national policy attention, little serious effort was placed into addressing the major causes of the disturbances, which were the rising unemployment rates as deindustrialisation and the mechanisation of the docks reduced the employment opportunities as a whole, and entirely eliminated whole classes of unskilled manual occupations.

A subsequent turning point in the history of the city was the takeover of the city council by a left-wing faction within the Labour Party, the so-called Militant Group. This came in part as a reaction to the local government funding cuts imposed by the Thatcher government and the desire of the council to maintain the resources necessary

for its culture of strong government. The council refused to set a valid budget out of a belief that the financial ceilings imposed on them were not justified, and this led to the councillors involved being suspended following a High Court ruling. Another more significant consequence of this period argued by Harrison (2009) is that Liverpool failed to follow Manchester in developing a culture of entrepreneurial governance which was attractive for national government investment. Liverpool continued to be seen as a problem by the government long into the 1990s, which reduced national willingness to support strategic infrastructure investment projects, reinforcing the city's peripherality with respect to Manchester, and reinforcing Manchester's position as the regional capital at Liverpool's expense.

Harrison argues that since the Militant period, the emphasis on the governance of Liverpool has been in trying to recover the lost ground, and create an entrepreneurial growth coalition similar to that which has brought such demonstrable prosperity to Manchester. Since the late 1990s, culture has played a significant role in providing an emblematic brand for the city, building on both the classical architecture and high cultural infrastructure of the city, as well as more recent connections to significant popular cultural phenomena in performing, visual and broadcast arts. An important event in this process was the coalition which came together to bid for and win the UK's European Capital of Culture title for 2008. Liverpool's coalition took over an infrastructure led by Sir Bob Scott, which had emerged as part of the rise of the Manchester City Pride movement, and which had bid unsuccessfully for the Olympics Games, which in turn bid for the highly successful 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games. The bidding team beat off fierce competition, including from the early favourites, Newcastle-Gateshead, to be declared as winners of the Capital of Culture competition in 2003 for the 2008 year.

This shift to emphasising the post-industrial role of the city created an opportunity for the city's three universities to become more important to the life of the city. The three universities were all awarded the freedom of the city in 1996, just as the city was realising a need to build up the appearance of a more dynamic city culture. In 1998, Hope chaired a group which oversaw the transformation of the local education authority which failed an Ofsted inspection, and the university involvement prevented a contentious privatisation of the LEA. Hope were also involved in a merger of the Playhouse and Everyman theatres which were experiencing financial difficulties at the time, which secured their long-term survival. Hope, along with the other two universities, were involved in the Capital of Culture bid, as well as delivering elements of the programme, providing performances, venues and audiences for events. Liverpool University's sociology department were also commissioned to track the public benefits of the event in terms of engaging non-traditional audiences, and Hope's community theatre course (*qv*), and organised a conference exploring the issues that this raises in which all three universities participated.

A final area of intersection of interest between the city's renewed civic ambition and the universities are the plans for the development of a knowledge quarter in Liverpool. These plans are being developed by Liverpool Vision, the urban regeneration company responsible for the management and visioning of the city. The idea for the "Liverpool knowledge quarter" plan involves primarily Liverpool and John Moores Universities, the hospitals and a set of national specialist research centres, such as the Biomedical Centre for Infectious Diseases and the Roy Castle Cancer Centre. The plan is currently at the stage of seeking to quantify the actual and political impact of their presence, and aims to identify the area as a strategic

investment site, backed up by £6.5m of RDA matched funding. Hope is peripherally involved with that because of its eligibility for Objective 1 funding, and its potential role as a gateway to help spread the economic benefits of the knowledge quarter and stimulate economic growth in Everton.

### **4.3.3 Other HEIs in LHU's spheres of interest**

The scope for community engagement by Hope is also defined by the other HEIs in Hope's sphere of interest, and their respective attitudes to community engagement. In the city of Liverpool, there are two other universities, John Moores University, which is primarily focused on maximising the employability of its students, although it does have the Foundation for Citizenship which organises the Roscoe Lecture Series, which regularly attract audiences of 1,000, and promoting active citizenship in schools across Merseyside. Liverpool University has a significant engagement footprint in part a consequence of the applied professional nature of its disciplinary base and its institutional size. Beyond the city, Hope has a similar institutional profile to a number of other former teacher training colleges including the University of Chester and Edge Hill University.

John Moores University traces its origins back to a mechanical college for technical engineering founded in 1825, and its emphasis remains on providing high-level technical education for employment, although today it has a broad disciplinary base. Since the 1989 FHE Act, it has emphasised differentiating itself from its competitors through building up a strong research base, and on providing a student experience (and employability outcomes) comparable to that of the established universities. Whilst community engagement is not explicitly part of that emphasis, JMU does acknowledge that the nature of its intake means that it is dependent on good relationships with Liverpool and Merseyside for its recruitment, and community knowledge allows it to improve its student services. Its strategic engagement has come through participation in high level activities such as the Culture Company and Knowledge Quarter projects, as well as creating an empowering environment in which staff and students can benefit from engagement and volunteering.

The University of Liverpool was founded in 1881 as University College Liverpool on its present-day site of Brownlow Hill; after a brief period as a college within the (Manchester) Victoria University federation, the university received its own charter in 1903 as the University of Liverpool. There is a paradox at the heart of Liverpool University's relationship with its local surroundings. The University is inextricably linked with the city and yet, is often seen as stand-offish and snobby, going uncredited for its hard work in promoting the city and the region, being a key animateur behind two recent urban festivals, Liverpool 800 and the Capital of Culture. Because its background as a civic university, it suffers unfairly because the good things that it does are sometimes assumed to be undertaken by JMU, with local communities only notice its negative impacts. It has a centre for lifelong learning, that includes both its continuing education and widening access activities. Unlike many institutions that have shed continuing education because of a lack of direct funding, uses its Widening Participation activities to create a stable environment for non-accredited learning, which the university sees as something that a responsible university should be doing. The university also sponsors an Academy School in North Liverpool and uses that as a means to attract and retain students.

The University of Chester was founded by the Church of England in 1839 as Chester College to educate people for community service. From the 1970s, the university developed discipline-driven courses and has teaching strengths in law, journalism, social policy as well as the traditional vocational subjects of midwifery and nursing, achieving university status in 2004. The ethos of much of UC can be described as engaged scholarship, and the university has proven very innovative in developing and accrediting learning pathways which allow and recognise various kinds of activities which fall under the heading of ‘engagement’. Since 2004, UC has also had a campus at Warrington, on the site of the former Warrington Collegiate, which is the focus for media and multimedia education. Warrington is a relatively deprived area within Cheshire, and UC’s Warrington campus provides opportunities for higher education in a local authority with little existing provision. The core of Community engagement at UC (historically and today) comes through the Work-Based Learning (WBL) programme. This is a 20 credit programme which all students must complete – some subjects such as archaeology organise subject-specific field courses, whilst other vocational courses are prescribed by professional body requirements (such as psychology). These placements may involve service delivery such as running a play scheme, or offline working, such as researching legal issues for abused women. It is not just large voluntary organisations such as NACRO which take students, but community groups can be involved (subject to a risk assessment)

Edge Hill University is a former teacher training and nursing college in Ormskirk that was granted formal taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) in 2006 and acquired Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) in 2009. The way that Community Engagement is regarded in EHU is fundamentally something which adds value to the core university activities, potentially through bolstering the case for DAP, by improving recruitment or helping to configure external stakeholders. There is a mix of corporate and individual engagement at the university. In terms of corporate engagement, the university runs Sporting Edge, which is a sports facility mixing community, student and professional sports education, training, facilities and therapy. Some individual engagement takes place through research centres in the university, including the Centre for Local Policy Studies, the Centre for Widening Participation Research and the Centre for Teaching and Learning Research. Success for Community Engagement within the engagement has been judged against the realities of what has been achieved. So the TDAP accreditation – which was at least partly premised on Community Engagement – made the link between external activities and teaching clear within the institution as a whole.

Each of these universities have a very clear engagement niche, and there is relatively limited overlap between what these universities are doing in terms of engagement. This highlights the nature of engagement by universities – it is by particular individuals who build relationships with particular communities even if that activity could in principle be carried out anywhere. There are examples of universities working in what might be seen as other universities natural territory – both Edge Hill and Hope have projects in the Blacon suburb of Chester, which is the closest that the very affluent Chester has to an excluded community. There are examples of partnership working in activities like the Culture Community and the Knowledge Quarter in seeking to ensure that projects deliver collectively and individually. The key message from this is that there is an expectation amongst a range of regional partners that universities will engage with outside partners.

All the institutions have their own commitment to community engagement – for the newer Universities it is more intimately connected to a need to build up enrichment in terms of the student experience, and give academic staff an external orientation that translates through into a culture of research, engagement and scholarship. For Liverpool University, engagement is part of its role as a leading civic institution, a major city employer willing to act as animateur for key projects and to manage its own assets to benefit the city-region as a whole. For John Moores, although engagement is not as explicit a mission, the university is aware of its role in improving the life chances of those from Merseyside and ensuring it has suitable community links to maximise the benefits achieved by local residents from excluded communities and non-traditional backgrounds.

## **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT LIVERPOOL HOPE: THE PILLAR MODEL**

Community Engagement is intimately associated with defining LHU's position within Liverpool given the presence of two other much larger institutions. They had a clear vision of being distinctive by being engaged in a particular way, engaging with those that shared the LHU ethos, and in particular extending widening participating opportunities to communities without access to HE but which shared similar vision and values to LHU. The idea was that they would provide a rigorous academic education with application for society. Community Engagement has both been inspired by LHU's Christian tradition, but has also drawn on the Christian infrastructure in and around Liverpool to prosecute that engagement mission. This has been helped by a general orientation of a majority of the staff to LHU's ethos, with staff in disagreement with that ethos tending not to take positions at LHU.

What is distinctive about community engagement at Hope is that it is not a particularly hierarchical process. Figure 4 presents an 'onion-skin' model for community engagement, where engagement is carried out by academics supported by community engagement officers within strategic frameworks set by university senior managers working to regulations and norms set by external policy-makers and sectoral bodies. Perhaps a better way to conceive of engagement at Hope is that there are various clusters or pillars of community engagement bringing together people, projects, infrastructure and framed by rational drivers and ethical belief systems.

These four pillars mutually reinforce one another, both physically – for example the development of Cornerstone creates a physical proximity which facilitates curricular interaction with excluded communities – but also critically discursively and strategically. The fact that there is a campus at Cornerstone which has to be seen to work means that engagement is unselfconsciously necessary and therefore it is much easier for those elsewhere in the university to become involved in engagement activity. This creates a self-reinforcing approach to engagement within the university, which in turn creates capacity and opportunities for further engagement activities, although these do remain dependent on the motivation of individuals and their capacity to build up external relationships.

### **5.1 THE FOUR PILLAR MODEL & THE GOVERNANCE OF ENGAGEMENT**

As noted in chapter 3 above, the Hope case study immediately demonstrated a particular attractive quality in the first phase of the research which was not demonstrated elsewhere. During the first site visit, what had been planned as three interviews was extended by a further four, and despite a lack of co-ordination, these provided a set of stories which hung together very convincingly. The Hope model is not imposed from the top-down, but involves a compatibility and complementarity between different levels of actions which come together around particular activities which in turn become 'strategic projects' for the university. The model is nowhere explicit within Hope other than their Christian values inform an engaged attitude seeking to use education and the university as what might be regarded the redemption of the fallen, through a philosophy of education which goes beyond the pragmatic and the utilitarian into the enlightening and liberating. This model is an attempt to



articulate on the one hand the remarkability of the situation at Hope and at the same time convey the amount of effort that has gone into creating that situation.

There is a significant amount of community engagement activity – in a variety of different guises taking place within Hope. The effect that this has is that these activities create a set of resources which in turn allow the university to achieve other things in the field of community engagement, and also feed into the other key missions of the university, in particular raising the richness of the student experience and contributing to Hope’s culture of scholarship. These resources may be physical or financial, such as Cornerstone, or the opportunity to win new grants from funding bodies. However, importantly they also created relational resources, contacts between Hope, community partners and also other agencies with whom communities can work, such as Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra or the city council. They also create good-will towards community engagement within the university, and in particular help to embody the idea that community engagement can help strengthen the delivery of Hope’s core missions.

### **5.1.1 Staff & student volunteering**

The first of the areas of activity is the support in the university for volunteering activity, both by staff and students. The university has a long tradition of supporting volunteering activity such as through the Hope One World charity (*qv*), which is a focus for both staff and student volunteering. Global Hope takes staff and students to work with “Strategy for Success” Childrens’ Villages, with the university staff providing CPD for teachers in these villages, and the students providing teaching cover in the classroom. In 2008, the university launched the ‘Service and Leadership award’ (SLA), which is a structured volunteering program which matches students to volunteering opportunities, ensures the students volunteering contribute to the organisation’s development, provides training and ongoing mentoring for students and then gets the students to reflect critically on their practice.

This is an extracurricular award, so does not count directly towards the degree, but provides students with extra evidence of motivation and learning for their subsequent employment, and accounts for one hour per week over the course of the degree. Student participation in Global Hope is restricted to those successfully completing the SLA. There is a degree of connection between the transferable skills training offered in the SLA and Global Hope, and the employability skills offered through the Student Services in the Foundation Building, so one justification for supporting the volunteering activity is that it helps to develop employability and enterprise activities within students.

### **5.1.2 Community within the curriculum**

The second element of the model is that the idea of the community has been built into a range of degree courses providing students with the opportunity or the requirement to engage as part of their courses. This is partly related to the fact that community engagement became increasingly necessary as an employability skill in the arts sector as there are far more jobs in running arts engagement and education projects than in performing activities.

- Community music is a module taught in the second year managed entirely by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, which places students into a local school, Faith Primary (immediately adjacent to the WECC – *qv*), and they teach

music skills and provide access to instruments which schoolchildren do not necessarily have access to.

- Hope also has a very strong expertise in community drama, where there are compulsory second and third year modules on the theatre and practice of running a community theatre group, as well as a module on interventionist theatre.
- There is also a third-year module in community dance which focuses on the role of dance as a means of engagement and personal expression, and re-engaging people with education.

The Creative and Performing Arts degree involves specialisation but allows people from across the range of arts disciplines to select these courses.

### **5.1.3 Cornerstone as a physical gateway between university and community**

The third element of the model is the physical location in an inner-city area, which acts as a primary focus for engagement activity. On the one hand, there are a range of activities of the university which create a sense of vibrancy and buzz in the Everton area, and help to bring people from the city centre into North Liverpool. Hope runs a subscription concert series and the Cornerstone Festival. The Cornerstone Gallery provides an exhibition space, which hosts not only student work, but work produced by those in art projects overseen by students as well as other artists seeking to make a breakthrough into the mainstream; in February 2008, for example, they had an exhibition of prisoners' art from the nearby HMP Walton, at the same time as they ran the Collect display of prints from more globally recognised artists. They are also trying to take that vibrancy and buzz off-campus; in 2002, Hope organised a very successful Kite Festival in the neighbouring Everton Park, and Hope are currently in discussions with the Liverpool Biennial arts organisation for creating permanent public art installations in the park.

The other element of this pillar is that Cornerstone is also a place that the community can come into and use as a gateway into Hope, either in education terms or to foster more structural relationships. The Esme Fairbairn Trust part-funded a community development worker within the university for the first two years of Cornerstone's existence; at the Trust's insistence, the worker had to take a much closer interest in the community's views of the university, helping to initiate a set of more structural links between Hope and West Everton Community Council, the formal community development organisation for West Everton.. The phase IV development of the Cornerstone, the Centre for Music, Performance and Innovation, was created with space allocated for community partners currently located within phase II, as well as shared community space within the building.

Picture 9 Cornerstone phase IV plans displayed in the Entrance Gallery, March 2009



#### 5.1.4 The Hope family of community organisations

The final pillar of the Hope model is the fact that there are a range of community-based organisations physically located on the campus. These organisations are related to the activities and strengths of the university as well as helping the university with its Widening Participation mission:-

- A highly innovative and award-winning community theatre group, Collective Encounters, established by a former Drama Lecturer at Cornerstone.
- A youth arts group, Liverpool Weekend Arts College, which provides opportunities for young people to experience a wide range of performing and creative arts at weekends and during summer schools.
- MusicSpace Trust, which provides music therapy and allows students to study the theory and practice of music therapy as part of their degree course.
- The European Opera Centre is directly funded by the European Commission to provide postgraduate Opera experience for promising European Opera singers by creating *ad hoc* opera companies and producing performances.
- Until very recently, Hope One World (*qv*) operated out of Hope Park, and provided staff and students with the opportunity to undertake intensive volunteering activity training teachers in orphanages.

## 5.2 THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE PILLARS: THE HOPE MODEL

A clear feature of the model is that there are connections between the different activities – certainly maintaining and managed by key animateurs within the university – which in turn ensure that community engagement maintains a sense of progress, and moves beyond being a set of discrete projects into something bound up

into the cultural and institutional life of the university. The different pillars represent groupings of communities of individuals which form and create links into the community, and stimulate co-learning. These communities of practice will be the focus of chapters six to nine, but these communities are also linked together within Hope in ways that take particular discrete one-off projects and activities, and build them into something larger, embedding them within the wider Hope culture, giving individual activities a sense of permanence and gravitas that they might not otherwise enjoy within other institutional contexts. A series of short synthetic vignettes – drawing on the classification of community engagement developed in working paper 3 – helps to illustrate how the various elements come together to build on existing capacity to mobilise new engagement activities.

### **5.2.1 Giving community access to better physical facilities**

One important project which provided improved community access to facilities was the Urban Hope project which operated from 2000 to 2007 and developed shared community assets, using the university as a developer, for groups without the capacity to undertake their own development work. Urban Hope came out of the experience in developing the Cornerstone Campus, in which the university integrated a range of funding streams to refurbish an existing site to create a university asset. Urban Hope developed six similar projects off-campus, on behalf of community groups, and provided the project management and delivery expertise, handing the activities over to the group at the end of the project. The prerequisites for each project were a community group, an anchor tenant, partial regeneration funding and a concept.

Picture 10 below shows the Kensington Life Bank project, developed about three miles from the university campus, with a Surestart centre, a community nursery, and community learning facilities, owned by the community group (with a covenant preventing disposal of the asset).

Picture 10 The Kensington Life Bank, an Urban Hope project, April 2009



Through the connections to the West Everton Community Council, the university were also able to help a community group on an *ad hoc* basis at a time of crisis. In early November 2008, a 16 year old Liverpoolian, Joseph Lappin, was murdered by an unknown group of gang members whilst attending a music workshop at the Shewsbury House ('Shewsy') centre. Lappin lived in the Old Swan area of the city, and was visiting the workshop for the first time that evening, and was killed in an act of revenge in a case of mistaken identity. The senselessness of the killing slowed down police investigations and forced the Shewsy to be closed for around one month. Hope immediately made their premises available to the youth club for that period, and were also approached by the WECC for their help in documenting through oral history the community response to those events.

### 5.2.2 *Pro bono* spill-over effects handled systematically

Secondly, the university run a set of activities in which communities can participate in a range of ways. The emphasis on the performing arts degrees is on a high level of practice, and so the university runs a number of drama, dance and music groups in which outside members are involved. Hope runs the Big Orchestra, which used to be the inter-university orchestra but which now involves a much wider range of participants, as well as a number of smaller, speciality bands and music groups related to specific musical styles. As part of its connection to Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, this helps to bring Orchestra members into the university and providing comment on students' compositions and performance. The link has also seen Hope develop specialist courses for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to improve the community engagement skills of their performers.

The drive for increasing research activity has seen the university appoint a number of visiting Professors to help sustain improvements in Hope's academic credentials and credibility. A number of these visiting professors have been appointed on the basis of relationships which came up in various ways through community engagement, and they have also helped to embed community engagement more thoroughly in the curriculum and research activities through their own interests. Vasily Petrenko, the Principal Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra has recently been made a Visiting Professor at Hope, building on connections between the European Opera Centre as well as Hope's sponsorship of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Hope has helped the European Opera Centre in providing academic and technical assistance with the arrangement of their performances, and the visiting Professorship helps to cement the link between these four actors.

The community music programme placed a group of students annually in the local Faith Primary School, and under the supervision of the community education team of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, worked with one class culminating in a show bringing in parents and carers. The links built between Faith, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the West Everton Community Council and Hope led to the formation of a consortium to bid for one of the Department for Education's *In Harmony* programmes, a multi-million pound multi-annual programme creating a new school curriculum in Faith Primary based around using music as a pedagogic medium to address problematically low progress with learning.

### **5.2.3 Tailoring existing activity to fit with community needs**

An activity which came out of the Community Drama activity was the political play "Nothing of value in this property". As part of the Documentary Theatre course, students are required to research and produce a piece of drama that tells a subaltern story and reveals/ discloses uncomfortable social truths. A group of students came into contact with community activists contesting enforced property demolitions in Edge Lane. The play, entitled "Nothing of value in this property", was performed in Abercrombie Square, the central symbolic space of the Liverpool University campus. The title of the play alluded to the signs placed on the doors of properties held vacant by housing associations seeking to clear areas in Liverpool to allow their gentrification. The process had been extremely contested, particularly in Kensington, in the area immediately adjacent to the Life Bank(*qv*) which had hosted some of the consultation meetings in which community opposition to the plans emerged. Despite rain during the performance, the play attracted a significant audience, and a recording of the piece was submitted to the Secretary of State's Planning Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order for Edge Lane.

Picture 11a-c (clockwise from top left): the eponymous signs; Abercrombie Square, Terraces of void units on Edge Lane (April & July 2009).



In 2008, Hope ran a global festival, “the Big Hope”, with a range of high profile speakers, bringing over 1,000 guests from 55 countries to Liverpool, including keynote addresses from the Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, Cherie Blair, Marie Macaleese, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, John Gummer, the former President of India Dr Abdul Kalam. Because there was a network of student volunteers through the Service and Leadership Award, they were able to easily arrange student volunteer participation in the event. The Big Hope also became a showcase for some of the community art activities developed, so there was a performance of a play developed jointly with Asylum Link, helping to underscore the relationships between the university and this particular community group through performance in the Festival.

The various activities that are hosted in Cornerstone also provide opportunities for students and staff at the university to become involved in community engagement. The Liverpool Weekend Arts College offers a mix of arts provision for young people during weekends and summer schools, and the tutors for these courses are both staff and students from Liverpool Hope as well as the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra has based its youth and training choirs in Cornerstone, and Music Education students come and work with those in the youngest choir, called the “Melody Makers”, deriving practical experience of teaching Music.

Students have been involved in doing the research for some of the pieces produced by the community theatre group Collective Encounters, which is based at the time of writing at the Cornerstone campus . An international conference at Hope on community engagement was dovetailed with the Collective Encounters performance the Harmony Suite, which played in a street earmarked for demolition in North Liverpool, and to which the conference delegates walked,. This piece related community dissatisfaction with the consultation surrounding regeneration in Everton and Anfield. Students were also involved in the performance as dancers and as technicians, with a total of 60 involved as volunteers, playing over the course of a week to a total audience of 2,500.

### **5.3 OVERLAPPING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE? THE HOPE MODEL**

The basis for the model, which will be explained in the following four chapters, is that what Hope has achieved is an arrangement which bridges between the top-down and the bottom-up models. The problem with top-down models (in general, not necessarily in the case of Hope) is that community engagement is inherently unknowable, and therefore it becomes very frustrating to manage all but what senior managers have knowledge of. Successful engagement at the bottom-up often can happen *in spite* of what the university does strategically rather than because of it, with engagement ‘entrepreneurs’ having to work around obstacles created by the university in an attempt to manage a process.

Conversely, bottom-up led models have the problem that engagement is not a core mission, so activity becomes very dependent on what particular individuals can achieve, and the status of individuals within their wider institutions. The effort required to maintain core academic status through teaching, research and administration as well as community engagement can mean that bottom-up models founder around succession issues, or individuals keep their activities deliberately low-key to avoid raising questions about what they are doing. The Hope model can



therefore be depicted as a way of holding these two elements together in a single institution.

### **5.3.1 The heuristic**

The heuristic for the community engagement model of Hope is that there are a number of distinct pillars by which engagement with particular communities is channelled, and these pillars interact with one another at two levels within the university. At the highest level, university managers take decisions around activities based upon how the pillars fit with the core mission, and also how realistic particular proposals are in the light of the university's existing engagement capacity. At the operational level, what the people charged with delivering those activities can achieve is also constrained by their existing linkages, and how they are able to draw on other university assets. Within the community with which the university is engaging, there are relatively few opportunities initially to shape what the university does, although as time evolves, and the community becomes more embedded in those networks, community influence has the chance to increase.

The nature of the pillars is evolving over time as the networks are also developing and consolidating. The award of the *In Harmony* project marked a 'deepening' of the Music engagement pillar. The project was only possible because of the past work and community linkages that had been built up, and they were in turn also reinforced by a desire by the university to create linkages to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. They also created a concrete project between Hope and the West Everton Community Council, which in turn helped to strengthen the networks for the WECC by creating a denser set of relationships between the other project partners, through the involvement of the university as an additional partner in the project.

This project is intimately concerned with the communities of practice that build up around the networks and connections linking the university to its surrounding communities. There are a number of communities of practice which have emerged, but these are very much at the micro-scale: as will be described in the following chapters, community groups have been able to work with the university in a variety of ways to achieve their goals, but typically with 'boundary spanning' actors who provide ready points of access to the university. It is important to stress that there can be no sense that these are strategic communities for the university as a corporate body, although they can be key learning communities for particular university internal stakeholders, particularly staff and students that use these community relationships to pursue their own objectives, including research, learning and employability.

What we are here describing as a model or a heuristic we would stress is also a very emergent model. What we are trying to do is create a metaphor to describe a dynamic and certainly rather unstable artefact that has systemic, community and network properties simultaneously. We are not arguing that these phenomena actually exist, rather they are an attempt to metaphorically capture something which is both highly complex but also highly exciting in terms of the terms of the engagement which has emerged in the last 15 years around Hope.

It is clear that when Professor Lee adopted the idea of community engagement as Hope's *Leitmotif* in 1996, the idea was not well fleshed-out, it was a vision for a direction of travel that has subsequently been materialised. Likewise, it has never explicitly been said that the different pillars of the model had to interact or support one another, but the issue was that strategic projects had to meet a number of core

needs in order to build support. So the four pillars have not emerged deliberately, rather they have been chosen over time as particular actors have attempted to achieve particular activities, and to achieve them in a difficult environment, have had to some extent to draw on the existing infrastructure, and as community engagement has become more central to what the university does, this has built up a network of activities around the university.

### 5.3.2 The Hope model: networked layers anchored around a university

We have already alluded to the fact that engagement in Hope is focused around a number of what we describe 'pillars', which are relatively discrete kinds of engagement activity that have their own participants, interests and outputs. The pillars will form the basis for the analysis in the following four chapters, but the model also includes at least three other important components, which link together to create what can be regarded as the Hope Model, namely, layers within the pillars, learning communities linking the pillars to the leading university activities (teaching, research, estates management) and then an anchoring around a corporate centre. This sub-section briefly outlines these four components, and then presents a rough topology of how they appear to hold together.

**Pillars:** the pillars are the main dimensions of the community engagement activity by Hope. The four pillars identified in this report are physical development, engagement in the curriculum, volunteering as a USP for Hope and a supporting family of organisations around the university. These each relate in quite different ways back to the university, so physical development concerns modernising the university's campus as well as stimulating visible regeneration, and is hence long-term and related to the university's corporate missions. Conversely, volunteering relates to creating volunteering as a unique selling point for Hope, contributing to student employability. Both relate to the long-term survival of the institution, but are of most direct interest to different elements within the university.

These pillars come together in different ways in different material activities, so for example in the Music Engagement activity, the physical development involves regeneration around Faith Primary and the Friary, engagement in the curriculum involves community music modules, volunteering involves students going into Faith Primary and providing the labour power for *In Harmony*, with *In Harmony* being the main organisation around the university.

**Functional layers within pillars:** each pillar is not a purely intra-institutional affair; the participants in particular activities in pillars are drawn from external organisations, and indeed, even within the university, they have a varying degree of centrality. The **university central core** (*qv*) has a strategic interest in what happens across the university in ensuring institutional survival and sustainability.

**Core teaching and research activities** are also within the university, and are concerned with delivering their main outputs. There is then a penumbra of **organisations associated with the university** which are more or less controlled by the university, which include things like Urban Hope (*qv*) as well as Global Hope which are controlled by the university, as well as a family of community partners physically located on the campus but independent organisations that nevertheless have close ties to Hope.

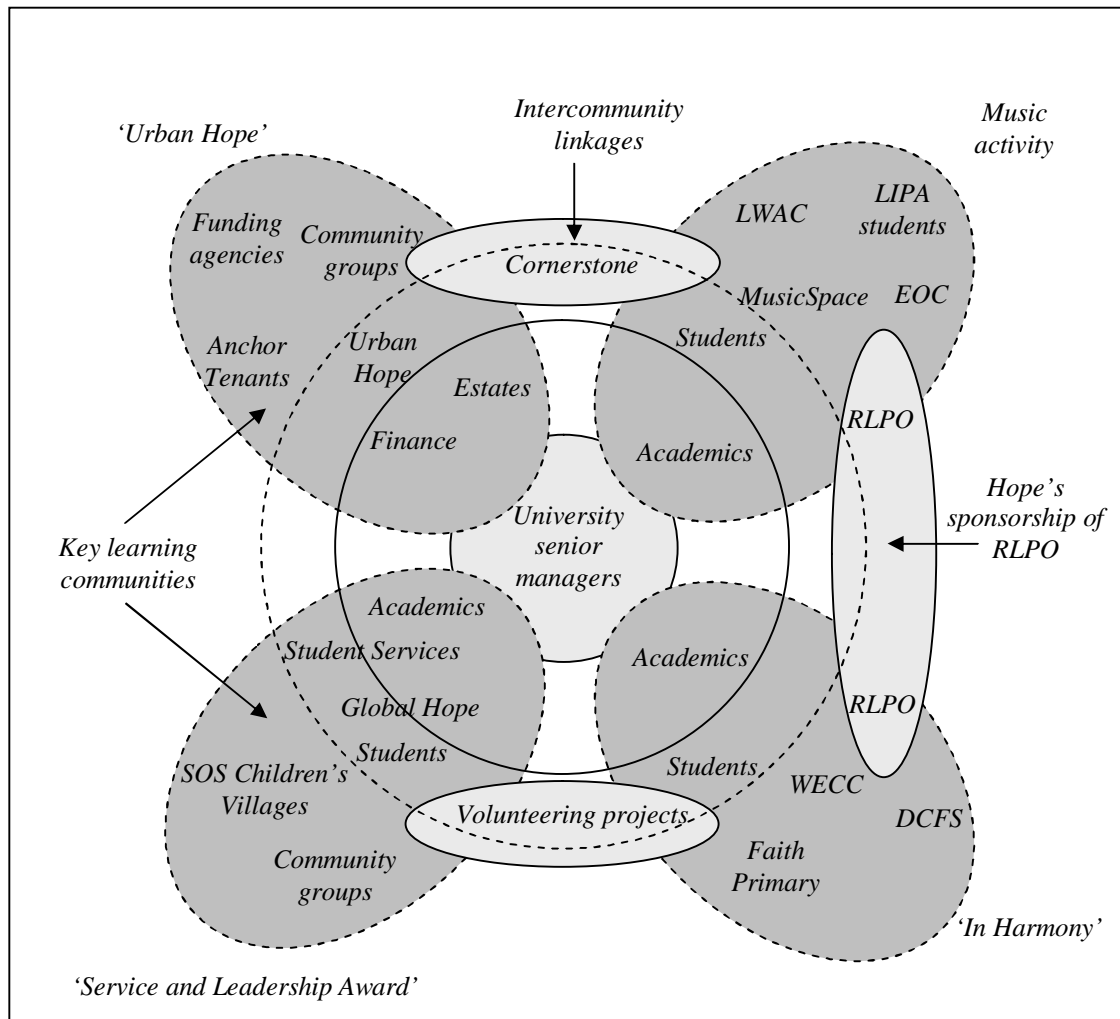
There are then a stakeholders in two external layers, the proximate and the remote. The **proximate external actors** are those for whom engagement with the university is effectively inevitable for whatever reason, whether a shared interest or the fact they both have an interest in the management of a locality or plot. There are then a set of **remote external stakeholders** who have a connection to the activities being organised (which might be as a funder, such as the Arts Council), as a ‘regulator’ (such as the local authority or regional development agency), and a raft of charities (such as the Esme Fairbairn Trust).

**Learning Communities:** the learning communities exist within pillars and bring together actors from different layers to deliver particular practical activities. These activities raise problems, and because they are learning communities, the actors work together to develop shared solutions. These shared solutions leave a legacy behind both in the form of the learned solutions to the problems but also a set of cultural epiphenomena as indicators that collective learning has taken place. An example of this would be that different actors linked through such an activity would tell similar stories about the period.

**Corporate central anchor:** the final element of the model is the fact that this is all anchored around a central university ‘node’, which provides a collective institutional anchor for the various pillars. The collective centre exerts a tight control over the inner layers of the pillars, and prevents them (in most cases) from drifting too far from what is institutionally acceptable. This ensures that the pillars themselves evolve in such a way that they can exist within the university. This anchoring effect means that the various engagement activities find themselves in a single institution, they have opportunities to access both central resources, but also to work with one another in achieving their collective goals.

As already noted, these activities come together in different configurations related to different activities, an example of which is given in figure 7 below. On the one hand, this means that the scope of activity can appear extremely broad and the relations between them extremely hard to pin down. On the other hand, it ensures that what are effectively relatively tangential activities as far as a university is concerned remain a relatively core concern. The model therefore provides a very strong shaping environment for community engagement. Some activities can be realised – they draw on existing assets, they fit well with core missions, they have enthusiastic promoters and champions and some prospect of success. The corollary of this is that there are a set of activities which cannot be achieved because they lack one or more of these critical pre-conditions

Figure 7 the key elements of the model and the main inter-element linkage in Music



### 5.3.3 The question of the reality

The model presented in 5.3.2 is attempting to give a sense of some of the regularities in an extremely complex environment. It must be stressed that the model is *ex post*, so in particular we are not claiming that it has a degree of transferability, nor that there are recipes for other kinds of collaboration which could easily be mobilised within the institution. Part of this arises from the fact that this model hides a degree of randomness in the system. Some of the activities have been funded out of competitive bids that have been won – had those bids failed, and had other bids which had failed won, then clearly the engagement system around the university could appear currently very differently. There is also an element of choice in what has been done – people have chosen to engage in particular ways out of personal inclination, and this has been an important determinant of what has been achieved.

One important feature of the model is the community engagement is clearly a subordinate actor within this system. Although there are many stakeholders making claims on the university, the university has developed an internal system for mediating between these claims to provide a degree of internal stability. Given that community are not imminent stakeholders in many of these processes, they have relatively limited opportunities to control decision-making, with the result reported amongst a number of the actors interviewed that they felt very dependent on the whim

and grace of the university for their participation, and that they were not systematic acknowledged partners in the engagement activities.

This can be explained in terms of the systems which have built up to ensure survival within the university. It can be recalled that Hope has been in a struggle for institutional survival since the mid 1970s, when the three antecedent colleges merged; the 1989 Further and Higher Education Act provided another challenge, to which the response was the Hope rebranding, and since then, the college has had to struggle to sustain student number growth and economic stability. The reality is that community engagement activities generally have to be stabilised within very complex institution eco-systems which have evolved to ensure that the future of the institution cannot be jeopardised. The tentativeness is to ensure that (a) activity fits in the model, (b) it does not disrupt the other activities and (c) it does not interfere with the life of the university as a whole.

This complex internal ecology is a relatively novel arrangement, arguably dating to around 2003. Before then, there was a much greater willingness in the university to attempt different activities without considering in such detail how they joined up within the institution. The result of this was that there were a wide range of activities without really a sense of how they all integrated into the institution. In Elford's history of Hope, *The Foundation of Hope*, the index gives a suggestion of how the idea of the 'Hope' brand spread into a very diverse set of activities, to which can be added 'Ripples of Hope' a commissioned CD music starring Julie Gold:-

- Hope across the Irish Sea: the development of a network of schools and colleges in Ireland to help recruit Irish students to Hope and to provide support for them during their stay.
- Hope at Everton (*qv*): the redevelopment of the St. Francis Xavier's school site in Everton, as a campus for the Arts & Community Deanery.
- Hope Direct: an occasional on-line magazine for visitors, alumni and other interested parties
- Hope in the community: the former name for the Deanery of Arts and Humanities.
- Network of Hope: a network of colleges in towns without substantial HE provision providing access to certificates of higher education in IT, business studies and social sciences.
- Hope on the Waterfront: from 1997-2001, Hope took over the former studios of the *Richard and Judy* show on the Albert Dock as an internet café, and to provide the university with a permanent location in the city centre.
- Hope One World: a volunteering project which allowed education deanery staff and students to travel to developing countries and work training teachers in development projects.
- *Hope Street: this is the road that joins the Catholic and Anglican cathedrals in Liverpool, and the first site of Notre Dame was located on Brownlow Hill, coming off Hope Street.*
- Theology Society: a university society, one which used Hope in the Community as a venue for a range of its meetings.

- Urban Hope: a consultancy service which helped voluntary and community sector groups to develop and run their own facilities by identifying core tenants and project managing the build.
- Hope Virtual Daily: this is an e-newsletter provided through the intranet to staff and students.

That is not to say that these activities were not enormously successful or helpful – the Cornerstone Campus was created under the previous management and has proven in its implementation to be an extremely useful gateway into the communities of Everton and North Liverpool more generally. More recently, Hope has become sponsor of a new Academy school in Newton-le-Willows in between Liverpool and Manchester, called “Hope Academy”. The complexity balancing of new engagement activities is demonstrated by the case of a set of activities which do not have to be balanced because they are clearly of institutional benefit, and which can be immediately and directly pursued, in part because there is no need to build internal constituencies for these activities.

It is important to stress at this point that this is an emergent model, and shows what has happened rather than the capacities which exist to mobilise projects. It is clear that the logic of the central anchor is extremely important, and there are a range of potential activities which could have developed forward which have not, and which have been reined in as the central core has sought to ensure that they do not drift too far from core university purposes. Likewise, there have been many struggles and conflicts in the development of these activities, within the institution as well as between university and external actors. There is not a completely empowering environment, where anyone who wants to realise a community engagement project can successfully do so. There is a complex system which restricts what can be delivered, and what has emerged reflects what can negotiate system demands.

The other element which is important to mention at this point is that graphic representations run the risk of emphasising the network and system characteristics of the situation, and downplaying the more dynamic and actor-centred characteristics. Community engagement at Hope has been heavily dependent on a set of individuals who have wanted to achieve things and to make a difference to the way that the university organised its business. What appear as relatively stable network linkages and even system connections all took individuals significant effort to mobilise and maintain, and there are clearly linkages which have been allowed to lapse because the effort they involved did not justify the reward they received. The future performance of the network continues to depend on individual efforts within the wider engagement community as on the constraints and restrictions placed by the central core on those individuals’ activities.

## **6 PILLAR I: VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES**

The first pillar of the Hope model is the volunteering activities which are arranged by the university. The fact that there are volunteering activities is by no means a rarity: indeed, through the Higher Education Active Community Fund as well as through Student Union activity, all universities in the sample have some kind of centrally-supported or sanctioned volunteering activities. Many of the institutions in the Phased 1 sample also have staff volunteering schemes which provide a degree of support and time for staff who wish to work on voluntary activities. What was distinctive at Hope was the way that it had been taken forward, and in the context of the institutional vision of 'educating the whole person' had developed into something which provided many weak links to the voluntary sector in Liverpool.

It should be noted that Liverpool does offer a very strong and encouraging environment for volunteering, and is home to a very well developed and organised sector, with voluntary and community sector organisations covering a spectrum of domains and areas. Some interviewees in Hope as well as Liverpool University and John Moores ascribed this as a relatively recent growth in the last three decades from the widespread availability of grants supporting community and volunteering activity, alongside a much longer-standing culture of philanthropy, including Garden Towns in New Brighton and Port Sunlight. The local CVS is also relatively strong in comparison with those in other parts of the country, and Hope works with both John Moores and Liverpool University in co-ordinating their volunteering structures to maximise the benefits for participating students.

### **6.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOPE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES**

The volunteering activity at Hope can be divided into three categories, although because of overlaps in key co-ordinators as well as fuzzy boundaries for the participants this distinction can be seen as relatively artificial. The first is that the university has a central volunteering activity where a number of staff and students go to a school in the developing world, with Hope staff training the school teachers, and Hope students covering for the teachers whilst they receive the training. The second is that some volunteering activity is organised in formal programmes, providing education mentoring at schools in Merseyside, as well as work experience placements more generally. The final element is that the university has introduced a formal structure which accredits student volunteering activity, and has a separate graduation ceremony for those that complete a structured volunteering programme over a number of years of their degree.

#### **6.1.1 Hope One World/ Global Hope.**

The first volunteering activity at Hope was originally called Hope One World, and is now called Global Hope, and involves a group of staff and students going to teach and help train teachers in a developing country. The idea came out of the Third World Group at the time when Hope was still Liverpool Institute of Higher Education, and the activity involved the staff and students of (what is now) the Deanery of Education. The project started in Ladakh in northern India, in a village for Tibetan refugees, and over time a partnership developed with SOS Childrens' Villages, expanding the scope of the activity to Asia more generally and also Africa (Lee, 2003). The programme won a Queen's Award in 1997, and as part of the rebranding associated with the

change to Liverpool Hope, the programme was renamed around this time as Hope One World.

The critical issue for the programme was that the course was intended to be credit-bearing. This made sense in the context of trainee teachers, with the faculty having pathways for accrediting placements in international schools in America and Europe (Kelleher *et al.*, 2003). However, the increasing requirements for student security and safety meant that the course needed to be open to all students in order to be sustainable within Hope; over the 20 years of its existence, only 115 students had been involved in the programme. There were some debates concerning how the course could be made credit-bearing, as it makes much less sense for non-educational students to be able to achieve course credits through a short teaching-based project. The course has therefore been launched as Global Hope, and is open to all students providing they have already completed the Service and Leadership award (*qv*).

A Global Hope project will typically be two weeks, so they go in to a project to work with teachers, they talk to the head-teacher and the national director to decide what they want. There are 2 staff and 2 students from Hope, the staff provide 2 weeks of workshops for the staff in the Village, and the students cover in the classrooms. In Malawi, there is an SOS Children's Village in the capital, Lilongwe. It is a bespoke built village, walled with open access to the community, with a kindergarten, primary and secondary school, a health centre, accommodation for teachers, guest houses, volunteering accommodation, houses for the children, men and women aged 18-23 who are doing FE training, 12 bigger bungalows for the orphans looked after 12 per house by house mothers and house aunties (who provide cover for the house mothers).

For Global Hope, participants must raise funds, a minimum of £500 and then the university find the rest of the £1,500 direct costs and the administration costs. The flights are typically £6-700, and SOS Children's Villages do also pay some of the costs as well – the idea of the activity is that it is about solidarity and understanding unfairness. For fundraising they have done things from a Car Boot sale with 60 pitches, to a celebrity cookbook of recipes under the \$1 per day under which 1bn people live. The fund-raising is partly collective amongst the participants.

### **6.1.2 Volunteering and employability in Liverpool**

The second set of activities fall under the rubric of the usual kinds of volunteering activities usually promoted by universities and their students. Volunteering is promoted within universities both out of a sense of altruism, but also because it is a good way for students to pick up skills which then increase their employability. Student volunteering projects typically involve students attending a number of training sessions prior to the placement, undergoing mentoring during the placement, and then either writing a reflective piece if the volunteering is credit-bearing, or being debriefed at the end of the volunteering placement. HEFCE provided funding for this kind of volunteering activity since 2002 through the Active Communities Fund, although that was withdrawn and replaced with Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, which is allocated by Formula by HEFCE.

“£15 million to continue our support for student and staff volunteering opportunities in HEIs. This is calculated pro rata to student and academic staff numbers, as with previous funding under the [Higher Education Active Community Fund](#) (HEACF). Eighty per cent is allocated to institutions pro rata to their total student FTE taken from the HESA student record 2004-05.



Twenty per cent is allocated pro rata to staff FTEs taken from the HESA staff record 2004-05. We have set a maximum allocation of £279,000 and a minimum of £15,000. We are holding back £85,000 from the total allocation for the annual awards ceremony for student and staff volunteering, and other associated costs.”

Source: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/enhance/quality.htm>

A second dimension to this is that for a period, volunteers were a means for the university to deliver its Widening Participation activity, by providing learning mentors for local schools. There is a particular problem within Liverpool of underperformance in schools at all levels, and relatively low progression rates. Hope built on its existing connections with schools, including some of those in some of the more challenging neighbourhoods of Liverpool, such as Champion High School, which has now been closed. . In 2001, then-lecturer Callum Moncrieff organised the “Kite festival in the Park” in the “Bowl” in Everton Park, something still talked about with a great deal of affection by the community representatives which were involved. However, there has been less progress, partly for issues of safety, in findings ways to get the students into bringing life to the Park on a more regular basis.

*Picture 12 A view across the “Bowl” in Everton Park, March 2009*



Finally, students were involved in some of the community organisations based around Cornerstone. Not all of those were volunteering posts, as for example with the Weekend Arts College (*qv*), the students who assisted as tutors were paid for their work. But the community drama group Collective Encounters drew on set designers, stage technicians and students from other disciplines to support a number of their productions without the students receiving a direct reward for their work.

### **6.1.3 Service and Leadership Award**

The third, and the most recent, of the activities around volunteering is the very-recently created Service and Leadership Award (SLA). The Award came out of efforts to increase the impact and accessibility of Hope One World across the university. The Award runs in parallel to the degree, and all students who complete a

portfolio of tasks are granted the award. There is a separate graduation ceremony for all those who complete the Award. There are currently around 130 students undergoing the SLA, in comparison for the 115 who participated in Hope One World in the first 20 years of its existence. However, the majority of the volunteering which takes place within the SLA is local to Liverpool, because it builds on the existing contacts of staff and students. They are working with homeless in the city centre, addiction, many church projects (as lots of staff are religious), Christian youth groups, elderly resident lunchtime clubs, parent and toddler groups, community gardening work, as well as the campus biodiversity group.

At the moment, the SLA as far as the students are concerned is in four elements, preparation and training to be volunteers, volunteering, leadership and reflective practice. With project volunteering, there are staff involved as mentors, and there are 133 students with 70 staff mentors, of which 55 are active. The mentors have to be trained as well as the students. The programme brings an extensive amount of training which would not be unfamiliar to the volunteering courses commonly offered amongst the surveyed institutions. These courses include health and safety, working with others, the notion of volunteering, and around low v high aspirations within the award, the concept of making a difference and change the world. There is a leadership element to the SLA, and the Award secretariat also work with the organisations taking the placement volunteers to help them with their placement and induction policies. The SLA is run out of the Deanery of Sciences and Social Sciences but is open to participants from across the university.

The heart of the SLA is reflective practice, students catalyse a positive change, so they redress the balance of poverty, then reflect on themselves and its impacts, what they have done that is right for them, the community and the individual. They get a reflective practise handbook and they write their reflections in it. They meet their mentors twice per semester, and the book is quite clear, what they are learning, what the organisation is gaining, what have been the transformations, attitudes and skills development, an awareness of issues, things they want to progress, she hates to use the phrase but “how they are making a difference”. They get feedback from the organisation and the mentors, they have reflections on the training, whether they have met their learning targets.

There are connections between curricular and SLA volunteering. Some of this is formal, as in the case of Community Music, where 8 students are going into Faith Primary to run workshops as part of *In Harmony*, for the first time next Wednesday, and the students get credit for that. It was written into the project specification, for example, that Hope volunteers could be involved in *In Harmony*, helping with things like class instrument lessons, and working as volunteers to mentor and supervise children’s group practice time, which also contributes to the Service and Leadership Award: the call for volunteers for the *In Harmony* project was made through the SLA secretariat. Likewise, the Music department runs a number of orchestras and choirs to help their students fulfil their requirement to be active in a performance activity, and these groups are open to the community. Informally, the curricular volunteering helps to bring potential volunteers to the attention of the SLA secretariat (as they deliver particular courses for them) and so the two work activities work together in partnership together, and both also reinforce the Global Hope activity.

...a proposal involving a partnership between the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Liverpool City Council and West Everton Community

Centre to create an acoustically sensitive space within the church to host orchestral rehearsals and for associated community-based music thereby bringing this magnificent building back into use in the heart of a deprived area, re-building community confidence, changing the image of North Liverpool and offering a new premium cultural resource to people in the area in a sensitive but imaginative manner.

Source: [http://www.amion.co.uk/news/news-detail.asp?Article\\_ID=51](http://www.amion.co.uk/news/news-detail.asp?Article_ID=51)

## **6.2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING**

Having looked at the core dimensions of the ‘volunteering’ pillar, it is necessary to try and gauge the extent to which there is collective learning taking place amongst the actors involved. Critically, a question is also the extent to which the collective learning is spread across to excluded communities, and the scale at which that learning is taking place. The volunteering activity can possibly best be characterised as small scale, but relatively high volume in terms of the number of connections involved. However, the majority of the learning within the volunteering pillar did not tie the communities to either university knowledges or provide them with voices within university strategic governance forums.

### **6.2.1 Existence of communities of practise involving excluded communities**

The relatively extensive nature of the research subject has made it difficult in the volunteering pillar to identify and follow particular communities of practice in this particular sphere. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify with varying degrees of certainty a number of communities of practice which have built up in anchoring the volunteering activity within the university. The first is within the university itself as a corporate actor – there is a core group which have built up expertise in many years around student volunteering, and have increased the intensity of that activity in recent years. The second is amongst the participants in the volunteering activities, the staff and students involved in the various projects, who undertake collective training and shared mentoring. The third is collective learning around the various volunteering projects, and the assistance given to particular organisations.

Arguably the key community of practice within the volunteering pillar is within the university, and derives from the group of people who initiated the Tibet Refugee teaching project in the late 1980s. That project, and its later incarnation of Hope One World, appeared to be a significant reference point for the members of this community, in that it was talked about by a number of interviewees as something significant to them.. Although a number of the founding group have subsequently left the university, a number of the key drivers from that project are still at that university, and in relatively senior positions able to influence the introduction of the Service and Leadership Award. The current SLA project officer previously participated in at least one Hope One World project, and was specifically recruited to run the project because of this past experience. There is therefore a group of people within the university who understand the practicalities of volunteering in local and overseas contexts, and who worked together to create the idea of the SLA.

There is also a set of secondary communities of practice which have built up within the university from the participants in the various volunteering activities, such as the SLA, the various Community Arts curricular programmes and Hope One World. One indicator of the ‘community’ nature of this is the recurrent involvement of the same

people in different volunteering activities around the university. It has already been noted that individuals from the Community Music course also participated in an (non-credit bearing) independent Music Learning project in the north of Sweden. Likewise, the participant in the SLA interviewed has also worked as a volunteer for various events around Hope, including a conference on Every Child Matters, as well as attending a conference on ethical business practice in Switzerland. The placements from the Documentary Theatre course provide a steady flow of ideas into and activities supporting the Community Drama Initiative at Hope.

The third set of communities of practice which could potentially exist are those which link the university to outside communities. These were much harder to trace and definitively establish, but there were some interesting suggestions that there were indeed links. Significantly, these links were often built around existing connections to existing voluntary and community sector groups in the locality. There were a number of volunteering activities which had linkages back to the university regular enough for them to be considered as network linkages, in part mediated through activist members of staff (some of whom were quite senior within the university). The Big Hope international festival was one means for community groups with linkages to the university to meet up with Hope's global partners and to develop their own external linkages.

It is important to stress that the university was not the only institutional anchor for these communities around volunteering. One particularly strong 'institution' which recurred in the stories that were told about volunteering were churches. Some of the volunteers were already active in volunteering activities through their own congregations and those networks were brought across to the university, so for example in the case of the SLA, there were people getting community work for their local churches accredited for the award. This reflected senior managers' approach to volunteering for those already active volunteers through churches. This partly reflected the fact that Hope was strongly embedded within the dual networks of the Anglican Diocese and Catholic Archdiocese through its governance arrangements, and the commitment of both churches to ecumenical activism. This network helped to lubricate particular activities, such as the rehabilitation of the closed St. Mary's into the Friary performance space.

### **6.2.2 A question of collective learning in reality**

The issue here is the extent to which the university made a difference to existing volunteering activities which would have taken place anyway, and the extent to which university 'knowledges' became involved in the collective learning processes. It was suggested that one benefit which emerged was the experience the university had in managing volunteering and training its staff and students to be volunteers helped to build capacity in local groups to absorb volunteers. The SLA had a set of procedures in place to help groups who wishes to use Hope volunteers to identify a proper task for them, and to effectively manage them in the organisation. However, from the community perspective, the learning within Hope was effectively black-boxed to them, and they worked bilaterally with the university to build up volunteer placements.

In this research project we have been deliberate to exclude Widening Participation activities as a form of community engagement because of the tendency of universities to use it in rather a functional way to cherry-pick the best students and provide them

with the means to leave their communities. However, there are examples of how Hope used Widening Participation as a rather more constructive activity. It is first necessary to remark that it was striking in the community groups that we interviewed that there were a number of Hope graduates employed, including those from non-traditional backgrounds. This suggests that Hope is not solely an 'escalator institution', providing those that can leave the means to leave, and that its Widening Participation motivations are not purely functional.

As part of Widening Participation, Hope worked with a secondary school in Everton, Champion (now closed after an extremely bitter struggle), to provide education mentors for GCSE-students. We were told that 70 students from Hope were given intensive training, during which they bonded as a group, and went into Champion High School. Before the project, the school was getting 16.5% pupils with 5 good GCSEs. Each student did 2 hours weekly in the school, and after the programme, the GCSE pass rate increased by 6 percentage points (i.e. above 22%). But the programme did not operate in a vacuum, and there were other links to Champion, in part through the Archdiocese (at a strategic level, between the Headteacher and Hope senior managers) but also with Hope staff going in and delivering enrichment classes in arts subjects. Hope also provides student mentors for the nearby Faith Primary school (*cf.* community engagement in the curriculum).

### **6.2.3 The scale of collective learning in the volunteering activity**

To get a sense of the significance of this activity, it is possible to consider the scale of the volunteering activities. The first thing to note is that it is a somewhat peripheral activity within the university, and has been established as distinctive from teaching activities (and engagement through the curriculum). This is not unusual as in the majority of institutions, volunteering activity is co-ordinated through the students' union and is therefore slightly peripheral. Although the HEACF has driven some mainstreaming within the sector, there has been a tendency with the loss of HEACF for volunteering to slightly recede. Therefore we contend that the fact that volunteering is increasing in importance without any direct funding for volunteering activities to be suggestive that it is being taken more seriously within the institution.

There are cases of universities with volunteering programmes in the survey which have for example won awards for volunteering or other community engagement programmes. Whilst those universities have been willing to accept the accolades, they have been less willing to assume the burden of continuing those activities into the future. Interviewees agree that having someone within the university working full-time on the promotion of volunteering is necessary to ensure that activity takes place at sufficiently a high level. Hope have gone a further step down that road, in that there are permanent staff running a well-defined infrastructure within an accredited process leading to an award. The fact that a conceptual link has been developed between the SLA and Hope' ecumenical background and mission – a link articulated by a number of actors – is further indication that the volunteering is at least taken seriously within the institution.

In terms of the volume of activities, there are around 130 students involved in the Service and Leadership Award, and around 70 students involved in the Widening Participation mentoring programme, out of a total of 5,200 full-time undergraduate students. This compares well with the other institutions in Liverpool; John Moores, with a total of 24,000 students, had around 150 students directly involved in

volunteering programmes, as well as around another 50 involved through a directly sponsored programme. Liverpool University's volunteering programme, run by their Guild of Students, was considerably larger, with 1,200 students and 200 staff registered for volunteering activities out of a student body of 17,000 and 4,000 staff. Therefore it is not reasonable to say that what is happening at Hope in terms of volunteering is particularly exceptional, with the exception of the direction of travel, which is increasing activity at a time of decreasing funding.

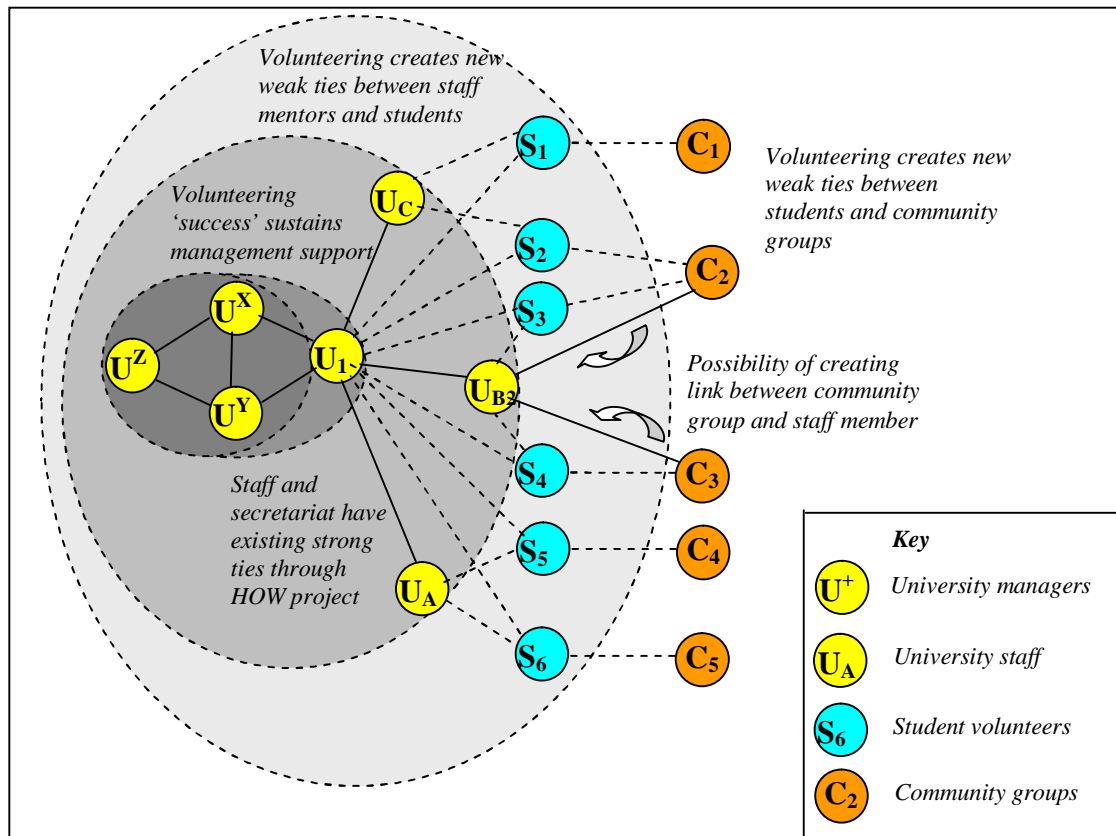
To characterise the volunteering pillar, it produces a set of transient, light touch linkages from the university to the community via mentors and student volunteers. The whole pillar is underpinned by a network with three main parts, senior managers that take it seriously, a secretariat that organises placements, Global Hope, training for volunteering and the Award, and the individuals who participate on volunteering activity. The activity does not just comprise Global Hope and the SLA –Widening Participation mentoring, volunteering for the Big Hope, and volunteering for overseas conferences draw on the same infrastructure and the same group of enthusiastic student volunteers and staff organisers.

### **6.3 A NETWORK REPRESENTATION OF HOPE'S VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES**

The impacts of the volunteering pillar are relatively weak as far as community actors go. The main mechanism for the building of connections and the transmission of knowledge are the students, and they are a relatively transient part of the university community, although the relatively significant number of local students increases the general permanence of their inclusion. It is worth adding at this point that despite the 'local' nature of many of the students, those interviewed who come from traditional backgrounds locally also found it novel to come into contact with people from parts of Liverpool outside their natural domain area, and so even those local students who stay could potentially have their willingness to become involved with Liverpool's excluded communities greater after the volunteering activity than beforehand.

The majority of the connections created and the learning activities in the volunteering pillar are therefore restricted to the university community, and in particular to the permanent staff elements of that pillar. The two main learning communities were as already noted those staff who had participated in Hope One World and/ or were already active in volunteering activities, and the senior managers who committed to the creation of the SLA. The links between the mentors and students was much weaker, as they were only committed to see one another 4-6 times over the life of the project. The linkages from the students to the particular concerned community were also very weak.

Figure 8 A stylised network representation of the 'volunteering' pillar



The only area where the community could be perceived to benefit from these activities improving their network position and access to resources was through developing links to university staff through the students. We found no evidence that this process directly happened, but what we did identify was students taking placements with organisations that were already significant to staff actors in the university (for example in the Widening Participation mentoring at Champion High School). Therefore, the greatest networking contribution made by the volunteering activity was as a performative activity, helping to sustain stronger links between university staff and community groups.

## **7 PILLAR II: COMMUNITY IN THE CURRICULUM**

The second element of Hope's community engagement activity comes through the fact that it is specified in a number of curricular areas. The majority of our research focused on the Arts & Humanities Deanery, where there was – in part for historical reasons – an emphasis on community engagement, as well as increasing pressure from accrediting bodies to provide students with access to community experience in the course of their degrees, thereby stimulating community engagement. Certainly, in the three areas that we examined in more detail, namely music, drama and dance, it was possible to see that there was indeed significant elements of community engagement. The Deanery accounts for around one-third of Hope's students, and it is clearly a significant element of what is undertaken at Hope, in contrast to other institutions where curricular community engagement was restricted to particular courses, subjects and schools.

### **7.1 AN OVERVIEW OF HOPE'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CURRICULUM**

One of the key challenges which Hope has successfully addressed in the last fifteen years has been establishing its independent viability as a university, this success being acknowledged successively with the award of Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2002, full university status in 2005, and Research Degree Awarding Powers in 2009. The criteria for these three achievements do vary, but all are related to the need to provide an education rooted in research and scholarship. A critical element of that is that the education needs to provide a broader perspective than what might be achieved at a further education college with teachers who although strong in their subject do not necessarily have a broad and developing understanding of the latest developments in their disciplinary field. One element which Hope have stressed in seeking to provide the kind of broad and enriched curriculum to justify this position has been to develop a strong community emphasis in its courses, underpinned by an approach that could be described as 'reflective practice'.

Therefore the aim has not simply been that the students gain experience in working with excluded communities – which could be perceived as being a primarily vocational experience. In order to gain the credits, students must reflect on their experience, and consider the interactions between the empirical and theoretical dimensions of their discipline, using the empirical experience of the community engagement activity as a means for that theoretical reflection. This has also dovetailed neatly with efforts within the university to develop a research culture building on existing strengths. Particularly in the field of arts and humanities, there is a strong culture of performance and practice, and therefore scholarship in these fields is related to practice. Reflecting on practice and engagement pedagogies therefore offered at the time of the research one pathway for Hope to build up its research culture, with staff at that time taking Ph.D.s reflecting on their experiences in community engagement as a pedagogic vehicle.

The story of curricular engagement at Hope is quite difficult to disentangle because of the degree of overlapping elements involved, and indeed the connection with other elements of the engagement story. For the purposes of this chapter, we will therefore focus on three elements, the first of which is the formal organisation of activities at Hope around Cornerstone, and in particular the one-time existence of a Deanery of



Arts and Community. The second is the community engagement which is carried out within particular courses, notably as part of the Creative and Performing Arts degree. The third is the extent to which the community are directly involved in core educational activities around Hope.

### **7.1.1 Faculty of Arts & Community**

For a period at Hope, the idea of Community engagement was formalised into the name of one of the Deaneries, and the idea that community engagement was an important part of education has subsequently permeated deeply into the courses offered within that Deanery. When the Cornerstone campus (*qv*) was opened, it was appreciated that in order to be successful, the university needed to develop a substantial presence in the community, and at the same time, that community engagement needed to be a rationale for a split site. With the two sites being around four miles apart, there needed to be a clear reason for the additional pressure that this placed on staff and students in terms of journey times, and its location within Everton, as a good entrepôt for engagement, became that rationale.

The second element of the formation of the Deanery was the choice of which activities would be located at the new Everton site. The Hope Park site was created out of the merger of three teacher training colleges into two sites, and therefore even before expansion from the 1980s, there was tremendous pressure on space on the two sites. In the wake of the merger, there was an attempt to ensure institutional survival by expanding the scope of qualifications beyond those leading to an educational qualification. The introduction of these novel courses required new facilities, and in particular, the decision to expand performing and creative arts substantially at the same time created a demand for stage and studio space that was extremely difficult to provide in an already crowded campus which was being developed to deal with expansion in existing subjects. It was therefore decided that the most logical step was then to put Creative and Performing Arts onto the Cornerstone campus, where, as subjects which did not always require access to core student facilities such as libraries, this would reduce the inconvenience of the distance between the two sites.

The Deanery that was first located at the Everton campus was initially called “Deanery of Hope in the Community” (Elford, 2003b, p. 173), a name which proved extremely contentious with a number of local community groups for suggesting that until the arrival of LHU, the virtue of hope had been lost from Everton. Two activities contained within the Deanery made Everton its natural home, given Everton’s status as an excluded community. These two activities were firstly in providing Access Courses (courses which allow students without level III qualifications to proceed into higher education). The second activity was the Urban Hope project (*qv*) in which Hope helped six community groups to develop their own buildings (*cf.* 5.2.1) drawing on the expertise they had built up in the process of developing the Cornerstone site.

Following the decision to establish a joint Deanery, and with Arts moving in large part to the Everton site, the Deanery of Arts and the Community was established focused around the new Everton site (*qv*). Picture 12 below shows the detail of the signage which was at the time of the research present on the Shaw Street approach to the campus. The signage dates from after the award of university status (which came in 2005) and before the separation of the Community elements from the Deanery (which came later). The sign highlights the aspiration which the university has had to

provide a friendly face to the community and to emphasise their presence as a good thing. As the following chapter will suggest, this process has not always run entirely smoothly.

*Picture 13 Detail of the signage at Cornerstone with the Deanery name c. 2005, photo taken November 2008.*



2005 marked the high water mark of the Deanery of Arts and Community, and it appears that the tensions between the two community-facing elements and the more academic elements were too great to sustain. Much of what the Community Deanery was doing was funded by one-off projects, and many of those in turn were funded by the European Social Fund. After 2000, in response to a number of frauds in the ESF scheme, eligibility and compliance requirements were tightened to the extent that the higher education sector nationally withdrew from ESF-funded activities, as they became almost impossible to deliver except at a loss to the universities. This undermined a great deal of the rationale and indeed the (revenue-funded) activities for the Community element of the Arts & Community Deanery.

Partly in response to the ESF problems, but also out of a degree of internal unease over its suitability, the majority of the Community elements in the Deanery moved to become the regeneration company Urban Hope whilst what remained in the Arts Deanery – all of the undergraduate teaching – became the Deanery of Arts and Humanities. The driver for this appears have been a desire amongst senior managers to emphasise the distinctiveness of their undergraduate programmes, and to get away from any sense that what they were doing resembled activities in the Further Education sector. Nevertheless, as the following section shows, the decision that the

Cornerstone campus should become a gateway into the community has left its impact on many of the courses offered in the Deanery.

### **7.1.2 Courses with community elements**

A second element to community engagement around Hope was that many of the work placements that take place through the curriculum also have a volunteering dimension. For the arts & humanities deanery, they have been highly sensitive to statements from the Arts Council that the main employer of their graduates will be community arts organisations rather than professional practice activities (such as orchestras or touring companies). Many of the degrees therefore incorporated a compulsory community placement element which has much in common with the volunteering activity described in the previous chapter. The distinction we make here is that because the placements are accredited and compulsory, they are distinct from the purely voluntary activity which is primarily altruistic in nature. The issue was blurred, however, by the fact that we did interview some music students who took accredited placement courses beyond the number of courses needed to complete their degree, giving their participation a voluntary dimension.

The basis for the high level of community engagement in the curriculum was in requiring students on its core Arts courses to complete a community engagement activity or in offering community arts modules as part of the course. The basis for these modules is that they would on the one hand learn a set of skills necessary to work in a community setting, and then on the other, have the opportunity to put those skills into practice and to make a difference to local communities. As already noted, the courses also included reflective elements so that community engagement was not seen as something purely vocational, but a means to reflect upon their acquired knowledge. This latter element was necessary to fulfil the stringent quality requirements demanded by Hope for its teaching activities which in turn formed part of its case for TDAP.

*BA Creative and Performing Arts* graduates are characterised by a flexible, open-minded approach to creative work, and by their critical and vocational skills which they need to put their ideas into practice in the real world.

The degree is a distinctive single honours programme, focussing in particular on community arts and interdisciplinary performance, alongside which you choose a variety of modules offered in drama and theatre studies, fine art with design, music, dance and writing.

< <http://www.hope.ac.uk/artsandhumanities/evertton/creativearts/index.htm> >  
<Accessed 12th February 2008>

Staff and participants in the Community Music and Community Drama courses were interviewed, and this gave the opportunity to see the opportunities for substantial volunteering activity within the courses but also more widely. One example of this was the Community and Applied Theatre module, which at the time of the research was a compulsory module over two years, the first year involving learning the skills necessary for community engagement, and then in the second year applying those skills with a community group. One of the options for the students was to work with a school, which has fewer attributes of a socially-excluded community, but we were told of other activities in which students were introducing nursery-age children to museums via story telling, working in mental health groups, working with at risk

children, working with people in alcohol awareness programmes. The Documentary Theatre (*qv*) course involved students working on occasion with organised groups to identify their stories and bring them to life in performances.

The Community Music course, which was in its second year of running during our research, involved a weekly placement at nearby Hope Primary school, working with school staff and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in introducing one class to musical educational ideas. The participants also had the opportunity to attend a two-week course, Exploration in Music, held in Umeå in Sweden, teaching music in local schools. There were other opportunities for community engagement in the Music course, as there were at the same time a pair of courses in the theory and practice of music therapy, using music to engage with people suffering problems. Together with the Music Space Trust (*qv*) which has space within the Everton campus, students taking the module were able to observe how music therapy could be applied in a range of contexts, and providing individuals who can subsequently develop into music therapists.

It is important to note that it was not just the students who were active in engagement through the curriculum, but also the staff. Staff interviewed within the Deanery related their involvement in a variety of volunteering and community work projects as part of their scholarship activities, providing them with the capacity to deliver an enriched curriculum for their students. Particularly in the area of creative arts, community engagement was regarded as a form of practice, and as a means to undertake reflective practice as the basis for scholarship. There were at the time of the research staff taking Ph.D.s drawing on this reflective practice as the basis for their research, as well as staff blending their community engagement and volunteering work into their wider research activities.

#### **The Journey, African Caribbean Jazz Dance**

Local youths signed up to attend a six-week dance programme at CSP's summer dance school which opened on 24 July. Liverpool Hope University Lecturer and choreographer Sue Lancaster, is carrying on the good work and dance traditions in the spirit of the late Elroy Joseph. The Journey, as Sue calls it, provides young people with the dance skills and detailed knowledge of the history of Jazz dance. Sue is focusing on contemporary Jazz dance chronicling the path of the genre from its African roots to its watered down version within mainstream America and the rest of the world.

<<http://static.novas.org/files/inpartnership-autumn-2006-126.pdf> > <Accessed 12 February 2008>

#### **7.1.3 Community engagement and meeting community needs**

There is a question of how far this curricular engagement activity reached into the surrounding community, and bound Everton to the life of the university, to the extent of potentially allowing them to shape the use of university resources<sup>2</sup> As Professor

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<sup>2</sup> We would reiterate at this point that we are using the idea of accessing resources in a strategic network sense, that is to say in terms of legitimacy and knowledge, as well as persuading others to agree on a course of action that spends resources collectively on ways that benefit the original actor. This is not the same as saying community groups have access to studios and workshops.

Tim Prentki said during his inaugural lecture as a visiting professor in Community Drama at Hope University:-

“Performance can be offered *to* a community by professional artists and students, can be created *with* the community, or may be produced *by* the community with or without external facilitation.” (Prentki, 2009, p. 18)

It is clear that using this fourfold classification (offered to, created with, produced by with facilitation, produced by without facilitation) Hope’s curricular engagement activities fall under the first three of those classes (a university could by definition play no role in communities producing performance without external facilitation). In courses that have run around documentary theatre and community theatre, there have been examples where students have simply undertaken research and then produced and performed a piece which has had relatively limited connection back to the originating community.

Some performances are created with the community, and one good example of this was the Kite Festival cited in 6.1.2 above. Calum Moncrieff was at the time of the research a Lecturer in Sculpture, and the project took the idea of sculpture into the park and engaged the local community in the creation of sculptures in the forms of Kites which were then flown and created a performance. The Kite Festival had acquired a life of its own as a story told about Hope’s interaction with the Everton community, with interviewees in both Hope and West Everton Community Council (*qv*) relating it as a successful example of community engagement that both sides had valued, and which was a model for both sides on how Hope could benefit the community.

One idea which was still in development at the time of the research, and which showed progress following the completion of the research, was that Hope, WECC and the Liverpool Arts organisation “The Biennial” were exploring whether they could create a sculpture park in Everton Park. The idea behind that was to help to rehabilitate an area which was seen by students, staff and residents as problematic. Although the idea was that student sculptures could be used and this might encourage students to use the park, the link back to curricular engagement here is perhaps slightly tenuous. What appears to have made a difference to this particular project was the formation of the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium, a self-styled alliance of eight of Liverpool’s leading arts organisations, demonstrating the contribution which their activities made to the wellbeing of the city in a time of economic crisis.

There were examples of activities which came out of the community which the university helped to facilitate. Some interviewees claimed that this lay behind the genesis of the *In Harmony* (*qv*) project, in which community actors had had the idea to bid for funding, and had enrolled and been assisted by Hope and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in developing the plausible bid which was subsequently to win funding. Entirely separately from this, WECC had approached the university to offer placements for students as part of the response to the stabbing of Joseph Lappin, as a means of documenting community feeling and making a permanent record of the strong feelings which emerged in the community.

There are examples of where students are able to get involved in prior activities as part of their placements or as *ad hoc* volunteers, assistants and helpers. We were told of examples in the Community Dance. In one case, a London ballet company were

coming to Liverpool and had arranged to run a small school-based project; Hope hosted them for their visit, the company provided a lecture on the community dance course, and then two students were able to observe the activity. Again, this raises the question of the degree to which it was specifically curricular engagement, and certainly, prior links between the dance teacher and the local group facilitated the particular activity. Nevertheless, the fact that Hope was a place which was keen on such community linkages within the curriculum helped to create a justification that brought a community dance education project into Hope and linked it to the enrichment of teaching, both via the lecture and the observation project.

## **7.2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING**

In common with the volunteering pillar, the engagement through the curriculum activity has also been comparatively light touch and low intensity, with the majority of connections coming through the students. However, in contrast to the volunteering, the university is more ‘structurally’ involved in these engagement activities. Because the students undertake them as part of an accredited course, staff and the university are more committed to the activities, at least in the sense of ensuring that something takes place which can form the basis for the reflective practice demanded by the university’s quality requirements.

This raises the question of the scope of the learning which takes place, whether it is restricted to the students and staff, and the autonomy community groups have to shape the engagement to respond to their own community needs. In some cases, curricular engagement occurs because staff and community groups already have substantive linkages, and these allow students to undertake engagement activity. In other cases, repeated interaction between staff, students and community groups leads to linkages developing between staff and community members, which are more enduring than the more fleeting volunteering arrangement.

### **7.2.1 A question of collective learning in reality**

Arguably the most important question for this chapter is where lies the locus of collective learning in the curricular engagement. The evidence points to the predominant locus being between staff and students (potentially working with groups). In the interactions with the main community groups studied, in general terms it can be argued that the community groups in reality had very limited contact with students and were possibly unaware of what precisely the students were doing in terms of their engagement. Within the university, the collective learning around reflective practise has been recognised in the award of a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (a CETL) from HEFCE to Hope for their course “Developing reflective writing in music”. In tandem with the interviews, this suggests that there had been substantive learning within the university about how to use community engagement as a means of stimulating effective inquiry.

#### **5. Developing reflective writing in music (or practical disciplines)**

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[http://www.writtenow.ac.uk/cetl\\_evaluation/2.3.%20Write%20Now%20Mini-project%20Fundine%20Recipients.pdf](http://www.writtenow.ac.uk/cetl_evaluation/2.3.%20Write%20Now%20Mini-project%20Fundine%20Recipients.pdf)

In the Documentary Theatre course, in the academic year 2008-09 there were 22 projects including “nothing of value in this property” (*qv*) one of a range of projects which worked with local groups – and groups of locals – to help articulate their voices. An example project might be a group of students from the Documentary Theatre course working with three 15 year olds about the consequence of the increasing criminalisation of the young in north Liverpool in the wake of the Rhys Jones murder. The lasting benefits of that activity are hard to identify other than the general personal benefits which accrue from participation in that kind of work, increasing the likelihood of progression into higher education. One interviewee noted that in another city where he had been extensively involved in student curricular community engagement activity, the tendency to use the same contacts led to a kind of engagement saturation, with communities actively helping the students to ‘engage’ out of their past experience of engagement, and consequently deriving very few direct benefits themselves<sup>3</sup>.

The *In Harmony* project was interesting, because it potentially inverted the relationships between the university and the community. It was assumed in chapter 2 that the university operated as the open, capacity-building actor and it could help other actors work effectively with the university. In the *In Harmony* project, the situation was reversed, with the West Everton Community Council working with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Archdiocese and the City Council originally around the restitution of St. Mary’s Church (the Friary) as a rehearsal space for Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. When the idea of the *In Harmony* project emerged involving Faith Primary, Hope were able to become involved because they knew three of the principal actors involved. Nevertheless, they were not the initiators of the project but joined in a wider mobilisation that had its roots elsewhere.

The most tangible effect of the curricular engagement was that it helps the university to sustain its networks with community organisations. The university was under a great deal of developmental pressure: at the time of the research, the main institutional concerns were research degree awarding powers and performance in the 2008 Research Assessment exercises. For that reason, linkages with community groups were not always to the top of its agenda except where there were strong material reasons for them to be so, which fundamentally reduced to curricular enrichment and innovation, and as a means of promoting research excellence and broadening the purchase of the research culture within the institution as a whole. From this perspective, it is clear why the *In Harmony* project was something which could be strategically significant to Hope.

This was a project that delivered precisely what Hope was seeking strategically and institutionally, in terms of improving its reputation as well as providing a means to strengthen its curricular offering and research strengths. The project provided an internationally recognised programme (working with the Simon Bolivar youth

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, the fact that the communities were able to guide the students through the engagement process suggests that some degree of collective learning had taken place, and the curricular knowledge had spread beyond the university into the community. However, under such circumstances it is almost impossible to estimate the value of that learning to the community, although it is possible to imagine positive outcomes where the community is taken more seriously as a partner by the university. In the case of Hope, there was no evidence that any local communities were reaching this point, beyond those placements with members of the Hope ‘family’ of organisations (*cf.* Chapter 9).

orchestra) together with the acclaimed Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom Hope have been seeking to develop more strategic linkages. This was sufficiently important news for the university to be included in the February 2009 issue of the university newsletter *Hope Times*, following the front page news that some research in its Theology and Social Work departments was rated at 4\* in the 2008 RAE.

For activities that were not as eye-catching from the university perspective, what curricular engagement did provide was an ongoing reason to be engaging with outside groups. The curricula were themselves designed to be community-facing and to provide students with the opportunities to learn about community engagement as an increasingly important employability skill. But the process of having to manage, oversee and supervise students in the community was also important for the maintenance of linkages to these groups. There was also some evidence that these connections were part of the social capital of these communities, through the regular contact with the university. What was much harder to demonstrate, once more, was the question of whether those relationships were really social capital that these groups could draw on to make a difference to their own situations.

Therefore, it is necessary to restrict the claims made for the value of the social capital created through community engagement in the curriculum, to not being intrinsically valuable, but to being functional, giving community and university groups reasons to interact, which overlapped with other more fundamental relationships. Without being able to clearly ascribe causality, the relationships that community groups had with the universities through curricular engagement were embedded within a wider web of relationships, both with the universities as well as with other actors. Although the curricular engagement did not necessarily stimulate learning activity that built new relationships that strengthened the position of those community actors, it did contribute to the maintenance of those relationships.

### **7.2.2 Existence of communities of practise involving excluded communities**

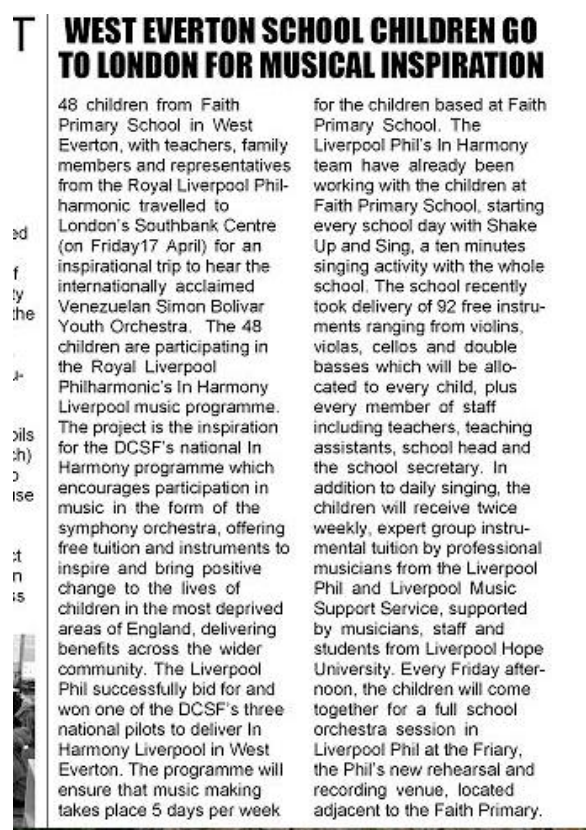
A second perspective on the value of curricular engagement in building novel social capital was the extent to which it created genuine communities of practice involving members drawn from excluded communities. Wenger's notion of a community of practice is often viewed in an extremely reductionist way, with commentators willing to describe any group that meets regularly as a community of practice. The definition we have taken in this research demands a higher level of involvement, that students, staff and community representatives genuinely worked together to solve problems, and in that collaborative process built up shared norms and cultures which facilitated future co-operation.

The most substantive of the communities of practice identified in this research related to the *In Harmony* project, and as we have noted, this is a project with which the university were only initially tangentially involved at the outset. But the project did not come from nowhere, and there is some evidence that the university were involved in the first negotiations around the reopening of the Friary building. The original closure of St. Mary's Church came at a time when the future of St. Francis Xavier's was secured through the deal with Hope, and the Archdiocese retained an interest in the Friary as well as its involvement in the Hope Governing Body. The Friary project if anything demonstrates the autonomy and capacity of local groups, and the *In*



*Harmony* project validates that capacity through the university's *post hoc* desire to become involved with the project. It is possible to point to a number of learning activities that took place as a result of the In Harmony project; the West Everton Children's Orchestra performed both in Hope' Great Hall ( ) as well as at Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (10<sup>th</sup> November 2009) in which they demonstrated that they had learned musical skills<sup>4</sup>. Children also travelled to London as part of the project, again the project helping to take the participants beyond their normal domains and to give 'normalise' a particular set of activities to which they might be habitually denied.

Picture 14 The In Harmony project broadening horizons



Source: *The Scottie Press*, May 2009, p. 3.<sup>5</sup>

It is undeniable that the main community engagement communities of practice influenced by the curricular activity were within the university, and did not directly involve participants from excluded communities. The main internal community of practice appears to have been within staff groups, who formed their own internal activities and networks to support community engagement. An example of this is the Performance and Cultural Intervention Initiative, which was an effort by a group of staff within the Drama department focused on those involved in the delivery of community drama. The initiative was premised on the idea of improving the research and consultancy performance of the department as well as creating a new taught masters degree and contributing (Hope, 2008). The idea of the Initiative, which was

<sup>4</sup>Cf. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTf-Su6pHOQ>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNVEBnrhMaw&feature=related>

<sup>5</sup> Available to view online at [http://www.scottiepress.org/press\\_archive/393/sp\\_393\\_may2009\\_pg3.htm](http://www.scottiepress.org/press_archive/393/sp_393_may2009_pg3.htm)

intended to lead to a new research centre, generating new funding and publications, was to capitalise on existing departmental expertise in community engagement activity built up in the delivery of the undergraduate curricular engagement.

A second community of practice which emerged around the community engagement activities was within the student body. During the fieldwork, it was possible to witness entirely fortuitously an act of student protest against conditions within the Cornerstone Campus. The so-called “Breakout” event had been planned as a protest event by students against restrictions placed on their use of the facilities at Cornerstone. Due to overcrowding, students had been prevented from using the communal spaces in Cornerstone for practice and rehearsals, and wanted to protest that this sterility destroyed the learning environment for them.

The programme for the “Breakout Festival” was planned as a part of the university’s Fairtrade Fortnight festival, but also a set of activities to fill Cornerstone with creative and performing arts. The organisers arranged with Cornerstone management to be allowed to disrupt classes and to spontaneously work (see pictures 14 a-b below) in the communal areas as a protest against the increasing perceived sterility of Cornerstone. The mobilisation of the Breakout suggests that there is at least a sense of connection and community between the students, even if that did not necessarily extend to the community .

*Picture 15a-b Internal and external views of the Breakout Festival, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009*



On an impressionistic level, the Breakout was impressive, and impressively organised: the visiting researcher from our team was completely unaware of its imminent start until the event launched with community singing in the Cornerstone canteen during lunchtime. Immediately following that, the Cornerstone entrance and internal spaces were covered with posters publicising the events for the afternoon and evening of activity. The participating students were able to direct the researcher to one of the organisers of the event, who in turn was able to spend half an hour to tell a well argued story about the significance of Breakout and its desire to challenge student political apathy.

Slightly more intense were communities of practice which emerged between a number of community groups which were located in the Cornerstone Building (*cf.* Chapter 9) and which took student volunteers on placement, contributing to the student courses but also helping the groups achieve their ends, such as the Music Space Trust. The Documentary Theatre group (*inter alia*) have worked with a number of local community groups including Asylum Link and the Shewsbury House youth centre (*qv*) to produce theatre pieces that have then ‘travelled’ to other locations, including Hope’s international festival, the Big Hope (*qv*).

One piece of community theatre developed as part of the Documentary Theatre course was produced in association with residents in the Edge Lane development area. Edge Lane is an extremely contentious urban regeneration project around the eastern Inner City approach to Liverpool (Allen, 2008) which was subject to a series of compulsory planning notices to clear properties along the road to allow the development of a new visually attractive eastern approach to the city. The proposals and subsequent CPOs were challenged by a number of local residents who disagreed with the assumptions made in the development rationale as well as the process through which local agencies engaged with community representatives. The Edge Lane residents group mobilised a large coalition of supporters who challenged the CPOs in the Crown Court, including as evidence a *pro bono* submission from the former member of the Government’s Urban Task force, Professor Anne Power.

The students’ performance was entitled “Nothing of value in this property”, a reference to the notices that are placed on the front doors of vacant houses sealed with tin screens to discourage thieves from breaking into the properties. A video of the performance was submitted as evidence to the Secretary of State’s Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order for Edge Lane. Our contention is that the fact that these activities have produced artefacts with an autonomous life of their own (submittable as evidence, or as performance pieces at a ‘global’ festival) highlights that something has been produced between volunteers and these particular excluded community groups.

Picture 16 “Nothing of Value in this Property” signs around Edge Lane, April 2009



As a control for the involvement of Hope in community activities, with one particular community organisation, none of those interviewed could specifically recall a student

being involved with the work of their organisation. Conversely, there was a student from another university who was undertaking an observational placement with a support group for a condition from which she also suffered. She had visited them over the course of two months, and was producing a film about the condition, as part of her final portfolio for graduation in Film Studies.

### **7.2.3 The scale of collective learning in the curricular engagement activity**

The curricular learning suggests that associated collective learning was focused around three main groups, firstly the staff, secondly the students, and thirdly around particular excluded communities. Perhaps in an inversion of what might be expected, the greatest intensity of involvement was by the staff directly involved in placing students into engagement activities. Students themselves had much less involvement in collective learning activities, although the Breakout festival suggests that they had internalised on some level the principals underpinning engagement and activism as a means for driving social change. Finally, and certainly the most surprisingly, was the fact that community participation in collective learning tended to be dependent on prior community capacity, and significant impacts were achieved where the ‘excluded community’ with which students engaged, had significant capacities and networks of their own, which reduced the student engagement to a suitably small and manageable task within the context of reflective practice.

What was interesting about the Performance and Cultural Intervention Initiative was that it built on the network structure of acknowledged successful community engagement activity with staff supervising students in reflective practice assignments. The community of practice brought two kinds of external experts into that network, with the intention of strengthening the activity within the university, and by implication, creating new opportunities for community engagement around Hope. The first type of external experts involved were senior university managers and professors from outside the department, seeking to build an acceptance within the university that the development of practice based work within the arts contributed to the wider institutional goal of developing a research-led institutional culture. The second was the involvement of external advisors, on the one hand to strengthen the cachet of the centre, but at the same time to contribute directly to the pursuit of the Initiative’s goals in terms of visible research output.

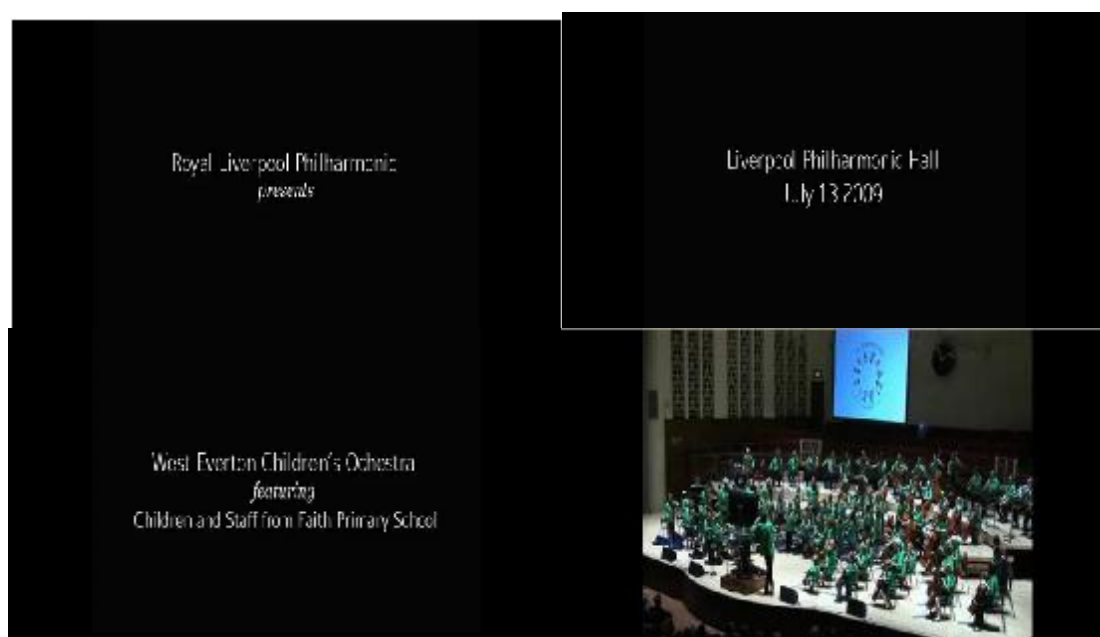
As far as collective learning centred around students is concerned, it is hard to interpret the significance of the Breakout phenomenon, particularly given that there was no substantial external community involvement in the activities, it remaining entirely student-centred, and organised through the Students’ Union. It does seem to suggest that the student body had internalised on some level the rationale which underpinned the curricular community engagement activity, of purposive arts activity as a means of expressing a desire for change, and tying local demands (more access to arts space) to a broader agenda (Fair Trade). It seems reasonable to claim that Breakout was an emergent demonstration of the fact of collective learning by students, and suggestive of the fact that this curricular focus on community engagement was stimulating that collective learning and creating capacity within the students to mobilise as a form of social activism.

The case presented of the scope of collective learning engendered by community engagement supports the thesis that student engagement activity piggy-backed on

existing community linkages and connections rather than helping community groups develop their own novel linkages and capacities. This is not to downgrade the community engagement activity that took place, but rather to place into context the scope with which that collective learning benefited the excluded communities. There are a number of examples emerging within this chapter that suggest that simplistic narratives of excluded communities as lacking in networks and capacities to affect change are insufficient to explain the kinds of engagement, and their rationales for university-community engagement.

The In Harmony project was impressive in terms of the scale of engagement that it involved, in particular in terms of a particular spatiality in the project. In Harmony could be regarded as taking children from excluded communities and placing them in 'elite' spaces, such as St. Francis Xaviers, the Great Hall at Hope and the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. However, rather than just taking them as visitors, they were placed in these spaces as validated users – in this case as musicians – along with the trappings that belong to musicians, that is to say with instruments, an audience, a performance, and in three cases, recording of those activities placed in the public domain.

*Picture 17 The framing of the West Everton Children's Orchestra by Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra*



Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNVEBnrhMaw>

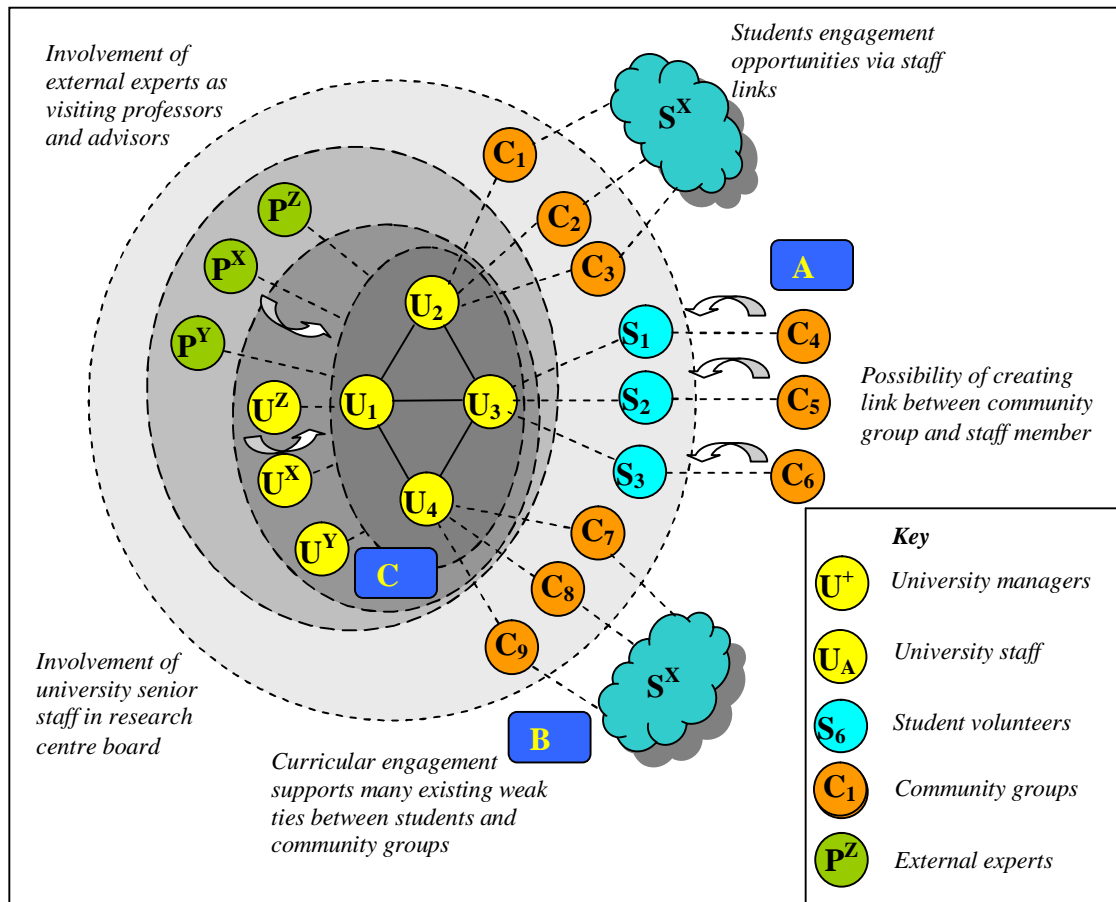
It is clearly far too early to tell how this will affect the later decisions of these participants in the activities, but in terms of engendering a democratic sensibility in terms of a right to access particular locations, the In Harmony project may yet prove to be – as did the original inspirational Simon Bolivar Orchestra – significant in re-engaging these individuals in group activities. The fact that they children involved worked together in an applied way towards a demonstrable outcome over a eight month period is impressive given the relatively high prevalence of attention-deficit problems in this community.

### **7.3 A NETWORK REPRESENTATION OF HOPE'S CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

The main impacts on the community as far as the capacity building elements of the curricular engagement are negligible, and we have attempted to represent the process in a stylised way in figure 9 below. The one area where there is some improvement in the network position and density of the community actors is in terms of those new community actors who are first engaged with by students. This is represented in figure 9 as area 'A', and it highlights that the network improvement it represents for the community is extremely limited, taking place via students who are themselves very peripheral to the university network, and provide relatively restricted access to the staff, who are better connected and provide better access to the university's networks as a whole, which are primarily (though not exclusively) mediated through the senior managers.

There are some community actors better positioned within this engagement activity, and those are those that have longer-term and ongoing relationships with university staff (area 'B'). Student engagement is a means of sustaining those relationships and maintaining the position of the community actors within the overall network. The most significant new connections in the network are those developed which improve the position of the department within the university (area 'C'). By demonstrating that the staff are research active and undertaking engaged scholarship, in part involving external experts to legitimate those activities, the department is strengthened within the university as a whole. Of course, strengthening the position of an engaged department within the university helps to change the nature of the university itself.

Figure 9 A stylised network representation of the 'curricular engagement' pillar



## **8 PILLAR III: THE PHYSICAL LOCATION: CORNERSTONE AT EVERTON**

The origins of the Cornerstone Campus lie in Hope's needs to increase its physical space needs associated with its increasing student numbers in the wake of merger in the 1990s. In the period immediately following merger, with the sale of the St. Katherine's site on Brownlow Hill and the decision to consolidate activities in Childwall, the focus of the activity was on integrated two sites into one, and producing a coherent campus. The legacy of the different participating institutions continued into the new coherent campus, and despite their co-location, until the mid-1990s, the two sites functioned as two separate spaces, arguably reflecting in part the failure of the two governing bodies to fully merge. The issue of a new campus emerged at the time of attempts by Professor Lee's new Rectorate team to produce a coherent institution, and certainly retrospectively has been justified in terms of contributing to the development of a new coherent institution.

The new campus was developed in the Liverpool suburb of Everton and was created to provide substantial new space for novel courses with space needs very different to those traditionally accommodated on campus, notably in the performing and creative arts (*cf.* 4.2.3). The location in the very deprived area of Everton offered great potential with very solid and attractive building stock, as well as eligibility for a range of development grants. The Everton development also played to HEFCE's concerns in the late 1990s with 'filling in the map' of higher education provision, bringing new HE opportunities to the so-called higher education cold-spots, into which category North Liverpool arguably fell.

The Everton development brought with these opportunities a set of new challenges for Hope. Some of these challenges were internal, in particular reconciling the creation of a new campus 4 miles from the main Childwall site, home to a single Deanery. This raised the risk of substituting a new divide within the institution, between the traditional subject Deaneries located at Childwall and the new subject Deanery at Everton, for the formerly denominational divide. However, the development also brought external challenges, and in particular, in relating with the new community which was host to the Cornerstone Campus. Although a community suffering from many problems of exclusion, one characteristic of Everton – in common with much of Liverpool – is that its communities are at least well-internally organised. Therefore, Hope arrived finding a well-configured and mobilised community with particular expectations of what a university should be doing for Everton.

This has shaped the impact of the Cornerstone development in Everton. There was certainly a learning process, but some of that learning lay with the university in dealing with this well-organised although extremely excluded community. Hope has had to balance tensions between a desire for local outcomes and a need for national recognition and global excellence, and the relative balancing between these pressures has changed over time, and changed the attitude of the university towards its Everton campus. At the same time, the presence in Everton and the unavoidability of the community has required the university to behave in particular ways which have made engagement more central to its ethos, and also helped to host and provide proximity towards a set of engagement partners. The Cornerstone development was characterised by flux and shifting meanings, yet notwithstanding this uncertainty, its



physical presence has provided an anchor point for activities and people supporting university-community engagement around Everton.

## **8.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICAL REDEVELOPMENT**

Hope as an institution emerged with a physical space problem, created from three institutions which merged into two sites and whose survival was dependent on successfully and substantially increasing student numbers. The emphasis in the early 1990s was on better managing the existing estate in Childwall, and in particular in rationalising the duplication of facilities in the two denominational areas of the campus. Associated with this rationalisation development, the university encountered a set of community demands very different to those that they were later to experience in Everton. The main complaints at the time of this redevelopment related to the long-term impacts that the campus expansion would have on traffic and parking in Childwall, and also to the short-term disruptions of the construction traffic and noise.

Hope's response to these was to open the campus up to its local community. One element was in literally dismantling its boundary wall separating the two sites from the community as well as the two sites from one another along Taggart Avenue. The second was to bring the community in through providing access to the facilities, opening up the nursery and sports centre to local users and creating a youth club, initiatives which operated for a number of years with varying degrees of success. An important link between university and community was the local councillors, who both informally represented local opinions but also incidentally were involved with the Council Planning Committee which shaped the speed with which Hope could realise its ambitions of revitalised campus space.

The decision to acquire and develop the Everton site was apparently taken as a consequence of the difficulties experienced in producing a single institution, and to provide a base for the university's Widening Participation activities, which were appreciated as the real opportunity for increasing student numbers at that time. Everton was an area which had been collapsing for at least two decades; the original slum clearance programmes had begun in the 1960s, and had begun a process led by the City Council of decanting inner city populations into suburbs and new towns, and reducing investment and services in old industrial areas such as Everton. This left a partly abandoned infrastructure, communities fighting hard to preserve local service provision in health and education, with a distrust of the authority figures who were seen as the cause of their community's very visible decline. It was into this challenging environment that the Cornerstone Campus was developed.

### **8.1.1 The Cornerstone site: phases I-III**

The detailed history of the development of the Cornerstone site is provided in 4.3.2, and in this section, we consider who were the key stakeholders in each of the development phases. The first phase was the development of the Gerard Manley Hopkins Hall, which provided student accommodation. This was the easiest of the phases to arrange, in that student accommodation provided a guaranteed income stream against which a bank loan could be secured. Following the successful delivery of the building project, and the successful installation of a stream of student tenants, the housing block was then sold to Cosmopolitan Housing group, a registered social landlord. There was very limited community engagement in this process.

The second phase was the development of the initial site, with three main elements. The first was the development of the Hope in the Community facility, originally designed to be a focus for the university's European Social Fund-funded projects, access courses and Widening Participation activities, based on a refurbishment of the old school building. The second element was the clearance of the courtyard area, with the removal of the Presbytery between St. Francis Xavier's church and school buildings, and the decommissioning of the undercroft which was home to a local snooker club. The third element was securing the long-term physical sustainability of the St. Francis Xavier's church building; although Hope won a substantial English Heritage grant for the restoration of the church building, its state of dilapidation led Hope to hand the church building back to the diocese along with a substantial dowry to allow the diocese to complete the renovations.

This second phase appears to have been the first point of the emergence of serious tensions between Hope and the local community, relating to a number of trivial criticisms which when taken together led to accusations by the community of arrogance on the part of the university. There was opposition voiced by the local community organisation, West Everton Community Council, to the name of Hope in the Community, and in particular to the sense that it was a university that was bringing hope back to Everton. The decommissioning of the undercroft was subsequently to become an issue when the development had no place for a snooker club, then west Everton's only licensed premise, with a story emerging that the university had attempted to claim that the Gallery Bar was a fulfilment of their pledge to restore the snooker club. Finally, Hope became embroiled by association in a class conflict in the parish which predated the Cornerstone decision but nevertheless was used by some to frame the university as dismissive and arrogant. Some parishioners felt that St. Mary's was closed in 2001 by the Archdiocese because it was the working class church whilst St. Francis Xavier's had been kept open because of its white collar, Jesuit connections, underscored by the university's involvement in its restoration.

Phase 3 was the restoration of the Great Hall, sealing in the central courtyard area to create a three storey space, and converting the two top storeys into a performance space. The performance space gave Hope the capacity to run larger concerts than possible in the Theatre area, and has provided the venue for the plenary sessions at the Hope Festival. Both phases 2 and 3 were partly funded by regeneration grants from the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the European Regional Development Fund.

These two phases were far more complex involving funds provided from a number of funding agencies, including higher education funders (HEFCE and the Teachers Development Agency), heritage funders (English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery fund), national government (through NWDA) and the European Commission (ERDF). All of these agencies provided funds in different ways, both in terms of when the payments were made against expenditure incurred by Hope, but also in terms of what they would be willing to fund. Therefore, ensuring sufficient cash flow within projects that represented a significant proportion of Hope's income was a significant challenge in undertaking these developments.

The demands of the project, and the need to balance all the interests and requirements of different funders, necessarily meant that there was relatively limited scope during the three project phases, to include community representation or interest, the focus

being on delivering a capital development project on time and within budget in ways acceptable to the various funders. However, funders were apparently very pleased with the way that Hope managed the process, and the degree of organisation and accountability that they provided to funders, particularly for Government Office who administered ERDF on behalf of the European Commission. Hope had established an in-house project bureau to deliver these projects, and had established a limited company, Urban Hope, to maximise the tax efficiency of the three project phases. Following on the completion of phase 3, it appears that some regional funders appeared to ask the question of whether there were other community regeneration projects which Urban Hope might be able to project management and ensure delivery to funders' requirements.

### **8.1.2 Extending the expertise: Urban Hope**

Accounts differ over who precisely made the approach to Urban Hope to project management a number of generation projects, between whether it was grant-awarding bodies or community groups themselves. What there is consensus over is that the Cornerstone regeneration project had attracted the attention of a number of groups who were impressed by the way that regeneration grants could be used to create buildings in deprived communities, and by the way that Urban Hope had delivered those projects. Subsequently, six projects outside the university campus, with no direct link to Hope but using Hope's estate management and financial capacity were undertaken and successfully delivered. These at the same time generating some financial management fees for Hope, and built profile nationally for what Hope was doing in terms of community development.

The recipe followed was similar on each of the occasions, and also similar to what had been undertaken at Cornerstone. Firstly, a site was acquired at no cost to the development project, either because it had a net zero or negative site value, or because it was provided to the organisation as part of a corporate social responsibility scheme. Secondly, an anchor tenant was identified to provide a guaranteed income stream for the building, such as a Surestart (a health & education scheme for toddlers in deprived areas). Thirdly, Hope acted as accountable body for the project, and bid to a number of funders for development funds in return for a set of deliverables, extending beyond successful completion of the build, but also including training outcomes, business contacts and course delivery. Fourthly, on completion of the project, Hope took a charge on the building and handed ownership to a local management consortium. In effect, Hope oversaw the development of new community facilities in communities that might lack the capacity to develop their own facilities.

These facilities were located in very deprived parts of Liverpool, already a very deprived city in the UK context. These are areas which have already undergone significant amounts of regeneration activity, often involving substantial clearance and redevelopment, and are 'deserts' for the provision of particular kinds of public and private services. The Kensington Life Bank was visited on two occasions in the course of the project: it was located immediately adjacent to the Edge Lane regeneration area. Picture 16a shows a local sign, visible from Edge Lane, indicating the location of the Life Bank, and 16b, taken parallel with the Life Bank signage shown in Picture 11, shows its proximity to Edge Lane, and to the substantial number of vacant properties held empty in anticipation of the Edge Lane redevelopment project.

*Picture 18 a-b Kensington Life Bank in its context of the Edge Lane regeneration, April 2009*



Urban Hope delivered in total six regeneration projects involving a total grant spend of £30m. The first project was the Kensington Job Bank, in the same Kensington area as the Life Bank, followed by a sports hall and Primary Care Trust developed on a former reservoir site, enabling the development of a sports hall on a site earmarked for such a development. This Kensington Community Sports Trust development took place in Kensington Green, immediately adjacent to the Kensington Life Bank, the third of the Urban Hope projects. The fourth project was Crawford House in Toxteth, to the south of Kensington, and was the refurbishment of a traditional community centre in a multi-ethnic deprived area. The fifth project was a SureStart centre, the Yew Tree Dovecote, located to and finally was Newsham Park Lodge, redeveloping a former stables in a Park which had been partly redeveloped as a primary school, these two last projects were further eastward than the previous four.

As with the development of the Cornerstone Campus, there were relatively few opportunities during the development phase to actively involve the community in the shaping of the project. In some cases, Urban Hope had been brought in because community groups had been unable to shape their developmental vision in ways acceptable to the funding bodies. Hope operated a loosely coupled set of relationships with the community, with one senior manager dealing directly with community representatives, and another senior manager taking oversight of the practical financial project demands. Because Urban Hope had no capacity to take a loss, it was impossible for it to commit to activities within projects outwith the original budgets, and in some cases this led to projects having to be reconfigured with fewer of the items desired by the community representatives.

It is equally hard to gauge the benefits of the Urban Projects for the communities involved. In the case of Kensington, the three projects (Job Bank, Sports Centre and Life Bank) did contribute to a larger regeneration project, the Holt Street part of Kensington regeneration. The Urban Hope projects did not really however integrate community members or representatives more effectively into the universities' own

networks, nor was there evidence to suggest that there was significant new capacity built up in the learning networks which took place around Urban Hope, which were contained primarily within the university, and which brought no wider community benefits after the sixth Urban Hope project was completed. The university remained involved in the projects even after hand-over because of ongoing responsibilities, to hold audit trails for all the projects, and in the case of Kensington Sports Centre, as the leaseholder of the land from United Utilities (Liverpool Echo, 2009).

### **8.1.3 Phase IV: the Centre for Music, Performance and Innovation**

The plans for phase 4 of the development had been in train since the completion of phase 3 but progress was suspended due to problems in securing the planning permission for the site. This in turn created problems for the funding streams which had been secured, including a HEFCE grant as well as ERDF Objective 1 funding and NDWA single pot funding. After 2006, responsibility for the Objective 1 programme passed from Government Office to NWDA, who demanded single bids from those bidding simultaneously for Objective 1 and NWDA's own funds. This in turn created a further delay whilst Hope renegotiated the HEFCE grant. The difficulties experienced around the grants is suggestive of the very narrow envelopes within which the capital build project was assembled, and the relatively limited scope those managing had the project to take on board the views of the community.

The idea behind the phase IV building was to provide a space for third stream activity related to Cornerstone subject areas around the creative and performing arts. Cornerstone had become host to a number of other organisations and part of the plan was that these other organisations would relocate into the phase IV building following its completion. The plans called for a three storey building, two floors of which would include a new theatre performance space, and a third floor comprising a set of offices and open plan space for use by community partners. Because the project was dependent on funding for its form, it was not possible to publicise detailed plans for the building until 2009, but during this time, there was a display within the Cornerstone building foyer open to locals to view.

One of the immediate tensions with the development was that ground preparation work began immediately following the completion of phase 3, although there was a four year hiatus as planning permission and funding had to be secured. The ground preparation work removed the phase IV site from its prior use as car parking for Hope, at around the same time that the City Council decided to introduce paid city centre parking throughout the CBD area. This had the effect that employees from the nearby hospital and Liverpool University parked around the Cornerstone campus out of a desire to evade parking charges whilst seeking to benefit from the enhanced security provided by the porters and the improved lighting directly adjacent to the campus.

The net effect as far as locals were concerned was that the Phase IV project had re-exacerbated the older parking problem which had created considerable community dissatisfaction around the time of the opening of Hope. Part of the issue was that levels of car ownership in West Everton at that time were very low, and so the problems created by dense parking were clearly an outside problem, and Hope was incorrectly blamed for the local impacts of City Council parking policy (see Picture 17).

*Picture 19 The view up Salisbury Street from Everton Brow illustrating the concentration of parking around Cornerstone, early afternoon, March 2009.*



Each of the funders have been able to stipulate some of the activity that will accompany the physical build. Phase IV was partly funded by HEFCE to help improve Hope's Widening Participation performance. The NWDA funding was provided within their job creation and business enterprise funding stream, and the project has been included as part of the North Liverpool & South Sefton Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. This has meant that part of the funding was dependent on Hope's willingness for part of the phase IV building to be used as an incubator for local arts businesses, and to provide support through a postgraduate Certificate in Continuing Professional Development "Business and Enterprise in the Creative and Performing Arts".

*Picture 20 The official photo of the ground breaking for Phase IV*



Source: [www.hope.ac.uk](http://www.hope.ac.uk)

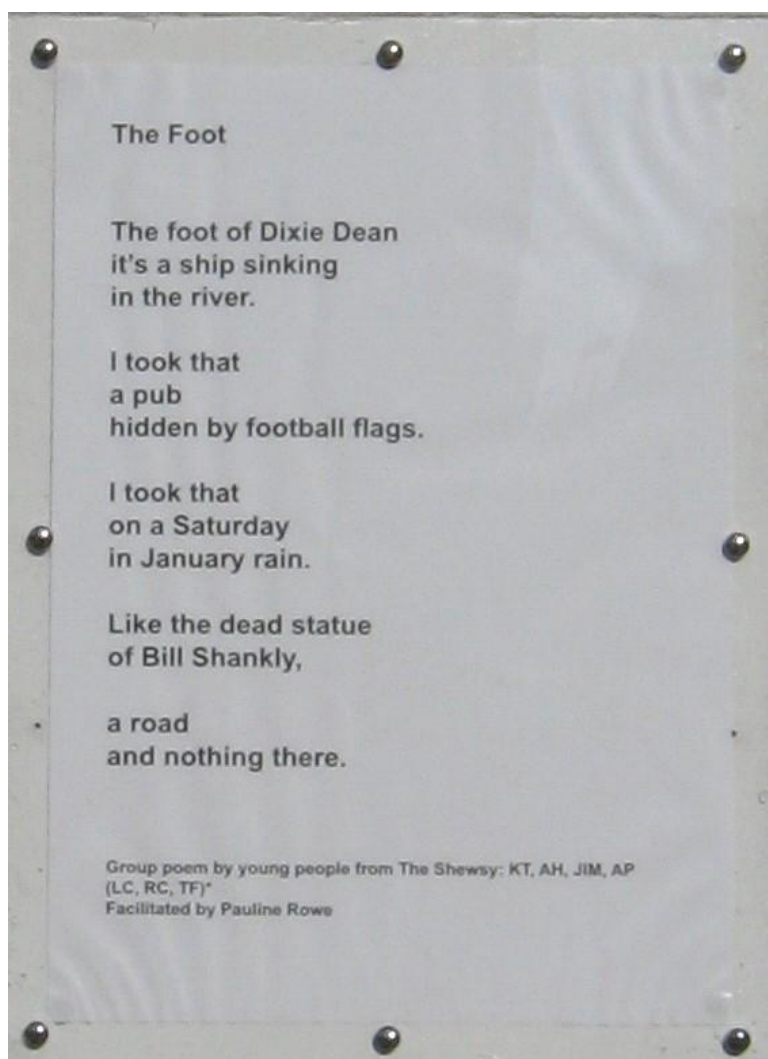
One of the ways that the community were involved with the Phase IV development was in providing a series of illustrations to humanise the hoardings placed around the site as the building work was underway (see Picture 8 above). On picture 8, a series of small panels are visible; in these panels were placed paintings and poetry produced by youngsters participating at the nearby Shrewsbury House youth club (cf. 8.2).

*Picture 21 The View from the Brow display as part of the phase IV developments, March 2009.*



One of the issues mentioned locally in relation to the View from the Brow project, which is evident in the detail of the poem reproduced below (Picture 20) was the problems in allowing the local participants to be openly acknowledged for their contributions. Whilst the facilitators from the youth club were credited by name, the local children were only mentioned by their initials. That was apparently a response to anti-social behaviour, and seeking to prevent the young children from drawing attention to themselves and the anti-social elements within the estate. The other effect however was that the children who had participated in the creation of the artwork were also invisible to the viewer.

Picture 22 One of the poems on the View from the Brow display



## 8.2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING WITH WEST EVERTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

One of the recurrent themes of the development around the Cornerstone campus has been the way that this development – or series of developments – has brought the university into contact with – and on occasion into conflict with – the local community. Although the Everton area is extremely deprived in both a Liverpool and English context, this does not mean that there is no internal coherence within the community, nor that the community are incapable of voicing their opinions around their neighbours' behaviour. In 8.1, we related a number of stories of how the developments around Cornerstone had generated and reinforced a sense of antipathy amongst the local community towards Hope. In this research, to explore the impacts and the relationships between the university and the community, we undertook a series of interviews, focus groups, study visits, walking tours and email exchanges with members of one West Everton community group, West Everton Community Council, and what follows in this section is related specifically to that group.

It is worth making the point at the outset that despite the antipathy voiced in the stories about the inconvenience caused by the university for the community, there were other indicators of a more positive relationship. During the second visit to



Hope, at the start of the intensive research phase, Hope had arranged a series of meetings between our researcher and a number of their staff and community partners, including West Everton Community Council. Even at that first meeting, there were a number of positive stories told about the relationship between the university and WECC, and it should be clear that there is an evolving relationship between the two groups that is progressing into a new sense of maturity, certainly cemented by the *In Harmony* project, but also the fact that WECC appears to have strengthened its own position and to be a more demanding partner for LHU. After the completion of the research, in the 2009 Cornerstone Festival, the WECC Community Centre was used as a festival venue, and the WECC youth choir sang at the Festival<sup>6</sup>. To understand that developing relationship, it is therefore necessary to have an understanding of the history of the WECC and its own evolution

### **8.2.1 The history of WECC**

The purpose behind the formation of WECC was in a community mobilisation to address the extremely poor housing situation in Everton in the 1960s to which the council's response was accelerating slum clearance and suburbanisation, and disinvesting from inner city Liverpool. Everton had been targeted for clearances, and in the 1960s, many terraces were demolished and replaced by prefabricated maisonettes and tower blocks, which were built to relatively low standards, and quickly began to replicate some of the problems of the slum housing which they had replaced. The turbulence of the 1960s clearances and reconstruction projects had led dissatisfied locals to mobilise themselves into a series of organisations, one of which, Great Homer Street District Association, was to transform in the early 1980s into West Everton Community Council (Great Homer Street being the main north-south arterial road running through Everton).

There were two main events which apparently stimulated the growth of the WECC in the 1980s. Initially, they signalled a shift towards support for Community Councils as an apparent means to devolve leadership to the local level. In order for local groups to be considered as Community Councils, they were required to build up a membership and hold elections for their key posts. This stimulated a campaign by GHSDA to gather signatures and subscriptions from local residents to seek accreditation as a community council. In 1981, at the time of the recognition of a number of Community Councils in Vauxhall and Anfield, GHSDA evolved into the WECC, with a much more tightly focused geographical coverage, and with a much greater emphasis on the public consultative role rather than the conflict and campaigning role which had characterised GHSDA.

The second was a change in the leadership of Liverpool City Council, and in particular the emergence of the Militant group, a left-wing splinter group within Labour. In 1980, Merseyside County Council had agreed an Urban Regeneration Strategy as part of their structure plan (Taaffe & Mulheurne, 1988), emphasising a concentration of house-building in existing urban areas, limiting expansion on the urban fringe. Batey (1998) notes that the Militant City Council focused their housing development on the regeneration and municipal house-building on 19 inner-city sites. Whilst there was a conceptual fit with the urban regeneration strategy, there was some concern that the approach taken – decanting inner-city residents to inter-war suburbs

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<sup>6</sup> Hope Web News page, viewed 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010

such as Croxteth and Norris Green - was disrupting the cohesion of the communities and undermining the foundations around which these strongly cohesive, if locally declining communities, could rebuild themselves.

Where this policy and indeed the Militant tendency directly influenced the story was that three of the 19 Militant focused sites in Liverpool were in Everton. One of these was the demolition of a series of terraces on Everton Brow to create what became Everton Park. Clearly, people from this area were being removed, and the park landscaping indicated that no more houses would be built there, undermining the local infrastructure. Therefore, WECC decided to protest again and to try to stop the demolition of a set of flats and semi-detached houses in Langrove. WECC organised a squatting campaign against the demolition, which succeeded in getting the demolition orders overturned around the same time as the Militant Council was disbarred for failing to set a legal rate (local taxation level).

When the post-Militant (Labour-led) council took over from Militant in 1987, the chair of the Housing Committee were themselves involved with a co-operative housing project in South Liverpool. A co-operative was established to run the Langrove houses, and this began a process of activist involvement by WECC in the decisions affecting the community, seeking to retain population, and to encourage in-situ redevelopment rather than community clearances which would lead to the collapse of the local infrastructure. A second issue with which WECC were actively involved was a campaign against the closure of a clinic on Netherfield Road. Local people were engaged to gather data for a counter-proposal to demonstrate the importance of ensuring service provision for the residents of Everton.

*Picture 23 The 4 bedroom family houses saved by squatting*



From the perspective of the 1980s, the 1990s saw some real successes for WECC and Everton in seeking to begin to turn around the locality's fortunes. Everton Park, part of the Merseyside Urban Regeneration Strategy, won award from the Royal Institute of British Architects and Times for quality of environmental design. The other outcome was became known as the 'Planning for Real' exercise, in which the public housing agency consulted with the designs for housing in South West Everton. Residents interviewed were relocated from maisonettes and tower blocks into the new purpose-built free-standing housing, and there appeared to be a consensus amongst the locals that both the quality of housing was good, and the planning for real process was the closest that the community had come to being substantively consulted.

*Picture 24 The RIBA award for Everton Park on display at the WECC, March 2009*



There was some suggestions amongst interviewees that in the course of the 1990s, WECC experienced a generational crisis, in the sense that its leaders were extremely drained by having to continually fight to preserve service provision in their locality, whilst at the same time there were continually new challenges to them. The Catholic Archdiocese decided around this time to close one of the churches in the Parish, leading to the eventual closure of St. Mary's in 2001. Several schools were also closed; before 2001, they lost Roscommon Primary and Secondary, St Anthony's Primary, and Penrhyn Street Primary in response to the low and falling numbers of residents and local children. In 2001, the City Council announced a large reorganisation plan for schooling, with a further seven secondary school closures in Everton, with the building of a North Liverpool Academy and with one secondary school remaining open.

There appears to have been a resurgence of a drugs problem around Everton around 2001/2 with a variety of characteristics. In the absence of independent research it is impossible to state precisely what the problem was, but from a residents' perspective there was a feeling that the problem was primarily of outsiders coming to Everton to use it as a marketplace for drugs. As a drugs marketplace, there were both directly physical safety issues, as well as indirect problems including prostitution. The use of Everton Park as a perceived drugs marketplace reduced its value as a community amenity, and a number of those interviewed related the growth of gangs in Everton as an increasingly common feature of the lives of those growing up locally.

### **8.2.2 Ongoing contacts and relationships**

The decision to acquire and develop the Cornerstone campus was taken in 1996, and the campus opened in September 1999 to a great deal of fanfare. There was an awareness amongst Hope managers that there were physical safety issues associated with a location in Everton, and to attempt to deal with those problems, Hope began to engage with the local community. There appears to have been something of a cultural clash at the start of this process, although over time the general story appears to have been more positive, indicated both by early successes, and the growth of a greater degree of respect between communities over the course of the last decade.

The background to the cultural clash clearly lies on a number of different levels, in a series of imbalances between the two groups, the community in West Everton and Hope, but also in imbalances in the mutual perceptions held by the two groups. The most obvious imbalance lay between a higher education institution with a history in the affluent suburbs, and a local community with relatively low levels of those with experience in higher education. A different split lay on an ecclesiastical level, with Hope being well-networked within the 'high' branches of the Diocese and Archdiocese of Liverpool, and Everton's churches being seen (or at least seeing themselves) as part of the less glamorous wings of the church. More generally, Hope was (or seen as ) well networked within Liverpool and Merseyside, whilst Everton as a locality had been continually struggling to preserve its situation in recent decades (*cf.* 8.2.1).

It is possible to stylise a number of phases in the relationship between Hope and Everton, with these relationships being configured partly by activities underway, but also by the disjuncture in perceptions between the two groups. The first phase came with the arrival of Hope, and it appears that there was within Hope a sense that they were going to bring all kinds of benefits to Everton. At the same time, the first manifestation of the arrival of Hope from the community perspective was one of creating trouble. Hope stylised themselves as "Hope in Everton", which was reportedly regarded as being very patronising for the local residents. At the same time, the construction of the new campus led to traffic problems as well as the removal of the Snooker Club (both being highly sensitive points). The traffic problems were not just parking problems but rather that insensitive parking blocked the through-flow of busses (important for local residents' access given low levels of car ownership) and also in one example (related more than once), blocking a funeral cortege.

Early on in its time in Everton, Hope created a Community Forum as a consultative platform for local residents. A grant-awarding charity, the Esme Fairburn Trust, asked WECC what they thought of Hope, in evaluating a community development proposal

from Hope, and this led the Trust to stipulate that Hope should fund a community development worker. The worker set about setting up the Community Forum, which did not work, and subsequently, Hope have worked with West Everton Community Council to try to better gauge community feelings. The problem appears to have been not that the Hope approach was misguided, but that it played specifically into problems that WECC was having in responding to the drugs problems. In brief, there were two factions, a hawkish group who wanted direct confrontation with drug users and prostitutes to drive them out of Everton and a more doveish group that wanted to work with local agencies to solve the drugs problem rather than merely to displace its symptoms. The losing group therefore withdrew from the WECC and instead used the Hope Community Forum as an outlet for their interests. This led the Community Forum to be rather more divisive within the Community, and created tensions between WECC and Hope, than perhaps could have been the case.

One example of a successful collaboration was the Kite Festival, held in 2001 as a community outreach activity. The premise for the activity was to create something to exploit the unique situation of Everton, with its Park offering commanding views of the city. The idea was to develop locally-representative kites and to fly them from the top of the Park, as a community activity, filling the Park and reclaiming it as a useful resource. The lecturer associated with the festival left the employment of Hope shortly after the research started, but what was perhaps significant was that it was mentioned by a number of people associated with WECC as an example of an alluring co-operation, something which made local residents feel that there was a great deal of opportunity for future relationships and co-operation with Hope. At the same time, much was made of the fact that despite its location in Everton, the campus had managed to avoid introducing a protective wall around its perimeter, to aid community integration.

This anticipation of greater co-operative relationships became imbued into the European Capital of Culture project. It was anticipated that this would indeed provide funding streams and mechanisms for Hope and Everton to work more closely around particular community arts projects. Regardless of the reality, there appeared to be a sense amongst those interviewed that the Capital of Culture year had not really made a great deal of impact in Everton, and in particular had not led to substantive new collaborations. This was related by some of those interviewed as a lost opportunity to achieve something. At the time of writing, plans were developing with WECC, Hope and the Liverpool Biennial for the development of a series of arts installations to occupy Everton Park, and to improve public access and deal with local safety issues (Liverpool Thrive, 2009).

At around the same time, the *In Harmony* project was announced as being successful. This was something initiated by the community, on the basis of their contacts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra which had in turn come about through the creation of the Friary rehearsal space in the old St. Mary's church. This gave a concrete opportunity for the two parties to work together, and helped to reinforce the sense that WECC was a reliable community partner with the capacity to manage and deliver particular projects. This capacity was something that they hoped to leverage into the future through further projects, including a potential Biennial Collaboration, but also with plans for the eventual use of the Faith Primary School (*cf.* 8.2.3).

In terms of characterising what has been achieved in developing community relationships between Hope and WECC, it is clear that something has been achieved

and which may be possible in the future to build upon. Yet, at the same time, it is also clear that there has been no formal organisational structure created to mediate between the two, or by which West Everton, or the WECC, have some degree of consultative right over the university. The interests of the two groups remain difficult to align except within quite narrowly-defined parameters, and often involving third-party grant awards. This raises the question about the generalisability of the social capital that could be said to be arising from the presence of Hope in Everton. It is to this question that the final section now turns.

### **8.2.3 The future and the return of the wall?**

Throughout the research it was clear that there was a kind of incommensurability in the way that Hope and WECC regarded West Everton, and that affected not only both their interests in the place, but also the kinds of territorial strategies that the two parties were able to adopt, and the power in those strategies. For WECC, West Everton's interests are non-negotiable: they do not have the flexibility to negotiate those interests away in return for a better deal. By contrast, Hope does have that possibility: although it is committed to and invested heavily in Everton, the real value of the Campus comes not in being in Everton, but in being located in a poorer part of town, allowing Hope to tell a bigger story about its Christian heritage and ongoing relevance. Hope has the opportunities to tell that bigger story in other ways, in co-operation with communities elsewhere in Liverpool, the UK or globally, whilst clearly WECC cannot.

This introduced a directionality into the relationships between Hope and WECC, and reduces WECC's ability to benefit from those relationships to gain connectivity into wider networks, or to use Hope's presence to reaffirm their legitimacy more generally as community partners. Certainly, Hope have placed a huge amount of effort into good neighbourliness and in ensuring that Everton are able to gain some benefits from their presence. A local resident contacted the WECC because of the lack of local employment on the Phase IV development, and WECC contacted their MP and Hope senior managers; Hope arranged with the contractors to create four apprenticeships for local residents. Hope staff regularly attend the WECC open and board meetings, and attempt to actively identify the particular projects where there could be opportunities for future co-operation.

It is hard to identify whether these relationships are developing over time, and whether on the one hand, the relationships are increasing Hope's interest in Everton vis-à-vis other opportunities to demonstrate its commitment to social justice. On the other hand, it is also difficult to see whether the experiences and links that WECC are building up through their contacts with Hope are allowing them to exert greater control over their social environment. Whether there is a sense of progress is important in determining whether the university is having a positive benefit on the levels of social capital in the community around Everton. This is also extremely difficult to judge on the basis of the work already undertaken. Moreover, three separate anecdotes point toward different conclusions as to this unfolding relationship.

The first is the 'return of the wall' at Cornerstone. As part of the Phase IV development, there has been the creation of a walled garden where formerly there was an open access between Shaw Street and Salisbury Street, corresponding approximately to the location of the former Presbytery. The 'Angelfields' gardens are

created to provide a quiet and contemplative space at Cornerstone, and to reinforce the scholastic atmosphere at Everton, underscoring the point that it remains part of an academic community rooted in scholarship and research. Although there has been some disquiet amongst the proposal, there was no attempts to seriously oppose the proposal, and the gardens now join up the three main buildings with the church, behind a high perimeter wall. Given the

*Picture 25 The outline plans for the Walled Garden at Hope, March 2009.*



Source: [www.hope.ac.uk](http://www.hope.ac.uk)

The second anecdote relates to the attempts of the WECC to preserve the physical integrity of the area, and in particular non-housing provision for services within Everton. Faith Primary is scheduled to relocate around 1km northwards to the site of the former Champion RC High School in 2010. This will leave the former Faith primary buildings unoccupied, and the WECC were at the time of the main research contemplating whether they could produce a bid to keep those buildings in use, and potentially for them to become a 'community hub'. This suggests that there is some capacity within the community and with WECC to mobilise and configure their own environment, and an argument could be made that part of the plausibility of this bid would be the positive effects of the Friary and In Harmony projects (St. Mary's, Faith Primary and the WECC are all contiguously located around Richmond Row and Everton Brow).

The final anecdote relates the increasing importance of North Liverpool and Everton as a focus for arts-led regeneration projects. Coming out of the Capital of Culture process and anticipating post-election cuts to arts budgets, the eight largest arts providers in Liverpool came together to create the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC). LARC appeared to be making an argument that these large arts organisations contributed to the physical vitality of the city through their outreach and regeneration work across Liverpool, and not just within the city centre area. In a LARC mapping and prospectus exercise, WECC and In Harmony were cited as examples of how high culture (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra) could contribute to the regeneration of an inner city area. This suggests that this

regeneration activity has changed the way that key actors in the city were thinking about North Liverpool as a space for investment in the physical environment.

Picture 26 Relationship of North Liverpool Community Councils to LARC

Community Councils	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	The Bluecoat	FACT	Biennial	Everyman & Playhouse	National Museums Liverpool	Liverpool Tate	Unity Theatre
West Everton Community Council	▶				▶	▶		
Anfield & Breckfield Community Council					▶			
Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council			▶					
Breckfield & North Everton Neighbourhood Council			▶					

Source: *Liverpool Thrive!*, 2009, p. 18

LARC is initiating a programme to help cultural organisations develop their evaluation capacity, and to document the results in a way that demonstrates the contribution that cultural projects can make to local and national governmental priorities. The team will be led by Francois Matarasso, an internationally recognised consultant and writer on community-based arts practice and its impact, who has worked for national and local government, foundations, arts organisations and international agencies in over 30 countries. The team also includes Helen Simons, a leading academic in the field of evaluation, and Rebecca Lee, an independent consultant and musician. The team will start work in May 2009 and the programme will be completed in Autumn 2010. The project will also be supported by Gerri Moriarty, an arts development consultant and theatre director who has worked extensively in Liverpool.

Source: <http://www.larc.uk.com/news/evaluation-consultancy-appointment>

### 8.3 A NETWORK REPRESENTATION OF HOPE'S CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

After this research was completed, the ideal type of narrative to tell would have been that Hope's investment in Cornerstone had become an anchor point for a wave of physical regeneration that was beginning to transform Everton, and tie it more closely into Liverpool City Centre. A separate strand of that narrative would be that through interactions with the university, Everton residents were themselves more able to involve themselves in those negotiations, and ensure that the investments made benefited themselves and did not merely displace their community problems to other locations. The research demonstrates clearly that it is not possible to tell such a narrative about what happened in Everton, and yet the research gives a sense that university-community engagement around physical development has coincided with and indeed become intertwined with a slight improvement in the fortunes of the locality, which have come as local actors have become relatively more important – or



at least their voices better heard – within local decision-making structures and networks.

This is quite a distinctive situation, but there are also some other characteristics that require recognition before they can be stylised into a network representation. The first is that there was already a strong community with a good organisational infrastructure, which faced a large number of simultaneous pressures from a variety of directions including from public bodies seeking to rationalise service provision. Secondly, there was a well-intentioned new arrival (Hope) within the community which felt morally driven to work with the community, but faced its own, no less urgent pressures, to establish itself organisationally, develop an excellent external profile, and to do that within very tight financial limits. There were a series of small scale successes, and tensions remaining at a larger scale, raising the question of what has in fact been achieved in reality.

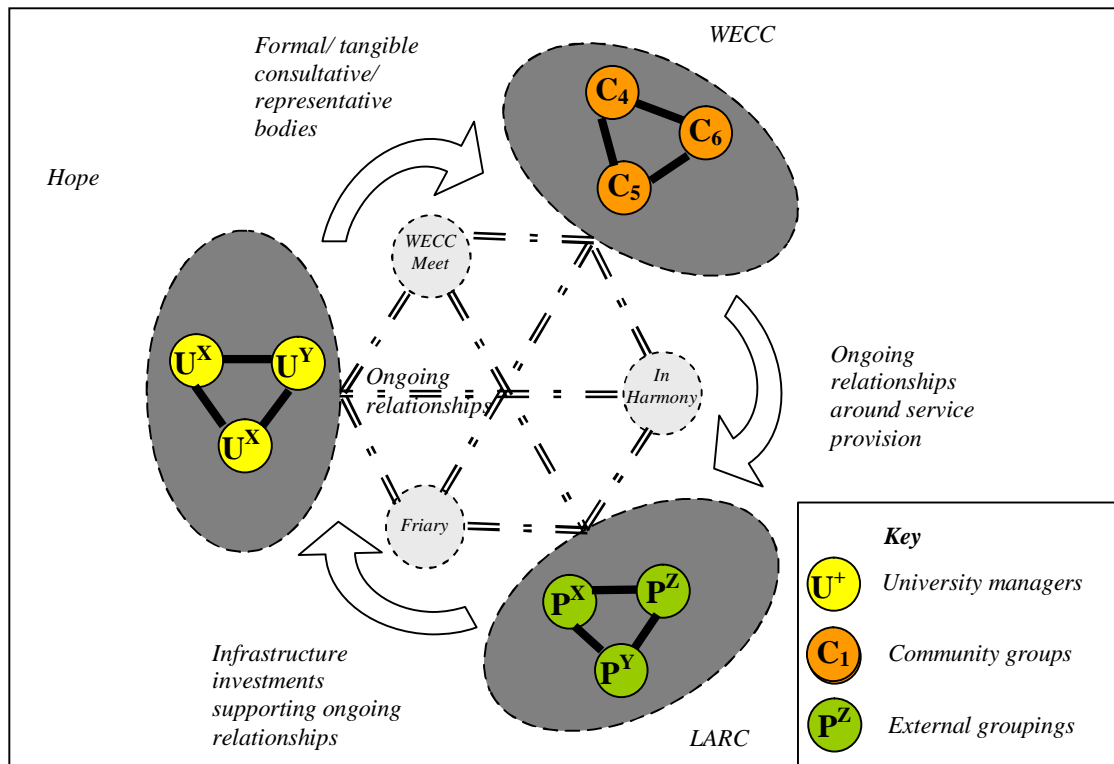
In the network representations we have made so far, we have assumed that relationships are enduring, and remain or are augmented. Yet, what is seen clearly in the case of the Cornerstone development is that where processes of exclusion are active, connections can be cut off. Everton had to actively mobilise and campaign intensively to save its infrastructure – health centres and schools, at a time when local political structures sought to pathologise these communities to legitimate a fairly bureaucratic set of decisions. Cornerstone and Hope became enrolled in these survival strategies, where Everton attempted to maintain its vital infrastructure, and in some cases succeeded. This creates a slightly different perspective – the fact that there has been any progress – around Faith School and the Friary – can be regarded as remarkable.

We stylise the contribution of Everton as an anchor point or a point of stability at a time when the local community networks were under pressure, and even collapsing. The collapse of a network relationship means two things, firstly that actors do not interact with one another, and secondly, that artefacts that exist as by-products of that interaction disappear. The closure of a school for example makes a local authority less interested in a community and confronts that authority less with their quotidian concerns, thereby reducing the power of that community. The possibility to engage with the university gave the community representatives activities to remain mobilised around, and therefore provided them with entry points back to their network connections. This ultimately helped make it seem reasonable that north Liverpool would become a place where high cultural organisations would discharge their social duties through a programme of investment in infrastructure, activities and engagement.

We represent this as ‘virtuous cycle’ of institutions, projects and investments that inter-relate and mutually support one another. This helps to prevent the collapse of the relationships responsible for the social exclusionary processes undermining Everton’s position, which can be understood as a countervailing vicious cycle of political exclusion, followed by a lack of service provision, and disinvestment by external agencies in Everton. What is important is the driver of the virtuous cycle, and how the vicious cycle is avoided, because this relates to the value of a particular locality as a place to invest in. At each stage, the various projects within which the university is involved helps to increase the investment-worthiness of the Everton location. This in turn places investment in that location on the agenda of other external bodies, and helps to mobilise the idea of new investments in North Liverpool.

What the diagram does not show are those external artefacts through which that place is constructed, and in the course of this research it has not been possible to trace them all, and to explore for example the impact of Angelfields on the spatial imaginary of LARC members, thereby influencing their willingness to invest in artworks for the park. But what it does emphasise is the importance of the university role as an actor, whose interests might not be exclusively within Everton, but which nevertheless does have interests in Everton. By being interested in these networks and external perceptions of Everton, its presence helps to drive the virtuous cycle, and is by implication at least partly implicated in the partial reversal of state-led disinvestment in Everton. It is also necessary to stress the critical contribution of the local community to this process.

Figure 10 A stylised network representation of the ‘campus development’ pillar



## 9 PILLAR IV: COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS: THE 'FAMILY' OF SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

The final element of the four pillars of the Hope model is the fact that the Cornerstone Campus is host to a number of external organisations that are located for a variety of reasons on the Campus. In this report, we refer to them as a 'family', and like a family, they have a variety of relationships back to Hope. The 'family' was important to Hope recently in being able to persuade a number of funders that the recently created Cornerstone Centre would have a genuinely local impact and promote local enterprise in North Liverpool. Beyond that symbolic value which was dealt with in 8.1.3, these organisations also represent learning loci, both within the individual groups given the opportunity to engage with the university, but also by helping these groups build individual connections with external partners.

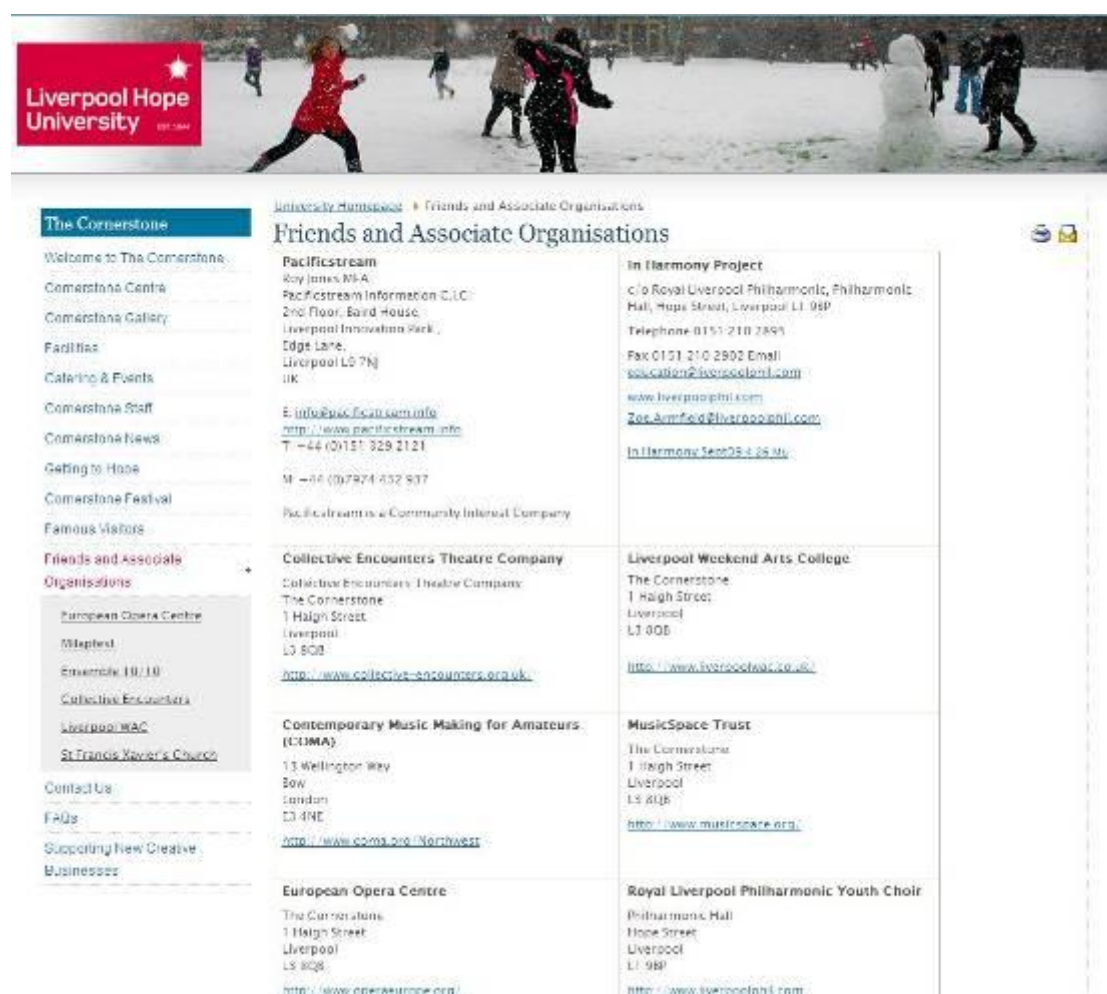
In common with the other chapters in the report, there were several features to these external relationships that members of the 'family' build. The first is that they were not always directly mediated by Hope, but Hope's contribution came partly in providing them with the stability to go about their business, and hence having the time to build wider relationships. Secondly, there were some direct relationships with Hope, and Hope staff and students were involved with the family members in a number of different ways. Thirdly, the connections sometimes involved strengthening these local actors' *external* connections in ways that potentially (but not definitely) strengthened their local legitimacy, or helped address the issue of the territorial fixity of these groups (being constrained to their local areas, whereas other actors always had the choice of doing business with these community groups or not).

### 9.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE CORNERSTONE FAMILY

In February 2008, a researcher from this project visited Hope as part of the phase I interviews, planning to do three interviews with a senior manager, the Cornerstone campus manager and an academic active in engaged research. The starting point for this case study, as related in 3.5, was the fact that on arriving at Cornerstone, rather than two interviews as had been scheduled, the campus manager arranged a programme of seven interviews encompassing ten interviewees, including one interview with Collective Encounters (*qv*). These were all arranged after the arrival of the researcher at 9.30am on 6<sup>th</sup> February, and at least four of them (including Collective Encounters) took place without the presence of a chaperone, and yet, these interviews added up to a fascinating picture of Cornerstone as a place where university and a range of other organisations came together to deliver exciting engagement projects with good links to local communities.

On Hope's website, since the start of this research there was within the 'Cornerstone' section of the website, a section on Friends and Associate Organisations of Hope, shown in a later incarnation from January 2010. This page lists all the various organisations with which Hope was involved, including for example the Hope Academy in Newton-le-Willows, outwith the scope of this research project. By family organisations, we specifically are referring to those activities which are legally entirely separate from Hope, but have taken office space within Cornerstone, and which are planning to move to the Cornerstone Centre.

Picture 27 The Hope Cornerstone 'Family' of Associate organisations



Source: Hope Website<sup>7</sup>

There were some common features to the activities located within Cornerstone; the first is that they were actively recruited by Hope to take premises to further an existing relationship or because it was regarded that they were valuable to Hope as tenants. Secondly, they were able to take advantage of a good offer, in particular a shortage of community arts venues in North Liverpool, in contrast to provision in south Liverpool, whilst offering good security and a range of arts facilities (including studios and theatres). The location was also accessible from the city centre, and at the time of the research, Hope sought to be a sympathetic tenant, setting reasonable rents and negotiating with tenants who found themselves in difficult circumstances.

### 9.1.1 Activities supported out of Cornerstone

The idea of the Hope family can be regarded as dating back to the time of the Community Deanery, when the emphasis lay partly on delivering shorter European funded training projects. One part of the 'family' was Urban Hope (*qv*) but as this is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hope, we exclude this from further consideration in the narrative. The second part of the family was a group of limited-life ESF projects,

<sup>7</sup> <Liverpool Hope University> <<http://www.hope.ac.uk/cornerstone/friends-and-associate-organisations.html>> <Friends and Associate Organisations> <Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010>

which were located within Cornerstone and which delivered these various training activities. As indicated in 4.2, these projects were important in the late 1990s as Liverpool Hope university College attempted to establish itself as a unified institutional presence, but after 2003, when the emphasis shifted towards excellence and scholarship, such projects became problematic, and indicative of the absence of a high-level theoretical base to Hope's educational programme. One interviewee related the change as a realisation that there should be no place on campus for those whose activism was for its own sake, and not for some higher scholastic purpose.

The tension between these two purposes also gave rise to a tension in the spatial configuration and purpose for Cornerstone. The former orientation suggested that the role of Cornerstone was to open an access point into North Liverpool, and to ensure that there were strong community benefits. The latter orientation suggested that the spatial role of Cornerstone was as an extension of the city centre, moving the barrier between central business district and inner city further east and northward, but preserving that barrier. These two tensions were evident in the developments around Cornerstone detailed in chapter 8, and also influenced the development of the Cornerstone Family.

From 2003, there has been an increasing emphasis on reconfiguring the Cornerstone Family around those that fulfil a higher scholastic purpose. There were two organisations in the family that were markedly less functionally scholastic than the other activities, and these will be dealt with in the following sub-sections. This section is primarily involved with those family organisations which delivered a contribution to Hope's growing research profile. One clear area where this has built up is in the area of music, as Hope has sought to profile its music education as being rooted on strong links to high culture, through the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as to cutting edge practice.

The European Opera Centre was funded by a direct grant from the Cultural Directorate General of the European Commission to provide post-graduate training opportunities for highly talented European opera performers, to bridge between study and employment, and reducing outmigration. Until 2003, the EOC was located in Manchester, but in 2003, after lengthy negotiations with Hope, took a tenancy in Cornerstone. Its modus operandi was to create new productions and recordings, and recruit new European graduates in opera to perform in these productions. EOC has used its links with Hope in a number of ways, for set and costume design in some productions, and via Hope was able to use Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's performers as musicians for some performances.

A second member of the 'family' was the Music Space Trust, which was involved in providing music therapy, which is the use of music as a form of psychological intervention. The topic was identified in the mid-1990s by the department as one of the reasons students studied music, and when an alumnus trained as a music therapist, Hope were put into contact with the Music Space Trust, a national charity that arranged Music Therapy. These discussions led to the establishment of a local branch of the Music Space Trust in Liverpool, located in Cornerstone, and which subsequently developed two modules, introducing students to music therapy, and a reflective placement in an institution using music therapy. Hope had at the time of the research links to Alder Hey Childrens Hospital and Broad Green Hospital through music therapy work.

Also associated with the Music degree, Hope provided support for a number of choirs and orchestras. From the university perspective, within the music degree it was compulsory for all students to be a member of a performance organisation, and as funding and support was withdrawn by other participating organisations, Hope became left leading these activities. The South Liverpool Rehearsal Orchestra relocated to the Hope Park campus in Childwall in return for students being able to participate in its activities, and Hope also ran the Big Band, the orchestra of the three universities and the local authority. Cornerstone also hosted a jazz group, a subject which is not taught on the music degree, which had the advantage of also being able to offer students the opportunity to practice and become experienced in that subject.

A final set of activities which ran out of Cornerstone was the 2009/10 season of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra 10/10 concert series. The 10/10 Orchestra was and is the contemporary music section of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The concerts were held in the evening at Cornerstone, and attracted strong audiences willing to travel to Everton to hear the music. The work of the Hope Director of Music, Stephen Pratt, a composer, featured in a number of the concerts, including the November 2009, concert; in 2007, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra released a CD of his music, *Lovebytes*<sup>8</sup>. That relationship helps to underscore the innovative nature of the composing teaching at Hope and thereby contributes to the development of Hope's scholarly atmosphere

### **9.1.2 Community activities within the Family**

The activities listed above were all well-established within Hope, and were all relatively secure ongoing activities that made a clear contribution to the university's developing excellence profile. However, what was less clear within those activities was the extent to which the local communities of Liverpool were specifically targeted and included in those activities. On the one hand, activities such as the 10/10 concert series did apparently play a role in bringing key actors in the Liverpool arts sector into North Liverpool and to see the effect of arts in regeneration, and a link can be drawn between these activities and the emergence of LARC. However, on the other hand, that would represent a very indirect strengthening mechanism for these excluded communities.

Part of that tension is itself a result of the tension arising from Hope's attempt to reposition itself as an excellence collegiate university, and a desire to divest itself of anything suggestive of further education. However, there were other activities which had closer links to the community, although some of them were less well-established, and the relationships with Hope less strong, than those high culture activities with an immediate contribution to excellence. In 9.1.3, we will explore one of those activities, the Collective Encounters theatre for social change at some more length. In this subsection, we here set out three areas where Cornerstone supported activities which were more focused on engagement with the inner city community, than in extending the boundaries of the CBD into Everton).

Clearly, an important element of bringing the community into Cornerstone was underscored by the In Harmony project. In November and December 2009, the West Everton Children's Orchestra (the *In Harmony* participants) undertook concerts in

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.liverpoolphil.com/451/events-classical-music/lady-magnesia.html>  
<http://www.liverpoolphil.com/1132/rlpo-recordings/stephen-pratt-lovebytes.html>

Cornerstone's Great Hall and St. Francis Xavier's, both part of the block that makes up Cornerstone. These concerts were open to the parents, and involved bringing local parents into contact with the university, with the added benefit that the children's entry was validated by the fact that they were 'performers'. As well as the university going out into the community, through the student volunteers, In Harmony also allowed the community to come onto the campus.

The second significant event in terms of bringing the community onto the campus came in October 2008 after the tragic murder of a local youth at a local Youth Club. Shrewsbury House (the Shewsy) was run as an affiliate activity of the nearby CoE St. Peter's Church, and Joseph Lappin was attending a music evening at the Shewsy when he was stabbed by local gang members in what was believed to be a case of mistaken identity or misplaced revenge. The youth club was temporarily closed to allow the police inquiries to continue, and during that time, the youth club relocated at its own request to the Cornerstone premises to allow the members to come to terms with those events.

A third activity which at the time of writing was not completely resolved were the enterprise support activities to be provided at the Cornerstone Centre through the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI). The Cornerstone's role in the LEGI programme for North Liverpool and South Sefton was to provide arts incubation activity, to stimulate the creation of new arts businesses. There were enterprise fellows within Hope funded by the LEGI (at the time branded as "stepclever"), and a number of meetings, for example in association with Global Entrepreneurship Week, were held at Cornerstone in support of Hope's participation in the LEGI activities.

Fourthly was the Liverpool Weekend Arts College (WAC). The idea was transplanted from London to Liverpool by a graduate of the London WAC, in which young people in London were given extremely cheap access at the weekend to high-level tuition in the performing arts. The Liverpool WAC was partly funded by Aim Higher, the widening participation scheme, with both term-time weekend activity as well as summer schools. The summer schools were developed in association with a number of other charities, including Bedscape (concerned with homeless people) Activ8 (refugees) and Fairbridge (NEETs), as well as Shrewsbury House.

The latest observed WAC took place in spring 2009, and offered five activities on weekends, against a nominal per activity fee. Hope provided a range of support, from sympathetic landlording, access to facilities, business planning advice and mentoring via participation in the local board. A non-participant observation and interviews with at a WAC session in January 2009 revealed that WAC had hit its target of providing opportunities for young people unable to pay for drama tuition to acquire sufficient skills to progress to tertiary education in performing arts, as well as helping to raise their aspirations for educational outcomes more generally.

*Picture 28 Junior WAC participants in the Cornerstone foyer in between classes having packed lunches and using the computers, January 2009*



### **9.1.3 Collective Encounters: theatre for social change**

Collective Encounters was a theatre company involved in theatre for social change based at the time of the research in the Hopkins Halls building at the Cornerstone Campus. The company was set up by a researcher in the Drama department who was teaching on the community drama course. Out of a successful bid for some research funding into arts provision in North Liverpool, she identified that provision was affected by a set of problems driven by the regeneration projects taking place. Rather than being able to co-operate and create a 'scene' organisations had to compete for funding. This raised the question of why there were not more organisations expressing the clear dissatisfaction felt within the community about the disconnection between the regeneration projects and their lives. The Company was established in 2004 as a means to give the residents of North Liverpool the opportunity to use the performing arts to express their feelings about their situations.

The modus operandi for Collective Encounters was that it was reliant on fund raising to create resources for particular projects. A project would typically name a community with which a play would be produced, tentatively a topic for the play, a means of doing some research, and then the play creation process. Collective Encounters drew heavily on the ideas of 'theatre of the oppressed', which seeks to create a debate and place alternative voices on a stage where they can tell stories and make arguments not necessarily heard in the usual course of events. Collective Encounters ran two theatre groups, a Third Age and a youth theatre, as well as running projects specifically for asylum seekers. Dependent on the availability of sponsorship and funding, the company also ran activities in schools, working with



youths in North Liverpool. The success of the early Collective Encounters projects was acknowledged with an award from the Arts Council of Regular Funding, £45,000 annually for a three year period from 2008, at a time when many formerly regularly funded organisations were unsuccessful.

One example of the kind of activity Collective Encounters undertook was the production “The Harmony Suite”, which dealt with the issue of regeneration projects in North Liverpool and their impacts on people’s lives. There were eight nightly performances, staged in a derelict/ abandoned terraced street in Anfield, in North Liverpool. The production was based on research undertaken with around 200 residents, and it was then turned into a script by a deviser. This script was then performed by professionals, with the stage technicals being provided by Hope. This was an extremely large, and expensive, project as far as Collective Encounters, and required significant fund raising from a variety of sources in order to proceed.

*Picture 29 The Harmony Suite, literally set in a derelict street in north Liverpool*



*Source: Photo from Leila Romana, Collective Encounters website<sup>9</sup>*

There were a variety of relationships between Hope and Collective Encounters, on a variety of different levels. One of these was the aforementioned involvement of staff and students in the productions themselves. A second came about through the involvement of Collective Encounters staff in teaching within the department, although this tailed off after the departure of the staff member concerned. The third was that the university played the role of sympathetic landlord (and was able to cite Collective Encounters as one of the anchor tenants for their arts incubator in the Cornerstone Centre in return). Hope also provided a member of the Board of the company Collective Encounters, and a number of students from Hope undertook work experience with the company. Collective Encounters has also provided the

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.collective-encounters.org.uk/images/harmonysuite/hs-gallery-5P.jpg>

opportunity for a number of students to undertake long-term placements, so in 2009, a student from Community and Performing Arts undertook a 100 hr placement for the reflective practise assignment.

The kind of drama production undertaken by Collective Encounter was rooted heavily in social research attempting to tease out the issues of significance to their performers. Knife crime, the vacuity of the cult of celebrity, pressures on adolescents and a gap between generations all formed the basis for shows produced by the Youth and Third Age group in the five years of Collective Encounters' existence. Collective Encounters was also a laboratory where experiments in theatre for social change were undertaken. The company have been very keen therefore to maintain a series of academic connections to get their research published, and to develop thinking around the theatre of social change. Around the time of the performance of the Harmony Suite (*qv*), an international conference on Theatre for Social Change was held at Cornerstone, and the conference programme included attendance at one of the showings, including a walking tour to the venue through the deserted, derelict streets of Anfield.

In section 9.2, the focus will turn to Collective Encounters' Youth Theatre, who our researchers followed for a period of six months as they prepared for a show as part of the Edinburgh fringe. This activity gave the opportunity to explore the co-learning within this group in more detail, and in particular the dimension of a group of children learning to transcend their immediate and restrictive social milieux. The Youth Theatre group in early 2009 staged a very successful production on the effects of the credit crisis in North Liverpool, entitled "A necessary evil", together with the third Age theatre. In September 2008, they had hosted the visit of a Youth Theatre group from Scotland to Liverpool, and had decided to work further with this group on a show that would feature in the Edinburgh fringe.

## **9.2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING**

In this section, we are concerned with the community learning that took place within the Collective Encounters Youth Theatre in 2009 as they prepared for and delivered their play on the 2009 Fringe, "*Barrie, Radge & Minging*" (see Picture 31 below). "*Barrie, Radge & Minging*" is a way of saying the "good, the bad and the ugly" in local Edinburgh dialect, and the title encapsulated the idea that the show was going to be a portrayal of adolescence in more deprived communities, highlighting the similarities between North Liverpool and North Edinburgh, where the Edinburgh youth group were based, supported by the North Edinburgh Young People's Forum, a local political initiative to provide some opportunity for initiative from young people in Edinburgh.

Picture 30 Members of the Youth Theatre present on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009



As background to the section, it is worth understanding a little about the background of the youths involved in the theatre. They were not all resident in Everton, Anfield and Kirkdale, as some had joined from elsewhere in the city. Although all resident in North Liverpool, a deprived area, and to some extent in deprived communities, each of them were individuals facing their own challenges. To each of them, participating in the Youth Theatre, provided an additional set of choices to those regularly offered to them in their own community and environment. Almost all of them encountered problems, difficulties or hardships in their local communities, which made what they were eventually to achieve in the course of the production remarkable.

### **9.2.1 The narrative of *Barrie, Radge & Minging***

The idea behind *Barrie, Radge & Minging* came with a visit by the Youth Theatre to Edinburgh in August 2008 to visit the Fringe. That event was run by Collective Encounter's then-Participatory Programme Manager, and as part of that, they met with an Edinburgh Youth Group that the Artistic Director of Collective Encounters was also working with. They were very enthused by the meeting on both sides, and resolved at that initial meeting to continue working together. The North Edinburgh Young People's Forum supported the group with their fundraising, and by October they had enough funds raised to visit Liverpool. That group came and had a one-Saturday workshop including a meal and visit to the theatre, and then agreed to also meet on the Sunday because of the clear possibilities for ongoing relationships. The Edinburgh group had links to the North Edinburgh Arts Centre (NEAC), and the idea emerged to co-create a performance that could feature as part of the *Fringe Festival of*

*Politics.* NEAC volunteered a free venue for the performance in Muirhill, in Edinburgh, and it was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August 2009, formally included as part of the Fringe Festival.

*Picture 31 The poster for Barrie, Radge & Mingin, North Edinburgh Arts Centre, 14 August 2009.*



It was decided to schedule a one-week workshop immediately before the performances in Edinburgh where the show would be formally devised. The fact that the groups would only meet up for this one week made the preparation processes more difficult. The activity was planned and managed as a project, which meant that it involved a sequence of steps in parallel, preparing a script, generating ideas, learning new skills, raising the funding, and publicising the performances. There was also the need for a substantial amount of fund-raising, both preparing bids to potential funding bodies, as well as directly raising donations from the public and saving up their own contributions.

Before the rehearsals and preparations began in April 2009, coming out of the experiences of the previous show, a number of key decisions were made. Firstly, there would be a shift of emphasis from realism to physical theatre and also including puppetry, which in turn required that the participants would learn a new range of skills, which would be bought in from freelance participants. The second was that there would be an outside element, building again on a parade sequence that Youth Theatre participants had liked from a prior show in 2008, *Standing Blind*. The third was that there would be a greater degree of interaction with the audience, breaking down the sense of space between audience and performance. Fourthly, the Youth Theatre were experienced actors whilst the Scottish Youth group were not, therefore

one emphasis had to be on providing the Liverpool Youth Theatre with leadership and mentoring skills to get the best out of their less experienced colleagues.

Over the course of the summer of 2009, the Liverpool group prepared through a set of weekly workshops which did three things. They firstly helped to develop the skills necessary for developing a piece of drama in this new area; as part of this, the company hired in two external freelance consultants to specifically tutor the participants in puppetry and physical theatre. They secondly helped to develop a set of ideas for what might be included in the performance itself, with the two directors in Liverpool and Edinburgh in regular contact integrating the ideas, and then devising some ideas for the eventual performance. The third was that the group started planning for the trip to Edinburgh, and in particular addressing themselves to the issue of fundraising. Although the balance of the workshops differed on a weekly basis, each of the sessions, from April to July covered these three areas in some detail.

The field workshop took place in the second week of August, with about ten participants from Liverpool, as well as the Participatory Programme Manager, and two helpers already known to the group. In total, there was about 19 of them in the play, one of the youth workers appears in the play, making about eight from *Barrie, Radge & Minging*. There was also a worker from NEAC who helped with the costume design, and a senior and trainee youth worker who supported the Edinburgh theatre group. There were three intensive day sessions (Tuesday- Thursday), running from 10am to 7pm; on the Friday, the final touches were put to the rehearsal starting at 10am, and then the first performance was at 7pm; there was a second performance on the Saturday afternoon.

The script for the play was based on a tension between two social forces, the 'paint-it-pretty's' (who gloss over social problems with superficial attractions) and the 'hoodies' (who menace and fight). Individuals falling into these two groups are controlled by external forces, likened to a puppet-master, making lives akin to puppets playing in a doll's house. The result is that people do not build bridges, but remain isolated, trapped within these groups and not in effective control, although with the illusion of control, or giving up control in return for a sense of belonging to something bigger. The message was that by talking to one another, and communicating more effectively, and appreciating other people, people can then become free to live their own lives and take decisions for themselves.

In the week, the play was effectively devised, and the participants have to learn their lines and the script. There was also the development of the costumes, the creation of a number of puppet master puppets, as well as two dolls and a dolls house. A photographer from a local newspaper, the North Edinburgh News, came during the rehearsals and took photos for an article which appeared in the September edition of the newspaper. Outside the workshops, the Liverpool group were staying in hostels in North East Edinburgh, half-an-hour by bus, and so by the time they had cooked for themselves and got ready, with the 10-7 programme there was very little time for them to do anything else, and although on the Saturday they went for a meal, there was very little direct engagement with the rest of the Fringe festival.

Picture 32 The coverage of the show in North Edinburgh News.

## Forth meets Mersey to stage show

The original idea was simple a bit 'naïve', the weather was 'miserable' but the performance turned out 'baric'. While the city centre was bustling with Festival and Fringe performances last month, North Edinburgh Arts hosted a wee gem of its own, a cast of 'Forths of the Fringe' youth performers. 'Barrie, Rudge and Mingie' was a remarkable piece of forum theatre put together in few frantic days by young people living over 200 miles apart!

The idea for the project was first raised last summer when Liverpool's Collective Encounters Youth Theatre met members of North Edinburgh Young People's Forum during a trip to the Edinburgh Festival. North Liverpool, like North Edinburgh, is currently seeing major change through a regeneration programme and the groups found they had a lot in common. Indeed the young people got on so well that the Edinburgh group received funds to travel to Liverpool to meet up with their friends and find out more about Collective Encounters, a small community-based arts organisation which sees theatre as a tool for social change. Collective Encounters Youth Theatre has met weekly since May 2008 to explore issues, develop new skills and find creative ways of using drama to influence change.

Inspired by what they learned, they agreed to do a project together and decided: let's put on a show! North Edinburgh Arts agreed to broker the project.

Since early this summer the two groups have met separately - Collective Encounters' Artists Director Sarah Thomson worked with the Edinburgh group while El Thomson, the company's Participatory Programme Manager, worked with the Liverpool team. Then, over five

very dull days, the two groups got together to share their ideas and write, devise and choreograph the entire performance.

The result - 'Barrie, Rudge and Mingie' - was an energetic, perceptive and well-thought out piece of theatre that showed communication through young people's eyes. The drama challenged preconceived ideas and stereotypes, and looked at ways to make positive change in society. The message! It doesn't have to be like this - we can make it better. The youngsters don't have all the answers to combating poverty, stereotyping and social stigma - who don't! - but the joint piece of work showed that young people are an exciting source of social issues at our 'bills and waver' citizens.

The 'Barrie, Rudge and Mingie' production certainly didn't lack ambition - it was staged not only in North Edinburgh Arts Centre's main theatre but also in the Centre's garden and in Mainhouse Shopping Mall - but the young people met the challenge and carried off the performance with real panache.

Collective Encounters' Sarah Thomson said: "It's been extraordinary! It's taken an immense effort over the last week to get things together, but I think we've all got a real buzz out of the way things have progressed. Collective Encounters' aim is to make theatre relevant to people, using the magic of live performance to create, sustain and stimulate debate. I think this production has achieved all these things, and everyone involved in the project has put so much effort in to make it happen. I'm absolutely sure that they will all take a lot from it too, and it's something they will never forget."

North Edinburgh Young People's Forum

has been working to 'clean, green and safe' issues across the area over recent months, and will be involving young people through the various local youth organisations in the weeks ahead. The course for the joint production, 'Barrie, Rudge and Mingie' was provided by NEYPP based on some of the work they've already carried out.

"These words all came up quite a bit when we were talking about the area, what's good and bad about where we live. We provided the names, that was our contribution!" joked NEYPP's Jordan Irvine.

"Instead of 'clean, green and safe' we've been thinking more in terms of 'the good, the bad and the ugly' to put a young people's slant on it. Many young people in the area are very passionate about their local environment and have strong opinions, and I think that came through in the production. The young people who were involved really got into it - I was amazed at the way some of the quieter ones really came out of their shells. It takes quite a bit of time to speak in front of an audience but they did it, and that's quite an achievement. For me, I just found it all an amazing experience. I loved being involved and I'm determined to try to get funding to allow us to do something even bigger next year."

North Edinburgh Arts' Angela Austin had just ten days to devise a stage set, design



costumes and then make them all but the getthere with a little help from her friends!

"It was a very quiet afternoon, but we managed it thanks to our Associate Artists group here in the Centre along with a group of volunteers who were happy to assist us. We had loads of people, of all ages, giving us a hand and it was brilliant the way everything ticked along. I was very excited, there was a lot of adrenaline and the level of community involvement reminded me a bit of 'Oyster Wars' (the community drama staged at North Edinburgh Arts Centre in 1995) in the way that everyone pulled together!" she said.

Liverpoolian Matthew Fox, who played a very impressive street singer, said: "There was a lot to learn and I was totally

missing in the costume, but we had a lot of laughs as well. We've had a very busy week and I'm really exhausted now - it's been really good though!"

The 'Barrie, Rudge and Mingie' cast were Adam Doreen, Ali Ahsan, Amber-Paige Moss, Charlotte Pinner, Caryn Lumsden, Chelsea Leigh, Chelsea Stewart, Danny Fitzgerald, Duncan Milligan, Rozanne Stewart, Jordan Irvine, Kayleigh Jones, Louise McMillan, Liam Barwell, Matthew Fox, Omar Farooq, Sammy Smith, Sarah Louise Johnson and Tommy Almond.

The project was made possible through the support of the Robertson Trust, North Edinburgh Trust, North Edinburgh Youth Forum, Collective Encounters and North Edinburgh Arts.

Source: <http://www.northedinburghnews.co.uk/assets/pdf/2009/sept09.pdf>

The play was performed on the Friday evening, and despite poor weather, went remarkably smoothly. The decision had been taken to close the gallery seating in the theatre, and so the theatre was completely full at ground level, with around fifty in the audience. The play started in the café, and the audience were led by the Ringmaster through a garden of 'paint-it-pretties', then around and back through an alley where a number of 'hoodies' stood. There was a scene in the local Shopping Centre, including the appearance of a giant puppet Puppeteer. Finally, the Ringmaster led the audience back into the theatre, where the rest of the play was performed. There was a sense in at least some of the audience that it had been a very successful performance, and conveyed the message very effectively.

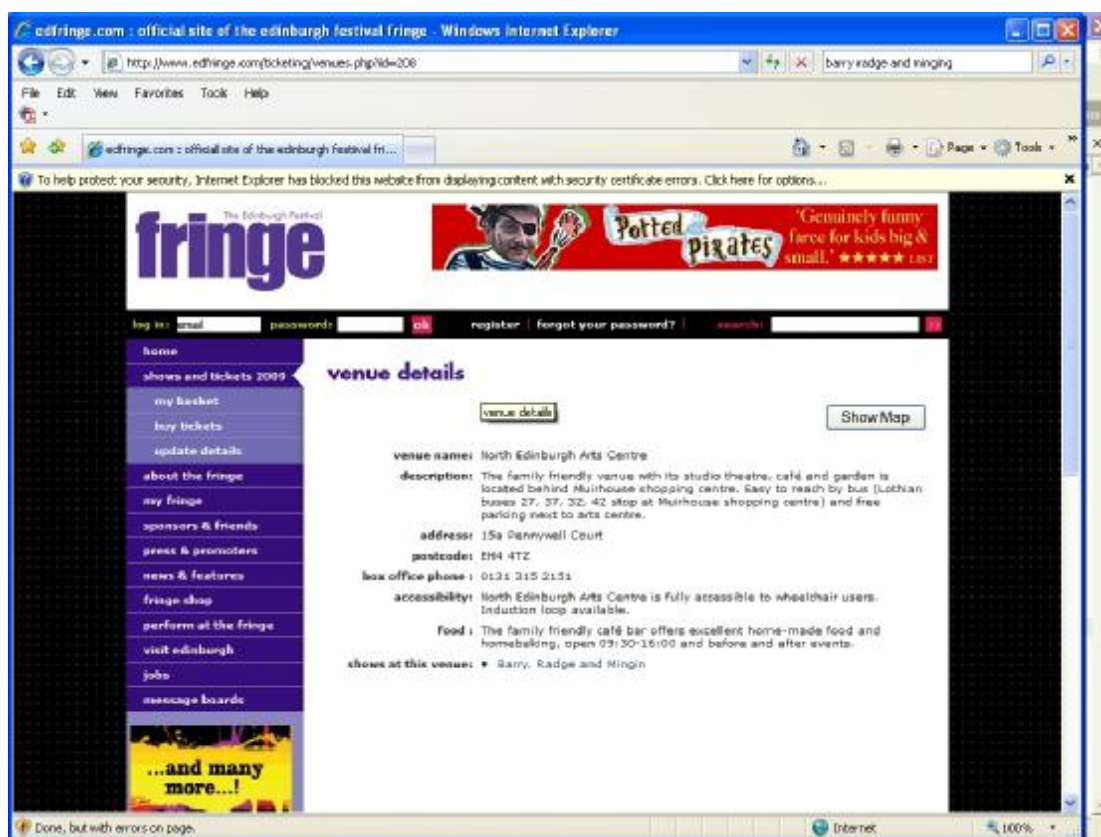
### 9.2.2 Key achievements for Collective Encounters through *Barrie, Rudge & Mingie*

It is our claim that the play can be regarded as representing a success, not just as a successful play, but as pointing to an underlying learning activity within which the group developed different kinds of social capital. In the following sub-section (9.2.3) we focus more on the learning processes and the social capital generated, but to provide a sense of scale of those impacts, firstly in this sub-section we highlight the different success dimensions of the performance. In this sub-section, we consider what evidence is there that are the indications that this activity led to socialised learning process, that is to say what outcomes were achieved that could arguably not have been achieved without a material change in the conditions of those involved in the learning process.

The first element that is suggestive of success is that they did indeed succeed in producing a play on the Edinburgh Fringe. Picture 33 below shows a screenshot from

the official Fringe website which lists NEAC as a Fringe venue, and “*Barrie, Radge & Minging*” as the only production that year at NEAC. There was an audience, the audience bought tickets, they watched receptively as the youths performed, they followed the instruction and guidance of the Ringmaster through the parade elements of the play. This had the effect of ‘framing’ the youths as ‘actors’, confirming their membership as part of the more general-abstract group, generalising them away from being ‘youth-actors in a theatre for the deprived’ (a restrictive version of being actors) towards being ‘young actors participating in the Fringe’ (a much more transportable version of being an actor, something that could be included for example on a CV).

Picture 33 *Barrie, Radge & Minging* listed in the Edinburgh Fringe website



Related to this validation as ‘actors’ and emphasising their links to wider groups, the Edinburgh event provided the group with the opportunity to do something which is also associated with actors, that is to say going on a ‘tour’, or at least producing a show at a venue not immediately known to them. A number of the group had not been away from Liverpool for any length of time either on holiday or with schools, and it was therefore impressive that they managed this at the same time as being able to create more or less from scratch a new production within the one week of the workshop. This ‘doing’ is important – they were not going on a trip to learn or prepare for something else (as they had done in the summer of 2008) – they used the trip to build a performance which achieved a life of its own, having a name and being talked about elsewhere, in the press, mentioned on websites, and also in the academic domain through this research project.

A second indicator of success pointing to collective learning outcomes was the fact that it built on what was already in the group, and helped to move the group forward, bringing on-board new skills. In terms of personnel in the group, there was

apparently good continuity between this and previous productions, and several of the main actors in *Barrie, Radge & Minging* had also featured in *Standing Blind* and *A Necessary Evil*. On the one hand, the fact that the group could undertake an ambitious project validated the strength of what had been achieved before, as clearly they had built capacity to develop links with the other group. But it also suggested that this group was developing and learning more about what being a theatre group involved, in terms of writing funding applications and sustaining the life of the group as well as merely undertaking the business of playing roles.

*Picture 34 Rehearsals in the local shopping centre with an attentive audience*



A further indicator of progression came through an observation of the increasing levels of concentration within the group over the course of the project. In the first evening workshop, for example, the accent on the exercises was on fun. The warm-up exercises were variations on playground games, there was a break in the middle of the session, it finished promptly, and even in the technical session, the actors had a lot of freedom to design their own pieces, and to play with ideas as a means to explore the issue (which was the idea of an emotion, and having that at a variety of scales from the subtle '1' to the caricature '10'). The late July rehearsal observed was very different: the focus was on physical theatre, and although there was a warm-up at the start of the sessions involving games, but the intensity of the games builds up over time, and the actors are challenged to use what start out as incidental noises in a game to make up scenarios from them. They continued for 90 minutes without a break moving from one exercise to another and extracting physical theatre out of what started as games. At the end of the session, there is a final administration section where they arrange more details. By the time of the workshop, they were able to work with very limited breaks for long days, with no observed outbreaks of nerves, conflict or tension in the Friday workshop session observed.

Another set of indicators that they were successful as a theatre group came through the fact that they organised other activities besides the productions. The trip to Edinburgh in August 2008 was one example of such a group activity, and as part of that, as a group they made a series of decisions about behavioural codes to ensure the



trip ran smoothly. In July 2009, the group went on a trip to another youth theatre in the Wirral, a trip which worked successfully. In the same week, a group of them went at the invitation of the Media Trust to the House of Lords in London to a debate on the impacts of celebrity and media image on young people. In this case, the travel costs were met by the Media Trust. Again, this demonstrates the fact that they had been able to transcend their narrow geographical setting and demonstrate their participation within a wider set of communities, in the region and nationally. They could be regarded as part of a spatial strategy within the group to broaden its boundaries beyond Merseyside and therefore to avoid being trapped and left reliant on the goodwill of others with a perhaps more variable commitment to north Everton.

### **9.2.3 Collective learning & Collective Encounters**

It is our contention that these benefits emerged through a series of learning processes that were engendered within the theatre group and through the activities that they undertook. Some of these related specifically to the skills involved in theatre production, whilst others were more explicitly about the management and survival of a community, and winning the resources to undertake interesting activities. Some of the characteristics are hybrids, such as the mentoring activity that took place between the actors in *Collective Encounters* and *Barrie, Radge & Minging*, they were primarily social/ community activities, but closely related to successfully delivering the final production.

The first learning process demonstrated clear bridging capital, in the sense of being able to build links to another group with similar interests to work together, in this case *Barrie, Radge & Minging*. In the course of a short one-off meeting with NEYPF (*qv*), they identified clear commonalities between the two groups. When the *Barrie, Radge & Minging* came to visit Liverpool, they together decided to try and launch a shared programme. Over a week, they developed a shared production, and as will be demonstrated later, over the course of that shared production, the barriers between the two groups down, and they began to function effectively as a single unit.

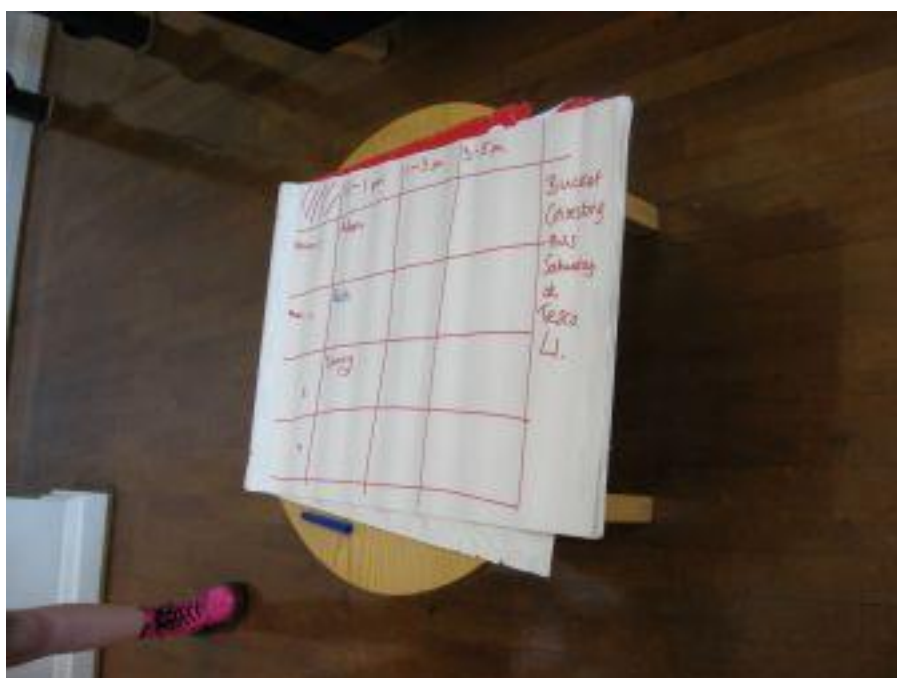
The second collective learning process was demonstrated by the shifting roles of different people within the group. To some extent, participation in the activities was determined by the availability for the trip to Edinburgh, although there were people who attended the weekly sessions who were not involved in the final production. The community involved at least two new peripheral members, the freelancers who came and delivered one-off training sessions. The anchor role for the second act of the play (in the theatre) was performed by a relatively young and new member of the group, who grew through the process into a central performer in the group. The performance also anchored two members of the group who had been formerly peripheral, and were early in 2009 considering whether to remain in the group, but indeed stayed as part of the group and performed key roles in the final performance.

The third key learning activity was the self-organisation that took place to ensure that the trip went ahead. For the first visit to the Fringe, the group collectively decided between themselves some groundrules, which primarily appeared to have been a decision that there would be no drinking of alcohol during the trip. For this longer trip, where there was a more concerted effort for fundraising, the group showed a capacity to deal systematically with the issues that this raised for them. Early on in the production process (May) they set aside one workshop to discuss the practical issues that had to be addressed to ensure that the Fringe production was able to take

place. This was initiated by the Theatre leader, who was worried in advance because the group had relatively little experience in that kind of collective governance.

The meeting set the rules for the trip, which included a reaffirmation that the trip would be completely alcohol-free. They also decided that to be eligible to go to Edinburgh, no more than three sessions could have been missed without good reason, and notifying the group in advance. They also decided that the fundraising would be a group effort, and that no one would be excluded for a lack of money. That in turn then implied a decision to fund-raise as a group for the trip, which meant establishing a budget, writing funding bids and soliciting donations. One group in the theatre devised the budget, whilst another group prepared funding bids to local agencies that typically support those kinds of activities, Liverpool Community and Voluntary Services and the Youth Opportunities Fund. Writing these bids involved taking decisions on behalf of the whole group because of insufficient time to consult in preparing the bids.

*Picture 35 The rosters for the collections at Supermarkets for fundraising for the visit*



There were also direct fund-raising activities. In the run up to the visit, they applied for permission to solicit donations (a ‘bucket shake’) in one Liverpool supermarket, as well as to help with packing by checkouts on a separate occasion at another Liverpool supermarket. Figure 36 above shows the grid that was prepared for the Tesco ‘bucket shake’, with the group members negotiating their times they would be present. Some of those at the rehearsal were not able to attend Edinburgh and were reluctant to participate in the activity. But by the end of the rehearsal at which the photo was taken, they managed to complete the grid and the bucket shake took place successfully. The other fund raising activity was that they ran a ‘change jar’ which was literally a jar they each placed all their spare change into every week, and then it was deposited into the Theatre Company bank account to make it available for the field trip (see Picture 37 below).

Picture 36 The jar used for the collection of members' spare change as a fund-raising exercise



This activity shows several elements of collective learning, on the one hand working together towards a shared objective, but also negotiating between private and shared demands. There was with the bucket shake a clear issue of potential free-riding, but at the same time some group members had jobs which they had to attend, and so assembling the roster was a delicate balance of peer pressure and trust, drawing on their past mutual knowledge and tolerance. Through the use of the roster they were able to co-ordinate the group of twelve to be self-organising, to be at the right point and to allow the shake to operate without the continual direct intervention of the Programme Leader. Taken together with their capacity to set rules and then to adjudicate compliance to those rules, there is evidence to make rather strong claims that the group had developed a relatively strong self-governing capacity, although certainly drawing heavily on the initiative and input of the Programme Leader.

The final claim for collective learning would be the way that the group were able to mentor and engage in collective learning with the *Barrie, Radge & Minging* group, who were far less experienced in drama as their background lay as a youth group rather than a youth theatre. Observations from the Friday rehearsals suggested that the Liverpool actors were actively mentoring the Edinburgh students to help them to deal with the pressures and stresses of the occasion as much to deal with the technical challenges involved in acting. In each of the groups in the play, there was a mix of Liverpool and Edinburgh participants, and in the final rehearsal and adjustments, they were working much more within their groups (hoodies and paint-it-pretties, also the different scenes in the play) than between the Liverpool and Edinburgh groups. We were also told that after the event, one of the Edinburgh actors had told that they had learned a huge amount from the Liverpool actor with which they had been, which

tallied with the way they were working together during the final rehearsal and adjustment session.

*Picture 37 The ensemble during dress rehearsal with the North Edinburgh News Photographer.*



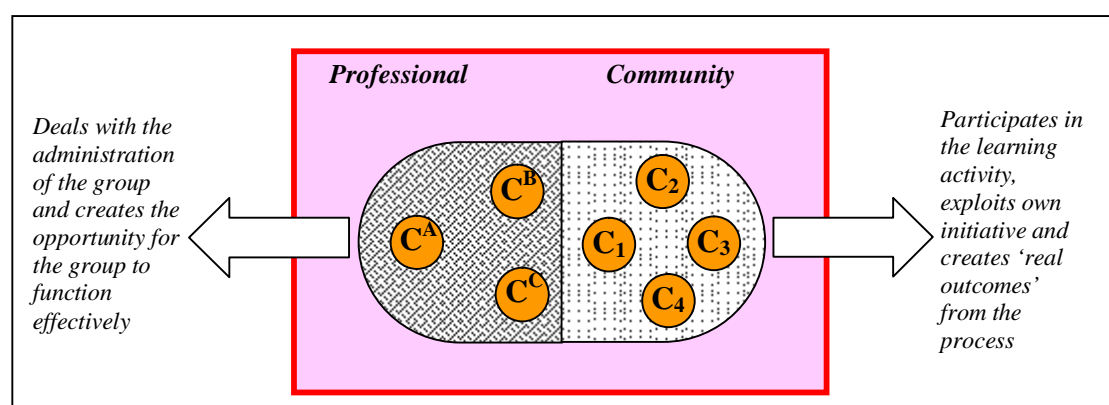
Taken in conjunction with the positive outcomes detailed in 9.2.2 above, 9.2.3 suggests the processes through which these outcomes may have been delivered, which are certainly suggestive if not proof that Collective Encounters functioned as a learning community, building social capital both bonding – self organising for fundraising and rule setting – but also bridging – building links with the members of the *Barrie, Radge & Minging* and incorporating them into the learning community. This learning activity had the effects of repositioning Collective Encounters youth theatre as something much broader than a ‘group of disadvantaged youngsters playing in deprived areas’ towards a youth theatre that performs its own pieces on the Fringe’. It is important of course not to overplay the capacity built within the group, or to downplay the important roles played by the adults in holding the youth community together. Nevertheless, the fact that the youth theatre can plan months in the future and hundreds of miles away to deliver a performance in an international festival is clearly an impressive outcome for that group.

### **9.3 A NETWORK REPRESENTATION OF HOPE’S FAMILY HOSTING ACTIVITIES**

To produce a network representation of this pillar, it is first necessary to characterise the activities within the family. In 9.2 above, we have focused on the activity as a whole, but emerging from the narrative is a division between the *professional* and the *community* elements of that particular activity. The professional elements are those actors which administer the organisation, so run the companies and administrative systems underlying the activities, working with sponsors and stakeholders to demonstrate the activities meet their funders’ requirements. The community elements are the individuals from the communities which participate in the activities and in

most cases deliver performances. They have some capacity to use their own initiative, as with the case of Collective Encounters developing a link with *Barrie, Radge & Minging*. They also have some legitimacy value in that some of their intermediate processes and outcomes are regarded by as valid outputs by a range of funders. This is shown in figure 11 below, which also emphasises the fact that together, the two elements cohere into a community learning activity which regulates and self-sustains through the processes outlined in 9.2.3 above.

Figure 11 Functional distinctions within the community learning activities



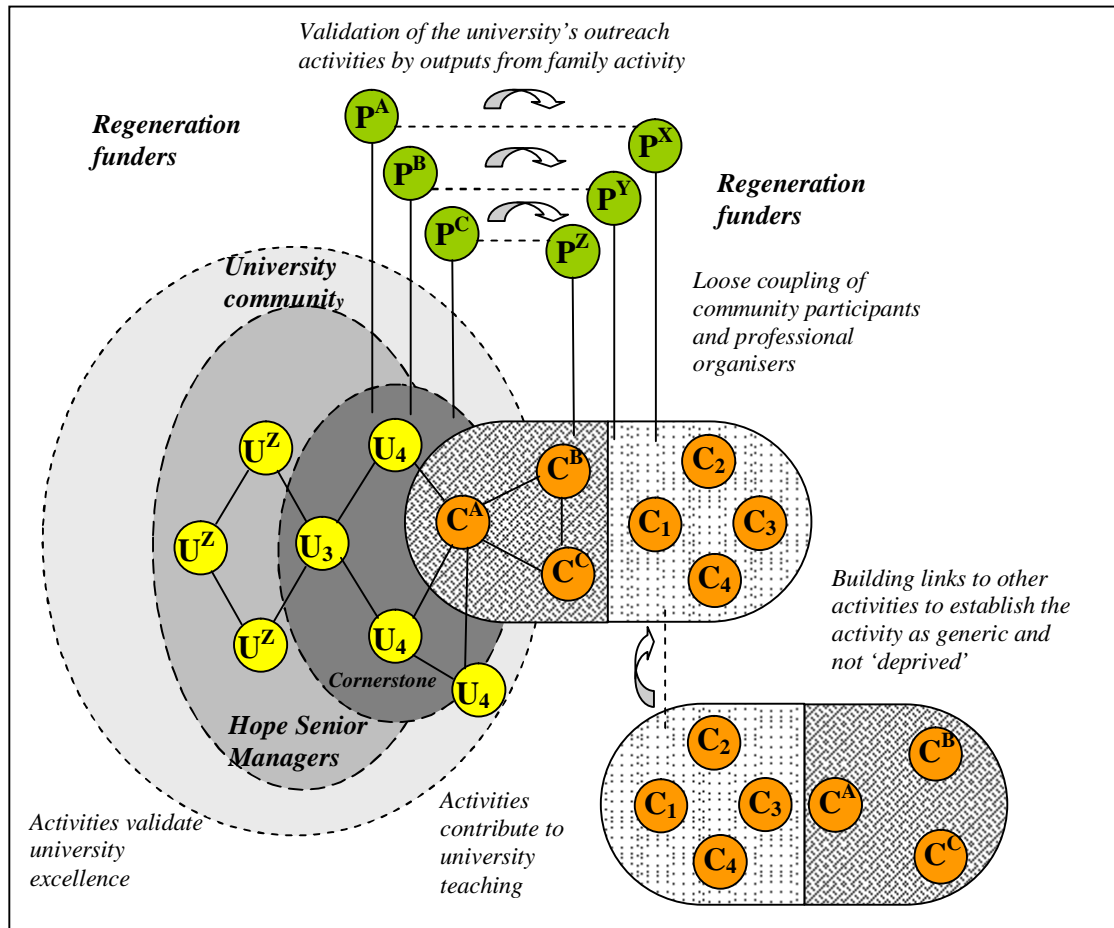
This learning community has a life of its own, built on collective learning. Having made that distinction, it is possible to see that the community activities have both indirect and direct relationships with the university. The direct relationships come through the interactions between the professional elements of the community activity and the university. A stylised fact is that these professional participants have a high degree of cognitive proximity with university actors: they are involved in research, writing papers, arranging symposia, publishing, performance and fund raising. Moreover, those activities are also interesting for the university in providing opportunities for their staff and students to broaden their horizons.

The indirect relationship comes through the way that the university is able to reframe and represent what are effectively community benefits generated by themselves, as something in which the university has made a decisive contribution. So a heuristic for the model is that the community activities are recognised by a range of external partners and agencies as having some kind of societal value in creating chances for residents of excluded communities. Some of these charities and bodies (community development funders) can be quite powerful and help to configure high-level debates about societal value. So other external actors (regeneration funders) regard the fact that the university is working with these community groups as strong evidence of delivering hard regeneration outcomes. So in that sense, the Cornerstone Centre is at least partly legitimated through the community development outcomes which its partner organisations – such as Collective Encounters have created.

There is clearly a question about the relationship between the university and the learning community, and there are clearly two rhetorics of relationship between the university and community organisations. On the one hand, there are straightforward relationships between the university and the arts professionals that complement their teaching and research activities, and add to the excellent offer in the university. On the other hand, there are very few relationships between the university and members of the excluded community. Yet, the university is a sympathetic tenant for this hybrid learning organisation, premised on a cognitive proximity and mutual benefits between

the university and professional elements. Without those relationships, the learning community could not function, and undertake community activities such as self-management and ‘procreation’ (through fundraising), as well as developing links with other external organisations allowing the community to validate in wider artistic circles (although those relationships lack salience from the perspective of the university).

Figure 12 A stylised network representation of the ‘family organisations’ pillar



## **10 UNIVERSITIES DRIVING COMMUNITY LEARNING: SECURING ENGAGEMENT WITHIN INSTITUTIONS**

This research working paper has been concerned with the processes by which universities create opportunities for collective learning within excluded communities which enables those communities to improve their situations within local political economies. It is outwith the scope of a single small research project to be able to demonstrate conclusively that this has happened from the starting point of university intentionality to definite changes in local political-economic structures. What the paper has been able to identify is a number of processes and outcomes which are suggestive of a model of how universities engage with excluded communities.

In chapter 6, we put forward a stylised heuristic of four interacting pillars which came together to resolve some of the traditional tensions and barriers universities face in promoting community engagement. Chapters 7 to 10 have subsequently explored those pillars in more detail, and looked at how – if at all – the universities have been involved in a process of improving the structural positionality of particular excluded communities. In this chapter, we reflect on the case study to reconceptualise university-community engagement which is dependent on a capacity to continually reframe engagement activities as serving a range of different logics.

In the empirical analysis chapters (7-10), we considered the network arrangements in each of the different engagement pillars. In this concluding chapter, we argue that each of these pillars maps approximately to a different rationale for engagement (see working paper 2). The pillars do not simply beneficially interact through a virtuous cycle. Rather, particular concrete activities adopt particular justifications based on these rationales and develop. After that development process, they create future opportunities which have to be actively selected on the basis of an expectation of the results they will produce, which may be validated by an entirely different logic to the initial reason that the activity was undertaken. This means that successful engagement is in turn dependent on being able to shift between these different logics, and the chapter and working paper conclude by reflecting on the implications of this.

### **10.1 THREE LOGICS OF UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In parallel with this sense that there was a dynamic university system in which particular engagement projects were assembled and which influenced the view of engagement in a general sense, it is not reasonable to present the university ethos and mission as being some kind of unified position. There were as indicated above at least three high level positions corresponding in a loose way to the three management regimes at Hope. But even at this same time, it was clear that there were a number of different narratives that were told about engagement, and why it was important for the university. Because the dynamic of engagement was built on establishing that engagement was useful to the university, and in turn giving entrepreneurs the opportunities to create community learning spaces, the interplay of these logics is important.

In working paper 2, we identified that generally speaking there are six narratives that were told by universities about why they engaged with excluded communities. In this paper, there were three principle narratives, each of which involved different actors, argued for different kinds of outcomes, and changed the particular salience of

different stakeholder groupings to the university. In this section, we set out these four groupings of narratives, which correspond rather roughly to the four pillars set out above.

### **10.1.1 “Engagement helps us to demonstrate commitment to a higher principle”**

The first narrative that was told about community engagement was that Community engagement was part of demonstrating commitment to a higher principle and a Christian ethos. The key parts of this narrative was that the engagement was altruistic, and motivated by groups within the university who wanted to do kind things to other, more unfortunate individuals and groups. The activities were valued in the university for contributing to realising the ethos, and seen as being the kind of things that Hope did. The narrative was underpinned by a kind of selflessness in which they were regarded as being good things to do for benefiting others, rather than because they helped to benefit either Hope or the participants.

The kinds of activity which fitted into this were primarily the volunteering activities, but also the involvement of the university in some curricular engagement activity. The main actors involved were relatively peripheral in the university, so there was a separate secretariat for the volunteering activity, a small charity was established to run the overseas volunteering work, and it was the students themselves who were the engagers. The potential downsides for the university was therefore extremely limited, and so it was relatively easy for the university to value these activities and make the most of them in their communications activities.

The validity of outcomes was defined primarily in terms of the altruistic principles, that is to say they were successful because they were voluntary. They did not place any great pressure on the university, and they also allowed the university to retain a degree of control where they did raise more pressures. This is seen in the case where the university reinvented the Hope One World activity – involving overseas placements – to ensure that the placements ran without raising substantial risks for the institution. They were also validated through senior staff enthusiasm and support for them, and the performance of recognition for the awards during the graduation ceremonies for those who had completed the Service and Leadership award.

What was interesting perhaps was that this narrative about engagement was constructed to allow Hope to retain almost absolute control over what counted as commitment to a higher principle. When there was a conflict of interests between Hope and a particular problem, the voluntary nature of the activity allowed Hope to resolve that conflict without the other party having any opportunity or channel for recourse. Ironically, it was the most principled of the commitments which was also the most elusive and which placed the least pressure on the university to change the way in which it behaved, or to reconsider its own behaviour in the light of demands from external stakeholders.

### **10.1.2 “Engagement helps us to built a more scholarly culture”**

The second narrative which was told around engagement with excluded communities was that it helped to build a more scholarly culture around Hope. This narrative came in a variety of different flavours with different interpretations of what precisely counted as scholarship. The ‘strong’ reading equated scholarship with research, and community engagement was useful where it provided academics with stimulation and



opportunities to undertake research through contacts with excluded communities. The weakest reading regarded scholarship more as a reflective approach to learning (pedagogic scholarship): in such narratives, engagement had value in providing teachers with the opportunities for pedagogic reflections in other settings. A middle reading was that scholarship was variegated and that community (and business) engagement was one form of scholarship alongside primary research and pedagogic reflection.

The actors involved with this narrative were primarily those involved in a struggle over changing the nature of the culture at Hope university, namely the academic and managerial staff. Senior managers tended to take a very strong reading of the value of engagement, seeing engagement only of value where it contributed to building externally-validated research excellence. Conversely, those involved in engagement for more intrinsic reasons tended to validate in terms of its conformance to a variety of scholarship, to argue that they were changing their behaviour to meet the demands of external senior managers.

In each of these two narratives, there were very different ways of valuing the outcomes and very different things that counted as valid outcomes. In a strong reading, engagement was only useful to the extent that it helped to win external recognition of intellectual strength, either through big research projects, or through signalling activities such as conferences, visiting professorships and flagship projects with wider excellence. In those weaker readings, valid outcomes were those in which activities took place where students were taught and there were opportunities for reflection on the teaching process as well as the application of knowledge in context.

The two different narratives appeared to reflect two very different perspectives on scholarship. The hard reading can be regarded as being based on ‘the idea of scholarship’, that is to say beginning from the point that a distinguishing feature of academic life is continually updating ones own knowledge as well as the participation in a series of scholarly conversations about what constitutes valid knowledge. From this perspective, valid engagement allows the updating of ones own knowledge as well as participating in scholarly conversations, and it is these two activities – rather than the community engagement – that has value.

Conversely, the more pedagogic-reflective version of scholarship begins from a perspective that good teachers try to reflect on their practices, and if teaching people how to work in excluded communities is taking place, community engagement becomes a means to reflect on teaching practices. From that perspective, valid engagement involves working with excluded communities in the course of teaching, and that either through explicit reflection or implicit learning, the quality of the teaching overall is raised by the engagement activities.

### **10.1.3 “Engagement helps us to access additional funding”**

The third narrative relating to engagement in Hope was a more functional one, in that engagement activities explicitly permitted the university to access additional financial resources, both widening participation but also regeneration funding. The narrative was one that the university could create additional benefits for particular groups by its activities, and that these activities in turn justified the receipt of extra resources. Engagement was therefore a positive thing because Hope was able to access resources it could not otherwise have, to stabilise a precarious position, and support its evolution towards being a small but scholarly collegiate university institution.

This was primarily an external narrative, deployed in various ways in dealing with external partners. There were naturally internal advocates of this position, and there was again a split between the hard and the soft variants, between those who argued that engagement was good where it allowed access to external resources, and those who argued that engagement was intrinsically good, and it brought in external resources which meant that it was not a problem for the university. One variant of the narrative was that engagement allowed Hope to sell its plans to a wider stakeholder coalition.

Those making the case externally were therefore large funding bodies who awarded specific funds to Hope in the expectation that Hope would deliver and be able to report back an audited set of outputs that demonstrated that particular targets had been delivered. This narrative was also told by those smaller bodies that had a relationship with Hope, and were trying to make sense of why Hope continued to work with them, and understand how the relationship might deliver into the future. Finally, this was the narrative that was primarily deployed by the community groups themselves in making sense of why Hope was engaging, albeit in far smaller measure than might perhaps be anticipated.

Hope had far less control over what counted as a valid outcome in these situations, because of the ongoing requirement to deliver outputs which met the needs of external funders through particular engagement activities. However, there were internal debates over the extent to which it was possible to balance between activities which were intrinsically good and those which delivered wider outcomes. The manifestation of these debates was the extent to which the activities delivering those external activities were integrated into the core of the university. Consequently, one-off funding for – for example – student employability through volunteering was placed in a stand-alone office, whilst the management of regeneration funding was managed through the university's finance office.

This narrative did have a tangible effect on changing the saliency of external stakeholders. A much wider array of actors within the university became aware of the importance of delivering particular outcomes involved external communities. These were in terms of delivering targets such as participation in courses and workshops, course starts and creating new courses to meet the needs of these groups. In these situations, the university had much less freedom to define what was valid, and faced a much stronger imperative to deliver some kind of community involvement. In situations where the university felt reasonably confident that those external interests were well aligned with the university, then those activities could be brought to its heart; in other situations, they were kept peripherally and excluded from any real influence over the governance and situations.

## **10.2 A MANY-FACETED PROCESS: HOLDING PROCESSES TOGETHER**

In chapter 6, the suggestion was of a model of pillars which inter-related with one another and thereby created a space where community engagement was possible. An alternative perspective on this is that these pillars represented a series of activities, and these activities in turn underscored a set of processes. Through supporting these processes, the university engaged with the community. In some of those activities, members of the university went out into the community, and engaged themselves directly. In other processes, the university directly supported community learning processes. What there was rather less of in this case study was there were rather

fewer opportunities for the community to come into the university and support learning and governance within the university, strengthening internal support for the idea of university-community engagement.

### **10.2.1 Sending individuals out into the community**

The first underlying process behind community engagement is that the university has been involved in encouraging people to go out into the community and to engage with them as part of their activities. The most obvious example of this is the curricular engagement, in which for the completion of the degree in creative and performing arts, there was the necessary completion of some kind of community engagement module. For those that have a strong interest in the area, there were the opportunities to undertake more modules, and to undertake those modules alongside their compulsory modules. Central to these activities was the idea of reflective learning, so the engagement activity was an opportunity to reflect on the application of theoretical and conceptual knowledge into a real world context, and also to create new knowledge and understanding through a reflection process.

Alongside this, there were a set of more voluntary engagement activities, in which principally students but also staff could use the presence of the university and its capacity to engage. The contribution of the university in the first instance in these cases was limited to helping the volunteers prepare themselves for engagement, through a series of training courses (“Learn to Lead”), offering contacts and mentoring. What however was also noteworthy was that the university built these activities into something more dynamic, with a degree of inter-relation, that helped to give a sense of progression through community engagement. So alongside the Service and Leadership Award, there was also both Global Hope as well as the opportunity for active members of Hope’s volunteering community to undertake short volunteering activities, including an *Every Child Matters* conference in Liverpool but also an Amnesty International conference in Switzerland.

But these two processes were not themselves entirely separate, and there was a degree of mutual reinforcement between the two, as we argue, in fact at a variety of levels. So there were short volunteering activities that took place within the curriculum volunteering side, including a two-week “nursery music education” course in Sweden, which were not compulsory but which extended the curricular engagement into the volunteering sense, in that it moved from being an engagement undertaken to achieve a credit into something with more altruistic and less immediate or tangible benefits.

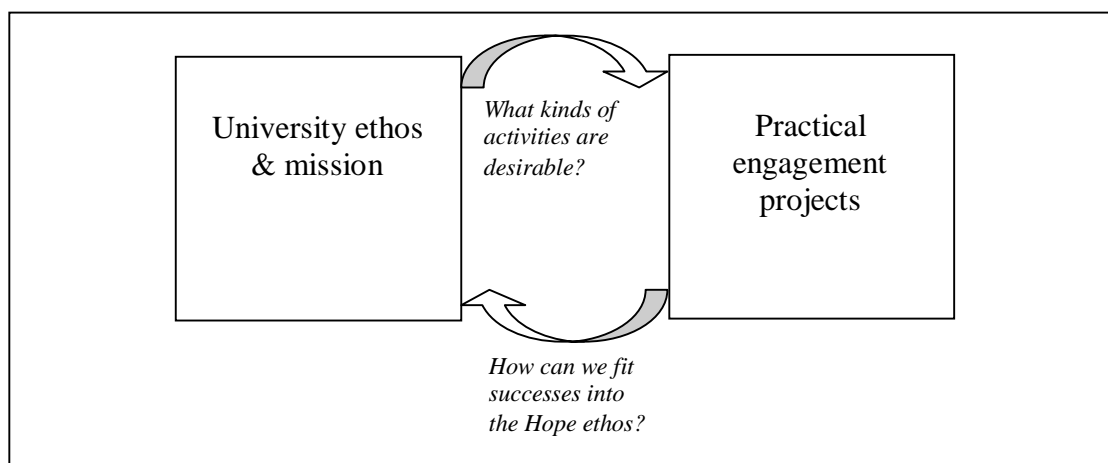
On the one hand, one can see the Service and Leadership Award building a sense of autonomy and legitimacy within the institution by adopting the trappings of quality assurance, as well as making claims that it improved participant employability. On the other hand, one can see that the curriculum engagement benefited from its increasingly altruistic nature (rather than functional) by taking place within a setting where altruistic volunteering was pursued and valued. The two activities built connections at a variety of dimensions:–

- the practical business of the university (courses and graduate employability),
- the ‘dignified’ business of the university (awarding degrees and the SLA),
- the narratives told by university stakeholders (Hope is a place to get a high quality degree and Hope is an institution with a strong Christian tradition)

- the mission and vision of the university (Hope is a small but excellent institution, and Hope is a place that embodies an ethical world perspective).

From this, we hypothesise that it was at a small scale, at the level of activities, where these different processes were brought together. In bringing them together, particular entrepreneurial individuals were able to create connections between them in practice, which in turn helped the higher level stories and ethical perspectives to be created. The net effect was to embed the idea of engagement within the university. Nevertheless, this was a very emergent perspective on engagement, that is to say that that it is shaped both at a high level by the individuals and institutions coming together, and at a micro-level by what can be mobilised and made to be successful. These two levels are not themselves inter-dependent, and the idea of engagement within the institution evolves along a pathway between what is desirable and what is possible, with what is possible in part defining what is desirable. In the figure below, we show how these two dimensions hang together to create an evolving trajectory of university-community engagement in practice.

Figure 13 The relationships between the desirable and the possible in university-community engagement



### 10.2.2 Supporting community learning processes

The second process within which the university were involved was within community learning processes involving excluded communities. The archetypal example of this was the case of *Collective Encounters*, where the university provided both physical and organisational spaces for a theatre group to operate. This theatre group encouraged collective learning between its participants, building bonding and bridging social capita. At the same time, there was almost no involvement of the community with university knowledge. The university was a passive rather than an active participant in the learning process, except insofar as the group was run by a former academic who still had links back to Hope's drama research activities, and was active within her own wider learning networks. This was also the case with the Weekend Arts College, where students from Hope and LIPA worked as tutors on the classes, but there was no (or at least somewhat limited) formal linkage between university staff and the LWAC participants.

What the university did provide was support for the professionals who were involved in running those community learning arenas. Set aside for one moment the fact that this is a restrictive version of community engagement, where outside individuals

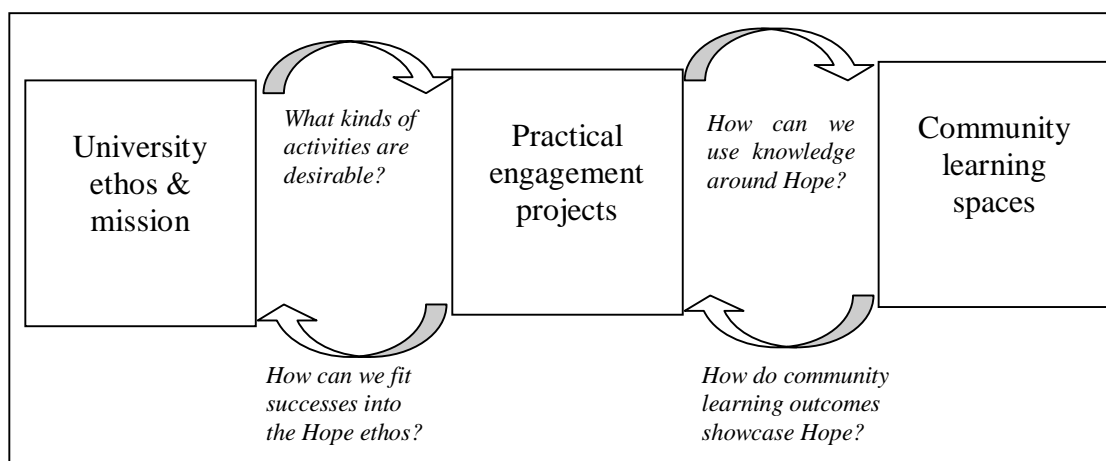
come and mobilise within a community. The university certainly helped those individuals mobilise particular activities which allowed these community learning activities to take place. Hope provided contributions in kind, management expertise and sympathetic land-lording which helped the professional organisers to build up these community learning spaces. They also became involved in the case of the *In Harmony* project in supporting a community-mobilised project which they helped to support and finalise.

The issue for the university here in the general sense is that the demands of community learning activities are not particularly salient for universities. We have seen cases elsewhere for example where universities have been funded to undertake community learning projects and adult education, but even when these activities have been funded, they have been peripheral within the universities and have taken a great deal of effort to retain (*cf.* WP2). Given that these activities are increasingly not funded, it is hard for community learning activities to satisfactorily stake a claim on university resources despite universities being learning institutions and nominally committed to lifelong learning.

The activities which seem to have been the most successful are the ones where these issues are addressed the most directly, that is to say that there is a practical kernel which the university deals with (*cf.* figure 11) and then at the same time, they create a set of benefits which are transmitted back to the university, and are seen as desirable. This can be conceptually fitted into the diagram outlined above in figure 13, and this is done in figure 14. However, there is an additional issue that relates to the dissociation of the community learning spaces from the university. The two parts of the learning community have their own dynamics: professional elements are required to fundraise and create the opportunities, and without that activity individual community learning and performance elements cannot take place.

Because community learning is not a salient stakeholder for universities, there needs to be something which establishes the longer-term value of short community learning activities to the university. This might be a long-term grant either to the university or the professional body, but those cannot be taken for granted. Within the Hope example, the most successful, in terms of the most tolerated, community learning spaces were the ones in which they established a longer-term mechanism to make the community salient to the university. Phase IV of Cornerstone was a good example of this, with the Cornerstone Centre creating a sense for a long period that community tenants would be important in the future, and hence current tenants (who would hopefully become future tenants) were likewise important. Conversely, those activities unable to establish the long-term promise and professional stability were unable to offer a stability to the community learning spaces.

Figure 14 Community learning and its salience to universities' emergent community engagement approaches



### 10.2.3 But without co-learning and co-governance facing the university

As well as community engagement being an emergent property, it was also always a negotiated property in the case of Hope. Despite a broad commitment to values including community development, nothing in those values was sufficient for the university to feel held to account by the community. The issue as set out in figure 14 above is that there is very limited involvement of the community in co-decision making and co-governance with the university. The model is of community learning loosely coupled around the university via intermediaries who may be either students or professional community workers with close links to the university.

The corollary of that has been that the community still lacks salient as far as university decision-making has been concerned. In the last 15 years, there were two complete shifts in Hope's approach to community engagement, and it appears that these changes took place more or less independently from the wishes of the community. In the first change, Hope went from being two small Church teaching colleges in a leafy suburb to a small university with campuses in two different parts of Liverpool, and its Everton campus indicating a wider commitment to widening participation. In the second change, Hope went from being a small former teacher training college to a collegiate-style university with a campus in Everton which was the focus for its performing arts and music activities.

The issue for Hope has primarily been that changes in the university strategy in response to urgent pressures have driven changes in the way that the university has dealt with excluded communities. These urgent pressures have largely been imposed by the central government. In no cases has Hope been pressured to engage with the communities or give them rights of co-determination in university decision-making. In the first change, Hope responded to the desire to attract widening participation funding elements as part of increasing overall student numbers: the needs of engaged communities were secondary to individuals from those communities. In the second change, Hope responded to increasing pressure of sustaining student numbers, and establishing a profile as an increasingly academic institution: the needs of engaged communities were secondary to perceptions of a much wider potential student base.

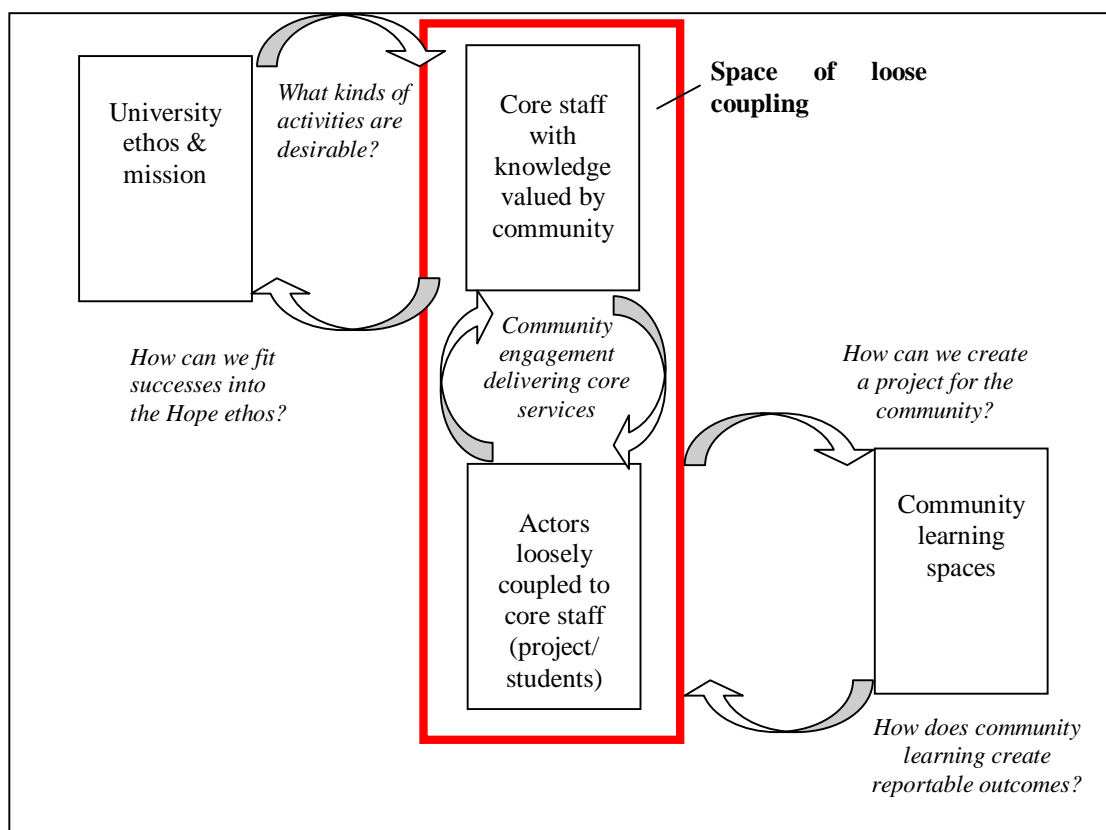
This raises the question of which kinds of stakeholders and instruments have most faithfully represented the needs of excluded communities to Hope's central decision-

making core? The obvious answer is where the excluded communities have become parts of solutions to the wider problems that Hope faced, with the university willing to negotiate to be able to derive the benefits and solutions. Of course, this is a problematic lesson to draw more generally, because there is a perception of excluded communities that they have a low capacity to articulate solutions, and hence to make a case for being effective partners for universities. The example of In Harmony suggests that this can certainly happen when communities are working with other kinds of institutions interested in regional development who can mobilise the kinds of large projects in which universities are interested.

This raises a fundamental problem around university-community engagement, in terms of a one-way balance in these processes. The argument seems to be that universities will engage with excluded communities if they see the benefit, but themselves feel no need to engage in a way that creates benefits for those communities, until there are clear potential benefits emerging. Alternatively, this might be one of scale and sequencing, that the smaller activities which staff and student undertake create potential benefits for the universities to take advantage of through larger and more systematic projects. But this also has the corollary that in such cases, there needs to be more of an emphasis on community benefits through learning communities and activities than a purely exploitative model might assume.

The way these various processes hang together is represented figuratively in figure 15 below. The diagram splits the relationship between the community and university, more clearly identifying the space of loose coupling by which very remote community activities are bound into the central needs of the university. At each stage, there is an exchange process between the groups, but because they are also in other exchanges with other elements in the university, there is a continual and dynamics exchange process by which the idea of university engagement and the particular micro-outcomes are redefined.

Figure 15 The space of loose coupling mediating between the community learning and university engagement projects



### 10.3 THE INTERPLAY OF ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

These narratives outlined above were important because they framed the way that particular concrete engagement activities were regarded both within and outside of the university. The interplay of these narratives provides an insight into the way that the university was trying to balance competing pressures and to deal with the tensions and problems in undertaking something such as community engagement which is at the same time both close to the university’s ethical position, but at the same time far removed from the teaching and scholarship activities which the university sought to prioritise. However, these narrative did not determine the concrete activities, rather they mediated the way those concrete activities were perceived, but at the same time, what those concrete activities themselves could deliver shaped the narratives and ultimately the position of engagement within Hope.

The idea in this section is that there are many pressures which make engagement very hard for universities to achieve in a concrete way, and in particular, to achieve more than altruistic and one-off activities. Clearly, at Hope, something more was achieved and in the period concerned could certainly be considered as an engaged university. Yet engagement was not an uncontested phenomenon in Hope during this period, and debates about engagement were shaped by and influenced wider institutional debates about strategy, direction of travel and institutional culture. This section seeks to understand this interplay process, and in particular, how small, one-off activities could change – or at least open up the possibility of change – in the institutional culture.



The argument in this section draws on the structure developed in 10.1, which noted that engagement activities were only very loosely tied to the decision-making centre at three degrees of remove. At each level, the meaning of engagement changed, and engagement built up where ideas could translate between scales, and create dominant narratives about engagement that resolved the tensions between these different narratives. Successful engagement activities translate well between levels and help to resolve the tensions between competing narratives which in turn allow them to become larger and more influential within the institution. We now move beyond Hope to reflect more generally how universities can in a more sustainable way commit themselves to serious community learning activities in excluded communities.

### **10.3.1 The university as a closed and resistant community**

The central issue in terms of the management of engagement is the recurrent fact that there is a gulf between how important engagement is in abstract and practical terms. Alternatively formulated, whilst engagement is a good thing for a university to be doing, there are always many reasons for engagement not to be undertaken. This manifests itself in a number of ways which systematically disempower excluded communities in the life of the university, and undermine the opportunities to create effective learning activities. These various symptoms come together to make the university closed and resistant to the idea of community engagement, which in turn make it difficult for successful ideas to make much headway upwards into university culture. But this is not purely at the senior levels of the university, the difficult is also – as WP2 noted – that there is much internal resistance, and even where senior managers can declare themselves in favour of engagement, the reality of becoming an engaged university is far more complex.

The first symptom is a tendency to take a very instrumental view of ideas of engagement, in particular constructing it as a complement or contradiction to ideas of excellence. This in turn makes it extremely easy to dismiss or sideline engagement, and to support extremely limited ideas of altruistic engagement, where the community should be grateful for whatever the university does. Although the university has obligations to society, it does not have enforceable obligations to a single community. This allows extremely slippery and rescaleable readings of engagement to be taken, and the idea to be redefined as required by the demands of the institution and the particular situation.

The second symptom is that engagement activities have a tendency to be regarded as being extremely peripheral within universities. In fact, Hope had taken at one point probably the most far-reaching commitment to engagement we encountered in the research project, in having a Deanery of Arts and Community Engagement. More normal is for universities to sideline engagement activities into an office that runs according to its own logic, and relies on not attracting too much negative attention from the university centre. In such circumstances, there were few opportunities to develop and translate engagement activities, with the focus being on delivering particular programme activities. Taken together with the first point, one manifestation of this can be seen in the widespread disappearance of non-accredited adult education programmes from universities, as peripheral community learning offices are forced to focus only on fee-bearing accredited course activities.

The third symptom of resistance by universities to the idea of community engagement comes through the evocation of ideal type universities in which engagement is

invisible. This appears to come from a desire to create a sense of certainty within universities in a time of great change, by making reference to the 'idea of a university', highlighting some combination of teaching and research as central to this idea. The effect is thereby to make engagement seem like an 'optional extra', something which can be addressed once the core activities have been stabilised, that universities can only cope with a limited number of changes at one time, and that community engagement is a change too far for the university and the idea of the university. Yet, given the dynamic nature of contemporary higher education systems, this suspension of the idea of engagement is tantamount to an avoidance of the idea in perpetuity.

What could be considered as developmental engagement activities are those that start to challenge and unpick those assumptions and symptoms, and to create an environment where a more positive attitude to engagement can flourish. We reiterate at this point that we are not supporters of the idea of university engagement, but clearly in the case of Hope, there were many opportunities to use engagement in a way in which both strengthened the community through collective learning activities, as well as helped to strengthen the university and its delivery of its own activities, teaching and research. Effective engagement therefore challenges these symptoms and starts to assemble coalitions and narratives able to demonstrate success and constructive possibilities, allowing for a greater acceptance of the idea of some engagement within the university.

### **10.3.2 Between competing narratives: alluring promise and constructive ambiguity**

One element of this issue is the fact that engagement is framed within different narratives. These narratives frame engagement in a way that potentially disempowers community actors, and which encourages the university to restrict participation in decision-making around the narratives. The influence of the narratives could be regarded as being more subtle than either stopping or discouraging particular actions, rather it restricts the uptake and spread of ideas that are necessarily peripheral at the beginning. From the Hope study, the kinds of activities which are best able to upscale, develop and sustain themselves are those which manage to avoid this negative framing in two distinct ways in parallel.

The first is that they manage to create a sense of alluring promise, that is to say that although the activities are necessarily small, they manage to harness themselves to a characteristic of the university that suggests that they could be important and influential in the university. The Service and Leadership Award for example was able to harness itself to the idea of a graduation ceremony, and therefore created at least temporarily the allure that it as an award within the degree could at some point be something that Hope became famous for as an institution. Likewise, the family of organisations around Cornerstone created the allure that the Cornerstone Centre could be a creative campus of arts and performance entrepreneurs helping to stimulate economic development in a poorer part of Liverpool.

The second is that effective projects are able to offer constructive ambiguity, at least in the sense that they are ideas that can bear different meanings. In several of the activities, we heard very different, positive rationales for those activities from very different actors with very different perspectives who nevertheless were able to agree that these activities were 'a good thing'. In so doing, the stakeholders were able to

agree for a continuation, iteration or development of the idea, despite having very different rationales and senses of why they were important. By being able to bear several different meanings at once, particular activities were able to avoid conflicts over their importance, and so were able to develop over time.

Alongside these two, the third critical element was dynamism, and we saw very few activities in community engagement which remained unchanged over time, at least using a retrospective methodology. The SLA was new, Hope One World evolved into Global Hope, the Deanery of Arts and Community became Arts and Humanities, Community Music blended into In Harmony and a number of ESF programmes withered away as funding dried up. This was similar to the sense of allure, that they had a promising future, but in that they also had engaging and interesting pasts, so in sum, the good activities were those where it was clear why they fitted with Hope, what they would deliver for Hope, and what capacity they brought to Hope.

### **10.3.3 Between university layers: interdependencies where it matters in 'the university super-tanker'**

Finally, we turn to reflect on how particular activities translate into the 'idea' of the engaged university, having already noted that the concept has tended to be framed in ways that connive at its failure. Yet, this also highlights that a university that supports effective community engagement and learning does not necessarily have to be one where engagement is a central part of its rationale. Defining oneself as an engaged university means little if that definition or mission does not create inter-dependencies and responsibilities to some particular external communities that give them the opportunity to influence university decision making. It is this opportunity for influence which is important, and realistically, these opportunities are very limited without a wholesale external redefinition of the contemporary roles and purposes of higher education in the UK.

What matters is that there is the opportunity for the community learning space to be anchored into the university, and critically, for community learning spaces to benefit from a stability provided by the university. This allows them to focus on the core learning activities and not force them to either pursue or confuse themselves with other activities such as dealing with project management. For the university to be willing to be sympathetic to these activities and for them to be anchored into the institution, there needs to be loose coupling mechanisms, things that provide the stability for the community learning processes, without the universities themselves having to take financial responsibility for them. This in the case of Hope has been provided by students – who have made a lot of their expertise for community groups and activities, as well as staff who have wanted to progress into more community activities with less direct university management perspective.

The question for the university in terms of interests is then in what cases would you be prepared to tolerate having these loose coupling mechanisms around, and one answer would be where they arise out of core teaching and research processes. So in Hope the answer was that volunteering and curricular engagement provided a unique enrichment experience that added to the value of teaching activities, and engagement also provided a means to improve the intensity of scholarly activity, through practical reflection as well as community based research. Finally, these situations were accepted and even promoted by senior managers as they sought to create a situation where Hope could survive, prosper and grow in an increasingly competitive market

for higher education, and increasingly one in which it had relatively few students in growth areas (science, technology, engineering, mathematics).

So the heuristic for effective engagement activities is not that they are themselves so overwhelmingly convincing that university senior managers look at them and decide that that will be the future of the university. Rather, there is a more stepwise process by which engagement became bound up into the interests of the university, and in the physical artefacts of the university such as through its physical location in Everton and desire to extend and develop the campus through what was ultimately become the Cornerstone Centre. What is important for engagement is the opportunity for people to make connections between these difficult levels, as well as at the most basic micro-level, seed-corn funding, encouragement and event support for community engagement activities exploring how they can augment and contribute to the overall mission.

The idea would not be that controversial if it were articulated through the idea of sophisticated end users in business engagement; the idea of open innovation is premised on university research laboratories employing academics alongside research associates and start-up entrepreneurs sharing equipment and ideas, and those start-ups growing into companies which employ people completely outside the university. Likewise, with unsophisticated companies, many universities have technology centres which work on a similar idea, employing technology associates who have affiliations and contacts with applied researchers in the university, and also helping to exploit technologies in businesses whose own innovation processes may be less than highly sophisticated. What these activities of course have in their favour is the fact that they are able to immediately demonstrate a financial reward for the participating university, even if that reward is often far less, and far less significant than initially estimated.

The message appears to be that the university can indeed act as an anchor for learning processes for excluded communities which do improve their social capital and help them build both internal and external linkages. But that does not necessitate that the university develop towards being an excluded community, rather that there is institutional space within which engagement can be mobilised, entrepreneurs able develop activities, and demonstrate benefits between the various elements involved. The key issue is commitment in terms of a commitment to particular projects rather than a rather abstract ideal or ethos of engagement, and being able to make clear why that commitment is founded on a set of mutual benefits and potentials at all the different stakeholder communities within and outside of the university.

## 11 OTHER PROJECT OUTPUTS

### 11.1 RESEARCH PAPERS

Benneworth, P. S., Charles, D. R. & Madnipour, A. (2010) “Universities as agents of urban change in the global knowledge economy” *European Planning Studies* (forthcoming).

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### 11.2 CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

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