PERARES Deliverable Report D7.2

Embedding Public Engagement in the Curriculum

Discussion papers from the PERARES project aimed at Higher Education Policies in the UK, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales

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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

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INTRODUCTION

The four policy discussion papers contained in this deliverable draw on key learning from workpackage 7 in the Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society (PERARES) project.

The PERARES project aims to strengthen the interaction between researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens in Europe. The project is made up of twenty-six partners from 17 countries. Partners include Science Shops, social organisations and higher education institutions (HEIs). The project actively involves researchers and CSOs, and explores how both CSOs and the general public can be supported to articulate research questions which can then be put on the research agendas of the partnering research bodies such as HEIs and Science Shops.

Science Shops are small organisations that carry out research, both theoretical and applied, in a wide range of disciplines – usually free of charge, on behalf of and with citizens and local civil society. They can operate under other names such as Community Knowledge Exchange. The fact that Science Shops respond to civil society's need for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. Science Shops are often, but not always, linked to universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum.

Work Package 7 of the PERARES project has sought to strengthen the position of Science Shops and similar initiatives in Higher Education policy, by encouraging them to think from the start about how to embed this work within their HEI, in particular using policy and curriculum development to ensure longer term security of such initiatives.

This deliverable consists of four brief policy papers designed for use in the respective contexts of the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales, reflecting the interests of the initial partners in the workpackage. They draw both on findings from PERARES and also on existing literature to build a policy case for public engagement through the curriculum and for brokering structures to support this work in a way that enables full participation by CSOs. The core information in each report is similar, although in addition, each paper draws on the policy context of the specific region.

We hope these discussion papers will be of use to policymakers who are considering public engagement through the curriculum and to new and emerging Science Shops who are trying to develop policy to support their work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Embedding Public Engagement in the Curriculum in the UK

A discussion paper from the PERARES project[1]

Public Engagement with Research is a key driver in United Kingdom (UK) higher education policy. This discussion paper argues that earlier stage exposure to public engagement with research through the curriculum can offer a key route in encouraging culture change within university research and in preparing students adequately for a knowledge society. It is based on information gathered as part of the EC funded Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society project as well as on existing literature.

This paper contends that whilst there are many examples of good practice in public engagement through the curriculum in UK universities, in many cases engagement through the curriculum happens in a fragmented way, relying on the goodwill of individual academics and is not strategically embedded.[2] The full benefits are not therefore realised at an institutional or policy level. Whilst there are examples in the UK and beyond where public engagement through the curriculum is strategically embedded within universities via intermediary mechanisms (see appendix 1), this is not commonplace.

This paper suggests that *Community Knowledge Exchanges* or *Science Shops* should be explored further in UK universities as a mechanism for creating a cohesive approach to public engagement through the curriculum. Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges are small organisations that enable students to carry out social and scientific research in a wide range of disciplines on behalf of citizens and local civil society organisations (CSOs). [3] This approach focuses on research with and for society rather than research on society. The fact that Science Shops **respond** to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. In this context we are discussing Community Knowledge Exchanges or Science Shops based in universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum.

Community Knowledge Exchanges and Science Shops:
- respond to research needs as expressed by civil society
- support research which involves a process of negotiation between partners to develop a question which meets the learning needs of the students and the research needs of CSOs
- produce agreed outcomes which should contribute to student learning and civil society knowledge
- respond to many of the challenges in society today, both scientific and social, encompassing research in areas as diverse as health, history, environment, nutrition, policy and planning.

These types of mechanisms are important for universities, academic staff, students and CSOs. They help to ensure mutual benefit for all parties in the research process. They allow universities to enhance their reputations by offering a resource to communities and can help to bring community knowledge into university research. They offer students a chance to build stronger skills in research and partnership working, enhancing their future employability and training them up to understand engaged research. They give Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) a one-stop-shop within universities and offer an opportunity to participate in the shaping of university research agendas, therefore increasing the evidence base to allow CSOs to engage with and influence public policy debates more effectively.

The danger is that in delivering on so many different policy priorities, they can fall between the cracks in terms of policy development.[4] This paper sets out the need for policy, practice and research to support the development of such intermediary mechanisms in UK universities.

WHY DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM MATTER?

Value to universities:

> *"(Universities) must increase their attractiveness; actively promote international mobility of students and staff; provide world-class innovative curricula as well as excellence in teaching and research opportunities; and enter into cooperation and strategic partnerships with other HEIs, government institutions, the private sector and civil society around the world.[5]*
>
> *European Commission 'European Higher Education in the World' July 2013*

Engaged Researchers: Public engagement through the curriculum helps undergraduate and taught postgraduate students understand the concept of engaged research and develop the skills and knowledge to carry it out.[6] This gives them a better appreciation of the potential impact, scope and public use of their work which may help them frame future research proposals. This learning may help develop a culture of public engagement within universities because it provides the necessary skill set for the next generation of researchers.

Reputation: Public engagement through the curriculum can enhance the contribution a university makes to CSOs and improve the reputation of a university within the local community and beyond.[7] It can also help to bring locally relevant research into devolved and national parliaments, creating a positive perceptual impact on the political establishment, which can help universities build relationships with key decision makers. Demonstrating the benefits of the university to CSOs as well as private and public sector organisations is of particular value in times of economic austerity in terms of justifying the use of public funds to support higher education. This work 'actively builds bridges' between the community and the university.[8]

Increasing Participation: Where engagement through the curriculum is embedded as a compulsory activity in courses of study, it offers a unique learning experience to students who may otherwise have limited opportunities and personal networks for engaged learning. Ensuring equality of access to those opportunities for all students and sourcing sufficient quality opportunities can create a challenge for HEIs.[9] Where engaged learning is offered to students, it helps them to understand the contribution their learning can make to CSOs and society.[10]

Value to Researchers and Academic Supervisors

Understanding CSO Research Agendas: Public engagement through the curriculum can help academics build links with CSOs via their supervision of student research. This can offer an insight into CSO research needs for academics whilst they are fulfilling their teaching obligations and may feed through into their own research.

Providing Research Projects for Students: Students sometimes struggle with identifying topics suitable for research at either taught masters or undergraduate levels. Working with communities can not only provide a range of suitable ideas but can also inspire and enthuse students. It can provide new perspectives and additional critical challenge which can act to drive up standards. Making work public is also a way of raising the quality of the work and acknowledging effort put into it.[11]

Linking to Curriculum Demands: The Dublin descriptors provide a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral level. At all these three levels, the ability to communicate to specialist and non-specialist is a prerequisite for achieving a degree.[12] Collaborative research projects can offer students real, demand driven and participatory cases to work on which can have all the benefits of work placement type experiences with much less time commitment from the academic. This can add value to the curricula of HEIs

Value to Students:

> ***"The aim is to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full range of purposes such as preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society" Leuven Communique, 2009***

Student Skills: Undertaking independent research helps students to develop critical thinking skills and personal and professional skills which are important assets in the job market. [13]   According to the European Commission, students need to comprehend how to apply their knowledge and understanding, make judgements and interpret data, communicate conclusions to different types of audience and develop skills needed to conduct further study in an autonomous way.[14] This is often framed as developing graduate attributes and contributing to graduate employability.[15] The priority of higher education therefore becomes teaching students how to continue to acquire new knowledge and, specifically, to *apply this knowledge in a societal context*. It is therefore extremely important to offer this type of experience through the curriculum[16] if students are to acquire the kinds of knowledge, skills and experiences to equip them to play a role in helping to tackle the European Commission's grand societal challenges which are at the heart of Horizon 2020. [17]

Valuing Knowledge: Student engagement with CSOs adds another dimension to the university experience, in addition to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of an academic subject. [18] This work helps students understand that there are many kinds of knowledge and expertise, and that there are diverse and plural ways to address issues within academic research and in society. [19]   It may also help graduates identify future career options.

Motivation and Access: The knowledge that the results will be made publicly available can have a galvanising effect on students and encourage them to produce higher quality work.[20]

Value to CSOs and Society

Meeting Research Needs: Public engagement through the curriculum offers CSOs an opportunity to put their research needs on student research agendas. This partnership approach means that completed research is much more likely to be of use to CSOs and is in contrast to the 'hit and run' model that some have experienced with university research. It also offers CSOs a resource they may not otherwise have, in terms of time, research skills and/or funding.[21]

Improving Society: If society is to move on from the current economic crises, it needs graduates who are skilled at partnership working, drawing on different kinds of knowledge from multiple sources, thinking flexibly and creatively and applying knowledge and skills. This outcome of the Science Shop process benefits not only students themselves, but also CSOs. By working with students on research issues, they are informing future professionals about their issues from a grassroots perspective.[22]

Supporting an Evidence Base: Many CSOs lack the capacity to gather evidence to influence policy debates.[23] Science Shops can give CSOs access to information specific to their region or context and this can enhance the building of evidence based policy, particularly within the devolved nations. Through Science Shops, CSOs can also influence the formulation of research agendas.[24] This can also enhance the capacity of CSOs to scrutinise and critically challenge devolved governments.

DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM EXIST IN THE UK?

UK Policy: There is a policy context for public engagement through the curriculum in the UK**.** Over the last seven years, successive United Kingdom (UK) governments have developed policies to encourage universities to engage with the public, particularly through public engagement in research.[25] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)[26] has been researching developments in this field as a way of expanding public engagement within universities. There is also a policy focus on the student experience, both on enhancing learning and on improving employability.[27] The Higher Education Academy has also supported research on engaged learning for students, both independently[28] and jointly with NCCPE.[29] and the Quality Assurance Agency has developed assessment frameworks flexible enough to assess engaged learning. Research Councils are developing models of postgraduate training to help early stage researchers to consider how to incorporate planning pathways to research impact, including considering economic, social, environmental, cultural or policy impacts.   However there is still a lack of strategic embedding of public engagement through the curriculum in UK universities.

UK Community Knowledge Exchanges: There are a number of Science Shops and Community Knowledge exchanges in the UK already, some of which are explored in Appendix 1.   There are also many examples of individual academics running courses where students are carrying out differing forms of public engagement through the curriculum. However these types of initiative are piecemeal and most commonly take place at the level of individual courses, or in some cases at the level of individual academic departments.

WHY IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM NOT MORE COMMON?

Competing Demands: Staff in universities face multiple challenges, ranging from attracting research funding, recruiting and retaining students, widening participation, providing high-quality education for students, developing income-generating initiatives and responding to research opportunities with business and public sector organisations. Whilst there are supportive academics and institutions, it can be difficult for leaders and academics to create and nurture opportunities for public engagement through the curriculum given the above list of imperatives. There is also no systemic provision of support or continuing professional development in many universities.[30]

Time: Academics struggle to find time to work with CSOs to develop research projects and where they do, they do not have the resources required to share this across other relevant disciplines.   This work can be time intensive and requires initial set up as well as ongoing monitoring.[31]

Recognition: At present, many academics feel they are not sufficiently recognised for their work supporting community engaged learning. Engaged learning can require extra time in terms of academic supervision and building extra skills.[32] This is often not factored into workload modelling which can act as a disincentive for busy academics.[33]   In addition, many institutions do not value or reward community engagement through the curriculum in staff promotions criteria or student assessment criteria, nor do they have mechanisms in place to support it. [34]

Lack of Embedding: Experience in this field suggests that engaged courses often rely on the commitment of a relatively small number of academic staff. This can lead to courses ceasing to exist when key staff members move on or retire. For engagement to become embedded in the curriculum, it needs to move beyond one or two committed members of staff and become core within academic programmes.

Assessing Learning: It can be challenging to assess engaged learning in a way that balances research outcomes for communities and learning outcomes for students. Academics can feel concerned about ensuring that there is comparability between engaged and non-engaged research. There can also be a concern about managing the expectations of community partners. The NCCPE has developed useful resources to support the student assessment element of this work,[35] however the issue of balance still needs further consideration.

Challenges for CSOs: It can also be challenging for CSOs to find a way in to the university, negotiate disciplinary boundaries and identify the academic courses or course leaders who can help with their research needs. This takes time and many CSOs are not able to make the time commitment to develop relationships with a range of academics. [36] This is a question which merits further research.

WHY SHOULD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM BECOME A POLICY FOCUS?

Embedding engaged learning opportunities which combine the pursuit of excellence in education with high-quality public engagement will take time, energy and commitment from leaders and academics in universities and policymakers in the field of higher education. Good practice should be developed in this area or we risk university students not engaging with issues beyond the boundaries of the university, and failing to acquire the broad range of skills, knowledge and experience needed for our knowledge economy and knowledge society to flourish. We also lose the opportunity to expose future researchers to research impact and engagement at an early stage. The practice of co-creating learning opportunities for students in response to community need takes specialist skills and knowledge. Community knowledge exchanges, science shops and intermediary staff in these organisations can offer effective ways of sharing good practice between disciplines and departments, and supporting engaged learning. The opportunity exists to envision a truly engaged university which offers opportunities to undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to take a strategic and systematic partnership approach to research issues. Enacting pubic engagement through the curriculum as a policy priority will encourage all groups to move forward towards the vision of an engaged university.

Meaningful Partnerships: The use of intermediary mechanisms such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges offers CSOs an opportunity to form meaningful partnerships with universities in an accessible and time-efficient way. There is increasing interest from the European Commission, from research funders and other stakeholders in how research projects can be co-created between academic researchers and CSOs within universities. For example, the Science Shops can act as a 'front door' for CSOs and can work with them to find the right student(s) to meet their needs.

Supporting the Creation of Evidence Based Policy: Science Shops can help CSOs develop their research capacity and can therefore contribute at a grassroots level to enhancing their ability to support the creation of evidence based policy.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DISCUSSION POINTS?

Synergy: How best to harmonise and synergise the different policy agendas around public engagement, curriculum development and responding to community need if we are to create truly engaged universities.

Recognition: How universities and academics can be incentivised to support public engagement through the curriculum.

Support: How to encourage more UK universities to set up support mechanisms for public engagement through the curriculum such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges.

Research: What types of research are needed to investigate the benefits and challenges for universities, students and CSOs working on community research issues.

WHAT NEXT? RECOMMENDATIONS

The PERARES consortium, particularly the UK members, should raise awareness of and promote the value of public engagement through the curriculum and the value of Science Shops and community knowledge exchanges within the UK. This may involve:

- Working with other partners across the UK to develop awareness
- Raising the profile of Community Knowledge Exchange principles with HE policymakers
- Identifying opportunities to present papers and publish about the work
- Working with CSOs to examine their experiences

The NCCPE should bring together key agencies and stakeholders to consider a more strategic approach to public engagement through the curriculum. Key agencies and policymakers might include the Higher Education Academy, Quality Assurance Agency, the Higher Education Funding Councils, Staff and Education Development Association, VITAE, the Research Councils and relevant political representatives. Stakeholders include researchers, students, practitioners (both academic and academic related) and CSOs working in this field. Particular issues to address may include:

- Scoping out areas of common interest
- Identifying future research areas
- Methods for incentivising public engagement through the curriculum
- Creation of a forum to share best practice
- Appointing a champion for this field

The Higher Education Funding Councils should consider how Public Engagement through the Curriculum can link to the Research Excellence Framework as a way of improving the skills of researchers in terms of PER. This should include:

- Monitoring submissions under the Environment element of REF 2014 to examine where and how universities refer to public engaged through the curriculum and/or links between engaged research and teaching
- Consider specific mention of public engagement through the curriculum within the guidelines on Environment for REF 2020

Appendix 1: Examples of Good Practice in Public Engagement through the Curriculum

These are just a few examples of a much wider community of practice.

The University of Cambridge's Community Knowledge Exchange worked with a domestic violence charity to develop projects suitable for a range of students. An undergraduate psychology student interviewed service users in order to investigate the impact of a particular element of the charity's service provision on their lives. Staff at the organisation helped students to frame the wording of questions appropriately for interviews. One student in particular proceeded to Masters and PhD study, developing research into legal and political aspects relating to services for people in need of domestic violence services, who have insecure immigration status. The domestic violence organisation has used the research in reports for funders and has shared findings with organisations working on similar issues.
http://www.cam.ac.uk/public-engagement/voluntary-sector/community-knowledge-exchange

The Community University Partnership Project at the University of Brighton has developed a range of ways in which engagement can be incorporated into existing programmes, either through a standalone module, through incorporating materials in existing modules or through dissertation work. Postgraduate students have, for example, produced research reports for a homeless project examining the effectiveness of an adult literacy scheme. The wide-ranging CUPP project experience has been reported extensively including through a co-produced and co-authored book in 2007 on community-university partnerships in practice.
http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/community-knowledge-exchange.html

The Science Shop in Northern Ireland is a partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. An organisation who works with people with dementia asked undergraduate Social Policy students to produce a paper outlining the policy context for dementia care in Northern Ireland. Their report was used by the organisation in a successful funding bid to provide services for people with dementia in the local area.   An independent evaluation carried out on behalf of their funder, the Department for Employment and Learning NI found that all of the voluntary and community organisations who had worked with The Science Shop would use the service again and would recommend it to other organisations.
 http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/

Dublin Institute of Technology's Students Learning With Communities programme has an elective community based research module on the MA in Public Relations. It offers students a conceptual understanding of community based research, encourages them to consider issues of power and inequality in terms of reflection, but students are also expected to work collaboratively with community partners to co-create knowledge. Last year, students worked with three community partners to conduct primary research into the challenges of, and opportunities for, reaching particular target groups through their public relations and communications.
http://www.dit.ie/ace/slwc/

[1] The Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society Project aims to strengthen public engagement in research (PER) by involving researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the formulation of research agendas and the research process. or further information on the PERARES project see http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/perares

[2] McEwen l and Mason O'Connor, K (2013) *Building Staff/Faculty Capacity for University-Public/Community Engagement*. UWE/University of Gloucester.

[3] According to the World Bank, "Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations".
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html Accessed 8/10/13

[4] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., with Treasure, K. (2011) *Embedding Community and Public Engagement Within Regional and National Policy and Higher Education Institutions.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[5] European Commission (2013) Communication from the Commisison to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions' http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com499_en.pdf Accessed 8/10/13

[6] Steinhaus, N (2013) *Experiences and attitudes of Research Funding Organisations towards public engagement with research with and for civil society and its organisations.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[7] Department for Employment and Learning NI and Invest NI (2010) *Evaluation of the Second Round of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Innovation Fund*. http://www.delni.gov.uk/review_of_ni_higher_education_innovation_fund_2_-_final_report.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[8] Robinson, F., Zass-Ogilvie, I., Hudson,R. (2012) *How Can Universities Support Disadvantaged Communities?* John Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/universities-support-disadvantaged-communities p.33 Accessed 10/12/13

[9] NCCPE and HEA (2012) *Report on Teaching and Learning Summit* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/HEA-Employability-Summit-May-2012-Report.pdf Accessed 28 July 2013

[10] O'Rourke, B., (2012) 'Building Community Engagement into the Curriculum' Case Study 5 in McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., *Developing Community Engagement.* SEDA.

[11] Healy, M., Lannin, L., Stibbe, A. and Derounian, J. (2013) *Developing and Enhancing Undergraduate Final Year Projects and Dissertations* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/projects/NTFS_Project_Gloucestershire_2010_final.pdf Accessed 26/7/13 p.74

[12] For more detail on Dublin Descriptors see appendix Joint Quality Initiative Reports Complete Dublin Descriptors 18 October 2004 1999-2003.doc accessed 1/12/13

[13] Healey et al (2013) op cit

[14] These qualities are identified by the European Commission as part of the Bologna Process, known as the Dublin Descriptors. See http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf for more details

[15] Mason O'Connor, K.,, McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011) *Literature Review: Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An Example of University-Public Engagement*. https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 1/8/2013 P.27

[16] Mulder, H., (2004) *Curriculum Development through Science Shops* Paper presented at ICEEM2, Iasi, Romania, Sep 2004 Reprinted (2004) in Environmental Management and Engineering Journal 3 (3), pp. 549-560

[17] European Commission *Tackling Societal Challenges* http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=better-society Accessed 20/11/13

[18] Millican, J. and Bourner, T. (Guest editors) (2011) *Special Issue: Student learning from community engagement*, Education + Training, Volume 53 issue 2/3

[19] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., (2012) 'The Science Shop at Queen's University Belfast: Embedding Community Engagement within the Curriculum' pp27-31 in Mason O'Connor, K and McEwen, L (Eds) *Developing Community Engagement*. SEDA Special 32

[20] Eppink, H., and Wals, A., (2011) *Science Shop Activities Embedded into Curricula of Higher Education*. Milestone 7.3, unpublished report from the PERARES project P7

[21] Stoecker, R. and Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. (2009) *The Unheard Voices* Temple University Press, US

[22] Ibid

[23] Gall, E., Millot, G. and Neubauer, C., (2009) *Participation of Civil Society Organisations in Research* http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/STACS_Final_Report-Partic.research.pdf Accessed 24/5/13 p.87

[24] ibid p.78

[25] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2009) *The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Higher-Ambitions.pdf Accessed 24/5/12

[26] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement [NCCPE] was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the Research Councils UK, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public.

[27] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) *Students at the Heart of the System* https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32409/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf Accessed 10/12/13

[28] http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/LEAPSE_Report_FINAL.pdf

[29] Mason O'Connor, K., McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011*) Literature Review, Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An example of university-public engagement*' https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[30] McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., (2013) op cit

[31] Healey and op cit p49

[32] O'Rourke, B., (2012) op cit

[33] Mason O'Connor et al (2011) op cit p34

[34] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

[35] See http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how-we-help/our-publications/framework-assessing-learning

[36] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

Embedding Civic Engagement in the Curriculum in Ireland

A discussion paper from the PERARES project[1]

Engagement with wider society is a key driver in Irish Higher Education Policy.[2] This discussion paper argues that linking engagement with teaching through student research projects with Community Service Organisations (CSOs)[3] can offer a key route in preparing students adequately for a knowledge society. It is based on information gathered as part of the EC funded Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society project as well as on existing literature.

This paper contends that whilst there are many examples of good practice in engagement through the curriculum in universities, in many cases it happens in a fragmented way, relying on the goodwill of individual academics and is often not strategically embedded.[4] The full benefits are not therefore realised at an institutional or policy level. Whilst there are examples in Ireland and beyond where public engagement through the curriculum is strategically embedded within universities via intermediary mechanisms (see appendix 1), this is not commonplace.

This paper suggests that *Community Knowledge Exchanges* or *Science Shops* should be explored further in Irish universities as a mechanism for creating a cohesive approach to public engagement through the curriculum.   Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges are small organisations that enable students to carry out social and scientific research in a wide range of disciplines on behalf of citizens and local civil society organisations (CSOs).[5] This approach focuses on research with and for society rather than research on society. The fact that Science Shops **respond** to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. In this context we are discussing Community Knowledge Exchanges or Science Shops based in universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum.

Community Knowledge Exchanges and Science Shops:
- respond to research needs as expressed by civil society
- support research which involves a process of negotiation between partners to develop a question which meets the learning needs of the students and the research needs of CSOs
- produce agreed outcomes which should contribute to student learning and civil society knowledge
- respond to many of the challenges in society today, both scientific and social, encompassing research in areas as diverse as health, history, environment, nutrition, policy and planning.

These types of mechanisms are important for universities, academic staff, students and CSOs. They help to ensure mutual benefit for all parties in the research process. They allow universities to enhance their reputations by offering a resource to communities and can help to bring community knowledge into university research. They offer students a chance to build stronger skills in research and partnership working, enhancing their future employability and training them up to understand engaged research. They give Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) a one-stop-shop within universities and offer an opportunity to participate in the shaping of university research agendas, therefore increasing the evidence base to allow CSOs to engage with and influence public policy debates more effectively.

The danger is that in delivering on so many different policy priorities, they can fall between the cracks in terms of policy development.[6] This paper sets out the need for policy, practice and research to support the development of such intermediary mechanisms in Irish universities.

> "*Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve*"
>
> *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*

Ireland's recent economic difficulties have led to a renewed focus on research as the engine of innovation and the cornerstone of a knowledge economy. The recent *Research Prioritisation Report* places an emphasis on research which delivers direct benefits both to the economy and to society.[7] The 2011 *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* offers a blueprint for the way ahead for higher education in Ireland, in terms of both research and teaching and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is currently developing an *Enhancing Engagement* strategy to address this. This discussion paper contends that earlier stage intervention through the curriculum is also necessary both to enable culture change within HEI research but also to prepare students adequately for a knowledge economy. It offers examples of how civic engagement in the curriculum is currently happening, both in Ireland and elsewhere.

WHY DOES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM MATTER?

Value to HEIs:

> "*(Universities) must increase their attractiveness; actively promote international mobility of students and staff; provide world-class innovative curricula as well as excellence in teaching and research opportunities; and enter into cooperation and strategic partnerships with other HEIs, government institutions, the private sector and civil society around the world*".[8]
>
> *European Commission 'European Higher Education in the World' July 2013*

Engaged Researchers: Public engagement through the curriculum helps undergraduate and taught postgraduate students understand the concept of engaged research and develop the skills and knowledge to carry it out.[9] According to the Research Prioritisation Report, there is an interest in building capacity amongst Irish researchers which will assist them in bidding for international research funding, particularly through Horizon 2020, however there is limited experience of working with CSOs on research issues in Ireland.[10] Activities which embed an understanding of engaged research help to prepare potential researchers at an early stage because they provide the necessary skill set for the next generation of researchers.

Reputation: Civic engagement through the curriculum can help enhance the reputation of a HEI within the local community and beyond.[11] It can also help to bring locally relevant research into devolved and national parliaments, creating a positive perceptual impact on the political establishment, which can help universities build relationships with key decision makers. Demonstrating the benefits of the HEI to local communities is of

particular value in times of economic austerity in terms of justifying the use of public funds to support higher education. This work 'actively builds bridges' between the community and the university.[12]

Increasing Participation: Where engagement through the curriculum is embedded as a compulsory activity in courses of study, it offers a unique learning experience to students who may otherwise have limited opportunities and personal networks for engaged learning. Ensuring equality of access to those opportunities for all students and sourcing sufficient quality opportunities can create a challenge for HEIs.[13] Where engaged learning is offered to students, it helps them to understand the contribution their learning can make to CSOs and society.[14]

Value to Researchers and Academic Supervisors

Understanding CSO Research Agendas: Public engagement through the curriculum can help academics build links with CSOs via their supervision of student research. This can offer an insight into CSO research needs for academics whilst they are fulfilling their teaching obligations and may feed through into their own research.

Providing Research Projects for Students: Students sometimes struggle with identifying topics suitable for research at either taught masters or undergraduate levels. Working with communities can not only provide a range of suitable ideas but can also inspire and enthuse students. It can provide new perspectives and additional critical challenge which can act to drive up standards. Making work public is also a way of raising the quality of the work and acknowledging effort put into it.[15]

Linking to Curriculum Demands: The Dublin descriptors provide a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral level. At all these three levels, the ability to communicate to specialist and non-specialist is a prerequisite for achieving a degree.[16] Collaborative research projects can offer students real, demand driven and participatory cases to work on which can have all the benefits of work placement type experiences with much less time commitment from the academic. This can add value to the curricula of HEIs

Value to Students:

> *"The aim is to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full range of purposes such as preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society" Leuven Communique, 2009*

Student Skills: Undertaking independent research helps students to develop critical thinking skills and personal and professional skills which are important assets in the job market. [17] According to the European Commission, students need to comprehend how to apply their knowledge and understanding, make judgements and interpret data, communicate conclusions to different types of audience and develop skills needed to conduct further study in an autonomous way.[18] This is often framed as developing graduate attributes and contributing to graduate employability.[19] The priority of higher education therefore becomes teaching students how to continue to acquire new knowledge and, specifically, to *apply this knowledge in a societal context*. It is therefore extremely important to offer this type of experience through the curriculum[20] if students are to acquire the kinds of knowledge, skills and experiences to equip them to play a role in helping to tackle the European Commission's grand societal challenges which are at the heart of Horizon 2020. [21]

Valuing Knowledge: Student engagement with CSOs adds another dimension to the university experience, in addition to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of an academic subject. [22] This work helps students understand that there are many kinds of knowledge and expertise, and that there are diverse and plural ways to address issues within academic research and in society. [23] It may also help graduates identify future career options.

Motivation and Access: The knowledge that the results will be made publicly available can have a galvanising effect on students and encourage them to produce higher quality work.[24]

Value to CSOs and Society

Meeting Research Needs: Public engagement through the curriculum offers CSOs an opportunity to put their research needs on student research agendas. This partnership approach means that completed research is much more likely to be of use to CSOs and is in contrast to the 'hit and run' model that some have experienced with university research. It also offers CSOs a resource they may not otherwise have, in terms of time, research skills and/or funding.[25]

Improving Society: If society is to move on from the current economic crises, it needs graduates who are skilled at partnership working, drawing on different kinds of knowledge from multiple sources, thinking flexibly and creatively and applying knowledge and skills. This outcome of the Science Shop process benefits not only students themselves, but also CSOs. By working with students on research issues, they are informing future professionals about their issues from a grassroots perspective.[26]

Supporting an Evidence Base: Many CSOs lack the capacity to gather evidence to influence policy debates.[27] Science Shops can give CSOs access to information specific to their region or context and this can enhance the building of evidence based policy, particularly within the devolved nations. Through Science Shops, CSOs can also influence the formulation of research agendas.[28] This can also enhance the capacity of CSOs to scrutinise and critically challenge devolved governments.

DOES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM EXIST IN IRELAND?

> ***"Every student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up-to-date practice and knowledge… Both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes should develop the generic skills needed for effective engagement in society and in the workplace."***

> *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*

Policy: There is an emerging policy context for civic engagement through the curriculum in Ireland. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 posits engagement alongside teaching and learning and research as a key public policy priority. It suggests that service learning and work placement offer students not only an opportunity to learn but also to better understand civic engagement. In order to take this work forward, the Higher Education Authority has funded *Campus Engage*[29] to support higher education community engagement practices. Practitioners have also recently established the *Irish Network for Community-Engaged Research and Learning* (INCERL).[30]

Networks: The recently established *Network for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland "*will be a one-stop-shop and showcase for teaching excellence in Irish higher education that unlocks collective approaches to addressing common challenges. The National Forum will strive to ensure that all students have the best environment in which to learn, and that academics have the tools to provide excellence in teaching."[31] Both Campus Engage and INCERL are linked to the UK based National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)[32] who play a key role in supporting public engagement in the UK and offer a range of useful resources. All three organisations have a strategic interest in enhancing student engagement through the curriculum. However there is still a lack of strategic embedding of civic engagement through the curriculum in Irish HEIs.

Irish Community Knowledge Exchanges: There are a number of Science Shops and Community Knowledge exchanges in Ireland already, some of which are detailed in Appendix 1. There are also many examples of individual academics running courses where students are carrying out some form of civic engagement through the curriculum. However these types of initiative are piecemeal and most commonly take place at the level of individual courses, or in some cases at the level of individual academic departments.

WHY IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM NOT MORE COMMON?

Competing Demands: Staff in universities face multiple challenges, ranging from attracting research funding, recruiting and retaining students, widening participation, providing high-quality education for students, developing income-generating initiatives and responding to research opportunities with business and public sector organisations. Whilst there are supportive academics and institutions, it can be difficult for leaders and academics to create and nurture opportunities for public engagement through the curriculum given the above list of imperatives. There is also no systemic provision of support or continuing professional development in many universities.[33]

Time: Academics struggle to find time to work with CSOs to develop research projects and where they do, they do not have the resources required to share this across other relevant disciplines. This work can be time intensive and requires initial set up as well as ongoing monitoring.[34]

Recognition: At present, many academics feel they are not sufficiently recognised for their work supporting community engaged learning. Engaged learning can require extra time in terms of academic supervision and building extra skills.[35] This is often not factored into workload modelling which can act as a disincentive for busy academics.[36] In addition, many institutions do not value or reward community engagement through the curriculum in staff promotions criteria or student assessment criteria, nor do they have mechanisms in place to support it. [37]

Lack of Embedding: Experience in this field suggests that engaged courses often rely on the commitment of a relatively small number of academic staff. This can lead to courses ceasing to exist when key staff members move on or retire. For engagement to become embedded in the curriculum, it needs to move beyond one or two committed members of staff and become core within academic programmes.

Assessing Learning: It can be challenging to assess engaged learning in a way that balances research outcomes for communities and learning outcomes for students. Academics can feel concerned about ensuring that there is comparability between engaged and non-engaged research. There can also be a concern about managing the expectations of community partners. The NCCPE has developed useful resources to support the student assessment element of this work,[38] however the issue of balance still needs further consideration.

Challenges for CSOs: It can also be challenging for CSOs to find a way in to the university, negotiate disciplinary boundaries and identify the academic courses or course leaders who can help with their research needs. This takes time and many CSOs are not able to make the time commitment to develop relationships with a range of academics. [39] This is a question which merits further research.

WHY SHOULD CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM BECOME A POLICY FOCUS?

Embedding engaged learning opportunities which combine the pursuit of excellence in education with high-quality civic engagement will take time, energy and commitment from leaders and academics in universities and policymakers in the field of higher education. Good practice should be developed in this area or we risk HEI students not engaging with issues beyond the boundaries of the HEI, and failing to acquire the broad range of skills, knowledge and experience needed for our knowledge economy and knowledge society to flourish. We also lose the opportunity to expose future researchers to research impact and engagement at an early stage. The practice of co-creating learning opportunities for students in response to community need takes specialist skills and knowledge. Community knowledge exchanges, science shops and intermediary staff in these organisations can offer effective ways of sharing good practice between disciplines and departments, and supporting engaged learning. The opportunity exists to envision a truly engaged HEI which offers opportunities to undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to take a partnership approach to research issues. Enacting pubic engagement through the curriculum as a policy priority will encourage all groups to move forward towards the vision of an engaged HEI.

Meaningful Partnerships: The use of intermediary mechanisms such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges offers CSOs an opportunity to form meaningful partnerships with universities in an accessible and time-efficient way. There is increasing interest from the European Commission, from research funders and other stakeholders in how research projects can be co-created between academic researchers and CSOs within universities. For example, the Science Shops can act as a 'front door' for CSOs and can work with them to find the right student(s) to meet their needs.

Supporting the Creation of Evidence Based Policy: Science Shops can help CSOs develop their research capacity and can therefore contribute at a grassroots level to enhancing their ability to support the creation of evidence based policy.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DISCUSSION POINTS?

Synergy: How best to harmonise and synergise the different policy agendas around public engagement, curriculum development and responding to community need if we are to create truly engaged universities.

Research: What types of research are needed to investigate the benefits and challenges for universities, students and CSOs working on community research issues.

Recognition: How HEIs and academics can be incentivised to support public engagement through the curriculum.

Support: How to encourage more Irish universities to set up support mechanisms for public engagement through the curriculum such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges.

WHAT NEXT? RECOMMENDATIONS

The PERARES consortium, particularly the Irish members, should raise awareness and promote the value of civic engagement through the curriculum and the value of Science Shops and community knowledge exchanges within the Ireland. This may involve:

- Identifying opportunities to present papers and publish about this work
- Working with other partners across Ireland to develop awareness
- Raising the profile of Science Shops with HE policymakers

Campus Engage should bring key agencies and policymakers, such as representatives of the Higher Education Authority, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland, Irish Network for Community Engaged Research and Learning and the Department for Education and Skills together with researchers, practitioners, students and CSOs working in this field to consider a more strategic approach to civic engagement through the curriculum. Particular issues to address may include:

- Scoping out areas of common interest
- Identifying future research areas
- Methods for incentivising civic engagement through the curriculum
- Creation of a forum to share best practice
- Appointing a champion for this field

The Higher Education Authority should, within the Enhancing Engagement Strategy, consider how engagement links to both teaching and learning and research and make recommendations addressing the importance of civic engagement through the curriculum.

Appendix 1: Some Examples of Good Practice in Civic engagement through the Curriculum

These are just a few examples of good practice. For further examples see case studies on the Campus Engage website, particularly those relating to community based learning
http://www.campusengage.ie/case_studies/category/

Dublin Institute of Technology's Students Learning With Communities programme has an elective community based research module on the MA in Public Relations. It offers students a conceptual understanding of community based research, encourages them to consider issues of power and inequality in terms of reflection, but students are also expected to work collaboratively with community partners to co-create knowledge. Last year, students worked with three community partners to conduct primary research into the challenges of, and opportunities for, reaching particular target groups through their public relations and communications.
http://www.dit.ie/ace/slwc/

NUI Galway's Community Knowledge Exchange has developed a range of programmes aimed at engaging students with communities, including *Learning with Community* which offers opportunities to students for curriculum based projects and service learning opportunities, and an extracurricular volunteering hub *Alive.*
http://cki.nuigalway.ie/page/313/communitybased-research--knowledge-exchange/

University College Cork's Community Academic Research Links has developed a 5 credit module for postgraduate students which will expose them to the principles and practices of community based participatory research and provide them with an authentic CBR experience in the form of a time-bound project with a community partner. This pilot module will be available to postgraduate students in UCC from January 2014. CARL supports a number of research projects which are undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students annually as part of their course requirements, e.g. final year projects or Masters' dissertations. These projects are conducted in collaboration with community partners and address research needs. http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/

The Science Shop in Northern Ireland is a partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. An organisation who works with people with dementia asked undergraduate Social Policy students to produce a paper outlining the policy context for dementia care in Northern Ireland. Their report was used by the organisation in a successful funding bid to provide services for people with dementia in the local area.   An independent evaluation carried out on behalf of their funder, the Department for Employment and Learning NI found that all of the voluntary and community organisations who had worked with The Science Shop would use the service again and would recommend it to other organisations. http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/

[1]The Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society Project aims to strengthen public engagement in research (PER) by involving researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the formulation of research agendas and the research process. or further information on the PERARES project see http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/perares

[2] Hunt (2011) *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030.* Available from http://www.hea.ie/files/files/DES_Higher_Ed_Main_Report.pdf Accessed 26 August 2013

[3] According to the World Bank, "Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations".

[4] McEwen l and Mason O'Connor, K (2013) *Building Staff/Faculty Capacity for University-Public/Community Engagement*. UWE/University of Gloucester.

[5] According to the World Bank, "Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations". http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html Accessed 8/10/13

[6] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., with Treasure, K. (2011) *Embedding Community and Public Engagement Within Regional and National Policy and Higher Education Institutions.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[7] Forfas (2012) *Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group. http://www.forfas.ie/media/ffs20120301-Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_Report.pdf Accessed 20/11/13*

[8] http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com499_en.pdf

[9] Steinhaus, N (2013) *Experiences and attitudes of Research Funding Organisations towards public engagement with research with and for civil society and its organisations.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[10] Forfas (2012) op cit p.9

[11] Department for Employment and Learning NI and Invest NI (2010) *Evaluation of the Second Round of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Innovation Fund.* http://www.delni.gov.uk/review_of_ni_higher_education_innovation_fund_2_-_final_report.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[12] Robinson, F., Zass-Ogilvie, I., Hudson,R. (2012) *How Can Universities Support Disadvantaged Communities?* John Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/universities-support-disadvantaged-communities p.33 Accessed 10/12/13

[13] NCCPE and HEA (2012) *Report on Teaching and Learning Summit* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/HEA-Employability-Summit-May-2012-Report.pdf Accessed 28 July 2013

[14] O'Rourke, B., (2012) 'Building Community Engagement into the Curriculum' Case Study 5 in McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., *Developing Community Engagement.* SEDA.

[15] Healy, M., Lannin, L., Stibbe, A. and Derounian, J. (2013) *Developing and Enhancing Undergraduate Final Year Projects and Dissertations* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/projects/NTFS_Project_Gloucestershire_2010_final.pdf Accessed 26/7/13 p.74

[16] For more detail on Dublin Descriptors see appendix Joint Quality Initiative _Reports_Complete Dublin Descriptors 18 October 2004_1999-2003.doc accessed 1/12/13

[17] Healey et al (2013) op cit

[18] These qualities are identified by the European Commission as part of the Bologna Process, known as the Dublin Descriptors. See http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf for more details

[19] Mason O'Connor, K.,, McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011) *Literature Review: Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An Example of University-Public Engagement.* https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 1/8/2013 P.27

[20] Mulder, H., (2004) *Curriculum Development through Science Shops* Paper presented at ICEEM2, Iasi, Romania, Sep 2004 Reprinted (2004) in Environmental Management and Engineering Journal 3 (3), pp. 549-560

[21] European Commission *Tackling Societal Challenges* http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=better-society Accessed 20/11/13

[22] Millican, J. and Bourner, T. (Guest eds) (2011) *Special Issue: Student learning from community engagement*, Education + Training, Vol 53 issue 2/3

[23] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., (2012) 'The Science Shop at Queen's University Belfast: Embedding Community Engagement within the Curriculum' pp27-31 in Mason O'Connor, K and McEwen, L (Eds) *Developing Community Engagement.* SEDA Special 32

[24] Eppink, H., and Wals, A., (2011) *Science Shop Activities Embedded into Curricula of Higher Education.* Milestone 7.3, unpublished report from the PERARES project P7

[25] Stoecker, R. and Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. (2009) *The Unheard Voices* Temple University Press, US

[26] Ibid

[27] Gall, E., Millot, G. and Neubauer, C., (2009) *Participation of Civil Society Organisations in Research* http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/STACS_Final_Report-Partic.research.pdf Accessed 24/5/13 p.87

[28] ibid p.78

[29] Campus Engage is a platform for the promotion of civic engagement activities in Irish higher education and is based at the Irish University Association (IUA). Campus Engage was recently awarded funding by Higher Education Authority (HEA) to drive activities to support a range of higher education community engagement practices to 2015. As a civic engagement platform, Campus Engage is open to all higher education institutions in Ireland, and aims to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the wider society, through the promotion of civic engagement activities in higher education and facilitating the sharing of knowledge and resources between academic and civic communities.

[30] INCERL was established as an outcome of the PERARES project. It is an inter-institutional All-Ireland initiative involved in coordinating, supporting and developing community based learning and research activities in Higher Education. The network plays a supportive role for individuals and groups working in coordination and development roles relating to Community Based Research and Community Based Learning.

[31] http://www.hea.ie/content/national-forum-enhancement-teaching-and-learning

[32] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the Research Councils UK, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public.

[33] McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., (2013) op cit

[34] Healey and op cit p49

[35] O'Rourke, B., (2012) op cit

[36] Mason O'Connor et al (2011) op cit p34

[37] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

[38] See http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how-we-help/our-publications/framework-assessing-learning

[39] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

Embedding Public Engagement in the Curriculum in Northern Ireland

A discussion paper from the PERARES project[1]

Public Engagement with Research is a key driver in United Kingdom (UK) higher education policy. Over the past seven years successive United Kingdom (UK) governments have worked to encourage universities to engage with the public, particularly through public engagement in research. Northern Ireland (NI) has responded to these public policy agendas in the UK as reflected in *Graduating to Success: A Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.*[2]

This discussion paper argues that exposure to public engagement with research through the curriculum can offer a key route in encouraging culture change within university research and in preparing students adequately for a knowledge society. It is based on information gathered as part of the EC funded Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society project as well as on existing literature.

This paper contends that whilst there are good examples of public engagement through the curriculum in Northern Irish universities, in many cases engagement through the curriculum happens in a fragmented way, relying on the goodwill of individual academics and is not strategically embedded.[3] The full benefits are not therefore realised at an institutional or policy level. Whilst there are examples in Northern Ireland and beyond where public engagement through the curriculum is strategically embedded within universities via intermediary mechanisms (see appendix 1), this is not commonplace.

This paper suggests that *Community Knowledge Exchanges* or *Science Shops* should be developed further in Northern Irish universities as a mechanism for creating a cohesive approach to public engagement through the curriculum. Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges are small organisations that enable students to carry out social and scientific research in a wide range of disciplines on behalf of citizens and local civil society organisations (CSOs). [4] This approach focuses on research with and for society rather than research on society. The fact that Science Shops **respond** to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. In this context we are discussing Community Knowledge Exchanges based in universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum.

Community Knowledge Exchanges and Science Shops:
- respond to research needs as expressed by civil society
- support research which involves a process of negotiation between partners to develop a question which meets the learning needs of the students and the research needs of CSOs
- produce agreed outcomes which should contribute to student learning and civil society knowledge
- respond to many of the challenges in society today, both scientific and social, encompassing research in areas as diverse as health, history, environment, nutrition, policy and planning.

These types of mechanisms are important for universities, academic staff, students and CSOs. They help to ensure mutual benefit for all parties in the research process. They allow universities to enhance their reputations by offering a resource to communities and can help to bring community knowledge into university research. They offer students a chance to build stronger skills in research and partnership working, enhancing their future employability and training them up to understand engaged research. They give Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) a one-stop-shop within universities and offer an opportunity to participate in the shaping of university research agendas, therefore increasing the evidence base to allow CSOs to engage with and influence public policy debates more effectively.

The danger is that in delivering on so many different policy priorities, they can fall between the cracks in terms of policy development.[5] This paper sets out the need for further policy, practice and research to support the development and embedding of such intermediary mechanisms in Northern Irish universities.

WHY DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM MATTER?

Value to universities:

> *"(Universities) must increase their attractiveness; actively promote international mobility of students and staff; provide world-class innovative curricula as well as excellence in teaching and research opportunities; and enter into cooperation and strategic partnerships with other HEIs, government institutions, the private sector and civil society around the world.[6]*
>
> *European Commission 'European Higher Education in the World' July 2013*

Engaged Researchers: Public engagement through the curriculum helps undergraduate and taught postgraduate students understand the concept of engaged research and develop the skills and knowledge to carry it out.[7] This gives them a better appreciation of the potential impact, scope and public use of their work which may help them frame future research proposals. This learning may help develop a culture of public engagement within universities because it provides the necessary skill set for the next generation of researchers.

Reputation: Public engagement through the curriculum can enhance the contribution a university makes to CSOs and improve the reputation of a university within the local community and beyond.[8] It can also help to bring locally relevant research into devolved and national parliaments, creating a positive perceptual impact on the political establishment, which can help universities build relationships with key decision makers. Demonstrating the benefits of the university to CSOs as well as private and public sector organisations is of particular value in times of economic austerity in terms of justifying the use of public funds to support higher education. This work 'actively builds bridges' between the community and the university.[9]

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DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM EXIST IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND?

UK Policy: There is a policy context for public engagement through the curriculum in the UK**.** Over the last seven years, successive United Kingdom (UK) governments have developed policies to encourage universities to engage with the public, particularly through public engagement in research.[26] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)[27] has been researching developments in this field as a way of expanding public engagement within universities. There is also a policy focus on the student experience, both on enhancing learning and on improving employability.[28] The Higher Education Academy has also supported research on engaged learning for students, both independently[29] and jointly with NCCPE[30] and the Quality Assurance Agency has developed assessment frameworks flexible enough to assess engaged learning. Research Councils are developing models of postgraduate training to help early stage researchers to consider how to incorporate planning pathways to research impact, including considering economic, social, environmental, cultural or policy impacts. However there is still a lack of strategic embedding of public engagement through the curriculum in UK universities.

Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland's response to these public policy agendas in the UK is reflected in *Graduating to Success: A Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland*. The strategy emphasises the importance of skills development and curriculum development. Under project 6, it proposes that students should have the opportunity to develop a distinctive portfolio of skills, attributes and experiences to enhance their employability. It also emphasises the importance of work placement as a mechanism to support this goal.[31] The Strategy also recommends that a systematic approach towards community engagement on a local, national and international basis is adopted and embedded within universities. Through Project 9, institutions are encouraged to review their social and community engagement strategies and adopt a systematic approach to such engagement, based on best practice throughout the UK and overseas. In particular they encouraged to use their skills and expertise to benefit and engage effectively with local communities.[32]

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has also been innovative at a UK level by including a requirement to use a proportion to Higher Education Innovation Funding to support activities with the wider community not measured by income. [33] In this way, over the last ten years they have supported The Science Shop across both of the Northern Irish Universities.

UK Community Knowledge Exchanges: There are a number of other Science Shops and Community Knowledge exchanges in the UK already, some of which are explored in Appendix 1. There are also many examples of individual academics running courses where students are carrying out differing forms of public engagement through the curriculum. However these types of initiative are piecemeal and most commonly take place at the level of individual courses, or in some cases at the level of individual academic departments.

WHY IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM NOT MORE COMMON?

Competing Demands: Staff in universities face multiple challenges, ranging from attracting research funding, recruiting and retaining students, widening participation, providing high-quality education for students, developing income-generating initiatives and responding to research opportunities with business and public sector organisations. Whilst there are supportive academics and institutions, it can be difficult for leaders and academics to create and nurture opportunities for public engagement through the curriculum given the above list of imperatives. There is also no systemic provision of support or continuing professional development in many universities.[34]

Time: Academics struggle to find time to work with CSOs to develop research projects and where they do, they do not have the resources required to share this across other relevant disciplines. This work can be time intensive and requires initial set up as well as ongoing monitoring.[35]

Recognition: At present, many academics feel they are not sufficiently recognised for their work supporting community engaged learning. Engaged learning can require extra time in terms of academic supervision and building extra skills.[36] This is often not factored into workload modelling which can act as a disincentive for busy academics.[37] In addition, many institutions do not value or reward community engagement through the curriculum in staff promotions criteria or student assessment criteria, nor do they have mechanisms in place to support it. [38]

Lack of Embedding: Experience in this field suggests that engaged courses often rely on the commitment of a relatively small number of academic staff. This can lead to courses ceasing to exist when key staff members move on or retire. For engagement to become embedded in the curriculum, it needs to move beyond one or two committed members of staff and become core within academic programmes.

Assessing Learning: It can be challenging to assess engaged learning in a way that balances research outcomes for communities and learning outcomes for students. Academics can feel concerned about ensuring that there is comparability between engaged and non-engaged research. There can also be a concern about managing the expectations of community partners. The NCCPE has developed useful resources to support the student assessment element of this work,[39] however the issue of balance still needs further consideration.

Challenges for CSOs: It can also be challenging for CSOs to find a way in to the university, negotiate disciplinary boundaries and identify the academic courses or course leaders who can help with their research needs. This takes time and many CSOs are not able to make the time commitment to develop relationships with a range of academics.[40] This is a question which merits further research.

Supporting the Creation of Evidence Based Policy: Science Shops can help CSOs develop their research capacity and can therefore contribute at a grassroots level to enhancing their ability to support the creation of evidence based policy.

WHY SHOULD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM BECOME A POLICY FOCUS?

Embedding engaged learning opportunities which combine the pursuit of excellence in education with high-quality public engagement will take time, energy and commitment from leaders and academics in universities and policymakers in the field of higher education. Good practice should be developed in this area or we risk university students not engaging with issues beyond the boundaries of the university, and failing to acquire the broad range of skills, knowledge and experience needed for our knowledge economy and knowledge society to flourish. We also lose the opportunity to expose future researchers to research impact and engagement at an early stage. The practice of co-creating learning opportunities for students in response to community need takes specialist skills and knowledge. Community knowledge exchanges, science shops and intermediary staff in these organisations can offer effective ways of sharing good practice between disciplines and departments, and supporting engaged learning. The opportunity exists to envision a truly engaged university which offers opportunities to undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to take a strategic and systematic partnership approach to research issues. Enacting pubic engagement through the curriculum as a policy priority will encourage all groups to move forward towards the vision of an engaged university.

Meaningful Partnerships: The use of intermediary mechanisms such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges offers CSOs an opportunity to form meaningful partnerships with universities in an accessible and time-efficient way. There is increasing interest from the European Commission, from research funders and other stakeholders in how research projects can be co-created between academic researchers and CSOs within universities. For example, the Science Shops can act as a 'front door' for CSOs and can work with them to find the right student(s) to meet their needs.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DISCUSSION POINTS?

Synergy: How best to harmonise and synergise the different policy agendas around public engagement, curriculum development and responding to community need if we are to create truly engaged universities.

Recognition: How universities and academics can be incentivised to support public engagement through the curriculum.

Support: How to encourage Northern Irish universities to develop further the support mechanisms for public engagement through the curriculum such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges.

Research: What types of research are needed to investigate the benefits and challenges for universities, students and CSOs working on community research issues.

WHAT NEXT? RECOMMENDATIONS

The PERARES consortium, particularly the NI member, should raise awareness of and promote the value of public engagement through the curriculum and the value of Science Shops and community knowledge exchanges within Northern Ireland, the UK and the Republic of Ireland. This may involve:

- Working with other partners across the UK and Ireland to develop awareness
- Raising the profile of Community Knowledge Exchange principles with HE policymakers
- Identifying opportunities to present papers and publish about the work
- Working with CSOs to examine their experiences

The NCCPE should bring together key agencies and stakeholders to consider a more strategic approach to public engagement through the curriculum. Key agencies and policymakers might include the Higher Education Academy, Quality Assurance Agency, the Higher Education Funding Councils (including the Department for Employment and Learning NI), Staff and Education Development Association, VITAE, the Research Councils and relevant political representatives. Stakeholders include researchers, students, practitioners (both academic and academic related) and CSOs working in this field. Particular issues to address may include:

- Scoping out areas of common interest
- Identifying future research areas
- Methods for incentivising public engagement through the curriculum
- Creation of a forum to share best practice
- Appointing a champion for this field

Higher Education Funding Councils including the Department for Employment and Learning NI, should consider how Public Engagement through the Curriculum can link to the Research Excellence Framework as a way of improving the skills of researchers in terms of PER. This should include:

- Monitoring submissions under the Environment element of REF 2014 to examine where and how universities refer to public engaged through the curriculum and/or links between engaged research and teaching
- Consider specific mention of public engagement through the curriculum within the guidelines on Environment for REF 2020

Appendix 1: Examples of Good Practice in Public Engagement through the Curriculum

These are just a few examples of a much wider community of practice.

The Science Shop in Northern Ireland is a partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. An organisation who works with people with dementia asked undergraduate Social Policy students to produce a paper outlining the policy context for dementia care in Northern Ireland. Their report was used by the organisation in a successful funding bid to provide services for people with dementia in the local area.   An independent evaluation carried out on behalf of their funder, the Department for Employment and Learning NI found that all of the voluntary and community organisations who had worked with The Science Shop would use the service again and would recommend it to other organisations. http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/

The University of Cambridge's Community Knowledge Exchange worked with a domestic violence charity to develop projects suitable for a range of students. An undergraduate psychology student interviewed service users in order to investigate the impact of a particular element of the charity's service provision on their lives. Staff at the organisation helped students to frame the wording of questions appropriately for interviews. One student in particular proceeded to Masters and PhD study, developing research into legal and political aspects relating to services for people in need of domestic violence services, who have insecure immigration status. The domestic violence organisation has used the research in reports for funders and has shared findings with organisations working on similar issues. http://www.cam.ac.uk/public-engagement/voluntary-sector/community-knowledge-exchange

The Community University Partnership Project at the University of Brighton has developed a range of ways in which engagement can be incorporated into existing programmes, either through a standalone module, through incorporating materials in existing modules or through dissertation work. Postgraduate students have, for example, produced research reports for a homeless project examining the effectiveness of an adult literacy scheme. The wide-ranging CUPP project experience has been reported extensively including through a co-produced and co-authored book in 2007 on community-university partnerships in practice. http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/community-knowledge-exchange.html

Dublin Institute of Technology's Students Learning With Communities programme has an elective community based research module on the MA in Public Relations. It offers students a conceptual understanding of community based research, encourages them to consider issues of power and inequality in terms of reflection, but students are also expected to work collaboratively with community partners to co-create knowledge. Last year, students worked with three community partners to conduct primary research into the challenges of, and opportunities for, reaching particular target groups through their public relations and communications. http://www.dit.ie/ace/slwc/

[1] The Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society Project aims to strengthen public engagement in research (PER) by involving researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the formulation of research agendas and the research process. or further information on the PERARES project see http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/perares

[2] Department for Employment and Learning NI (2012) *Graduating to Success: A Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.* http://www.delni.gov.uk/graduating-to-success-he-strategy-for-ni.pdf Accessed 30/10/2013

[3] McEwen l and Mason O'Connor, K (2013) *Building Staff/Faculty Capacity for University-Public/Community Engagement*. UWE/University of Gloucester.

[4] According to the World Bank, "Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations". http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html Accessed 8/10/13

[5] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., with Treasure, K. (2011) *Embedding Community and Public Engagement Within Regional and National Policy and Higher Education Institutions.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[6] European Commission (2013) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions' http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com499_en.pdf Accessed 8/10/13

[7] Steinhaus, N (2013) *Experiences and attitudes of Research Funding Organisations towards public engagement with research with and for civil society and its organisations.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[8] Department for Employment and Learning NI and Invest NI (2010) *Evaluation of the Second Round of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Innovation Fund*. http://www.delni.gov.uk/review_of_ni_higher_education_innovation_fund_2_-_final_report.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[9] Robinson, F., Zass-Ogilvie, I., Hudson,R. (2012) *How Can Universities Support Disadvantaged Communities?* John Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/universities-support-disadvantaged-communities p.33 Accessed 10/12/13

[10] NCCPE and HEA (2012) *Report on Teaching and Learning Summit* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/HEA-Employability-Summit-May-2012-Report.pdf Accessed 28 July 2013

[11] O'Rourke, B., (2012) 'Building Community Engagement into the Curriculum' Case Study 5 in McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., *Developing Community Engagement.* SEDA.

[12] Healy, M., Lannin, L., Stibbe, A. and Derounian, J. (2013) *Developing and Enhancing Undergraduate Final Year Projects and Dissertations* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/projects/NTFS_Project_Gloucestershire_2010_final.pdf Accessed 26/7/13 p.74

[13] For more detail on Dublin Descriptors see appendix Joint Quality Initiative _ Reports_Complete Dublin Descriptors 18 October 2004_1999-2003.doc accessed 1/12/13

[14] Healey et al (2013) op cit

[15] These qualities are identified by the European Commission as part of the Bologna Process, known as the Dublin Descriptors. See http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf for more details

[16] Mason O'Connor, K.,, McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011) *Literature Review: Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An Example of University-Public Engagement*. https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 1/8/2013 P.27

[17] Mulder, H., (2004) *Curriculum Development through Science Shops* Paper presented at ICEEM2, Iasi, Romania, Sep 2004 Reprinted (2004) in Environmental Management and Engineering Journal 3 (3), pp. 549-560

[18] European Commission *Tackling Societal Challenges* http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=better-society Accessed 20/11/13

[19] Millican, J. and Bourner, T. (Guest eds) (2011) *Special Issue: Student learning from community engagement*, Education + Training, Vol 53 issue 2/3

[20] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., (2012) 'The Science Shop at Queen's University Belfast: Embedding Community Engagement within the Curriculum' pp27-31 in Mason O'Connor, K and McEwen, L (Eds) *Developing Community Engagement*. SEDA Special 32

[21] Eppink, H., and Wals, A., (2011) *Science Shop Activities Embedded into Curricula of Higher Education*. Milestone 7.3, unpublished report from the PERARES project P7

[22] Stoecker, R. and Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. (2009) *The Unheard Voices* Temple University Press, US

[23] Ibid

[24] Gall, E., Millot, G. and Neubauer, C., (2009) *Participation of Civil Society Organisations in Research* http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/STACS_Final_Report-Partic.research.pdf Accessed 24/5/13 p.87

[25] ibid p.78

[26] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2009) *The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Higher-Ambitions.pdf Accessed 24/5/12

[27] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement [NCCPE] was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the Research Councils UK, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public.

[28] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) *Students at the Heart of the System* https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32409/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf Accessed 10/12/13

[29] http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/LEAPSE_Report_FINAL.pdf

[30] Mason O'Connor, K., McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011*) Literature Review, Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An example of university-public engagement*' https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[31] Department for Employment and Learning NI (2012) op cit p64

[32] Ibid p71

[33] http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education/higher-education/role-structure-he-division/knowledge-transfer/higher-education-innovation-fund.htm Accessed 30/10/13

[34] McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., (2013) op cit

[35] Healey and op cit p49

[36] O'Rourke, B., (2012) op cit

[37] Mason O'Connor et al (2011) op cit p34

[38] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

[39] See http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how-we-help/our-publications/framework-assessing-learning

[40] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

Embedding Public Engagement in the Curriculum in the Wales

A discussion paper from the PERARES project[1]

Public Engagement with Research is a key driver in higher education policy across the United Kingdom. In the Welsh Assembly Government's 2013 *Policy Statement on Higher Education* there is a strong focus on economic growth and innovation alongside key policy priorities such as Widening Participation, Employability and Internationalisation.[2]

This discussion paper argues that exposure to public engagement through the curriculum can offer a key route in encouraging culture change within university research and in preparing students adequately for a knowledge society. It is based on information gathered as part of the EC funded Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society project as well as on existing literature.

This paper contends that whilst there are many examples of good practice in public engagement through the curriculum in UK universities, including in Wales, in many cases engagement through the curriculum happens in a fragmented way, relying on the goodwill of individual academics and is not strategically embedded.[3] The full benefits are not therefore realised at an institutional or policy level. Whilst there are examples in the UK and beyond where public engagement through the curriculum is strategically embedded within universities via intermediary mechanisms (see appendix 1), this is not commonplace.

This paper suggests that *Community Knowledge Exchanges* or *Science Shops* should be explored further in Welsh universities as a mechanism for creating a cohesive approach to public engagement through the curriculum.   Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges are small organisations that enable students to carry out social and scientific research in a wide range of disciplines on behalf of citizens and local civil society organisations (CSOs).[4] This approach focuses on research with and for society rather than research on society. The fact that Science Shops **respond** to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. In this context we are discussing Community Knowledge Exchanges or Science Shops based in universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum.

Community Knowledge Exchanges and Science Shops:
- respond to research needs as expressed by civil society
- support research which involves a process of negotiation between partners to develop a question which meets the learning needs of the students and the research needs of CSOs
- produce agreed outcomes which should contribute to student learning and civil society knowledge
- respond to many of the challenges in society today, both scientific and social, encompassing research in areas as diverse as health, history, environment, nutrition, policy and planning.

These types of mechanisms are important for universities, academic staff, students and CSOs. They help to ensure mutual benefit for all parties in the research process. They allow universities to enhance their reputations by offering a resource to communities and can help to bring community knowledge into university research. They offer students a chance to build stronger skills in research and partnership working, enhancing their future employability and training them up to understand engaged research. They give Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) a one-stop-shop within universities and offer an opportunity to participate in the shaping of university research agendas, therefore increasing the evidence base to allow CSOs to engage with and influence public policy debates more effectively.

The danger is that in delivering on so many different policy priorities, they can fall between the cracks in terms of policy development.[5] This paper sets out the need for policy, practice and research to support the development of such intermediary mechanisms in Welsh universities.

WHY DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM MATTER?

Value to universities:

> *"(Universities) must increase their attractiveness; actively promote international mobility of students and staff; provide world-class innovative curricula as well as excellence in teaching and research opportunities; and enter into cooperation and strategic partnerships with other HEIs, government institutions, the private sector and civil society around the world.[6]*
>
> *European Commission 'European Higher Education in the World' July 2013*

Engaged Researchers: Public engagement through the curriculum helps undergraduate and taught postgraduate students understand the concept of engaged research and develop the skills and knowledge to carry it out.[7] This gives them a better appreciation of the potential impact, scope and public use of their work which may help them frame future research proposals. This learning may help develop a culture of public engagement within universities because it provides the necessary skill set for the next generation of researchers.

Reputation: Public engagement through the curriculum can enhance the contribution a university makes to CSOs and improve the reputation of a university within the local community and beyond.[8] It can also help to bring locally relevant research into devolved and national parliaments, creating a positive perceptual impact on the political establishment, which can help universities build relationships with key decision makers. Demonstrating the benefits of the university to CSOs as well as private and public sector organisations is of particular value in times of economic austerity in terms of justifying the use of public funds to support higher education. This work 'actively builds bridges' between the community and the university.[9]

Increasing Participation: Where engagement through the curriculum is embedded as a compulsory activity in courses of study, it offers a unique learning experience to students who may otherwise have limited opportunities and personal networks for engaged learning. Ensuring equality of access to those opportunities for all students and sourcing sufficient quality opportunities can create a challenge for HEIs.[10] Where engaged learning is offered to students, it helps them to understand the contribution their learning can make to CSOs and society.[11]

Value to Researchers and Academic Supervisors

Understanding CSO Research Agendas: Public engagement through the curriculum can help academics build links with CSOs via their supervision of student research. This can offer an insight into CSO research needs for academics whilst they are fulfilling their teaching obligations and may feed through into their own research.

Providing Research Projects for Students: Students sometimes struggle with identifying topics suitable for research at either taught masters or undergraduate levels. Working with communities can not only provide a range of suitable ideas but can also inspire and enthuse students. It can provide new perspectives and

additional critical challenge which can act to drive up standards. Making work public is also a way of raising the quality of the work and acknowledging effort put into it.[12]

Linking to Curriculum Demands: The Dublin descriptors provide a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral level. At all these three levels, the ability to communicate to specialist and non-specialist is a prerequisite for achieving a degree.[13] Collaborative research projects can offer students real, demand driven and participatory cases to work on which can have all the benefits of work placement type experiences with much less time commitment from the academic. This can add value to the curricula of HEIs.

Value to Students:

> *"The aim is to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full range of purposes such as preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society" Leuven Communique, 2009*

Student Skills: Undertaking independent research helps students to develop critical thinking skills and personal and professional skills which are important assets in the job market. [14]   According to the European Commission, students need to comprehend how to apply their knowledge and understanding, make judgements and interpret data, communicate conclusions to different types of audience and develop skills needed to conduct further study in an autonomous way.[15] This is often framed as developing graduate attributes and contributing to graduate employability.[16] The priority of higher education therefore becomes teaching students how to continue to acquire new knowledge and, specifically, to *apply this knowledge in a societal context*. It is therefore extremely important to offer this type of experience through the curriculum[17] if students are to acquire the kinds of knowledge, skills and experiences to equip them to play a role in helping to tackle the European Commission's grand societal challenges which are at the heart of Horizon 2020. [18]

Valuing Knowledge: Student engagement with CSOs adds another dimension to the university experience, in addition to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of an academic subject. [19] This work helps students understand that there are many kinds of knowledge and expertise, and that there are diverse and plural ways to address issues within academic research and in society. [20]   It may also help graduates identify future career options.

Motivation and Access: The knowledge that the results will be made publicly available can have a galvanising effect on students and encourage them to produce higher quality work.[21]

Value to CSOs and Society

Meeting Research Needs: Public engagement through the curriculum offers CSOs an opportunity to put their research needs on student research agendas. This partnership approach means that completed research is much more likely to be of use to CSOs and is in contrast to the 'hit and run' model that some have experienced with university research. It also offers CSOs a resource they may not otherwise have, in terms of time, research skills and/or funding.[22]

Improving Society: If society is to move on from the current economic crises, it needs graduates who are skilled at partnership working, drawing on different kinds of knowledge from multiple sources, thinking flexibly and creatively and applying knowledge and skills. This outcome of the Science Shop process benefits not only students themselves, but also CSOs. By working with students on research issues, they are informing future professionals about their issues from a grassroots perspective.[23]

Supporting an Evidence Base: Many CSOs lack the capacity to gather evidence to influence policy debates.[24] Science Shops can give CSOs access to information specific to their region or context and this can enhance the building of evidence based policy, particularly within the devolved nations. Through Science Shops, CSOs can also influence the formulation of research agendas.[25] This can also enhance the capacity of CSOs to scrutinise and critically challenge devolved governments.

DOES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM EXIST IN WALES?

UK Policy: There is a policy context for public engagement through the curriculum in the UK**.** Over the last seven years, successive United Kingdom (UK) governments have developed policies to encourage universities to engage with the public, particularly through public engagement in research.[26] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)[27] has been researching developments in this field as a way of expanding public engagement within universities.   There is also a policy focus on the student experience, both on enhancing learning and on improving employability.[28] The Higher Education Academy has also supported research on engaged learning for students, both independently[29] and jointly with NCCPE.[30] and the Quality Assurance Agency has developed assessment frameworks flexible enough to assess engaged learning. Research Councils are developing models of postgraduate training to help early stage researchers to consider how to incorporate planning pathways to research impact, including considering economic, social, environmental, cultural or policy impacts.   However there is still a lack of strategic embedding of public engagement through the curriculum in UK universities.

Science Shops In Wales: Science Shops Wales (SSW) was set up in the University of Glamorgan (now part of the University of South Wales) in August 2006 supported by the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales' Strategic Development Fund. SSW played a crucial role in facilitating discussions in south-east Wales on social and environmental sustainability, and in building networks around this issue.[31]   However the outstanding success of the project in establishing external links was not replicated to the same extent within the University and following changes in management at the University the Science Shop closed in 2010.[32] A small Science Shop still operates in the University of Glamorgan as a result of this initiative. Some of this work was also carried through to the Beacon for Wales, a partnership between Cardiff University, University of Glamorgan, Techniquest, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and BBC Cymru Wales.   The Welsh Beacon encouraged staff and students to undertake high quality public engagement and provided opportunities for academics to reach new audiences.[33]   Some elements of the Beacon for Wales was embedded in both University of Glamorgan and Cardiff University where significant structural changes have taken place to encourage public engagement, for example linking it to promotions criteria.[34]

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Challenges for CSOs: It can also be challenging for CSOs to find a way in to the university, negotiate disciplinary boundaries and identify the academic courses or course leaders who can help with their research needs. This takes time and many CSOs are not able to make the time commitment to develop relationships with a range of academics. [41] This is a question which merits further research.

WHY SHOULD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CURRICULUM BECOME A POLICY FOCUS?

Embedding engaged learning opportunities which combine the pursuit of excellence in education with high-quality public engagement will take time, energy and commitment from leaders and academics in universities and policymakers in the field of higher education. Good practice should be developed in this area or we risk university students not engaging with issues beyond the boundaries of the university, and failing to acquire the broad range of skills, knowledge and experience needed for our knowledge economy and knowledge society to flourish. We also lose the opportunity to expose future researchers to research impact and engagement at an early stage. The practice of co-creating learning opportunities for students in response to community need takes specialist skills and knowledge. Community knowledge exchanges, science shops and intermediary staff in these organisations can offer effective ways of sharing good practice between disciplines and departments, and supporting engaged learning. The opportunity exists to envision a truly engaged university which offers opportunities to undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to take a strategic and systematic partnership approach to research issues. Enacting pubic engagement through the curriculum as a policy priority will encourage all groups to move forward towards the vision of an engaged university.

Meaningful Partnerships: The use of intermediary mechanisms such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges offers CSOs an opportunity to form meaningful partnerships with universities in an accessible and time-efficient way. There is increasing interest from the European Commission, from research funders and other stakeholders in how research projects can be co-created between academic researchers and CSOs within universities. For example, the Science Shops can act as a 'front door' for CSOs and can work with them to find the right student(s) to meet their needs.

Supporting the Creation of Evidence Based Policy: Science Shops can help CSOs develop their research capacity and can therefore contribute at a grassroots level to enhancing their ability to support the creation of evidence based policy.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DISCUSSION POINTS?

Synergy: How best to harmonise and synergise the different policy agendas around public engagement, curriculum development and responding to community need if we are to create truly engaged universities.

Recognition: How universities and academics can be incentivised to support public engagement through the curriculum.

Support: How to encourage more UK universities to set up support mechanisms for public engagement through the curriculum such as Science Shops and Community Knowledge Exchanges.

Research: What types of research are needed to investigate the benefits and challenges for universities, students and CSOs working on community research issues.

WHAT NEXT? RECOMMENDATIONS

The PERARES consortium, particularly the UK members, should raise awareness of and promote the value of public engagement through the curriculum and the value of Science Shops and community knowledge exchanges within Wales. This may involve:

- Working with other partners across Wales to develop awareness
- Raising the profile of Community Knowledge Exchange principles with HE policymakers
- Identifying opportunities to present papers and publish about the work
- Working with CSOs to examine their experiences

The NCCPE should bring together key agencies and stakeholders to consider a more strategic approach to public engagement through the curriculum. Key agencies and policymakers might include the Higher Education Academy, Quality Assurance Agency, the Higher Education Funding Councils (including the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales), Staff and Education Development Association, VITAE, the Research Councils and relevant political representatives. Stakeholders include researchers, students, practitioners (both academic and academic related) and CSOs working in this field. Particular issues to address may include:

- Scoping out areas of common interest
- Identifying future research areas
- Methods for incentivising public engagement through the curriculum
- Creation of a forum to share best practice
- Appointing a champion for this field

The Higher Education Funding Councils, including the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, should consider how Public Engagement through the Curriculum can link to the Research Excellence Framework as a way of improving the skills of researchers in terms of PER. This should include:

- Monitoring submissions under the Environment element of REF 2014 to examine where and how universities refer to public engaged through the curriculum and/or links between engaged research and teaching
- Consider specific mention of public engagement through the curriculum within the guidelines on Environment for REF 2020

Appendix 1: Examples of Good Practice in Public Engagement through the Curriculum

These are just a few examples of a much wider community of practice.

The University of Cambridge's Community Knowledge Exchange worked with a domestic violence charity to develop projects suitable for a range of students. An undergraduate psychology student interviewed service users in order to investigate the impact of a particular element of the charity's service provision on their lives. Staff at the organisation helped students to frame the wording of questions appropriately for interviews. One student in particular proceeded to Masters and PhD study, developing research into legal and political aspects relating to services for people in need of domestic violence services, who have insecure immigration status. The domestic violence organisation has used the research in reports for funders and has shared findings with organisations working on similar issues.
http://www.cam.ac.uk/public-engagement/voluntary-sector/community-knowledge-exchange

The Community University Partnership Project at the University of Brighton has developed a range of ways in which engagement can be incorporated into existing programmes, either through a standalone module, through incorporating materials in existing modules or through dissertation work. Postgraduate students have, for example, produced research reports for a homeless project examining the effectiveness of an adult literacy scheme. The wide-ranging CUPP project experience has been reported extensively including through a co-produced and co-authored book in 2007 on community-university partnerships in practice.
http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/community-knowledge-exchange.html

The Science Shop in Northern Ireland is a partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. An organisation who works with people with dementia asked undergraduate Social Policy students to produce a paper outlining the policy context for dementia care in Northern Ireland. Their report was used by the organisation in a successful funding bid to provide services for people with dementia in the local area.   An independent evaluation carried out on behalf of their funder, the Department for Employment and Learning NI found that all of the voluntary and community organisations who had worked with The Science Shop would use the service again and would recommend it to other organisations. http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/

Dublin Institute of Technology's Students Learning With Communities programme has an elective community based research module on the MA in Public Relations. It offers students a conceptual understanding of community based research, encourages them to consider issues of power and inequality in terms of reflection, but students are also expected to work collaboratively with community partners to co-create knowledge. Last year, students worked with three community partners to conduct primary research into the challenges of, and opportunities for, reaching particular target groups through their public relations and communications.
http://www.dit.ie/ace/slwc/

[1] The Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society Project aims to strengthen public engagement in research (PER) by involving researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the formulation of research agendas and the research process. or further information on the PERARES project see http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/perares

[2] Welsh Assembly Government (2013) *Policy Statement on Higher Education*. http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130611-statement-en.pdf Accessed 30/10/2013

[3] McEwen l and Mason O'Connor, K (2013) *Building Staff/Faculty Capacity for University-Public/Community Engagement*. UWE/University of Gloucester.

[4] According to the World Bank, "Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations". http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html Accessed 8/10/13

[5] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., with Treasure, K. (2011) *Embedding Community and Public Engagement Within Regional and National Policy and Higher Education Institutions.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[6] European Commission (2013) Communication from the Commisison to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions' http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com499_en.pdf Accessed 8/10/13

[7] Steinhaus, N (2013) *Experiences and attitudes of Research Funding Organisations towards public engagement with research with and for civil society and its organisations.* Unpublished report for the PERARES PROJECT

[8] Department for Employment and Learning NI and Invest NI (2010) *Evaluation of the Second Round of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Innovation Fund*. http://www.delni.gov.uk/review_of_ni_higher_education_innovation_fund_2_-_final_report.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[9] Robinson, F., Zass-Ogilvie, I., Hudson,R. (2012) *How Can Universities Support Disadvantaged Communities?* John Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/universities-support-disadvantaged-communities p.33 Accessed 10/12/13

[10] NCCPE and HEA (2012) *Report on Teaching and Learning Summit* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/HEA-Employability-Summit-May-2012-Report.pdf Accessed 28 July 2013

[11] O'Rourke, B., (2012) 'Building Community Engagement into the Curriculum' Case Study 5 in McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., *Developing Community Engagement.* SEDA.

[12] Healy, M., Lannin, L., Stibbe, A. and Derounian, J. (2013) *Developing and Enhancing Undergraduate Final Year Projects and Dissertations* http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/projects/NTFS_Project_Gloucestershire_2010_final.pdf Accessed 26/7/13 p.74

[13] For more detail on Dublin Descriptors see appendix Joint Quality Initiative_ Reports_Complete Dublin Descriptors 18 October 2004_1999-2003.doc accessed 1/12/13

[14] Healey et al (2013) op cit

[15] These qualities are identified by the European Commission as part of the Bologna Process, known as the Dublin Descriptors. See http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf for more details

[16] Mason O'Connor, K.,, McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011) *Literature Review: Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An Example of University-Public Engagement*. https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 1/8/2013 P.27

[17] Mulder, H., (2004) *Curriculum Development through Science Shops* Paper presented at ICEEM2, Iasi, Romania, Sep 2004 Reprinted (2004) in Environmental Management and Engineering Journal 3 (3), pp. 549-560

[18] European Commission *Tackling Societal Challenges* http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=better-society Accessed 20/11/13

[19] Millican, J. and Bourner, T. (Guest editors) (2011) *Special Issue: Student learning from community engagement*, Education + Training, Volume 53 issue 2/3

[20] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., (2012) 'The Science Shop at Queen's University Belfast: Embedding Community Engagement within the Curriculum' pp27-31 in Mason O'Connor, K and McEwen, L (Eds) *Developing Community Engagement*. SEDA Special 32

[21] Eppink, H., and Wals, A., (2011) *Science Shop Activities Embedded into Curricula of Higher Education*. Milestone 7.3, unpublished report from the PERARES project P7

[22] Stoecker, R. and Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. (2009) *The Unheard Voices* Temple University Press, US

[23] Ibid

[24] Gall, E., Millot, G. and Neubauer, C., (2009) *Participation of Civil Society Organisations in Research* http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/STACS_Final_Report-Partic.research.pdf Accessed 24/5/13 p.87

[25] ibid p.78

[26] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2009) *The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Higher-Ambitions.pdf Accessed 24/5/12

[27] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement [NCCPE] was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the Research Councils UK, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public.

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[29] http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ntfs/LEAPSE_Report_FINAL.pdf

[30] Mason O'Connor, K., McEwen, L., Owen, D., Lynch, K., and Hill, S. (2011*) Literature Review, Embedding Community Engagement in the Curriculum: An example of university-public engagement'* https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CBL%20literature%20review.pdf Accessed 26 July 2013

[31] Martin, E., and McKenna, E., (2008) *An Evaluation of Science Shops Wales*. Unpublished report for Science Shops Wales

[32] http://collectivememory.britishscienceassociation.org/memory/science-shop-wales/ Accessed 30 November 2013

[33] Etherington, B., (2012) *Beacon for Wales Final Report.* https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Beacon%20for%20Wales%20Final%20Report%20English.pdf Accessed 20 October 2013

[34] Ibid

[35] McEwen, L., and Mason O'Connor, K., (2013) op cit

[36] Healey and op cit p49

[37] O'Rourke, B., (2012) op cit

[38] Mason O'Connor et al (2011) op cit p34

[39] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit

[40] See http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how-we-help/our-publications/framework-assessing-learning

[41] Stoecker, R., Tryon, E. with Holgendorf, A. op cit