3. Nurturing a society in which the next generation want to take part in research, teaching and learning

The public engagement activities which fall under this category are those motivated by encouraging groups outside the university to be interested in taking part in research, teaching and learning. These types of activities may take a variety of forms and may involve a range of people, not all necessarily school children, as illustrated by Example 6.

| Example 6  |
| Science Soirees, November 2009 – February 2010, Department of Chemistry |

Funding from the UCL Public Engagement Unit Beacon Bursary small grant scheme supported six ‘cabaret-style’ evening events on five different cutting-edge chemistry topics at six different London schools. Topics included: CO2-The world’s deadliest Molecule, Pattern formation in nature, and Fuelling the vehicles of the future. The audience of the events were parents and guardians of primary and secondary school students. Each event involved 10-25 parents/guardians.

Alongside providing talks and demonstrations for parents at primary and secondary schools the project aimed to communicate to parents that science, specifically chemistry, are interesting fields which offer stimulating opportunities for their children.

This is a rather different approach to public engagement to types of methods the UCL Department of Chemistry generally undertake (e.g. talks to school children, science festivals, media appearances). The project provided a means to undertake stimulating and entertaining presentations in a relaxed and interactive environment.

Example 6, Science Soirees, aimed to provide stimulating talks and demonstrations for parents and/or guardians at primary and secondary schools. The evaluation strategy adopted by the project team (which included a personal response system at the events, observations of the events and interim and final team reflection meetings) demonstrated that the events were effective in providing stimulating presentations on a range of chemistry related subject matters, in a relaxed and interactive setting. The discussion generated by the presentations and demonstrations was wide-ranging.

Example 7 is a project funded by the UCL Public Engagement Unit’s Innovation Seed Funding stream, detailed in Section 4.1.2, called On the Move. The project aimed to stimulate young people’s interest in the subject of history through the organisation of arts and education workshops with youth groups and a one day showcase event held at UCL.
On the Move paired UCL graduate historians with local artists to deliver 3 history workshops with 4 youth groups across London. These workshops were followed by an all-day event held at UCL in February 2010.

The activities varied according to the youth group and historian/artist team but were based upon the history of their local area or of the youth group itself. The 4 youth groups involved were: Westminster House Youth Club, Nunhead; Smalley Road Youth, Stoke Newington; New Horizons, Somers Town; and Mosaic Youth, Brent.

The original aim of the project was to engage the ‘next generation’ in history but this required a knowledge of what ‘the next generation’ found interesting in history, through what mediums could they engage with history. The project was as much, if not more, about learning how and in what ways different people engage with the past, as it was reaching out to young people to engage them in the subject. Thus, an extremely important aim of the project became about understanding what it was that young people wanted to know about history and how they wanted to acquire that knowledge. The openness of the project and the workshops meant that the themes that were explored were those relevant to the youth groups.

Unlike Example 6, Example 7: On the Move, directly engaged the next generation with the subject of history. This project introduced the UCL History Department to a new audience - young people from diverse backgrounds. The project lead noted that the project was learning experience for the historians involved; specifically they were introduced to how different audiences viewed the subject of history. It was necessary for the team to spend time working with the young people to explore what questions were relevant to the young people and how these questions could be formulated and examined historically.