



UCL Beacon for Public Engagement

Final Report

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Contents

Index of Tables.....	2
Abbreviations	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Strategic Priorities	5
3. Culture Change at UCL.....	8
4. Impact	10
4.1 Support institutional commitment to public engagement.....	12
4.2 Values and attitudes towards public engagement	13
4.3 Influencing action and behaviour	15
4.4 Develop skills, enhance knowledge and understanding	15
4.5 Establish and maintain networks and relations.....	16
4.6 Create a learning community.....	16
5. Story of Change	18
6. Lessons Learnt.....	21
6.1 Embedding public engagement within HEIs	21
6.2 Working with other HEIs and the NCCPE to share best practice.....	23
7. Sustainability Plans	25
8. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	27
8.1 Conclusion for Funders.....	27
8.2 Conclusion for other HEIs.....	28
9. Appendices	31
9.1 Appendix A: Summary of activities and funded projects for each year.	31
9.2 Appendix B: Case Studies	35
References.....	47
Bibliography	48

Index of Tables

Table 1: Beacon for Public Engagement and UCL Aims	6
Table 2: Summary of progress against Beacon aims	10
Table 3: The PEU funding streams	31
Table 4: Details of the PEU funding streams.....	32
Table 5: Details of the applications for public engagement funding in relation to UCL Faculty/Office	32
Table 6: Details of public engagement funding awardees in relation to career level	33
Table 7: Funding received to support public engagement projects facilitated by the PEU.....	34

Abbreviations

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
BEAMS	UCL Built Environment, UCL Engineering Sciences and UCL Mathematical and Physical Sciences
BPE	Beacon for Public Engagement
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
PE	Public Engagement
PEU	Public Engagement Unit
RCUK	Research Councils United Kingdom
SLASH	UCL Arts and Humanities, UCL Laws, UCL Social and Historical Sciences and UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies
SLMS	UCL School of Life and Medical Sciences (comprising UCL Biomedical Sciences and UCL Life Sciences)
SMT	Senior Management Team
STFC	Science and Technology Funding Council
UCL	University College London

1. Executive Summary

The Beacons for Public Engagement (BPE) is an initiative launched in the UK to support public engagement by higher education institutions (HEIs). The initiative is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Wellcome Trust. The initiative aims to promote excellence in public engagement and encourage a culture change within UK universities to recognise, reward and support public engagement. This report captures and describes the activities that have taken place under the UCL-led Beacon as part of the BPE programme.

The Public Engagement Unit (PEU) has been established within UCL to support staff and students to involve members of the public in their work. The achievements of the PEU, from the period of its inception in May 2008 until December 2011, are summarised below:

- 91 public engagement projects have been funded through various grants.
- One Beacon Fellowship has been completed and five public engagement mentors have been appointed.
- A total of 237 partner groups/organisations have been linked to the programme.
- Creation of the Annual UCL Provost's Awards for Public Engagement.
- Creation of the Annual UCL Public Engagement Symposium.
- Over 37,560 people have attended programme and project activities.
- Over 1600 UCL staff and students and 530 people outside UCL, have taken part in training and mentoring on public engagement.
- £98,136 additional funding has been received from external agencies to support projects facilitated by the PEU.
- Advice and support has been provided on 47 public engagement and research funding applications to external bodies. These have been awarded funding totalling over £10 million.
- 37 Bright Club events have been delivered, and attended by approximately 3,933 people.
- 60 Bright Club podcasts have been created with an average download figure of 1,955 per episode.
- Creation of the Bite-Sized Lunchtime Lecture series featuring 44 speakers over three academic terms.
- Development and approval by the UCL Senior Management Team and UCL Council of a UCL Public Engagement Strategy.
- Public engagement is now included as a requirement in the UCL academic staff promotions criteria.

Conclusion

To varying degrees, the five aims of the Beacon initiative have been met. The PEU has had a long term impact in supporting institutional commitment to public engagement. It has been successful in creating an independent structure and model for public engagement, and has addressed many barriers traditionally faced by HEIs undertaking public engagement. The PEU has also driven a culture change at UCL both at a strategic and grassroots level, which has led to a longer term commitment to public engagement through the continuation of the unit. The PEU can now build upon the success that the Beacons programme has allowed, and focus on a more targeted approach within the Schools and Faculties.

2. Strategic Priorities

The Beacons for Public Engagement (BPE) is an initiative launched in the UK to support public engagement by higher education institutions (HEIs). The initiative is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Wellcome Trust. Specifically, the initiative aims to promote excellence in public engagement and encourage a culture change within UK universities to recognise, reward and support public engagement.

For the purposes of the BPE, HEFCE defines public engagement as:

“bringing together Higher Education specialists and non-specialists to develop new channels of communication and mutual understanding. The 'public' includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with an HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.”

Six BPEs were set up to pilot a programme of public engagement activities. Each BPE was made up of one or more higher education institution, receiving £1.2 million funding over a period of four years (November 2007 – December 2011). A National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) was also established to coordinate the dissemination of learning from the initiative.

Specifically the strategic aims for the BPE programme have been to:

- Create a culture within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students;
- Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved;
- Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level;
- Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise;
- Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning.

UCL is one of the six Beacons for Public Engagement. In May 2008 a Public Engagement Unit (PEU) was set up within UCL, funded through the BPE. The remit of the PEU is to support activities which encourage a culture of two-way conversations between university staff/students, and groups outside the university.

In its bid for funding UCL documented the following objectives:

- Provide grants for innovative, high profile public engagement, through partners, with clear success criteria, including fellowships and bursaries;
- Build networks of public engagement practitioners, researchers, external organisations and Beacon partners;

- Develop and promote training and mentoring programmes to support practitioners (whether academic or support staff, or students) within the institution;
- Develop and publish online guidance for those engaging with members of the public across UCL;
- Launch a dedicated website to provide a portal for promotion of public engagement and training opportunities, sharing of evaluation, and a means of celebrating public engagement activity as a valued part of academic life;
- Ensure that public engagement activities are appropriately monitored and evaluated;
- Develop and communicate a UCL Public Engagement Strategy with the aim of enhancing the value and increasing the effectiveness of the university's work in public engagement;
- Launch an annual scheme of awards rewarding staff and research students for achievements in public engagement;
- Review UCL's Human Resources Strategy to ensure that public engagement is appropriately acknowledged through appraisal and promotion procedures and staff training and development.

In summary, the UCL-led BPE programme aimed to encourage a culture change at UCL with regard to public engagement, and to facilitate and coordinate public engagement opportunities, through identifying and building upon best practice. Table 1 documents the aims of the BPE initiative in relation to UCL's public engagement aims.

Table 1: Beacon for Public Engagement and UCL Aims

Beacon for Public Engagement Aims	UCL Aims
1. Create a culture within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students	<p>A. To ensure all UCL's public engagement activity is integrated, targeted, supported and valued</p> <p>B. To embed public engagement within UCL's policy and practice, as a core business activity</p>
2. Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved	C. To raise the profile of public engagement activities within UCL by actively promoting the value of this work
3. Ensure HEIs address public	B. To embed public engagement within

engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level	UCL's policy and practice, as a core business activity
4. Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise	D. To share best practice with the HE sector.
5. Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning	D. As above

3. Culture Change at UCL

At the beginning of the BPE initiative in 2008, UCL was already involved in a range of public engagement activity and many staff and students were passionate about this area of work. In March 2008 the research consultants FreshMinds¹ were appointed by UCL to undertake an investigation of public engagement at UCL. This research provided a background to staff attitudes towards public engagement and a snapshot of public engagement activity at UCL. The study revealed that there was an opportunity to coordinate public engagement activities at UCL, and build upon the existing strengths in public engagement being undertaken by the institution. The findings from this study were used to inform the BPE programme implementation at UCL, outlined in detail below.

Programme management and organisational structure:

In the period 2009-2011 the core PEU team existed of:

- Head of Public Engagement (full-time position);
- Public Engagement Coordinator (full-time position);
- Evaluation Officer (part-time position).

The PEU works to support activities which “encourage a culture of two-way conversations between university staff and students, and people outside the university.”² The role and remit of the UCL PEU is summarised below, covering six broad areas of operation within the institution:

- **Funding and facilitating public engagement projects.** Provide grants and support for public engagement projects;
- **Networking and brokerage.** Build networks of public engagement practitioners, researchers, external organisations and Beacon partners;
- **Training and mentoring.** Develop and promote training and mentoring programmes to support practitioners within the institution;
- **Support and advice.** Develop and publish online guidance for those engaging with public groups across UCL;
- **Strategy.** Develop and communicate a UCL Public Engagement Strategy with the aim of enhancing the value and increasing the effectiveness of the university’s work in public engagement;
- **Reward and recognition.** Organise an annual scheme of awards rewarding staff and research students for achievements in public engagement.

Throughout the life of the BPE programme there has been continuous support from a number of staff linked to the initial bid for funding, including the Vice-Provost (Academic & International) and the Director of Museums and Public Engagement.

¹The FreshMinds (2008) report can be downloaded from the following web link:<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/research/Reports/Baselinesurvey>

² The Public Engagement Unit website: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/>

The UCL Public Engagement Steering Group was set up following the BPE award. The 20 members of the group represented a range of sectors, organisations and disciplines and the group was chaired by Professor Michael Worton, the Vice-Provost (Academic and International). The diversity of members aimed to provide a spectrum of voices within and external to UCL. The steering group membership was impressive, with an inter-disciplinary spread of expertise and range of public engagement experience (in terms of audiences and modes of engagement).

A network of partners were nominated in the UCL proposal for BPE funding. These were:

- Arts Catalyst
- Birkbeck College
- The British Museum
- Cheltenham Science Festival
- City and Islington College
- The Southbank Centre

The intended role of the PEU was to facilitate and broker collaborations between these core partners. However, the practice of partnership has been very different than initially anticipated in the original programme bid. The working links failed to develop in the formal way as planned: partnerships instead developed around specific audiences, projects, and initiatives.

4. Impact

The UCL-led BPE uses a wide range of activities and strategies (e.g. funding streams, symposiums, awards, support, training, mentoring, events, formal and informal networks, learning by doing, case studies) for the engagement of different groups, predominately UCL staff and students. Table 3 illustrates the achievements of the PEU against the Beacon aims, based on a fundamental appraisal of the UCL-led BPE projects and programme since its initiation.

Table 2: Summary of progress against Beacon aims

Beacon for Public Engagement Aims	Achieved through.....
1. Create a culture within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students	<p>Creation of a PEU, located within the Museums and Collections Department (core funded by UCL from July 2012)</p> <p>Over 37,560 people attended project and programme activities</p> <p>Funding 91 public engagement projects and activities through the <i>Beacon Bursary Scheme</i> (51 projects funded), <i>Beacon Bursary Dissemination Scheme</i> (1), <i>Innovation Seed</i> (17), <i>Reveal Festival</i> (1), <i>Step Out</i> (7), <i>Train & Engage</i> (9), <i>Bloomsbury Festival</i> (5) funding schemes</p> <p>£199,555 funding provided, with £721,272 reported match funding gained for public engagement projects</p> <p>Funding 1 <i>Beacon Fellowship</i> and subsequently 5 <i>Public Engagement Mentors</i></p> <p>Facilitating public engagement programmes (e.g. organising <i>Cradle to Grave</i>, 37 <i>Bright Club</i> events, attended by 3933 people, which is c.106 people per event. There are also 60 <i>Bright Club</i> podcasts with an average rate of 1955 downloads per podcast</p> <p>Providing support and advice to 599³ people</p> <p>Inclusion of public engagement as a criterion in the academic staff promotions procedure</p> <p>Developed and managed the annual <i>Provost's Awards for Public Engagement</i> (2 award events held and 10 awardees to date)</p> <p>Building up an evidence-base of case studies of public engagement projects</p>

³ This number refers to the names collated in the contact database held by the PEU. In reality the actual number of people the PEU has provided support and advice to be higher, as this database is not used to capture the details of those who have contacted the PEU once.

<p>2. Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved</p>	<p>Training and mentoring provided to over 1,600 UCL staff and students</p> <p>Training and mentoring provided to 530 staff and students from other HEIs and public engagement related institutions</p> <p>Providing advice and support on a range of public engagement activities (e.g. project ideas, evaluation, funding applications, research impact plans)</p> <p>Creating opportunities for first steps into public engagement for early career researchers and students (e.g. <i>Bite-Sized Lunchtime Lectures, Train & Engage, Step Out</i>)</p>
<p>3. Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level</p>	<p>Developed the <i>UCL Public Engagement Strategy</i>, which has been approved by Senior Management Team (SMT) and UCL Council</p> <p>Embedding public engagement in UCL's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Teaching and Learning Strategy</i> ○ <i>Research Strategy</i> ○ <i>International Strategy</i> <p>Coordination of 3 UCL <i>Public Engagement Working Groups</i> to develop the UCL Public Engagement Strategy</p> <p>UCL signed up to NCCPE's '<i>Manifesto for Public Engagement</i>'</p> <p>Influencing the UCL master-planning exercise</p>
<p>4. Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise</p>	<p>Developing partnerships (237 partner organisations linked to programme and project activities)</p> <p>Encouraging networking and brokerage (e.g. establishing the <i>Annual UCL Public Engagement Symposium</i> (3 held), facilitating UCL's contribution to festivals, organisation of <i>Early Careers Researchers Public Engagement Summer Sessions</i>, establishing <i>Bite-Sized Lunchtime Lectures</i>, managing the Birkbeck/UCL <i>Train & Engage</i> programme)</p> <p>Recognising and rewarding public engagement through nominating UCL staff and students for award schemes (at UCL and beyond)</p> <p>Providing support and advice to more than 599 people</p>
<p>5. Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning</p>	<p>Funding and facilitating a range of public engagement projects and programmes (e.g. <i>Bright Club, Public Engagement Mentors</i>)</p> <p>Built up an evidence-base (e.g. case studies of specific public engagement projects, 'how to' guides)</p> <p>Supporting replica models of UCL-led public engagement</p>

	<p>mechanisms (e.g. the role and remit of a PEU, 11 replica <i>Bright Clubs</i>, the PEU's approach to funding public engagement)</p> <p>Dissemination and influencing policies and strategies (e.g. the <i>Manifesto for Public Engagement</i>)</p> <p>Strategic advice provided to HEIs on particular initiatives (e.g. public engagement support services, the RCUK Catalysts bid)</p>
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In September 2009 a framework was developed for the evaluation of the UCL-led BPE. The framework is made up of a range of information linked to the five strategic aims of the Beacon programme.⁴ The five aims provide the conceptual boundaries for the evaluation; these aims have been segmented into a series of culture change dimensions of the programme. These dimensions are:

- Support institutional commitment to public engagement;
- Values and attitudes towards public engagement;
- Influence action and behaviour;
- Develop skills, enhance knowledge and understanding;
- Establish and maintain networks and relations;
- Create a learning community.

In summary, the framework describes the set of guidelines that connect the evaluation strategy of inquiry and methods of collecting data. Monitoring and evaluation methods were adopted to collect evidence and inform an understanding of how these dimensions have been met. The overview of findings is grouped under the above headings in order to explore and map the activities against the principles of the BPE programme, so as to demonstrate the relationship between these activities and the concept of an 'HEI-public engagement culture.'

4.1 Support institutional commitment to public engagement

The UCL-led BPE programme represented a complex interplay of strategies as well as practical actions to formalise and embed public engagement within UCL. Primarily the establishment and continuation of the PEU has played a major role. The PEU supports and encourages public engagement across the institution, and this provides a foundation for both coordinated and increased public engagement activities within the institution. Post Beacon funding, the PEU team has increased from three to six full-time members, allowing for more individual and targeted support across the Schools.

The creation of the ***UCL Public Engagement Strategy*** is another factor contributing towards longer-term commitment to public engagement. The UCL Public

⁴ The UCL Beacon for Public Engagement Evaluation Framework can be downloaded from:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/research/framework>

Engagement Strategy gives legitimacy to the process and practice of public engagement within the institution.

The recognition and reward of public engagement is a core feature of the BPE aims and is seen as a component in embedding public engagement at UCL. The UCL-led BPE has approached this in many ways. Firstly, through the organisation and delivery of an internal annual awards programme for public engagement, through the **Annual Provost's Awards for Public Engagement**. Secondly, through the active nomination of UCL staff and students for **external public engagement awards**, and finally, through the incorporation of elements of public engagement in the **UCL promotions criteria**: public engagement is included as a requirement in the academic staff promotions procedure at UCL.

A core objective of the PEU is to influence policies and strategies, to encourage the incorporation of public engagement as a priority in UCL institution-wide mission statements and strategic plans. The UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021 has been developed in order to outline a vision and strategy for UCL for the coming 10 years. Public engagement is referred to within this paper:

“UCL will continue its commitment to public engagement, in order to understand public concerns and attitudes, to inform public opinion and to address the barriers to adapting individual and mass behaviour. We will make the outcomes of our research accessible and comprehensible to the public, and engage in responsible and mutually beneficial debate.”

4.2 Values and attitudes towards public engagement

Staff enjoyment of public engagement activity continues to be a driving force behind much public engagement work. This level of motivation was identified initially through the FreshMinds report of 2008,⁵ but has also been confirmed within this evaluation more than three years later. There is a wealth of evidence from across the evaluation – from observations, project learning and evaluation reports, interviews – that staff and students enjoyed activities immensely and looked forward to them.

Staff and students involved in public engagement activities also articulated benefits in terms of things they had learnt. Below is an example of the learning gained by a project leader at the end of their project:

‘The work of the Bentham project has helped to stimulate the Laws Faculty to become more involved in public engagement. Project staff spoke to the Faculty about their experiences; these experiences will also feature in a new Laws Faculty intranet site for staff as well as an external site about public engagement explaining what it is and how to do it.’

Although enjoyment and learning have been key factors behind public engagement activity, linking this activity to research and teaching has been a key objective. The

⁵ FreshMinds (2008), Establishing a Baseline for Public Engagement, p5

UCL Public Engagement Strategy proposes six broad categories for engagement that all link to research and teaching activities. These are:

- Telling public groups about our work;
- Supporting communities with our expertise;
- Nurturing a society in which the next generation want to take part in research, teaching and learning;
- Letting people outside the university contribute their research and knowledge to our programmes;
- Taking part in dialogue about the direction of our research and teaching;
- Creating knowledge in collaboration with communities and interest groups outside the university.

There is also a strong internal awareness of the principles and values of 'quality' engagement within the PEU, and it is important that this message continues to be promoted more widely within the institution and the sector. Below is a list of considerations to ensure the success of any PE activity. These guiding principles have been developed by the evaluation expertise within the PEU, and academic expertise at UCL, and they draw upon literature within the field (Rowe and Frewer 2000, Stilgoe 2003, Wynne *et al.* 2005). The principles mentioned below are now an intrinsic part of the working processes of the PEU:

- **Transparency** in the process and the decisions made. The PE activity should be transparent so that all of those involved (e.g. directors, staff and beneficiaries) can see and understand what is going on, particularly how decisions are being made.
- **Clarity and purpose.** It is important to set clear parameters for the PE activity. The nature and scope of PE should be clearly defined; this should, ideally, include both its expected output and the mechanisms of the activity.
- The **relevance** of PE activity. The activity should be justified as being relevant, for example, is the activity useful or responsive to the audiences' needs?
- Application or **influence.** The result of the PE activity should have a genuine impact and be seen to do so; otherwise the activity could be seen as ineffectual. Thus, there should be clear acceptance beforehand as to how the output of the activity will be used.
- The **timing** of involvement. The timing of involvement of stakeholders in the PE activity should be considered to ensure that the involvement becomes salient.
- **Cost/resource effectiveness.** Value for money is a significant motivation for PE, which (in many circumstances) needs to be demonstrated. Effective PE requires access to appropriate and relevant resources (e.g. information, people, skills) to enable full involvement in activity.
- **Representative.** Those participating should consist of a representative sample of the public, or of the targeted group. The issues of 'representation' can also refer to the consideration of a range of viewpoints.

- **Audience focus.** The PE activity should be specific or tailored to certain factors or partners or audiences. There is a need to take the time to carefully think about the audience, to identify and approach the right people, consider what interests them and why they should be involved.
- **Independence.** The PE activities should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way.
- Engage people both **meaningfully** and **respectfully**.
- **Evaluation and learning.** There is a need to consider how to evaluate the success of, and learn from any PE activity undertaken.
- Build in time to critically **reflect** upon the activity or project.

4.3 Influencing action and behaviour

The resources provided by the UCL PEU to carry out public engagement projects (e.g. training, funding, support) have overcome some of the stated barriers to public engagement in the institution (e.g. money, expertise, commitment) outlined in the FreshMinds baseline public engagement report.

In many cases within the institution, engagement is achieved by staff and students through one-off events and activities (e.g. a festival, an open day, a lecture) rather than it being a continuous process. However, there is evidence that, in some cases, those involved in the UCL-led BPE programme (e.g. previous *Bright Club* speakers, or those leading *Beacon Bursary* projects) continued to participate in public engagement activities (e.g. mini lectures, podcasts, blogs, radio interviews, running user-groups and focus groups) after their initial involvement.

There was evidence of staff and students joining activities independently as a result of being involved in the programme, and evidence of staff and students continuing to attend projects. Although the service provided by the PEU had not been set up with this expectation, this is a significant outcome from the BPE programme. Due to the rapport built with the PEU and the friendly and flexible nature of all staff members within the PEU, longer term working relationships have been built with key 'champions' of public engagement who have then been involved with other public engagement projects.

4.4 Develop skills, enhance knowledge and understanding

The evaluation research of the PEU initiative emphasises the social perspectives of skill development, where new ways in learning have been supported by the PEU. For example, a range of training and mentoring programmes have been organised. These have been predominately targeted at UCL staff and students. Despite the responsive, organic nature of the training provided by the PEU there are some key topics covered by programmes, including:

- Introduction and background to public engagement;
- Methods and techniques for engaging certain audiences;
- Systems and structures to support public engagement at UCL;
- Working with public groups;
- Understanding the potential impacts of teaching and research activities;
- Evaluation – tools and techniques;
- Applying for funding for public engagement projects;
- Communication.

Many of those involved in public engagement activities noted that they acquired knowledge and skills, which included insights into their research/subject area, communication skills and project management skills:

‘I found it certainly interesting because it gave me the chance to learn about topics I have never heard before. It was also useful because I acquired new skills. I will add also challenging, because for me it was the first time I tried to explain to a vast non-specialist public the specific work I am doing, and rewarding as it was one of the most positive experience (in terms of enjoyment and feedback) I had in my career.’ (‘Bite-Sized’ speaker)

Furthermore, some of the core messages from the training and mentoring programmes have been translated into hand-outs or guides, available from the UCL public engagement website (www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement).

Public Engagement Mentors

The ‘Mentorship’ programme was developed by the PEU in February 2010. The Mentorship fund gave out a total of up to £50,000; with up to two mentors appointed in each of the UCL schools. During the summer of 2010, five Beacon Mentors were appointed to carry out activities that would help embed public engagement across the Schools in the 2010/11 academic year. Each mentor had the task of linking public engagement activity to the research and teaching within their school, and they had quite a lot of flexibility in doing so.

4.5 Establish and maintain networks and relations

The PEU has been part of a number of partnerships, internal and external, HEI and non-HEI, formal and informal, including its own and the national BPE network. The evaluation findings show that as of the end of December 2011, 237 partner organisations have been identified as being involved with the programme.

4.6 Create a learning community

A community of public engagement practitioners, both staff and students, has formed around certain projects and activities. Communities are in one sense a sum of

interpersonal and grouped relations, and these have established around certain projects and activities which have been a crucial part to how the project actually works. Specific examples include the 'creative' community that has established from *Bright Club*, the 'learning' community that has formed through the *Beacon Bursary* funding scheme and the 'instrumental' community (i.e. a group acting to deliver a certain programme or project) that is the *Bite-Sized Lunchtime Lectures* committee.

The PEU's focus on evaluation and reflection – in all funded and non-funded public engagement activity at UCL - has been at the heart of activity since the very beginning. All project leaders are trained in evaluation and are required to complete an 'End of Project Learning Report,' highlighting the successes of the project, but also addressing problems that arose within the project and acknowledging the learning gained through this. The PEU have encouraged an element of risk-taking, maintaining that the lessons learnt from public engagement activity are just as important as the success gained from them.

5. Story of Change

UCL Public Engagement Unit Interview with Professor Michael Worton (Vice Provost, Academic and International)

The Beacons for Public Engagement (BPE) programme is an initiative that was launched in the UK to support public engagement by higher education institutions (HEIs). The UCL Public Engagement Unit (PEU) was established with funding from this programme. This story of change highlights the journey of the PEU from mid 2008 until December 2011, as the team attempted to fulfil their overall aim of formalising and embedding public engagement at UCL.

Background to public engagement at UCL

Professor Michael Worton, Vice-Provost (Academic and International) was responsible for winning the funding to create the PEU. He stated his reasons for proposing this public engagement initiative at UCL were: ***'We wanted to get to people who don't read newspapers, who don't watch television documentaries or the news, who are not interested in politics or science – but who are all potentially going to be affected by the kind of research we do and the kind of teaching we do.'***

Michael's passion for public engagement is evident in his undivided involvement with, and loyalty to the PEU and his recognition of the importance of public engagement in improving everyday life for ordinary people; ***'I think it ties in with the notion of UCL as being a university which is a value-rich university, which is committed to contributing to solving the world's greatest problems. But part of that has got to be about helping people to understand better the world in which they live and I do see public engagement as helping people to live their lives more fully – whether they ever come to one of our events at UCL or not, they nevertheless can be touched by some of the stuff that we are doing.'***

In preparing the institution for the potential transformation, Michael states: ***'The actual bid process involved an awful lot of consultation within UCL. It was important that this was a document which had a lot of strategic thinking from the institutional point of view, and not simply saying that this is what individual champions might think, but it is actually strategically aligned with UCL's main objectives.'***

Implementation of public engagement at UCL

Michael was planning the long-term future of public engagement at UCL – not only through securing short-term funding for the creation of the PEU, but also through building trust amongst senior people, encouraging 'buy-in' from across the institution, and regularly 'drip-feeding' the merits of public engagement across the Faculties and Departments. Michael has been very careful about planning and structuring the future of public engagement at UCL, ensuring that new developments are done in a timely, sensitive and appropriate way.

In attempting to embed public engagement as a core business activity at UCL and including it within UCL's policy and practice, public engagement has been successfully implemented in the UCL Promotions criteria, as a requirement of individuals when they are seeking a promotion. Public engagement has also been included within the UCL Research Strategy and the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The PEU has worked with academics and senior managers to create UCL's Public Engagement Strategy in order to provide focus, direction and guidance in public engagement activity for the institution.

What makes PE work?

Michael states: *'I think you need to know your own institution very well and one thing that was really helpful was having someone with top UCL-level responsibility for it. It's about drip-feeding and drip-feeding makes things mainstream. People stop thinking about it as another extra activity that they have to do.'* Michael also stated that public engagement needs to become a part of daily life at UCL, and in order to achieve this level of inclusion, it takes time.

Similarly, having a clear and concise definition of public engagement at UCL has been imperative to the success of the programme. Michael states that *'we need to keep this focus that public engagement must be a two-way dialogue, it is not about widening participation, it is not the same thing as knowledge exchange or dissemination. It is very difficult to keep that focus on it being dialogic if we allow it to be everything we do outside our own doors. My worry is that if you allow public engagement to be everything you want it to be, then it becomes nothing.'*

Successes of the Beacons programme at UCL

Although the Beacons programme at UCL had many successes, one that stood out for Michael was the 'Food Junctions' project where sustainability was a highlighting feature. After two series of food-focused events with local communities, a cookbook was produced and sold. This then helps to raise money for future initiatives and so the momentum continues. Michael also emphasises that the yearly UCL Public Engagement Symposium is a defining success factor of the programme: *'It's where people 'show and tell' to each other and there is a great sense of people being together and sharing in each other's successes.'*

Bright Club has also been another self-sustaining, organically flourishing form of engagement where academic staff and students talk about their research to a live audience in the form of a comedy show. This has led to the creation of eleven replica Bright Clubs across the country.

The expansion and continuation of the PEU at UCL is perhaps the most significant success of the Beacons programme in terms of ensuring that the longer lasting impact of such an initiative can be felt. The learning derived from the Beacons initiative has placed the PEU in good stead to carry things forward with a dynamic, forward-thinking approach, placing UCL as a leading light in university public engagement.

Challenges of the Beacons programme at UCL

Getting institutional 'buy-in' has been the biggest challenge for the Beacons programme at UCL. However Michael has addressed this accordingly: ***'It was about trying to know the temperature and the appetite for change.'*** Michael's subtle and timely approach was therefore a suitable way to tackle this issue. Another challenge that has always been at the forefront of public engagement activity is the conflicting demands placed on researchers. For their research, staff strive to get recognition in terms of the Research Excellence Framework or by having their research published. There is no such national recognition for public engagement and so it can be seen as a secondary task.

The way forward....

Public engagement at UCL has not only led to establishing community relations in the local area, but has also helped to create communities within UCL. Inter and cross-disciplinary partnerships have been formed due to projects such as Food Junctions.

Public engagement with the local community originated from the volunteering agenda: ***'Over the last decade we have made enormous strides, largely it started with volunteering...and I think that the public engagement movement at UCL helped that development of us being part of a much more complex world than before.'*** (Michael Worton).

'We have been incredibly lucky to have the people of the quality that we have in the PEU....a team which has been astonishingly successful at making a very diverse community at UCL engage with public engagement.'

For the future, with much more public engagement capacity and a greater support structure, Michael suggests that the focus should be on public engagement at a global scale: ***'There is one thing I feel that we haven't quite done as much as we could do which is public engagement at a global scale – this has been partly a capacity issue and partly that I just don't think we have thought about it. Conceptually we haven't come round to this yet because there has been so much that we have wanted to take forward here.'***

6. Lessons Learnt

Within the UCL-led BPE a number of factors emerged to ensure the effective delivery of a programme which aims to achieve university-public engagement: themes that can be termed as *keylessons learnt*. This is a first step in developing a practical guide which sets out how to bring about culture change.

6.1 Embedding public engagement within HEIs

▪ **Research and planning**

An initial scoping exercise needs to be done within an organisation to learn about the existing structure for, and amount of public engagement activity. This will also help to identify perceptions and understanding of public engagement amongst students and staff, and identify gaps within the organisation. This baseline information will be imperative to inform future strategies and operations. It must be highlighted that existing programmes and services, or the existing culture within an organisation should not be undermined, instead they should be treated as areas that can be developed further. Once this data has been gathered, careful, clear and concise planning is needed about the way forward. Any strategy created needs to explain fully what the term public engagement does and does not include, what support can be provided and future visions for the organisation. The PEU at UCL was very clear from the outset regarding its role of supporting staff to undertake public engagement as opposed to doing it for them.

▪ **Vision, clarity and purpose**

Whilst there is a strong and commonly agreed strategic approach to public engagement, there is an even stronger need to retain local flexibility. It is this flexibility that has been key to the UCL-led BPE success. Departments, research groups, staff and students involved in public engagement generally know their audiences already, as such they are able to tailor activities. An institutional approach that tries to restrain the flexibility is unlikely to be successful and would not have appealed to most people.

▪ **Leadership**

Without strong leadership and strategies across the PEU or department within an organisation, services that work with public communities are unlikely to achieve cultural change amongst the wider organisation. It is also key to get senior figures on board in order that they can make changes within their departments in a conscious and considerate way. One UCL public engagement mentor highlighted that having a new Dean within her department has made a huge impact upon the public engagement agenda as he recognises the importance of such work.

▪ **Coordination and promotion**

Through the establishment of a PEU, the BPE programme has enabled UCL to create something in the field of public engagement that is greater than the sum of the numerous public engagement activities undertaken. Most public engagement activities now have a central umbrella through which they are co-ordinated. This hub of activity is a necessary body that is needed in order to develop and maintain effective university public engagement.

▪ **Visibility**

An approach adopted from the very beginning of the PEU has been to make it as visible as possible – both internally and externally. Much time and effort was spent initially meeting people across the university, giving the PEU some form of identification and essentially making people aware of its existence. Similarly, the PEU is heavily promoted on websites and social media channels, and has even created a certain amount of branding in the form of its successful ‘Bright Club’ events.

- **Partnerships and audiences**

This is an important area where careful planning and forward thinking is key. If there are to be many partners involved in a public engagement programme, the roles and responsibilities of each need to be clearly defined and agreed upon – before the start of the programme. Likewise, the stakeholders involved need to be relevant in order that they can monitor the success of the programme effectively. However it should be recognised that stakeholders may change over the life of the project, or may want to be involved at different stages.

- **Application or influence**

The result of the engagement should have a genuine impact on the activity taking place and be seen to do so; otherwise the activity could be seen as ineffectual. To prevent false or superficial engagement, there should be clear acceptance beforehand as to how the output(s) of the process will be considered and ultimately used by the key decision-maker(s). This level of accountability is essential to build trust between partners involved in the process.

- **Provide a range of opportunities**

Underlying the flexible nature of public engagement, there are a variety of methods in which to carry out public engagement projects and these should be heavily promoted throughout the life of the programme. With the PEU at UCL, it was made clear that public engagement can range from informing the public about one's work, to taking part in two-way dialogue about the direction of research and teaching. The underlying ethos always being that one-way engagement (i.e. informing) should lead to deeper understanding and two-way dialogue. Additionally, the range of funding streams (Bursaries, Innovation Seed Fund, Step Out), projects (Bright Club, Bite-Sized Lunchtime Lectures), regular and one-off events (Awards, Symposium, Festivals) that people can get involved with allow for a wider scope of public engagement to take place.

- **Sustainability**

Maintaining public engagement activity within departments is a continuous challenge. Due to conflicting demands on time, public engagement activity is an area that needs to be an ingrained part of academic life. In reality, once a public engagement project has ended, it has been difficult to keep staff and students involved in further public engagement activity. However, there is potential for staff and students to gain skills and confidence while undertaking public engagement projects, and this should make it easier for them to do it again, therefore consistent support and encouragement is an essential element to ensure sustainable public engagement.

- **Evaluation and learning**

There is a need to consider how to evaluate the success of, and learn from, any activity or project undertaken. This involves building in time for reflection, both for the person managing the process of engagement and those engaged. The PEU at UCL

has been extremely successful at embedding evaluation at both a programme and project level from the very start. All those involved in carrying out a project were encouraged to build evaluation into their project plans at the beginning in order that they could learn valuable lessons for any future public engagement activity. On a separate level, the workings of the PEU itself were also thoroughly evaluated. This has resulted in valuable lessons learnt for the future of the PEU.

6.2 Working with other HEIs and the NCCPE to share best practice

The UCL-led BPE extends beyond its own immediate partners to liaise with a network of five other Beacons and the NCCPE. They comprise of Edinburgh Beltane, Beacon North East, Manchester Beacon, CUE East and Beacon for Wales. All incorporate varying partnerships, most of which include other universities and community organisations. Input into the BPE partnerships from all members of the PEU has included formal participation (e.g. the Engage Conferences held in December 2010 and November 2011) and informal engagement (e.g. general advice).

Working with the other Beacons to share best practice has been an integral part of the PEU, with regular communication between members of the project teams across the country. At a management level, senior managers within the Beacons provided advice and support to each other enabling greater efficiency and effectiveness. The PEU's working relationship was particularly strong with Edinburgh Beltane, where guidance and assistance was provided in enabling Edinburgh to begin their own Bright Club series, following on from the successful model created at UCL. Although liaising with some Beacons was easier than others, allowance needed to be made for different personalities and varying ideological contrasts of what public engagement is, which led to inevitable differences.

A defining feature of the UCL Beacon is that it was focused primarily on culture change in one organisation in London. This enabled UCL to clearly identify strategies and priorities without dealing with potentially conflicting needs of other organisations. It allowed the PEU more independence, greater control and therefore stronger impact within the organisation. It also allowed for more flexibility in experimenting with different aspects of the programme, investigating what works well for the organisation and the local area, and then developing these initiatives. In comparison with other Beacons where the initiative was divided between many organisations (either HEIs or otherwise), the UCL Beacon delivered a particularly successful public engagement programme perhaps due to this focus.

Another aspect of UCL that enabled it to become a successful Beacon was that the role of evaluation was an important part of the programme from the beginning. An Evaluation Officer was brought in as a member of the team and has thereafter carried out a thorough and detailed evaluation of the programme. The PEU, as an independent organisation facilitating public engagement, has allowed for accurate, up-to-date and extensive evaluation data that has been used to create a model of best practice.

UCL and the NCCPE have enjoyed a strong partnership, encouraging mutual benefit. As Paul Manners (Director of the NCCPE) states: ***‘UCL has been a pleasure to work with, being genuinely collaborative and keen to share learning. The PEU has grown and (been) sustained, and is unique.’*** Paul also commended the champions of public engagement at UCL stating that ***‘Michael Worton, Vice-Provost (Academic and International) has a profound and intellectual grasp of public engagement, and Sally MacDonald (Director, Museums and Public Engagement) and Steve Cross (Head of Public Engagement) identified early on that they needed wide ownership of academic engagement. They established clarity with other areas of higher education such as widening participation, worked well with them, but also separate from them.’***

7. Sustainability Plans

UCL recognises the importance and value of public engagement, not only internally for the organisation itself and its staff, but also externally for the wider community. It is this sense of responsibility in seeking how UCL's research and teaching may impact society and how the university can generate public benefit that has led the institution to commit funding for the continuation of the PEU and further development of public engagement activity. To begin with, the university has incorporated public engagement within various strategies, and created an independent Public Engagement Strategy to provide guidance for all staff:

UCL Public Engagement Strategy

UCL's Senior Management Team and College Council have signed-off a Public Engagement Strategy (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/publicengagementstrategy>) which commits the institution to continue centralized support after the Beacons programme, to expand that support, and to embed public engagement in other UCL activities.

Public engagement embedded in other UCL Strategies

Public Engagement is explicitly mentioned in **UCL's Research Strategy** (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/vision-strategy>), where the third of three main aims is:

"Increasing the impact of our global university's research locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Effective public engagement is a pre-requisite of research impact, both by understanding the public's varied concerns, beliefs and behaviour, and by responding with relevant proposals...without diminishing the profundity of our research, we will make it accessible and comprehensible to the public and engage in responsible and mutually beneficial debate."

UCL's Teaching and Learning Strategy states:

"UCL will develop its teaching and learning activities and support structures to...provide opportunities to students to develop a rounded and engaged view of academia through volunteering and public engagement."

The International Strategy states:

"UCL is recognised nationally as undertaking outstanding public engagement work...we will work to make UCL's international campuses similarly open to and engaged with local communities, building on successful work in London but developing new forms of engagement appropriate to different cultures and places."

Public engagement is also a key element of the new **Masterplan** for UCL's Bloomsbury campus (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/masterplan>)

Structures and Support

UCL have recruited a number of new staff to expand the UCL Public Engagement Unit to 6.0 FTE, and with a budget of £380,000 p.a. The unit will continue to provide strategic, evaluation and project support. There will be a new focus on support directly targeted to Schools and Faculties, alongside provision of public engagement opportunities that cover the whole of UCL.

The PEU are establishing a new reporting structure to help ensure delivery of the Public Engagement Strategy, which will take the form of an Advisory Group to be chaired by the Vice-Provost (International) and will comprise senior representatives from Outreach, Volunteering, Communications & Marketing, HR, Estates, and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research), alongside the Director of Museums and Public Engagement.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

This report has highlighted the impact of the UCL Beacons for Public Engagement programme. It has shown how the Public Engagement Unit has not only embraced the underlying Beacon ethos in promoting excellence in public engagement and encouraging a culture change at UCL, but it has also created an independent structure and model of public engagement that has the capacity to become a natural part of university life.

The UCL-led BPE programme represents a complex interplay of strategies and practical actions to formalise and embed public engagement within UCL. The five Beacon strategic aims have built firm foundations and a clear vision for delivery of the UCL-led BPE programme. The different types of activity linked to the strategic aims: funding and facilitating public engagement projects; encouraging networking and brokerage; supporting training and mentoring; providing advice, rewarding and recognising public engagement; and influencing university strategies - provide a good balance between top-down and bottom-up mechanisms to cultivate both interest in, and respect for public engagement.

Although the following conclusions have been separated for funders and for other HEIs, they are essentially mutually applicable:

8.1 Conclusion for Funders

In assessing the impact of the Beacons initiative at UCL, it has proven to have succeeded in its main aims. The PEU has driven culture change, built capacity for public engagement, ensured that public engagement is included in strategic priorities, created internal and external partners, and tested different methods of supporting public engagement. All of the above can now be further developed in order to maximise the opportunities that the Beacons initiative has provided. Within the space of four years, there has been a significant shift in the culture of UCL, where public engagement has been highlighted as one of the ways forward, and the importance of UCL not only being a global but also a local university is now recognised. However, there is still much to be done to embed public engagement as a natural part of university life, not as an addition to teaching and learning. The continuation of this effort to further embed public engagement is a priority for the PEU.

From a financial perspective, the impact and benefits of public engagement at UCL have far outweighed the cost of running the PEU, providing opportunities and facilitating public engagement projects. The PEU has provided a university-wide infrastructure for public engagement which is now a model to build upon. One of the main barriers to public engagement at UCL, and indeed at other HEIs, is the lack of funding available. The Beacons initiative directly addressed this barrier, allowing a wide range of public engagement activity to take place. The continuation of the PEU at UCL and the funding provided for it are testament to the recognition and awareness of public engagement and the benefits it reaps.

So far, the Beacons initiative at UCL has provided an array of opportunities for staff and students to carry out public engagement activities. However, most of these

have been one-off projects, a fact that raises concerns about sustainability. Efforts continue to be made to enable staff and students to participate in on-going public engagement activities and build long-term working relationships with communities. Due to conflicting workloads and lack of time, this is only achievable once public engagement is an integral part of academic life.

A defining feature of the UCL Beacon is that it has delivered the programme essentially as a single organisation. This independence awarded UCL more flexibility and more control over its own programme, and inevitably allowed the PEU to set an ideal example of a public engagement model. It also allowed UCL the freedom to experiment and be innovative, identifying and developing the things that worked well.

Although the shape of the UK HEIs is uncertain, it is expected that agencies, policy makers and local communities will work more closely together to ensure a more collective, mutually beneficial alignment of policy. In addition, it is expected that there will be a need for more transparency to ensure that multiple partners gain the mutual trust and backing needed for public engagement activities. Given these factors there is increasing pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of such processes and strategies.

8.2 Conclusion for other HEIs

Since the creation of the PEU and the subsequent expansion of the unit, public engagement is now a prominent feature of academic life at the university. When staff first arrive, they are introduced to the concept of public engagement through the Provost's Welcome induction. Through inclusion in the promotions criteria and through acceptance and advancement at a senior level at the university, public engagement is more embedded within the institution.

Within the projects and activities facilitated and supported by the PEU, a number of factors have emerged to ensure the effective delivery of the engagement process. The application of public engagement has occurred through an adaptive approach which combines strong leadership, experimentation, coordination and a shared vision. The resources, support and guidance provided by the PEU for staff and students to carry out public engagement projects (e.g. training, funding, support, guidance, brokerage) have overcome some of the stated barriers to public engagement within UCL.

Some of the challenges highlighted in this report will need to be addressed in order to create a leading example of the benefits of public engagement at a higher education institution. Primarily, public engagement needs to be clearly and concisely defined. The definitions of 'public' and 'engagement,' the types of activity that can be included and where it fits with teaching and learning, for example, should be clarified from the start in order to ensure smoother delivery. The PEU has successfully defined public engagement through its Public Engagement Strategy and although it has been a significant achievement that public engagement is now included in various university-wide strategies, the next step is for these developments to cascade through Schools, Faculties and Departments until they reach the individual.

Secondly, having the PEU as a single body within the organisation, to co-ordinate, facilitate, deliver, promote and support public engagement has proved to be central to the success of public engagement at UCL. The PEU has not only provided the resources, organisation and management of public engagement, but often the staff have been commended for their moral support, personal communication and welcoming approach. The unit has been through a learning process itself, and can now offer staff and students examples of best practice and advice on what will work well based upon the experiences of previous projects. The unit has been thorough in monitoring projects and events, and has now gathered valuable data to promote successful and practical examples of public engagement activity.

For any public engagement initiative to be successful, it is essential that the university understands the public participants and that relationships are built on a basis of mutual trust. This can only happen over a period of time and the subsequent benefits will be realised thereafter. Different people have different needs, university public engagement may be more appropriate in one area of the local community than in others. The history, culture, demographics, and different organisations of a local area need to be researched and understood. Partnerships should be nurtured so that they may lead to new initiatives and further networking. In essence, the creation of a strong bond with members of the public is the ultimate goal.

For public engagement to succeed within an HEI, it must be embraced and promoted, and have the backing of senior figures. The Vice-Provost (Academic and International) at UCL, Michael Worton, was instrumental in not only initially winning the funding for the Beacons initiative at UCL, but also in being a key driver of public engagement, providing the support, loyalty and strategic guidance for public engagement to be embedded at UCL.

Building on past successes, the PEU must create opportunities for longer-term engagement, enabling all of the positive outcomes that this approach can yield. With the continuation of the PEU, there is a need to set more ambitious targets. In addressing these challenges, there is an underlying need for public engagement to be embedded within teaching and research at any HEI. When public engagement is no longer seen as an 'add-on' to existing work, but instead an integral part of the role of staff and students in higher education, then the longer term impact of public engagement work will be recognised.

In summary there is sufficient evidence that the UCL-led BPE programme as delivered by the PEU has been effective in formalising and embedding public engagement as a valued and recognised activity for UCL staff and for students. This represents a wider movement within UK higher education sector where ideas of 'participation,' 'engagement' and 'involvement' have become key in the higher education policy agenda. Furthermore, these engagement-driven processes are considered pivotal to demonstrating the deeper impact of HEIs reaching out to their communities. The PEU has been a key product of the Beacons programme, however it has now evolved to become a distinct model of encouraging, supporting and facilitating public engagement. Due to its evident successes, its focus and clarity, and its identification of the way forward, the PEU has won the support of the institution to continue embedding public engagement at UCL.

The Beacons initiative has allowed public engagement to be recognised and valued throughout the higher education sector. It has sown the seeds for further developmental strategies to be put into place at UCL. It is important to note, however, that this initiative has been a journey, the purpose of which has been to grow and develop, rather than to arrive at a destination.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: Summary of activities and funded projects for each year.

There have been **9** funding streams in operation over the life of the programme. These are detailed in Table 4. The UCL-led BPE six month review reports (March 2010, September 2010 and March 2011) provide the full details of the funding streams.

Table 3: The PEU funding streams

Fund	Maximum per project (£)	Total pot of funding (£)	No. of calls (per year)	Dates	Notes
Beacon Bursaries	1,500	20,000	3	December, April, July	Open to staff and PhD students
Innovation Seed Fund	20,000 ⁶	70,000	1	February	Open to staff and PhD students
Fellowship	50,000	50,000	1 ⁷	February	Open to staff
The REVEAL Competition	20,000	20,000	1 ⁸	December 2009	Open to staff and PhD students
Beacon Mentors	10,000	50,000	1	April 2010	Nominated staff
Step Out	750	5,000	-	Rolling programme (during term time)	Open to all students
Train & Engage	500	5000	1 ⁹	January 2011	Open to UCL and Birkbeck arts and humanities postgraduate students
Beacon Bursary Dissemination Scheme	1,500	10,000	1	October 2011	Open to staff and PhD students
Bloomsbury Festival	1,000	5,000	1 ¹⁰	October 2009	Open to staff and PhD students

Each funding scheme has specific aims, for example the *Beacon Bursaries* funding scheme provides small grants of up to £1,500 to support projects that will help staff and students to connect their research or teaching with people outside UCL, whereas the *Train & Engage* funding scheme was an interactive, learning-by-practice training scheme for arts and humanities postgraduate students from UCL and Birkbeck to turn their ideas for public engagement into reality.

⁶ The amount for this fund was originally £20,000 and later reduced to £10,000

⁷ The Fellowship scheme ran in January 2009 and February 2010, and then was replaced by the Mentors Scheme

⁸ REVEAL was a one-off competition, linked to the REVEAL festival in Kings Cross

⁹ Train & Engage was a training and funding scheme, supported by the AHRC

¹⁰ The Bloomsbury Festival was a one-off competition, linked to the festival in October 2009, this scheme was managed by 'Hidden Cities.' As a result the PEU have limited records of this scheme.

Since opening in December 2008, 92 projects (receiving £328,200.68) have been supported following competitive rounds of funding which received 417 applications requesting £1,534,533.86¹¹ for public engagement activities.

Table 4: Details of the PEU funding streams

Scheme	Number of applications received	Number of projects supported	Total funding awarded (£)	Total funding requested (£)
Beacon Bursary	292	51	£57,303	£368,933.40
Innovation Seed	77	17	£193,045	£1,003,344
Fellowship	5	1	£45,000	£90,666.30
REVEAL Competition	16 (stage 1) 3 (stage 2)	1	£18,164	£58,164 ¹²
Train & Engage	11	9	£4,485	£5,485
Step Out	10	7	£3,703.68	£6,441.16
Beacon Bursary Dissemination Scheme	1	1	£1,500	£1,500
Bloomsbury Festival	5 ¹³	5	5,000	-

A full breakdown of all funded projects to date, in relation to UCL Faculty/Office of the stated project lead, is outlined below in Table 6.

Table 5: Details of the applications for public engagement funding in relation to UCL Faculty/Office¹⁴

		Awardees	Total applications	Percentage funded
Faculty	Arts & Humanities	15	58	26
	Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment	14	63	22
	Brain Sciences	13	49	27
	Engineering Faculty	6	32	19
	Laws Faculty	1	11	9
	Life Sciences	3	21	14
	Mathematical & Physical Sciences	5	31	16
	Medical Sciences	5	28	18
	Population Health	7	24	29
	Social & Historical Sciences	14	74	19
Vice-Provost	Vice-Provosts Offices (Academic & International, Enterprise, Operations,	4	18	22

¹¹ This table does not include the 5 Public Engagement Mentors (£50,000) as they were appointed. This amount may be slightly less due to some projects applying for funding (for the same project) more than once.

¹² Only the three applications for Stage 2 of the bid process were asked to submit a full budget

¹³ The total application for Bloomsbury Festival is unknown as this scheme was managed by an external agency.

¹⁴ This table does not include the Bloomsbury Festival projects

Office	Research)			
Other	Bloomsbury Theatre, UCL Union	0	3	0
TOTAL		87	412	21

Table 6 illustrates 15 projects out of 87 funded projects are linked to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. It is important to note that the Train & Engage funding project was targeted at the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, so the figures are slightly skewed.

Furthermore, 22 of the 87 funded public engagement projects are led by postgraduate students and 65 of the projects are led by staff (as outlined in Table 7).

Table 6: Details of public engagement funding awardees in relation to career level

		Number of funded projects
Career level of project lead	Professor	8
	Lecturer	21
	Senior Lecturer / Reader	3
	Teaching Fellow	3
	Teaching Assistant	0
	Support staff	5
	Research Associate	3
	Research Fellow	22
	Postgraduate student	22
	Undergraduate student	0
	Other	0
TOTAL		87

Monitoring and evaluation of completed funded projects shows that on many occasions the total value of the projects was beyond the PEU award (as listed above). Many of those leading projects applied for further funding to support their public engagement activities. For instance, in the *Beacon Bursary* funding scheme, the small grants gave many of the project leads a starting point for a whole range of activities and funding applications, aimed at different audiences and addressing slightly different problems, but all built around the same themes or ideas.

Receiving grants to facilitate public engagement projects

This section of the report briefly introduces projects that have been facilitated by the PEU (full details have been documented in UCL-led BPE Review Reports). These facilitated projects include:

- Cradle to Grave;
- Bright Club;
- Bright Club Podcasts;
- Train & Engage;
- Words, science and art;
- Fix the world in 5 minutes (to be delivered in 2012)

£98,136 of additional funding has been received from external agencies to support projects facilitated by the PEU since the beginning of the BPE initiative at UCL. Table 8 documents the successful funding applications submitted:

Table 7: Funding received to support public engagement projects facilitated by the PEU

Application	Source	Amount (£)
Bright Club Podcasts	Wellcome Trust	15,500
Bright Club Trilogy	STFC	3,500
Gethan Dick – words, science and art project	Wellcome Trust	8,000
Reflective engagement is effective engagement (Train & Engage)	AHRC	7,993
Train & Engage 2011/12: BEAMS	EPSRC	20,830
Train & Engage 2011/12: SLMS	Wellcome Trust	20,000
Fix the world in 5 minutes: BEAMS	EPSRC	18,313
Bright Club	Physiological Society	4,000

Although these projects have been planned and delivered by the PEU all have provided a means for UCL staff and students to become involved in public engagement activities. These activities included giving a short comedic talk at a comedy night, podcasts, working with an artist, undertaking a workshop with women prisoners and applying for funding to run public engagement projects.

9.2 Appendix B: Case Studies

Case Study 1 - BRIGHT CLUB

'It's so much fun – does it count as work?'

(Bright Club speaker)

Bright Club is an exciting, creative and innovative model for public engagement focused around popular entertainment. It is an event where researchers become comedians for one night only.

Bright Club provides a creative platform for staff and students to perform short sets about aspects of their research or teaching, all with a single unifying theme. Themes explored so far have included: Time, Space, Light, Food, Books, Power, Connections, Bodies, Noise, Craft, Building, People.....and many more.



Background

The Public Engagement Unit at UCL identified a key challenge: many university staff and students struggle to take the first step into public engagement. Bright Club is designed to be a 'continuous start-up,' a fun place for people to have a first positive experience, from which to build their public engagement practice.

Bright Club is a novel model of public engagement for UCL. It breaks new ground in terms of combining research, entertainment, comedy and music, and also through the diversity of themes, academic disciplines and a variety of career levels of staff and students involved. It is not simply an event, but a distinct model of public engagement and raising awareness of research.

The target audience for Bright Club are 20-40 year olds who are not linked to UCL, but who take part in cultural events. This is an audience historically under-served by the university. The project also seeks to engage with an audience of potential Bright Club presenters.

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Bright Club aims to:

- Raise audience awareness of science, research and the role of higher education institutions (HEIs);
- Influence the attitudes and values of audience members towards, science, research and the role of HEIs;
- Develop researchers' skills, enhance knowledge and increase their understanding of public engagement.
- Exchange information, share learning and inform culture change across the sector.

Description

Bright Club has four interlinked areas of activity:

- **Monthly comedy events.** These take place in a comedy club in London. A professional comedian comperes the evening, and staff and students perform short sets about aspects of their research or teaching, all with a single unifying theme.
- **Training programme.** Staff and students are trained in performance skills and how to communicate their work in an engaging and entertaining way that puts the audience at the centre of the experience.
- **Podcasts.** 60 Bright Club podcasts have been produced featuring some of the staff and students who have performed at live events, alongside comedians.
- **Replica Bright Club models.** These are events organised and held outside the regular London-based monthly events. Currently there are regular Bright Club events in the following cities:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| • London | • Guildford | • Bristol | • Cambridge |
| • Manchester | • Cardiff | • Glasgow | • Belfast |
| • Newcastle | • Edinburgh | | |

- There have also been one-off bright club events in:
 - Sydney
 - Norwich
 - York
 - Leeds

Successes

There have been 37 Bright Club events in London up until December 2011, attended by 3,933 people, which equates to approximately 106 people per event. There are also 60 podcasts available with an average rate of 1,955 downloads per podcast. In addition to these outputs, the following outcomes have also been achieved:

1) Providing opportunities for creativity. The speakers (predominately UCL staff and students) are trained to communicate their work in an engaging and entertaining way. Both speakers and audience members commented on the model of public engagement offered by Bright Club:

“Well you come to a comedy night and you expect to be entertained and amused, but you don’t expect to learn anything! I really liked the mix of science and comedy.....it’s a fantastic concept.” (Audience member)

2) Raising awareness and changing attitudes. An intended outcome of the project was to raise awareness of, and influence audience attitudes towards science and research. The evaluation confirmed that this outcome has been achieved:

“It opens your eyes up to the types of subjects and the types of people involved in research. There is the subject, but there is also the person. I think Bright Club is as much about the subject as it is about the people.” (Audience member)

The Bright Club podcasts, which feature some of the researchers that performed at the evening events, extend this learning to a wider audience both in terms of numbers and location, as anyone anywhere can listen to Bright Club. Speakers mentioned that Bright Club has assisted them to raise awareness of their research:

“People engaging with science and research is really good, not just in terms of people knowing facts, but the point of view in understanding how research works.” (Speaker)

An unintended outcome was the perceived effect Bright Club has on the institution (UCL) in terms of raising awareness of public engagement, as noted by a member of the project team:

“It has changed the way people think about engagement and the Public Engagement Unit at UCL. It helps us to put into very visible practice the principle of good engagement, and it helps us to communicate what public engagement can be.” (Member of the project team)

3) Personal and professional development. One of the project’s main impacts is on the speakers, who develop skills and learn new things. The learning outcomes include developing subject-specific knowledge, learning about public engagement (e.g. methods to engage) and/or the development of skills (e.g. communication, time management). This is illustrated by a speaker involved in Bright Club and the podcasts:

“Eight or nine months ago I hadn’t really presented or tried to explain my work to the public. Now I have, and it has been a lot of fun. Now, I’ve started to learn those skills of how to make my work interesting and accessible.” (Speaker)

4) Acting as a catalyst. Many of the speakers have been involved in other public engagement projects or activities since performing at Bright Club. Bright Club gave speakers a starting point for a whole range of public engagement activities, events and funding applications, aimed at different audiences and addressing different topics

5) Stimulating conversations and developing relationships. The output from Bright Club is a group of researchers (UCL staff and students) who have increased skills in discussing their work with non-specialists in a friendly and approachable manner, and are able to relate their research to that of individuals in other disciplines. As intended, a ‘Bright Club community’ has emerged from this project – made up of a variety of researchers, speakers and audience members. Networks have been established within and across institutions, departments, groups and individuals.

The way forward.....

As replica Bright Club models have been set up in other cities, it would be useful to have some formal co-ordination of these under one single Bright Club umbrella. The Bright Club website achieves this to a certain extent, however, creating a first point of contact for Bright Club organisers in order to ensure alignment of activity, sharing of contacts if relevant, and to assist systematic evaluation taking place would be an ideal next step. In Scotland, the ‘Social Enterprise Scotland’ organisation provides support for Bright Clubs, and a similar setup in the rest of the country is an area to be explored further.



© UCL Public Engagement Unit, Hilary Jackson

Resources:

Bright Club Website:

www.brightclub.org

Bright Club Podcast:

<http://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-bright-club-podcast/id368949295>

Case Study 2 – ‘FOOD JUNCTIONS’

‘Now I can agree that UCL is part of the local community – previously I had an impression that our work has nothing to do with the university.’

(Co-ordinator, local community organisation)

Reveal was a ten-day festival from 22nd April to 2nd May 2010, at Kings Cross. The festival was organised by ‘CreateKX’ – the Kings Cross creative and cultural development agency.

‘Food Junctions’ was a part of the Reveal Festival, a student-led project that involved a range of people including UCL staff and students, members of the local community, creative organisations, local businesses and food enthusiasts.

Background

Building on the success of the 2007 ‘Arrivals’ programme, Reveal aimed to lay the foundations for 2012, so that Kings Cross/St Pancras could fully realise its position as an Olympic gateway.

Reveal offered artists, participants and audiences access to the hidden treasures of Kings Cross, allowing them to discover the past through local stories, site specific performance and installations in some of the area’s iconic buildings.

The UCL Public Engagement Unit collaborated with CreateKX to open a competitive funding call to UCL staff and/or students to deliver a public engagement project at the festival. The result was ‘Food Junctions.’



© UCL, Francine Solley

Food Junctions aimed to:

- Raise awareness of the significance of food and empower people to take action;
- Reinforce artistic practice as a public forum;
- Develop researchers’ skills, enhance knowledge and increase understanding of public engagement;
- Exchange information and share learning between UCL departments;
- Develop recommendations for the policy agenda and implementation towards sustainable food practice.

Description

With a mission to ***‘empower participants to become living artists through tailor-made events that help us understand, reflect and take action to reshape our relationship with food’*** (Marina Chang, Food Junctions project co-ordinator), the Food Junctions project was an ambitious undertaking created by a multi-disciplinary team of students at all levels of university life.

Food junctions was a series of 60 events and activities which included art workshops, discussions, wine tasting, films, tours, readings, performance, art installations. The project targeted a range of audiences (such as local residents, community groups, festival attendees, local organisations). These activities were organised with the Camley Street Natural Park, the Calthorpe Project and surrounding organisations in Kings Cross.

Successes

The original Food Junctions project proposal ***'came out of a frustration that we as students often feel our studies do not directly impact upon society and of our yearning for actually doing something to transform this reality'***(Marina Chang). The resulting project became less an academic intervention and more a series of creative conversations, seeking greater learning opportunities, application and understanding of their disciplines.

- 1) **Increase in number of events delivered.** Although it was originally proposed to deliver 16 events for the Food Junctions festival, due to the enthusiasm and dedication towards this project across UCL, a staggering 60 events were delivered. The mushroom effect of this activity meant that Food Junctions was described as a 'festival within a festival.'
- 2) **Between 1800 - 2000 people attended Food Junctions events.** Although there were a variety of comments from participants at the festival, below are a few examples:
'the interaction, you get to meet people at festivals' (25-34 year old male)
'excellent panel discussion' (55-64 year old male)
'food growing and gardening tips' (65-74 year old female)
'the indoor-outdoor element' (25-34 year old male)
'informative presentations and talks' (45-54 year old female)
- 3) **Diversity of UCL project staff.** 150 UCL staff and students, from 27 different departments, participated in delivering Food Junctions. Coming from a variety of different academic disciplines in UCL and also at different stages of their academic career, these factors enabled learning to begin to be shared at the moment the group was formed. Project leader, Marina Chang commented that ***'one of the ideas was to cross borders, to try to include as diverse a community as possible from undergraduates...[and] postgraduates..... We also wanted to cover different disciplines because we think the university plays a critical role in bringing people together in terms of public engagement.'*** Additionally, there were a further 100 contributors that were external to UCL.
- 4) **Over 20 different organisations were involved in Food Junctions:** The value of networks across UCL and beyond is clearly a key success factor of the scope and imagination of Food Junctions. ***'What is fascinating is the networks that have been established, and the sharing through the project, and that's really hard to capture, yet ultimately has more of an impact on the things that are actually achieved'***(Gemma Moore, Evaluation Officer, UCL Public Engagement Unit). Below are a list of stakeholders involved in the project:

Create KX	Letchworth Garden City
Camley Street Natural Park	Bompas and Parr
Calthorpe Project	Food Cycle
Alara Wholefoods	Urban Wines
Global Generation	Poet in the City
City Leaf	You and I Skills
Brockwell Bake	Hare Krishna
Urban Bees	Organic Lea
Camden Council	Art and Architecture
Choc Star	Beeja (Dance)

The way forward.....

The Food Junctions project has been successful in sustaining its impact within the local community. As Sian James from CreateKX mentions: ***It's the tangible projects that keep going and the sustained conversations that start during the programme. It's [about] keeping those conversations going, and those relationships going.*** The success of the Food Junctions project is evident through its many achievements since the end of the Reveal festival:

- 1) A new project entitled 'Foodpaths' has been delivered as a follow-on to Food Junctions. Foodpaths included a series of events that aimed to facilitate sustainable university-public engagement in the Kings Cross area, and to also create constructive 'paths' (shared visions and effective methods) towards sustainable food systems through the creation of spaces for dialogue among stakeholders.
- 2) The Food Junctions project also led to the creation of a Food Junctions Recipe Book. This is an amalgamation of everything learnt from the Food Junctions project and is available at: <http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/fj/>.
- 3) Additionally, 14 other events, invitations, workshops or opportunities for filming have emerged as a result of the Food Junctions project. The partnerships formed within the project have led to a ripple effect of sister projects.



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Food Junctions website:
www.food-junctions.org.uk

Case Study 3 – ‘QRator’

‘It’s cool and awesome, there’s some really amazing stuff in here....’

(Museum visitor)

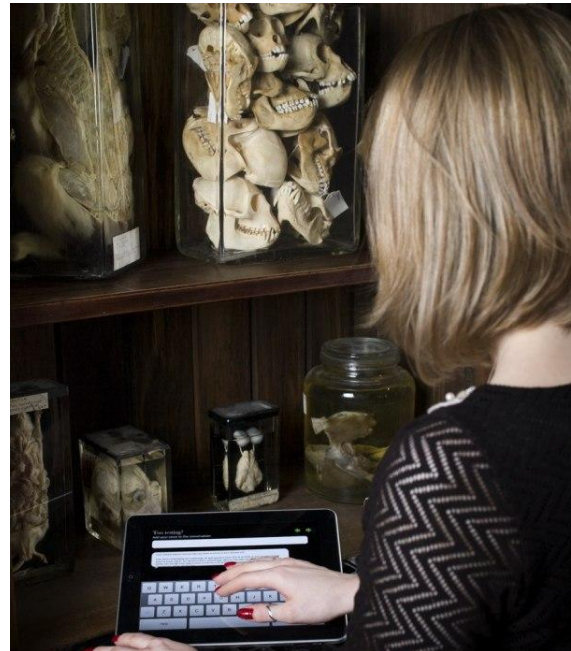
QRator has been an innovative, cutting-edge model of public engagement based in a museum environment. With the use of iPads in UCL’s museums, visitors, academic researchers and museum curators have the opportunity to provide feedback and essentially co-curate objects themselves.

QRator has been recognised as paving the way for two-way dialogue and meaningful interaction between the university and members of the public through museums. Most recently, the QRator project has won the Museums and Heritage Award for Innovation (2012).

Background

QRator was a collaborative project between three UCL departments: the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities (UCLDH), UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA), and UCL Museums and Collections.

The project arose from the ‘Tales of Things’ technology, a method for cataloguing physical objects online and capturing memories and stories. QRator takes the technology a step further, providing an opportunity to move the discussion of objects direct to the museum label and then onto a digital label, allowing for further interaction between visitors.



© UCL Grant Museum, Matt Clayton

Description

The interactive system is designed to be un-intrusive while enabling members of the public to simply type in their thoughts and interpretation of museum objects and then click ‘send’. Their interpretation becomes a part of the objects history and ultimately the display itself via the interactive label system which allows the display of comments and information directly next to the artefacts.

Essentially, QRator is an iPad/iPhone and web-based system that allows everyone to be a curator and share their views on an exhibition. Visitors can examine an object before leaving their thoughts via an iPad to create a digital, ‘living’ label that subsequent visitors can read and respond to.

By downloading a free application to an iPhone or android phone, visitors are able to see rolling updates to the digital label after they leave the museum. Alternatively, these can be viewed via Twitter. Participants are also able to take part in the conversation online via the QRator site (<http://www.qrator.org/>) with comments appearing live in the museum.

Content currently covers three museums at UCL: The Grant Museum of Zoology, The Petrie Museum of Egyptology and the UCL Art Museum. The Grant Museum of Zoology is one of the oldest natural history collections in England, dating back to 1827. The collection comprises over 68,000 skeletal, taxidermy and wet specimens, covering the whole of the animal kingdom, it is the only remaining university zoology museum in London. The Petrie Museum houses an estimated 80,000 objects, making it one of the greatest collections of Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology in the world and the UCL Art Museum holds over 10,000 prints, drawings, sculptures, paintings and media works dating from the 1490s to the present day.

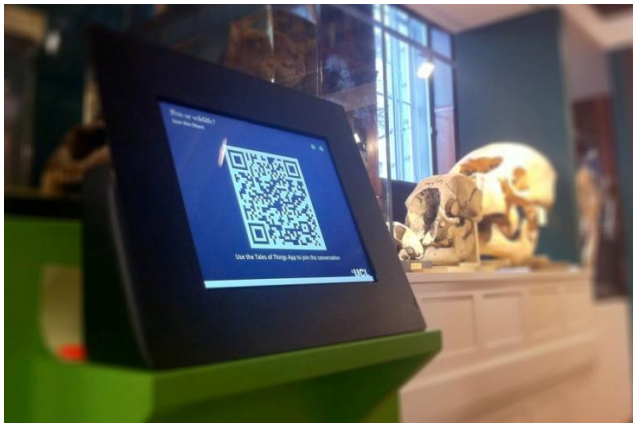
The museums will offer a continual programme of 'current questions' for visitors to engage in. UCL is taking the opportunity to rethink what a university museum can be; a place not simply for a passive experience but for conversation, positioning the museums as places of experimentation, dialogue and debate.

Successes

- QRator has won an award as part of the UK Museums and Heritage Awards for Excellence (2012) in the 'Innovation' category.
- Featured in the highly prestigious NMC Horizon Report: Museum Edition 2011. (<http://www.nmc.org/horizon-project/horizon-reports>). This is a highly selective publication about new technologies in museums. Decisions about inclusion are made by an international committee of museum professionals and the report is widely read and respected.
- Nominated for the Best of the Web Award at 'Museums and the Web 2012.'
- The project has also received widespread recognition in books, journals and conference papers, and has also been the subject of much online coverage on various websites.
- Between March 2011 and June 2012, there have been 4,348 visitor contributions through the QRator iPads. This has led to possibly the greatest outcome, and the intention behind the whole project, that visitors are genuinely engaging and leaving feedback for further discussion.
- The quality of the responses has far exceeded expectations, considering the risk of misuse that comes with using a free-text anonymous digital device. In total around a third of all comments (after moderation) directly attempt to answer the question and conversations between visitors in the museums at different times are common, highlighting not only that visitors are reading the questions posed by the museum, but also suggesting that visitors are inspired to share their own experiences, thus co-constructing multiple public interpretations of museum objects.
- Linked to this, the museums at UCL have been innovative in adopting the concept of 'radical trust.' That is, trusting visitors to leave honest feedback with no moderation or intervention from the museums. Traditionally, many museums have been hesitant to allow unregulated communication between visitors, for fear of inappropriate comments. By trusting visitors, this has largely been avoided.
- In the Grant museum, research suggests that approximately 3 in 10 visitors to the museum choose to leave a contribution on one of the QRator iPads (assuming that visitors make no more than one contribution per visit). This rate is a lot higher than the expected return of feedback through paper-based forms.

The way forward...

1. Due to the success of the QRator project, the Imperial War Museum invited QRator project leaders to collaborate on a funding application to NESTA's Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture. This collaboration was successful, ranking amongst the top eight of 495 applications, and funding has been awarded to support art and cultural organisations to work with those with digital expertise to understand the potential offered by new technologies.
2. Members of the QRator team have been offering support and advice to other museums and organisations that are interested in using QRator, such as the V&A, Natural History Museum, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Design Museum, Manchester Museum, and Tyne and Wear Museum and Archives.
3. The findings from the QRator project are also disseminated regularly at conferences for the wider museums sector, including 'Museums and the Web,' 'Museum Next' and 'Digital Humanities 2012.'
4. The project team are also considering the possibility of commercialising QRator, with a view to embedding it within the museum sector.



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www.qrator.org

Case Study 4 –‘BIRDSHOT DAY’

‘The day was excellent, and I believe has most likely made a positive improvement to the lives of some of the sufferers, and I guess that's the best result you can hope for.’

(Person with Birdshot Chorioretinopathy)

The Birdshot Day was set up to bring together people with Birdshot Chorioretinopathy, their friends and family members, and healthcare professionals with an interest in this area.

This public engagement project at UCL was a first attempt to have a collective understanding of the disease, and its extent at a national level. On 11th September 2010 an event was held at the UCL campus in order to address issues surrounding the disease.

Background

Birdshot Chorioretinopathy is a rare, potentially blinding, chronic, auto-immune form of posterior uveitis which affects adults of all ages. It is still relatively little known and often misunderstood. People with Birdshot may never meet another person with the same condition. Healthcare professionals may only see one patient with Birdshot in their entire professional career. It is not known how many have this condition, it is often misdiagnosed or under-diagnosed and many people are suffering, often in isolation without the support they need.

The team behind Birdshot Day was a forum to bring together all identified people with Birdshot and all health professionals working in the field of Birdshot to exchange information and learn from each other.

The aims of the Birdshot Patient Day were to:

- Reduce the sense of isolation for patients with this rare disease;
- Raise the profile of the disease in the UK;

- Allow a two-way exchange of information between patients and professionals;
- Help to obtain a better visual outcome for patients, and;
- Provide a base for research.



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Description

The first UK Birdshot Day was set up by a team that included an academic member of staff at UCL and staff from Moorfields Eye Hospital in collaboration with the ‘Birdshot Uveitis Society’ (BUS). The underlying aim from the start to the end of the project has been to better understand Birdshot and to identify the needs and research priorities of people with Birdshot.

The Birdshot Day hoped to develop a community of Birdshotters (as people with Birdshot sometimes call themselves) and professionals, and to foster partnership approaches to this rare disease. They also wanted to have some impact in ensuring that people do not lose their sight needlessly, thus also meeting the aims of the ‘Vision 2020 UK Strategy.’

The programme for the day enabled healthcare professionals and people with Birdshot to come face-to-face for the first time, to discuss in an informal setting, the disease and the impact it has on quality of life. The event allowed for in-depth engagement, including up-to-date information on government policy to improve services for people with Birdshot, practical exercises such as an art workshop to increase awareness of the disease, and a question and answer session to address concerns.

Successes

Although the project set out to attract 100 professionals and people with Birdshot for this one-day event, it far exceeded this target, attracting 126 participants - an equal spread of 50 Birdshotters and 50 healthcare professionals, and an additional 26 supporters or family members. The overall comments and feedback received after the event were testament to its impact both on Birdshotters – many of whom spoke of **‘a new sense of hope for the future,’** and on professionals – who relayed the benefits in terms of **a better understanding of Birdshot.** Other successes were as follows:

- **A reduced sense of isolation of people with Birdshot.** Most Birdshotters had never met another individual with their condition. In the six months following the Birdshot Day, 47% of Birdshotters had been in touch with another individual with Birdshot. As one Birdshotter commented: *‘I am no longer scared of my future and I feel less isolated and powerless.’* Also after six months, 52% of health professionals had been in touch with at least one other newly acquainted Birdshot colleague.
- **Raising the profile of the disease.** In the 3 weeks following the patient day, the number of ‘hits’ on the BUS website more than doubled to 67,000. Six months after the event, all health professionals who responded to the evaluation stated they would recommend a similar event to people with Birdshot and 96% of them stated they would recommend it to other health –care professionals. It is hoped that the profile of Birdshot will continue to increase as the benefits can be life-changing; *“It was so great to finally meet and talk to others who are asking the same questions as me. I can now say that I don’t feel so alone and the day has made me feel more positive for the future” (patient feedback).* An educational DVD about the event has also been created by BUS, the Biomedical Research Centre, and the NIHR (National Institute for Health Research) and circulated to all eye departments in the UK.
- **A two-way exchange of information between people with Birdshot and professionals.** The programme for the day was based on a survey of Birdshotters and their needs. The day included talks about Birdshot (from both healthcare practitioners and those suffering with Birdshot), networking events, practical exercises and question and answer sessions to allow essential two-way learning, communication and feedback. When people with Birdshot were asked prior to the event how much they knew about Birdshot, 100% of those that answered ‘nothing’ or ‘very little’ had stated they had learnt something by the end of the day. Similarly, when professionals were asked the same question, 43% stated they had ‘very little’ or ‘a little’ knowledge before the event, and this percentage fell to 6% at the end of the day.
- **Providing a base for research.** People with Birdshot voted for their priorities for medical research. Nearly half of the patients wanted research to focus firstly on the causes of Birdshot. This is because they want to prevent the next generation from experiencing what they have suffered. Birdshotters’ commitment to this research was also very apparent in the fact that on the day, every single one of them was willing to give a blood sample as part of a research project.
- **New partnerships.** The Birdshot Day project led to the creation of new and lasting partnerships between the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology, NIHR Biomedical Centre for Ophthalmology at Moorfields Eye Hospital and the Birdshot Uveitis Society. Other partnering organisations were:

The partnership so far



The way forward...

- 1) **Birdshot Research Network.** The Birdshot Day and the constructive discussions held throughout the day led to the creation of the Birdshot National Research Network. This is supported by the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre for Ophthalmology based at Moorfields and UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and involves 'Team Birdshot' comprising of many expert professionals and people with Birdshot throughout the country.
- 2) **The 2nd Birdshot Day and a new 'Glaucoma' Day.** The success of the Birdshot Day, and the sheer determination of the organising team led to a second event on 3rd March 2012. The experiences gained from the first event, the evident impact upon patients and professionals also led to a similar event for glaucoma patients.
- 3) **Other opportunities.** The success of this day has led to many other opportunities for the organising team in terms of further research and training opportunities surrounding Patient and Public Involvement. The Birdshot team nurse, for example, was invited to an international lecture on uveitis to talk about her experiences at the Birdshot day



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