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CUE East  
Case Studies  
Autumn 2010

CASE STUDY: Public Engagement with Research at the University of East Anglia



Engaging with Communities...  
City, Coast and Countryside

**UEA**  
University of East Anglia

## Welcome

Welcome to our case study publication on public engagement with research. The role of Community University Engagement East (CUE East) at UEA is to provide an environment where public engagement with research and teaching is encouraged, supported and facilitated. This publication is one of three issued in autumn 2010, almost three years into the four year national pilot. The others are on our Public Engagement Continuing Professional Development Programme and on Public Engagement with Teaching. All tell you about some of the wide range of engagement activities that we have supported and how they have helped to change the culture of the University. This edition focuses on public engagement with research and helps to demonstrate the impact of the work that CUE East has undertaken and supported. It is informed by a number of evaluation reports and conversations with engagement practitioners and community partners. In addition, we are especially pleased to present Dr Laura Bowater's story, 'in her own words'.

The CPD edition provides an assessment of the CUE East staff development programme and the Teaching edition profiles five UEA engagement practitioners. As a pilot, we are keen to share not only our own challenges and lessons from a CUE East perspective but also of those experienced by practitioners who may be described as being 'at the coalface'. That way, other individuals and institutions may benefit from the breadth and depth of our experience when they seek to develop their own engagement activities and missions.

This edition is co-authored by Dr Julia Stinton (the Beacons Researcher), Liane Ward (CUE East Operations Manager) and Julie Worrall (CUE East Project Director). Dr Stinton works alongside the team and her role is to evaluate CUE East. She is employed by City College Norwich and undertakes a range of evaluation activities in order to provide constructive feedback on significant learning points as the four year programme develops. This has helped us to embrace the practice of continuous improvement in all aspects of our programme delivery and it has been enormously beneficial.

**Julie Worrall**  
CUE East Project Director

# CUE East Case Study: Public Engagement with Research

## Summary

This case study publication identifies and discusses the background to the programme, aims and objectives, a 'typology' of public & community engagement, process, activity, outcomes and impact, and includes a final word from Dr Rob Liddiard, UEA's School of History. It is informed by contributions from engagement practitioners and their 'community partners' and by a number of funded project evaluations. A key objective of CUE East is to increase levels of support, reward and recognition for public engagement across the institution with the aim of introducing and embedding a culture at UEA where knowledge dialogue is encouraged, nurtured and supported. To facilitate this CUE East provides advice, liaison, brokerage and facilitation, talks, workshops and presentations, community contacts and partnerships, assistance with event organising, project and small expense funds, and professional development opportunities. Staff and students have been offered opportunities to develop, expand and apply their public engagement understanding, skills and knowledge in a wide variety of contexts.

Cover image: *The Butterfly Effect Project, CUE East & Partners*  
Norwich and Norfolk Sustainable Living Festival, May 2009 (see page 9)

## Sources

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## Background

The UEA led Beacon, CUE East, is both inward looking (encouraging a change of culture in respect of public engagement) and outward looking (promoting meaningful discourse with the public):

*“Our ‘knowledge dialogue’ activities are designed to foster an informed climate within which we are all better able to improve quality of life, support social and economic regeneration regionally and inculcate civic values. Our aims are divided into three inward-looking activities and three outward-looking activities.”*  
(CUE East Business Plan, 2007, p.15)

The change of culture refers to the aim to make public engagement an integral part of academic practice that is recognised, valued and rewarded. This includes research,

*“In an internal environment that fosters, records and rewards engagement activity, we believe that research excellence can be positively correlated with effective and exemplary engagement activity.”*  
(CUE East Business Plan, 2007, p. 1)

The challenge of achieving and demonstrating culture change was acknowledged in the original bid for the Beacon status,

*“...Like true public engagement itself, it is a complex, multi-faceted process and cannot be achieved by simple ‘engineering’ or demonstrated by statistics or monetary values such as visitor figures at museums/public lectures and annual spend.”*  
(CUE East Business Plan, 2007, p.12)

The Baseline Research whereby 55 academic and research staff were interviewed about their views on university public engagement and where cultural and institutional barriers to involvement were explored, provided a qualitative baseline against which the change in institutional culture could be assessed. The interviews highlighted that most academics believed public engagement was important but not as important as other activities, such as research and teaching, and for some, administration. A Senior Researcher concludes,

*“It’s very difficult to say because it almost comes into a different category because it is not part of my job description or one of the measures against which I think I will ever be measured... it’s more like deciding do I want to go for a run today? It’s something I enjoy and it’s important but I don’t really see it as part of my paid job.”* (McDaid 2008. p25).

This illustrates that for many, public engagement was seen as a bolt-on activity and not an integral part of research or teaching. In contrast, however, for some disciplines, described in the Baseline Research as being more ‘public-facing’ such as those in the in the Faculty of Health, public engagement was shown to be synonymous with ‘user-involvement’ in both research and teaching. The Baseline Research will be repeated in 2011.

## Aims and Objectives

A core focus of CUE East is to increase levels of support, reward and recognition for public engagement across the institution. The Baseline Research recommendations proposed ‘...the term ‘public engagement’ should be clarified and a typology of activities developed’ and ‘...the barriers to public engagement that have been

identified should be considered, along with any practical steps to address them’ (McDaid 2008. p7). Table 1 (overleaf) indicates how the CUE East programme aligns with and is applicable to the Beacons for Public Engagement (BPE) aims and CUE East objectives.

Table 1: How CUE East plans to meet its objectives and those of the Beacons initiative

Beacon for Public Engagement Initiative Aims	CUE East Objective	To be achieved through
<b>Create a culture</b> in HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels	To introduce and embed a culture at UEA where knowledge dialogue activity is encouraged, tracked, evaluated and rewarded appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentives and Reward Scheme</li> <li>• Enterprise and Engagement tracker</li> <li>• Engagement CPD Programme</li> <li>• Enhancement Fund</li> <li>• Sustainable Living Partnership Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Build capacity</b> for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved	To introduce and embed a culture at UEA where knowledge dialogue activity is encouraged, tracked, evaluated and rewarded appropriately	

## A 'Typology' of Public and Community Engagement

CUE East describes public and community engagement as a multi-faceted and complex activity that benefits UEA staff and students, the University as a whole and the community. It has devised a simple model, now incorporated in UEA's academic promotions criteria, which reflects the one, two and three way types of engagement:



### Communicating knowledge and enriching cultural life

#### 1 way

e.g. public lectures, media work, writing for the non-specialist, exhibitions, showcasing academic know-how, pro-bono schemes, communicating research to the public, acting as the lead for major festival themes, contributing to the organisation and delivery of engagement activities.



### Providing a service and being in dialogue with the public and communities

#### 2 way

e.g. volunteering, promoting and employing user involvement in research and the co-production of research, forums, focus groups, seminars and debates that involve the public, pro-bono schemes, drama outreach, museum education, continuing education and lifelong learning, contributing to the organisation and delivery of engagement activities.



### Being in dialogue with the public and policy-makers

#### 3 way

e.g. governmental committees involving the academic as the 'expert', such as an expert panel, government led public consultation and task forces, and active membership of professional bodies.

Of the academics interviewed for the Baseline Research, 84% said that they had personally been involved in some form of self-defined public engagement. The interview sample included a high proportion of senior academics, thus it was unlikely that the 84% applied to the wider UEA community. Many of the activities cited were one-way communication activities, such as media work, public lectures and writing for the non-specialist audience. A smaller number of

two-way dialogue activities, such as participatory research and interactive events, were given as examples (McDaid 2008. p6).

The Baseline Research identified a number of barriers to public engagement such as time; career progression; peer approval; the research-led culture; perceived risk; funding; attitudes towards public engagement; the media; and, the challenges of engaging people.

## The Process

CUE East, often acting as an intermediary and facilitator, encourages and supports public engagement with research via a range of activities.

Table 2: The key mechanisms through which culture change is to be achieved and examples of specific activity

CUE East Objective	To be achieved through	Examples of activity on encouraging & supporting engagement with research	
<p><b>To introduce and embed a culture at UEA where knowledge dialogue activity is encouraged, tracked, evaluated and rewarded appropriately</b></p>	<p>Incentives and Reward Scheme</p> <p>Enterprise &amp; Engagement tracker</p> <p>Engagement CPD Programme making available engagement training for staff and students</p> <p>Enhancement Fund</p> <p>Sustainable Living Partnership Fund</p>	<p>New &amp; revised academic promotions criteria</p> <p>CUE East Public Engagement Awards</p> <p>A pilot an online system for individuals to record their engagement activity (to be evaluated December 2010)</p> <p>User Involvement in Research Workshop (see vignette 1)</p> <p>Write Out Loud Workshop (see vignette in CPD case study publication)</p> <p>Science, Art &amp; Writing (SAW) Training Workshops for postgraduates</p> <p>Introductory sessions for postgraduate researchers &amp; staff briefings</p> <p>Training on 'How to Run a Successful Café' (see vignette in CPD case study publication)</p> <p>World Art in the City (see vignette 3)</p> <p>Collaborative research in Mental Health</p> <p>The Butterfly Effect (see vignette 2)</p> <p>Sustainable Long Term Care for Older People (see page 10)</p> <p>Invisible Dust – linking leading world scientists and postgraduate students to local artists and schools</p>	<p><b>Advice, liaison, brokerage &amp; facilitation, talks, workshops &amp; presentations, community contacts &amp; partnerships, assistance with event organising, project and small expense funds, and professional development opportunities</b></p>

## Vignette 1: User Involvement in Research Workshop Supported by the CUE East Engagement CPD Fund

### Background

Leaders – Dr Fiona Poland (pictured below), School of Allied Health Professions & Dr Laura Bowater, School of Medicine, Health Policy & Practice, UEA's Faculty of Health. Supported by PPIRes (Public & Patient Involvement in Research), the NIHR Research Design Service and CUE East.

There is a growing recognition that involving service users, carers and members of the public in research processes can help to make research more relevant to peoples' lives and concerns. It can also make it more likely that the research findings will be used and lead to improved practice. Despite policy shifts towards involving the public in the research process, it is important to recognise that this calls for a move away from conventional research that has been mainly driven from the focus, interest or expertise of the researcher rather than users or the public. Many researchers remain unaware of, uninterested in or reluctant to move towards a research base that draws upon 'public expertise and experience'. However, while researchers moving towards such engagement will be entering into a changing research environment, it can also be seen that involving service users, carers and members of the public, means immersing them in research processes that they may experience as both unfamiliar and alien. Several such barriers to 'service user-led research' have been identified within the Faculty of Health at UEA. However it could also be seen that this Faculty had, over recent years, developed a pool of staff and student expertise in addressing at least some of these. Such expertise was drawn on in an exercise to provide researchers and service users with confidence and skills to begin to involve the public within the research process by offering a one-day introductory workshop to engage with issues of PPI, that is, public and patient involvement in research.

### Learning Outcomes

The one-day workshop was designed for researchers and those planning research. It used a mixture of information-giving, real-life examples and experience-sharing with other researchers and service users to achieve the following outcomes so the participants:

- **begin** to understand what involving the public and people who use services in research

can mean, consider reasons for involving the public and people who use services in the research process,

- **explore** ways in which the public and people who use services can be included and involved at difference stages of the research process,
- **begin** to develop the skills needed to involve the public and people who use services at difference stages of the research process.

### Key Events

The one day workshop has now run on two occasions: October 2009 (20 participants), April 2010 (15 Participants). The course is uniquely cross-sectoral in being offered as part of the Faculty of Health Short Course programme for researchers external to UEA whilst also being offered through the CUE East section of the University's staff development programme and in postgraduate research training options.

### Challenges

The course is designed to facilitate a culture change within research. Involving the public throughout the research process is a new concept that presents initial challenges to researchers and members of the public involved in research. It can be an unfamiliar concept to many established researchers who have built successful careers in an era when public participation wasn't promoted; researchers who may ask '*why fix something that isn't broken?*'.

To exemplify its promotion of user involvement in research, it was important to plan and run the course with the integral involvement of service users, carers and members of the public. This brought challenges for scheduling and organisation that required specific investments of time, money, communication and negotiation.

The course relies on the successful participation and engagement of all who are involved and it is important to manage expectations. This means explicitly recognising that everyone brings:

- **intrinsic** value and useful experience,
- **different** experience and values,
- **expectations** which may differ from each others.



## Lessons Learned

Administrative support and negotiation are needed to surmount the particular challenges raised in crossing organisational, disciplinary and community boundaries. This is even more so in Public & Patient Involvement (PPI) because extra support and development is needed to back up the main activity, because extra thought needs to be given to accessible communications and because new ways of collaborating are being established between previously separated groups, teams and organisations.

The response to the course has demonstrated a need for this type of workshop. The course must continue to be adapted to a range of challenges which include changing facilitators, agendas and political climate. More and specific support needs to be given to service users and carers and UEA is well-placed to address these.

## Key Outputs

The workshop has been successfully delivered across a range of skill-levels and disciplines and is now scheduled to run on a regular basis. The course was evaluated and very positive feedback was received from the participants, including the 'PPI' partners,

*"I was surprised by the ease with which people from very different backgrounds were able to share ideas."*

*"I thought there was a great mix of delivery of information and opportunities for participation."*

*"It will significantly change certain aspects of the research project I am involved with."*

The community partners involved with the course provision were from PPIRES, Conversation Partners and mental health services user groups. The course is now embedded within the Health Faculty's MSc in Health Research training for Academic Clinical Fellows.

## Forward Plans

It is planned to run the workshop again in April 2011 and to build upon the experience and lessons from the first two sessions. The course will also be expanded into a Master's module which will seek to give recognition and validation to community as well as academic partners' expertise and learning gained in developing and carrying out the workshop. The aim is to work across and involve wider sections of the community whose experience to date may have been more as research subjects rather than research partners (such as much older people, people with cognitive impairment and those from more socio-economically-disadvantaged groups).

## User involvement in research

CUE East has supported the user involvement in research agenda, particularly in UEA's Faculty of Health, and facilitated a discussion between PPIRes (Public & Patient Involvement with Research – recent workshop pictured overleaf) volunteers and UEA academic staff which addressed a number of key issues on procedures, expenses and on the status of Visiting Researcher rights for active PPIRes volunteers. Penny Vicary (pictured left), a lay member of PPIRes, has recently participated as a 'co-applicant' in a successful research award application from the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme (PB-PG-1207-13321).



The project, 'Improving Preoperative Education for Colorectal Surgery Patients and their Relatives (PREPARE)', is led by UEA and the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital and Penny's collaboration as a co-applicant is a major breakthrough:

*"My involvement in PREPARE has given me the opportunity to move on from the traditional 'user involvement' role to something much more tangible. For example, with Dr Gregory's support, I'm contributing as a co-researcher, analysing interview transcripts."*

*Penny Vicary*

Penny was also actively involved at the concept stage of this research, influencing a number of key factors in the development of the research such as the inclusion of non-cancer surgery patients (35% of the patient group) and the timing of follow-up appointments. Penny's voluntary work, in addition to PPIRes, includes the Macmillan and Department of Health National Cancer Survival Initiative and Genetics Programme. She has also set up her own support group, Pandora's Box and chaired the Norfolk & Waveney Cancer Network. For the past ten years

Penny has championed the rights of patients to play an equal role in research:

*"Achieving real equity in involvement is a challenge in a research culture where user involvement can become too professionalised. I mean, there's an assumption, for example that everyone has access to an office environment. Communication needs to be accessible, putting the power back into patient's hands"*

Penny Vicary



## Collaborate community research

CUE East has developed strong links with the Association for Research in the Voluntary & Community Sector (ARVAC est. 1978), a national membership organisation and resource for people interested in research in or on community organisations.

*"Partnership-building is vital for developing communities' research capacity. Building links between HE and community groups, as enabled by CUE-East, demonstrates the value of creating new learning networks and insights. This has suggested alternative ways to bring together diverse experiences and expertise in ways which would have been less likely without their focus and encouragement."*

Dr Fiona Poland, Chair ARVAC

CUE East has supported a wide range of engagement including helping to enable access

to community research for hard-to-reach groups, facilitating and amplifying the dialogues between community and higher education research stakeholders, e.g. in facilitating and publicising the "user involvement" debates, and disseminating lessons from community research capacity building partnerships through workshops and conferences. CUE East has written articles for the ARVAC Bulletin and in April 2010, hosted the ARVAC Annual Lecture at UEA London on the subject, *Towards a theory of user control and community integration in voluntary action research* with speakers Professors Carl Milofsky (Bucknell University, US), Peter Beresford (Brunel University), Peter Halfpenny (Manchester University) and Cathy Pharoah, Professor of Charity Funding and Co-Director of the ESRC Research Centre for Giving and Philanthropy Research. Supported by the CUE East Marketing Fund.

## Vignette 2: The Butterfly Effect Project at the CUE East & Partners Norwich & Norfolk Sustainable Living Festival May 2009

### Background

The Butterfly Effect Project, funded by the CUE East Sustainable Living Partnership Fund (£12,500), took place between January 2009 and early 2010, with the main design installation being the centre-piece of the Festival in May 2009 (pictured below). The Project, a pilot for the CreativeData series conceived by Leonora Oppenheim of Elio Studio, took inspiration from a PhD thesis on *Visualising Future Wetland Landscapes* by Paul Munday at UEA's School of Environmental Sciences. Paul studied future land-use and climate change in the Norfolk Broads, using the UKCIP national future socio-economic climate scenarios and applying them locally to the Broadland area through the use of GIS mapping systems.

The title of the installation refers to the chaos theory that small actions now lead to larger unknown consequences later. This concept not only encapsulates our current position on climate change, but was also reflected in the installation through the process of people interacting with it. The process also addressed the three project themes of uncertainty, time and responsibility.

### Key Events

Four months research including interviews with members of the public at The Norfolk Broads about their experience of the area and in the city of Norwich, at the market place and The Forum. People were asked about their relationship with The Norfolk Broads in the past and present which helped the team to gain an insight into how people viewed the Broads from a personal perspective and to what degree they felt the area was under environmental threat.

An installation informed by Paul Munday's research, public questionnaires and the field work research, which took the form of an enormous map of The Broads occupying the central position of The Forum's floor. The idea for the map was directly inspired by Paul's work on the future mapping of The Broads. During the Festival members of the public were invited to interact with the map by placing icon stickers onto it that symbolised key sectors of The Broads chosen from Paul's work. People were asked to choose one of the three stickers in answer to the question; 'what do you think the Norfolk Broads should be used for in the future?' People were then asked a second multiple choice question on,



*'what do you think will have the biggest effect on the Norfolk Broads in the future?'* A third and final question asked, *'how do you think you can help look after the Norfolk Broads?'*

CUE East, as the Festival organiser as well as the project funder, facilitated liaison with the venue and provided storage for the installation materials after the Festival. Children's workshops were organised and facilitated by UEA MSc student, Lucy Rose, as a part of the installation. The children explored the meaning of the icon stickers, answered the questions and envisaged their lives in 50 years time through drawings.

An innovative aspect of this project was the multidisciplinary collaboration between social science, climate science and creative design communication; Drs Lorraine Whitmarsh and Saffron O'Neil at UEA and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, Paul Munday and Leonora Oppenheim. A range of experts on climate change and The Norfolk Broads were consulted during the project including Professor Tim O'Riordan and Katy Appleton from UEA, Simon Hooton from the Broads Authority, David North from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and Jerry Simpson, a volunteer ranger at Barton Broad.

### Challenges and lessons learnt

People of all ages found aspects of interest in the project. Unsurprisingly, often people did not take the time to answer all three questions at the installation but the UEA MSc students who were helping found that once they engaged people in conversation they were more willing to do so.

The team successfully stayed within the budget but Leonora Oppenheim greatly exceeded the number of days allocated to her as she spent more than double the estimated time on research, design work and project management. The budget restrictions excluded the possibility of using any digital technologies, increasing the need for well thought out low tech creative solutions. A notable omission from the budget was funding to cover the final dissemination of the project into local communities. This final stage emerged as a key ingredient to the success of The Butterfly Effect during the project itself.

Health & Safety requirements at the venue meant that not all the materials used could be sustainable.

*(Continued over page)*

(continued from page 9)

### Forward Plans

The collaboration and the impact of The Butterfly Effect installation in the public space will be evaluated in an academic paper by Lorraine Whitmarsh who is now working as a lecturer at Cardiff University and is a Visiting Fellow of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and a Research Associate at the ESRC Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability,

Sustainability & Society. Leonora Oppenheim is working on further CreativeData collaborations around the UK which include collaborations with Cardiff University on linking rural coastal communities with academic research on coastal erosion, with the Eden Project on the topic of food security and with Kings College London on an Olympics project linking sport, health and air quality in London.

## Involving postgraduate researchers

Postgraduate researchers are a key audience for CUE East in the light of the culture change agenda and the aim to embed engagement as an integral part of academic practice. Dedicated briefings are provided by CUE East for UEA's Graduate Schools and CUE East supports postgraduate researchers in a number of different ways. For example, in 2010 Dr Mayumi Hayashi (UEA's School of History) was awarded a grant from the CUE East Sustainable Living Partnership Fund for extending her post-doctoral research on sustainable long term care for the frail elderly which involves collecting oral testimonies from older residents and their care providers in the Eastern Region. Fundamental to the vision of her research is the involvement of a wider community audience in long term care policy discourse. Through her engagement Dr Hayashi has developed links with other projects and organisations such as Age UK and the Norfolk & Waveney Health Innovation & Education Cluster.

CUE East also supported the UEA Postgraduate Research Showcases 2008 and 2010, which took place at The Forum, Norwich, by sponsoring a public engagement prize, participating in the

judging and facilitating café Scientifiques which took place alongside the poster exhibitions. The two public engagement prizes were won by Linda Birt (UEA's School of Allied Health Professions) for her research poster on '*Men – working carers: the experience of men who combine care giving with paid employment*', and Jennifer Hodbod (UEA's School of Environmental Sciences) for her research poster on '*Biofuelling Development – are Biofuels good or bad for developing countries?*'

*“Having conversations with people outside of my own subject area made me consider the language I use and others perceptions of my work...”*

*Linda Birt, postgraduate researcher (McDaid, April 2009. p49)*

The two Cafés were run by postgraduate researchers, Kamena Henshaw, on *The Value of the Family Meal* (UEA's School of Social Work & Psychology) and Adam Elliston, on *Waste to Fuel: transforming rubbish to resource* (Institute of Food Research, Norwich Research Park). Supported by the CUE East Marketing Fund.

## A Making History Workshop on 'The value of research', 2009

Commissioned by CUE East as an 'experiment', this workshop provided an opportunity for five members of the public and five postgraduate researchers (from UEA and the Norwich Bioscience Institutes) to explore the role of research in society through four weekly sessions. The brief and the workshop invitation were deliberately non-prescriptive, 'a course with UEA exploring life experience...to talk about the value of research'. For the postgraduate researchers, the main outcome was a fresh enthusiasm for public engagement and an increased appreciation of its importance,

*"I think probably just a new enthusiasm for, I guess, research in general and kind of bringing it to the community... It did just kind of ignite this idea behind the fact that anything you are doing is relevant to society."*

*(Postgraduate researcher)*

*"I suppose thinking about maybe how research is perceived by other people and perhaps more about the importance of communicating that."*

*(Postgraduate researcher)*

*"Yes, I learned that interaction is an invaluable asset to the research process."*

*(Postgraduate researcher)*

See the 'Write Out Loud' vignette in the CPD case study publication for more information about the workshop facilitators and format, and the Making History Evaluation Report by Lisa McDaid (2009). Supported by the CUE East CPD Fund. CUE East is funding a Write Out Loud Workshop for UEA's Science Faculty Graduate School in 2010/11.

## The CUE East & Partners first Norwich & Norfolk Sustainable Living Festival 2009; Social Science Cafés by the Faculty of Social Sciences, UEA

Researchers and academics led Cafés on six sustainability subjects, e.g. 'Is it selfish to have more than two children?', 'Increasing happiness, decreasing consumption' and 'Water Conflicts or Water Wars?'. A total of 109 UEA staff and students and 30 community groups and organisations were involved with the ten day Festival which took place at The Forum Norwich and attracted 39,000 visitors. Staff and student feedback on the benefits of participating included the following:

*"More confidence in running public exhibitions, readings and workshops."*

*(McDaid 2009. p29)*

*"...increased contact with members of the public and hearing different points of view and perspectives from both older and younger people on the topic under discussion."*

*(McDaid 2009. p29)*

The Cafés were funded by the CUE East Festival Fund; £1,100.

## Community Book Launch in partnership with the West Norwich Partnership, November 2009

*Moving Histories of Class and Community: Identity, Place and Belonging to Contemporary England* by Ben Rogaly & Becky Taylor (2009). The research for the book was funded by a grant from the Economic & Social Research Council (ref: RES-148-25-0047) as a part of its Identities and Social Action programme. The launch was attended by the researchers, academic colleagues

from UEA, local residents and politicians. Apart from being a successful reunion of the researchers and the Norwich Larkman, Marlpit and North Earlham residents who participated in the research, the event also prompted a debate in the local press about the research and contributed positively to UEA community relations. Supported by the CUE East Marketing Fund.

## Vignette 3: World Art in the City 2010

### Background

Leader – Dr Sarah Monks (pictured below), School of World Art Studies & Museology (ART), UEA's Faculty of Arts & Humanities. World Art in the City, funded by the CUE East Enhancement Fund (£3,572), was a series of twelve free public talks at The Forum, Norwich, given by members of ART on aspects of their research.

The aims of the series were to communicate the character and noted excellence of ART teaching and research in an accessible, informal and beautifully-illustrated format to people living in the region who are not in higher education; to contribute to the public understanding of art and its histories; to increase the levels of aspiration and attainment amongst local groups; to encourage young people and potential mature students throughout the region to apply to UEA. The talks were followed by relaxed and informal discussion with members of ART and with student helpers.

### Key Events

In addition to the twelve lectures which took place in April, May and June 2010, a Facebook site was set up. The site was a first attempt to showcase ART research in this way and it attracted 96 followers of whom 77% were under 35 years and 68% lived in East Anglia. The series was promoted via posters and flyers to all sixth-form art departments, all FE colleges with art departments, all Norfolk adult education centres, libraries and the Norwich University College of the Arts. Parts of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire were also targeted.

### Challenges and lessons learnt

Attendances were initially low (33 and 40 at the first two talks) but this improved with figures of between 65 and 84 for the rest of the series. Publicity was a substantial challenge; the ART Press Officer was unable to secure the anticipated interest from the local media and adverts proved to be prohibitively expensive; the Project Leader was new to Norwich and unfamiliar with local art societies and networks (Professor Keith Roberts played a crucial role in establishing a core audience); reaching beyond the existing networks continued to be a challenge throughout the series. It is important not to underestimate the costs and difficulties in publicising a project effectively.



Informal audience feedback suggests that there may have been some confusion between this series and the academic research seminars held in ART and at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts & Cultures where the talks are of a more academic nature. A solution is to find ways of better articulating the intended target audience. Formal feedback was obtained via an evaluation form was handed out. 47 out of 72 attendees responded. The majority of the audience, 55%, were aged between 55 and 70 years and 70% lived within two miles of The Forum and a significant minority of the total audience had little or no experience of higher education. Respondents praised the clarity of the talks, and stated that they had taught them about the sheer diversity of art.

*"Really enjoyed the informal format and language used, makes all the topics accessible."*

*"...never to accept my prejudices/ preconceptions, but to be willing to question them and absorb new ideas..."*

By running the series over several months, people were able to engage with it in their own way and get used to the learning environment it offered. Running an event like this on a weekday, in the early evening and in the city centre will attract a more diverse audience than would come to the UEA campus. Also, the opportunity to meet and talk with the speaker was enthusiastically received.

The project gave a cohesive public identity to the School beyond its academic audiences. Whilst ART members are already used to giving 'non-academic' public talks about their work, this was the first occasion for many years where they had given such talks on a corporate basis and explicitly presented ART itself as a body to a broad local public. The series gave the academics a chance to sound out and disseminate research, some 'hot off the press', for example, John Mitchell gave a first-time talk on his studies on the Anglo-Saxon treasure recently found in Staffordshire.

### Forward Plans

At least three of the talks were based on work-in-progress and have served as a prelude to subsequent academic publications. The poster campaign also established contact with local art teachers at sixth forms and FE colleges.

## Vignette 4: Dr Laura Bowater (pictured below), School of Medicine, Health Policy & Practice, UEA

### In her own words...

I was appointed to the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice as a Teaching Fellow in May 2007. This was an indefinite contract but it was to a faculty position on an Academic Teaching and Scholarship (ATS) track and not to the more usual Academic Teaching and Research (ATR) track position held by the majority of my colleagues. Prior to my appointment at UEA, I had studied as a microbiologist and I used my experience as a microbiologist to work as a post doctoral research assistant at the John Innes Centre. It was during my time at John Innes that I started to become interested in science communication, initially by participating in several organised events but with time and experience I began to organise and coordinate my own events.

My appointment at UEA corresponded rather fortuitously with UEA (through CUE East) being awarded Beacon status. I was able to use my experience as a science communicator to work with other faculty members throughout the University to facilitate their learning and involvement in engagement opportunities. CUE East was able to buy out 10% of my time to enable myself and a colleague to develop and deliver a public engagement practitioner programme for members of faculty, post doctoral researchers and graduate students throughout the University and specifically in the School of Biological Sciences, UEA.

It was also through my work with CUE East that I became involved in a project organised by Bristol University on Science Engagement and Research for Change (SEARCH). This project was a series of workshops composed of a mix of engineers and scientists from different universities brought together to use action learning and the range of expertise of the group to explore and develop best practice in SEARCH. This has facilitated change within my own practice as an engagement practitioner and has led to opportunities to represent UEA and its engagement policies in national arenas that include policy documents, national conferences, national workshops and training events.

I have also been supported through CUE East to organise two key projects, The Darwin Radio shows and the Workshop on User Involvement in Research short course programme. The Darwin Radio shows was an opportunity to work with a community partner, namely Future Radio, to write and produce a series of radio programmes

that drew on the knowledge and expertise of members of all four UEA faculties to celebrate the anniversary of Charles Darwin. This series of radio programmes provided opportunities for staff to talk about their work and their research to a lay audience. However we were keen to ensure that this was a community event and we worked hard to try involve and incorporate the interests and views of the audience into the shows. The Workshop on User Involvement in Research is another project that was designed to facilitate an engagement process between the University and the community. This programme recognised that there is a role for research within the Health Sciences to take place within a University setting but that this research can be improved by involving the audience (that the research is focused on) within the research process.

Engagement can be done at many levels but organising events and courses takes a huge investment in time, commitment and energy. I often feel as if I am learning all the time and that I am constantly stepping outside my comfort zone. Being comfortable and confident in new and unfamiliar roles is becoming a lot easier.

I often feel as if engagement is still something to be 'justified' as part of my role and it is not perceived as a prerequisite for my role in the sense that teaching and administration and research are. However I also feel as if I am a trail blazer and I have been able to formulate my own role which is unique within my school and perhaps within the University.

I have learnt that for engagement to work successfully as part of my role, it has to overlap seamlessly with my other roles and responsibilities and I am beginning to recognise and use new ways to do this. I have incorporated engagement into my teaching portfolio and into my research portfolio.

Encouraging other members of staff to take on engagement is fraught with issues. The main issue is time! The other issue is reward. The first issue is surmountable but only if staff are provided with time and opportunities. Reward is something that is key and I feel that incorporating engagement into the promotions criteria has encouraged those that are practitioners to do so more blatantly and openly and proudly. At the same time it has encouraged the skeptics to look at the process again because it matters on a

*(Continued over page)*



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personal level. There has also been a shift towards acceptance of engagement among staff that have little previous experience but are open minded and willing to become involved the opportunity to explore this facet of their career path. On a personal level, I have been included in two reports:

- *The Road Ahead* – a Sciencewise project for the then Department for Business Innovations and Skills.
- The RCUK *Benefits of public engagement* booklet.

I have been promoted to an ATS Senior Lecturer on the back of my strength in teaching and my strength in engagement. This has been down to the inclusion of engagement in the promotion criteria document. I feel as if I am the first person in the University to have received engagement on this track (ATS) using the new criteria.

I was lucky enough to receive a CUE East Public Engagement Award in 2010; I have been recognised for showing excellence in my contribution to the University's engagement agenda at UEA's Congregation in 2010. I feel extremely proud to be an Ambassador for the University's engagement profile and feel as if

I have received a seal of approval for my role. I believe that this award has managed to move what I do from a peripheral part of my job to a key component of my job and my contribution to my institution.

With regard to forward plans, I am seeking to develop a research career that is focused on and involves my interest with engagement. I am also seeking to develop my scholarship by providing me with opportunities to develop as a science communicator. Currently I am trying to have a book commissioned (with Kay Yeoman and Stephen Ashworth) focusing on science communication for scientists.

And finally, I am trying to develop and expand my area of expertise and my comfort zone namely science communication. I recognise that this is a small part of engagement but I also recognise that my knowledge of a wider experience of engagement will allow me to contribute and add a different perspective of science communication. I have also had an opportunity to straddle disciplines that I will bring to this role.

## Outcomes and Impact

Time, administration, negotiation, accessible and inclusive communications, planned marketing, venues, scheduling, evaluation... just some of the ingredients needed for successful public engagement with research. Lessons from the diverse cases described in this publication can be applied to a range of public engagement activities and projects. They are not just about the success of the intended outcomes (which are, of course important in promoting community-university engagement) but also about what is needed to set them up in terms of much longer-term planning and relationship building and what is needed to ensure that they are properly evaluated in order to maximise impact. It is important, for example, not

to underestimate the organisational and relationship requirements for delivering public engagement with research successfully. These range from essential health & safety and logistical requirements and the need for good marketing, to the more complex demands of collaborative working with diverse groups and communities.

CUE East has acted as a small but effective cog in a large wheel and has assisted individuals and groups both inside and outside the University to work together more effectively though more needs to be done. The quotes opposite are from The Stakeholder Perceptions Survey 2009, conducted as a part of the CUE East Annual Review,

*'CUE East has made a big difference to the ease with which other organisations can engage with UEA.'*

*'I think the work of CUE East has improved the accessibility of UEA to the public but I think more work could be done.'*

*'I am impressed by the level of awareness of CUE East within the university – reflects the extent of their excellent work – and I believe there have been changes in the culture – to a certain extent.'*

*(McDaid & Stinton 2010. p28)*

Public engagement, done well, can help to improve the quality and impact of research; the 'public' can raise relevant questions and also be involved in defining and conducting the research, helping to keep it relevant and responsive. It can challenge assumptions, sharpen thinking and help to build trust; discussing research with the 'public' can help researchers to examine their assumptions and introduce fresh perspectives. Also, involving the 'public' can help researchers to think through the social and ethical implications of their work and demonstrate its social impact. Engagement can help researchers to develop transferrable skills including project management, aiding their employment and promotion prospects.

Research funders in the UK recognise the importance of public engagement in research and ask applicants to detail how they will do it in research grant proposals. Research Councils

UK (RCUK) seeks to create a culture where the research sector and researchers themselves value public engagement, through encouraging researchers to engage with the public and supporting and rewarding those who do so. However, our research-driven culture means that public engagement is not a priority within many universities. In addition, public engagement is often not well regarded by peers, and is difficult to undertake as it does not bring in significant funding. This is one of the reasons why the UK higher education funding councils, RCUK and the Wellcome Trust came together to create the Beacons for Public Engagement, funded to 31st December 2011. CUE East is already starting to show impact, as illustrated in this case study publication,

*"Over the past two years at UEA, CUE East has influenced a number of changes which will help to embed public engagement in institutional practices...Feedback from a range of sources suggests that such changes would have been unlikely in the time period, if at all, without Beacon status" (McDaid & Stinton, 2010. p6)*

It is also important, not just to be accountable to the research funders; the 'public' fund much research and they are entitled to know how that money is being spent and to feel a sense of ownership. Good public engagement may also lead to additional funding for engagement and for further research.

## A final word...

In a recent workshop on *Public Engagement: Themes, Challenges and Solutions*, organised by Dr Lucy Marten and Professor David Bates at the Centre of East Anglian Studies (UEA's School of History) and supported by CUE East, a presentation was made by Dr Rob Liddiard (UEA's School of History and a CUE East Public Engagement Award Winner 2010) on *Public Engagement and New Media: Virtual Part and the Walberswick Defences of WWII*. Dr Liddiard (pictured left), who took a visionary approach in devising and directing the Walberswick project, described how the public engagement is not only borne out of MA research carried out at the University but also continues to inform his teaching and provide new ideas for further research.



*"I am constantly surprised by how public engagement throws up new information for this project. Some of the most useful insights into what went on along this part of the coast during the Second World War have come from working with local people and hearing their stories about communities adjusted to wartime conditions. This has also fed into undergraduate and post-graduate teaching within the School of History. In many ways, the Walberswick project has become something of a virtuous circle between public engagement, research and teaching."*

*Dr Rob Liddiard, UEA's School of History*

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**For further information** about the Beacons for Public Engagement project visit the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) web pages: [www.publicengagement.ac.uk](http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk). The NCCPE works with all the beacons to promote best practice in public engagement and provides a single point of contact for the whole higher education sector.

Funded by The Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust

