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# **Partnerships for Education, Well-being and Work: Models of University Service in the Community**

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The University of  
**Nottingham**

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## Glossary

<b>AC</b>	Active Communities
<b>APU</b>	Academy Project Unit
<b>CRB</b>	Criminal Records Bureau
<b>DCSF</b>	Department for Children, Schools and Families
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>ESRC</b>	Economic Social Research Council
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>GTP</b>	Graduate Teaching Programme
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEACF</b>	Higher Education Active Community Fund
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HEI</b>	Higher education institution
<b>HEROBC</b>	The Higher Education Reach-out to Business and the Community
<b>ILTS</b>	Institutional learning and teaching strategies
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>NCEE</b>	National Council for Educational Excellence
<b>NUSA</b>	Nottingham University Samworth Academy
<b>OFFA</b>	The Office for Fair Access
<b>Ofsted</b>	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
<b>PM</b>	Project Management
<b>SPS</b>	Supporting professional standards allocations
<b>TQEF</b>	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
<b>WP</b>	Widening Participation

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# Executive Summary

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This five month multi-perspective study, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), investigated the nature, forms and practices of three partnership enterprises between the University of Nottingham and its local schools and communities.
- 1.2 This executive summary provides an analytical overview of the key features of the partnership models which our data suggest are transferable to partnerships in other settings.
- 1.3 Research methods emphasised the triangulation of multi-perspective documentary and qualitative data collection and analyses. Thus, documents relevant to the purposes, operation and evaluation within each partnership, individual and focus group interviews and observations of practice drawn from a range of stakeholders were analysed.
- 1.4 Partnerships themselves were defined in this study as joint enterprises for the mutual benefits of those involved and in which each partner has a distinctive contribution to make to the achievement of an agreed purpose.
- 1.5 The three partnerships – Widening Participation (WP), Active Communities (AC) and the Nottingham University Samworth Academy (NUSA) have been in existence for different periods of time. It was hypothesised that each would demonstrate similar and distinctively different characteristics.
- 1.6 A central feature of the partnerships is that their work demonstrates both altruistic vision and a concern to produce tangible outcomes.

## 2.0 Founding Principles

- 2.1 All three partnerships are characterised by a strong social justice ethic. They are driven by an explicit commitment by the university to the enhancement of well-being of young people who live in socio-economically disadvantaged communities which are in close geographical proximity.

- 2.2 The partnerships demonstrate an ability to manage tensions between a focus on social justice and the need to meet defined performance outcomes.
- 2.3 Each partnership had been made possible by central government policy initiatives designed both to raise aspirations and to encourage universities to increase their active involvement with local communities.
- 2.4 Without central government policy and funding support, these partnerships would not exist.
- 2.5 In all cases the partnership draws upon the unique intellectual capital, research expertise and resources 'in kind' from the university. This is what differentiates it from a business partner.
- 2.6 Successful partnerships demonstrate through their own work an understanding and appreciation of the different cultures which contribute to the partnership.

### **3.0 Growth and Sustainability**

- 3.1 Although there are common features across the partnerships, they develop at different paces and pass through different phases.
- 3.2 Establishing a strong core vision in the early stages of the partnership unites the partners enabling them to better cope with external tensions.
- 3.3 Successful partnerships are dynamic and recognise that the management of change is a necessary and constant function.
- 3.3 Where change is managed well by leaders, there is a subsequent strengthening of shared vision and purpose driving the partnership forward.
- 3.5 Where the partnerships are respectful and based on trust and shared vision, turbulent times are easier to negotiate.



## **4.0 Management of Partnerships**

### **4.1 Leadership**

- 4.1.1 Leadership of partnerships by those who hold a senior position within their organisation is a necessary but insufficient condition for successful partnerships.
- 4.1.2 Successful leaders possess clear vision; a strong sense of moral purpose; and an unswerving ambition to achieve the vision.
- 4.1.3 Successful partnerships are led by individuals with strong organisational and interpersonal skills and who focus on the detail as well as the bigger picture.
- 4.1.4 Successful leaders are resilient in managing contexts of uncertainty and change.
- 4.1.5 Successful leaders face both inwards and outwards: managing internal and external relationships.
- 4.1.6 Successful leaders adopt, develop and adapt and, where appropriate, sustain strategies which are sensitive to context.

### **4.2 Organisational Structures**

- 4.2.1 Successful partnerships develop their capacity to work with different organisational structures.
- 4.2.2 Each of the three partnerships illustrates a different formal organisational structure (see Figures 3.2, 4.1–4.3 and 5.1 from Chapters 3–5).
- 4.2.3 All also:
  - include representation from the client base in their meetings and the decision-making process
  - are accountable for their actions through formal reporting mechanisms
  - evaluate their activities through feedback from their partners and client base
  - have developed mechanisms for generating and responding to feedback.
- 4.2.4 Successful partnerships develop their capacity to work with different organisational structures.

### **4.3 Organisational Development and Trust**

4.3.1 It is important to acknowledge when planning partnerships that there will be different phases in their development which may require different leadership strategies and interpersonal skills.

4.3.2 Two central elements in the growth of successful partnerships are trust and trustworthiness.

4.3.3 Building trust requires development of mutual respect and actions which re-enforce the trustworthiness of each partner.

4.3.4 Development of trusting and respectful relationships facilitates the management of change and eases tensions.

### **5.0 Benefits of the Partnerships**

#### **5.1 For schools, they:**

- Raise aspirations and achievement
- Contribute to the standards agenda
- Provide opportunities for teachers to draw on external expertise
- Offer school-based research collaboration.

#### **5.2 For school pupils, they provide:**

- Enrichment activities
- Opportunities for making informed choices about the future
- Access to learning resources

#### **5.3 For the community, they:**

- Increase interaction between members of the university and the community
- Raise awareness of the opportunities for further education
- Engage the community in educational activities.

#### **5.4 For the university, they:**

- Meet its social justice goals
- Create opportunities for research
- Enhance staff professional and personal development
- Enhance student professional and personal development

- Raise its profile in the local community
- Can create economies of scale that make a partnership more efficient.

# Part 1 Partnerships for Education

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This report is based upon a five-month, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded multi-perspective investigation into the nature and models of university service in local, socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The investigation was led by the School of Education of the University of Nottingham in conjunction with Nottingham University Samworth Academy, Active Communities Team and Widening Participating Team and is set within current national policies in which promoting the development of sustainable relationships between schools and higher education (HE) is seen as vital to 'raise the educational attainment of learners, widen participation and promote learner progression to the full range of HE available' (HEFCE website: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlelets/2009/cl01\\_09/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlelets/2009/cl01_09/)). The study examined contexts, purposes, processes and outcomes of three strategic partnerships, each at a different stage of development – *nascent* (Nottingham University Samworth Academy), *developing* (Active Communities) and *mature* (Widening Participation). The purpose of the study was to provide evidence of i) how different partnership models worked; ii) organisational, cultural and relationship issues within partnerships in different phases of development; and iii) costs and benefits of university, school and community partnerships. This study should be seen as a first stage in creating a taxonomy of different forms of HE and School/Community/Individual Learning Partnerships, including the economic, social and individual costs and benefits, together with different kinds and levels of intervention.

Whilst the three partnerships themselves are examples of the university's responsiveness to HEFCE funded policy initiatives, they are also a testament to one Russell Group university's sustained commitment to make a difference to the health, education and welfare of the local community, and central to its aim to provide equality of opportunity in order to maximise the benefit to the university from the diversity of its workforce and student population. The three partnerships were selected as case studies because they all focus upon interventions in areas of socio-economic deprivation, where participation in HE is low, and address the academic, social and well-being development needs of three key disadvantaged sections of the community, i.e. those of statutory school age, those who

are excluded or who exclude themselves from school and those who are beyond school age but educationally and socially marginalised.

*We're a global university but I do want colleagues to respect the fact that our roots are here. We are embedded within the local community and we should be doing what we can to support and develop and enrich the community in which we operate...*

*The payoff for us is ultimately two things: one, the university being valued by the local community, them being proud that they've got a university of this quality in their city; and then secondly: making a difference seeing things happening that wouldn't otherwise have happened without us here.*

(Vice Chancellor, University of Nottingham, 2009)

## **1.1 Research Design and Methods**

### **1.1.1 Research design**

Beginning in April 2009, the research team collected and analysed qualitative and documentary stakeholder data from each partnership in order to understand the nature, work and effectiveness of the aims and approaches, staff structures and strategies within each partnership. A Steering Group was appointed in consultation with external partners and with representation from them and from the areas within the university involved in the partnerships. Following the first Steering Group meeting in early April, the project was conducted in five stages:

- i) selection, collation and preliminary analysis of data;
- ii) discussion of initial findings with the Steering Group;
- iii) refinement of the research focus and structure;
- iv) discussion with the Steering Group in the light of further findings; and
- v) agreement on report structure and recommendations.

By adopting a multi-perspective approach, the research was able to take into account the ethical, policy and practical factors that affect the capacities of the participants within each partnership to engage with each other over time, including funding, infrastructure and staffing, competing resource demands and competing performance indicators.

### **1.1.2 Data collection and analysis**

In addition to collection and analysis of existing documentary data, a series of interviews was carried out with university staff, staff and students at schools and colleges and other key stakeholders. Interviews and other forms of qualitative data were coded, categorised and transferred into analytical matrices which were used to refine emergent themes, identify patterns, focus subsequent data collection, and synthesize key attributes at and across individual partnership levels. The interplay between these analytic procedures progressively integrated and triangulated the various forms of data, provided grounds for continuing problem reformulation, and extended understanding of emergent themes relating to the essence of partnership models over the course of the study.

#### ***1.1.2.1 Widening Participation (WP)***

Data collection within this strand of the research took the form of materials analysis, including national and the university WP websites and strategy documents, WP budgets, costs and funding, and records of various WP activities and a sample of student applications. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 key stakeholders, including the head and deputy head of WP, the schools and colleges manager on the WP team, five university academics and administrators, three school teachers and two students from the Advantage Nottinghamshire scheme.

#### ***1.1.2.2 Active Communities (AC)***

This part of the research involved 15 semi-structured interviews and analysis of university policy statements and documents produced by AC, as well as online documents produced by HEFCE, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the primary schools. The former head of AC was interviewed. The current head was interviewed on four occasions. A project manager was interviewed twice. Also interviewed were two University lecturers, two university support staff, three headteachers, one deputy head, two teachers and two university students.

#### ***1.1.2.3 Nottingham University Samworth Academy (NUSA)***

The NUSA strand of the research comprised analysis of a range of materials produced by the University Academy Project Unit, including films and other materials produced by the visioning and steering groups during the Academy Procurement Process, in addition to online documents on the websites of the existing school and NUSA. Semi-structured

interviews were carried out with eleven individuals representing different aspects of the partnership: the academy project manager; the vice chancellor and three senior academics (one of whom was a member of the new governing body for NUSA). Externally, the research team interviewed the representative of David Samworth (the co-sponsor), the principal and vice principal of NUSA, as well as two members of the teaching staff who were members of the existing 'failing' school before it was re-designated as an academy.

## **1.2 Structure of the Report**

Chapter 2 will provide a review of selected literature on partnerships, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will report on the main findings from each of the three partnerships sites, i.e. Widening Participation, Active Communities and NUSA. Finally, Chapter 6 will focus upon issues of sustainability, transferability and the nature of models of university service in the community.

## Chapter 2

### Policy and Research Contexts: Setting the Scene

*We all have a part to play in giving every child and young person the best possible start in life. Government, schools, colleges and children's services have a key responsibility in partnership with children, young people and families, but if we want to achieve our aspiration for a world-class system then we need others too. Employers and Higher Education Institutions in particular have a key role to play in helping to create a culture which values educational achievement and talent, in which all young people have high aspirations and understand their routes and opportunities to achieve them, and in which young people can access skills and expertise to enrich their learning and set it in a real world context.*

(Rt. Hon Ed Balls and Rt. Hon John Benham, 2008: 4)

#### 2.1 The Policy Context

A key social, economic and political focus of governments throughout the industrialised world is "raising educational attainment and enhancing employability". Four recently published research reports together demonstrate graphically the continuing educational and life disadvantages experienced by children and young people in the UK and the important role played by schools in combating these:

- i) Research commissioned by the Sutton Trust presents 'unequivocal' evidence that 'the attainment of otherwise similar pupils in deprived schools lags significantly behind those in the more advantaged schools' (The Sutton Trust, 2009: 3) by as much as two grades at GCSE level; and that they were 'five to six times more likely to enter examinations other than full GCSEs' (2009: 12);
- ii) A report of research into child wellbeing and child poverty, also in 2009, found that the UK was placed 24 from 29 European countries, 'well below countries of similar affluence. Only Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta do worse' (Child Poverty Action Group, 2009: 2). The wellbeing index which informed the research conclusions was made up of seven key indicators: health (24th); subjective wellbeing (22nd); children's



- relationships (15th); material resources (24th); behaviour and risk (18th); education (22nd) and housing and environment (17th);
- iii) DCSF research (DCSF, 2009) found 'very strong correlations between many of the attitudes and behaviours of young people (and, to a lesser extent, their parents) and a variety of teenage education and behavioural outcomes'. Particularly important, according to this research, were the young persons' beliefs in their own abilities, whether they liked and found their time in school worthwhile and their educational aspirations;
  - iv) Large scale, longitudinal research into schools in a range of communities shows that whilst some 'add value' to pupils' personal, educational and social achievements, other do not (Day et al., 2009). Research into teachers' work and lives in successful schools serving disadvantaged communities has found that there are associations between teacher wellbeing, pupil achievement and school improvement (Day et al., 2007).

Schools play an integral part in the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and citizenry development of their pupils, and by extension the communities in which they live. The government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal have placed additional responsibilities upon schools in socio-economically disadvantaged communities in urban and rural areas. The publication of *National Council for Educational Excellence: Recommendations* (NCEE) in October 2008 has paved the way for an integration of different schools sectors, business and higher education institutions (HEIs) to help raise all children's aspirations and educational attainment, and through this, promote the country's economic and social wellbeing. This document can also be seen in the light of a movement in the policy and practice debate on social justice and economic competitiveness – 'from a focus on which universities students attend, to one about the vast number of able students who never progress to higher education (NCEE, 2008: 10). Forging links between schools, colleges, business and HEIs is thought to be the way forward.

HEIs' involvement in schools and the community is not a new phenomenon (Wiewel and Broski, 1997). Much attention has been paid to enhancing the significant role of HE in supporting the professional development and lifelong learning of teachers and, through this, improving learning outcomes for school students (Brady, 2002; Day, 1997 and 1998; Watson and Fullan, 1992; McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins, 2004). Harkavy (1998) wrote of the close connections between the improvement of schools and the revitalisation of their

local communities and strongly proposed to involve universities as essential partners in community building and education reform, because 'they have both the interest and ability to make a profound difference' (1998: 29). In today's global knowledge economy where knowledge transfer is high on national agendas, it would also be in the universities' best interest to reformulate their mission and 'societal rationale' (Wiewel and Broski, 1997: 2) for themselves. The usefulness, rigour and relevance of university research has been called into question and placed under close finance-led, ideologically determined public scrutiny (Day, 1998). Traditional research-focussed institutions, in particular, are under pressure to transform their role by becoming 'part of a larger and denser network of knowledge institutions' which extends into industry, government and the media (Gibbons et al., 1994: 71). The Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) (2009) argues that 'academic researchers collaborating with business, the public sector and/or the third sector on projects of mutual interest is one of the most effective mechanisms for knowledge exchange and transfer' (ESRC, 2009). Within such policy contexts, universities are expected to extend their services to adjacent communities through outreach programmes which aim at creating opportunities for dialogue, knowledge application and ideas sharing between the research community and its targeted users.

It is within such policy contexts that this HEFCE funded research was conducted to explore the nature of university-school partnerships and key issues with regard to their growth and sustainability in times of change.

## **2.2 Understanding the Nature of Partnerships**

### **2.2.1 The definition problem**

Partnerships between individual universities and schools are not new. Yet despite the growing rhetoric of the importance of university-school partnerships in raising aspirations and raising attainment of learners, there has been a lack of consensus upon the purposes, nature and forms of effective models of partnerships. What adds to the difficulty is that the nature of these 'partnerships' has been changing over the years. Yet, as Clark (1988) pointed out more than 20 years ago, understanding the meaning of the terminology is crucial in discussing partnerships:

*One of the complications of investigating this subject is that different terms are used to describe similar activities, and on the other hand, different meanings are attached to the same term. Authors speak of partnerships, collaborations,*

*consortiums, networks, clusters, inter-organisational agreements, collectives, and cooperatives, frequently without definition and often without distinguishing their chosen description from other possible terms.*

(1988: 33)

### **2.2.2 Defining partnerships**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2006), a partner is 'a person [or organisation] who takes part in a business or other undertaking with another person or group' (2006: 543). Bradley (1988) describes a partnership as an 'operational relationship in which people work together towards the achievement of their goal'. However, what appears to be missing in his definition is the reference to a formalised system established through or for the partnership – within which participants negotiate processes, power relations and outcomes – and reference to those who are expected to benefit.

For the purpose of the research and in order to clarify our use of terminologies, we define the **partnership** as the enterprise. In the enterprise, the work does not belong to any one individual or one interest group. Rather, it is jointly owned by each of the participants. **Structures, relationships** and **intervention** are three indispensable components of a partnership enterprise and play an integral part in determining the direction, growth and sustainability of the partnership. The structure refers to the formal organisational arrangements which are unique to each partnership. The relationships refer to how the participants act within the structures and how they interact with each other. Both contribute to the culture of the partnership ('the way we are and the way we do things around here') and to its ability to achieve its purposes.

Tushnet (1993) identified three types of partnership:

1. Primary or limited partnerships: *'managing partner with other organizations providing services either to it or to clients'*
2. Coalition partnerships: *'participating organizations divide the labour in order to seek common goals'*
3. Collaborative partnerships: *'equal partners divide both labour and decision-making on a continuous basis'*

(Tushnet 1993: 6)

Each of these may be found in the cases in this report. However, Tushnet is describing structures, and it is the nature of the relationships and quality of the interventions within partnerships that are crucial to their success. McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins (2004) argue that 'in the models which are school-wide, and even more so in those which go across institutions, the nature of the relationships is crucial' (2004: 279). Because purposes differ, there is unlikely to be a single "right way" to establish and sustain a partnership (Callahan and Martin, 2007: 143). There are, however, a number of core components which, if present in partnerships, are likely to enhance the possibilities for their success. For example, a range of research suggests that clearly defined collaborative structures provide systems which enable different parties to work together towards shared goals which 'cannot be reached by either party independently' (Barnett et al., 1999, cited in Callahan and Martin 2007: 136), and that, within these, trusting relationships, strong leadership and respect, are necessary to achieve lasting success. In a healthy university-school partnership, each partner brings to the partnership their unique, complementary expertise, experiences and qualities and it is important that, as Wiewel and Broski (1997) argue, each partner's unique strengths, weaknesses and needs are acknowledged (1997: 6).

Callahan and Schwandt's (1999) identification of four themes of the dichotomous characteristic of a school-university partnership provide further elaboration on the elements likely to be present in such successful partnerships. The first is *culture*; this is about the 'shared understanding of the culture, values and assumptions' (Callahan & Schwandt 1999: 139). It pertains to the nature of the participation within the partnership, the relationships and the bonds of interaction. These can be either localised or dispersed. The second theme is *action and experience*, which is about 'reflection in order to achieve goals' (*ibid*: 139) and the modes of learning involved and the way that events are dealt with. This can be either continuous or periodic. The third theme is *knowledge systems* and regards 'dissemination and diffusion' (*ibid*: 139). Dissemination is considered to be formal knowledge transfer, such as policies and organizational reporting structures, while diffusion refers to informal communication, networks. The final theme, *adaptation*, 'implies some change in behaviour' (*ibid*: 139). This concerns the nature of change patterns within the partnership and 'the ways in which social systems adapt to their environments' (*ibid*: 141).

In discussion of their university-school-community partnerships, Wiewel and Broski (1997) pointed out that universities could bring partnerships experts in many fields, access to multiple sources of funding and to other potential partners, their relatively neutral academic standing and the ability to take a long-term perspective, whilst schools and communities could provide local knowledge of what approaches might be acceptable, grassroots legitimacy and their long-term stake and commitment. However, in order to do so successfully, they and their staff will need to change. Although academics will always have distinctive contributions to make and unique sets of research expertise to bring to the partnerships, these are of no more importance than those which others bring. The point is, as was noted more than a decade ago, 'to ensure informed dialogue, and, through this, influence' (Day, 1997: 201). In essence, pluralism and dialogue are needed, in order to engage in the task of creating, building and sustaining partnerships which are founded on principles of equity, justice and respect and which make a difference.

## **Part 2 Nascent, Developing and Mature Partnerships: Three Models**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Widening Participation – A Mature Partnership**

##### **3.1 Background**

The purpose of this partnership is to address the discrepancy in the take up of higher education opportunities between different social groups. This is guided in part by the HEFCE widening participation strategy:

*Our aim is to promote and provide the opportunity of successful participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it. This is vital for social justice and economic competitiveness.*

(HEFCE website)

There were a number of factors which influenced the creation of WP at a national level. The first was the political pressure of improving university social justice statistics. The incoming Labour government of 1997 had and continues to have a strong drive to increase participation in HE, particularly amongst groups who traditionally have not accessed it. As a result of central government funding, a number of small WP teams were created in universities around the country. This policy was reinforced when, alongside the introduction and increase in fees (in 1998 and 2006, respectively) universities had to provide for increases in entry for students, those who would not otherwise have been attracted to HE and those whose families had no history of HE.

Within this national picture, the University of Nottingham took a number of steps to improve its WP provision, and new forms of working relationships were developed with state schools in the Nottinghamshire area, within the university and, more recently, with other local HEIs. These have aimed to facilitate better recruitment and contributed to regional efforts to raise aspirations to university study and to support achievement; and to attract capable students from underrepresented backgrounds specifically to the University of Nottingham. One scheme in particular, known as Advantage Nottinghamshire, is the focus of this part of the study and will be discussed in detail in section 3.3.1.

### **3.2 A Brief History**

The WP team has grown consistently since its inception in 2000. Starting with a single member of staff, by its third year the team had grown to eight people, each with a different area of responsibility and level of involvement. The team now comprises 12 people. Over the years its growth has been subject to funding and many external influences and pressures which have significantly affected the nature of the work and relationships formed with schools, pupils, university academics and other key stakeholders. At all times the WP team is subject to changing pressures from external, and internal, sources of funding as well as government policy and university demands.

#### **3.2.1 Changing perceptions (2000–2001)**

Initially, there was resistance from the local community. The University had long been perceived by local people as “posh”, “prestigious” and with no interest in students from the surrounding areas, many of which contain neighbourhoods characterised by high deprivation (see also, Chapter 5). Thus, one of the first jobs for the team leader on her appointment was to visit schools and attempt to change this perception of the university, determine what they would like to see the university doing and what would persuade them to engage with the university.

*In 2000, when I started, I couldn't get schools to talk with me. Some schools said that they didn't have any high flyers so they didn't have anyone who was going to get good enough grades to get in to [the University of] Nottingham and so they didn't want to work with us.*

(Head of WP)

Work to break down these barriers has been ongoing.

#### **3.2.2 Extending provision (2001–2004)**

The provision by HEFCE from 2001/2 to 2003/4 of £500K funding a year for three years for the WP team led to its rapid growth and a significant expansion of its work. During this period the team of eight were able to engage in a range of outreach activities, from work with ethnic minority groups in the community, to summer schools and master classes for Year 12 pupils. The team also worked with a range of university services, particularly admissions and financial support, to find ways of providing the best help and support for

students from deprived backgrounds. The work to engage schools continued and more supportive, trusting relationships with schools had developed. At this stage it was largely a diffusion model: the WP Team sent its menu of activities to schools and colleges locally and followed this up through phone calls and meetings to arrange the delivery of individual sessions. WP staff subsequently delivered the menu sessions (for students from Year 7 through to those on courses provided by the university either on or off-campus. At this stage only two summer schools involved input from academic staff, so there was limited ongoing engagement with academics.<sup>1</sup> The team also worked with a range of university services, particularly admissions and financial support, to find ways of providing the best help and support for students from deprived backgrounds.

### **3.2.3 Managing change: indications of performance (2004–2009)**

During this phase changes in the balance of external and internal funding, together with increases in the student fee structure nationally, led to a significant shift in focus of many of the WP activities.

WP continued to receive a reduced but substantial amount of external funding from HEFCE, meaning that the university was required to contribute financially to the WP programme. A subsequent increase in funding from a number of other sources (including AimHigher, The Sutton Trust and The Goldman Sachs Foundation) allowed the WP programme to expand. Some of this external funding is now coming to an end and, in order to continue the WP programme at the current levels, the university will increase its financial contribution in WP. One consequence of the university's financial contribution is the need to ensure that a significant proportion of WP activities contribute directly towards improving WP performance indicators.

The three types performance indicators are: i) the university's own indicators which are given to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA); ii) HEFCE's national performance indicators which are public and used by the media; and iii) performance indicators which measure the take up and impact of outreach activities. At the heart of these performance indicators are the two key institutional targets:

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<sup>1</sup> WP staff also worked with academics in the School of Continuing Education to develop and run courses for community groups, but this resource-intensive work was subsequently discontinued.



- Increase the proportion of low-income undergraduate entrants from 20% in 2008 to 25% by 2012.<sup>2</sup>
- Maintain continuation rates of students from low-participation neighbourhoods at over 94%.<sup>3</sup>

(WP strategy)

The WP budget for 2009/10 can be found in Table 3.1. This shows that the majority of money is currently spent on activities, such as the summer schools, that most directly contribute to the performance indicators. In addition, academics and other staff across the university provided 'in kind' assistance to WP activities and programmes, which was valued at £400k in 2008/9 (University of Nottingham Finance Department).

**Table 3.1: WP Budget 2009/10**

	<b>Internal funds</b>	<b>External funds</b>
Team Salary Costs + Misc Admin Costs	£320,000	tbc
Admissions Office Funding	£35,000	
School and Colleges (menu activities)	£25,000	
Access and Vocational (menu activities)	£10,000	
Creative Learning	£10,000	
WP Team	£25,000	
WP Initiatives Account (inreach and outreach projects)	£30,000	
Communications	£20,000	
Sutton Trust (summer school)	£40,000	£32,000
Advantage Nottinghamshire (central administrative costs and masterclasses)	£5,000	£15,000
Summer Schools	£50,000	
Careers Strategy	£0	£24,000
HEFCE WP - Academic Enrichment Programme		£50,000
Excellence Hubs (DCSF funds) (central administrative costs and masterclasses)		tbc
Sutton Trust Goldman Sachs Academic Enrichment Programme		(funds carried forward)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£570,000</b>	<b>£121,000+</b>

<sup>2</sup> 'Low income' here means students with household incomes at or below the equivalent of qualifying for full fee remission under the old fees system (the system in place up to and including the September 2005 intake), adjusted for inflation annually. 'Low income' students entering in September 2008 had household incomes up to £23,660.

<sup>3</sup> This uses the HEFCE definitions and performance indicator.

### 3.3 WP in Operation: An Overview of Activities

#### 3.3.1 Advantage Nottinghamshire Scheme

There has been a gradual increase in the activities on offer to schools and in the development of different forms of external partnerships. One important development has seen mutually beneficial but relatively 'light touch' relationships with other local HE providers, through the creation of the Advantage Nottinghamshire Partnership scheme in 2006.

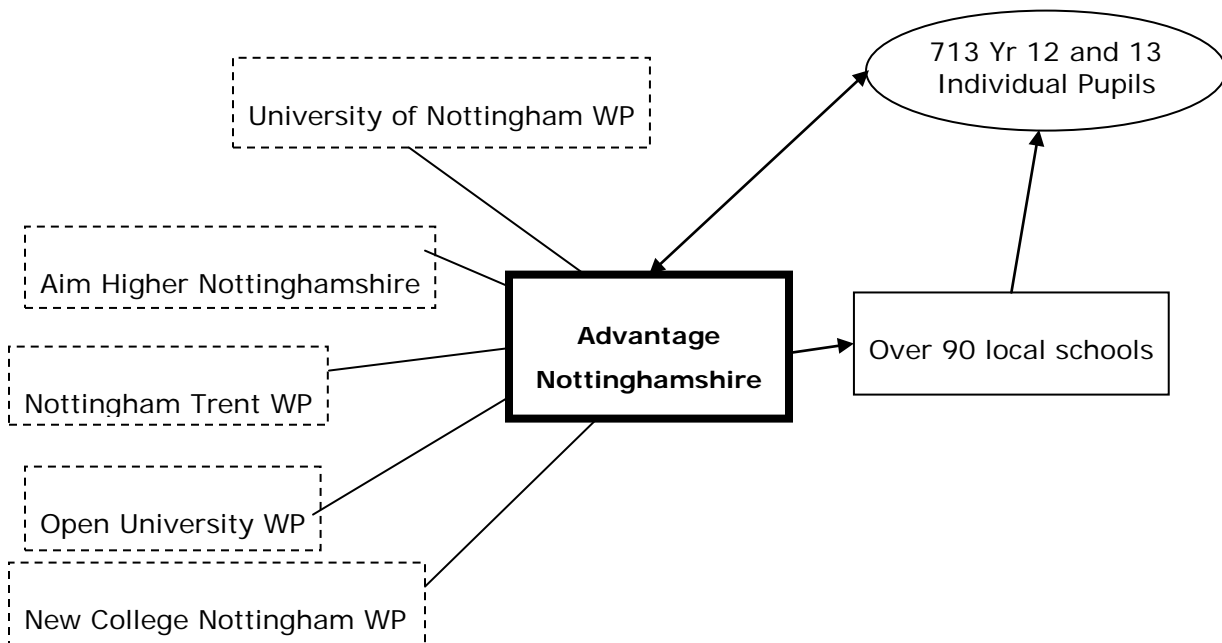
The rationale for Advantage Nottinghamshire was driven [through the provision of more extra-curricular activities such as the master-classes and summer schools] by the need to reach and recruit more local students. The Advantage Nottinghamshire scheme has created a new kind of partnerships between the local HEIs involved in outreach activities and students from more than 90 schools. The scheme is coordinated by the Nottingham WP Team:

*The University of Nottingham was going to run it's own scheme where we had the relationships directly with the students but then we were talking to Nottingham Trent and they were thinking of doing something similar so we thought it seemed stupid to have two programmes running at the same time which is why we then approached AimHigher Nottinghamshire to see whether they would be interested in coming in and working with us and that's when the Open University came on board as well. But as to the coordination it's actually me. Obviously I have a strategic overview which helps [the deputy head of WP] from here and [his counterpart] from Nottingham Trent.*

(WP team member)

In this scheme, shown in Figure 3.1, A-level pupils themselves who have achieved high GCSE results are partners, with the school acting as a mediator and the HEIs supporting one another.

**Figure 3.1: Advantage Nottinghamshire Model of Partnership**



Activities are delivered separately, with each HEI producing its own activity menu. However, rather than receiving a visit from up to four institutions, the schools receive only one. Students are given the activity ‘menus’ and can sign up for any extra-curricular activities delivered out of school hours which interest them. This work does not replace other WP work, but provides an efficient way to deliver more co-ordinated extra-curricular outreach work Consistent with Table 3.1.

*We wanted to get more students into this university so we wanted to expand ‘Get on to Uni’ and master classes and we were introducing a new summer school so we really wanted to recruit more local students on to our activities. And it takes time going into schools and colleges to recruit the master classes. So it was really quite a practical way to recruit students more efficiently.*

(Head of WP)

This ‘light touch’ brokerage partnership is cost effective. The HEIs share the workload. The University of Nottingham WP team sees this as a unique form of partnership. Since its inception in 2006/7, more Year 12 and 13 pupils are accessing the extra-curricula

activities on offer. This partnership has also helped the other HEIs involved to recruit to their extra-curricular activities.

### **3.3.2 Outreach activities**

Advantage Nottinghamshire complements a range of WP outreach activities for groups of learners from schools and colleges, delivered within school time. These activities aim to raise aspirations to university study and support achievement. There is a busy programme of activities focused on an area within commuting distance to the university. They are targeted at local schools and colleges with a high proportion of students from under-represented groups. These activities include:

- Aspiration and attainment raising activities with groups under represented in HE. For this the WP team delivers activities for every group from Year 7 to those on access courses. In general, for pre-16s this takes the form of raising aspirations and for post-16s of raising attainment. This can range from campus visits to student forums.
- Classroom support; undergraduates going into schools to help with younger pupils, to plan lessons, mark work, assist after school clubs etc. This has a dual purpose of providing opportunities for undergraduate students to build their CVs, provide a service to the community and gain experience. It is also designed to present the school pupils with role models and help them to aspire towards university study.

### **3.3.3 Inreach activities**

The inreach activities aim to provide support and bursaries for WP students once they have a place at the University of Nottingham. Complementing this outreach work are a number of supportive internal processes:

- First in the family, Sutton Trust summer school, Jubilee and Malone bursaries, all targeting low-income first-generation local students. These have been popular, with an increase in total uptake from 25 in 2001 to 290 in 2009. Since 2006 the university, like all universities charging higher fees, has provided bursaries to low-income students from across the UK; in 2008 this amounted to £4.8m of means-tested bursaries. Approximately £1m of this was for East Midlands students.
- 'Flexible admissions,' adopted by the majority of the university's schools since 2001 and now managed by a central admissions team.

### **3.4 Snapshot of Achievements (2005–2009)**

#### **3.4.1 Expanding activities and programmes**

##### *i) Outreach activities*

- Collaborating well with the schools liaison team within university services and now sharing some resources and structures.
- Coordinating two national programmes (formerly coordinated by the Sutton Trust) and leading the development and implementation of two regional programmes.

##### *ii) Inreach activities*

- Working with the university to provide comparable contextual data for applicants from across the UK.
- Introducing the Certificate in Health Science, to continue to facilitate entry to Health Science courses. This initiative won the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) WP Initiative of the Year award in 2006. This is run jointly with the University of Lincoln and is successfully facilitating the entry of WP students to medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and other highly competitive courses in the health sciences.

#### **3.4.2 Meeting performance indicators**

First, looking at the attendees and subsequent applications for the various 'Get on 4 Uni' programmes, the number of attendees remained more or less the same since 2005 and the number of resulting applications remained at about a third of the attendees.

Second, the Sutton Trust summer school resulted in 39 applications in 2006 and 59 in 2008. A total of 16.2% of summer school participants enrolled at the university between 2005 and 2007. Participants from the WP team's two 2007 summer schools, who enrolled in Sept 2008, brought in over £600,000 in fee income over the course of their studies. The cash costs of these two summer schools were around one-fifth of this and to date the vast majority of this has been provided by the Sutton Trust and the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

Third, the number of students from lower income backgrounds increased from 18% in 2005 to 20% in 2007 and the proportion of local students, in particular, grew from 6% in

2003 to 10% in 2006. Students from deprived areas rose from 8.2% in 2005 to 10.0% in 2008. This data can be seen in Table 3.2 below. The retention of students from low-participation neighbourhoods is the same as retention of other students, at 94.8%. In addition, the mean number of successful applications per school from local state schools has increased from 3 per school in 05/06 to 5 per school in 08/09.

**Table 3.2: Percentage of students on low incomes or from deprived areas at the University of Nottingham**

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
<b>Students on low incomes</b>	17.2%	17.9%	22.4%	19.3%	20.0%
<b>Students from most deprived areas</b>		8.2%	8.9%	10.2%	10.0%

In the case of Access and Vocational course applications there has been an increase in the mean number from 9 in 05/06 to 28 in 08/09. This average is taken from a list of colleges which offer these courses, and for that reason it is higher than the mean applications from *all* schools.

Other specific achievements include:

- Delivering 524 outreach activities in 2008/9, up from 429 the previous year.
- One-quarter of these were for learners on Access, Diploma and Vocational pathways.
- In the coming years the partnership will maintain at least the current number of partner secondary schools and colleges (92) and activities (524) up to the end of 2011.
- Increasing the number of interventions in local schools and colleges from 14,000 contact opportunities in 06/07 to 16,000 in 07/08, and 22,000 in 08/09.
- Involving 22,483 learners, up from 16,370 the previous year.
- Providing 4,664 places on master classes and summer schools.
- Ensuring 100% attendance and completion on both summer schools.
- Ensuring that students from low income backgrounds received £4.8m in means-tested financial support from the University of Nottingham.

- Facilitating 98.2% of eligible students to claim their core bursary. Bursary provision is above the Russell Group average, and the WP team's work also contributed to national policy development and the profile of the Russell Group.
- Providing clear information for all applicants and working out clearer signposts for Year 0 (degree foundation) courses, which has helped WP students in the admissions process.

### **3.4.3 Success in attracting external funding**

- Being successful with a number of applications for competitive external funding.

### **3.4.4 Success in gaining recognition within and outside the university**

- Receiving positive feedback from schools and continued uptake of activities.
- Winning a Lord Dearing Award for WP summer schools.

## **3.5 The Nature of the WP Partnership**

The WP partnership may be likened to a 'customer–supplier' service relationship. However, it is much more than this, for the university acts simultaneously in the role of initiator (of opportunity) and 'broker' (between academics, university students, schools and pupils).

Three groups of individuals, in addition to the WP team, are at the heart of this partnership. First, it is the students themselves and the teachers in schools with whom the WP team has formed a direct work relationship. Second, the involvement of undergraduate students as ambassadors on the summer schools and master classes, for classroom support and for mentoring and revision support, plays an integral part in WP programmes. Their participation provides the pupils with a type and level of support that they could not have normally received from an adult and thus, is highly valued by school pupils and the student ambassadors themselves. Third, the activities could not run, as subject specific tasters, without the voluntary commitment from university academics.

A striking feature of the WP partnership is that it works with a large number of partners, particularly in the case of the individual students. Within the partnership there are different types of internal and external relationships which indicate the ways that different partners interact. For example, the WP team does not work very closely with schools. Despite sharing a common goal, there is limited evidence of them "sharing resources,

responsibilities and agreeing to integrate in selected areas of programmes" (Catelli *et al.* 2000: 225). Yet the aims and objectives of each partner complement those of the others and this enables the relationship to remain strong. However, the more cooperation oriented work relationship is evident between the HEIs involved in the Advantage Nottinghamshire scheme, suggesting that this is a functional and more equal partnership.

Another important feature of WP is that it takes the form of a dispersed partnership – given the large number and wide variety of internal and external bonds and relationships involved. Associated with this is its unique mechanism for communication and decision making. There are three scheduled meetings a year between the WP team and academic schools and departments of the university, in addition to regular email exchanges. Nonetheless, the nature of decision making in WP tends to be independent rather than joint with other partners. This is despite the close cooperation relationships embedded in some instances. The summative and formative evaluation of its activities takes place on a periodic basis.

### **3.5.1 External relationships**

Externally, there are three types of relationships with schools, ranging from a) an **information diffusion** oriented relationship, b) a **supportive facilitating** relationship, and c) a **closer cooperative** relationship, and made up of direct links with, first teachers, and later with students, with the school acting as a gatekeeper. The WP team has also formed a **mutually beneficial** relationship with other HEIs to deliver a broader, more efficient, package to schools and students.

*I think it's being aware of the needs of schools and not duplicating what they were already doing; being aware that they have lots of other initiatives that are already going on. I think making sure that what we do benefits them and their students. Being in close dialogue and also providing a high quality product for them so that we do actually deliver what we say we are going to deliver.*

(Head of WP)

The development and *diffusion* model with external schools is based on weak relationships and a one-way flow of information. It is designed to alleviate the administration for schools and teachers, and demonstrate understanding of a partner's needs. This allows WP to reach more schools and more students. It also allows for the possibility of development towards closer forms of relationships. For example, schools may ask for WP



data to complement their Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) requirements, or make specific requests, or even offer to help the WP team with research or data collection about their activities, when their relationships with the WP team mature. This was summarised by one external interviewee:

*In fact in recent years some of the things that we used to do with other universities I don't bother with now. I used to take all the students – going back fifteen years – on an open day to Birmingham University to get an idea of what the university campus was like but now I don't really need to do that because they can get it here one way or another. And we used to have quite a good contact with De Montfort who came in to talk to them about how to fill in an application form.... I would call on local people now if we needed any of that.... Because I know them and they know us.*

(Deputy Head of Partner School)

The relationships with schools and teachers are integral to the WP partnership enterprise and beneficial to both parties, with the networks that gradually form working both ways. These networks are important to the schools and they appreciate the WP team understanding their needs and in some cases personalising the activities they offer. The benefits extend to individual teachers, by engaging in these networks. As James *et al.* (2006) found in their study: "individuals, who had a role in relation to initiatives outside the school, were able to create links through their own personal and social networks outside the school. These 'intentional networks' were not ad hoc but created, managed and sustained deliberately" (James *et al.* 2006: cited in Macbeath 2007: 12). The nature of these networks is fundamental in forming a successful partnership since "these different kinds of links, networks and network roles are important in knowledge creation and sharing" (Carmichael *et al.*, 2006: 218). Not all the schools benefit from these types of networks; this is common of the schools with whom there is a 'close cooperation partnership.'

In terms of WP's relationships with local schools in particular, the style has remained primarily informal. As it began, the team tried to be as flexible as possible with the activities they offered.

*When we first started working with schools and colleges outside we were pretty much doing anything they wanted because we were so desperate to work with*

*them. So we were quite flexible and if they didn't want what was on the menu we would see if we could develop something to suit them and you really do need to build up that trust with teachers.*

(Head of WP)

*I see ourselves as a service for schools and colleges. We can be prescriptive in the things that we offer but we do try and be flexible and if a school wants to come for a visit we will always try to accommodate that but we don't promise anything and we are bound by the wider university.*

(WP Team Member)

### **3.5.2 Internal relationships**

The internal relationships with academics tend to be informal and flexible. However, as time goes by these relationships may become more regularised and the nature of the relationships develops from a) ***attempting to engage***, b) ***developing involvement*** and c) ***close reciprocal interaction***. The interaction may remain informal but the regularisation gives the relationship more stability and opens up more opportunity for reciprocity and input from the academics. This all adds to the smooth running of the WP partnership. Academics from the three different stages of engagement commented on the smooth nature of the development of their relationships with WP, and all felt supported by the WP team. As one academic commented, *"we have settled into a happy marriage"*. It appears that the essence of the partnership is relational rather than highly structural, focusing as it does on personal rather than organisational relationships.

Over the years some academic departments have remained at a very low level of engagement with WP, whilst others have been closely involved and provided a great number of activities. One academic, for example, has formed a strong relationship with the WP team and as a result, that school has participated in many WP activities, offering a range of sessions. The feedback they offer to the WP team aids the development and smooth running of future activities. This shows another form of reciprocal relationship. There is also the 'Friends in School' system; this is a mechanism for communication between the WP Team and most academic schools. There are three scheduled meetings a year, plus regular email communication. With the academic departments the WP team act as brokers to facilitate the contact with schools. Also represented on the model are the relationships with other university services. These have always been two-directional but

have got stronger over the years. This is demonstrated through the use of thicker arrow lines in Figure 3.2.

The internal relationships also entail another important dimension: the ***Student Ambassadors***, who work together with the WP team to deliver activities. This is a workforce of students recruited, trained, supervised and paid by the WP team. While there is clearly a financial element to the relationship, student ambassadors need a commitment to high standards and to the aims of WP to do the work. They have strong links with the WP team and form a key element of the WP work.

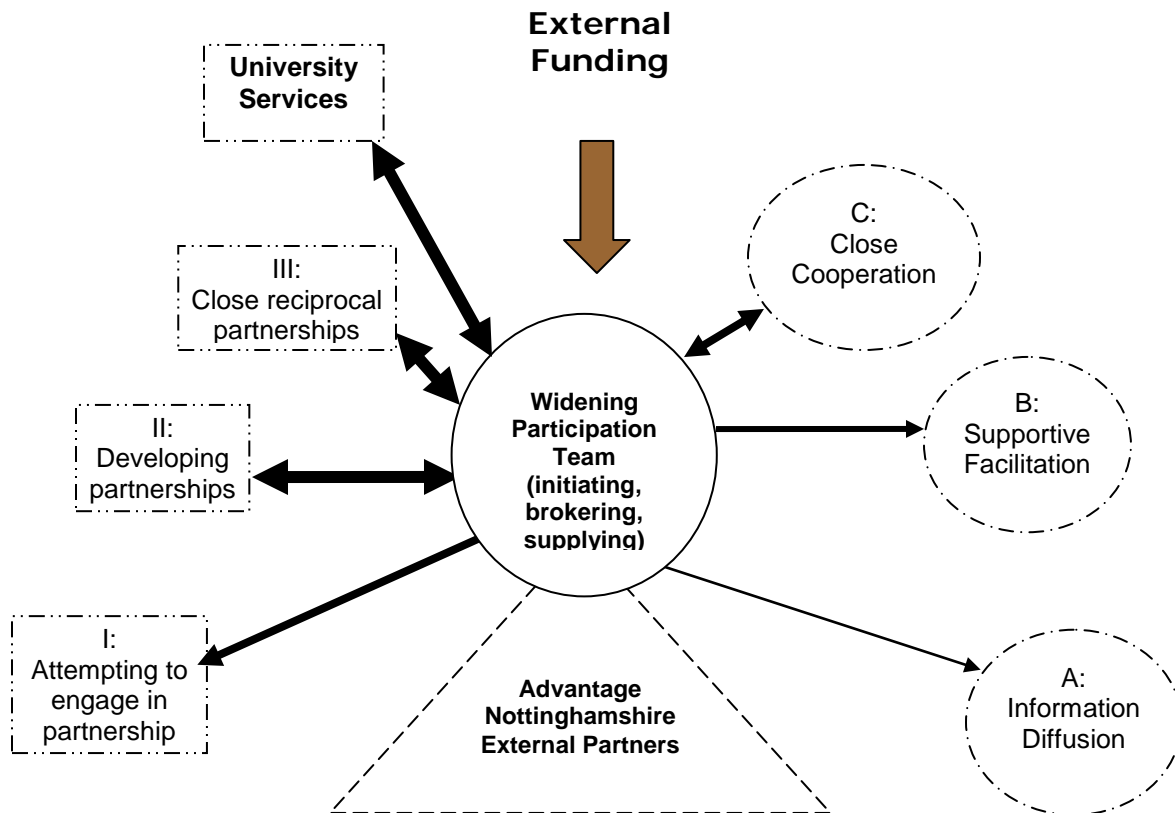
In sum, relationships matter but these exist within organisational structures which are determined and led by WP.

### **3.5.3 Models of partnerships: relationships count**

Figure 3.2 illustrates the WP partnership model. The right hand side, represented by circles, shows external relationships with schools, while the left hand side, represented by squares, shows internal university relationships. The triangular base shows the external partnerships with other HEIs that form Advantage Nottinghamshire, which provides a base for the brokering work that supports extra-curricular activities. This work has seen a gradual build up from external and internal relationships of types A (information diffusion) and I (attempting to engage), respectively, to relationships of types C (close cooperation) and III (close reciprocal partnerships).

The former (A and I) tend to be one-directional and usually consist of sending information or emails to arrange activities and sign students up. This development and information diffusion model of interaction with schools and students still features in many WP activities, particularly with new partners. Some schools, after being involved with WP for some time, start to form a slightly closer relationship with the university, giving more feedback and often requesting certain activities from the university. Equally, the academic departments, once initially engaged, begin to regularise their involvement, developing closer partnerships with the WP team. As WP has enhanced trust and trustworthiness with their internal and external partners, some of its internal and external relationships may become more two-directional.

**Figure 3.2: Widening Participation: A Model of Partnership**



Common to all these relationships, however, are the key leadership roles played by the WP team. It still has ultimate ownership and accountability for the partnership. The design application and evaluation of the processes and decision-making through which the partnerships are enacted are the responsibility of the WP team, although there is room for input from external schools, who might have specific requests or feedback, and internal academic departments, who may have suggestions about the organisation or delivery of the sessions. Indeed, there are different types of internal and external relationships. These range from close up 'reciprocal' relationships, to those which are more distant and diffused and characterised by a one-way flow of information. In essence, whilst both internal and external partnerships are those based upon mutuality, the quality of the latter is dependent upon the provision by the former. Whilst the WP team provides a leadership and brokerage role matching internal expertise with external needs, this role with schools and pupils may be most accurately described as one of development and diffusion.

## Chapter 4

### Active Communities: A Developing Partnership

#### 4.1 A Brief History

*Volunteering will help both staff and students gain new perspectives and enable them to develop their employment skills while enhancing the quality of life in disadvantaged sections of the community.*

(HEFCE Website: Expected Outcomes for the Higher Education Active Community Fund, 2002)

Central government funding of £27 million for the national Active Communities initiative became available in 2001, towards the end of the first period in office of the new government of 1997. Intended to promote the active involvement of HEIs in disadvantaged local communities, particularly through staff and student volunteering, it can be seen as an example, like the WP initiative, of New Labour 'Third Way' policies designed to address social inequality, whilst at the same time raising the economic competitiveness of the country within the global economy (Giddens, 1998). There had already been considerable government success in encouraging universities to develop partnerships with a range of businesses, through the Higher Education Reach-out to Business and the Community Fund (HEROBC), set up in 1999 with the expectation that such partnerships would lead to wealth creation. Active Communities was seen as a way of more specifically extending university involvement into local communities to both inspire and engage with them in ways which, it was hoped, would raise aspirations and subsequently lead to further wealth creation and the associated social inclusion (Lister, 2004). This built on proposals in the report 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (Rogers, 1999).

The University of Nottingham Active Communities project was set up in September 2002 to co-ordinate and respond to the national initiative which had been developed by the HEFCE, in partnership with the Home Office, through the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) and offered to all HEIs across the country. Although student volunteering was already well established at the University of Nottingham, the introduction of significant funding and specific foci brought a different perspective to

volunteering principles, particularly staff involvement. Initially a full time Head of Active Communities was appointed. In August 2003 a full time Volunteer Co-ordinator (job share between two half time posts) was appointed and in September 2004 one of these posts was increased to full time. As the workload increased a third part time Volunteer Co-ordinator was appointed and a part time Administrator to support the whole team.

## 4.2 Funding

### 4.2.1 Initial funding

The Active Communities project was jointly funded by HEFCE and the Home Office across 112 institutions which had applied for funding. Table 4.1 below is the allocation for the University of Nottingham from 2002–20044:

**Table 4.1: Initial HEACF funding 2001 – 04<sup>4</sup>**

HEACF funding 2001/2 to 2003/4	Allocations (£)			
	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	Total
University of Nottingham	108,399	108,399	233,462	450,260

As well as supporting the activities of the Active Communities team, a proportion of this funding was allocated to support volunteering in the Arts and the Students Union through Student Community Action, to support the continuation of generic student volunteering. Some funding was also allocated to setting up a project called EPARS to encourage students to develop electronic portfolios of their academic enrichment activities.

There was a second, reduced round of funding from 2004–2006 with a total funding pot of £10 million to continue existing activities. Institutions were not expected to submit further plans at this stage. It is of note that the funding allocations could be carried forward over financial years. This enabled Nottingham Active Communities to develop and expand during this period and to maintain staffing, even though funding was reduced considerably from 2004 onwards. Table 4.2 below illustrate the allocations for this period.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2001/01\\_65/01\\_65anna.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2001/01_65/01_65anna.pdf)

**Table 4.2: Second round of HEACF funding 2004–2006**

<b>HEACFE Funding 2004–06</b>	<b>Allocation for 2004/55 (£)</b>	<b>Allocation for 2005/6 (£)</b>	<b>Total allocation (£)</b>
<b>University of Nottingham</b>	92,500	92,500	185,000

5

From details published on the HEFCE web site it is clear that the initiative was being judged on quantifiable outcomes (See Appendix I) and during this period was expected to support, maintain and develop 92 or 93 existing volunteering opportunities and to generate 23 new opportunities.

#### **4.2.2 Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) 2006–09**

The HEFCE web site explains the rationale of the TQEF fund. It is of note that staff volunteering is not specifically mentioned in the identified national priority areas

‘We have amalgamated a number of funding streams which has broadened the scope of learning and teaching strategies. This is reflected in the national priority areas we have identified: institutions were asked to consider these in developing their learning and teaching strategies:

- ensuring that teaching is informed and enriched by research
- supporting continuing professional development activity, enabling staff to meet agreed national teaching standards and building a record of attainment against these standards
- broadening the learning experience through support for student volunteering
- supporting success and progression for students with diverse needs’.<sup>6</sup>

The total amount of funding for these areas was £185.5 million. The funding for continuing staff and student volunteering activities was £15 million. For the University of Nottingham the allocation was as shown in Table 4.3.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04\\_19/04\\_19.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04_19/04_19.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/enhance/quality.htm>

**Table 4.3: TQEF Funding 2006–09**

<b>Active Communities Funds</b>		
<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>
93,000	93,000	93,000

Other TQEF allocations for the university are of interest. There was no funding from this source for research informed teaching but other allocations were as given in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Other TQEF funding 2006–09**

**ILTS** Institutional learning and teaching strategies

**SPS** Supporting professional standards allocations

<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>
557,482	557,482	557,482

During this period the university has additionally funded Active Communities by approximately £150,000 per year. Funding will continue in 2009/10 but there will be a shortfall in university funding of £60,000 during the following year (2010/11).

### **4.3 The Growth and Sustainability of Partnership**

#### **4.3.1 Setting up the model (2002)**

The lack of clarity within the initial guidelines regarding volunteering opportunities meant that the responsibility for deciding how the initiative would be developed was that of the university. The appointment of the first Active Communities Project Co-ordinator was in itself significant. The Project Co-ordinator had considerable experience of community volunteering, similar to the earlier HEROBC initiative.



*...my background had been in the Third Sector, initially in a community development role and immediately prior to joining the university in the field of corporate social responsibility. As the East Midlands Regional Director of Business in the Community I worked with major companies across the region who increasingly used community engagement as a tool for the personal development of their staff.*

(Active Communities Project Co-ordinator 2002–2007)

The Steering Group for the HEACF initiative was co-chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and the university's Registrar, ensuring that the project received senior level support. At this time encouraging staff to volunteer was something new and unfamiliar to the university and the experience which the appointee brought to the post was invaluable.

*....with guidance from the Steering Group the development of the initiative was really down to me. I had been appointed because of my experience of community engagement and I was expected to direct and develop the initiative.*

(Pro Vice-Chancellor)

#### **4.3.2 Identifying, developing and establishing priorities (2002–2006)**

##### ***i) Establishing internal credibility***

The first priority in 2002 was to establish the guiding principles for volunteering with departments across the university. This was partially achieved through what was described as an 'Away Day' when 30 members of staff (both academic and administrative) from across the university departments who were interested in, and supportive of, the initiative were brought together. The involvement of a Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar in the day was significant in that it gave credibility to the Active Communities initiative. The purposes of the project were described and staff were asked to explain their reasons for supporting the initiative and to set out their vision of what it would feel like if the initiative were successful. Table 4.5 below provides the statements which were developed from this part of the day.

**Table 4.5: Active Communities 'Away Day' visions November 2002**

<b>What Would It Feel Like?</b>
"University more responsive to local community"
"Normal for people to look to University for advice and support."
"Volunteering would be encouraged and valued by University."
"University would recognise its civic role."
"Support staff would feel more included and valued."
"There would be significant change in culture."
"All students and staff who wanted to volunteer would have the opportunity."
"An increasing number of people want the University to change."

These responses, alongside a list of 44 possible benefits of the initiative (Appendix II), were used as the guidelines for promoting Active Communities and had a significant influence on the university in setting up a staff volunteering policy, potentially supporting 20 hours volunteering in work time. **The recognition and involvement of support staff was a notable development.**

***ii) Building partnerships with primary schools***

Active Communities has been working in primary schools since 2003. Initially it was in response to a request from a family of primary schools in a local socio-economically deprived community seeking financial support for children for whom English was an additional language. A joint working group between the schools, the English as an additional language (EAL) team from the City Council and Active Communities was set up and provided support for the schools. This particular group worked together to capitalise on one of the unique features of the university, its range of nationalities and expertise in language skills.

***iii) Establishing community links***

Establishing community links in the areas of social disadvantage close to the university was concurrent with ii) above. The remit of Active Communities was wider than just involvement with primary schools. A number of volunteering activities, through charitable organisations and local industry involvement, were already taking place in local primary schools. Challenged to raise standards, and seeking to encourage further involvement of

responsible adults with their children, these schools welcomed the idea of more support. A part time project manager was appointed to Active Communities in early 2003. Her role included developing a volunteering model focussed on literacy and numeracy, but providing a better and more sustained service than other organisations were seen to be offering.

#### ***iv) Targeting education***

In preparation for the second round of HEACF funding (2004–2006), Active Communities reviewed its strategy and arrived at the decision to target its resources to support education in the community, focusing on aspiration raising and access in primary schools, to ensure no duplication of effort with WP and their emphasis on non-traditional learners and secondary schools, with a view to recruitment. This decision supports the university's long-standing active role as a key education provider in Nottingham and its ongoing commitment to support and improve educational outcomes within the local community.

Nottingham City Local Authority, in particular, was facing a number of challenges in terms of levels of attainment in its schools, and as a result it was felt that skills-sharing partnerships between AC and local schools would be mutually beneficial. Projects such as Time to Read and Number Partners derived from a drive to support educational attainment.

Schools within easy access to each of the university campuses were contacted by the Active Communities team. As a result, activities have taken place in over 60 primary schools in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, relatively close to the University of Nottingham, in the last five years. For internally developed and led projects, volunteers were trained by Active Communities staff and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks carried out before starting their placements. In one school seven members of staff (both academic and support staff) have now been volunteering for more than five years, through support for literacy and numeracy schemes. **This is clear evidence of a long term commitment by these volunteers.**

#### ***v) Extending support***

Between 2004 and 2006 partnerships were developed and offers extended to schools further away from the university. A further part time Volunteer Co-ordinator post was created and a part time administrator appointed. Once something had been tried and established the format or idea could be offered to other schools or refined further in the

same school. The realization that something different could be done has helped inspire on-going innovations.

From the initial offer of volunteering help Active Communities project managers have now developed a knowledge and understanding of how to identify and respond to the needs of the primary schools they work with. As one project manager explained:

*We took a very open and flexible approach initially with the schools that we worked with. We sat down and discussed what needs they had that they felt could be fulfilled by interactions with the university. As a result a number of projects and activities were developed that then became part of our general offering to other schools. As the programme developed we would go to a school with a number of 'off the shelf' programmes but still make the offer to support them with any other ideas that they had. This might in turn lead to development of 'one off' activities or more sustainable projects that could again be extended beyond that particular school if appropriate.*

(Active Communities Project Manager)

Across the schools there is now a recognition and understanding that there is flexibility, with Active Communities staff both willing and able to help develop ideas and offer suggestions using the wide range of resources available throughout the university.

#### **4.3.3 Towards a new community engagement strategy (2006–2009)**

The maintenance of external funding and the support of the university allowed Active Communities to continue developing and expanding its services throughout 2006 & 2007 and a number of national awards helped in establishing its internal credibility. In 2007 a decision was taken by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Communities, supported by the Head of Active Communities who has reduced her working hours, to re-instate the post as a full time one.

It was felt that the project was now well established but remained vulnerable to shifts in funding policy. Further developing a strategic leadership role was necessary as part of the university's commitment to positioning Active Communities more centrally within both the university and its external communities.

In September 2007 a new full time head of Active Communities was appointed, leading a team of one full time and two part time Project Managers (the job title of the Volunteer Co-ordinators posts had been changed and the roles slightly amended) and a part time administrator. The administrator role was re graded and renamed in 2008 to Project and Systems Co-ordinator and a further part time administrator was appointed.

The new Head of Active Communities, previously the Chief Executive Officer of a Third Sector infrastructure organisation and a former lecturer in social/community/active citizenship, brought a different perspective to the post.

*...a lot of our work seemed to be regarded rather peripherally and it was badged entirely as volunteering. No one had really pushed the message that we were part of staff personal development and student learning in some of the newer projects and we weren't just focused on staff volunteering. It was more about student academic enrichment as it was evolving.*

(Head of Active Communities)

Building on elements of partnerships with schools which had been highly successful in terms of staff and student development, there has been a change of emphasis from more basic volunteering activities, seen as very similar to those offered by other organisations, to the further development of more unique, dynamic activities that the university can develop and offer. The first example of an academic related volunteering programme was the Engineers of Nottingham project developed in partnership with Nottingham City Local Authority. Since its inception in 2004 at least 30 volunteers (staff and students) have supported 15 schools across the city. Other examples of academic related projects that have developed are: science after school clubs, the MA in Special Needs Education volunteering programme, the MA TESOL language volunteers and links between Nottingham University Business School and various community based organisations. Today the challenge for Active Communities is to keep the momentum of such initiatives going. The dialogue between the primary schools and the university has also produced more 'bespoke' activities influenced both by the needs of the schools and the skills and resources available within the university. At the same time this type of involvement of university staff and students in primary schools was seen to be highly beneficial for their own personal and professional development. A more collaborative relationship has grown out of these bespoke activities. There is, now also, an expectation to identify community involvement in many grant applications and in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

#### **4.3.4 The Future**

One project manager will be specifically responsible for liaison with schools within the new structure, which is to start in September 2009. This new role itself is to be more strategic and the project manager will work with staff and students in the academic schools and departments of the university in a more facilitative way. They will be supported to develop, implement and manage projects of their own with guidance on who to work with and how in terms of consistent processes and procedures and good practice across the institution. In this way it is hoped to maintain momentum and to further develop 'bespoke activities' and to encourage more university schools to take part, thus enriching the learning experiences of both staff and students and providing a more cost effective service for all concerned.

Active Communities has now become part of the university's new community engagement strategy and is set to lead on its development and dissemination.

*There are five key themes that make up the strategy: opening up the university's physical environment and resources; sharing and exchanging knowledge and skills; contributing to key civic agendas; being good neighbours and promoting and supporting education.*

*Active Communities will be leading on the following activities*

- *Promoting public access to the university*
- *Supporting local research partnerships with community organisations*
- *Supporting student placement opportunities with community organisations*
- *Supporting staff and student volunteering in schools and community organisations*
- *Promoting workplace experience within the university for under-represented people.*

(Active Communities Internal Document, 2009)

## 4.4 Models of Partnership: From University Initiated to Sustained Engagement

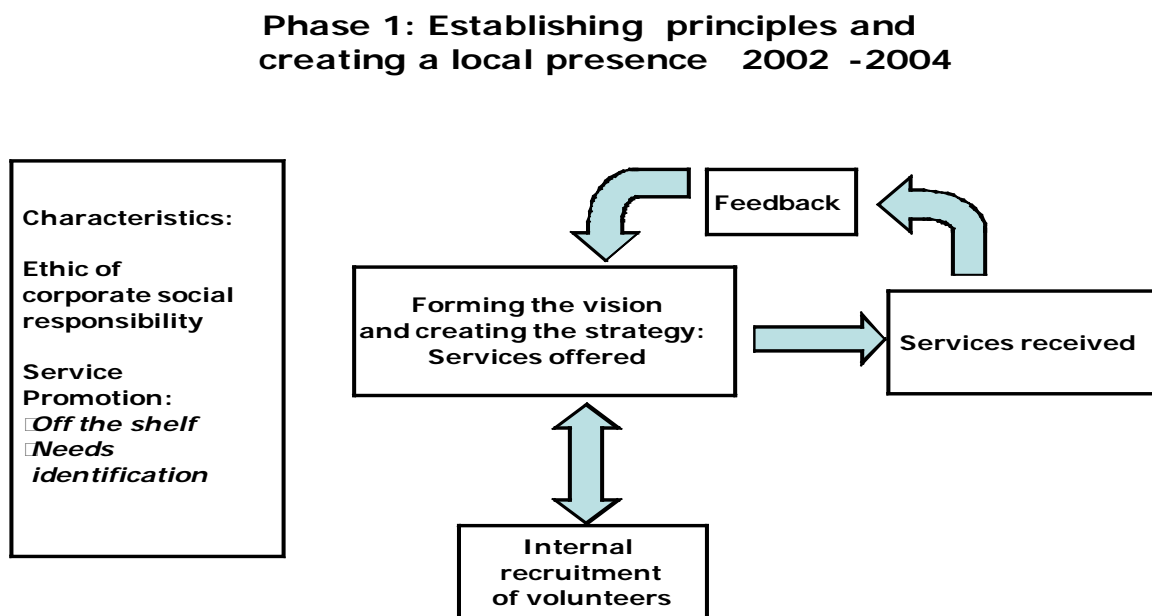
### 4.4.1 Three phases of development

In summarising the worth of Active Communities at the University of Nottingham over its seven year existence it is possible to identify three phases, each of which was influenced by internal and external contexts, structures and leadership. The three phases in the development of the Active Communities initiative are illustrated below:

#### i) Phase 1 Establishing principles and creating a local presence

Initially, as with the WP initiative, the university needed to establish a tangible presence in the local community, whilst also developing principles for volunteering and creating the goodwill among staff and students for it to happen. At this stage the success of the initiative was judged by the number of opportunities created (Appendix I) resulting in a number of 'off the shelf' activities being offered. Figure 4.1 below presents the model of this first phase.

Figure 4.1: Active Communities Model Phase 1

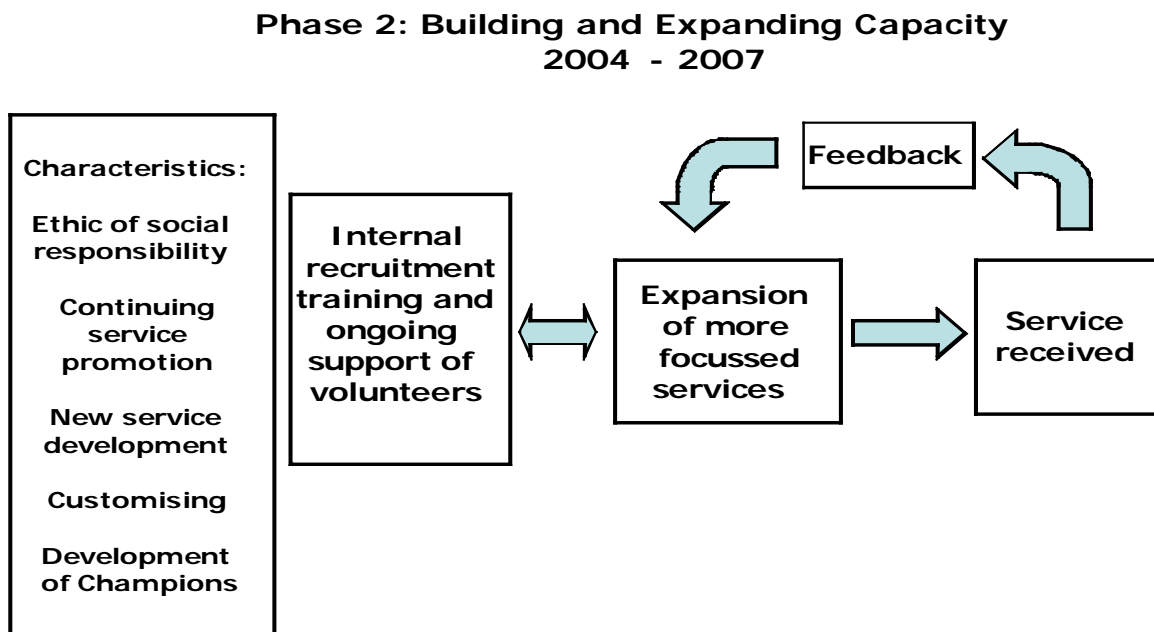


#### ii) Phase 2 Building and Expanding Capacity

Once the first phase targets had been achieved Active Communities moved into the second phase of building and expanding the capacity of its involvement with primary

schools. It was during this period that the developmental nature of more focussed activities came to the fore. Such activities were seen as being internally, for university developments, more beneficial and enriching, whilst in the schools these were opportunities which were unique and could not have been developed through other volunteering organisations (Figure 4.2). Towards the end of this phase the Head of Active Communities reduced her working hours.

**Figure 4.2: Active Communities Model Phase 2**



One example of a partnership developing in this way came from a School of Pharmacy lecturer contacting Active Communities after being involved in an Active Communities Team Challenge<sup>7</sup> where staff from her department helped paint part of a local community centre. Inspired to carry on volunteering but wanting to specifically share her knowledge and passion for science she approached Active Communities about the possibility of setting up some sort of science club for primary aged children. Working together, an after school club was developed and implemented. The lecturer was able to persuade other members of staff and students to give a couple of hours to the scheme on a particular

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<sup>7</sup> Another element of Active Communities activities, not directly related to primary schools, involving groups of staff/students from University schools being given a short term community challenge, such as creating a sensory garden in an open space.



theme. Following its initial success the programme was actively supported and promoted by the Head of School for Pharmacy as something he wanted all his academic staff and post graduate students to get involved in. The lecturer was put forward for the HEACF Staff Volunteering Award in 2005 and won it, being awarded excellence within the category. This model has now been running for four years with up to four different primary schools each year, with more than 50 lecturers and postgraduate students from the School of Pharmacy involved over this period. A themed hour-long session is planned by a different group of three or four people for each week e.g. Extracting DNA, Drugs, Fossils, The Human Body. A further development has been running a similar club for children in care at the university. The 2008 Active Communities Annual Review talks of recruiting...

*...community champions in schools and departments who can act as our eyes and ears on the ground and foster meaningful links with us.*

The lecturer in the School of Pharmacy was already a 'community champion' whose involvement developed over time. The School of Pharmacy has recognised the benefits, funding travel and resources for the science clubs. It is also important to record that during her absence (on maternity leave) another lecturer took on the overall responsibility of being a 'champion' for the science clubs.

The influence of this approach was also identified during a recent focus group session run by Active Communities:

*...there is a genuine impetus from staff who have volunteered in other ways because it gives them the drive and the energy and, sometimes, the enthusiasm to start thinking about an application within their (university) school or their subject area and it definitely acts as a kind of catalyst. And that's for academic and non academic staff.*

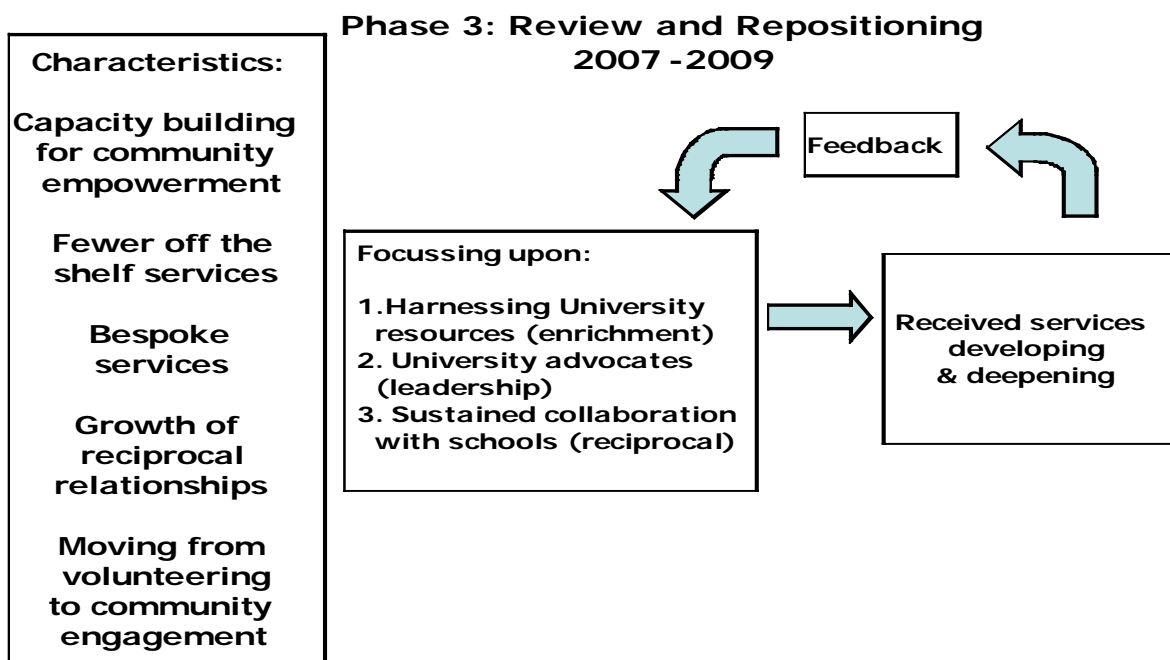
(Head of Active Communities)

### **iii) Phase 3 Review and repositioning: a capacity building model of sustainable university – community partnerships**

The third phase in the development of Active Communities is on-going, involving a review of the services offered to primary schools, alongside building capacity for further community engagement and empowerment (see Figure 4.3). With the appointment of the

new Head of Active Communities the strategic role developed with a more overt emphasis upon capacity building for community empowerment through sustained engagement. Funding issues and concerns about the positioning of the initiative within the university have resulted in some elements of volunteering being reduced whilst more unique and focussed elements are being strengthened.

**Figure 4.3: Active Communities Model Phase 3**



It is this more refined model which points to the future growth and sustainability of Active Communities.

## Chapter 5

### NUSA – A Nascent Partnership

#### 5.1 A Brief History

The Nottingham University Samworth Academy (NUSA) is a new secondary school, replacing an existing school judged to be failing in the quality of its educational provision, which will open in September 2009 in the community of Bilborough in Nottingham. Academies are state schools established and managed by external sponsors. Whilst academies are not maintained by the local authority (LA), they are set up with the LA's backing. The LA also has a seat on the Academy's governing body. Core funding comes from DCSF with external sponsors providing the vision and direction, including the appointment of the majority of the governors. In the case of NUSA, the co-sponsors are the University of Nottingham and David Samworth, a retired local businessman.

The decision to open an Academy in Bilborough lies within an educational policy context which aims to redress cycles of underachievement in schools serving areas of high socio-economic deprivation within the maintained sector. In this sense, it is driven by the same policies of the Labour government of 1997 as those which promote the Widening Participation and Active Communities initiatives. The decision by Lord Adonis in 2005 to endorse this Russell Group University as a co-sponsor of the proposed Academy marked the first stage in the development of a new model of sustained partnership between the university and its local community with the shared aim of raising educational standards for the children within that community.

The university's involvement with the project came about as a result of a discussion, in May 2005, between the local MP for the community, the (then) Schools Minister and the Vice Chancellor about the feasibility of the university sponsoring a new Academy in Bilborough. The decision to take up this opportunity was partly driven by the Labour government's policy for the establishment of 'new' Academies to replace failing schools in disadvantaged communities and, importantly, by the university's strong sense of social and moral obligation:

*It's about being open to your neighbours and your community and more widely with the knowledge and the expertise that you have and with the kind*

*of very positive, supportive community that the university can be, to perhaps bring out the best in another community.*

(Academy Project Unit director)

There is a pervading sense that the opportunity to work with one community in this unique way, to be involved in establishing a brand new school, has the potential to be a reciprocal partnership with gains for all involved. Of particular significance has been the commitment at this stage for NUSA to be considered a 'research school' in partnership with the university.

### **5.1.1 Three stages of procurement (2005–2009)**

There are strict guidelines of procurement prescribed by the DCSF about the structural procedures involved in opening an Academy. The initial processes in 2005–2006 were part of the early stages of 'pre-feasibility' called '**Brokering**'.

*Once partnerships have been established, a Statement of Intent letter is issued by the Office of the Schools Commissioner to the LA. This confirms to the LA the sponsor's intention to work with them in taking forward the Academy Project.*

(The Standards Site: Establishing an Academy)

An Academy Project Unit, under the directorship of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (with responsibility for community), was set up within the university to co-ordinate all Academy related activities. There is a statutory requirement that new Academies require the support of the LA. The LA endorsed the decision to open an Academy in Bilborough and to close the predecessor school in December 2005. The Academy Project Unit (APU) Director was then able to begin the search for a suitable co-sponsor who could help to contribute towards the £2 million commitment to an endowment fund, a requirement by DCSF that has since been dropped. The APU Director met first with Samworth's representative and then with David Samworth himself in January 2006. There then followed a conversation between the Vice Chancellor and David Samworth described by Samworth's representative as a '*meeting of minds in terms of the importance of culture and ethos*' leading to an agreement to work together as co-sponsors of the new Academy. In practice, it is clear that Samworth has brought more than the financial contribution to the partnership both in terms of his commitment and experience with two other academies.

The co-sponsors then worked with the LA to prepare the required formal **Expression of Interest**. Samworth's representative worked closely with the APU Director and another academic within the university, the Head of School for Education, on this. In June 2006, the Expression of Interest was submitted and in September 2006, NUSA entered the **Feasibility Stage**. During this stage there is a requirement by DCSF for the sponsors to consult with the community and to prepare the vision and ethos which will characterise the Academy. There are a range of documents which have to be prepared during this stage and the co-sponsors were required to work with a DCSF project team (Tribal – a project management (PM) company) to ensure that this was undertaken according to the guidelines. This stage proved to be particularly important in the development of the unique model of partnership that the university sought to create with regard to NUSA.

*The co-sponsors have fought hard to develop their own vision and to bring in, first a Principal and Vice Principal, and then the Governors, who subscribe to the same aspirations for Bilborough. Although this has had to be conducted under the watchful eye of DCSF, it has been very much the sponsors' vision.*

(APU Director)

The documents prepared during this period were submitted to DCSF and a funding agreement was obtained. The co sponsors pledged their contributions to the endowment fund, totalling two million pounds. The university has made an undisclosed financial contribution towards the endowment fund required from the sponsors by the DCSF. In addition, the university has invested 'in kind' through the giving of time and expertise from a range of academics and other staff across the institution. It has also funded some of the events that have taken place across the partnership with the existing school:

*The university's contribution involves a partnership which is much more dynamic and which offers much more choice about the sorts of things in which it manifests itself. But it does also sometimes involve paying for things and so the day that we had at the university for the Year 6 transition we actually footed the bill.*

(APU Director)

During the early stages of the partnership the individuals on the steering group invested a great amount of their time. As yet, however, there is no clear financial costing model for

this time nor for people within the university who have contributed to one-off events or ongoing programmes of support.

*The chief financial officer of the university has promised to look at some kind of formula to how much we are spending because otherwise you can't see all the costs of this sort of arrangement. If you look at the DCSF process that we've now come through with flying colours but while we were in it many of the meetings we needed to draw on specialist support like our Estates people; we had to get the PR team to do some things for us and all of these things involve costs.*

(APU Director)

There have also been long-term investments in the partnership from the university, for example the School of English has created a role for an academic member of staff to coordinate the school's work within NUSA and the feeder schools. This is a three year position. There has also been long-term investment in the establishment of the APU not least in the decision to direct the Pro-Vice Chancellor's time to work on the project. The DCSF committed to paying 24 million pounds for the cost of the building. This then moved the process forward into the **Implementation Stage** which incorporated all aspects of preparation for the opening of the new school.

At the Implementation Stage the sponsors were able to appoint the Principal (four terms ahead of opening) to develop the vision and render it practically achievable. Later, the Vice Principal, the Director of Finance and the Principal's Personal Assistant joined the NUSA staff, with the remainder of staff being transferred from the old school or newly appointed with effect from the opening in September, 2009. During the Implementation Stage, the work of the visioning/steering group, initiated during the Feasibility Stage, continued; especially with regard to engaging different parts of the community and developing the vision into a curriculum. In June 2009, at the Implementation Sign-Off Meeting, the DCSF 'RAGged' the plans for the NUSA Academy and rated the plans 'green'<sup>8</sup>. The final requirement of the Implementation Stage was the production of NUSA's development plan which was approved by the DCSF in July.

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<sup>8</sup> 'RAGged'. From the acronym Red Amber Green used in school assessment procedures – Red indicating a child at risk of underperforming significantly. Green indicating that they are on track to succeed..

NUSA officially opens in September 2009 when the Implementation Stage is completed. The new buildings will be operational in September 2010. The university's role in the partnership will change from this point onwards and the intention, according to the APU Director, is for it to take a continuing active role with the school to develop the core educational dimension of its work:

*...and we'll get other people involved in that [a reformed Project Steering Group] who will help us to maintain these critical parcels of the educational delivery. And then we will meet monthly and we'll look at all the progress and adding new projects. So we will still have a Project Steering Group but it will be a very different body and it will be about our education offering.*

(APU Director)

The Academy Project Unit Director explained that as NUSA moves from being a virtual school to a real school there has been an increasing sense of freedom for the university to develop the educational partnership with NUSA that she had envisaged from the beginning.

*The vehicle for delivery of projects involving University of Nottingham staff is through the offices of the Vice Principal of the Academy and the Academy Project Manager at the university. A Steering Group consisting of the members of the APU and the Vice Principal has been established to which other members of NUSA will be co-opted.*

(APU Director, correspondence)

### **5.1.2 NUSA in operation: activities to date**

The activities fall broadly into two phases. The first captures all the events and activities prescribed by DCSF in the stages of procurement outlined above. An example would be consultation evenings held in the existing school for parents of the prospective pupils. The second incorporates the university-led events and activities that were intended to sow the seeds of the educational partnership encapsulated in the APU Director's comment above. Examples of these are provided in Table 5.1, below.

**Table 5.1: Key activities within the partnership**

	<b>Expression of Interest (June 2006)</b>	<b>Feasibility (Sep 2006–Sep 2007)</b>	<b>Implementation ( Sep 2007– Sep 2009)</b>
<b>Consultation and Marketing Events</b>	Newsletters to local residents ( <i>APU Project Team</i> )	Newsletters to local residents ( <i>APU Project Team</i> )	Newsletters to local residents ( <i>APU Project Team</i> )
	Stalls at the local market ( <i>APU Project Team, individuals from the university, Samworth's rep.</i> )	Marketing strategy website, logo, uniform ( <i>APU Project Team</i> )	Principal and Vice Principal active in the local community and existing school ( <i>NUSA</i> ) Hanby and Barrett community theatre event ( <i>School of Education</i> ) 100 day event ( <i>APU Project Team, Individuals from the university, NUSA, Samworth</i> )
<b>Educational Partnership Events</b>	'First steps' dance performance in the existing school ( <i>APU Project Team, University Lakeside Theatre</i> )	Providing professional support in the existing school e.g. developing the GTP cohort ( <i>School of Education</i> )	Providing professional support in the existing school e.g. developing the GTP cohort ( <i>School of Education</i> )
		University initiated one off events (e.g. What's Cooking ( <i>APU Project Team, University Hospitality Division, existing school</i> ) University initiated longer term programmes (e.g. <i>School of English student literacy volunteers programme</i> )	University initiated one off events (e.g. transition day 'Earth and Space': <i>APU Project Team, representatives from NUSA, the existing school, and academics within the university</i> ) University initiated programmes for staff (e.g. Masters level programme for NUSA leadership team: <i>School of Education</i> ) INSET day for teaching staff newly appointed to NUSA to outline the vision for the new educational partnership between the university and the school. ( <i>APU Project Team, NUSA</i> ) And for students (e.g. support for showcase project 'Sharp Records'; <i>teacher within the existing school, APU Project Team</i> )
			School initiated one off events (e.g. the Roman day: <i>Existing School, APU Project Team, School of Archaeology, University Museum</i> )



The APU (comprising the APU Director, the APU Manager and the former Manager of Active Communities) is currently planning five key areas of activity to develop the educational partnership beyond the Implementation Stage:

- i) Four 'flexible days' on health and science
- ii) Support for literacy using School of English model for years 8–9
- iii) Support for mathematics (possibly using 'Number Partners' model) years 8–9
- iv) Model to deliver support for extended school agenda over a range of activities
- v) Mentoring support for Year 11 students through GCSE.

These five interventions have been chosen because they map onto the newly-formed Academy Development Plan which provides a formal planning structure for the future development of the real school. The appointment of the Vice Principal to manage the links between the university and the virtual school in January 2009, and the opening of NUSA in September 2009, denote the establishment of a formal organisational structure within which the development plans are to be delivered. In addition, the Vice Principal has a mandate to draw on the research community within the university to help create a research community within the new school in order to continually improve teaching and learning. An early example of this already developing is that ten teachers from NUSA have registered for an MA in Leadership and Management at the university starting in September 2009.

This more structured approach, proposed by all involved in the partnership, has moved the model of partnership forward a stage from the 'random acts of kindness' model of intervening (by interested academic 'champions') that existed during the early stages of the procurement process, to a new phase in which the planning structure will, to a larger or lesser extent, dictate the change and development of the organisational structure. The next phase of the growth of NUSA is beyond the remit of this specific study. Nonetheless, it is clear that the calibration of the development of the formal planning structure and the organisational structure is beginning to dominate the landscape of the old school.

### 5.1.3 Achievements to date

#### 5.1.3.1 Success in transition: completion of milestones

- Successful progression through the DCSF procurement process with the highly sought green 'RAGged' rating at the Implementation Stage.
- Positive evaluations of the transition day planned by representatives from NUSA, the existing school and the university (on the topic of Earth and Space). The day was intended to be a taster of future university and NUSA partnership events to come.
- Appointment of inspirational individuals onto the governing body.
- Full complement of staff ready for opening of NUSA in September.
- This new staff co-operating with the Vice Principal and Principal in preparing schemes of work and other materials required by DCSF before they are officially working for NUSA.
- Re-writing of the curriculum to include an emphasis on community, mentoring and citizenship.
- Establishment of the first post-16 cohort.
- Recruitment of 140 new Year 7 pupils (previous year this had been under 100).

Other examples of returns on investment are the time devoted to the DCSF procurement process by the university in that the Implementation Plan was 'RAGged' green for all areas which is a very unusual DCSF response for first submissions. In addition some of the 'high-risk' strategies (such as consultation evenings at the local supermarket and at the local Thursday market; and university-sponsored dance and theatre performances to spread the message) carried out in terms of marketing and creating community support for the Academy have also been successful:

*When we started with that kind of strategy the DCSF was really nervous about it and they didn't want us to do it but as time's gone on the muddy bits are things that the DCSF have thought were rather good and they quite liked that and that was helping with the marketing of the Academy and the marketing is something that you get DCSF cash for. So DCSF have started to want reports on what we are doing and started to put it into their things.*

(APU Project Manager)

Also, the decision to create a GTP cohort within the existing school appears to have paid dividends. One of the benefits according to an academic within the School of Education has been seeing how the GTP cohort can act *“as a wedge of positivity in a rather demoralised school”*. She described how this GTP model worked in the existing school and how the GTP students were working *“to reject deficit models of children’s culture and lives and experience”* to the extent that by the end of the year this had an influence on the existing staff. *“And members of the existing staff said that was the case.”*

## **5.2 Roles, Responsibilities and Creative Tensions in the Development of Partnership**

It is important in reporting the work of partnerships at an early (nascent) stage of their development to chronicle the key roles, responsibilities and tensions which need to be managed if they are to result in success. Here we identify five.

### **5.2.1 A ‘meeting of minds’**

This helped facilitate the early stages of the partnership in that each sponsor brought different strengths. As well as the financial contribution, Samworth also brought experience of successfully opening two academies. The university also contributed financially but was able to draw on a huge range of experts from within the institution to support and advise at each stage of the procurement process. This meant that during the Feasibility Stage when there were pressures from DCSF to follow established procedures for procurement, the co-sponsors, who had established a strong sense of a shared vision, were able to respond robustly:

*I would say we have fought side by side and [Samworth’s rep] brings as much to those fights as we do. When the chips are down and the local authority mess about with the design of your building then [Samworth’s rep] comes out fighting and we come out fighting and between us we get what we want. We’re fighting over the furniture budget at the moment and, to that extent, the sponsorship is a symmetrical thing – having more of us may mean we can help.*

(APU Director)

This view is echoed by Samworth’s representative:

*The partnership is probably at its best and most effective when united by a determination to resolve critical issues facing the Academy.*

Thus, although the DCSF model of procurement was a source of tension at times for those involved in the partnership, there were benefits for the partnership that emerged as a result. The experience of meeting the challenges posed led to a strengthening of the shared vision amongst all members of the university involved in the project and the co-sponsor and resulted in a growing sense of trust amongst those involved in the visioning/steering group.

### **5.2.2 Community resistance**

As with Widening Participation and Active Communities, there was initial resistance within the local community to the idea of a new school which involved the university. The Academy Project Unit had to devise ways of breaking down barriers that had been put up within a community which felt that it had been let down too many times before. This was coupled by a belief that the university was only interested in feathering its own nest and wanted to 'cherry pick' the best students:

*We had also to struggle with the image of the university as a sponsor... Probably a misunderstanding also that universities were about widening participation and they couldn't see why we might be interested in what the kids were interested in.*

(APU Director)

### **5.2.3 Tensions with existing school staff**

There were also tensions that arose from working with the existing school, '*we haven't found that we've had a really, really good dialogue with the majority of the teaching staff in the school in terms of what we could have achieved*' (APU Director). The 'Roman' day is an example of this (where the university was asked to help the school after it had been let down by another provider and university staff found there was a lack of direction from the school in terms of the expectations of their input); this has led to procedures being drawn up for future involvement from the university with events such as this. The Vice Principal reflected on the relationship between the existing school and the university in the early days of his appointment in the following way:

*I think the process of engaging the university has been fairly patchy to the point where there will have been everything from enthusiastic support to outright opposition and there are still pockets of mistrust.*

(Vice Principal)

#### **5.2.4 The appointments of Principal and Vice Principal – squaring the circle**

Major drivers of change to the model of partnership were the appointments of first a new Principal and later a new Vice Principal, also an important milestone in the development of NUSA. In terms of the university this shifted the work that it was doing with the existing school from that of outreach towards an individual tangible relationship:

*Until the Principal was appointed a year and a bit ago, there wouldn't have been anything on this site – there would just have been university outreach which, in one sense, doesn't have a direct connection. The existing school got lots of support along with other schools but it's a very different process from the university putting its name above the door.*

(APU Director)

The Principal and Vice Principal became the public face of NUSA in the community, the existing school and the virtual school, NUSA. Because of the groundwork carried out in the early days of the project, it was important that these key appointments went to individuals who would understand the project steering group's shared vision and be able to move this forward and actualise it in terms of relationships with the co-sponsors, curriculum developments and creating the right team of teachers in the new school.

*I think they appointed me because my views fitted somewhere into that. I would like to think that I had some role in helping to shape it but I've certainly not led it and like any good design the group is growing bigger and bigger.*

(Principal)

There was a sense that the ownership for the partnership was widening beyond the co-sponsors as the Principal and Vice Principal established their roles and developed relationships across the university and the existing school and community. These appointments helped establish NUSA as a reality for those not immediately connected with the steering group. From the university point of view this was helped by the fact that the

Principal and Vice Principal were located in the new NUSA offices on the main campus. From the existing school and community's view this was brought about by their frequent presence within the community. The Principal took a relationship based approach to building the trust between the existing school, the virtual school and the university:

*The Principal has been very active since he was appointed in that literally family by family and person by person he has engaged people to the point that when I'm now involved in various operational things I'm getting commitment and enthusiasm from people that we don't employ and won't employ until September.*

(Vice Principal)

### **5.2.5 Bringing the school staff on board**

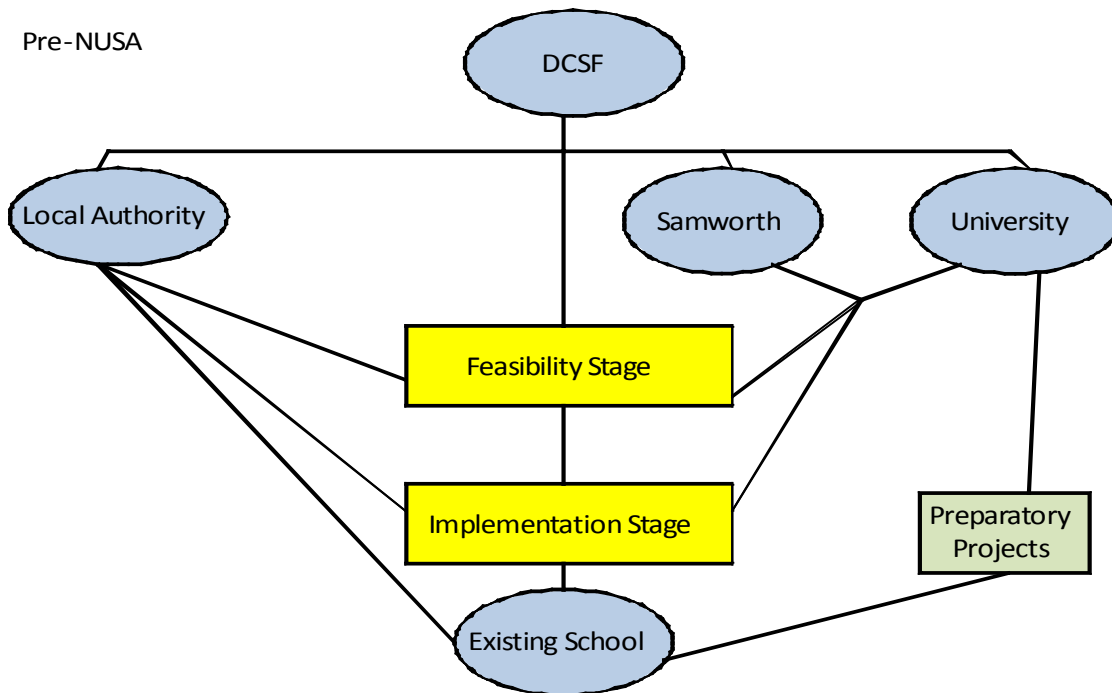
Individuals at the existing school spoke about how they felt supported by the Principal and trusted him because of his ability to keep in constant communication with them virtually through email. The teachers who were moving from the existing school to NUSA spoke about how the university was not, from their perspective, as important as the Principal and Vice Principal. A mainscale teacher explained that the fact that the Principal's office was based at the university served as the '*odd reminder that we are part of the university*'. Nevertheless, it is clear that the co-sponsors continue to play a key role in the development of NUSA.

## **5.3 Social Relations in a Nascent Model of Partnership**

### **5.3.1 The model of partnership**

The model of partnership that is emerging is one that is both structurally and relational defined unlike the models associated with developing (AC) and mature (WP) partnerships. Since this is in its infancy, we will identify it in terms of the nature of the social relations which are its defining features. Massey (1993) argues that social relations are also spatially related and that these spatial relations can change over time. Ideally there would be a mechanism to demonstrate how the model looks differently from the perspectives of different individuals, from different geographical locations and from different contexts as well as from different points in time. In the absence of such a mechanism the model in Figure 5.1 is presented in a range of ways to reflect its multi-dimensionality. Those who were directly involved in the early stages of the project had a clear view of a hierarchical model with the DCSF at the top of the structure.

**Figure 5.1: Establishing the Partnership: A Hierarchical Relationship**



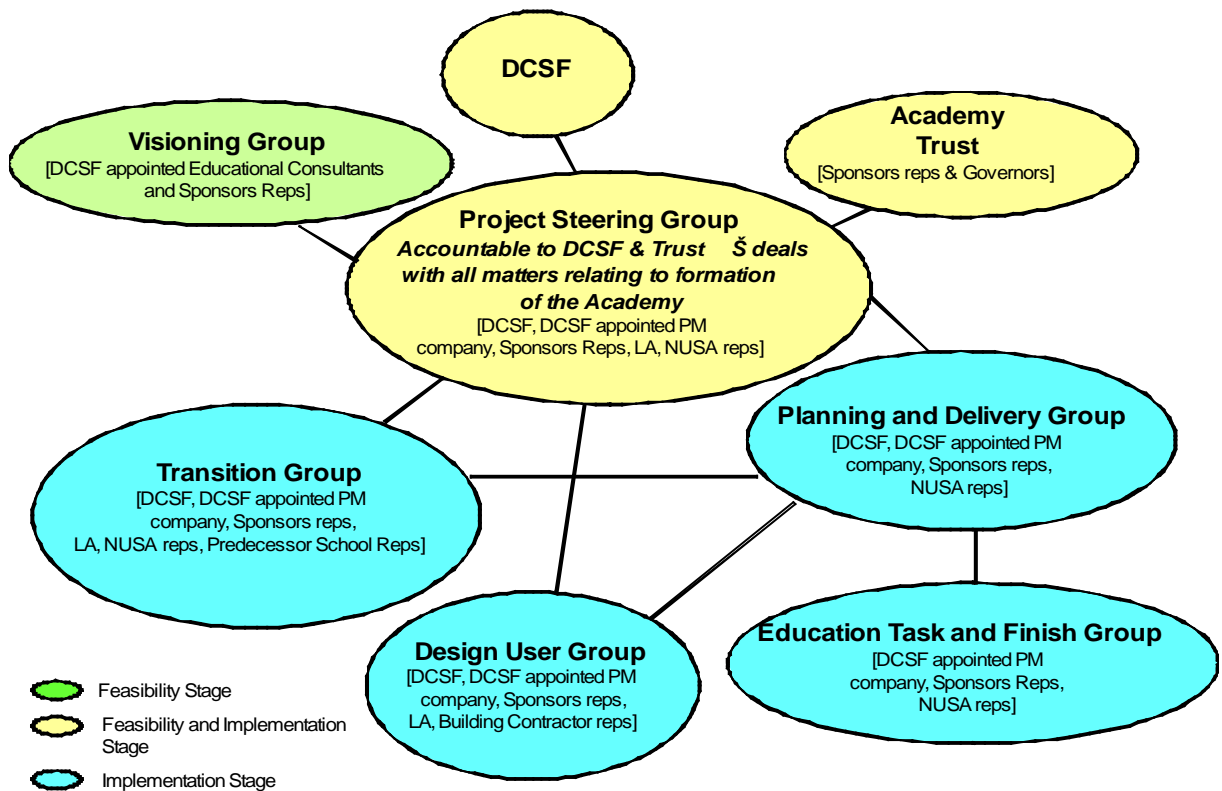
This model does not capture some of the intricate relational aspects that began to be enacted once all the key stakeholders became involved. It does, however, show that despite the University's creative and unique responses to some of the procurement processes, they remained responsive to the DCSF for signing off the Academy and providing the major funding to operationalise the building.

### **5.3.2 Key stakeholder perspectives on building a shared ethos and vision**

#### **5.3.2.1 The APU Director's perspective**

During the pre-NUSA life cycle of the model illustrated in the hierarchical diagram above, the APU Director was involved in a range of relationships with individuals or groups. These were largely based on individuals' roles within the various organisations. The APU Project Manager provided the illustration in Figure 5.2 of how she perceived the relationships, with the DCSF now one of several equal stakeholders drawn together by the Academy Project Steering Group.

**Figure 5.2: How Shared Ethos and Vision Was Built and Maintained Throughout the Project Life Cycle**



Concurrent with her work as represented in the model above (where she is referred to as ‘Sponsor rep’), the APU Director was also working on projects which she believed were essential to prepare the partnership for the next stage when NUSA opened, with a range of individuals within the university to develop ‘one-off’ and longer term activities with teachers and students in the existing school and within the feeder schools. In this model the APU Director is at the centre of a web of relationships.

As well as drawing on the strengths of WP and AC, her senior role within the university meant that NUSA was high profile and so individuals with a particular project to champion (such as an academic member of the School of Philosophy who was interested in running some projects with children in the feeder schools) knew to approach the APU Director about the work they wished to do. She was also able to use her informal and formal connections within the university to generate other forms of support for the existing school. An example of this is the experience of the ‘Roman’ Day:



*Roman Day came about because one of the deputies of the school rang up – rang me I think originally – and said that they'd got this day booked in for the kids and they'd got some resource for it and they were going to take them on a trip but that's fallen through so can we help? It's in six weeks time. So we had a kind of outline of what it was that they wanted and the APU Manager, who works with us on the community side, and I thought about what we might offer and we got some very interesting and interested people because I was pro Vice Chancellor for Arts so it wasn't too difficult to say that I knew people in the museum; people in our archaeological unit; I know who the Roman specialists are.*

(APU Director)

This development may be seen as a move away from hierarchically dominated structures to relationship dominated processes, though the development of NUSA remains under the oversight of the university. The APU Director described the processes by which partnership activities take place, during the latter phase of the development stage:

*The vehicle for delivery of projects involving University of Nottingham staff is through the offices of the Vice Principal of the Academy and the Academy Project Manager at the University of Nottingham. A Steering Group consisting of the members of the APU and the Vice Principal has been established to which other members of NUSA will be co-opted.*

(APU Director, correspondence)

This model builds on the preparatory work with the existing school and the university during the Feasibility and Implementation Stages of the procurement processes. Through this model we are able to identify the continuing leadership of the university but now within a more active, direct partnership with NUSA.

### **5.3.2.2 The Principal's perspective**

The Principal of NUSA sees the model of partnership as one based on a shared understanding of core values rather than structures.

*In the heart of it there is a single desire and a shared agreement about what it is that we are doing.*

(Principal)

Relationships are at the heart of his partnership model but perceived differently than in the previous model. Here the growth and sustainability of a partnership relies upon the creation (and endorsement) of a series of inter-related activities and opportunities which bring together individuals from different sides of the partnership so that core values are communicated and shared.

*What our aim is, is to build up a number of one to one relationships and this is why we've got the action research; so six months from now I would hope the evidence from that will be that there will be a number of projects going on with the university and that's how you build things.*

(Principal)

In the web of relationships that have been established and developed over time, the Principal, as the representative of NUSA, describes himself as the child of two parents – the University of Nottingham and Samworth – who have the same set of shared ideas and vision but who also have their own individual priorities and agendas. His presence on the common visioning group allows him to work with them as co sponsors with a shared aim of working through the stages of procurement. In addition he has formed a relationship with them as individual 'parents' with occasionally differing views.

*We're like the baby of two parents who may not be living together: both parents want the very best for their child but they may not always agree at a fundamental philosophical level but the one thing they both agree on is that they want their child to be happy and I think that's very much the way that I would see the relationship and whenever there are issues which my two parents feel different on I always know – because there are some. There have to be because you couldn't have a relationship without some fundamental core differences. In terms of the way they deal with the Academy they are always, from both sides, trying to do the best for us; it's just that their view of what is best for us differs.*

(Principal)

He manages the relationship by having *'the wisdom to actually understand why your parents are different'* and waiting for them to reach an agreement so he can be given direction *'and then I'll go with it because the key factor is that my relationship with my*

*staff will be very good because that's where my skills lie.'* The model of partnership presented in Figure 5.3 reflects that from the Principal's perspective, his experience of the day to day model of partnership is with the co-sponsors, with the visioning/steering group (and DCSF) and with the staff (and pupils) of both the existing and virtual school; whilst his Vice Principal's strength is in liaising with academics within the university to promote research and teaching and learning.

### **5.3.2.3 The Vice Principal**

The Vice Principal's perspective on the model of partnership had been shaped by his previous involvement with the university, particularly with the School of Education. He felt comfortable working with academics and with teachers in the school. He acted in a brokerage role at times to explain why the teachers were wary of working with the academics and he sought opportunities for collaboration between the school and the university on behalf of the teachers. His title is Vice Principal of Research and Development and so he actively looks for ways to work with the university on research which would be mutually beneficial to both sides of the partnership. He believed the partnership will only continue to work if it builds upon existing connections and was a *'redemptive process'* developing what was already good to make further improvements.

He explained that one of the obstacles was the size of the university as an organisation and again this was why existing relationships across the partnership were essential as starting points for future growth. A member of AC within the university who had moved across to work for the APU was a

*...crucial agency in all of the things that I've mentioned so far... because she is such a dynamo she opens up the doors both ways because it does need both ways. She's been frustrated in various ways by a poor welcome at the school and chaos here and there and so on but she has enabled the university to find a pathway into the school and vice versa and that's been absolutely at the heart of what she has done. Because she is just one person and not a system that has meant that it's depended on who she knew; it depended on who she bumped into. And now there is me there as well and we're working in a sort of slightly disconnected tandem.*

(Vice Principal)

#### **5.3.2.4 Teachers**

The teachers we spoke to had worked in the existing school and were transferring across to NUSA. Initially they had a limited understanding of what could be gained from having the university as a sponsor. They viewed the two co-sponsors as bringing financial contributions with the university also offering the potential for resources. One mainscale teacher described the partnership in the following way:

*There seems to be no link between the teachers and the university or the pupils and the university. The link is between the teachers and the pupils and the Academy and then because we are linked to the Academy we are therefore linked to the university...the Academy is a 'go between'. The staff and pupils are not aware of the university involvement at the moment.*

The teachers explained that the Principal and Vice Principal were important figures and they embodied NUSA's ethos and vision. There was a sense that some staff were '*upping their game*' because of the increased presence of the Principal and Vice Principal in the existing school. They spoke about the early feelings of mistrust and unease as teachers were applying for a school that only existed virtually. There was a leap of faith involved in the decision to transfer across rather than look for a new job. The Principal and Vice Principal had had a role to play in alleviating these fears in ways in which the sponsors had not.

*The Principal and VP have given everyone time. They have given everyone the opportunity to express their ideas and encouraged staff to have new ideas. They are very clear about what they want. They want a different place to what it is now.*

(Head of Department)

There was no clear indication from the teachers of knowing what to expect from the partnership once the new school opened. One teacher said that the opening of NUSA coincided with large scale changes in the 14–19 curriculum and explained that he didn't know what he would like support with because he had not come to terms fully with the change to the course. One head of department explained that she had not got time to keep thinking of fantastic ideas and contacting people; she hoped that people from the university would approach her. '*And I would always be welcoming and I hope that we would get a reputation as a department who would be welcoming to other people.*'

She felt that this was a unique Academy partnership and she felt this made people have more confidence, she thought people were excited about being part of something new and innovative. She believed that people were *'hoping that the university and their success would feed into the Academy'*.

The teachers were not aware of the work carried out in the community by the university so at the time of the interviews they were not aware of the six newsletters that the APU had produced nor were they aware of Hamby and Barrett's play (a play documenting the history of the community, commissioned by the university) which had been performed in the community. Their perceptions may have changed as Hamby and Barrett have produced a second play about teachers in the existing school which was performed after these interviews took place. (In addition, subsequent to the data collection in the existing school, there has also been an INSET day for teachers transferring across to NUSA which outlined the ways in which the school and university might work together in the future).

A diagrammatic representation of the model of partnership from the perspective of these teachers would clearly have the Principal and Vice Principal in the centre with individuals or departments from the university on the periphery.

#### **5.3.2.5 Academics**

The academics that we spoke to were already involved in one way or another with the partnership. Other academics within the university may be not entirely aware of the nature of the university's involvement in the growth of NUSA. On the other hand there are now many academics who are involved and the following represents only a small example of the kinds of ways academics are contributing to the model of partnership.

One academic within the Faculty of Medicine was involved with NUSA because of the Academy's chosen specialisms of Health and Science. He spoke of being invited by the APU Director to get involved with what he referred to as a 'think tank' on the ways in which the university and NUSA might best work together. He wanted to *"see an improvement in that community – those who stay on in education, those who go into employment... and in the longer term crime going down"*. There was, from his perspective, a tangible benefit to the community in working with the university in terms of reducing social deprivation indicators. For him, the relationship could be reciprocal. On the one hand, the university would gain from a deeper understanding of local communities and the education system

and more opportunities for research. On the other, the school would benefit from stronger academic outcomes. The community was supportive of this partnership because it wants the social outcomes to be realised.

He outlined a number of ways in which he thought his department might be able to work with NUSA and described the School of English's work with Literacy Volunteers as a model of good practice for working with the school. He believed it was important to wait for the school to request support rather than overwhelm them with offers.

The Vice Principal of NUSA also spoke about the Literacy Volunteers scheme and it clearly had become a model of good practice from the viewpoints of both sides of the partnership. The Lead Academic within the School of English who was linked with the project described in detail the origins and development of the Literacy Volunteers scheme.

*My role isn't a formal role as such; it has emerged from my previous work with community. Involvement in such projects grows organically and isn't particularly structured or formal.... Myself and other members of the School of English have had strong links with Active Communities and many of us have got involved with projects run by AC. The APU Manager has been a strong link and when she moved from AC to NUSA, she, the APU Director and I brainstormed a number of ideas and they included not just NUSA but the partnership of feeder schools that feed into NUSA and a whole range of ideas emerged.*

(Lead Academic in the School of English)

He described a previous project with an English department in another Nottingham school. Drawing on the lessons learnt from that experience, he and a colleague from AC devised a scheme involving students from the School of English working with pupils in the feeder schools and the existing school to help improve literacy. They had grown from six volunteers to almost 40. In 2009, the School of English decided to appoint one of the lecturers to have responsibility for NUSA so the process is becoming more formalised. This is a long term role with a three year contract and so NUSA is now seen as something central to what the School of English do.

*It is an administrative role and it appears on the administrative calendar. It is more visible now. Previously it was done informally which was right not that*

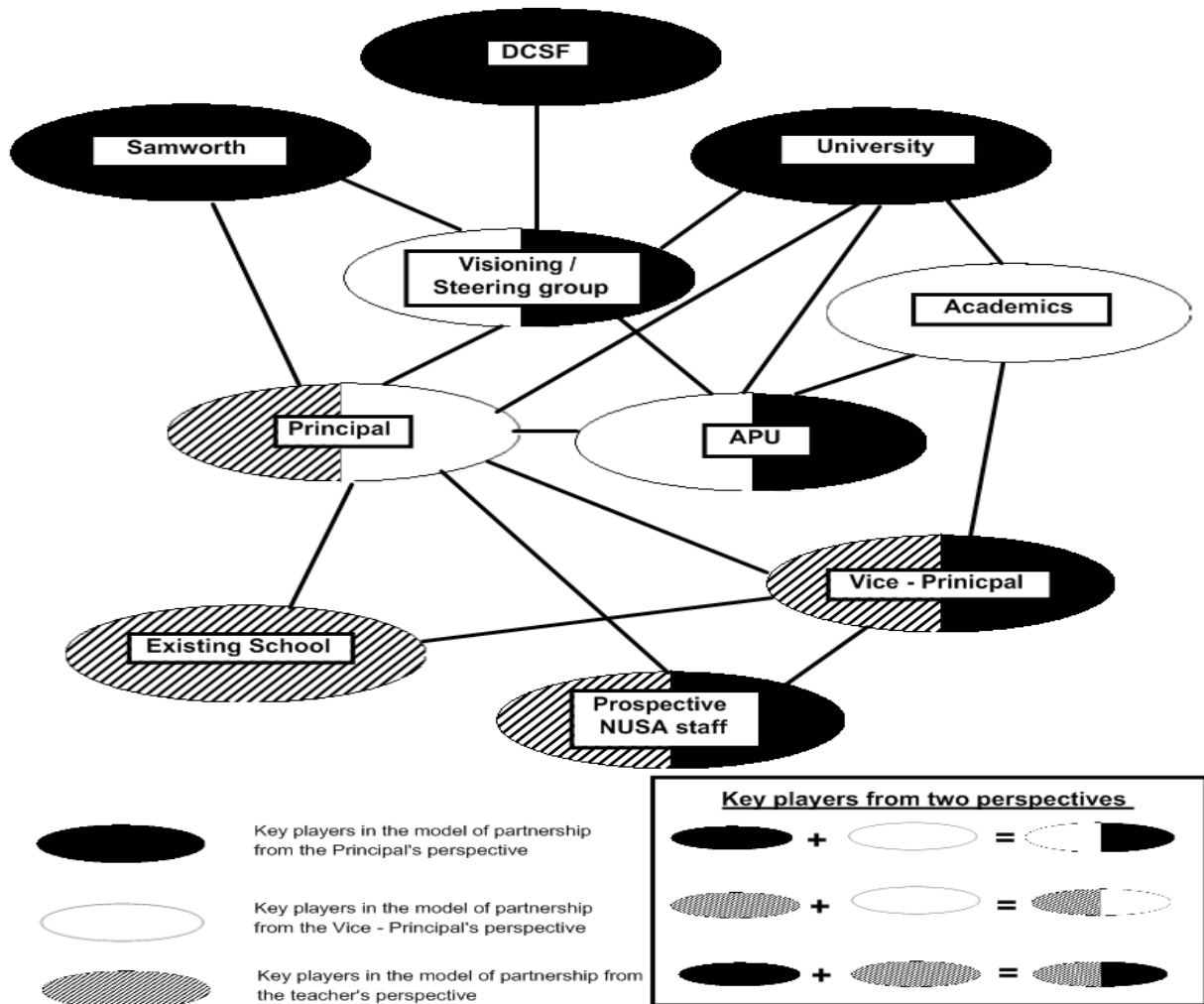
*the school didn't know about it, not that the school hasn't funded it. For example the Head of School gave £500 to help the students with bus fares and so on. And we've been able to buy some resources for the schools. So we're beginning to structure it and formalise it a bit better now.*

(Lead Academic in the School of English)

The understanding of the partnership model in relation to this scheme is open to different interpretations according to different time dimensions and from whose perspective the model is viewed. A teacher in NUSA might not recognise the role that the APU Director had in bringing AC and the Lead Academic together, for example.

Figure 5.3 below illustrates how different groups or individuals within the partnership have different perceptions of the nature of partnership relationships. For example, the most immediate points of contact for a teacher within the existing school are with the Principal and Vice Principal whereas academics within the university have a distant relationship with the teachers in the existing school. The Vice Principal has a closer relationship with academics within the university than the Principal. Massey (1993) refers to this as social relations which have a spatial dimension.

Figure 5.3: The Model of Partnership from Differing Perspectives





## Chapter 6

### Partnership for Change: Issues of Growth and Sustainability

#### 6.0 Introduction

*We want this to be the best place in the world for our children and young people to grow up, where all children go as far as their talents will take them, and where background is no barrier to a young person's future success.*

(National Council for Educational Excellence, 2008: 3)

It is this sense of altruism and moral obligations that have been the key driver for the growth and sustainability of the three partnerships presented in Chapters 3–5: Widening Participation, Active Communities and NUSA. This final chapter discusses the ways in which each of the partnerships has managed the complex sets of individual and organisational relationships and fluctuations in their external environments in ways which have enabled their work to continue to develop and deepen, albeit in different ways. Their work shows that there is no single model of success in partnership, but rather that structures and strategies need to be fit for purpose, sensitive to context and flexible enough to adapt as external and internal conditions change. However, all continue to be driven by leaders who demonstrate a strong and unswerving sense of social justice and moral purpose and who are dedicated not only to meeting externally defined targets appropriate to the continuing international research and teaching profile of a research led Russell group university, but doing so within a commitment to contribute to the well-being and achievements of individuals and organisations who live and work in communities in close geographical proximity to the university. The chapter is organised in seven sections each of which represents a key element of the work of the three partnerships. These are:

- Common features of partnerships
- Differences between partnerships
- Managing changes in structures
- Leadership matters
- Changing cultures
- Partnership benefits: service, satisfaction and improvement
- Growth and sustainability: partnerships as organisations of trust

## 6.1 Common Features

One of the major challenges facing schools and universities in establishing a partnership is to manage the difference in cultures. Brookhart and Loadman (1980) identified four key dimensions of differences: '1) work tempo and the nature of professional time; 2) professional focus, from theoretical to practical; 3) chosen reward structure; and 4) sense of personal power and efficacy' (cited in Watson and Fullan, 1992: 218). Nonetheless, as Watson and Fullan assert, '*we can learn from each other, but we also need to change some aspects of both types of cultures*' (1992: 218):

*...working in isolation from each other, both schools and universities tend to accept uncritically their own views of education. In working together, universities may become more focussed on outcomes and accountability, while schools and school systems may become more reflective and coherent in their approaches. Working closely together requires not only communication and understanding, but also shifts in behaviour. It is difficult to avoid stereotypes and build on an acknowledgment of differences, but commitment to a partnership, with constant interaction around joint tasks, may lead to reconceptualizations of responsibilities, to the mutual benefit of both.*

(ibid 1992: 218)

Whilst each has different characteristics and histories, there are seven commonalities:

### **i) All three partnerships have the same general purposes:**

- i) To contribute to the well-being and achievement of pupils who live in socio-economically disadvantaged communities;
- ii) To attract and recruit those who are academically able to benefit from a higher education experience;
- iii) To provide members of the university community with opportunities to work in disadvantaged communities;
- iv) To change the perceptions that the university is disengaged with the local community;
- v) To establish sustained and sustainable ways of working between the university and its local communities which are appropriate to i) to iv) above.

**ii) External funding and internal support** are crucial to the existence, growth and sustainability of all three partnerships. HEFCE funding was clearly fundamental to the early work of Active Communities and Widening Participation partnerships and continues to be important, as do other sources of external funding. NUSA would not have happened without DCSF funding.

**iii) All three partnerships have experienced distinctive phases of development** over time. For both WP and AC, changes in funding and the subsequent expansion of the team set key milestones in the development of the partnerships. Prior to the opening of the physical school in September 2009, the growth of NUSA has been through three stages as imposed by DCSF procurement guidelines, with the appointment of the Principal and Vice Principal as an important milestone. For all three partnerships, there have been different forms of structures and cultures within each phase.

**iv) The quality of leadership is a key factor** in building and sustaining the development of the three partnerships. Leaders have brought to the partnerships their vision, skills, experiences and expertise which played a significant part in ensuring that the growth of the partnerships is strategically planned and that there is continuity in the capacity building of the team.

**v) Each of the partnerships is concerned with issues of change management.** There are a range of social, economic, political and organisational factors which have, to a larger or lesser extent, influenced the internal and external contexts in which the partnerships come into existence, develop and thrive. For example, there are demographic changes in the student body to consider. More students are staying at home for university now, in order perhaps to cope with higher fees. Moreover, the current economic climate may effect further changes. The university itself has become gradually more performance orientated in terms of meeting targets and measures of external success.

**vi) Each partnership has focused upon building credibility, respect and trust** among the partnership members as a necessary condition for success.

**vii) Each partnership has to manage tensions** caused by fluctuations in the policy and social environments.

## 6.2 Differences

There are also marked differences in the three partnership models.

**The nature of the relationships between the university and the schools are different.** In the nascent educational partnership between the university and NUSA, the Academy is a partner as well as a product of the partnership, whilst for Widening Participation and Active Communities schools play a mediating role in brokering the university support and the learning of the pupils.

Second, the structures of the partnership models have taken on **different forms in the process of their development.** At the outset of the partnership, there appears to have been more freedom and autonomy and less complexity for WP and AC, whilst in some ways it is the converse for NUSA which has been most restricted by meeting externally imposed criteria and procedures. For WP and AC in particular, changes in funding streams have been instrumental in imposing constraints and pressure on reformulating the focus of their activities. By contrast, for NUSA, with the physical school coming into existence and a clear structure in place, the focus of the development will be education oriented rather than administration oriented.

## 6.3 Managing Changes in Structures

### 6.3.1 Widening Participation

The team has grown over the eight year period from one to twelve as the range and reach of activities has expanded. The organisational structures which WP has built up over time reflect not only the needs of a range of individuals, schools and other organisations, but also changes in funding sources and strategic demands of the university. Whereas it began as a flexible model with few guidelines imposed from the university, with the introduction of performance indicators the structural constraints on the partnerships have grown. Nonetheless, this has, as yet, had little significant impact on the nature of its work.

- ***Internal structures: the personal touch***

Widening Participation has established an organised, systematic way of working with academic departments and administrative university services. However, the nature of the ways in which different departments interact with WP varies. For example, from 2002–2004 the Medical School had a member of WP located in the faculty, while others relied on more occasional email contact. There is also the ‘Friends in School’ system, a mechanism

for communication between the WP Team and most academic schools. There are three scheduled meetings a year, plus regular email communication. With the academic departments, the WP team acts as brokers to facilitate the contact with schools. Since the university has a devolved management structure, the key relationships have been on a personal level, an important dimension of this partnership. Some departments work very closely with WP while others do not engage at all.

The structures in place with the admissions department have become more efficient with the increasing centralisation of admissions. Thus, for a number of years now an electronic system of flagging up WP students has been part of the standard process. These flags show if a student is WP, based on them attending a 'below average school' if the school has below average performance at A level, or living in a 'deprived postcode', if the applicant lives in a socio-economically deprived area.

Another key feature of the internal structure is the capacity building mechanism developed by the WP team. For example, professional development courses are offered by the team to lecturers running the master-classes to support them in gauging the standard of the classes appropriate for a Year 12 audience, ensuring more consistent quality from the activities on offer. Extensive training is also provided for the Student Ambassadors.

- ***External structures: identifying needs, building trust***

Changing the perception of the university as an accessible option for local students was an early priority for WP. Trust has been developed through WP demonstrating an understanding of schools' needs. The activities are publicised through a number of routes with the schools; individual contacts, letters, emails, and talks in schools, depending on the type of activity. Initially information for students is also sent out to the school, but once students have signed up to the Advantage Nottinghamshire scheme, WP can contact them directly. Students can then sign up directly to WP or if they prefer through the WP responsible person at their school. The partnership structures with the students work very well. Although partnerships with pupils are not equal relationships, they are perceived to be beneficial to both parties.

With other HEIs, both nationally with other Russell Group universities and locally for Advantage Nottinghamshire, the partnerships work for the mutual benefit of all parties. AimHigher nationally provides links between universities and schools. Schools are given specific recruitment targets for students from within their own school.

The administrative support from the WP team is perceived by students to be hugely important in Advantage Nottinghamshire activities. Small details were appreciated, such as having food provided before evening sessions, having master-classes scheduled on the same day each week and having help filling in expenses claim forms. Reminders were always sent so students always felt supported and encouraged and buses provided to transport students, which are also seen as a key element of the work. The other important element raised by students is the personal touch. The relationships the WP team formed with individual students made the activities more meaningful and easier for the students to engage with.

### **6.3.2 Active Communities**

Significant funding has enabled the structure of Active Communities to develop over a number of years. At present there is a full time head, three part time project managers, an administrator and a clerical assistant. Two project managers focus on school involvement and a third on community activities. From September 2009 one project manager will be responsible for working directly with schools; the second will focus on developing knowledge transfer and research partnerships with university schools and the third in developing community partnership activity.

Current funding allows this structure to continue for one further year. If further grants are not obtained within this period or changed responsibilities within university re-organisation of community engagement do not ensure staffing levels are maintained, there may have to be significant reductions in staffing. This will limit both the scope and ability of Active Communities to function effectively.

### **6.3.3 NUSA**

#### **6.3.3.1 *Managing external and internal tensions***

The early stages of the partnership were characterised by the external influences inherent in the DCSF procurement stages of opening a new Academy. Those involved in the visioning group were forced to find ways of coping with these top-down demands whilst also engaging with a local community and staff within the existing school who were apprehensive and unclear about the ways in which the university might work with them. As the stakeholders began to work together within this uncertain context, they developed systems and strategies to make the external demands work for the good of the partnership. Key strategies were to draw strength from both working in a large institution

(and thus having the confidence of a cohort of experts to draw upon) and from working closely with a co-sponsor:

*(Samworth's representative) and I worked with the person from Tribal endlessly re-working the ready made documents and eventually throwing them out and writing our own expression of interest.*

(Head of School of Education)

This confidence to take a principled stance in responding to conflicting demands is a strong indicator of being able to manage change. The fact that there was a sense that all those involved in the partnership could respond to change is a further indicator of a strong partnership:

*The way the partnerships adapt and respond to changes in the learning environment can be either uni-directional or multidirectional... the change pattern continuum is anchored by poles of unilateral (U) and reciprocal (R) adaptation.*

(Callahan and Martin, 2007: 142)

Whilst people on all levels of the partnership described the sense of shared vision and common goals, there were also internal tensions, for example, in working with a business co-sponsor:

*The university is a fantastic partner and brings richness and breadth which a business couldn't easily bring. But the size of it brings its challenges too and I don't envy [APU Director] for trying to coordinate that and she does a great job. Occasionally it feels like a Nottingham University road show, a view that I have voiced and I have felt the need to stress the importance of publicly reinforcing the joint and equal nature of the partnership. I sometimes feel out of the loop in terms of university activity on NUSA although [APU Project Manager]'s role has helped enormously with this. But overall it has been great and I think that the complementary and very different things that the sponsors contribute bring great strength to the project. There are now other examples of universities working with Academies but we are one of the first examples of this kind of partnership and I think people will be watching what happens.*

(Co-Sponsor)

The size of the university and the processes involved with working with a school that did not physically exist were additional internal influences on the ways in which the partnership model developed by building a series of relational ties.

*It must grow exponentially. Every year you're going to get – if you do it well – growth in the relationships because all good relationships in education are based on personal relationships. I don't think you can have a relationship in an organisation unless you have a relationship with an individual.*

(Principal)

The APU Director's previous experience as Pro-Vice Chancellor for community affords her a unique overview and perspective on the ways in which the model of partnership between the university and NUSA has developed in differing ways from those with WP and AC. She observed that the transition to a greater degree of freedom for the university to develop the partnership with NUSA in this latter stage is almost the reverse of the experiences of those involved in developing partnerships within WP and AC:

*For the University of Nottingham, the years spent in the run-up to NUSA have been the ones most restricted by meeting externally imposed criteria – well, jumping through hoops really - and that it is only now, as NUSA comes into existence, that there is the freedom to progress the nascent educational partnership between the university and the Academy that has all along been our goal. In this it is in some ways the converse of AC and WP, where there appears to have been more freedom, and less complexity, in the early stages of development where there was some relatively unfettered funding to deploy. The obvious reason for the difference in NUSA's case is that for DCSF to hand over £24m for the Academy building, plus the costs of running the Academy, they want some pretty substantial assurances up front. For WP and AC, changes in the early funding streams seem to have been instrumental in imposing constraints on some areas of activity as their work developed, including potentially productive partnerships that were forming.*

(APU Director, correspondence)

### **6.3.3.2 Building structures for sustainability**

Whilst it has been argued (Chapter 5) that the partnership success has been built through relational ties, these have been developed and are part of the developing, though still



nascent, structures. The Vice Principal described how the partnership with the University gave him the backing and the authority to resist some of the 'top down' management processes that individuals setting up another school would not necessarily have. A partnership solely between business and an academy would be very different, he argued.

The DCSF has also had an important role part to play in this, especially in relation to the ways in which the co-sponsors have worked together, particularly in the procurement phase.

The director of the APU has had a pivotal role in the partnership to date and in the model for the future (with her and the Vice Principal acting as intermediaries). However, if a partnership is overly reliant on one individual then its sustainability is called into question. In the NUSA partnership model, over time systems are being put in place which counter such over reliance on individuals.

*The idea for NUSA over time is that, as relationships build up and as structures become more stable, they won't need the intermediaries and the head of department at NUSA will ring the head of a school here and arrange things themselves. At the moment [Principal] can't afford that very open school model because he needs to know exactly what is going on and it needs to be planned for so that the Academy doesn't collapse under the pressure of well meaning offers of support or, indeed, end up with nothing because nothing has been properly planned. But the close control at the moment isn't planned to be there forever.*

(APU Director)

The Vice Chancellor spoke of the university's commitment to the partnership as a long-term one. This is an important predictor of success since: "partnerships which rely upon the temporary provision of external resources are very likely to fail in the longer term" (Day, 2003: 23). However the author also warns that universities have traditionally been unlikely to support such "commitment-led, labour intensive work" (ibid: 27). There will therefore need to be further structures put into place to support the staffing commitment required by the university to sustain the partnership in this way.

## **6.4 Leadership Matters**

*There is no substitute for strong leadership.*

(Wiewal and Broski 1997:5)

A good leader in a partnership must provide the skills required for building the leadership capacities of all the partnership members. A key condition for this is the development of trust. Overcoming traditional suspicions and reservations from other partners, is an on-going process. The ever-expanding group of interested parties in WP – particularly academic departments, schools, and their students – mean that the team, for example, has to think of new ways to engage in action, as demands become more complex.

The nature and forms of partnership within each of the three phases identified in the development of Active Communities may be associated closely with the change in leadership. In the first phase it was the knowledge and experience of leading through a business model of corporate social responsibility which was crucial in establishing the credibility of Active Communities within the university before it was taken out into the local community. In phase 2 a project manager (already appointed in phase 1) with experience of working in communities in the third sector, brought to the project a more explicit ethic of social responsibility and an ability to listen to the needs of schools and to seize opportunities. At the same time the Active Communities team was being expanded, with two more project managers appointed. Leadership focussed on with the need for all staff, including the head, to working more closely with schools and community organisations in a more focussed way.

In phase 3 a full time Head of Active Communities was appointed, also from a third sector management but community not commercial background. With this, the emphasis moved from volunteering to more sustained engagement with and empowerment of communities of disadvantage.

## **6.5 Changing Cultures**

There are two strong leaders in the NUSA partnership as it moves from its nascent phase to its development as a new school: the director of the APU and the principal of NUSA. Both share the same vision and purpose. Both work to break down barriers and engender a sense of trust in the individuals and groups within the organisations. These have not

been easy tasks. The director of the APU has to work across a vast organisation and find ways of familiarising individual academics and schools within the institution with what NUSA would involve. The interview data would suggest that she has achieved this through her constant championing of the cause, her ability to engage with people and build and sustain relationships and her creative response to challenges. Similarly, the principal of NUSA had to overcome the obstacle of leading a community of people in a 'virtual' school that did not yet exist. He also had to work sensitively with staff in the existing school who were inevitably vulnerable because they had publicly been shown to be failing. Again the interview data show that he has been successful in both breaking down barriers and helping his new colleagues to rekindle that passion for changes. As a result of her conversations with the principal and observations of his work around the existing school, one teacher said:

*We have the opportunity here to make a really good school because our kids are fantastic and we have the resources now to do what we've wanted to do for years and years. We have the opportunity to reach our ideal which is very exciting.*

(NUSA Teacher)

The director of the APU was very clear that the previous role she had had within the university as Pro-Vice Chancellor had had a major impact on the way she had been able to achieve some of these results:

*It's about the role and if you give it to someone who is senior enough in the organisation then they have the opportunity to make things happen whereas if it is put in lower down people will encounter barriers and they will say that they can't make somebody do what I want them to do.*

(APU Director)

The cultures of school and university are very different. To achieve a mutually beneficial partnership between the two cultures, the challenge, as Richmond (1996) argues, "is to understand the cultures of the various players and to foster a sense of belonging, regardless of the cultures involved" (1996: 217). Not surprisingly, NUSA gives rise to an interesting debate about whether partnerships can exist between a metonymic construct (what do we mean by 'The University') and a school that has no physical representation. Can a model of partnership be sustained across these two constructs? The Principal

explained how initially this had caused him to question how such a partnership might work. It became clear to him that it worked through a series of relational ties:

*I started to understand what it was and that I was not forming a relationship with the university; I'm forming a relationship with some remarkable individuals. And then I got to meet more of them and I got better and better relationships.*

(Principal)

These relational ties are strengthened by shared goals and a common sense of purpose for the partnership (something which is echoed throughout the interview data), "as the partnership itself evolves... sharing common understandings and values is important, as is acknowledging and respecting differences in perspectives" (McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins 2004: 279). Such commonality of purpose and a sense of equality give rise to an "authentic partnership" (Catelli et al., 2000:227).

The individuals with responsibility for creating sustainable bonds across the partnership are the APU Director and the Vice Principal of NUSA. Both described the ways in which these differing cultures manifest themselves. The Vice Principal's brokering role has helped to progress the situation from one of (at times) mutual mistrust to a clearer understanding of these differences.

*Another thing that happened recently was that one of the centres of excellence for teaching and learning at the university had a conference about our brief and about universities in schools and (the Vice Principal) was one of the speakers – one of the better speakers actually because everybody was full of praise for what he had to say. But he was saying things like school teachers don't really approve of or admire academics – they want to believe that those who can't teach teachers. Now that's a sort of difficult thing to say but once it's been said you can see how you feel about it and what you can do about it and how we are going to get round it and not upset each other. I think those are the sorts of questions that we just need to be very frank about. And there are physical things like having a space at NUSA, which [Principal] has kindly agreed, that we should have and so university staff doing stuff are welcome and have a place to be. So we will be there regularly and I'm sure that [Principal and VP] will spend significant amounts of time*

*here because partnerships need time and space. The model has to be a dialogue between the university and NUSA.*

(APU Director)

The APU Director's outline of the ways in which the school and university will work together, after the opening of the school, using the Vice Principal as a conduit from NUSA and the APU as a conduit for the university, represent the creation of a "new inter-institutional structure that will permit change and improvement to occur at both levels, and strive toward a new seamless system of education" (ibid: 207).

## **6.6 Partnership Benefits: Service, Satisfaction and Improvement**

Each partnership was driven by:

- i) a strong service ethic which resulted in a keen awareness of the importance of attending to the needs of its beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries;
- ii) the internal and external policy, financial and organisational contexts which influenced the development of its strategic direction;
- iii) the professional values and standards of the leadership within the partnership.

### **6.6.1 Widening Participation**

All the partners in WP involved appear to be clear about how they benefit from the partnership. For the academics the involvement is fairly straightforward. However, they may not always have a clear overview of the partnership. As one academic commented: *"They just present me with an audience"* (Academic). Limited participation in this form may be seen to be providing a service to the larger interest of the partnership. Nonetheless, academics can achieve rewarding social goals and at the same time are involved in an activity that may increase their competitive edge when applying for funding. It may also help with the departments' recruitment onto their courses.

For the teachers, one of the advantages of the WP partnership is that they were not required to do a lot of additional work, and they receive benefits in many ways. The "buzz" it gave the students and the added enthusiasm for their schoolwork was beneficial in the classroom. Teachers were also able to call on WP or even the academics to talk to their students about different aspects of university and this was seen as highly valuable. This work also benefits schools as it helps schools with the standards agenda. As one teacher explained: *"This is all part of a standards agenda for us; if we can raise an*

*aspiration we might be able to raise an achievement” (Deputy Head Teacher of Partner School).*

*It opens your eyes to what choices are out there that you don't realise, and it gives you a head start.*

(Current Year 12 Student)

For the students the benefits were clear. They are able to learn a lot and gain experience and confidence that they would not get at school. Through the activities they can meet personal goals, prepare for exams, make important decisions and discover new opportunities. This gives experience and understanding that cannot only help them to increase their choices of course and university, but also potentially their employability in the future. The inreach activities, and their prior knowledge of the university, aid their transition into higher education. The role of the Student Ambassadors is very powerful, as they are able to relate to them and feel they understand their situation. All this added to the enjoyment that led one student to say *“I would recommend it to anyone”* (Advantage Nottinghamshire and Current Undergraduate Student).

*I can't explain how much it's done for me. Summer school tipped it for me; I was at a point when I wasn't bothered either way if I went to uni. It was amazing and I think it helped me get into this university. It really made me think, yes, university is for me, I didn't want to go home at the end.... I've never met a more organised group of people in my life. They made you feel right where you were supposed to be.*

(Advantage Nottinghamshire and Current Undergraduate Student)

### **6.6.2 Active Communities**

Over time Active Communities has developed two distinct areas of activities: those which are enabling for specific children and those which are enriching for larger groups. Table 6.1 below portrays a sample of the kinds of activities that have taken place.

**Table 6.1: Active Communities activities for children**

<b>Enabling</b>	<b>Enriching</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language support one to one</li> <li>• Time to Read and other literacy support</li> <li>• Number Partners</li> <li>• IT support for parents</li> <li>• SATs translation/readers*</li> <li>• IT classroom support</li> <li>• Sports Assistant</li> <li>• Spanish classes in school time*</li> <li>• Children in Care Literacy Support through Time to Read</li> <li>• French teaching toY6*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish Club</li> <li>• Science Clubs</li> <li>• Healthy Eating Project</li> <li>• The Engineers of Nottingham Clubs</li> <li>• Music performances</li> <li>• Science &amp; Environmental</li> <li>• Support for off curriculum themed weeks</li> <li>• World of Work Week</li> <li>• Multicultural activities</li> <li>• Gifted &amp; Talented support*</li> </ul>

\* Meeting statutory expectations for SATs, Gifted & Talented Register and MFL

For schools there were a number of very clear benefits, very much in line with the enabling and enrichment activities identified above and shown below in Table 6.2:

**Table 6.2: Active Communities key benefits for schools**

<p>Enhancing and enriching the curriculum</p> <p>Broadening learning experiences of children &amp; teachers in and beyond the classroom</p> <p>Introducing children to the concept of higher education and University from a young age</p> <p>Access to a broad and diverse range of University resources</p>
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For the university the benefits of Active Communities are more diverse and subtle and can be found in different areas (see Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3: University benefits from Active Communities partnerships**

<p><b>For University Staff through;</b></p> <p>Teaching at a different level</p> <p>Getting beyond the University walls</p> <p>Enriching experiences of courses</p> <p>Developing an understanding of primary schools</p>	<p><b>For students;</b></p> <p>Challenges thinking to work with young children</p> <p>Enhances CV</p> <p>Experience the British education system for international students</p> <p>Getting beyond the University walls</p> <p>Helpful for post graduate work &amp; research</p>	<p><b>For building trust between the University and community through;</b></p> <p>Provision of learning experiences for children not usually available in primary schools</p> <p>Schools visiting University site to use grounds, Lakeside theatre, visiting eco buildings, history museum, hospitality unit</p> <p>Exhibition Days</p>
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### 6.6.3 NUSA

The academics involved in the NUSA partnership spoke with one voice about the perceived reciprocal benefits of involvement.

#### 6.6.3.1 Benefits to the university

The university gains were potentially multilayered. One of the possible benefits was a greater understanding of the ways in which secondary school education is changing and the university hoped to benefit from “*a dialogue about the academic understanding of applicants to university*” (Academic in the Faculty of Medicine). Secondly, there would be opportunities for research and publications, “*there is a research dimension to this; there is a proper university home to be had within the Academies movement. It is not just about governing a school*” (APU Director). Thirdly whilst the university was very clear that the aim was not to ‘hot-house’ gifted and talented pupils from the area there was a recognition that any changes to the aspirations of the school pupils might result in increased numbers of people applying to higher education and some of these may well choose to apply to an institution with which they are familiar. There were also altruistic benefits for individuals within the university who choose to be involved.

The Vice Chancellor summarised some of these perceived benefits:



*It keeps us grounded doesn't it? In the community in which we live and operate and it reminds us that there is another constituency there that we serve as well as our student community, our research community, what we do internationally, our global community. We've got the local community in which we are embedded reminding us that they are important to us, which they are.*

(Vice Chancellor)

His comments echo Wiewel and Broski's observation that "the university should be useful to its community in a direct and applied way, not just through the education it provides or the long-term potential benefits of pure research" (1997: 1).

#### **6.6.3.2 Benefits to academic schools**

Individual academic schools have also derived benefits from their involvement with the partnership. Engagement with this process allowed the School of Education to make a case to the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) for extra Initial Teacher Training (ITT) places and to engage in a strategy to build strength in the existing school by creating a cohort of GTP students to work in that school. A particular programme (built around the needs of that school) was devised to support this cohort. The programme has been very successful and the findings from it have fed into the development of GTP provision to other schools as well as a similar programme being introduced into the sister Academy. So there have been benefits to the existing school, the sister Academy and to the GTP programme.

#### **6.6.3.3 Benefits to the community**

In terms of benefits to the community, there was the view that the local community has not always benefited from the best opportunities and has been let down in the past so *"from the point of view of former governors and some parents, there is a sense that they won't be done down if the university and David Samworth are fighting our cause."* There was also the belief that the university could help to raise aspirations within the local community, could enthuse pupils to think about higher education, could demonstrate the career possibilities within the university and the NHS (not just academic opportunities) and so raise employment levels, be involved in health promotion activities and help to instil a sense of pride in the area. In terms of NUSA, the university believed that it could contribute to the curriculum, especially in Health and Science, by sharing resources and expertise.

#### **6.6.3.4 Benefits to individuals at NUSA**

Individuals within NUSA or the existing school saw benefits from having access to the resources that the university could bring. They also recognised that having such a high profile sponsor could lead to an improvement in terms of their reputation within the community and beyond. One teacher from the existing school explained that the university is a respected institution in the community and the fact that it had attached its name to the school was important *'because everything they do turns to gold'*. There was also recognition that the university could be an exciting source of professional development for the teachers who would be able to engage with research projects directly linked to improving their own practice. There was also the sense that there were opportunities for a synergetic relationship where the university could benefit from having such immediate access to one school and community for a site of research.

It is too early to assess the extent to which these purposes have changed over time. There is however a strong sense from individuals at the university that the partnership is already changing individual lives both within the community and within the university.

There is not yet one simple model which represents the NUSA partnership. Rather, as in the early stages of any relationship involving a number of stakeholders, there are different perspectives and experiences as trust is built, past experience reconsidered and old and new ways of working reconciled. Bringing together the different cultural traditions of academics and universities – well known for their independence and individuality – schools, which depend for their success upon collaboration, and communities of disadvantage which contain elements that are, by definition and practice, fractured and dysfunctional, is no easy task. To begin to map the dynamics of relationships in such innovative, nascent partnerships is, therefore, important in understanding how change for improvement may be achieved.

### **6.7 Growth and Sustainability: Partnerships as Organisations of Trust**

*Partnerships, their character and consequences, are forged at the contested interface between localised networks and central agencies, and they are framed by the broader relations that play through partnerships as well as between*

*partnerships and the wider political order. Like schools, partnerships are sites of struggle.*

(Sedon, Billett and Clemans, 2005: 582)

The university-school partnerships which are the focus of the research reported here are examples of ways in which the university acts which are different from the norms of teaching, research and administration which traditionally characterise university work. They illustrate forms of intervention in which those from within the university actively seek new ways in which they can relate to the needs of, in this case, communities of socio-economic disadvantage through the provision of dedicated resource and through different forms of engagement. In these partnerships the university as interventionist aims to ask questions which are perceived by the clients as relevant to their needs, to investigate answers to these questions collaboratively with the clients and to place the onus for action on the clients themselves. For such partnerships to be mutually beneficial to all parties involved, it is particularly important that those in HE learn to act in different ways, *'to converse in new languages and to listen to different voices'* (Day, 1991: 69).

However, commitment by universities is as much about contributing altruistically to the life chances and well-being of the young people and their communities to whom these partnerships are dedicated as it is to the instrumental achievement of the performance indicators which are a necessary part of sustaining the necessary resource; for the successful implementation of social change is dependent as much upon building and sustaining trust over time as it is upon legislation or policy advice.

*Trust is established through a commitment period during which each partner has the opportunity to signal to the other a willingness to accept personal risk and not to exploit the vulnerability of the other for personal gain...As participants begin to feel more comfortable with one another, there may be a tacit testing of the limits of trust and influence and attempts to arrive at a mutual set of expectations...*

(Tschannen-Moran, 2004: 42)

Whilst external funding and internal university support are essential conditions for establishing the mechanisms through which university-school partnerships are able to be created, they do not, in themselves, guarantee that such partnerships will be successful. As the case studies in Chapters 3–5 demonstrate, this is dependent upon leaders who are

able to face inwards (to their colleagues in the university) and outwards (to potential partners outside the academy) and engage with both in order to develop organisational structures, cultures and relationships appropriate to the fulfilment of expectations and intentions of the funders and their clients.

To do so successfully in changing economic and social contexts in which sources of funding have fluctuated and in which ways of measuring success have become more complex requires considerable strength of purpose, resilience, strategic vision and the possession of a range of organisational management and interpersonal skills. Strategies, for example, must be fit for purpose and context sensitive. The analysis of different development phases in each partnership is a clear indicator of the differential application of strategies; and 'nascent' (NUSA), 'developing' (AC) and 'mature' (WP) partnerships illustrate the ways in which challenges and tensions within growth and sustainability are being managed.

One clear feature of each partnership is forward movement. Successful partnerships are living organisms rather than fixed points. Uncertainties – recruitment of students (WP), effectiveness of community engagement (AC) and the success of new curricula (NUSA) – are a present and continuing feature of such partnership work and must be managed.

Finally, analysis of interviews and other data show clearly that each partnership leader and member recognises the critical importance of trust:

*Effective organisations depend and thrive on trust. In relationships and organisations, trust amounts to people being able to rely on each other, so that their world and relationships have coherence and continuity... Trust is a resource. It creates and consolidates energy, commitment and relationships.*

(Hargreaves and Fink, 2006, pp.212–3)

In writing about sustainable leadership, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) cite Reina and Reina's work on 'Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace' (1999). They identify three forms of trust, each of which may be found in the three school-university partnerships:

1. **Contractual trust** is expressed through impersonal, objective and often written agreements – in shared performance standards, agreed targets, clear job descriptions... Contractual trust requires us to meet obligations, complete contracts, and keep promises.

2. **Competence trust** involves the willingness to trust oneself and other people to be competent and the willingness to provide sufficient support and learning opportunities for people to become competent. Delegating effectively and providing progress and growth and development for others are strong indications of competence trust.
3. **Communication trust** is evident in human interactions that communicate shared understanding and good intentions. Clear, high-quality, open, and frequent communication are the hallmarks of communication trust. So too are sharing information, telling the truth, keeping confidences and being willing to admit mistakes.

(Hargreaves and Fink, 2006, pp.212–3)

Each of these partnerships has been built upon the premise that trust matters. From the outset, the leaders had to change attitudes of many outside the university who regarded it as distant and self interested. Extending, deepening and embedding different, more positive attitudes takes time but without doing so the participation of individuals, schools and communities required to fulfil the vision of school justice which each partnership has at its heart would have been impossible.

## Appendix I

### HEFCE Targets for Active Communities Funding<sup>9</sup>

#### Targets

18. Across the sector, we expect HEACF 2 funds to support, maintain and develop (in terms of optimising quality and volunteer throughput) 10,000 of the volunteering opportunities that have been generated under HEACF 1. Institutional sub-targets for this over the whole period of the HEACF 2 programme can be calculated by dividing the institution's allocation by 1,000. In addition, a further 2,500 new volunteering opportunities are to be created. Institutional sub-targets for this, over the whole period of the HEACF 2 programme, can be calculated by dividing the institutional allocation by 4,000.

19. For example, an HEI that receives an allocation of £80,000 will be expected to support, maintain and develop 80 existing volunteering opportunities and to generate 20 new opportunities.

20. An average of over £600 is allowed for each volunteering opportunity maintained over the two years of HEACF 2 activity (about £300 a year), and an average of £1,500 is allowed for each new volunteering opportunity created.

21. These figures are for guidance only and, because of whole number rounding, might not match exactly to the total of an institution's funding. It is up to individual HEIs to ensure that all HEACF 2 money is used in accordance with the aims and target calculation above.

22. Additional funds may become available to supplement the almost £10 million we are allocating under HEACF 2. If so, we will contact all HEIs receiving HEACF 2 funding. Any additional funds will be distributed using the appropriate formula based on staff and student FTE numbers. Targets associated with any additional funding will be for the creation of new volunteering opportunities only.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04\\_19/04\\_19.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04_19/04_19.pdf)

23. In some cases HEIs may have achieved their HEACF 1 targets but not fully spent their HEACF 1 allocations. These underspends should be reported to Anju Kataria in the Business and Community Team at HEFCE by 31 August 2004. We will then agree appropriate action with individual HEIs.

## **Appendix II**

### **Benefits of Active Communities Initiative (November 2002)**

#### **1. STUDENTS**

1. Prospects enhanced by inclusion in CV
2. Potential qualification
3. Learning from community
4. Holistic approach to personal development
5. Feel good factor
6. Opportunity to raise awareness of/engage in social issues
7. Resettlement issues
8. Additional training opportunities and use of support networks (SCA)
9. Group benefits/team building – widen activities
10. Students as a whole could gain from a potential change in the community's perception of students
11. Chance to mix with other students
12. Chance to develop skills and test/define career choice

#### **Downsides**

1. Stress
2. Time management
3. Conflict with academic performance
4. Levels of responsibility
5. Students only available in term time
6. Affecting capacity to earn



## **2. STAFF**

1. Feel good factor/altruistic glow
2. Increased knowledge of local community for work/personal benefit
3. Resource for examples to use in work
4. Improve work/life balance
5. Provides bridge to career change
6. Develops new and/or existing skills
7. Opportunity to get out of ivory tower
8. Creates opportunities for team building and healthy competition
9. Provides opportunities for research
10. Social awareness of local community and how university can help
11. (Staff may need help to realise what they can give to the community)

## **3. COMMUNITY**

1. Benefits from learning activities
2. Positive role models provide opportunity to raise self esteem
3. Raise aspirations
4. Engenders enthusiasm and motivation
5. Raised awareness about opportunities (not just learning but employment, leisure pursuits, etc.)
6. Broadens cultural horizons
7. Provides opportunity for empowerment and personal development
8. Economic benefit
9. Two-way understanding and mutual benefit
10. Help for organisations with limited resources
11. Good quality volunteers

#### 4. UNIVERSITY

1. Improved image
  - In community
  - Amongst decision makers/policy
2. Raised non-academic profile in media
3. University more
  - Touchable
  - Relevant
  - Acceptable
4. Removes perceived/actual barriers
5. Normalised use of university plant/resources
6. Rounded happy/staff/graduates/students
7. Generalised community links and unknown benefits (Joined up university initiatives – working out of silo)
8. Knowledge of range of activities
9. Develop new business/customers/wider audiences
10. Win further funding beyond two years
11. Selling utility of subjects/research to community

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