



University of Brighton

**Community
University
Partnership
Programme**

**On our
doorsteps**

Seed Funded Projects Self-evaluation Report

Length: Up to 3 sides of A4, with additional income and expenditure sheet. Please include direct quotes where applicable in sections 3, 4 and 6.

1. Brief Description of Project

The *bigger splash* project has been funded by CUPP to develop an effective system for administrating, coordinating and mentoring the work of Chelsea School undergraduate students within neighbourhood voluntary sports organisations. The Bigger Splash has created and refined voluntary roles which are specific to the skills acquired and required for various sports courses run from Chelsea School, Eastbourne. Academics, volunteers, and community partners-who appreciate the needs and operational procedures of voluntary sports organisations-worked together to develop a model which will help students find skills-led placements, initially within Eastbourne Swimming Club. The roles are designed to require minimal mentoring by the sports club itself, thus not overly increasing the workload of voluntary coaches and teachers in sports clubs. Students can undertake placements within community voluntary sports clubs utilising the pre-existing framework of the University-based *Active Student*. The Bigger Splash hopes the outcomes from the project will be applied to many more community voluntary sports clubs throughout Eastbourne. This project has supported students to integrate, and ultimately graduate with skills and experience relevant to their degree, and facilitate sports clubs to remain dynamic centres of learning.

2. Project Progress

The Bigger Splash was planned to have two distinct stages (see appendix 1 for the detailed schedule). The first stage “Knowing our neighbours” involved two workshops, to familiarise the requirements and define the areas of involvement for university academics and students. Stage two was planned to involve setting up the student experience platform; defining operational procedures, gathering student feedback of their experiences and development of sustainability in conjunction with other university departments. The initial workshop had to be postponed due to issues with university personnel procedures. As a result, the project had less time to get students involved to undertake voluntary roles (due to the resulting imminence of the summer break). Availability of facilities at the University of Brighton Chelsea School campus to hold the workshop was also extremely limited, which dictated the rate of initial progression. These factors both altered the timeline and subsequent shape of the project itself. The content from the two planned workshops was amalgamated and satisfactorily covered within one morning.

At the closure of the workshop it was concluded that the press reports, as well as some actions within the second stage of the project were rendered unnecessary. The strength of support and involvement by Active Student, its comprehensive framework and existing methods of marketing rendered the development of the student experience platform unnecessary.

Bigger Splash participants are students who are undertaking voluntary roles, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the swimmers within Eastbourne Swimming Club, supported by voluntary teachers, voluntary coaches, under the auspices of a voluntary management committee. Teachers and coaches mentored students on the poolside to develop their skills in communication and confidence to effectively deliver information to swimmers, parents and the teaching and coaching team.

3. Partnership working

As a direct result of the Bigger Splash project students have been placed in roles within Eastbourne Swimming Club. The students have gained practical skills which complement their theoretical university based learning. Their skills are entirely transferable and CV-worthy. Stewart, a 3rd year Sports and Exercise Science student who undertook the role of Dietary analysis with a swimmer *“I found working with Eastbourne Swimming Club very rewarding. The process helped me to develop skills that I can transfer to a working environment. It was also very enjoyable which made the whole experience worthwhile”*. The swimming club has had not only additional teachers to support its young members, but has also been able to offer elements of sports science support which were previously not possible. This includes education opportunities for the swimmers as well as their parents, in terms of strength and conditioning training and nutrition. There has been mentoring of the students which allows them to assess their own practice. Due to the clear definition of the positions undertaken, and their subsequent revision following placements, the whole process became more streamlined, the outcome being to reduce the workload for the mentors as much as possible. The management committee of Eastbourne Swimming Club has examined the functions it performs and evolved to, where necessary, enable effective student mentorship to be performed within the Active Student framework, and reported upon. The sports club’s main management role became simply fulfilling the conditions of a service level agreement with Active Student.

ESC (and, theoretically, other voluntary sports clubs at a later stage) have gained an appreciation of University of Brighton courses taught in their neighbourhood. The a subsequent identification of positions students could apply for, within the club – video analysis, guidance on nutrition, strength/conditioning programs, etc is generic and non-specific to swimming. The delivery of sport teaching and coaching by the students has developed and improved, and the professional development of voluntary ESC teachers and coaches has been facilitated via knowledge brought by “visiting” students.

By applying their learning in the field, students within Physical Education, coaching and Sports and Exercise Science courses gained experience through working in a voluntary organisation, and recognise the benefits of such experience. They have developed their own skills and confidence to bridge communication gaps by working within the community with people from all ages and backgrounds.

The financial contribution of On Our Doorsteps allowed the partnership representatives to commit time to develop and manage the project. Ideally, a wider meshing of partners within the two groups would have created a more global partnership net which encompassed more student involvement, for example, having multiple academics and multiple mentors within sports clubs running the

project concurrently. Voluntary community sports clubs mentors would benefit from a concise document which outlines the course content and anticipated existing knowledge base of students undertaking placements. The information deficit, has, to some extent, been met through the Active Student application process, which students themselves complete.

4. Neighbourliness

Neighbourliness - Geography. Students worked in four different swimming pools which ESC hires for their activities, three within a mile of the Eastbourne Campus. The attendance of students educated the parents of swimmers as to the presence of a local sports science campus and the University itself. Some students found attending pools other than the university campus's own, to carry out their role, a challenge; possibly a confidence issue.

Neighbourliness – Do you know your neighbours and neighbourhood?

Greater student engagement in local sports clubs promoted integration; swimmers were motivated by having a teacher/coach closer to their own age, with students becoming positive and influential role models. Local communities of parents became appreciative of students for who they truly are, by providing purpose to interact positively, and developing mutual understanding and respect. ESC welcomes families of all backgrounds/ages, with whom students become involved. Local communities learnt about our students, how they can be supported in their daily activities, which most certainly reduced stereotypes and misperceptions.

“Working as a Nutritional Advisor as part of the Eastbourne Swimming club provided me with a very rewarding opportunity to be included as part of the Eastbourne community, instead of just being classed as a student. This allowed me to apply the knowledge that I have learnt on my course to new and interesting sporting situations within the area. I found applying this knowledge to questions parents had regarding their child's nutritional needs an interesting role to fulfill.” Emily, BSc Sports and Exercise Science, 2nd year.

“Good-neighbourliness: Learn with your neighbours”

Teachers at ESC have worked with swimmers for several years on a weekly basis, some of whom are of regional level. Students learnt sports-related skills from contact with not only swimmers, but their parents, teachers, club management and other clubs. Conversely, students following a PE, C, SES courses provided practical assistance to swimmers/ parents in daily activities, and effectively reducing the workload of teachers in their teaching. Members of local sports clubs – whether parents, committee members or swimmers - have compelling reasons to come into positive contact with the university world. The local sports club is often the first step into the world of volunteering. All groups got to know each other, work together, learn together and supported each other, reducing the group delineation.

There were challenges faced by both partners due to the novel nature of the partnership; voluntary teachers are not familiar with the requirements and expectations of mentorship and some found this as stretch to accommodate within their weekly lesson plan, students undertaking the practical requirements of meeting the learning and safety requirements of a pool/gym full of children and young people, as well as their own learning needs.

5. Outputs

We organised a workshop involved 20 attendees from various external community organisations- Eastbourne Swimming Club, YMCA, lecturers from physical education, sports and leisure

management, sports and exercise science and sports journalism courses at Chelsea School, as well as Active Student.

Workshop, student placements including involving writing of lesson plans, 10 student voluntary roles, service level agreement between Eastbourne Swimming Club and Active Student, article written for local press, Channel and Active Sussex. Marketing by email and leaflet distribution of the Active Student voluntary role, outline of the key procedure to enable widening of the sports club involvement, throughout the lecturer community within the University of Brighton Sports and Exercise science lecturers, local voluntary organisations and Youth Schemes.

6. Outcomes

The CUPP funding has enabled the applicants to develop transferable “job” descriptions for placements within (initially) Eastbourne Swimming Club, to be extrapolated to any community voluntary sports club. It has enabled students to have a clearly defined placement opportunity which relates directly to the skills and development required of various University of Brighton sports degree courses.

Following the creation and piloting of voluntary job opportunities for students by The Bigger Splash Project, Active Student has been involved in a way which enables all sports clubs to benefit. The pre-existing framework that Active Student offers, has been applied in this case and Bigger Splash has facilitated a supportive and experienced link which will be carried to any number of voluntary community sports clubs that wish to benefit from having students involved as volunteers within their community.

Academics were introduced to the purpose of the project and reflected on means of enriching students experience through placement in the voluntary world. Positions for students to undertake, based on skills developed within their courses, were identified and are today used in academic tutorials. The *bigger splash* project was referred to in an application for a promotion to Senior Lecturer.

The *bigger splash* project gave an opportunity for consultancy and teaching activities to work on a common project where expertise of both partners was fundamental. Furthermore, the different teaching departments within the Chelsea School could discuss their respective course content, with reference to placement modules in particular. Practice was shared between academics in a novel and up-lifting situation.

Academics are today considering their own teaching methods with the *Bigger Splash* in mind. The definition of voluntary roles has enabled the theories that lecturers impart to their students to have taken on a physical entity, and therefore become reality; students can read a job role and decide to meet the skills it demands. The management of a students’ placement has become easier and more effective.

With the current climate in Higher Education, the development of vocational opportunities has become critical and the Bigger Splash project could be seen as a first step in the process of enhancing students’ experience. The project has definitely increased the ability to articulate and promote academic work.

Students’ opportunities and experience in community practice has been the purpose of this project. The development of partnership with local sports clubs is key for students’ dissertation to take place off-site.

The *Bigger Splash* workshop was advertised through the 3VA to all its members as well as East Sussex Community Youth Services and Active Sussex. The sussexsport.co.uk directory was used at the end of the project to explain the opportunity Active Students can offer to voluntary sports clubs. The advert was also sent to 3VA, ESCVYS, sports clubs, Active Sussex, active students own mailing list, Sports National Governing Bodies websites.

The *Bigger Splash* opportunity was also promoted with posters on swimming-pool notice boards (Moira House; University of Brighton; Eastbourne College; Sovereign Centre).

The community of young people who are members of Eastbourne Swimming Club, and their parents have gained through direct theoretical information (nutritional support, strength and conditioning, teaching and coaching in swimming) to apply to their home lives as well as sporting activities. *“The responses students gave us to our questions about what our kid should eat before a race has dispelled some myths that our kids like to perpetuate! No more Jelly Babies”* Steve, a parent of competitive swimmer.

Swimmers have been taught skills which have shown immediate improvement in their performance, which can be continued to be applied in their futures (video analysis). These services as a direct result of the intervention of the *Bigger Splash* project within Eastbourne Swimming Club, and can be provided to any local community sports club. Users of the project, in terms of both students and sports club members and their families have a deeper knowledge of the reality of their neighbourhood and the rewards of an effective, meaningful interface *“I didn’t know there was a sports campus nearby. Jasmine has been able to have a teacher for just her lane of swimmers, and has really enjoyed developing a relationship a young adult”* Chrissie, parent.

Active Student has facilitated The *Bigger Splash* Project’s legacy to be sustainable and ongoing. As such, it can offer new services to local sports clubs and new positions to students.

7. Longer term knowledge exchange work

Now that voluntary roles have been clearly defined, it is hoped that students will continue to undertake placements within Eastbourne Swimming Club. Evaluation from students has led to further refinement of the voluntary positions. Active Student will continue to oversee and manage the service level agreements and placements of students certainly within Eastbourne Swimming Club, and it is hoped, within multiple local sports clubs. A *Bigger Splash* marketing exercise, will promote these opportunities throughout Eastbourne’s Sports Club community.

8. Statement of Income and Expenditure

Table 1 summarises the discrepancies between the budget in the project plan and actual expenditures. No income was anticipated from the *Bigger Splash* project.

	Project plan	Actual expenditures	Difference
UoB staff	£3840	£3840	£0
Community partner	£1757	£1757	£0
Promotional material	£455	£200 8 posters (A5) 8 posters (A4) 200 Flyers	On-going expenditure

		£200 T-shirt for students	
Hospitality	£60	£34.20	£25.8
Land Training	£ 484	£ 484	£ 484
Laptop	£100	£0	£100

9. Quantitative evaluation

The Bigger Splash project placed 10 students on practical placements over a six-month period, within Eastbourne Swimming Club. In addition to the 10 students who gained practical experience, 120 swimmers benefitted in the following ways:

- Video analysis of swimming technique: 15
- nutrition advisers: 20
- Strength and Conditioning: 45
- Lane Coach: 20
- Swimming teacher: 20

Where more hours were spent on the project than planned, please indicate how this time was paid for, or whether it was voluntary