Executive Summary | Queen Mary in Tower Hamlets

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) has a proud culture of contributing to our local community, whether it be through research, volunteering, partnerships, economic impact or sharing resources. This includes a contribution of over £1 billion of economic activity to the UK in 2014, supporting nearly 10,000 jobs, a substantial part of this within Tower Hamlets.

Founded as the People’s Palace, our principles reflect its original commitment to providing education and cultural activities for the people of east London, something we have always seen as an essential part of being a university.

This commitment is represented in the diversity and strength of our community work, with a number of professional teams to support involvement and hundreds of staff and students engaged in activities.

A selection of case studies are included in this summary and following report.

**Working in Local Schools**

QMUL recognises the importance of working with local teachers and schools to inspire new generations through taking part in delivering education, inviting schools on campus and creating resources in collaboration with schools.

**Centre of the Cell** is a science education centre with its roots and mission firmly within its local area. The Centre has worked with 81 per cent of primary schools and 100 per cent of secondary schools in Tower Hamlets through its science shows, interactive talks, online resources and outreach projects.

**Computer Science for Fun** (CS4FN) inspires enthusiasm for computer science, delivering free booklets and/or presenting workshops at 10 local schools. Their success, amongst sustained national work with schools, has led to QMUL’s selection to lead the Department for Education’s Computing at School regional network ‘CAS London’.

**Amplifying Community Voice**

Our **School of Geography** has a long-running partnership with **Citizens UK** and hosts the only university based Citizens UK representative in the country.

The School’s research underpins many of the community organising group’s local and national campaigns. This includes the high profile national campaign for a Living Wage, which Queen Mary has partnered and contributed to from its start in 2001, producing over 16 academic articles and reports supporting their work.

The partnership also involves collaborative teaching, Citizens UK partner and deliver on the compulsory undergraduate module Geography in Practice (GEG5103) and **MA in Community Organising** which give students the chance take part in social action research at a local level alongside representatives of Citizens UK in a range of areas, such as housing and letting in Tower Hamlets.

**Working with Patients**

Queen Mary understand that involving patients in research is a key part of improving medicine and healthcare, and also hosts **public festivals** and **talks** to encourage this.

Our **Life Sciences Initiative** is a multidisciplinary endeavour at the forefront of research that will bring significant benefits to human health. With **public engagement** as one of its three core strands, we will work with partners from the local community to achieve this through major projects such as **East London Genes and Health**.
Our centres work to involve patients in research through consultation. The William Harvey Research Institute’s (WHRI) Public and Patient Advisory Group provide heart research to the public and patients, while the Multiple Sclerosis Team have recently moved to embed their advisory group further throughout research, from being part of designing research questions to evaluating methods for distributing results.

Students in the Community

Our student volunteering service facilitates over 800 student placements every year within 150 local charities, non-profit making organisations and statutory bodies.

Their Olympic Legacy Project has delivered over 1,200 hours of community sport through accredited student coaches and has been shortlisted for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community at the Times Higher Education Awards 2015.

The QMUL Annual Fund, supported by donations from alumni, staff and friends of Queen Mary, has funded 17 new projects across the university which will enhance student engagement with the local community. These projects are designed to benefit both the students who take part – through building their experience and skills – and the individuals and groups across the local community in fields such as health, media, the arts and sports.

QMUL students have also taken part in over 1,500 work placements and internships since 2012, allowing local organisations to access expertise while enhancing student employability. This includes an average of 130 project based placements in charities and non-profit organisations and 350 internships and part-time roles in businesses every year.

Using students’ passion and innovation for social enterprise, a collaboration with UnLtd provided eight student mentors to local young people developing social enterprises and QMUL contributed 26 students to UpRising’s 2015 East London Leadership programme. While there they developed and delivered five social enterprise projects alongside 20 other young people, with plans for a new intake in 2016.

Innovation and enterprise

Queen Mary is very much a part of the entrepreneurial east end, creating and supporting businesses to develop student employability and create meaningful impact from research and teaching.

qLegal, a strand of the wider Legal Advice Centre, provides free legal advice and resources to east London’s tech start-ups and entrepreneurs. Through their team of postgraduate students, partnered with legal and non-legal partners, qLegal assisted over 200 clients in the last academic year through appointments, workshops, toolkits and events.

Our Enterprise service supports students and graduates to create businesses, working with over 500 students since 2013 to network with local business and form start-ups. These are embedded into the local economy through partnerships with organisations such as Central Working: Whitechapel and Digital Shoreditch, a celebration of London’s creative, technology and entrepreneur community co-founded by QMUL.

The case studies attached in this report provide a selection of the wide range of community engagement we carry out at Queen Mary University of London, with hyperlinks to guide you to more information where interested.

Centre for Public Engagement
publicengagement@qmul.ac.uk
http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/
Computer Science for Fun
Teaching London Computing

Over 1.20m visits to the cs4fn website
... an average annual of 230,000 visits
10% of visitors stayed on the site for 3mins or more

PDF copies of the cs4fn magazines have been downloaded over 900,000 times
Free issues are sent to schools, teachers, libraries and school pupils

Teaching For London - cs4fn's sister site aimed at Computing teachers in London

35,000 website hits in it's first year
nearly 11,000 copies of their first booklet sent to teachers
over 1,250 teacher subscribers in the UK
Queen Mary University of London maintains a proud culture of contributing to our local community through research, volunteering, partnerships or sharing resources. Originally founded as the People’s Palace with the principles of providing education and entertainment for the people of east London, QMUL always considers these aspects an essential part of being a university.

This is represented in the diversity and strength of our community work, with a number of professional teams to support public involvement and hundreds of staff and students engaged in activities.

The case studies in this document demonstrate a selection of the work we do in the local area, if you are interested in hearing more please do let us know.

**Supporting Local Teenagers through Film**

*Cities in Flux* and *Encounters* are both projects that work with local young people to create films explaining east London through their own eyes.

Collaborating with four community partners, outputs have been presented at City Hall and East End Film Festival to a range of politicians, media professionals, academics and social workers, giving teenagers a chance to express their voice and take part in research through creativity.

**Amplifying Community Voice**

QMUL works closely with Citizens UK on a range of projects that support the community to address local issues.

Focused within the School of Geography, research conducted alongside community members underpins national and local campaigns. These include research supporting the case for a national *Living Wage* and to support better safety, housing and health locally.

**Appendix I** details QMUL’s diverse work with Citizens UK, a strategic partnership focused on working with the local LBTH community.

**Centre of the Cell**

*Centre for the Cell* is the first science education centre in the world to be located within working biomedical research laboratories, providing science shows, interactive talks, online resources and outreach projects.

Approximately 50 per cent of the school groups that visit come from a ten-mile radius of Whitechapel, with 81 per cent of Tower Hamlets primary schools and 100 per cent of Tower Hamlets secondary schools having taken part in their educational activities.

The Centre also offers work experience, placements, revision and mentoring sessions, careers workshops and volunteering opportunities for local young people aged between 14 and 19.

Through their ‘Young Roots’ project, local teenagers have created joint activities with the Centre, such as ‘Spores, Sores and Sickly Bugs’ and the WW1 Whitechapel Medical Marvels Trail.
Community Partner Spotlight:

Assan Ali
Co-Director, Mile End Community Project (MCP)

*MCP* is a multi-award winning organisation using film making and sport to teach skills and engage local young people in Tower Hamlets.

"Engaging with Queen Mary has been good for MCP in three main ways.

One is that we have been able to network a lot more with the different departments and the people there, which has been really useful.

Secondly, it has created more funding opportunities for us to work with the university and for the university to work with our young people and their wider community.

Thirdly, it has benefitted young people in the community, an example of this being when we have our football sessions for under sixteens we get volunteer coaches from the university who are students, and they come and volunteer as FA coaches."

Involving the Community with Medicine

The Medical School works to involve local people with their research, whether it be students in their Barts Cancer Institute Stars lab-based work placements, or those with a general interest visiting the Barts and Queen Mary Science Festival.

They also recognise the importance of involving patients and run local patient involvement groups, hold public talks, and are currently undertaking a community focused project 'East London Genes and Health', in conjunction with a community partner to involve local people with research in human genetics.

Passing on a Passion for Science to Local Schools

Computer Science for Fun (CS4FN) covers a range of activities to enthuse people with computer science through magic tricks and problem solving puzzles. They deliver free booklets and/or have performed workshops at 10 local schools and growing.

QMUL’s commitment to developing and embedding excellence in computer science education has led to its selection as one of 10 university centres for the Network of Teaching Excellence in Computer Science.

Working with Schools

Our staff and students recognise the importance of working with nearby schools to inspire the new generation and collaborate with teachers to create new resources based on current research.

Projects such as *The Meanings of Military Service* and *Centre of the Cell* have worked with teachers to develop new resources and plans based on current research which are then made widely available and delivered in local schools.

QMUL also runs a series of programmes to raise aspirations amongst local school children, providing mentoring and support:

Campus Residences in medicine and dentistry, health sciences and engineering allow local young students to experience real university environments over the course of a week, along with regular campus visits matched with interactive activities.

Year 12 Talking to Mary is a half-day, on-campus transition event enabling students to practise strategies for making the most out of lectures, attend sessions held by the student union and get any questions answered by current university students.

Bridge the Gap increases awareness of careers in medicine and dentistry amongst under-represented groups. A long term project delivered between school years 6 - 13, this programme provides the knowledge and support needed to provide a step-up to these professions.
Centre of the Cell

The first science education centre in the world to be located within working biomedical research laboratories.

Founded in 2009 in east London’s Whitechapel, the centre has involved over 100,000 participants through shows, resources and outreach activities, including their Youth Membership Scheme.

- 1,016 shows and workshops for 46,677 participants
- 25 educational online games
- 2,481 interactive pod sessions for 60,670 participants

worked with 81% of primary schools and 100% of secondary schools in Tower Hamlets

42.5% of school participants come from a ten-mile radius of Whitechapel

Youth Membership Scheme (YMS)

Outreach and Work Experience for young people aged 14 - 19 years

91% of YMS school leavers are in education or training, compared to the London figure of 62%

88% are now studying at university, compared to the London figure of 48%

79% of those going on to higher education are studying STEM subjects

(% of 130 youth members that have now left school that CoC have been able to contact)
Overview | Students in the Community

Students at QMUL have always shown a passion to be involved with the community they study in and the university provides a range of opportunities to get involved, as well as the professional support to organise themselves.

Queen Mary Student Union Volunteering Service

QMSU Volunteering partners with over 150 local charities, non-profit making organisations and statutory bodies to provide hundreds of quality volunteering opportunities for students to get involved in.

Staff work with these organisations to create opportunities accessible for students and ensure they meet the compliance guidance to deliver safe opportunities for students.

This enables over 800 students to access a variety of opportunities to volunteer in the local community and across London each year to make a positive impact on an individual, cause or environment in need.

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (LAC)

The Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (LAC) provides a free, accessible, client centred advice service to the local community and wider public. Advice on a range of issues is provided by undergraduate and postgraduate law students, with the support of professional solicitors.

The Centre aims to make free legal advice as accessible as possible, while enabling students to learn from practical experience. They welcome all enquiries from the public, and clients come to the advice centre from a wide variety of backgrounds, presenting a wide range of legal issues.

SEEN (Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Network)

QMUL is a key partner in SEEN, aiming to establish a network of social entrepreneurs in Tower Hamlets. Working with UnLtd, Tower Hamlets College, NACUE and Student Hubs, QMUL students provide mentoring to help young local people from the college to launch their own social enterprises to improve their area.

UpRising

QMUL are partnered with UpRising’s East London leadership programme. Here students and residents work in groups to design and deliver social action campaigns on local issues they are passionate about.

Last year’s projects included ‘pop-up’ speed mentoring in cafes, collecting and distributing warm clothes for children from low income families and inspiring young people to consider art-based careers such as architecture.

QProjects - Linking Students with local Charities

QProjects is a Guardian newspaper Award-winning work experience programme that places Queen Mary students into challenging projects within local charities, with an average of 130 placements per year.

The aim is to give the student an opportunity to develop and showcase skills – such as leadership, influencing, problem-solving and initiative – whilst filling a skills and/or resource gap in a charity.
**Student Societies in the Community**

Many student societies use their learning and passion to help in the community.

**Teddy Bear Hospital** visit local schools with teddy bear patients to explain what happens at the doctors and make children more comfortable with visiting.

**Bow Foodbank group** support Bow Foodbank. They shift food, befriend clients, organise collections and generally work as a team to support the foodbank in creative and innovative ways.

**Homework Club** mentors years seven and eight students to help improve their grades in Mathematics and English.

**STAR (Student Action for Refugees)** aim to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. They teach English to help smooth transition. They also fundraise, campaign to end people being detained unfairly, and educate people through local events.

**Canal Clean-up Group** lead waterway clean up events to maintain and improve the Regent's Canal.

**Aspire** teach local able-bodied primary school children about disability sport, engaging them in activities to understand how people with physical disabilities have to modify sports in order to play them.

**qInterns**

**qInterns** places over 150 students every year into paid internships with start-up businesses and small and medium sized enterprises in east London.

These internships supply creative ideas and labour for businesses, while providing relevant work experience for the interns.

**qConsult**

**qConsult**, supported by J.P. Morgan, places high-calibre Queen Mary students from lower-income families into mini-consultancy projects in east London businesses.

Local organisations are able to solve a business problem whilst building the employability of students who, although high-achieving, often lack the social capital to compete for graduate jobs.

**qTemps**

**qTemps** places over 200 students a year into positions at local organisations looking for short-term or part-time help.

**MA Community Organising**

This **masters programme**, partnered with Citizens UK, puts students in the heart of community-led action in the east London.

Students join Citizens UK to experience and take part in community organising, as well as achieving an understanding of theory, history and practice.

**QM Olympic Legacy Project**

This **Times Higher Education** shortlisted project trains sports coaches with a National Governing Body recognised qualification who then deliver sport in a variety of community settings including schools, local sports clubs and with charities in the Tower Hamlets and east London region.

The community coaches have delivered over 1,200 hours of sporting activity to local young people in conjunction with community partners across a range of sports including: football, basketball, hockey, netball, cheerleading, badminton and tennis.

**Community Undergraduate Modules**

To introduce students to community participation, the Institute of Dentistry now requires students to have an element of volunteering as part of their undergraduate first year, delivered through the student union.

The School of Geography requires undergraduates to take **Geographical Research in Practice**, a module in partnership with Citizens UK.

Student research groups are assigned a local London Citizens membership group to develop a research relationship with. They then conduct research based on the group’s criteria, producing a final report to feed back to the group, fellow students and wider relevant local authorities.

**QMUL Teacher Training**

QMUL works with **Teach First** to place approximately 40 graduate students each year into teacher training and challenging schools, many going to work in Tower Hamlets’ schools.
qLegal: The small print for BIG IDEAS

September 2014 - May 2015

- 38 students and 20 legal and non-legal partners
- Provided over 200 Clients with legal assistance
- Covering 5 areas of law

- Through 52 advice appointments
- 9 toolkits
- 5 qLegal events
Activities in the School of Geography

September 2013 - September 2014

Working with the School of Geography, Tower Hamlets Citizens UK (THCitizens) has:

- Run special introductory sessions for undergraduates as part of welcome week (including a tour of East Tower Hamlets);
- Managed opportunities for students to undertake voluntary work with other member groups in London Citizens (churches, mosques, schools, community organisations etc.). This involved Darul Ummah Mosque (five placements), City Safe/Safety Campaign (two placements), Shuffle Festival (15 students);
- Worked with academics to support research methods training and community engagement for second year undergraduates.
- This involved applying community organising principles in research methods, mapping local governance in five east London boroughs facilitated through London Citizens in the run up to local elections. All students received skills training and mentoring throughout. Results included a student presenting to 70 delegates at a Tower Hamlets Citizens Assembly in the Octagon in February 2014 and students taking part in a Local Election Accountability Assembly held at QMUL (Arts 2) with the main local candidates on 8 May 2014.
- Trained and mentored postgraduate students taking MA and Postgraduate Certification in Community Organising. This involved setting up projects; face to face meetings and mentoring; additional training & development opportunities; and access to community relationships via London Citizens.

September 2014 – September 2015

- 76 second year undergraduate students in the School of Geography were supported to lead a project on health in Tower Hamlets, subsequently written up in a report.

Following lectures on the makeup of the health system in Tower Hamlets, conducting qualitative interviews with members of the community and action focused research using the tools of community organising, the students engaged over 231 community members and health providers. Their findings were then compiled into a report and group presentations delivered at the first Tower Hamlets Citizens and Queen Mary University of London Health Conference with more than 117 in attendance.

The report findings went on to form the THCitizens health campaign which focuses on maternal health, mental health and healthy living. The students have gone on to present their work to the local clinical commissioning group and have met with several high profile health professionals in order to discuss solutions for improving conditions in the borough.

- Ongoing from September 2014 THCitizens has been supporting Liam Harney (a PhD student in Geography) in conducting the E14 Leadership action research project, building a new community group in Poplar as part of his PhD research.
Activities open to all students and staff at QMUL

September 2013 - September 2015

Ongoing training in Leadership and Community Organising

Students have been invited to certified training (six hours in total) covering the key skills of community organising. There have been 10 cohorts over two years, each with a range of participants from six to 32 each session.

QMCitizens group

As a result of the work in Geography and ongoing training, a new QMCitizens group has been set up to build community on campus; identify and tackle important issues around campus; offer volunteering opportunities; engage students in issues of citizenship; and to develop relationships with the local community.

This is not a registered society but a student-led group that is overseen by an organiser. Up to 300 students have been engaged in various capacities, including an email list of 167 people and a Facebook group of 736 people. The group also has a close working relationship with the Student Union.

Housing: Feb 2015 - May 2015

A housing report was co-produced between PhD students and community members, developing research and local skills. This involved training 20 community representatives from diverse backgrounds, developing the report and campaigning. The project has led to significant policy changes and considerations in housing such as Living Rent, community Land Trusts and implementation of a private landlord register. Report available here.

Save Me Campaign: Oct 2014 - Present

THCitizens trained a core group of 56 students in the tools of community organising and leadership who went on to work with QMCitizens, where they focused on building a road safety campaign. This campaign engaged hundreds of students on campus and in the local community in trying to identify the major issues on the road. The team developed relationships internally and externally which led to the Save ME action on 12 March 2015 which saw over 400 people protest. They are in ongoing negotiations with TFL, Tower Hamlets Council and the Police.

Safety Report

In February 2014, students from the leadership training and QMCitizens conducted research to investigate whether west London was brighter than east London, finding that west Kensington was three times brighter than Tower Hamlets. The dangers of this were illustrated through stories collected around the issue of sexual harassment, mugging and fights that were occurring in the poorly lit areas. The research formed the foundation of a safety campaign that focused on improving the level of lighting in Tower Hamlets.

Voter Registration and First Time Voter Assembly

After national training in voter registration, QMCitizens has gone out to engage other students in voter registration on campus and in the halls of residence, working alongside the Student Union. Students are now working on delivering a national first time voters assembly around youth issues with key ministers and politicians, bringing young people from across the country to QMUL.
Activities in the wider community at QMUL

THCitizens has built relationships with staff in a range of Schools (including Economics, History, and Psychology, Primary Care and Public Health) and the Student Union. Members of Tower Hamlets Citizens have also met with the Life Sciences team to explore opportunities for building long term relationships with the local community around health needs and research.

These opportunities include:

**Jobs/Employment – Development**

Students involved in joint THCitizens initiatives at Queen Mary are able to develop employability skills, with voluntary positions provided to students allowing them to gain experiences within the community in various positions, from working in schools to housing associations. THCitizens campaigns have created opportunities to work in teams, manage events and co-ordinate details.

The wider impact of this work has been the personal and professional development (improved employability, leadership and better relationships) of students; a raised public profile in media/community for the work of the University; and enhanced student experience. The development of local community organising projects and increased political engagement of students in Tower Hamlets and east London will have lasting benefits for students, QMUL and the wider area.

**Public Engagement**

One of THCitizens’ main objectives has been to engage the wider community with QMUL, something being worked towards by training community members. This includes training a mothers’ group from Toynbee Hall, who for the first time came onto a university campus, to training young students from central foundation.

THCitizens has also used QMUL as the hub of leadership development and community based research, giving students the opportunity to engage in local, national and regional levels, from Tower Hamlets Citizens to working nationally with Citizens UK.