Developing and Implementing Civic Engagement Programmes in Dublin 15

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Developing and Implementing Civic Engagement
Programmes in Dublin 15

Breffni O'Rourke
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I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand

- Confucius, 551 B. C.

1. Applied Portfolio – Background

Moss (1994) compares Applied Portfolios to job applications where the candidate has to convince a committee of the strengths on offer; In the Applied Portfolio the student has to convince the teacher of what has been learned and how effectively. The period February and March of 2013 were not unlike a job interview, the basic structure was known (for the Applied Portfolio) and there was a sense that anything could happen next. Similar to a job interview the Portfolio process requires you demonstrate examples of your learning in an applied setting, a key difference being you get to propose an assessment criteria.

Biggs and Tang (1998) assert common approaches to assessment stem from an objectivist theory of knowledge. The objectivist concept accords a dominant role to the measurement model of assessment (Taylor, 1994). Student assessment by applied portfolio according to Biggs and Tang (1998) enables students to apply and benefit from a constructive learning approach. Bay (2011) states learners using the constructive approach move away from memorization-based learning assessment to a more proactive approach where the emphasis is placed more on the learners' assessment than the teachers.

1.1 Terms of Reference

Part 1 required Identifying an issue for the portfolio and developing a project plan with milestones and timelines. The development of a proposed assessment criterion was not unlike project planning where setting down key performance indicators (KPIs) would be considered good practice. Part 2 the Literature review is divided into a number of sections that relate to the key deliverables in the project. The scoping exercise for the Literature review helped inform and influence the eventual format and focus of the Applied Portfolio, which moved from a study on the process of collaboration to become more solely focused on strengthening Civic Engagement in Dublin 15. Part 3 required selecting the most appropriate evidence of learning that would demonstrate the required learning had taken place. This process has been described as a 'decision as to what treasures to put on show as crucial' (Biggs & Tan, 1998, p. 6). Biggs and Tan identify the requirements from the student to be, 'sufficiently metacognitive to recognize the nature and quality of their own learning' (ibid, 1998, p.6). Part 4 will draw together moments of self-actualization, reflections and give an assessment of outcomes. The ability to be able to identify and recognize, through different pathways the knowledge and learning which has taken place will be the most critical to communicate.

1.2   Summary Statement

The primary Social Enterprise is Fingal County Council and Civic engagement the issue identified. Learning from the development and application of strategies designed to strengthen civic engagement in the Dublin 15, will be documented, examined and critically reflected upon.

1.3   The issue and its evolution

The initial issue and focus of the Portfolio was on the process of collaboration, specifically what Himmelman (2002)[21] describes as "exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose". My statement of March 2013 reflects this:

March 2013   The Applied Portfolio will be a study of the process of collaboration. It will research, develop and examine how, through civic engagement, specifically knowledge exchange and knowledge co-generation, collaboration between the ITB, RAPID programme, third sector and public service organisations and citizens located in the RAPID area evolves.

Considerable scope for strengthening Civic Engagement was identified at an early stage in the collaborative process between the project manager of Fingal County Council and the office of Civic Engagement in the Institute Technology Blanchardstown (ITB). This potential is captured in the issue statement below.

May 2013:   Develop and Implement civic engagement programmes in Dublin 15.

1.4 The Challenge

Between the periods 2002 – 2009, 12.8million of capital and revenue investments were made by central government in the RAPID[22] area in Dublin 15, Blanchardstown.

Government designated 45 spatial geographies RAPID status in 2002. Relatively high levels of investments in areas of high levels of socio-economic disadvantage followed, designed to help, 'Improve the quality of life and opportunity available to residents of the most disadvantaged communities in Irish towns and cities'. (Pobal website, 2011)[23]

Between 2010– 2013 additional resources from government to RAPID areas had reduced to a trickle. Reductions in the Public exchequer provided an impetus to investigate innovations that may not require large financial investments but have the potential, over a period, to make an impact on social and economic challenges in RAPID areas.

1.5 Client Organisations - Fingal County Council (FCC) & Institute Technology Blanchard town (ITB)

Fingal County Council employs a coordinator (the Student) part of whose responsibility is the coordination of activities designed to strengthen service delivery and improve quality of life measures in the government designated RAPID area in Dublin 15, Blanchardstown[24].

The co-coordinator reports to a steering group, chaired by the Department of Social Protection, with representatives from other statutory, non-statutory bodies and volunteer community residents who provide an oversight on the prioritization. In May 2012 the ITB created the new position of Head of Civic Engagement. Part of ITBs campus is located in the

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[21] http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/4achange.pdf accessed 10/11/13
[22] Revitalising Areas through Planning Investment and Development
[23] https://www.pobal.ie/FAQ/Pages/RAPID.aspx accessed 3/5/13
[24] http://www.fingalcoco.ie/media/RAPID_Area_Map.pdf accessed 3/5/13

designated RAPID area in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. The appointment was a response to the ITBs 2012 – 2015 Strategic Plan[25], specifically a commitment to:

> Expand and deepen our links with public sector bodies, community representative organisations, voluntary organisations and other education providers. (ITB, 2012 – 2015, Strategic Plan, p.14)
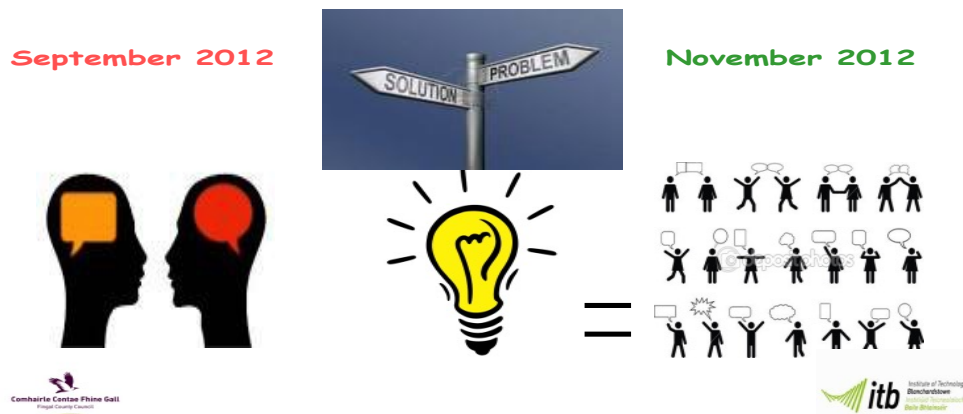

Figure 1: Origin of Civic Engagement work in Dublin 15

September 2012	RAPID co-coordinator, Fingal County Council meets Head of Civic Engagement Institute Technology Blanchardtown.
November 2012	Academics from ITB meet with public service and community representative organizations (26 in total) to explore developing more collaborative partnerships.
December 2012	As part of Business and Society, Next Generation Module, I attend the Martin McEvoy Annual Seminar Series 2012 at DCU, entitled: *The Engaged University – The role of the university in the development of its region*, my learning at this event influences my choice of the issue for the Applied Portfolio.
March 2013	A short report with recommendations arising out of the November meeting is discussed at the March RAPID board. The recommendations (including civic engagement measures) are endorsed and the board nominates Miriam Ryan, Manager Blanchardstown Youth Services to work with RAPID coordinator and Head of Civic Engagement on implementing its recommendations.
March 2013	Issues of collaboration and civic engagement in the RAPID areas identified and submitted to Lecturer as the Applied Portfolio project.
March 2013	Applied Portfolio; Project work commences.

1.6 Civic Engagement – Key Project Deliverables

a. Knowledge Exchange Learning Domain
Develop and implement a knowledge exchange initiative that generates ideas, promotes collaborative opportunities, to impact on local economic and social challenges. A minimum of 2 knowledge exchange events will take place during the project period.

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[25] http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/ITBStrategicPlan2012-2015.pdf accessed 3/5/13

b. Community Based Research Learning Domain

This relates to research that is undertaken in collaboration with the community. A mechanism will be developed and implemented that matches community challenges with student & academic knowledge/learning. A minimum of 5 community based research assignments will be instigated during the period of the portfolio.

1.7 Project Plan - Assessment Criteria

Bigg & Tang (1998) assert:

> The beauty about AP (Applied Portfolio) is that it puts the onus on the Student: it is what *they* decide to include as an AP Item that determines what *they* need to do about it. (Bigg & Tang, 1998, p.14)

Table 1 identifies 6 categories of criteria for assessment. In each category examples of the type of learning to be evidenced is listed, examples column lists what part of the Applied Portfolio these can be found.

Table 1: Learning Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Evidence it has been met	Examples
a. **Project plan is fulfilled.**	• Ability to construct project plan methodology • Project objectives met in part / whole. • Project deliverables / benefits demonstrated. • Project milestones met in part / whole. • Quality of products / deliverables. • Number of collaborators involved (inc. class mates / lecturers)	Part 1. Project Plan. Part 3. Learning Activities and Evidence. Portfolio / Items / artefacts selected.
b. **Understanding of research.**	• **Information literacy:** demonstrate able to use information gathered effectively. • **Data evaluation:** determining which literature makes a significant contribution to understanding of the project. • **Analysis and interpretation:** discuss the findings and conclusions of literature.	Part 2. Literature review.
c. **Application of learning and knowledge.**	• Learning from Masters applied and enhanced • Social Enterprise themes adopted. • Use of theoretical frameworks. • Technologies …	Part 1 – 4. + Portfolio /Items / artefacts selected.
d. **Collaboration with class colleague and / or lecturers.**	• Able to demonstrate tapped into peer learning with colleagues / lecturers involving and collaborating with them in some way which contributes to deliverables.	Part 3. Learning Activities and Evidence. Part 4. Learning assessment of outcomes / reflection. Portfolio /Artefacts selected
e. **Reflective learning throughout project.**	• Critical pathways to learning identified. • Journal documenting key moments in development • Evaluation of learning	Part 4. Learning assessment of outcomes / reflection Portfolio / Artefacts selected
f. **Sustainability**	• Evidence portfolio deliverable/s has embedded itself in client organisations (Fingal County Council & Institute Technology Blanchardstown)	Part 4. Learning assessment of outcomes / reflection ----Websites --- Portfolio /Artefacts selected

Table 2: Learning Assessment Criteria - Communication

Communication Type	Description	Frequency	Format	Distribution	Deliverable	Owner
Journal / Notes	121 meeting between projects leads	Monthly	In Person	Personal	Notes	Project Architect
Notes /Minutes Research Hub Meeting	Meeting to review action register and status	6 weekly / Bi Monthly	In Person	Research - Members	Minutes	Project Architect
Knowledge Exchange Reports	Present metrics and status to team and sponsor	Monthly	Group activity	All attendees	Report	Project Architect
RAPID Board Reports	Progress report deliverables	Minimum 1	In Person	RAPID Board	PowerPoint	Project Architect (x2)

1.8 Project Plan

Thinking through where it is you want to get to, what it looks like when you have got there, and what steps you may have to negotiate saves time and stops mission drift.   The business and project goals for the Applied Portfolio have been set out clearly in the table (3) below: Including parameters or scope of the project, assumptions made and likely constraints.

Table 3: Project Plan Summary

Issue/Project: Develop and Implement civic engagement programmes in Dublin 15**.**	
The **business goals** for the project are to: 1. Develop **Knowledge Exchange** Projects in Dublin 15. 2. Develop **Community Based Research** Projects in Dublin15.	The **project goals** and objectives include: 1. Accomplish business goals in a timely manner. 2. Civic engagement programmes developed are sustained. 3. Apply learning and utilise peer network developed from participation in Msc Management: Social Enterprise in Innovation.
The **Scope of project** will be: • To ensure both the business goals and project goals are achieved. • To restrict the Applied Portfolio to 2 of the civic engagement domains: Knowledge Exchange and Community Based Research. • Demonstrate a learning pathway and select appropriate evidence in my Portfolio which demonstrates meeting its stated objectives.	
Assumptions • My role as RAPID Coordinator for Fingal County Council will not change for the duration. • Des Moore Head of Civic Engagement ITB will remain at his post for the duration. • Sponsors are fully supportive of the project. • An appetite exists for knowledge exchange between the HEI, Public and civic sector.	**Constraints** • Limited timeframe to develop robust mechanisms for community based research. • Time constraints of project manager balancing existing workload. • Willingness of peers from course and lecturers to become involved. • Can civic engagement become a 'core business' of the contemporary university, or is it an attractive 'add-on' that is not affordable in the current economic climate?

1.9 Project Plan – Management & Role Requirements

There are three identifiable roles in the organizational Chart illustrated in Figure 2:
a. Sponsors: These have a line management role with the principal architects their strategic Support and encouragement will be important in helping the project secure its deliverables.
b. Principal architects: Project leads a co-dependent relationship exists between the two, they are the principal decision makers and budget holders.
c. Supporting role: These could be many more; the chart identifies two, their role is as project champions community / student / lecturer outreach.

Figure 3 identifies six major milestones and breaks them down into tasks and duration.

Sponsors	**Patricia Swords,** **Chair, RAPID**	**Mary Meaney** **President, ITB**
Principal Architect & Co-Architect	**Breffni O'Rourke** RAPID Coordinator, Fingal County Council	**Des Moore** Head of Civic Engagement, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Support	Miriam Ryan Head Youth Services	Cormac Doran ITB, Humanities
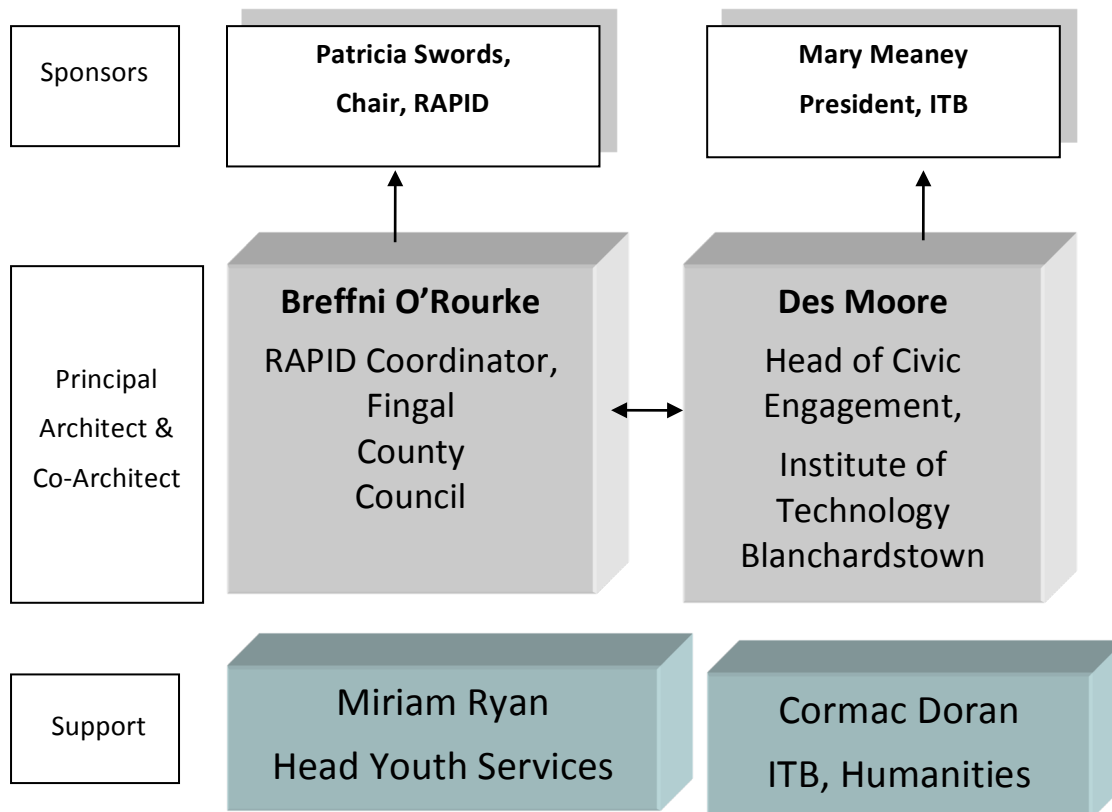
Figure 2: Project Management - Organisational Chart

Outline	Task Type	Task Name	Start Date	Duration	End Date
1	Milestone	Start Portfolio	01/03/2013	6	14/04/2103
1.1	Task	Agree objectives and scope		1	
1.2	Task	Draft project plan		1	
1.3	Task	Report and recommendation endorsed by sponsors		1	30th March
2	Milestone	Develop and implement Knowledge Exchange Event (I)	01/04/2013	12	31/05/2013
2.1	Task	Develop Learning Exchange concept and market	1st April	6	16th May
2.2	Task	Confirm and brief speakers & facilitators (including MSSE peer group)	1at April	5	12th May
2.3	Task	Co- facilitate Learning Exchange Event	16th May	0	16th May
2.4	Task	Document learning and distribute	1st July	8	1st September
3	Milestone	Develop and implement an approach to Community Based Research in D15	01/04/2013	13	31/12/2013
3.1	Task	Develop and convene Research Hub	1st April	5	9th May
3.2	Task	Develop and circulate Community Based Research template to capture proposals	1st May	8	1st July
3.3	Task	Complete meeting with community partners	1st May	8	1st July
4	Milestone	Develop and implement Knowledge Exchange Event (II)	01/08/2013	20	30/09/2013
4.1	Task	Develop Learning Exchange concept and market	1st August	7	26th September
4.2	Task	Confirm and brief speakers & facilitators (including MSSE peer group)	1st August	6	12th September
4.3	Task	Co- facilitate Learning Exchange Event	26th September	0	26th September
4.4	Task	Document learning and distribute	1st October	12	31st December
5	Milestone	Match Student / Lecturers with Community Based Research	01/09/13	16	31/12/2014
5.1	Task	Distribute community based research proposals	1st August	12	31st October
5.2	Task	Match community research proposals with ITB student / academic	20th September	13	31st December
6	Milestone	Report to Board	9/12/13	N/A	9/12/2014
6.1	Task	Civic Engagement Presentation to the board	9th December	0	9th December
6.2	Task	End of period to capture for Applied Portfolio	31st December	0	31st December

Figure 3: Milestone Chart

2.0 Introduction

The first task of the review will be to identify the term Civic Engagement, before locating it in the literature, specifically where it is applied to partnerships between Higher Education Institutes (HEI's) with public organisations and community. The main body of the literature review will locate the key deliverables (a) Community Based Research, and (b) Knowledge Exchange within the framework of civic engagement before examining knowledge sharing and its relationship with social capital. Relevant literature will be extracted on sustainability, as it relates to embedding civic engagement, before touching briefly on measures of impact and success. Literature will be extracted reviewed and evaluated before emergent themes are identified and findings synthesised in the summary.

2.1 Civic Engagement

'Engagement' implies mutual listening, reciprocity and dialogue; It comprehends both a promise of action and the outcome of action, it entails a willingness to change, a capacity to accommodate the other and a preparedness to be transformed in the process (Bjarnason and Coldstream, 2003). Barnett (2003, p. 253) defines engagement as: "a coming together, a merging, a fusing…not just a coming together but an interaction". He states that in the process of this interaction, one party, at least, becomes somewhat transformed. Boyer's (1994) vision of an engaged university mooted a new model for higher education that revitalized the notion of community engagement as a central mission for 21st-century colleges and universities. Boyer (1996) promoted a new model for higher education in which: "the academy must become a more vigorous partner in searching for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and it must affirm its historic commitment to society" (Boyer 1996, p.19-20).

The terms "community involvement" and "civic engagement" are differentiated in the NSHE report in the following way: community involvement is defined primarily by location and includes faculty work that occurs in communities and in clinical settings either on or off campus. Civic engagement is a subset of community involvement and is defined by both location as well as process (it occurs not only in but also *with* the community). This distinction between community involvement and civic engagement is consistent with Boyer's call for fundamental changes in the structure and behaviour of the academy. (Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Clayton, P. H. 2006, p.3). Civic responsibility contains the idea that a university which has expertise in social work or education or governance, or many other areas, might have a duty to support a struggling local government, education or health service, or contribute in other ways to civic life (Burns & Squire, 2011, p.10). Civic engagement is said to develop partnerships that possess integrity and that emphasize participatory, collaborative, and democratic processes (e.g., design, implementation, assessment) that provide benefits to all constituencies, and thus, encompass service to the community (Bringle et al, 2006, p.3). The contemporary university agenda, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'has moved on from a desire to simply increase the general education of the population and the output of scientific research, there is now a greater concern to harness University education and research to specific economic and social objectives' (OECD, 2005 p2).

The (Irish) National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 defines Engagement as: At its simplest, engagement means taking on civic responsibilities and cooperating with the needs of the community that sustains higher education – including business, the wider education system, and the community and voluntary sector' (NSHE, 2011, p.74).

2.2 Civic Engagement – Irish Context

A growing body of literature exists exploring civic engagement and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and their social, economic and civic engagement potential in the regions they are anchored. Within Ireland, the National Strategy for Higher Education (NSHE, 2011) prioritises engagement and comments on the need to educate students for their role as "citizens who will add to the richness of society". The strategy goes on to state: "Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live and serve" (NSHE, 2011, p.77).

A survey carried out on activities in Higher Education in Ireland[26] (Lyons & Mcllrath, 2011) and commissioned by Campus Ireland defined civic engagement as, 'A mutually beneficial knowledge-based collaboration between the higher education institution, its staff and students, with the wider community, through community-campus partnerships' (Lyons, & Mcllrath, 2011, p.5). Expectations on universities are higher than ever. Industry, government and the community expect higher education institutions to demonstrate their value, and contribution and benefit to society and the economy. The NSHE (2011) report asserts, 'institutions should have open engagement with their community and wider society and this should infuse every aspect of their mission' (NSHE, 2011, p.11).

2.3 Community Based Research

Community Based Research is one of two domains within Civic Engagement (the second knowledge exchange) identified in the scope of this portfolio. Community university partnerships in research, learning and knowledge are evident in the literature as being a growing trend in countries around the world as nations and regions seek solutions to inter-related social economic and environmental issues and challenges to their sustainability. The literature identifies 'science shops' as important actors in the narrative of community based research (CBR) (Turney1982 & Mulder 2001). Originating in the Netherlands, Science shops benefited from the financial autonomy of Dutch universities in the 1970s, and from a clause in the Higher Education Act which directs universities to pay attention to the advancement of a sense of social responsibility (Turney 1982).

Science shops in Europe were said to be initiated by critical university staff and students in the Netherlands in the 1970s. In practice, 'contact is established between a civil society organisation and a science shop or CBR centre on a problem in which the civil society organisation is seeking research support. In this collective search for a solution new knowledge is generated'. (Mulder et al, 2001, p.15).

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[26] http://www.tcd.ie/Community/assets/pdf/National%20Civic%20Engagement%20Survey.pdf accessed 9/3/13

Target group (social partner)	Mechanism or modality (within university)
Individuals - students, graduates, seniors - pupils - general public	Formal and non-formal courses (including life-long learning) Public courses; lectures; science week; Open House; high-school desk; popular magazines PR department
Community Groups NGOs Non-profit sector Local authorities (SMEs - non-profit questions)	Science shop
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Regional authorities	Technology Transfer Bureau; Business Service Centre
National authorities Industry	National Science Foundations Contracts Paid chairs

Source: Mulder et al, p.16, 2001

Figure 4: Mapping the university society relationship

What of the relationship between the community partners and the university? (or in the case of the ITB a Higher Education Institute - HEI). For a science shop it is crucial to have a supply-base of knowledge and research capacity to answer to questions from civil groups (Mulder et al, 2001, p.67). What do communities have to say about engaging with universities? What is on the communities 'minds? Embedded in the values of community based research are collaboration and empowerment. Despite these community focused principles, the discourse on community service learning has been criticized for its focus on its value to students rather than its value to communities (Stoecker 2003). Bortolin (2011) asserts that the dearth of research related to community service learning and research poses the question "Who is served?" (Bortolin 2011, p.55). Bortolin analyzed examples of the word "community" from 25 of the most recent articles in the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning. Four themes emerged:

a. community as a means by which the university enhances its academic work:
b. community as a recipient of influence by the university;
c. community as a place which the university makes better;
d. community as a factor in the financial interest of the university.

The literature serves to demonstrate tensions which may emerge in the relationship between community and institute. Bortolin (2011) contends that by identifying these troubling themes, its hoped 'scholars reflect critically on how their discourses shape an evolving understanding of community engaged practice' (Bortolin, 2011, p.53).

2.3 Knowledge Exchange
Knowledge Exchange is the second learning domain identified in the scope of this portfolio. Burns & Squire (2011) identify four categories in the spectrum of public and civic engagement in HEI's: (i) academic knowledge production; (ii) knowledge transfer; (iii) knowledge exchange; (iv) knowledge co-generation.

The approach to engagement advocated by the Association of Commonwealth Universities relies on a mutual exchange of ideas between the university and its multiple communities, involving: "the exchange of thinking across the boundary between academy and the rest of society, between thinkers and practitioners, researchers and innovators-on-the-ground [and] is essentially synergistic — it yields more than the sum of the thinking of both undertaken separately" (Wedgwood, 2003, p. 126). Civic responsibility contains the idea that a university

which has expertise in social work or education or governance, or many other areas, might have a duty to support struggling local government, education or health service, or contribute in other ways to civic life (Burns & Squire, 2011, p.7).

Spectrum of public engagement in HEI's

Academic knowledge production	Knowledge Transfer	Knowledge Exchange	Knowledge Co-generation
Knowledge is both produced and consumed by academics. Wider stakeholders have little access to academic knowledge. Many parts of society have limited access to education and teaching which is based on knowledge generated by the academy.	Universities make their research more accessible. Degree courses are made available to a wider number of people.	Universities recognise that others also have valuable knowledge and work in partnership. Teachers acknowledge that their students and the places where they live and work are also a source of knowledge and wisdom.	Universities and publics co generate knowledge, including the setting of research questions, research design, data collection, analysis and the ensuing practise implications. Curriculum is developed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders (businesses, community groups, marginal groups etc).

Source: Burns & Squire (2011)

Figure 5: Spectrum of public engagement in Higher Education Institutes

How do we effectively and respectfully facilitate exchange of knowledge between community and university? Advocates of campus-community engagement suggest a need for knowledge to be co-created with, rather than for the community (d'Arlach, Sanchez and Feuer 2009). Knowledge exchange is also important for the public and third sectors, although as yet this is poorly understood NESTA (2007). Cherwitz (2005) calls for academic engagement to result in a substantial shift in how we understand our purpose and how we conduct our work toward public purposes, public problem solving, and public participation in knowledge generation. What is so appealing about community service learning, and what often inspires converts to the field from both the university and the community is this idea that universities and communities can be equal partners in this enterprise (Bortolin, 2011, p.53). Service learning scholars have been advocating for university- community partnerships that view the community as possessing knowledge and assets, such that the university and community can work together to co-create solutions to social problems (d'Arlach, L., Sanchez, B., & Feuer, R. (2009, p13). d'Arlach, Sanchez and Feuer (2009) in their research look at the example of students of a university assisting teaching English to Spanish immigrant speakers. Results favour a service-learning class format where community recipients can have expert roles (i.e., teach Spanish, too, rather than only being tutored), knowledge is assumed to be co-created and multi-directional, and ample time is devoted to dialogue about current social issues. This last point could be important in helping ensure a respectful relationship between community and institute can flourish, based on skills and merits being recognised by both partners.

2.5 Knowledge and Social Capital
Bringing together a cross section of actors with different experiences, skills and backgrounds for knowledge exchange is one of the portfolios key deliverables. The purpose of developing a platform a – Learning Exchange – to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, specifically

around social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, is based on the premise that new knowledge can be created when people are brought together with a unified purpose that can help impact economic and social challenges in the Dublin 15 area.

The notion of a shared vision is an emergent theme in the literature, Chiu et al. (2006) in their empirical study found that shared vision was positively related to the quality of knowledge shared on the network. Further it is argued that a shared vision amongst the network members, leads to sharing of resources (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). Trust is an enabler for social exchange and cooperation and it opens up people for knowledge sharing. It facilitates cooperation, which, in turn, begets trust (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Trust, vision and sharing are terms associated with social capital a concept that has been applied to a wide range of settings from the personal, family and community and most relevant to the portfolio geographical areas (Putman 1995). Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998, p.245) define social capital as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit". According to Mu, et al. (2008) knowledge creation and sharing are processes that cannot be induced through coercion; rather they are social processes facilitated by social capital.

External networking allows individuals to gain knowledge which is otherwise not available. Similarly external networks allow the individuals in the organizations to gain knowledge (information, expertise and ideas) beyond the bounds of the hierarchies and local rules Faraj, and Wasko (2005).   Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argue that social capital affects the conditions requisite for the knowledge creation and sharing favourably. Norm of cooperation in a social network also facilitates knowledge sharing. A deal of the literature deals with the mechanisms and processes necessary for the creation of social capital. Since knowledge can be a source of competitive advantage creating communities that share knowledge is a social challenge (Widén-Wulff and Ginman, 2004). Credibility and trust of participants in the key drivers developing the knowledge exchange platform, Fingal County Council and the Institute Technology Blanchardstown, in this case are revealed as important ingredients to facilitating the sharing of knowledge.

The time spent by members of a knowledge sharing network together and the nature of their relationship to each other can be significant factors in how successful sharing knowledge . A good deal of the research of Chiu et al.(2006) concerns virtual networks and the conditions in which knowledge is shared, some of its principle findings regards social interaction ties as consisting of the relationship, time spent, social interaction ties are related to the knowledge sharing and may be equally applied in this context. Shared goals, interests and a vision facilitate a community to understand more fully the meaning of knowledge sharing (Chiu, et al., 2006). Hence common goals and norms are a binding force that creates trust (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). The latter point flags the importance and necessity to state clearly and unambiguously the learning objectives you are seeking to achieve in bringing together partners together and for what purpose you are seeking the exchange of knowledge.

2.6 Sustainability
One of the project objectives identified in Part Two, Table 3 is that Civic engagement programmes which are developed are sustained. Munck (2010) poses the question, can civic engagement become a 'core business' of the contemporary university, or is it an attractive 'add-on' that is not affordable in the current economic climate? (Munck, 2010, p.1). Boland found in his research that there is "a degree of ambivalence regarding academics role in realising the civically engaged campus" and the need for "clarity regarding the respective

roles of students, the higher education institution and community partners in this venture" (Boland, 2012, p.18). The NSHE (2011) found that engagement must become more firmly embedded in the mission of the higher education institutes it suggested a number of actions need to be taken including:

- Recognise civic engagement of their students through programme accreditation, where appropriate.
- Put in place structures and procedures that welcome and encourage the involvement of the wider community in a range of activities, including programme design and revision (NSHE, 2011, p.46).

When scoping out the rationale for this applied portfolio, diminishing public resource and the resultant strain in funding for community and voluntary services were identified as a key catalyst for the potential added benefit and resource civic engagement with a HEI may bring. Plater (2004) notes, regardless of the degree of prominence attached to civic engagement, in an era of diminishing resources and an increasing commitment to serve the public good, the aspirations for civic engagement and the support for faculty roles, rewards, and recognitions must be aligned with and proportionate to the institution's declared mission.

In order to sustain the practice then of civic engagement it needs to be reflected clearly in the institutions mission. Munck (2010) asserts the contemporary university should not conceive of community engagement as something of a 'feel good' luxury or as a sideline, 'Rather, we need to understand citizenship as a vital third leg of what a university is about, alongside (and equal to) research and teaching' (Munck, 2010, p.32).
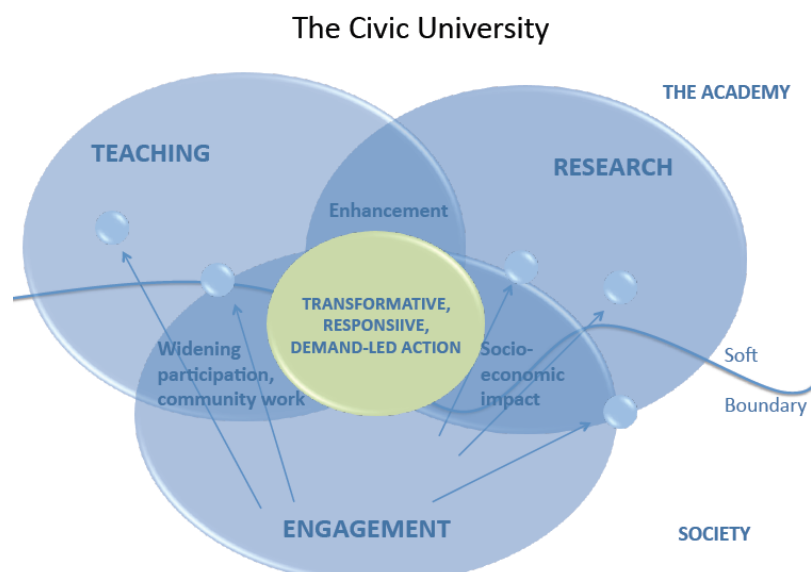
Source: NESTA (2009) Reinventing the Civic University.

Figure 6: The Civic University

From the literature on community-based learning/research, it is possible to identify a continuum of approaches, as follows:

(i)   Transactional models which are characterised by an exchange process with the community as recipient of a service, while students gain academic credit for experiential learning (leaving conditions unchanged at best).

(ii)   Transformative models (for the student) which lead to deeper understanding, and to a capacity for empathy or even action on the part of student.

(iii)   Transformative models (at community/ societal level) which seek to question and change the circumstances, conditions, values or beliefs which are at the root of community/society needs (Boland, 2012, p.18).

2.7 Measuring Impact & Success

The ability to measure with some objectively the impact a community based research or knowledge exchange initiative may have as part of a Civic Engagement strategy may be difficult. Firstly a number of perspectives exist, to take a few, you have the individual learner/student, academic, institution and community partner.

Bortolin (2011) contends If community-based engagement is intended to serve us (the institution), then let us make it clear to ourselves, and our partner communities that we are engaging in this pedagogy because of what it does for us and for our students. Borttolin, goes onto make the further point that 'if that is not our position, then we will have to adjust our lines of inquiry and our discourse to be sure we are engaging with communities with every effort to partner mutually with, and to the equal benefit of, our communities (Bortolin 2011, p.56). Whatever the perspectives and interests served barriers to more effective implementation can be many, for instance some institutional structure may restrict faculty members from collaborating outside of their department (Whitimer et al. 2010).

Tools to assist individual, group's institutions to measure the cumulative value and impact of interventions designed to make a social impact have developed. Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework based on social generally accepted accounting principles (SGAAP) that can be used to help manage and understand the social, economic and environmental outcomes created by your activity or organisation[27]. Mulgan (2011, p.1) asserts "Better metrics do not themselves deliver better outcomes. You can't fatten a pig by weighing it. But if you don't have some means of weighing it you may find yourself unable to persuade others it's as fat as you believe." This statement highlights the challenge of measuring your impact as much to try and quantify impact but also to serve as an evidence base to continue to invest in an activity where some social and economic benefits can be proven. Success may be seen as taken place where a productive interaction between the university occurs which may lead for instance to 'enhanced human and social capital development, improved professional infrastructure and capacity building as well as, more broadly, to benefits for the socio-economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of the wider community' (Munck, 2010, p.32). The literature has demonstrated, the enhancement of social capital is a complex intertwined but nonetheless important concept where it comes to civic engagement processes. Once more it is also critical that when one seeks to measure they define the point of view from which they are starting in clear unambiguous terms.

2.8 Evaluation & Summary

The literature demonstrates that universities and HEI's are increasingly perceived as having a wider role and obligations to society than solely as providers of education. Research and teaching the foundations on which institutes of learning were founded are being reassessed the question of civic engagement needs to be seen in the context of what are our universities and HEIs in the 21st centaury for? In Community Based Research the relation between the community and institution is not straightforward. The expectations of each and how you serve their needs can be complex. The literature finds subtly, to have successful partnerships, one side—the university— may need to carefully consider with whom they choose to work (Bortolin 2011).

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[27] http://www.thesroinetwork.org/ accessed 10/2/13

Since knowledge is a source of competitive advantage, it can be argued that a high level of motivation may be required for an individual to share his or her knowledge. It requires a platform, culture and certain amount of trust between individuals for them to share their knowledge in a meaningful manner. What's true of both is that perhaps they both take their starting point from the assumption that community has a deficit that the expertise of a HEI can help meet. Civic Engagement seems reasonably well embedded in some universities and HEIs, and has its own network, Campus Engage, producing in depth quality research. A framework document exists the NSHE 2030 which is far reaching in its expectations for the future:

> 'The multidimensional nature of many of the social, economic and civic challenges means that they require multidisciplinary approaches, and higher education institutions are uniquely well placed to lead, develop and apply these, in partnership with others.' states (NSHE, 2011, p.74)

The (Irish) National Framework Qualifications (NFQ)[28] includes 'insight' as one of eight dimensions of all awards. Boland (2012) argues its inclusion gives civic engagement and community based learning much to contribute by students demonstrating how 'insight' may be promoted recognised and rewarded, arising from their experience of embedding civic values within the higher education curriculum. The Civic engagement concept is still relatively young in Ireland a challenge exists for it to become more than 'embedded', for it to become sustainable (Munck, 2010) argues it must be an integral part of what university administrators call 'core business'. In some jurisdictions legislation (Danish univesrity Act 2003) requires universities to exchange knowledge and competencies with society and encourage (their) employees to take part in public debate. This type of approach whilst it may have its merits having engagement become a separate obligation could give it a more peripheral 'add on' status. Cherwitz and Hartelius (2007), contend engagement will always remain supplementary competing for time and energy. They go onto argue 'Professors will inevitably perceive it as non-academic, less rigorous, and less valued by peers and academic decision-makers who grant tenure and promotion and other university rewards', (Cherwitz and Hartelius, 2007, P.269).

Finally in seeking to measure impact and success, where it comes to community based research at least, it is the recipients of the 'service' the community who may be best placed to give an honest assessment. If the gap between academic ivory towers, and transforming and impacting on social and economic challenges in neighbourhoods makes an impact the community members would take notice. Several questions emerge from the literature review that requires more in depth critical evaluation such as: What type of new knowledge can be created through these partnerships? What are ethical and operational issues underlying community based research and knowledge exchange and how can we overcome them? What metrics can be used to measure impact, success or failure? How might these differ for community and university partners?. What emerges strongly however is that a university strongly anchored in the community can put their considerable intellectual resources to imaginative uses, in the pursuit of knowledge and benefit of the community.

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[28] www.nqai.ie accessed 1/5/14

Figure 7: Ivory Tower Syndrome?

3. Knowledge Exchange - Products developed & implemented.

In section 1.2 it was identified a minimum of 2 knowledge exchange events would be developed and implemented. This target was exceeded, 3 Knowledge Exchange activities-titled – Learning Exchanges - took place during this period.

Learning Exchange (I): Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship,
Learning & Innovation Centre, ITB, 16th May 2013.
Evidence: Learning Exchange Report
(Cover, Contents Page & web address to full report)
Section 6 (Selection o f feedback)
Agenda / Learning Schedule
Attendance list
Learning Exchange (II): Social Enterprise & Social Impact,
Learning & Innovation Centre, ITB, 26th September 2013.
Evidence: Learning Exchange Report
(Cover, Contents, web address to full report)
Learning Schedule / Promotion
Learning Exchange (III): Civic Engagement –
Social Enterprise & Entrepreneurship,
Black & Minority Ethnic Communities,
Learning & innovation Centre, ITB, 4th November 2013
Evidence: Learning Schedule / Promotion
Attendance List / Photos of event

3.1 Knowledge Exchange – Learning Exchange Fingal

The Learning Exchange is based on the premise that by providing a platform for a cross section of groups and individuals to listen, discuss and exchange ideas and knowledge on a focused issue you can start some good and make impact.
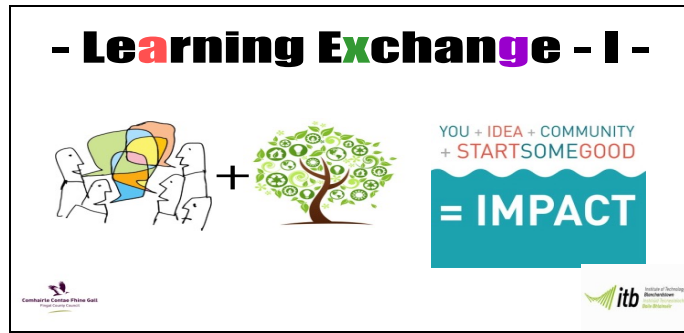
Figure 8: Learning Exchange Model

Figures 9 and 10 were developed by 2nd year ITB students in Creative Digital Media for the Learning Exchange. Both seek to capture elements of what the Learning Exchange platform in its development and implementation set out to achieve. Figure 9 incorporates the colours schemes of Fingal County Council and ITB the principal architects of the learning exchange. The series of different shapes and colours represent the different actors and different shades of opinion which exist. The shapes fitting together signify those same divergent interest groups and backgrounds coming together around a specific challenge.

Figure 9: Learning Exchange – Logo (1)

Figure 10: Learning Exchange – Logo (2)

Figure 10 is an earlier prototype which seeks to demonstrate that there are different shades of black and white and opinion. The raven is taken from the Fingal County Council corporate logo and represents ideas 'taking off'.

3.2   Community Based Research Developed and Implemented

Section 1.2 Identified a minimum of 5 community based research assignments would be instigated during the project period. This target was met, 5 community based research projects have been instigated by students and/or lecturers and ITB as a direct result of this project during the learning period of 01/03/2013 – 30/12/2013.

3.3 Community Based Research

The research hub is the developmental vehicle where partners met to formulate and implement strategy regards community based research and knowledge exchange events. Figure 11 illustrates the research hub model in simple terms, starting with issuing a call for community and civic groups in Dublin 15 to identify issues and challenges that might benefit from the research capacity available within ITB.
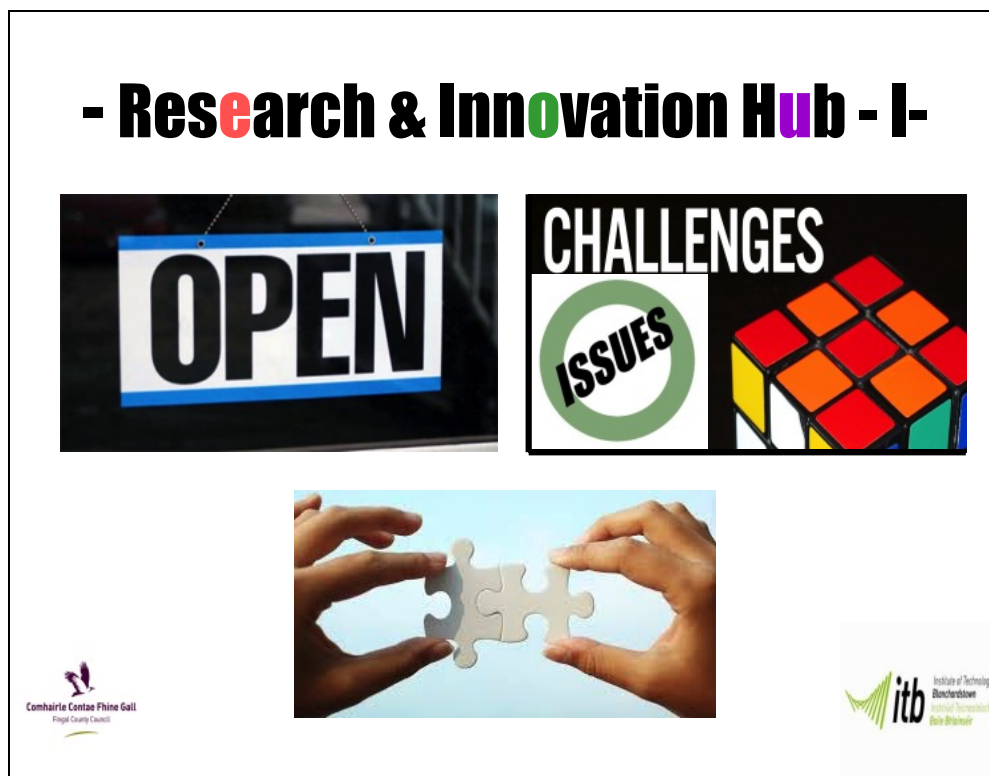

Figure 11: Research Hub Model
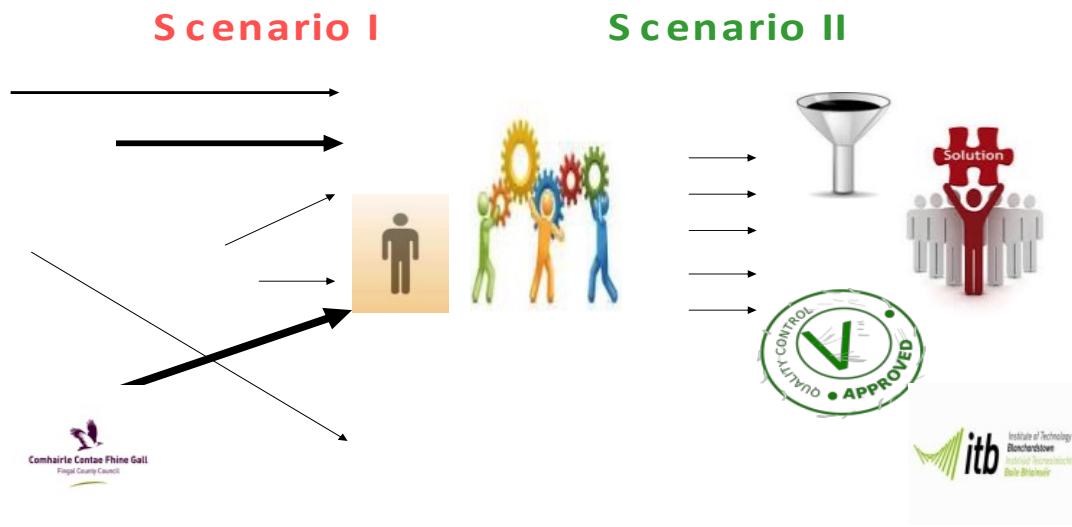
- Research & Innovation Hub - II -

Figure 12: Community Based Research (before and after)

ITB had previously, through individual lecturers, either identified or been approached in a very sporadic and non-uniform way regards potential collaborations and research projects in the past. The methodology developed for the Portfolio sought to funnel requests through a small number of people, the 'Research Hub', could assess , negotiate between the community partner and student the parameters, thus ensuring some form of quality control and a means to capture value. The process and its essence is captured in Figure 12.

3.4 Incorporating learning from MSc Network
As part of the Business and Society module for Next Generation Module, (NGM) I attended the Martin McEvoy Annual Seminar Series 2012 at DCU, entitled: The Engaged University – *The role of the university in the development of its region*. My attendance at this seminar directly influenced the choice of my Applied Portfolio.

Learning Exchange & MSSE Mgt and Social Enterprise: The learning outcomes of the three Learning Exchange events developed and implemented were very much around local economic development, social enterprise and entrepreneurship and social impact. These learning objectives were as much about social and economic challenges which existed in Dublin 15 (unemployment 14.8% - more local sustainable employment) as they were about learning I had gathered from course content in the Social Enterprise module.

Learning Exchange & MSSE Peer Networks: In seeking to develop the first event Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship event in Dublin 15 an invitation was issued to:

Ger Doyle -   DCU Social Enterprise Lecturer - TSA Consultancy
Tanya Lawlor -   DCU Social Enterprise Lecturer - TSA Consultancy
Paul Murgatroyd -   DCU MSSE Mgt Social Enterprise (Student) – Base Enterprise
Niall Comber -   DCU MSSE Mgt Social Enterprise (Student) – Base Enterprise

Ger and Tanya opened up the session and Paul and Niall facilitated and feedback from workshops. In seeking to develop the second Learning Exchange Event titled Social Enterprise and Social Impact utilising the skills of another fellow student was negotiated and a key input organised and delivered to participants:

Seamus Carlin -   DCU MSSE Mgt Social Enterprise (Student)
                        – Cruinnan Associates

As each opportunity presented I sought to utilise and collaborate with networks in the development and implementation of the Learning Exchange aspect of the portfolio.

3.5 Evidence of products adopted & mainstreamed

The contraction of public finances means increasingly innovative methods of responding to local economic and social development challenges are required. The applied portfolio required the author to develop a collaborative relationship with the civic engagement office of the local Higher Education Institute in Dublin 15, the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB).   Two platforms were developed to act as the vehicle for the delivery of the knowledge exchange and community based research domains, these were a Learning Exchange and a Research Hub.
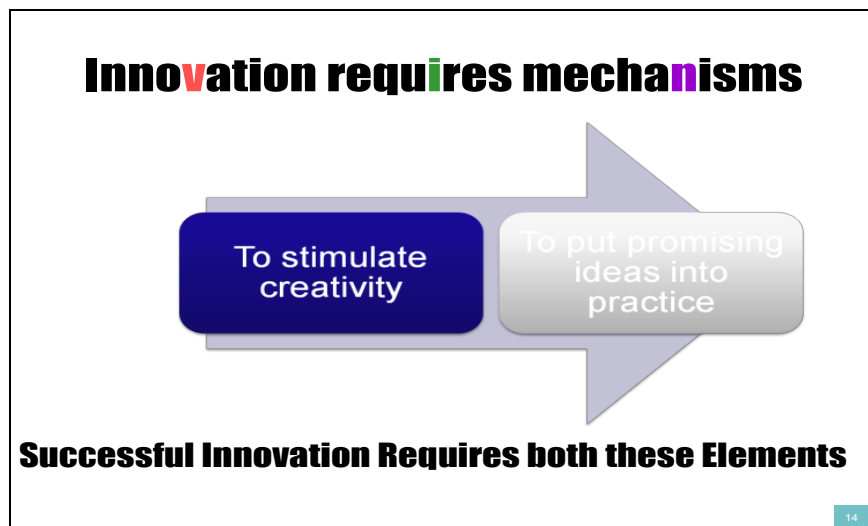

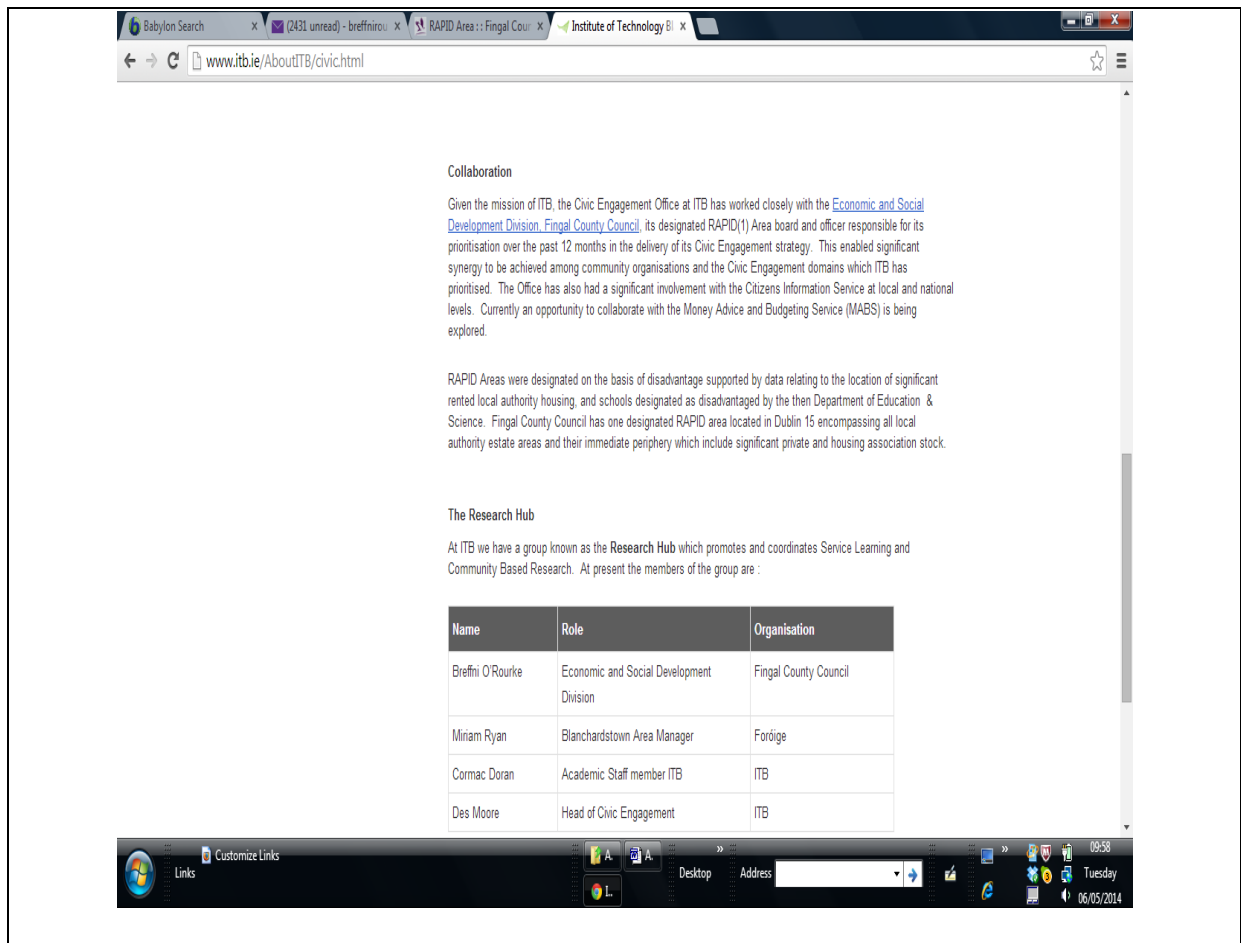*Figure 13: Learning Exchange – A mechanism for innovation*

Figure 14: ITB Civic Engagement Homepage

The Learning Exchange was designed to reach out to a broad cross section of stakeholders in Dublin 15 to generate ideas and collaborate for impact on local challenges. The Research Hub was designed to reach out to civic forums and community groups to identify issues and/or challenges for community based research and match these with available ITB resources.

Both mechanisms were designed to align with the operational and strategic priorities of the key partners Fingal County Council and the Institute Technology Blanchardstown. Avoid duplication, maximize resources and become sustainable strategies for Civic Engagement in Dublin 15. The Learning Exchange and the Research Hub are identified within Fingal County Council and the ITB as central to there civic engagement strategies. The Research Hub its membership and the Learning Exchange are documented extensively on the ITB Website[29].

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[29] http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/civic.html Accessed 7/04/13
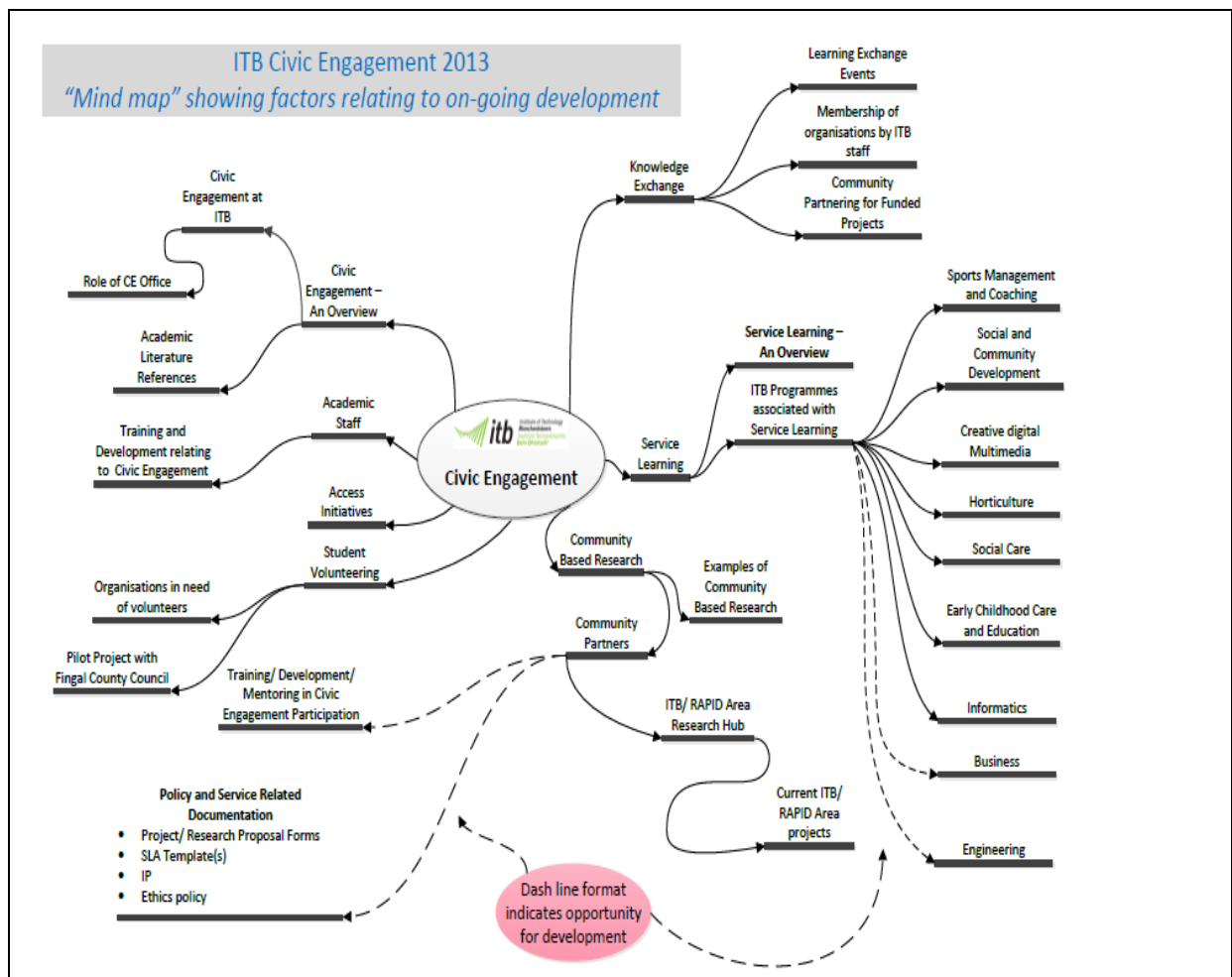
Figure 15: Mind map - locating project deliverables

The Learning Exchange events are listed as an element of the Knowledge Exchange learning domain. The ITB/ RAPID Research Hub is listed as an element of the Community Based Research Domain.

3.6 Evidence of Milestones reached

Figure 16 starts from the period prior to Applied Portfolio (Nov 12) where a meeting took place between community partners and the ITB to see how relationships between the two could be further strengthened. Recommendations arising from that meeting were endorsed at the RAPID board meeting of March 2013. The Learning Exchange in May '13 marks the first of the deliverables for the Portfolio. The short lines along the timeline represent meetings of the Research Hub, examples of agenda and a snapshot of minutes have been scanned and are reproduced in the appendix from the May and June 2013 meetings, 6 meetings took place between the period of the Portfolios study, May to December 2013.
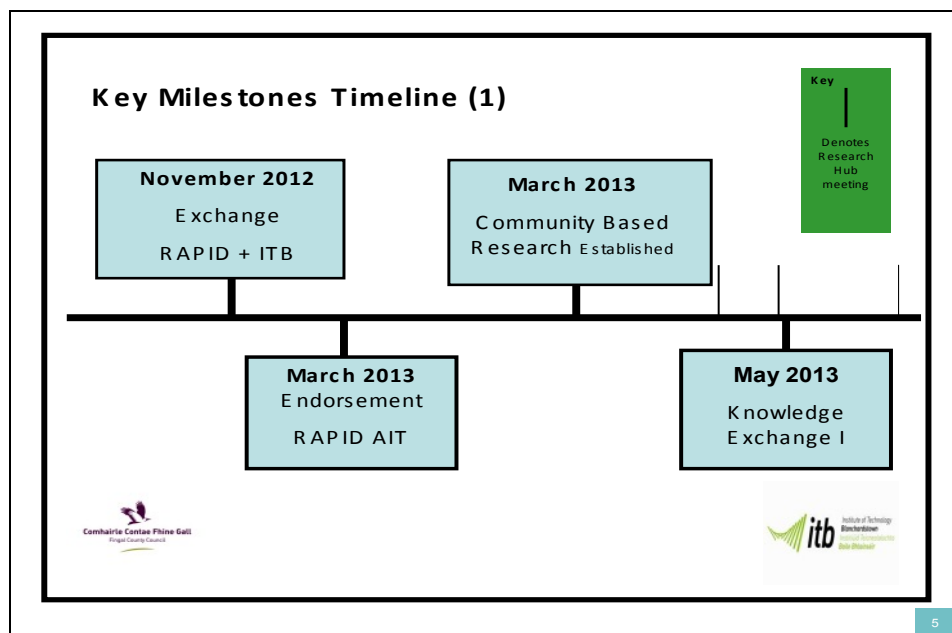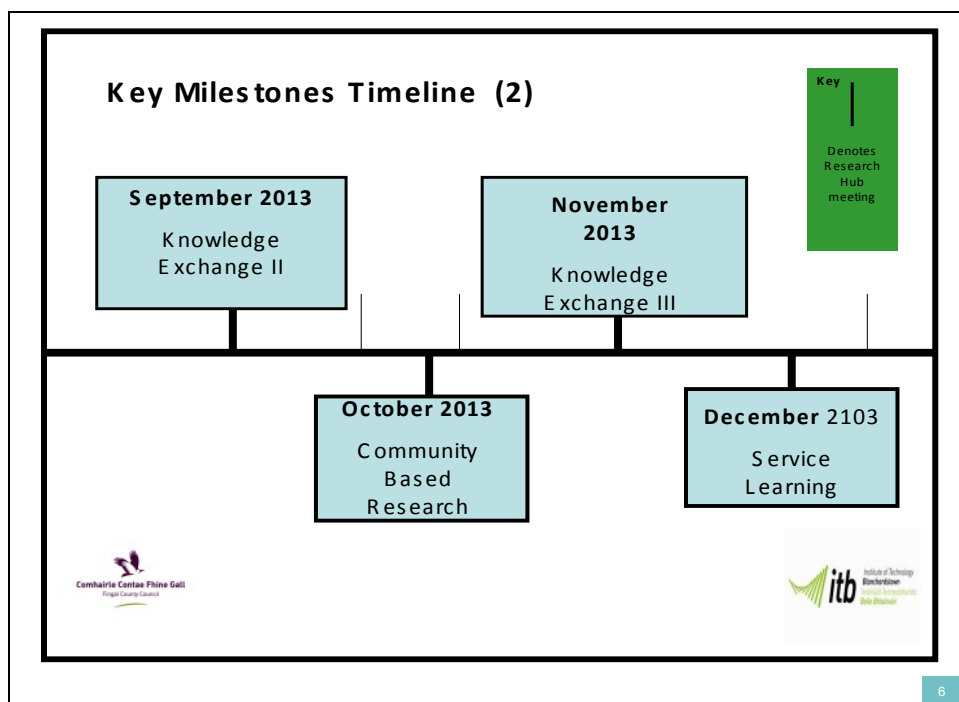
Figure 16: Milestone Implementation – May 2013

Figure 17: Milestone Implementation – December 2013

3.7 Evidence of response to product

From the beginning of the portfolio and throughout the development and implementation stages of the Research Hubs work (Community Based Research) and the Learning Exchange events a wide range of agencies and individuals collaborated in a positive and enthusiastic manner. Of the 15 issues and challenges identified by community partners 5 had been matched between the community partner and the ITB, between the periods Sept and Dec 13'. In all likelihood a further 4 will be negotiated with the community partner before the end of this academic year 2013/14. Of the 3 Learning Exchange events which took place at the ITB in the Learning and Innovation Centre (LINC) approximately 135 participants took part in

sharing ideas, knowledge and participating in discussions on Social Enterprise, Social Impact and Civic Engagement Issues. A number of positive feedback comments were received a small selection of which has been selected as evidence. The outputs and outcomes of the exercise were presented to the members of the RAPID board at the beginning of December 2013, of which the presenters Des Moore, Head of Civic Engagement ITB and Breffni O'Rourke, Fingal County Council received a deal of positive feedback. Both organisations have stated there intention to continue to support the development of the Community Based Research and knowledge exchange elements of the initiative. This support is based on its potential for generating impacts in the medium to long term on social and economic challenges in the Dublin 15 and greater Fingal- Dublin administrative area.

4.0 Reflection and Analysis - Introduction

The 5Rs framework modified from a body of work undertaken in Queensland by Bain et al. (2002) provides a systematic method for thinking through an experience, re-evaluating, bringing some critical thought to the process and considering the relationship between a series of events. The 5Rs are Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning and Reconstructing. By reflecting on my experiences I hope to identify new key learning outcomes, gaps in my practice, imagine alternative scenarios and inform a set of conclusions and recommendations, which may strengthen continued work in this area in the future.

4.1 Reporting & Responding

The issue of civic engagement was put forward for the portfolio based on a number of observation and motivations which existed at the time of its inception in March 2003, these were:

1. An environment of constrained resources and desire on the part of the (RAPID) board, and more chiefly my project sponsor, to find new ways within existing resources, of working effectively to make impact.
2. Viewing the RAPID area through a lens of what potential community assets were available (community assets based approach). In a mapping exercise carried out in 2012 the fact that part of the ITBs campus was in the designated RAPID area was noted. I had worked in community development in the Dublin 15 area for nearly 10 years; it was my experience and that of others that the ITB had not engaged in any meaningful Civic Engagement activities during this period.
3. The relatively new position of Head of Civic Engagement (May 2012) was created, an introduction later on that year presented an opportunity which was seized in an effort to create something new.

By adopting a problem-based approach to my learning, I was able, with the assistance of community collaborators, to set about identifying social and economic challenges in the Dublin 15 area. This scanning period proved to be the start of my learning process one which, I believe in hindsight, was triggered by my learning at DCU. The Applied portfolio required a problem based solving approach to my subject different from the methodology most common hitherto, which involved application of knowledge, learned (Biggs & Tang 1998). Key to achieving my project objectives was establishing meaningful relationships with ITB. Without ITBs full co-operation, particularly its Head of Civic Engagement, implementation would have faltered and the experiences and evidence available for my portfolio would have been very different. I was involved in every element of the development and implementation of the Research Hub which coordinated the Community Based Research and the Learning Exchanges activities. This involved convening meetings, co-producing agenda and

distributing notes. I was able to utilize existing networks to develop the core audiences for the Learning Exchanges; these were helped by tapping into the networks of my fellow principal architect Des Moore for the student and academic component and fellow class mates Niall Comber and Paul Murgatroyd for small business and budding entrepreneurs.

The response from the outset for these initiatives was positive from all quarters, so much so that project deliverables were exceeded (3 instead of 2 knowledge exchange events). Based on comments received from participants the Learning Exchange was really well received. This was down to a number of factors including: (i) environment created by the hosts and the venue space the LINC – Learning & Innovation Centre, brought with it a dynamic but welcoming environment in which participants seemed to thrive. (ii) Quality of inputs from invited contributors, which included contacts from my network. I was keen to incorporate the element of engaging participants who I had met as part of my DCU masters in my task. The experience of contacting and securing the input and assistance of classmates and lecturers was very satisfying; peers within the class became "effective collaborators" (Knowles, 1990). Of those things which worked less well the number of proposals generated from the community numbered 15, this number could have been doubled with ease only it became apparent early on that the capacity did not exist in ITB to take on any greater a number. Ensuring a project proposal is pitched at the right level for the student experience and forms part of their learning at a specific time is a challenge. It meant although 5 projects were matched, 3 of which were either completed (Mulhuddart Priority Task Group which ended up involving a whole year class as part of their research methodologies module) or in the process of being completed, 2 had not been started by the end of the Portfolio time. My attendance at a seminar as part of NGM brought the full potential of civic engagement to my attention. Spending a deal of time at campus on the ITB putting theory into practice was at once professionally and personally satisfying. I felt during the 10 month period an enormous amount was achieved of value in raising awareness and knowledge of social enterprise and its potential for local economic development, developing collaborative relationships between public bodies private business, community and civic groups which had not existed prior to this in Dublin 15.

4.2 Relating and Reasoning
Part of the reason I was drawn to the MSSE in Mgt Social Enterprise and Innovation was a need to challenge my own self as a period of professional complacency had set in. The nature of my role at that time required a strong level of self-direction something that I have always had in the work roles I have performed. I felt this particular experience set me up in good steed for the practice of the Applied Portfolio. Self-management refers to the exercise of autonomy in learning (Loyens, et al 2008). This trait I felt is something that served me well in completing the Portfolio. Self Directed Learning in problem-based learning is defined as the 'preparedness of a student to engage in learning activities defined by him or herself rather than the teacher' (Schmidt, 2000). The latter is an essential part of the experience of the portfolio the essence of which is typified by the exercise in Part 1 in the construction of a proposed assessment criterion. Being present at ITBs campus for periods as part of the Portfolio compensated, I felt, from the distance learning aspects of the DCU learning experience. Actively engaging in discussions with lecturers as an equal partner provided a real boost to my confidence, which although not lacking normally professionally, academically it was nearly two decades since I had last done any concentrated study and felt I was on a steep learning curve. My role in the development an implementation of the two project deliverables put me front and centre as a facilitator in a classroom type environment. From this vantage point the full extent of the inertia that can set in after a period working and

moving in the same circles became all too apparent. Figure 18 represents some of the cross section of interests participating at Learning Exchange events, some of the opportunities these created and emergent themes.
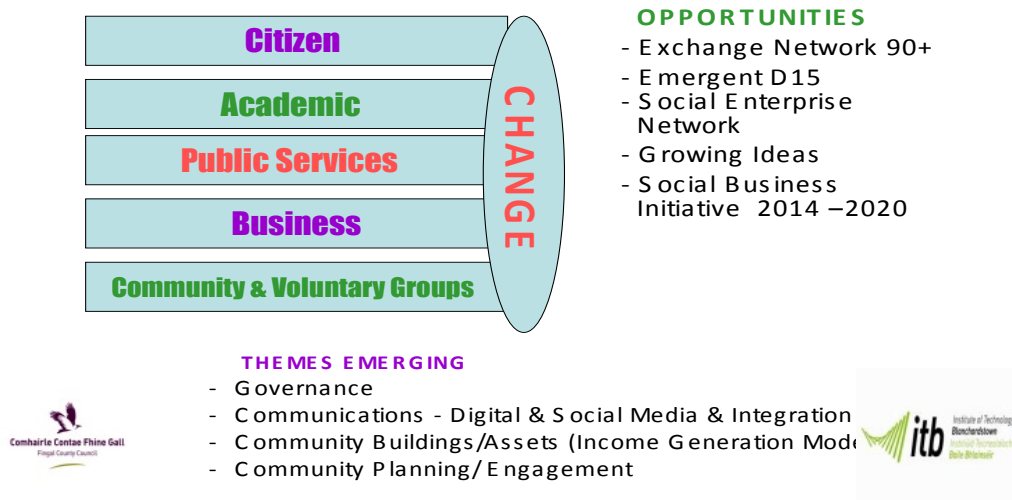

Figure 18: Learning Exchange - Partners and opportunities

On reflection the development of a involved Civic Engagement partnership with the ITB was almost a inevitability. A sustained period where similar people came together in government formed partnerships to try impact complex social and economic challenges was leading to limited creativity, fatigue and questionable outcomes and impact. The involvement of students, lecturers, budding entrepreneurs small and large and other individuals in approaching the same issues as complex as it was but brought an entirely different and refreshing approach to similar issues. Trust I felt was being developed in the brand (Learning Exchange) during its three events, which in time could help foster what had been referred to be Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998, p.245) as social capital "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within...".

4.3 Reconstructing

The learning generated in developing and implementing the deliverables as specified in the project plan, in a relatively short timeframe, was quite intense. The momentum became self sustaining, where for instance a third un planned learning exchange (specifically targeting Black & Ethnic Minority Communities) was an immediate response to a request specifically from a participant at a the May event. A good deal of time was spent going out meeting and matching for the community based research and organising for the knowledge exchange. More time could and perhaps should have been spent negotiating the terms of reference and expectations from each of the parties. The civic engagement work we were involved according to Bringle et al. (2006) should be evidence (a) that it has been conducted in a manner that is reciprocal and mutually beneficial to the community partners, and (b) that the results of the service activities have been shared in multiple ways with diverse stakeholders (Bringle et al p.17, 2006).

- Challenges -

- Alignment of operational & strategic priorities

- Quality Control

- Capturing and measuring impact

- Limited time & resources

Figure 19: Civic Engagement challenges

If the Portfolio task was implemented in a more controlled learning environment I would have sought perhaps to take stock of events a little more, for instance being more meticulous with my journal. This latter element could have proved more valuable for detecting shifts in my relationships and expectations at different junctures of the project. The experience taught me that for a Higher Education Institute to be truly engaged it meant working with government, businesses, and community and civic groups to respond to community needs. It requires members of staff who are not content with going through the motions or being protected by the ivory tower, and that the nature of engagement is a two way street. The complexities, which can be involved in the Community Based Research element of the task, demonstrated to me that collaborations demand mutual respect and understanding of each other's needs, this in turn can lead to real innovations and unintended outcomes. As the learner, approaching problem-based learning, I had the freedom to choose this deepened my learning experience (Loyens et al., 2008). My willingness to facilitate discussions from the front and collate reports based on these discussions is a result of a new confidence and sharpening of existing skill sets that I feel will be put to good use in the future. This experience has taught me the value of implementation, of building a good product, gathering good people around and trusting the process to offer up a myriad of possibilities. Collaboration, which seeks to include, not exclude all shades of opinions and backgrounds is one of the most important elements of my learning. In the community development profession I am involved there is much talk of inclusion however we can and do construct false barriers serving to sometimes shut out different opinions and approaches perhaps from the academic side or from private industries. For me the experience will help to further my practice in the future by opening up the potential for more involved, sustainable relationships with a broader cross section of partners.

4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This portfolio is as much a statement about my values and what informs my experiences, as it is a document of the process of developing and implementing Civic Engagement in Dublin 15. Burns & Squire (2011) argue that the real challenge for universities is how:

> "the work of universities can become more visible and accessible, and how we might encourage people outside universities to feel that universities are for people like them" Burns & Squire, (2011, p.3).

My whole professional career has been spent working in urban areas marked by poverty and disadvantage where equality of opportunity can prove a barrier to services and privilege. Having barely made it to university and then struggled whilst there to complete my first degree, the first in my family to do so, I feel strongly about the opportunities and experiences third level education can create for individuals and the communities in which they are anchored.

- Future Plans -

- **Capture learning , adapt, exploit opportunities as they arise.**

- **Enrich student learning;** Develop volunteering into student credits

- **Expand hub opportunities** (early childhood, business, English language)

- **Support Learning Exchange** (Digital, community planning, governance)

- **Funding consortiums (Local, National & European funding)**

- **Consolidate and build collaborations (RAPID area priority)**

Diary date 4th February, 2014 - Learning Exchange - EU Funding, Supports, Opportunities,

t.b.c June, 2014   - Learning Exchange – Ideas / Showcase Festival

Figure 20: Civic Engagement - Future plans

ITB's strategic Plan 2012 – 2015[30], Chapter 9: states the ITB will seek to 'Deepen our impact in the wider community within the broader alliance of TU Dublin', it goes on to state the phrase 'Civic engagement' is a key component of the broader university mission of 'engagement' which includes enterprise and public engagement'. Like any big organisation translating mission statements into meaningful action can be a tricky business. It is my contention the deliverables for the Portfolio were achieved. That is not to say bigger questions have not arisen during the process. Greater deliberation and discussion going forward is needed if the partnership between Fingal County Council the ITB and its many other partners are serious about making a more sustainable transformative relations with the community in Dublin 15 on its doorstep. On a practical level numerous community spaces exist a stones throw from the campus a discussion might take place on how the university might use some of these to build relationships and perhaps bring income streams from the HEI into the area where it was located and much needed. Likewise how could citizens and groups use the HEI space in different ways they don't do now? On a more fundamental note, emerging from the literature and my own experience a more pressing question arises. What is the core proposition of what society needs form are HEIs? Rather than academics in conjunction with other public organisations doing a set of activities in the community perhaps university heads need to be asking: What does our local (or other) community need? How can we identify those needs? How might your teaching and research contribute to this? The work

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[30] www.itb.ie

developed and implemented in this portfolio will be sustained in Dublin 15 with plans to expand its reach Fingal wide with plans to include a greater number of academic disciplines.

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