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Connecting Local to Global: A Case Study of Public Engagement

Sarah Hambidge ¹, Sonal Minocha ^{2,*} and Dean Hristov ¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Bournemouth University, Poole BH12 5BB, UK; shambidge@bournemouth.ac.uk (S.H.); drdeanhristov@gmail.com (D.H.)

² Nexford University, 1140 3rd St., NE Suite 200, Washington, DC 20002, USA

* Correspondence: sminocha@nexford.org

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Abstract: Public engagement is recognised as having an increasingly important role in the changing landscape of higher education in the United Kingdom (UK), and is promoted as a ‘pathway to impact’ by many higher education funding bodies. However, there is limited evidence to support the outreach and impact gained by higher education institutes that undertake international public engagement activities. Similarly, little is known about higher education staff and student’s experiences of participating in such public engagement activities. This study focusses on a Global Festival of Learning (GFoL) in delivering public engagement on an international stage through an integrated approach involving the fusion of education, research, and professional practice, and the perceived impact on staff and students. This paper proposes an adaptive model for public engagement founded on five strategic public engagement areas that can be transferred to other higher education institutes with an interest in developing their international outreach and impact.

Keywords: public engagement; higher education; impact; global engagement; innovation; festivals

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, public engagement (PE) in the United Kingdom (UK) has gained momentum [1,2] as a mechanism in higher education (HE) to increase the sharing of expertise and approaches with society to mobilise and motivate positive practice and culture change [3]. However, in today’s multi-national HE sector, which promotes international collaboration as integral to world-class research with impact [4], higher education institutes (HEIs) are expected to ‘connect’ with both national and international communities [5,6]. HEIs need to continually improve their understanding of the complex global systems—social, cultural, economic, and political—between different communities, and the impact of change. This is to ensure that their education, research, and practice can identify sustainable ways to meet the current needs of global society, without diminishing the quality of the environment or reducing the capacity of future generations to protect their own cultural needs. A review of the current literature revealed that there is limited research to demonstrate mechanisms for successful international PE and the potential outreach and impact that this type of engagement can provide HEIs, university staff and students, and the public [7].

Amid the fragmented evidence from the literature, the study described in this article therefore seeks to introduce and critically discuss one such institutional approach for successful international PE, aiming to explore the potential outreach and impact of this engagement in response to the challenges of developing the ‘public value’ of higher education (HE) [8]. Specifically, it focused on the experiences and perceptions of two groups that are currently understudied in the context of PE: staff and students [9]. The groups provide an important case study of the ways in which public engagement can be operationalised to contribute towards international education, research,

and practice. The paper concludes by proposing that internationalisation has increasing importance in HE systems worldwide, through which the role of PE can provide a cross-cultural influence and act as an initiator of international progress and development within HE [10].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Higher Education, Development, and Social Change

HEIs have a long history of PE with society [11–15]. In the last decade, the awareness and uptake of PE has been driven by policy makers and the introduction of various new frameworks such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) [3]. Universities are increasingly under pressure by the government and funding bodies to respond to and meet a range of societal needs [16]. Once again, PE activity has become increasingly utilised to reflect the outward-looking nature of HE to contribute to society and democracy [2].

The rise of PE has created a growing emphasis of the ‘knowledge society’, where knowledge is recognised as a critical driver of economic and social development [17]. A plethora of different types of knowledge has become valued, among which knowledge that creates and leads to research and education innovation is most significant [17]. HEIs have traditionally been viewed as the catalyst of innovation through transforming science and technology and impacting the global economy, and universities are re-emerging as central players in global participation and discussions on world development and change [18]. Despite the UK’s vote to leave the European Union (EU) in the June 2016 EU referendum [19], HE in the UK remains a world-class sector, and UK universities continue to be ranked amongst the best, producing world-class research and making the UK an attractive choice to both international staff and students [20,21]. The UK’s forthcoming departure from the EU has created significant uncertainty about links between UK universities and those in Europe and internationally [20], and it is more imperative than ever that both the government and UK HEIs communicate a strong and consistent message that the UK is welcoming to international staff and students through a variety of mechanisms. PE is a viable mechanism to promote the benefits and opportunities of UK HE to international staff and students.

UK universities are uniquely positioned beyond the realms of research and education and have intermediary connections with labour markets, the government, and civil society [22]. PE is an important mechanism that allows academics to engage with the broader issues of societies and communities [22]. The benefits of academic knowledge production should benefit society [23], and universities can use PE as a mechanism for supporting social change, which allows academics and the public to collaborate as contributors to their communities and wider society [2]. The great diversity of the international staff and student population adds a varied range of expectations and needs [24] against a backdrop of a changing HE landscape in the UK.

Organisations such as the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) have encouraged HEIs to strategically promote best practice in their PE activities, and the effects and impact on society and the economy are well-documented [3]. Research has confirmed [2] that nearly half the submitted case studies to Research Excellence Framework 2014 referred to PE as a pathway to the stated impact(s). Guidance from the Research Councils UK states:

“Public engagement may be included as one element of your Pathway to Impact. Engaging the public with your research can improve the quality of research and its impact, raise your profile, and develop your skills. It also enables members of the public to act as informed citizens, and can inspire the next generation of researchers.”

According to the Economic and Social Research Council, impacts relate to: “fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom; increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy; and, enhancing quality of life, health, and creative output” [25]. However, the current literature fails to confirm a universally accepted

theoretical framework and indicators for PE, and discrepancies continue to exist around how the effectiveness of PE should be evaluated. Developing rigorous evaluation methods would help transform PE into a robust academic practice [26]. Universities typically base their PE policy on formal and/or informal activities, and each institution's approach differs [16]. Whilst it is acknowledged that measuring PE outcomes at the institutional level is complex, there should still be a focus on context-driven measures [27]. This should include evaluating the external outputs and visibility of individual members of staff, single projects, or impact-related activities as a totality of the institute's PE policy [28,29]. Despite some universities providing resources and budgets, PE is still not regarded as a significant component of academic practice or a credible factor in career progression [30,31].

2.2. The Need for Measuring Public Engagement Impact

A number of universities have adopted different approaches to PE, some of which are traditional, and some that have been deemed to be innovative. The use of science and education festivals has gained global popularity in recent years [32]. Festivals can include universities organising their own festivals locally or internationally, or universities participating in a larger festival [3]. These types of festivals have become recognised as a constructive way to communicate research, because the formats provide an inherent ability to bring HE and society together in a 'user-friendly' format that enables the wider dissemination of research to different types of communities [32,33].

The majority of HE festivals have only focussed their research efforts on effective marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, and the logistics of attendance. There is little evidence to help understand the short-term and long-term impact of engagement for staff, students, and the communities involved [34,35]. HE festivals typically focus on one dimension of engagement, such as research dissemination [32,36], and do not provide insight into a cohesive and/or integrative framework. There is no evidence to demonstrate innovative approaches of PE championed by universities that have mobilised their teaching, research, and/or practice to a global stage with the view to deliver international outreach and impact to communities and individuals alike.

Improved measurements for the impact of festivals and events are required. It is important to define the objectives of the event and identify where these have been met, and where unexpected outcomes arose [37,38]. While PE festivals have gained popularity [32], there is still limited data on the impacts delivered [32,39]. This article aims to provide a better understanding of a university festival (GFoL), and proposes an adaptive model for PE with five strategic areas identified by the research findings that can be transferred to other institutions with an interest in developing their international outreach and impact.

2.3. Public Engagement and its Place in Comprehensive Internationalisation

Internationalisation and global engagement have been at the forefront of HE policy and practice for well over a decade [40,41], coinciding with the rapid expansion of such activity across the UK HE sector. From a scholarly perspective, De Wit et al. [42] provided a comprehensive enquiry into the background and history of the internationalisation of universities. They offered a critical analysis of the present day policies and practices, and have assisted with the widening of its definition.

Elkin et al. [43] explored internationalisation through the lens of institutional strategy. They argued that the lack of agreement about the concept of internationalisation has itself slowed down a coordinated response within the sector. This lack of agreement is also likely to have hindered attempts by individual institutions to internationalise and shape their approaches to internationalisation.

The notion of internationalisation has also been explored through the perspective of the global marketisation of HE [44]. The authors contend that the very notion of internationalisation has been narrowly defined to serve institutional and sectoral commercial interests influenced by global trends such as the rapid marketisation of HE. Similarly, Hawawini's [45] critique and conclusion that universities should stop calling themselves global universities and instead focus on integrating aspects

of the import–export model into their core juxtaposes with Hudzik’s (2011) call for ‘comprehensive internationalisation’. The author explains:

“Comprehensive internationalisation is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values, and touches the entire higher education enterprise.” [46] (p. 6)

Hudzik (2011) placed comprehensive internationalisation at the institutional core. This paper embraces this definition, and argues for public engagement to be an integral component of comprehensive internationalisation (and vice versa) as opposed to being an appendage to the core.

However, other than Hudzik’s (2011) case for embedding comprehensive internationalisation, little evidence has provided practice insights into the interplay between public engagement and comprehensive internationalisation. We make an attempt in this paper through our case study insights.

2.4. The Concept of Global Festivals of Learning—Background to the Case Study

Through critical evaluation of the changing educational fabric of society and current HE practices, Bournemouth University (BU) identified an opportunity to create excellence in international PE across the sector by developing a unique festival format. The GFoL expanded the traditional university ‘campus–community’ engagement model to a ‘university–community’ engagement model [47,48]. The GFoL aimed to test the ground for PE on a global stage as an international learning platform to exchange practice and knowledge with a larger and wider range of local, national, and international communities, with a specific focus on delivering outreach and sustainable impact.

The GFoL 2017 took place across three weeks of events showcasing Global Britain and Global BU in Malaysia, Indonesia, India, and China before returning to the UK to showcase the learning, insight, and best practice gained at the GFoL 2017. Each festival incorporated free events and activities ranging from interactive workshops, panel sessions, and public lectures, alongside an exciting programme of cultural and social activities. Identifying and understanding the impact of the festival as a PE tool is prevalent [39]. This paper explores how the GFoL has the potential to contribute aspects of education, research, and practice on a local and global scale. Four key areas of potential impact, including an additional fifth area were identified, which provided a wider understanding of education, research, and practice by bringing back global learning and experiences to the local region to inform future developments.

3. Methods

3.1. Case Study Approach

A case study approach was used to evaluate the impact of the festivals. A case study is a strategy of enquiry that facilitates the study of an emergent phenomenon that is difficult to separate from its context, whilst it also being important to study the subject within it in order to understand the dynamics of the setting [49,50]. This is the case with festivals adopted in the context of HE as an approach to enabling PE on a global stage. The case study strategy of enquiry provides concrete, context-dependent knowledge [51], which in the case of this study takes into account the festival itself, the festival dimensions, and the wider HE context. This paper discusses the findings of a case study that is exploratory in nature [51].

3.2. Methodological Tools

The project used a mixed methods approach [52] to explore the impact of the GFoL 2017 on staff and students, and secondly to understand the level of PE and media outreach. The research incorporated quantitative and qualitative data collection through an online survey that included both closed and open-ended questions regarding participants’ experiences of public engagement.

To examine the impact of GFoL 2017 on staff and students, this research utilised a survey questionnaire featuring a total of 15 questions corresponding to the five distinctive themes underlying the core purpose of the festivals. The questionnaire was piloted with 10 members of staff and students to refine the questions prior to building it on the University's online survey platform: Bournemouth Online Surveys (BoS). The semi-structured questionnaire was designed to be completed by staff and students who participated in the GFoL 2017; footfall data was manually collected for the number of host staff and students and members of the public attending the three different locations.

To research the level of PE and media outreach, we collected data from social and press channels for each location. The hashtag analytics (see [53] and [54]) methodology was adopted for the tracking of impact and outreach of digital content on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. A hashtag campaign was created on Union Metrics (see [55]) by utilising the hashtag #GlobalFoL17 as our unique event impact and outreach identifier.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken using NVivo10 [56], which is a qualitative data interpretation and analysis tool to facilitate the exploration of the key themes that emerged around the impact, experiences, and understandings of the GFoL as a model to deliver PE [57]. A node tree was developed based on the four participant-focussed GFoL areas to include: the dissemination of global education, research, and practice in an overseas context; enhancing global access to and engagement with research activities; encouraging the diversity of thought, creativity, and innovation; and nurturing global employability through professional development. Building on these four parent nodes, a structure of nodes was created to reflect the salient themes under each area. A fifth parent node with sub-nodes was then developed to assist with identifying the themes related to 'lessons learnt and reflections' as a result of student and staff participation in GFoL. The node tree and underlying coding pattern of the collected qualitative data reflected the consensus that was achieved on the key emergent themes; the researchers who were involved in this study controlled for inter-rater reliability [58] to reduce bias during the data analysis and interpretation stage, and support the trustworthiness of the study findings.

In the results that follow, the discussion is structured around five key themes drawn from the data. Each theme evaluates how the GFoL contributed towards developing international education, research, and practice to increase intercultural skills and opportunities in HE. Finally, we present the GFoL model designed around the fusion of these themes as a potential framework to facilitate future international PE.

4. Results

Demographic data was collected to better understand how participation was structured across the festival. Forty out of a potential of 110 BU staff and students completed the survey. This figure contributes to a total response rate of 36% and covers over a third of our eligible sample. We acknowledge that this research involves a small-scale study with a relatively small quantitative data sample. Whilst this poses certain limitations related to the validity and reliability of survey questionnaire data, the quantitative insights should not be seen as generalisable in nature. Together with the qualitative data and social media impact and outreach insights, our purpose has been to provide exploratory insights into an under-researched area as a site worthy of further exploration, and the preliminary case study findings hold relevance for other institutions pursuing PE goals.

A total of 47% of the survey respondents attended GFoL Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), while a further 33% attended GFoL China, and 20% attended GFoL India. Overall, 47% of the respondents attended the GFoL as an academic member of staff, 33% attended as student speakers, and another 20% attended as other members of staff. Of those students who engaged with the GFoL 2017, 71% were either in their final year of their undergraduate degree, or postgraduate-taught students. A lack of PE experience, a lack of awareness about the opportunity to participate in the GFoL, and the

timing of the GFoL against examination and course work deadlines are anecdotal reasons that were suggested for the lack of involvement by non-attending students.

4.1. Theme 1: Showcase and Disseminate Global Education, Research and Practice in an Overseas Context

Typically, festivals tend to be focussed on specific topics and audiences, which can limit the public's level of engagement and the impact of a festival [32,59]. However, the festival provides a unique format that incorporates events from all four BU faculties, providing the opportunity to collectively disseminate education, research, and practice.

Most (83%) staff indicated that the GFoL 2017 had met their expectations, with 39% suggesting that the GFoL 2017 events had been above or significantly above their expectations. Staff were given the opportunity to rate these mechanisms, whereby 94% agreed that the speakers at the GFoL 2017 events attended were high quality, and 89% agreed that the events were insightful. The qualitative data was triangulated with the quantitative data, and confirmed that both staff and students agreed that the GFoL had provided an opportunity to showcase and disseminate global education, research, and practice in an overseas context.

“Brilliant educational experience, focussing on areas that I had not previously thought about.”
(Survey response: BU staff)

Similar to other public engagement studies [16,60,61], both staff and students viewed their participation as a positive PE experience, with engagement typically regarded as a rewarding two-way process between staff/students and lay participants. Responses confirmed the desire and interest to showcase and disseminate global education, research, and practice within an overseas context:

“I attended [the pilot GFoL] last year, and was very keen to continue the collaboration with Chinese universities. I also believe strongly in the Global Festival agenda, and I am passionate about representing the university.” (Survey respondent: BU staff)

4.2. Theme 2: Enhancing Global Access to and Engagement with Research Activities

Communities of practice are typically deemed to be any community through which engagement occurs. While the majority of community practice is face-to-face and long term, short-term communities such as those created through attendance at an event or engagement with social media can offer valuable insight and the opportunity for learning and sharing knowledge on a topic. Footfall data revealed that 2000 participants co-created and celebrated the GFoL 2017. Over 2250 external visitors attended the GFoL events, and a further 630 joined the events digitally through live streams. Over 50 external organisations participated as either a collaborator or participant. There were 29 student projects across 10 disciplines, which included—but were not exclusive to—film, human resources, sustainability, and global health. A total of 73 staff projects and presentations across disciplines and 17 collaboration projects between BU staff/students and staff/students from a GFoL partner institution were showcased.

Media analytics showed the GFoL 2017 generated impact and traction across social media. Data revealed that the official GFoL 2017 hashtag (#GlobalFoL17) was trending as the second most popular in the UK on the first day of the GFoL ASEAN in Indonesia. Overall, 296,721 unique Twitter users saw posts containing the official BU GFoL hashtag in the full week of GFoL ASEAN. Meanwhile, 500 unique Twitter posts were created by 51 participants during the GFoL ASEAN. A total of 2,461,520 impressions, which include the number of times that Twitter users saw posts containing the official GFoL 2017 hashtag, were generated in the full week of GFoL ASEAN. Similar social media traction was obtained during the GFoL China and GFoL India; however, both of these countries saw higher impressions of the official GFoL hashtag (3,373,989 and 537,537 respectively).

4.3. Theme 3: Encourage Diversity of Thought, Creativity, and Innovation

PE is not only about showcasing current HE research and education and practice; it is also about encouraging diversity of thought and nurturing creativity and innovation. Staff were given the opportunity to rate a number of statements that reflected their overall experience of the GFoL 2017. Staff indicated that they had learnt new information (93%), and that this information was thought provoking (79%). Other positive benefits included thinking differently about issues raised at the GFoL 2017 (79%), being exposed to new experiences that would be beneficial to their future work/education (86%), and the opportunity to meet new people who may be useful to current and/or new practices/education (86%). Staff highlights revolved around enhancing international access and increased opportunities to learn about and engage with a range of international research activities:

“The richness of the experience and the opportunity to learn more about the countries and educational practices has provided opportunity to develop my international learning and knowledge”. (Survey respondent: BU staff)

Respondents were asked to provide more details on any skills developed through participating in the GFoL 2017 that encouraged diverse thinking and nurtured creativity and innovation:

“[I’ve] definitely developed interaction skills but mostly the ability of thinking in different perspectives.” (Survey respondent: BU staff)

Students specifically reported that the GFoL 2017 promoted a new way of thinking and nurtured creativity through the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge, and competence (80%) in conjunction with the opportunity to explore new career options (50%).

4.4. Theme 4: Nurture Global Employability through Professional Development

Enhanced productivity, future employability, and staff turnover are all positively linked to professional development [62]. Individuals cited professional development as a key impact of attending the GFoL 2017. Respondents (100%) can see how the international experience gained from participating in the festival will help them in their future work or study while providing the opportunity to learn new skills. Key staff highlights included: they are very likely to consider exploring new global opportunities for research, study, or work (86%), and they are very likely to consider working abroad in the future (83%). Likewise, students (100%) agreed that they are likely to seek further experiences abroad as a result of their experience at the GFoL 2017; 93% agreed that they intend to seek work abroad in the future; and, 60% agreed that they would like to study abroad in the future as a result of their experience at the GFoL 2017.

Previous studies have identified that collaboration and networking opportunities were identified as valuable components of events that provide professional development [63]. Respondents confirmed the GFoL 2017 provided a platform for opportunities to collaborate and network. More than half (64%) indicated that they were very likely to be working with people they met at the GFoL 2017, while 97% of respondents agreed that they could see how the international experiences of students would benefit society more broadly and enable them to confidently seek employment opportunities abroad:

“As a result of my participation and experience gained through the Global Festival of Learning, I am keener to seek job opportunities abroad and to gain international exposure before returning to my country and applying this new knowledge there.”

“I did not consider working abroad previously prior to the ASEAN trip; however, I have been inspired and motivated by the experiences in Malaysia and Indonesia, and would like to pursue a career where I can travel abroad.” (Survey respondent: BU student)

The GFoL has provided the opportunity for BU staff, students, and their international counterparts to work on new projects and research and facilitate collaborations. To date, 12 collaborative projects

have been established since GFoL 2017, which otherwise may not have been created. Three Indonesian students who attended the GFoL 2017 event in Jakarta have accepted offers to study at BU in 2018, and there is the expectation that more students from the event intend to apply for the proceeding academic year.

4.5. Theme 5: Bring Back Global Learning and Experience to the Local Region to Inform Future Developments

The outcomes and learning gains of staff and students who attended the GFoL 2017 were showcased for one day at the BU Festival of Learning (FoL) to demonstrate the collaboration of learning and knowledge exchange that had taken place across the GFoL 2017. Footfall data revealed that approximately 200 members of the public and 100 BU staff and students visited the GFoL stand across the duration of the day. No media data was analysed to understand the GFoL media traction as part of the BU FoL.

Staff and students were given the opportunity to reflect on their participation in the GFoL 2017, and their responses suggested that the public engagement experience was beneficial in bringing back international learning and experiences into their current and future work and/or education:

“I am excited that we are given the opportunity to bring back to Bournemouth University the knowledge, experiences, expertise, and connections that we developed during the Global Festival of Learning in India and China. This in turn will help with internationalising our campuses in the UK further by showcasing what we have done abroad at the home based Festival of Learning in Bournemouth.”

All of the respondents expressed the hope that relationships built with international colleagues and students at the GFoL 2017 would be sustained, and would lead to future impact through collaborative working, and ultimately a new international community of practice.

5. Discussion

HE has a significant influence on the UK and global economy through the provision of graduates, research partnerships, and professional development opportunities [64]. The purpose of this paper was to evaluate the GFoL in its ability to deliver outreach and impact through PE on a global stage in response to the challenges of developing the ‘public value’ of HE. Universities are under increasing pressure by funding bodies and research councils to engage with the public [16] and create sectoral and societal change regionally and internationally. However, the literature review confirmed that there are limited examples of PE approaches championed by institutions to target international audiences [39]. Whilst a small number of HEIs conduct international PE on campus [39], the GFoL takes BU (as an institution) out to the world through a series of learning events on a global stage.

The findings of the research identified the outreach and impact of the GFoL, which were presented as five themes, and demonstrate how international PE can create both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes (i.e., the breadth of the social media impact and the international students who attended the GFoL subsequently enrolling as BU students). The five themes have contributed towards developing an international PE model that can be replicated by other institutions to promote international public engagement, and is subsequently presented and discussed below. This discussion demonstrates how the proposed model (Figure 1) can lead to significant improvements in the field of collaboration between the host HEIs, staff, students, and attendees in a variety of nonlinear ways.

The GFoL adapted a festival format to reconcile globalisation with different communities through inclusive internationalisation [21]. HEIs have been called upon to ensure that internationalisation seeks unique ways to extend the benefits to a deeper base of people in order to legitimise it against the changing fabric of societies and communities [65]. The GFoL provides an innovative framework (Figure 1) that enables internationalisation through a two-way learning process to take place, and in an integrative way both internationally and locally to showcase and disseminate not only international education, but also research and practice (PE Area 1, Figure 1).

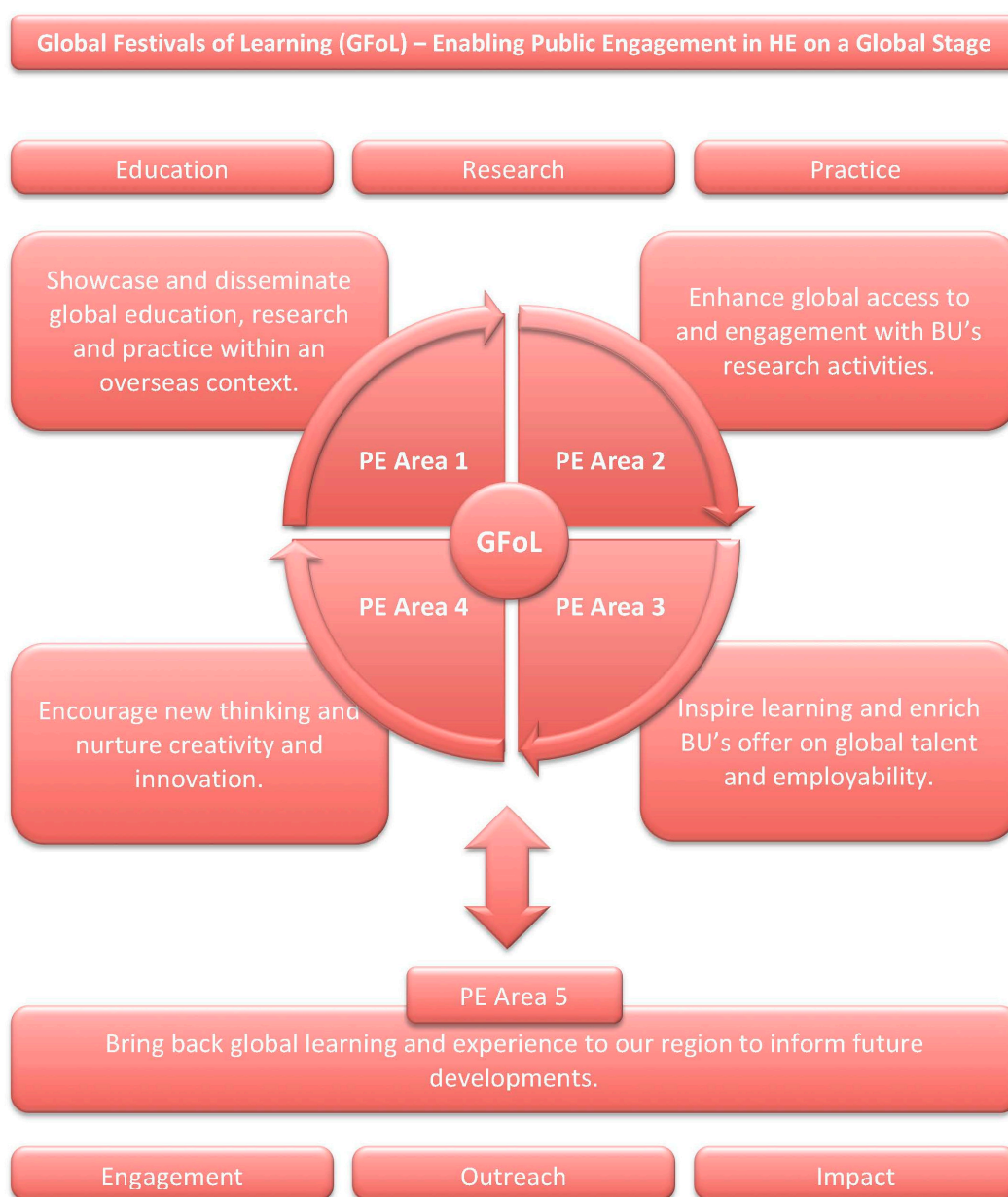


Figure 1. Model to Show the Global Festivals of Learning Framework for PE in HE on a Global Stage.

Communities of practice are typically deemed to be any community through which engagement occurs [66]. While the majority of community practice is face-to-face and long term, short-term communities such as those created through attendance at an event or engagement with social media can offer valuable insight and the opportunity for learning and sharing knowledge on a topic [67]. The footfall and media data reveals the full extent of the GFoL impact on enhancing global access to and engagement with BU’s research activities (PE Area 2, Figure 1) from both an awareness raising and participation perspective. The GFoL demonstrates how communities of practice can be created through a variety of platforms, and how it can offer value to a wider and more diverse public audience than institutions would typically interact with. The large social media reach for the GFoL demonstrates the opportunity that PE provides for wider dissemination than that which an individual event may achieve [32]. The data confirms that the GFoL impact spreads internationally beyond the physical attendees. The festival provides a new medium through virtual engagement (social media) for enhancing BU’s value and reputation, as well as the host organisation’s profile, and encourages student recruitment potential [68]. This is key evidence to demonstrate that global festivals can widen

individual's access to HE without having to be physically present. However, future data would need to capture the benefits of access and engagement from a virtual perspective, and assess how this can be developed for future festivals. Furthermore, feedback from the GFoL 2017 provides strategic insight as to how BU can develop future GFoLs to increase activities and opportunities for those who virtually engage with or physically attend the festivals. The collection of new data, as described in the discussion, and the consideration of expanding the GFoL2018 to Europe confirms that new activities, collaborations, and learning will continue to emerge.

Institutions have a significant role in the development of the UK and international workforce to compete in the worldwide economy [69]. The proportion of staff and students who have the opportunity to study, work, or volunteer abroad continues to remain a small proportion of the UK population (6.6%), despite the EU's mobility target of 20% by 2020 [4]. This implies that over 80% of the population will not directly benefit from internationalisation through mobility, confirming that alternative options need to be resourced [4]. International mobility was provided by participation in the GFoL, and allowed participants to engage in industry-specific events. The events encouraged a diversity of thought and skills development, and nurtured creativity and innovation (PE Area 3, Figure 1). The development of skills and innovation is vital on an international and national level, because the requirement for talented individuals who can contribute towards an enterprising workforce is critical to successful economies [64]. The GFoL developed horizontal bridges across countries while simultaneously developing vertical bridges deep into societies and communities [65].

As acknowledged in the introduction of this paper, PE is not a 'one-size-fits-all' model [70]. The type of PE that is used during the GFoL typically fitted within two key strands: the 'education' and 'participation' of staff, students, collaborators, and the public [39]. The GFoL successfully combined 'education' and 'participation' in a unique format to deliver inspired learning (PE Area 4, Figure 1). Survey respondents were asked to consider their future opportunities as a result of their global PE experience so that BU could better understand any potential international traction and mobility as a consequence of participating in the festival. The literature confirmed that the opportunities to collaborate and network are important aspects of PE [63]. The GFoL provided the opportunity for participants to overcome perceived cultural and geographic barriers through an improved understanding of international and local issues, which led to the development of connections with international staff and students. The above contributes to a better understanding of how change can happen through learning and participation with international HEIs [71]. Partnership work is likely to become an important route to create pathways to impact [71] through future plans to include student placements and student research, in addition to increased academic research in collaboration with the international HEIs.

Through the creation of the GFoL model, BU has found an adaptable and responsive impact measure in an era where HE must increasingly demonstrate their value to the economy, research, and society [72]. Given the pressure that is now placed on universities by funding bodies and research councils to engage with the public [16], having a deeper understanding of how such processes occur is vital knowledge for those working within HE and looking to create sectoral and societal change internationally. The collaborative projects that were developed through participation at the GFoL demonstrated the impact of this approach on unlocking a diversity of minds and how it could nurture creativity and innovation (PE Area 4, Figure 1). In contrast, UK-based festivals will not necessarily be able to create this type of creativity and innovation due to the overall outlook of the event remaining local and more inward looking.

Internationalisation at home is a crucial factor according to international education consultant Elspeth Jones [65]. The GFoL returned to the UK as part of BU's FoL (PE Area 5, Figure 1), and demonstrated its unique ability to connect international with local, which is something that has been overlooked by current PE practice. The GFoL involved festival co-creation and co-production with international partner institutions to stage events that were focussed on relevant areas of interest and

collaboration in all of the different host countries. The data showed that the GFoL is multi-dimensional in outcomes and impact.

6. Conclusions

The GFoL was developed by BU as a direct response to traditional public engagement models adopted by the HE sector to broaden PE on an international scale. The festival provides a programme that continues to function as an institutional attractor, acting as a visible storefront to enable global outreach, impact, and engagement with UK HEIs. The GFoL acts as a locus of networking and learning [2] and demonstrates how a global festival can contribute to a HEI's innovation and evolution [2] to further its established institutional international goals and missions, and enhance staff and student's mobility, learning experiences, and curricular expansion. These factors demonstrate how the GFoL has a collective power to stimulate institutional diversification on an international level. The festival provided BU with structures that are essential for creating visibility for new ways of working and building relationships across partnership institutions.

In response to the current political and social climate in the UK, it is imperative that HEIs develop and support institutional policies, practices, and procedures at both strategic and operational levels to ensure timely and appropriate PE [30]. To become truly embedded within HE in the UK and internationally, it is essential to identify and share good practice across the sector to enable others to accelerate PE [73]. Through critical evaluation of the changing educational fabric of society and current practices [73], BU identified an opportunity to demonstrate excellence in PE across the international sector. This paper has demonstrated that a GFoL as a PE event catalysed outcomes relating to engagement, outreach, and impact to the education, research, and practice of a UK-based HEI, and that these outcomes can be replicated by other HEIs.

The findings from this study may be of practical importance to other HEIs wanting to develop their own PE on an international scale as part of their institutional agenda, both in the UK and internationally. The GFoL provides three critical opportunities for developing global PE in a HE context: redefining PE from an international HE standpoint to create a move away from a Eurocentric worldview to a paradigm that is more closely aligned with international knowledge and practices and reflects the social, cultural, political, and economic landscape; appropriately resourcing international PE activities to enhance international talent and educational outcomes; beginning to build an evidence base about international PE investments to learn from collaborative research and more sophisticated forms of evaluation, and monitoring to help develop the global learning sector.

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