



**Registered Charity No. 1038129**  
[www.liv.ac.uk/ssp/interchange](http://www.liv.ac.uk/ssp/interchange)

## **Annual Report and Accounts**

**2007-2008**



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**December 2008**

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# Interchange

*Learning through Service*  
*A member of the International Science Shop Network*  
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## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to read the 2007-8 Annual Report of Interchange. The last twelve months has seen significant changes in the administration of Interchange with its long-time co-ordinator having taken up a full-time post within the School of Sociology and Social Policy. Yet despite this loss the work of Interchange has been sustained with the stalwart support of its management committee and the increasing engagement of other staff within the School of Sociology and Social Policy with its work.

As a result the students who have been involved in projects associated with the work of Interchange have succeeded in producing work of a consistently high standard. Also during the last twelve months the profile of Interchange has been raised considerably within the wider university community since it served as a central plank from which the Faculty of Environmental and Social Sciences made a bid to the ERSC for a Centre for the Study of the Third Sector. Though unsuccessful the significance of the work done by Interchange is now much more appreciated within the university as a whole.

Whilst at one level, the financial status of Interchange remains fragile, at another level the work that it engages in and encourages the students to produce and the kinds of skills they develop, suggests that its work is more deeply embedded in the work of the School than ever. So whilst there may be some difficult times ahead I am very pleased to commend the work of Interchange and this Report to you.

***Sandra Walklate***  
***Eleanor Rathbone Chair of Sociology***  
***and Head of the School of Sociology and Social Policy***  
***University of Liverpool***

# Interchange

## FACTFILE

**Principal Office of the Charity:**  
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### **Board of Trustees:**

Ms. Louise Hardwick (Chair)  
Ms. Gwen Lighthouse (Secretary)  
Mr. Philip Hurst (Treasurer)  
Ms. Natasha Butler  
Dr. Margaret Coffey  
Dr. David Hall  
Dr. Trish Lunt  
Ms. Barbara McNamara  
Dr. Dave Whyte

### **Staff:**

Interchange Co-ordinator position currently vacant  
(post formerly filled by Sharon Lockley, plus subsequent temporary  
placement administration by Barbara McNamara)

### **Independent Examiner:**

Ian Leadbetter, Community  
Accountant  
Sefton CVS  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 3tc  
16 Crosby Road North  
Waterloo  
Merseyside, L22 0NY

### **Bankers:**

NatWest  
Liverpool University Branch,  
5 Oxford Street  
L7 7HL

### **Membership/Affiliations:**

International Science Shop Network ([www.livingknowledge.org](http://www.livingknowledge.org))

## **Interchange – An Overview**

### **Aims:**

Interchange is an unincorporated association that was registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1994. Our constitution and objects were revised on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003 to include student volunteering within the curriculum and now read as follows: -

1. The advancement of education by: -
  - a. bringing together charitable groups in the area of Merseyside and neighbouring Districts and students in Higher Education in the same areas for the purposes of conducting research projects and collating organising and disseminating the results of such research for public benefit
  - b. enabling such students to pursue projects, research and experimental work considered to be for public benefit
  - c. enabling students to undertake volunteering opportunities as part of the curriculum
2. To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in Merseyside and neighbouring Districts by providing charitable groups operating within the area of benefit with advice, training, volunteering and scientific or technical information and by any other assistance appropriate to the use of scientific or technical information so as to enable such organisations to carry out their Charitable work more effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the Community.

### **Core Service**

Interchange provides a research and volunteering exchange between community and university to promote applied research for the benefit of the community and for student education and learning.

The ethos of Interchange is partnership; its aim is to act as a 'broker' to partner community and voluntary groups who have a need for research or student volunteers with students who can conduct the research or volunteer as part of their academic studies.

Interchange partners with community and voluntary groups throughout Merseyside and surrounding areas, and operates with the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University and Liverpool Hope University.

Interchange is also a member of the International Network of Science Shops (the European term for Interchange type activity). We are currently a partner in the European Union project TRAMS which provides training and mentoring for new science shops.

## Management

Interchange held its last Annual General Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007. The meeting appointed 8 trustees in accordance with the Interchange constitution, all with the responsibility of ensuring the effective organisation and management of the charity's work. Details of these appointments are in the 'Factfile'. New trustees were given an induction pack relating to the work of Interchange and offered training on the responsibilities of Charity Trustees.



Interchange  
Management  
Committee

Management of the charity is carried out via bi-monthly committee meetings and other meetings as necessary for special activities. Procedures are followed as outlined in the constitution and records kept regarding the proceedings of the meetings and decisions made by the trustees.

The office of Interchange is based in the School of Sociology & Social Policy at The University of Liverpool, where it receives much in-kind support from the University in order to run the Interchange office. The post for Co-ordinator of Interchange is currently vacant.

## Achievements for this Financial Year

- The main activity continues to be the facilitation of student projects in applied social research with the voluntary and community sector on Merseyside, as detailed below. This year has seen a large number of students from Sociology & Social Policy conducting Interchange projects as their final year dissertations
- This year we piloted a new module entitled Social Policy which also involved student placements with community groups sought by Interchange
- The successful work of applied social research projects conducted in the Health Department at Liverpool Hope University continued for the third year
- Interchange again presented a community forum at Blackburne House, Liverpool to showcase the newly completed projects and help voluntary and community sector organisations think how research can benefit their organisations
- Interchange in partnership with the research trainer Leslie Mahmood at St. Helens CVS run a four week course on the Wirral on community based research, as part of a programme of assisting voluntary and community sector organisations to develop their research skills.
- The Interchange website, linked to The School of Sociology & Social Policy continues to be updated on a regular basis. This is an on-going task and work on its development will continue

## **Chair's Report**

This is my first report as the Chair of Interchange, following Dr David Hall's retirement from full-time work in the School of Sociology and Social Policy. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to David, who with Irene Hall founded Interchange 15 years ago, for his years of dedication as Chair. His pedagogical approach to 'community-based learning' has enhanced the academic curriculum in the School of Sociology & Social Policy contributing to innovative approaches to knowledge transfer between Higher Education Institutions and non-profit organisations across Europe. Fortunately this is not to say goodbye to David as he remains an invaluable trustee.

I also want to thank Sharon Lockley for her sustained work as Coordinator over many years. As David remarked in last year's annual report much of her work is hidden behind the scenes and never gets recorded. Recently the very evident aspects of her work have been the coordination and writing of funding bids in an effort to secure the future of Interchange.

Sharon is loved by students and community groups alike and will hopefully flourish in her new post with Liverpool University as Research & Academic Enterprise Officer for the School. Despite her new role and extensive new responsibilities she has continued to offer advice and support in developing partnerships with community groups for the research and work projects in the forthcoming academic year and she has also become a trustee, which secures her continued involvement with Interchange.

I would also like to mention Barbara McNamara, an ex-Interchange student and winner of the 2006 Dissertation prize for her applied social research project. Barbara is currently researching for her PhD thesis and has taken over the temporary role of Coordinator. She has organised the forthcoming projects with community groups and students.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the other members of the Interchange Management Committee for their support and hard work over the past year.

**Louise Hardwick**

## **Co-ordinator's Report**

2007-2008 has seen a number of changes in terms of Interchange itself and also in terms of a culture change in government and in higher education in its views on knowledge transfer. As we had been swimming against the tide for so many years I became quite excited by this shift in views as I believed that finally our work would be recognised and thus attract appropriate funding. However, as the year progressed the financial difficulties persisted, however as usual we remain optimistic for next year.

Interchange has seen the departure of the founding fathers of Interchange, both taking early retirement from their academic life. Tribute was paid to them in last year's annual report, and once again I would just like to express the Committee's and my own personal thanks to them both.

I too am no longer Co-ordinator for Interchange, a post I have held on and off since 1999. I began my new role of Academic Enterprise Officer within the School of Sociology & Social Policy in March 2008, and whilst this position has a variety of priorities (developing Interchange as one of them) I am no longer employed to do the day-to-day practical side of setting up the placements. Interchange will however continue to be close to my heart.

***Sharon Lockley***  
***Interchange Co-ordinator***



## Academic Supervisor Reports

### The University of Liverpool – Supervisors Report

In the academic year 2007/08 David Hall and I both taught on the Applied Social Research module and I introduced a new community based module focusing on a discrete work project called the 'Social Policy Project: Work-Based Learning'. This gives students a further alternative to a library-based dissertation. I also coordinated the Voluntary Service Learning module at level 1 and Understanding Non-Profit Organisations at level 2. We have had 24 students undertaking either the ASR or Work Project module for an Interchange organisation

### Activities During Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

#### Student Placements (2007/08 academic year)

This financial year has proved to be a busy year for Interchange. We have continued to offer an excellent research exchange service, working on a one-to-one basis with third sector organisations (TSOs) across Merseyside. Details of the student placements facilitated are listed below: -

#### University of Liverpool 'Applied Social Research'

In the academic year 2007-08, we had another excellent set of student projects with the voluntary, community and faith sector on greater Merseyside.

Brief details of these applied research projects from Liverpool University are as follows:

Victoria Allison & Rachel Boardman	<b>Victim Support</b> This is a national charity, dedicated to helping victims of crime. Rachel and Victoria undertook an evaluation of the process of joining and being trained as a volunteer with the organisation.
Helena Cookman & Kate Faller- Fritsch	<b>Wirral CVS Mentoring Scheme</b> This is a service for stable drug and alcohol misusers supported by Wirral Council for Voluntary Services. Helena and Kate assessed the effectiveness of this mentoring scheme for mentors and service users.
Jessica Cole & Laura Walsh	<b>YKIDS</b> YKIDS is a children's charity based in Orrell which works with local schools and churches in the area. Jessica and Laura investigated the local community support for the development of a new children's centre.
Liz Deane	<b>Interchange</b> Interchange provides a research and volunteering exchange between community groups and universities on Merseyside. Liz evaluated Interchange's service from the perspective of the community organisations.
Patrick Eastwood	<b>The Tiber Project</b> Tiber is for local young people and located in the Lodge Lane

	regeneration area. Patrick investigated methods of gaining, maintaining and facilitating involvement of young people in the Steering group of the organisation.
Samantha Jennings	<b>St Helens CVS</b> This is an umbrella organisation providing support to voluntary and community groups in the St Helens area. Samantha investigated why some member organisations had had little or no contact with the CVS since their subscription.
Emma Lambert	<b>First Initiatives</b> First Initiatives is a charity formed in 2001 to provide care, support and education for people within the field of mental health and learning difficulties, along with their families and carers. Emma investigated the potential of Goddard Hall in Bootle to provide inclusive services to suit the needs of a variety of service users.
Victoria Ralph	<b>Refugee Action</b> This is a registered charity working to enable refugees to build new lives in the UK. Victoria produced a literature review of policy and research on repeat homelessness amongst refugees and investigated the experiences and consequences of a small number of refugees in Liverpool.
Amy Rebane	<b>Witness Service</b> The Witness Service offers support to all witnesses appearing in criminal courts. Amy evaluated the services offered focusing specially on the reasons for the up-take or not of pre-trial visits.
Clare Ridings	<b>Millennium Volunteers</b> The Millennium Volunteers scheme is a Government-funded initiative to facilitate the commitment and involvement of young people in voluntary activities. Clare investigated which opportunities young people wanted to get involved with and also considered the barriers to such involvement.
Kirsty Rogers	<b>Her Majesty's Prison Kennet &amp; Sefton CVS</b> HMP Kennet is a new category C prison housing 350 male offenders. Kirsty investigated offenders' perceptions of the voluntary sector to evaluate which services would best suit their needs.
Lisa Seddon	<b>Dare to Care</b> Dare to Care was set up in 1992 by a community group who had increasing concern about the rise in drug use amongst the Black and Ethnic Minority communities living in Toxteth. Lisa evaluated the Auricular Acupuncture service it offers across the local community.
Barney Shearer	<b>Rampworx Youth Village</b> This is an indoor skate park based in Netherton caters for on average 800 young people each week over the age of 5. Barney explored the views of both the users and staff to explore which aspects were satisfactory and which required improvement.

One further project was established with The Frontline Church, Wavertree, who aim to inspire economic, physical and spiritual change in the city by "unleashing the potential of Liverpool's population", but regrettably this could not be completed because of illness sustained by the student after the Christmas period.

The following placements were for Social Policy students which was a new course piloted this year

Sarah Alderton	<p><b>All Together Now!</b> All Together Now! is an award winning supplement for readers with disabilities. Sarah undertook a project to assemble secondary data statistics on disability from the National Census to disseminate to future sponsors.</p>
Leanne Cook	<p><b>Her Majesty's Prison Kennet &amp; Sefton CVS</b> HMP Kennet is a new category C prison housing 350 male offenders. Leanne produced a pamphlet with useful information, contacts and advice as well as volunteering opportunities to develop confidence and work skills for prisoners on their release.</p>
Jane Ithell	<p><b>Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust Volunteers Scheme</b> Originally set up by the 'League of Friends' in 1994 the scheme now offers over 700 volunteering opportunities with the aim of easing the patient journey throughout the hospital. Jane produced a volunteer handbook for the scheme and also one for the committee of the North West Voluntary Service Managers.</p>
Rebecca Lynch	<p><b>The Big Issue in the North</b> The Big Issue is a social enterprise providing the homeless with the opportunity to generate an income as well as supporting punters with their welfare needs. Rebecca developed 'pathway posters' to help formalise procedures for customer service in the local office.</p>
Charlotte Middleton	<p><b>Kirkby Unemployment Centre</b> KUC is a TUC Centre and works in helping the unemployed. Charlotte's project was twofold: to develop an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and to research the demographic breakdown of staff, volunteers and management committee.</p>
Jessica Moule	<p><b>The Tiber Project</b> Tiber is for local young people and located in the Lodge Lane regeneration area. Jessica developed a toolkit to encourage the Steering group, made up of only young people, to understand their role and continue to participate and contribute to the development of the project.</p>
Roxanne Neenan	<p><b>The Anfield Detached Youth Project</b> This project is part of Merseyside Youth Association Ltd. Leanne undertook a community profile and produced a directory of services for local young people (aged 11-25).</p>
Anna Stogdon	<p><b>ARC (Arts for recovery in the community)</b> Reddish-based ARC is an organisation for people with enduring mental health problems and aims to promote health through the use of art. Anna was involved in setting up a new group that provided members with the chance to exhibit their work in a new gallery space.</p>

**Louise Hardwick**

### **Liverpool Hope University, School of Health Sciences**

While most of the projects were with the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Liverpool, we again had projects with the School of Health Sciences at Liverpool Hope University, where Margaret Coffey is the project supervisor.

### **Liverpool Hope University – Supervisors Report**

Liverpool Hope University have enjoyed another successful year working with Interchange on a community-based project in Aintree University Hospitals NHS foundation Trust. Aintree University Hospitals NHS foundation Trust was established in 2006 in order to provide acute healthcare to a population of 330,000 in North Merseyside and surrounding areas.

Previously the Trust had identified that smokers with diabetes appear to be the group least likely to make use of the smoking cessation services available within the Trust. In this respect, two final year students carried out an audit of smoking cessation services across patients with Diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). They also explored the particular barriers to smoking cessation that smokers with diabetes may face, using a number of interviews.

The study found that there was a difference between diabetic smokers and patients with COPD and CAD. Diabetic smokers are more concerned about weight gain and reported that they suffered from depression when attempting to cut down or stop smoking. Females in all groups expressed more worries than males in respect of smoking cessation, although, encouragingly the majority of smokers said they wanted to quit smoking.

Both of the students who took part in this study achieved excellent grades for their work, and we look forward to continuing this rewarding relationship by providing students with the exciting opportunity of working with Interchange in the forthcoming academic year.

<b>Student Name(s)</b>	<b>TSO supported</b>	<b>Placement Details</b>
Sarah Smith & Alison Walker	Aintree Hospital Trust	To explore the uptake of and barriers to smoking cessation services amongst patients with diabetes, compared to patients with other chronic illnesses.

**Margaret Coffey**

## **Developing Volunteering Placements through 'Voluntary Service Learning' and 'Sociology at Work' Modules**

### **Community-Based Learning Placements (University of Liverpool)**

The majority of these placements were organised through Sarah Jones Community Bridge, Careers & Employability Service based in the Centre for Lifelong Learning and were focused on two modules, Voluntary Service Learning: SOCI111 and Understanding Non-Profit Organisations: SOCI212. Placement details for both are below: -

#### **Voluntary Service Learning - SOCI111:**

There were 16 students on this module and the majority were organised through Sarah Jones Community Bridge, Careers & Employability Service based in the Centre for Lifelong Learning:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Oxfam City Centre
- WAM
- Wirral Age Concern
- Friends Meeting House cafe
- Wirral Crime prevention Unit
- St Helens hospice
- Anfield Family centre
- Oxfam furniture shop
- Ronald Macdonald House
- Liverpool School for the Blind

#### **Understanding Non-Profit Organisations - SOCI212:**

There were 6 students on this module and the majority were organised through Sarah Jones Community Bridge, Careers & Employability Service based in the Centre for Lifelong Learning:

- YIP (Youth Inclusion Programme)
- Rumanian children's charity
- Oxfam City Centre
- Campus
- Orrell Park Community Centre
- Aigburth Training Centre

**Trish Lunt**

## **Outcomes from the Placements**

### **Students**

We are delighted to report that Interchange student Barnabus Shearer won the Lundy Memorial Prize. This followed the tradition of the past two years that has seen Interchange student Chris Parry winning the prize in 2007 for her research for Wirral Women and Children's Aid, following on from Barbara McNamara's success in 2006 for her research for Helplink, Wirral.

### **Voluntary Sector**

It is the role of the Co-ordinator to follow up monitoring and evaluation of the student placements. Generally Interchange receives extremely positive feedback from organisations, a few quotes from this year's TSO's include: -

*"Interchange is a unique and excellent free service that empowers small community based charities to progress to the next stage of development by the research undertaken"* Carol Darby-Darton, Dare to Care

*"The feasibility study conducted in partnership with Interchange has been an excellent process. We are looking forward to the final report which will be of huge benefit to the organisation."* Tony Berry, Rampworx

*"Interchange provided Kirkby Unemployment Centre with a key document that was designed for our needs."* Carole Austin, Kirkby Unemployment Centre

### **Community Research Skills Training**

This year Interchange was fortunate enough to receive funding from Wirral Life Long Family Learning 'Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities' Fund to develop a Community Research Training course on the Wirral. The course was developed in partnership with St Helens CVS and Interchange, and was run 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## Interchange Community Research Forum



Interchange  
Community Forum

The fourth Community Forum proved as popular as the first. This year the Community Forum was sponsored by the Economic Social Research Council ESRC and was attended over eighty representatives from TSOs

across Merseyside.

The community forum included presentations from students, community representatives and Change-Up Merseyside, as well as round the table discussions on community groups' research needs. The students were also presented with certificates in recognition of the work they had achieved.

A full-page article reporting on the success of the Community Forum was published in the University's The Key, published by Business Gateway. An article highlighting our student 'hatrick' of awards has also been published in Precinct magazine.

### Website

The Interchange Website is now well embedded into The University's preferred format and can be accessed easily from the School of Sociology and Social Policy web pages, [www.liv.ac.uk/ssp/interchange](http://www.liv.ac.uk/ssp/interchange) the web site holds information on student projects, news and information on the Science Shop Network, and previous annual reports in pdf format. It continues to be updated by the Interchange Co-ordinator.

### International Activity and the TRAMS Initiative

As part of the TRAMS (training and mentoring of new Science Shops) project, Interchange was mentoring the new Science Shop from Riga in Latvia. In 2006, the Co-ordinator from the Riga Science Shop visited Interchange and attended the Community Forum.



TRAMS team

A return two day visit to Riga was arranged for April 2007, which was attended by David and Irene Hall and Sharon Lockley. The visit was a mix of workshop meetings with staff at the Science Shop and presentations for staff and students at The University of Latvia, Riga.

### Conferences

Hardwick, L., Lockley, S. 2007 'Engaging students in local community issues by undertaking an applied research project for a community organisation' C-SAP Conference Birmingham

## Case Study

### Student's Perspective

"I chose the Applied Social Research module as it offers a practical demonstration of the early research skills we develop throughout the undergraduate course, unlike other third year modules. There was also the added impetus of producing a piece of well needed research for a non profit organisation, the work would prove very important not only for ourselves but for the outside agency. I was also able to gain an insight into the research process which we had never had access to before. I worked in a pair to produce a report for Victim Support on Merseyside. They were keen to understand why they were unable to retain and recruit volunteers. Although at times the experience was highly stressful, I did thoroughly enjoy it.



Rachel Boardman  
Barney Shearer

I have been able to see firsthand the problems behind the research process such as researcher bias, sampling problems, ethical and methodological issues. In particular, we had a problem with our sample. Victim Support provided us with a small sample which was often incomplete and illegible. This inevitably affected our sample size and as such our response rate. However I have also seen that problems can indeed be solved. We were able to send out a large enough sample to gain an adequate response, however with all postal questionnaires a larger response rate is always desirable. Through this process I have developed vital skills, such as time management, problem solving and team work as well as patience.

I have now decided to complete a MA degree next year, in research methodology. I hope that this will lead to a career in social research. I am particularly interested in working for the Home Office as they combine research methodology with other social aspects I have come to be more knowledgeable about over the past three years as part of my degree. This year has been a great foundation for what I hope will be an interesting future. It has given me a backbone to research methodology which is of great importance for my chosen career path. I will take these skills with me and hopefully build upon them."

**Rachel Boardman, Interchange student**

"This has been an extremely positive experience for me as it has given me the ability to solve disheartening problems, manage my time, and take responsibility for my own actions whilst my confidence to deal with difficult tasks has been strengthened, and my skills as a researcher have been developed. Thus, I can say without a doubt that this has been the most academically satisfying module I have chosen to study and I look forward to applying the skills developed to my future career."

**Barnabus Shearer, Interchange Student**



## **Case Study**

### **A Third Sector Perspective:**

To support the effective engagement of the Voluntary, Community and Faith VCF Sector in the delivery of offender support and services, Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) and HMP Kennet have developed a strategic new partnership. The partnership provides guidance and infrastructure support to enable the VCF Sector to provide meaningful services to offender groups.

Initial requirements of this innovative project included establishing offender's perception of VCF Sector groups and the projects, which they provide, including any experience and knowledge they have. We then held focus groups with offenders to discuss our project and raise awareness of the diversity of activity, support and services available locally, nationally and regionally through the VCF Sector and how these services could impact on their lives.

When I approached Interchange I found them exceptionally helpful, responding quickly to my request for help and matching me to a suitable student who could get involved in various research methods, collate and analyse the feedback and work directly with us and another student to make recommendations to help design a leaflet or booklet for the offenders. The booklet aims to help signpost offenders post release and support them to access key services that could enhance their resettlement prospects.

When carrying out research the students were a real positive influence at the offender focus groups, their non-judgemental attitude and fresh approach helped to instigate positive dialogue with offenders. They managed the discussions relating to their perception and understanding of what services were being provided within HMP Kennet, and helped us to understand their issues and barriers to accessing mainstream and VCF services.

The focus groups also provided us with an opportunity to raise awareness of the V, C, and F sector services available in Kennet and how offenders can access them. It also provided an opportunity for us to discuss external groups and projects that may be of interest and could provide post-release support. This information was used for ideas for the leaflet/booklet development.

Interchange is an excellent way for the University of Liverpool students to use their academic skills to support community development, and also provides a unique learning experience for students that supports and compliments their academic development!

**Paula Atherton, Sefton CVS**

## **Case Study**

### **An Academic Supervisor's Perspective**

"I'm relatively new to the Department, having joined just over a year ago from the University of Stirling. My research and teaching interests are in sociology and criminology, and I have been working in social research in government, in universities and with NGOs and campaign groups for 15 years.

I have a specific interest in crimes of the powerful, the regulation of corporations, and corporate power. When I joined the School I was very impressed with the work that Interchange do in developing links between the University and the community. In a higher education system where 'knowledge transfer' is increasingly measured in terms of its commercial value or its value to business, Interchange remains committed to exchanging ideas and developing knowledge for the benefit of the community.

We shouldn't underestimate the importance of research that allows students to experience the realities of the research environment and adds real value to the work of groups that normally would not have the resources to conduct research. I am really excited to be involved in Interchange and am really looking forward to my first year as an academic supervisor".

**Dave Whyte – New Academic Supervisor for Interchange**

## **The Future of Interchange**

Interchange is committed to exploring future development of our work in relation to identified external trends, opportunities or threats in the coming financial year. In response to planning activity, we have adopted the following Strategic Objectives that identify our future focus: -

### ***Securing Sustainability for Interchange Service:***

Interchange currently manages a relatively small budget, which supports our ongoing core service. However, we have worked in close partnership with the University of Liverpool who employ our Interchange Co-ordinator. Reach Out Growth Fund (HEIF funding) ended for this post and our Co-ordinator moved onto another role within the university. For the short-term, another worker has been appointed to administer the current student placement programme, though long-term solutions to the delivery of the Interchange service are still being discussed with University of Liverpool.

### ***Building Capacity of Interchange:***

Interchange must consider our own capacity building needs to strengthen our ability to develop as a support service to the Third Sector and as a key partner to academic institutions. Through the testing of new activity such as the Research Skills Training for the voluntary sector, we have identified barriers in capacity in the form of organisational systems, policies and procedures necessary for effective delivery of learning activity and also the employment of staff. The standards and criteria of various funding regimes require these to be in place and our charity will need to respond proactively to this in order to develop as a credible service provider.

### ***Increasing Student Placement Capacity from Liverpool University 'Sociology Dept.':***

To build our TSO support service in the Greater Merseyside, we must build our capability to secure student and tutor resources from our core partner, the University of Liverpool 'School of Sociology & Social Policy'. Effective marketing and promotion of our work to students is essential to open up this resource to the Third Sector. Equally, however, Interchange must recruit academic tutor support to supervise students out in the field. The level of tutor resources is currently the main limitation for increasing our numbers of student placements. Identification of further linkages within the rest of the school's courses is also a priority.

### ***Increasing Student Placement Capacity from John Moores and Liverpool Hope Universities 'Sociology Depts.':***

There is great potential for engagement with the sociology in the other two Higher Education Institutions within Liverpool. Interchange successfully facilitated a student placement through Liverpool Hope University and recruited a representative from the institution as a trustee. We will build on these successes to open up further

resources from this institution. Links with John Moores University need to be re-established though great potential exists in the establishment of a work-based learning requirement for all courses within this institution. Interest in these institutions will focus on Sociology for the time being until links are more established.

***Increasing Links with Other Liverpool University Depts:***

The Interchange Model has the potential for being replicated into other academic subjects and courses beyond social research. A mapping of potential linkages with courses delivered by other Depts. within the University of Liverpool will be our initial focus under this objective. We will explore wider interests in community engagement work and work-based learning commitments by Depts. to offer a solution in meeting these aspirations. Early signs of potential linkages with the Business School, for example, already exist, with possible support to TSOs being discussed on management and HR issues.

***Increasing Community Research Training Delivery to VCF sector organisations:***

Interchange delivered Community Research training during this financial year in partnership with St. Helens CVS and Wirral Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities as an approach to adding value to our student placement service to TSOs. Interchange proposes to develop this intervention further in the coming financial year to become part of our core package of services offered to TSOs around community and social research work. We will explore further funding options and also a model of accredited learning to ensure viable outcomes for the TSO representatives themselves, in addition to academic learning outcomes for students. However, our organisational capacity building will need to be a pre-requisite to this development.

***Development of Wider Partnerships:***

In addition to academic partnership development, Interchange must build strong working relationships with key structures within the third sector and public sector generally. For example, recent developments have included the establishment of the Greater Merseyside ChangeUp Consortium, a network of the third sector-based support services that offer infrastructure support to frontline third sector organisations.

In addition, VOLA (Voluntary Organisations Learning Association) has recently been established as a partnership of third sector learning providers and is forging links with the Greater Merseyside Learning & Skills Council to build firmer relationships with the Third Sector on commissioning of learning activity in the sector. Interchange must keep in touch with these and other developments so as to utilise them in support of our wider work. Our strong International links must also be maintained through the Science Shop movement, etc.

**Phil Hurst Sefton CVs**

## **Interchange Acknowledgements and Thanks**

The Interchange committee would like to thank: -

### **Financial Support**

- Wirral Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities

### **'In-Kind' Support**

- Liverpool Hope University, Margaret Coffee, Department of Health & Sociology (*Student Placements*)
- University of Liverpool, Sandra Walklate, Head of School (*Partnership Links*)
- University of Liverpool, Chris McLinden & Nick Palmer, Research & Business Services (*Partnership Links and Delivery Support*)
- Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (*Promotion/TSO links*)
- University of Liverpool, Sarah Jones Community Bridge, Careers & Employability Service based in the Centre for Lifelong Learning (*student and volunteer placements*)