



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Celebrating Impact

PRIZE 2021

Celebrating outstanding social and economic
impacts of ESRC-funded researchers





Welcome

The ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize, now in its ninth year, is an annual opportunity to celebrate the success of ESRC-funded researchers in achieving and enabling outstanding economic or societal impact from their excellent research.


Our competition recognises the UK's world-leading economists and social scientists and highlights how their work makes a difference to people and organisations within the UK and across the world.

The important contribution being made by the social sciences to helping communities and businesses navigate the pandemic features prominently among this year's finalists. Others highlight insights focused on enduring issues including education, sustainability and health. It's encouraging to see so many research teams feature among the finalists, celebrating the vital role of collaboration and teamworking within research.

The impacts of the finalists are impressive and far-reaching. All our finalists have demonstrated the impact of their work and illustrated its relevance and importance to society. They are already contributing to policy debates in their specialist areas and I am confident their influence will continue for many years to come.

I'm very proud that the ESRC has funded this work, and that we can fully recognise it through our prestigious Celebrating Impact Prize. I'd like to thank the judging panel for their considerable efforts and, of course, all the applicants for their commitment and hard work. Most importantly of all, I offer my congratulations to this year's winners and finalists – well done.

Professor Alison Park

Interim Executive Chair
Economic and Social Research Council
 @parkali

About ESRC

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research into the big social and economic issues facing us today. We are part of UK Research and Innovation and receive most of our funding through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). We support independent, high-quality, relevant social science research, resources and training that have the maximum impact on people and society.

We help to tackle the biggest challenges society faces through partnerships, new ways of funding research, and involvement with some of the world's most ambitious research programmes. Our research informs policymakers and practitioners, and helps make businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective.

About the Celebrating Impact Prize

The annual ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize is an opportunity to recognise and reward researchers whose work has made a real difference to society or the economy.

Entrants' applications are reviewed by a panel of academics, engagement and knowledge exchange experts, and research users. Shortlisted applicants were invited to an interview, along with non-academic supporters who helped describe the impact of the work.

This year's prize categories are:

- Outstanding Early Career Impact
- Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact
- Outstanding International Impact
- Outstanding Public Policy Impact
- Outstanding Societal Impact

A prize of £10,000 is awarded to the winner of each category.

This year the panel also chose to award an additional prize – Panel's Choice – which recognises high potential and quality in other finalists' work.

Each prize is to be spent on furthering knowledge exchange, public engagement or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of the research.

Onshore wind and solar farms: improving decision-making on ageing infrastructure



Dr Rebecca Windemer
University of the West of England

Research into the 25-year planning consents that regulate the UK's onshore wind and solar farms has led to policy change in Wales, greater guidance for local authorities and the wind industry on end-of-life considerations for onshore renewable energy infrastructure, and increased community awareness of the potential to influence the future of local wind and solar sites.

Impacts

- Dr Rebecca Windemer's ESRC-funded PhD research led the Welsh Government to develop an end-of-life policy for onshore renewable energy infrastructure in 2018. This policy in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) establishes a supportive approach towards onshore renewable energy through greater consideration of the options for ageing infrastructure, such as the need for larger turbines.
- Scottish Government policymakers are currently using her research to inform the update of their onshore wind policy.
- Dr Windemer has advised the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland on the key challenges associated with time-limited planning consents for wind farms.
- UK policymakers and business leaders have accessed her evidence on the opportunities and challenges for replacing existing wind farms with more efficient infrastructure. Developers across Europe have adopted her recommendations on improving community experiences through ongoing engagement with communities during the lifetime of existing onshore sites and greater levels of community involvement in planning for the future of ageing infrastructure.
- Dr Windemer has increased public awareness of the challenges of time-limited planning consents, of the need for a more detailed planning policy and guidance for end-of-life options, and the opportunities for local communities to shape the future of onshore wind and solar farms.

About the research

The UK's first wind turbines began operation in 1991. Today onshore wind farms generate 11% of UK electricity but 112 (17% of all wind farms) in England, Wales and Scotland are at least 15 years old and starting to reach the end of their time-limited (usually 25-year) planning consents. ESRC-funded doctoral research by Dr Rebecca Windemer at Cardiff University examined the UK's ageing wind and solar farms and for the first time highlighted the challenges in deciding what happens to this infrastructure.

As part of her research, Dr Windemer analysed all planning and energy policies relevant to the duration and end of life of onshore wind and solar farms. She also reviewed the planning documents for all applications to repower or extend the duration of the planning consent for existing onshore wind farms in England, Wales and Scotland. She undertook in-depth studies at four wind farms and one solar farm involving interviewing developers, planners, local authorities, opposition groups, and communities, and undertook surveys of 710 residents living within 3.5 km of two wind farms.

"My research identified significant challenges impacting the decision-making process for wind and solar farms at the end either of their 25-year planning consent or operational lives," says Dr Windemer. "Three main options exist for end-of-life sites: first, to extend the planning consent of original infrastructure; second, to repower by replacing existing sites with newer, more efficient infrastructure; or third, to decommission entirely."

The decision-making process is not straightforward. Sites have changed since 1991. New developments may have been built nearby, land designations changed, community attitudes towards wind farms altered and newer, much taller turbines become available. These challenges, combined with the current lack of clear end-of-life policies or financial incentives for repowering, have stalled decision-making for both local authority planners and renewable energy developers.

As a further complication, developers have long assumed that communities would inevitably grow to accept wind farms over time and support repowering, particularly if it was accompanied by financial incentives such as increased funding for community projects. Instead, Dr Windemer's research shows that familiarity does not always lead to local acceptance, particularly when some communities were assured that infrastructure would be removed after 25 years.

Based on these findings, policymakers are working towards clearer end-of-life policies. Across Europe, developers are adopting her recommendations on improving community engagement. Dr Windemer has shared her findings internationally at the 2020 WindEurope End-of-Life Issues & Strategies conference (and with the 400 WindEurope member organisations), leading to follow up discussions with developers and policymakers across Europe.

"Previously many communities had little knowledge of the temporary nature of planning consents or the opportunity they have to shape the future of their local site, including co-ownership," she explains.

"Gaining planning permission for new onshore wind farms in England is very difficult," says Dr Windemer. "Understanding the future of windfarms will be essential as many governments are planning on ways to move to NetZero. If we don't repower or life-extend existing sites, there is a risk that our supply of onshore wind energy will slowly fall over time. As more than 34,000 wind turbines across Europe are now 15 years or older, the challenge of what to do with ageing infrastructure is Europe-wide."

Further information

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<https://rebeccawindemer.wordpress.com/repowering-onshore-wind>

Project website <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/explore/find-a-project/view/2478089-end-of-life-challenges-for-the-wind-and-solar-energy-sectors>

<https://rebeccawindemer.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/reducing-community-opposition-to-repowering.pdf>

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/blog/2020/december/why-time-limited-planning-permissions-on-wind-farms-need-to-be-rethought>

“Dr Rebecca Windemer's research on the repowering and life-extension of onshore wind and solar farms has been influential in bringing these issues to the attention of Welsh Government officials who were shaping future planning policies.”

Stuart Ingram Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Group
Welsh Government

Gaining recognition and funding for refugee-led assistance during COVID-19



Professor Alexander Betts
University of Oxford

ESRC-funded researchers have drawn international attention to the key role played by refugee-led organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting a rapid change in global policy, new funding of over USD 50 million, and the provision of vital assistance to more than 100,000 of the most vulnerable refugees.

Impacts

- The research team helped secure over USD 50 million of new funding for refugee-led organisations (RLOs) through attracting innovative forms of finance from philanthropic foundations and governments. This includes:
 - Influencing the Canadian Government’s decision to create the first-ever government fund for RLOs and informing grant allocation choices by The Open Society Foundations.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling more than 50 RLOs to deliver vital assistance such as food, soap, face masks and health information in local languages to over 100,000 refugees in East Africa and elsewhere.
- Evidence of the importance of engaging directly with refugees within the humanitarian system has prompted international NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee to collaborate directly with RLOs.
- It has shaped debates within the United Nations, influencing the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to create a new partnership status for refugee-led organisations, a global database of RLOs, an Innovation Prize for RLOs, and plan a multilateral funding mechanism to enable donors to invest in RLOs.
- Widespread dissemination – including the #ByRefugees seminar series in May/June 2020 (with 2,000 virtual attendees), policy briefings, media pieces, and the book *The Global Governed? Refugees as Providers of Protection and Assistance* (2020) – has transformed attitudes towards the legitimate and effective role refugee-led organisations can play in the international humanitarian system, helping to persuade governments and other donors to fund RLOs.

About the research

Refugee-led organisations (RLOs) have long played an important but neglected role in providing assistance and support in camps and cities around the world. A two-year project by the Refugee Studies Centre in refugee settlements in Kenya and Uganda found that RLOs are actively helping refugees with key basic services such as food, health, shelter, skills training, social insurance and education. In a survey of 8,000 refugees, 80% said they would turn to their immediate community for food; fewer than 20% would look to NGOs for help. “When we think of humanitarian assistance to refugees, we usually assume it is delivered by UN agencies or large international NGOs, but very often it is provided by refugees themselves,” explains Professor Alexander Betts.

Prior to COVID-19, the Refugee Studies Centre’s project, which was ESRC-funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund programme, had already identified RLOs as effective, efficient, and legitimate providers of aid. When the pandemic worsened and international aid workers were forced to withdraw from refugee camps, RLOs stepped in to fill the gaps by distributing supplies, disseminating public information and serving as community health workers. YARID (Young African Refugees for Integral Development), for example, is one of over 100 RLOs in Uganda and Kenya. During the pandemic, YARID delivered food and soap door-to-door to 1,500 refugee households as well as 70,000 face masks to urban refugees in Kampala – just one of around 30 similar RLOs in Kampala alone.

Early in the pandemic, the research team highlighted such capabilities to governments, NGOs, policymakers and potential donors through a series of online seminars featuring refugees and RLO leaders. “We were able to showcase the great work of RLOs to senior policymakers and NGOs sitting in the same virtual room as refugees themselves,” says Professor Betts. Traditionally, governments and donors have been reluctant to allocate aid to RLOs because of concerns about risk, audit requirements and accountability.

But by offering evidence-based, policy-relevant insights into how to recognise, finance and increase the capacity of effective RLOs to the UN, governments and funding organisations, the research team attracted innovative forms of finance from philanthropic foundations, new government funding and support for RLOs' life-saving work. "Now the Canadian Government has taken the lead in providing funding, we hope that the UK government and others around the world will begin to recognise and fund the vital work that refugees themselves are doing," he says.

Critically, the research team's work has reshaped the debate on refugee assistance, reframing the view of refugees as passive recipients of aid and highlighting their role as active providers of assistance. "This shift in thinking could potentially transform the way the international humanitarian system works as it creates momentum towards more participatory global governance," says Dr Evan Easton-Calabria. "In practical terms, we have shown that 'protected' populations such as refugees actually offer important and neglected sources of social protection."

Further information

The Refugee Studies Centre's Professor Alexander Betts, Dr Evan Easton-Calabria and Dr Kate Pincock are Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

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<https://theconversation.com/why-refugees-are-an-asset-in-the-fight-against-coronavirus-136099>

<https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/research-in-brief-refugees-as-providers-of-protection-and-assistance>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Global-Governed-Providers-Protection-Assistance/dp/1108816703>



“ The research of the Refugee Studies Centre on refugee-led organizations is critical in what is now a growing international discussion. The research is having a major impact on global institutions, national debates, and refugee realities.”

Hon. Bob Rae Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations

Law change and new guidance protect patients' best interests



Professor Celia Kitzinger
University of Cardiff



Professor Jenny Kitzinger
University of Cardiff

ESRC-funded research has led to changes in the law in England and Wales on life-sustaining treatments, improving person-centred decision-making, benefiting over 68,000 patients in prolonged coma, vegetative or minimally conscious states, as well as their families and friends, and resulting in new guidance for health professionals on protecting all patients' dignity and best interests.

Impacts

- ESRC-funded research led to legal changes that ensure patients in a vegetative or minimally conscious state are not subjected to futile or unwanted life support if robust decision-making procedures have been followed, and clinicians and the family are in agreement on the best interests of the patient. The court remains available when a patient's best interests are in dispute, or decisions are 'finely balanced'.
- They ensured healthcare professionals are supported in making high-quality, well-informed decisions about all adult patients who are unable to speak for themselves by contributing, through impacts on case law and the insights provided by their research, to a detailed 100-page professional guidance on clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH) (2018), produced by the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), and endorsed by the General Medical Council. They also contributed to the RCP 2020 National Guidelines on clinical care of patients in prolonged disorders of consciousness.
- Evidence from the research fed into the landmark 2018 Supreme Court judgment that doctors and families no longer need to go to court before removing all life-sustaining treatments (provided correct procedures have been followed). This has led to more timely person-centred decision-making for patients and less trauma for families. It has freed up Court of Protection time, thereby reducing the backlog of cases for other vulnerable adults, and avoided the unnecessary diversion of healthcare funds (court cases cost on average £122,000).

About the research

One in three people face the end of their lives unable to make medical treatment decisions for themselves. Over the past decade, Professors Jenny Kitzinger and Celia Kitzinger have contributed to legal changes, new clinical guidelines and increased public awareness to ensure that humane, person-centred, robust decision-making processes are applied to any patient who lacks the capacity to decide for themselves.

Their ESRC-funded research into medical decision-making for patients in vegetative or minimally conscious states (prolonged disorders of consciousness) identified many cases of doctors prescribing life-sustaining treatments (such as clinically assisted nutrition and hydration) without consulting family and friends on the patient's wishes. Frequently, patients were being kept alive for many years without any consideration of their best interests. "We found this partly to be due to a perceived requirement to refer cases to court if withdrawing clinically-assisted nutrition and hydration was being considered," says Professor Jenny Kitzinger, who is a social anthropologist.

Their study highlighted unintended consequences of the need for judicial approval, particularly the long delays in ending treatment when both families and clinicians had come to the decision that the treatment was no longer in the patient's best interest. Court hearings are intimidating for families and expensive for hospitals and NHS Trusts. The researchers learned that doctors often provided medical treatment without any review of whether or not this was what the patient would have wanted – and some doctors abdicated responsibility to consider patients' best interests at all, leaving them to be treated by default, sometimes for decades.

Through in-depth interviews with families and work tracking patient pathways, the researchers drew on their clear evidence-based findings to inform clinicians, High Court judges, the Royal College of Physicians and the BMA of the need to change the law and introduce better person-centred decision-making.

Following their work the law and guidelines are now clear, but a 'cultural lag' persists in some hospital and care settings where a professionally-centred rather than person-centred ethos prevails. Consequently, the researchers continue to work towards ensuring timely person-centred decision-making for all 'coma' patients as well as patients more generally.

"When considering whether to continue or discontinue a treatment, 'no decision' is no longer an option," says Professor Jenny Kitinger. "All institutions and clinicians working in this area need to be fully familiar with the law and professional guidelines. They need to be sure they are consulting appropriately with the patient's family and friends and acting in patients' best interests, taking into account the best available clinical evidence and – crucially – information about the individual's approach to life, and their values, wishes, feelings and beliefs."

The researchers have raised awareness of the need for more person-centred patient care through the award-winning resource healthtalk.org website, varied publications and social media, as well as radio and TV appearances.

Further information

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<https://healthtalk.org/family-experiences-vegetative-and-minimally-conscious-states/overview>

Coma and Disorders of Consciousness Research Centre
<https://cdoc.org.uk/>

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/guidelines-policy/prolonged-disorders-consciousness-following-sudden-onset-brain-injury-national-clinical-guidelines>

<https://openjusticecourtsofprotection.org/2021/06/23/clinically-assisted-nutrition-and-hydration-decisions-that-cannot-be-ignored-or-delayed/>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/1161/bma-clinically-assisted-nutrition-hydration-canh-full-guidance.pdf>

“It is indisputable that Professor Jenny Kitinger and Professor Celia Kitinger have directly contributed to the dramatic and positive evolution of the law and practice over the last seven years concerning the treatment of people with prolonged disorders of consciousness. Their work has been fundamental in helping to promote person-centred care for all.”

Victoria Butler-Cole QC

Helping families worldwide cope with the stresses of COVID-19



Dr Jamie Lachman
University of Oxford



Professor Lucie Cluver
University of Oxford

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic researchers brought together an emergency collaboration of UN agencies, NGOs, governments and volunteers to adapt and deliver evidence-based child abuse prevention and positive parenting resources. These have reduced violence against children and helped tens of millions of families cope with the challenges of COVID-19.

Impacts

- The COVID-19 Emergency Parenting Response Team's open-source parenting tip sheets and programmes have provided more than 197.8 million people in 198 countries and territories with free, accessible resources to help parents manage stress, look after their mental health, improve family relationships, keep children safe online, cope with challenging child and adolescent behaviour, manage their budget, create routines and manage in crowded homes.
- Globally, 34 governments are now using the team's COVID-19 adapted child abuse prevention research and parenting resources in their national pandemic responses and child protection programmes. These include Kenya's national parenting guidelines, Thailand's child welfare remote training protocols, India's phone mentoring programmes, and emergency parenting hotlines in Montenegro, Malaysia and the Philippines.
- Surveys of more than 1,300 families receiving COVID-19 parenting resources in 10 countries including South Africa, India and Pakistan find better reported parenting, improved coping strategies and less violence against children: 78% of respondents reported less physical abuse of children, 74% reported lower parenting stress and 84% reported more engagement with their children.
- The team collaborated with more than 240 NGOs, grassroots organisations and volunteers to develop highly accessible resources for low internet, high poverty settings and for populations with disabilities.

About the research

In March 2020 more than 1.6 billion children worldwide left school due to COVID-19 lockdown measures. Based on their previous ESRC-funded research into HIV, Professor Lucie Cluver and Dr Jamie Lachman knew that public health emergencies and school closures lead to child abuse. Indeed, UNICEF estimates COVID-19 increased family conflict and child abuse globally by 30-50% due to the stress of school closures, lockdowns, lack of services, mental health problems and economic crisis. "It was clear to us that parents everywhere would be challenged by COVID-19 and we had to do something – and fast – to provide positive parenting support," says Professor Cluver. "Now was the time for information offering immediate practical usefulness, communicated empathetically, without requiring expense or expertise."

With more than a decade of prior research and experience of implementation of evidence-based parenting programmes, members of the quickly assembled COVID-19 Parenting Emergency Response Team were able to move with speed to adapt an existing evidence-based parenting programme into a wide variety of freely accessible, culturally-sensitive, positive parenting tip sheets and radio resources. Building on existing strong partnerships with agencies such as UNICEF and the WHO, Professor Cluver, Dr Lachman and their team took just a few hours to gain the agreement of 10 UN and major donor agencies for a plan to create and disseminate parenting resources. Based on their previous research evidence, parenting tips sheets were rapidly translated into more than 100 languages in a few days with the help of volunteers including members of the World Without Orphans church network and staff from global insurance firm, Generali Insurance.

Over 200 organisations then worked to tailor the resources for different communities, and thousands of people from governments, NGOs, faith-based networks and community groups helped ensure the positive parenting messages reached the most vulnerable families in developing countries, for example through community loudspeakers to villages in Cameroon or faith-based radio sermons in Malawi.

One of the reasons the resources were so well received and shared so widely across the globe is that they were perceived primarily as positive parenting resources, rather than a violence prevention tool. “This year has pushed almost every parent in the world to their limit,” says Professor Cluver. “Our programme was for all the parents who have been stressed, exhausted and overwhelmed and just needed some parenting support at a very difficult time.”

Demand for parenting support is set to continue, particularly for more in-depth, long-term family support. The COVID-19 Emergency Response Team is currently developing digital versions of their full parenting programmes for delivery remotely through an app and as a text message programme.

“By using the findings of our previous ESRC-funded research into HIV we were able to act fast in a crisis situation, and our research was able to have an almost immediate impact,” says Dr Jamie Lachman. “We are all incredibly proud of the extraordinary global team effort in which people and organisations – most of whom we have never met in person and who were juggling their own lockdown problems – have selflessly dropped everything to make this initiative work.”

Further information

The COVID-19 Emergency Response Team of Professor Lucie Cluver, Dr Jamie Lachman, Dr Franziska Meinck, Janina Steinert, Professor Lorraine Sherr MBE, Dr Inge Wessels, Dr Ohad Green, Isang Awah and Dr Yulia Shenderovich is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

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<https://www.covid19parenting.com/home>

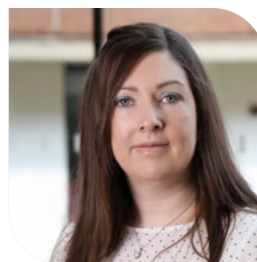
<https://www.covid19parenting.com/assets/resources/psas/Top-6-Tips-English.pdf>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-0932-8>

“It was the COVID-19 Emergency Parenting Response Team’s initiative and insight which brought parenting to the attention of agencies at the forefront of the global violence prevention response to the pandemic. It was their evidence-based expertise and resources which have provided the essential and exemplary tools for addressing this core need for families across the globe.”

Dr Alexander Butchart, Violence Prevention Unit Head
in the Social Determinants of Health Department,
World Health Organisation

Boosting productivity in ethnic minority microbusinesses



Dr Imelda McCarthy
CREME



Professor Monder Ram
CREME

Productivity from Below, an ESRC-funded collaboration between researchers, business and civil society partners, has enhanced productivity among ethnic minority microbusinesses, ensured they accessed the right funding and support during the pandemic, and has helped organisations like Ashley Community Housing, Punch Records, and Citizens UK secure as a combined value over £3 million of funding to support more than 1,000 female and migrant entrepreneurs.

Impacts

Productivity from Below (PfB) has:

- Shaped successful bids for major project funding using PfB design principles. This includes: Pathways to Enterprising Futures (PEF), a £1-million initiative to support 600 women into employment or self-employment in Birmingham; and the Migrant Business Support project (worth £1 million) to provide business support to 500 migrant-owned businesses in Bristol and the West Midlands.
- Supported Bangladeshi caterers to use social media as a new business model to increase takeaway trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Established a peer support and leadership development programme, 'The P Word', providing urgent commercial guidance to microbusinesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provided support and peer-to-peer learning to help local retailers and community groups improve their business practices and to access UK Government COVID -19 emergency funding through the launch of a Business Leadership Group (BLG), providing a monthly forum for more than 25 members. The innovation foundation NESTA identified the BLG as an example of 'grassroots innovation'.
- Built the future capacity of practitioner partners and participating firms to support local businesses through £500,000 of additional funding for four PhD students to research the implementation of PfB initiatives.

About the research

The UK's 250,000 ethnic minority businesses contribute more than £25 billion to the economy. Ninety per cent of these firms are microbusinesses with 1-9 employees. In 2019 an ESRC-funded research collaboration led by Professor Monder Ram and Dr Imelda McCarthy from The Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME) explored productivity in a sector where management processes are frequently informal and business support or HR interventions are often absent. "Despite their economic contribution, these vibrant enterprises rarely feature in debates on productivity, attract policy attention or access mainstream business support programmes and initiatives," says Professor Ram. "This results in knowledge gaps on the meaning of productivity, the role of business support providers, and the kind of interventions that might make a difference to such firms."

The Productivity from Below (PfB) project is a co-produced, innovative model for boosting entrepreneurship through partnership-working between the Universities of Aston (lead), Birmingham and Warwick and four practitioner partners: Ashley Community Housing (ACH), an award-winning social enterprise with a keen interest in promoting the employability of migrants, the Bangladeshi Network (comprising four groups with local and national reach into the sector), Citizens UK (a national civil society alliance) and Punch Records (a business with a strong social mission to promote artists from diverse backgrounds).

"It's clear that ethnic minority microbusinesses are keen to engage with academics if the relationship is based on mutual respect," says Dr McCarthy. Practitioners worked as co-investigators on the project and contributed to dissemination events. They shared understanding of what productivity means for ethnic minority-owned microbusinesses and their specific support needs, leading to the development of customised business support programmes.

“Collaborative cross-sectoral partnerships will be a key ingredient to recovery initiatives in the post COVID-19 era,” she adds. It is this collaboration that enabled PfB to rapidly respond to the needs of microbusiness during early stage lockdown restrictions and create tailored support which helped these businesses respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PfB model of working has proved highly successful over the past two years in securing major funding, demonstrating that learning and insights from grassroots initiatives can be readily scaled up. For example, in August 2021, Ashley Community Housing and the research team won a £1 million bid for funding to support migrant businesses on the continent. “The rest of Europe is looking at ways to enhance competitiveness, address inequality and promote collaboration, cohesion and integration,” says Professor Ram. “PfB has demonstrated traction regionally, nationally and internationally and is seen as a highly agile and innovative way of tackling these grand challenges.”

The research project ends in 2023, but the researchers are confident that the commitment to working hand-in-hand with local businesses will continue. “Our collaborative ethos has shown that microbusinesses can be engaged in productivity-enhancing initiatives,” says Professor Ram. “This ethos has underpinned the implementation of our business support solutions and will be a key factor in our longer term objective of developing an inclusive business support ecosystem in this region and further afield.”

Further information

Professor Monder Ram and Dr Imelda McCarthy are Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

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CREME <https://www.aston.ac.uk/research/bss/abs/centres-hubs/creme>

Addressing the productivity challenges of microbusinesses in the West Midlands:

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/research/bss/abs/centres-hubs/creme/microbusinesses>

View select project outputs here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsYukuICGNA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV5y2ypSIEA>

ProPEL Hub – The PfB project is a member of the ProPEL Hub:

<https://www.propelhub.org/author/monderram/>

“ I was delighted to take part in the Productivity from Below project with Aston University. The project was incredibly helpful in showing us the advantages of new business models and progressive ways of managing staff. The social media intervention that Aston facilitated was really important in helping us to tackle the challenging situation caused by the pandemic.”

Shahab Uddin, restaurateur, Streetly Balti

Integrating newcomers and vulnerable migrants

A unique city-focused programme has brought over 60 UK and other European cities together to share best practice on inclusion and service provision – to the benefit of their whole local communities – and prompted local, national and EU initiatives to protect vulnerable migrants and crime victims.

Impacts

- ESRC-funded researchers have enabled thousands of migrants with a precarious immigration status to access services such as shelter, food, healthcare and legal advice. In Ghent, for example, a new Reception and Orientation service now offers shelter and advice, while Frankfurt's health clinic can now provide legal advice and signposting to council services to 30 migrants a month. These migrants, termed 'irregular' due to their lack of a regular immigration status, are often excluded as a matter of national policy from many basic services.
- In the UK, 12 cities are developing and implementing individual Action Plans co-designed with the research team to foster integration of all newcomers. Bristol is developing a city-wide narrative that emphasises the shared history and identities of all residents, and Liverpool has increased English language learning and inclusive communication.
- Programme findings prompted the European Commission to commit – for the first time in a dedicated EU strategy – to the protection of victims of crime throughout the EU, regardless of immigration status, and to coordinate new EU-wide studies into solutions for long-term irregular migration status.
- The programme has also begun to shift thinking at national government level. In 2020, the Belgian government endorsed Ghent's national pilot shelter scheme; while Utrecht's 2018 'Bed, Bath and Bread' service for destitute irregular migrants prompted unprecedented national government support and funding.



Jacqueline Broadhead
COMPAS



Nicola Delvino
Amnesty International
(formerly at COMPAS)



Sarah Spencer
COMPAS



Denis Kierans
COMPAS

About the research

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity has developed ground-breaking research into integration theory and municipal initiatives that is now informing policy and practice across more than 60 European cities and beyond. "In 2016 we developed a holistic model of the integration processes based on ESRC-funded research with colleagues at Bristol University in which migrants and other residents are engaged, and identified the key roles local authorities can play to facilitate these," says Dr Sarah Spencer.

Since 2017, this model has underpinned two initiatives: Inclusive Cities, in the UK, and the City Initiative on Migrants with Irregular Status ('C-MISE'). Inclusive Cities works with local authorities on the inclusion of newcomers in the UK while C-MISE helps city leaders across Europe to find solutions to the challenges posed by 'irregular' migrants who are excluded from work and most basic services.

The research team's comprehensive written guidance and video, providing practical examples of city responses to local residents, have also been distributed by the Council of Europe to local authorities in 46 countries.

Knowing how to respond to this section of their population has been a long-standing challenge for European cities, but often too sensitive to discuss in mainstream city networks. C-MISE has provided a safe space to start conversations between cities and share knowledge and ideas on how to address the many concerns – from provision of healthcare, shelter and legal advice to protection for victims of crime, including domestic violence. "It has been a turning point in building confidence and consensus that it is appropriate and feasible for cities to address the needs of these vulnerable people," says Mr Marc Serra, Councillor for Citizen's Rights and Participation, Barcelona City Council.

Much of the success of both C-MISE and Inclusive Cities rests on the opportunities they provide for peer-to-peer learning in a well tested city working group model based on respect for the mutual expertise of researchers and city participants. Most cities do not have the resources to conduct their own research. "We have a three-way learning system," says Jacqui Broadhead. "Cities learn from each other, they learn from us and we learn from them. For cities working in isolation it is more difficult to find sustainable solutions for all residents."

The benefits of working together are broad. Local authorities can access tried and tested initiatives to help address their social and economic policy goals, thousands of vulnerable migrants can gain the support they need, and the wider community can reap the benefits of reduced homelessness, crime prevention, greater community cohesion, and the protection of public health.

“The research by Dr Sarah Spencer and her colleagues not only provided us with information about city practices across Europe from which we could learn, it opened a door for us to discuss our experience and ideas with other cities, and with the European Commission, to find practical solutions.”

Jan Braat, Senior Policy Advisor,
Migration and Integration, Municipality
of Utrecht

Further information

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) team of Jacqueline Broadhead, Sarah Spencer, Nicola Delvino and Denis Kierans, Marie Mallet-Garcia, Nathan Grassi and Rosaleen Cunningham is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

In addition to ESRC funding, the team's work has also received funding from the Open Society Foundations and Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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<https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/global-exchange/about/>

Short documentary 'Irregular migrants in European cities: How to respond?': <https://youtu.be/bdohxNnIN-M>

'Migration Making People and Places':

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/sociology/exploring-how-migration-changes-the-places-where-we-live>



School health network improves pupil health and wellbeing



Dr Emily Marchant
Swansea University

An ESRC-funded researcher has expanded a primary school health and wellbeing network across Wales, developing new tools such as a survey for pupils to share their perspectives on health and wellbeing. This has helped more than 250 schools design the health and wellbeing component of the new Curriculum for Wales (2022) tailored to their pupils' needs, and adopt evidence-based initiatives such as outdoor learning.

Impacts

- Dr Marchant's ESRC-funded doctoral research project led to a ten-fold increase in the number of primary schools in Wales participating in HAPPEN (the Health and Attainment of Pupils in a Primary Education Network). She developed a pilot health and wellbeing project from just 30 schools into a national research-led collaborative network of education, health and research professionals reaching over 250 schools across Wales.
- This has resulted in over 20,000 primary school children sharing perspectives of their health and wellbeing through the HAPPEN survey. Consequently, more than 250 schools across 19 Local Authorities in Wales have received a tailored report designed to help improve pupil outcomes, providing them with practical support in designing the health and wellbeing component of the new Welsh curriculum based on their pupils' health and wellbeing needs.
- Dr Marchant's findings influenced schools' design of the new Curriculum for Wales (phasing in from 2022) and Active Mile briefings (2020), Public Health England's guide for public health teams.
- Her evaluation of outdoor learning and The Daily Mile running initiative has benefited children worldwide by promoting evidence-informed changes in school practices, including the integration of outdoor learning into school timetables. A World Economic Forum video about her findings on outdoor learning has received over one million views worldwide.
- She has enabled more than 300 primary school staff and health education professionals to collaborate in new health and wellbeing interventions through the establishment of an annual HAPPEN conference.

About the research

HAPPEN is a network which brings together education, health and research, and is part of the National Centre for Population Health and Wellbeing Research funded by Health Care Research Wales. The overall aim of Dr Emily Marchant's PhD was to further develop this network, and expand its reach and research capacity.

HAPPEN helps primary schools who have been tasked with the design and development of their own curriculum by the Welsh Government. "HAPPEN's whole ethos is about autonomy," says Dr Marchant. "It is very important for schools as, based on curriculum reforms announced in 2015, health and wellbeing will now become an integral part of the new Curriculum for Wales from 2022." Earlier research had found a range of barriers for schools prioritising health and wellbeing because it was not a part of the assessed curriculum. As part of her PhD, Dr Marchant used the opportunity of the new curriculum development to rebrand the HAPPEN network and align its resources towards helping schools plan and implement curriculum change. "HAPPEN helps schools identify what they want to implement within their curriculum or the wider school based on the needs and priorities of pupils, and then liaises with local authorities, health teams and charities to support schools to do the things they want to do," she says.

HAPPEN now provides tools, including a survey for pupils to share their perspectives on health and wellbeing. Dr Marchant's approach has meant that the results are now shared with schools as a school report and action plan, offering a meaningful framework for the design and development of their own curriculum content that meets their particular needs. The tools can also examine the impact of health and wellbeing school-based interventions.

The HAPPEN survey has now been completed by more than 20,000 pupils in years 4-6 across Wales, providing information on topics such as physical activity, nutrition, sleep, screen time, wellbeing and mental health. Dr Marchant also linked this unique health-behaviour data with the SAIL Databank, a national database of anonymised population-level data part-funded by ESRC via the Administrative Data Research UK partnership.

A novel part of HAPPEN is that the data collected via the survey on children's health and wellbeing not only helps improve school practice but also, by linking it with routine records in SAIL such as educational attainment, provides opportunities to investigate the different influences on children's outcomes. At present, for example, access to COVID-19 testing data combined with HAPPEN survey data throws light on the association between child health behaviours and the likelihood of COVID-19 infection.

In addition, Dr Marchant's rigorous evaluations of health and wellbeing initiatives such as outdoor learning and The Daily Mile have provided schools with the confidence to implement local interventions based on barriers and enablers identified by pupils, teachers and headteachers. Her decision to integrate HAPPEN action plans into the feedback from the HAPPEN Survey has prompted schools to explore practical ways of meeting their health and wellbeing targets. For example, some schools have introduced a board game club or screen time workshop to help reduce sedentary screen time while others have created certificates for health tuck shop choice to promote healthy eating.

“Working alongside Emily was hugely valuable for us as a school; her work with HAPPEN enabled our staff to assess pupils' wellbeing and then work with learners to identify priorities for the year ahead. This has had a positive impact on standards of wellbeing, evidenced when the HAPPEN survey was again carried out at the end of the year. Emily's passion to improve children's wellbeing is inspiring!”

Cathy Barnett, Headteacher, Eveswell Primary School, Newport

Further information

Dr Emily Marchant is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

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The HAPPEN network: <https://happen-wales.co.uk/>

HAPPEN in schools video:

<https://happen-wales.co.uk/happencasestudies/>

Outdoor learning article:

<https://theconversation.com/outdoor-learning-has-huge-benefits-for-children-and-teachers-so-why-isnt-it-used-in-more-schools-118067>

The Daily Mile article:

<https://theconversation.com/running-a-mile-a-day-can-make-children-healthier-heres-how-schools-can-make-it-more-fun-130156>

SAIL Databank: <https://saildatabank.com/>

Administrative Data Research UK partnership (ADRUk): <https://www.adruk.org>



Providing rapid, reliable business data in uncertain times



Professor Paul Mizen
University of Nottingham

Near real-time data on UK business activity and uncertainty provided since 2016 by the pioneering Decision Maker Panel survey has helped shape UK Government and Bank of England policy decisions in response to the economic shocks caused by COVID-19 and Brexit.

Impacts

- The Decision Maker Panel's (DMP) timely and reliable data on business activity and uncertainty met an immediate need among policymakers and influenced decision-making in the Bank of England, 10 Downing Street, Cabinet Office, HM Treasury and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- The DMP data contributed to key government decisions about interest rates, taxes and business support schemes in response to Brexit and COVID-19.
 - It helped shape the Chancellor of the Exchequer's decision to raise allowances in the 2018 Budget, permitting over 1.25 million businesses to invest £19.5 billion in the UK economy tax free in 2019-20.
 - The data also informed the design of 'furlough,' grant support schemes and stimulus measures to protect businesses and jobs through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The survey is now an essential tool for the Bank of England and its committees in setting monetary and financial policy. Between 2017-2021, DMP data was cited in more than 25 Bank of England speeches and 35 official publications including Inflation/Monetary Policy Reports.
- The novel DMP Uncertainty Index – a measure of the percentage of firms reporting Brexit/COVID-19 to be the most important source of uncertainty – has been adopted to communicate business uncertainty in official publications.

About the research

Professor Paul Mizen, with colleagues at the Bank of England and Stanford University, created the Decision Maker Panel (DMP) survey in 2016, with funding from the ESRC. DMP comprises a monthly online survey of around 9,500 senior business executives and includes specially devised questions about current business conditions, expected future conditions and uncertainty. "Prior to 2016, business insight was based on smaller, unrepresentative surveys, while official statistics were available but with a lag," says Professor Mizen.

The DMP survey provides much more up-to-date information than almost all other business surveys. Its innovative approach means data is available within days, enabling policymakers to view current conditions ahead of official figures. Forward-looking, it uses methods not previously used in business surveys such as questions seeking information on a range of future outcomes – for example, sales and the probability of them happening. The DMP is highly flexible in response to particular issues at a specific moment and can cover areas outside the usual domain of business surveys. It has proved that concepts, including those as subjective as 'uncertainty', can be measured in a meaningful way. It revealed timely and novel insights about the scale and effects of COVID-19 on business in different sectors, for example that business sales revenue fell by 30% on average between April-June 2020, but fell by 80% in the accommodation and food sector.

Professor Mizen believes the DMP highlights the value of an international team of academics and policymakers working together to produce top quality research with policy impact. Co-creator Professor Nick Bloom, an international expert in business surveys and uncertainty, ensured the team could compare results with a similar survey supported by the US Federal Reserve, enabling valuable comparisons over the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration with the Bank of England proved vital in ensuring information reached key decision-makers in monetary and financial policy as well as government. Its timely and reliable data on business activity and uncertainty has met an immediate need among policymakers and influenced decision-making in 10 Downing Street, Cabinet Office, HM Treasury and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Although the DMP was initially created to help the Bank of England and UK Government make critical policy decisions under uncertainty in response to Brexit, it quickly pivoted to address a possibly even greater source of uncertainty – COVID-19. Its potential to inform decision-making during unprecedented economic shocks is now attracting interest internationally and among organisations such as the World Bank and IMF. “The rapid, reliable data has proved essential for the UK and US responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also points to the future, indicating how businesses will respond to the ‘new normal’ after the pandemic,” says Professor Bloom.

“Having developed the new tool – based on rapid business surveys gathering representative samples of data across a range of businesses types – we are unlikely to return to the old methods,” says Professor Mizen. “With government funding, these surveys will become increasingly integrated and connected to administrative, web-based and transaction data providing policymakers with better quality data for the undoubted challenges that lie ahead.”

Further information

The Decision Maker Panel team includes Professor Paul Mizen, Julia Leather and Gregory Thwaites (University of Nottingham), Professor Nick Bloom (Stanford University) and Phillip Bunn and Lena Anayi (Bank of England). The team are Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021

The project also received funding from the Universities of Nottingham, Stanford and the Bank of England

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<https://decisionmakerpanel.co.uk/>

<https://www.economicsobservatory.com/update-which-firms-and-industries-have-been-most-affected-by-Covid-19>

<https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-productivity>

<https://voxeu.org/article/labour-market-reallocation-wake-covid-19>

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/quarterly-bulletin/2021/2021-q2/influences-on-investment-by-uk-businesses-evidence-from-the-decision-maker-panel>

“ The Decision Maker Panel has been a significant success that helped to spur innovation in the Office for National Statistics and more widely. In sum, the DMP was a game changer for business surveys.”

Jonathan Athow, Deputy National Statistician and Director General, Economic Statistics, Office for National Statistics

Peace and reconciliation: tackling conflict from the ground up



Dr Simon Rushton
Department of Politics and
International Relations
University of Sheffield

An international ESRC/Minciencias Newton-funded collaborative research partnership has prompted a new city-wide peace strategy in the violence-affected Colombian port of Buenaventura and led to a skills-based training programme that enables communities to engage in conflict resolution at the grassroots level.

Impacts

- A research collaboration, led by the University of Sheffield and Javeriana University's Improbable Dialogues project team, prompted Buenaventura's municipal council to adopt a Strategy for Peace and Co-existence initiative in February 2021. Supported by Mayor Victor Hugo Vidal, who created the Office for Peace and Co-Existence Programmes to implement this strategy, the policy sets out a roadmap of practical initiatives including new institutional mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution to tackle the violence that threatens almost half of the city's 400,000 inhabitants.
- The Inter-Ethnic Truth Commission in the Pacific Region (CIVP), co-designers of the peace strategy, has adopted it as the basis of a wider Regional Peace Pact for Colombia's Pacific coast region.
- Increased peace-building capacity with more than 50 local people trained in conflict resolution techniques and the skills to instigate and support local community dialogues for peace through the Diploma in Facilitation of Territorial Social Dialogue (the 'Diplomado'). The Diplomado was developed and delivered by researchers from Sheffield and Javeriana Universities, working with the local organisation CORMEPAZ (the Organisation for Memory and Peace), community groups, local governments and citizen researchers.
- Based on the success of the Buenaventura peace strategy, a parallel peace-building initiative has been launched in Tibú, on the border with Venezuela.

About the research

Buenaventura is one of the most dangerous cities in South America. A 2016 national-level Colombian peace agreement ended two decades of violent paramilitary power struggles but has not translated into peace on the ground. The port city, where 80% of citizens live in poverty, has since fallen victim to criminal gangs, drug wars and tensions between the port authority and local people. "People's lives are characterised by violence and insecurity," says Dr Simon Rushton. "In theory, Colombia is a post-conflict country, but the lived experience of communities is of political or criminal armed violence." This includes significant tensions that arose from attempts by the port authority to clear a largely Afro-Colombian community from informal housing on land on the coast and, as a separate issue, the port's plans to dredge an estuary believed by local people to be the resting place of the bodies of those who disappeared during the 1995-2015 conflict.

In 2018, the Improbable Dialogues project team began working with a range of local stakeholders to co-produce participatory peace-building initiatives. "Crucially we didn't come as outside experts with all the answers," says Dr Rushton. "We saw ourselves as facilitators with evidence that grassroots, locally driven initiatives not only work in other places around the world but often work better than top-down attempts to create peace. Our goal was to help set in motion a range of local dialogues between different groups in the city who are often in conflict."

The success of this highly collaborative effort, funded in partnership by the Colombian government through Minciencias and by the ESRC via the Newton Fund, is due to the participation of influential actors including the local human rights organisation CORMEPAZ, Javeriana University, the Office of the Mayor, community leaders and numerous grassroots organisations. Together they co-created not only a roadmap for peace but also a sustainable process of dialogue-building through the Diplomado, a conflict resolution training programme in research, communication and negotiation skills.

Dr Juan Mario Díaz-Arévalo, a post-doctoral researcher on the Improbable Dialogues project, explains that “The Diplomado is all about giving trainees the skills to work with peers in their communities, engage productively in the dialogues we are creating and exert agency over their own situation.”

In 2019, Victor Hugo Vidal, Mayor of Buenaventura, was elected to office with a mandate to urgently address the high levels of violence in the city. “Working with the Improbable Dialogues team on the strategy for peace and its implementation has not only allowed his new administration to start delivering on this promise, but also to take a leading role in wider regional peace-building initiatives,” says Dr Rushton.

Further information

Dr Simon Rushton, Dr Juan Mario Díaz-Arévalo, Dr Melanie Lombard and Dr Juan Miguel Kanai (all of the University of Sheffield); **Professor Jefferson Jaramillo Marín, Dr Paula Ospina Saavedra, Daniela Mosquera Camacho and Johana Paola Torres** (all of Javeriana University, Colombia); **Adriel Ruiz Galván and María José Ruiz** (CORMEPAZ, Colombia); and **Jhon Erick Caicedo** (Office of Communication and Community Development, Mayor’s Office, Buenaventura, Colombia) are **Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2021**

This project was funded in partnership between ESRC and Minciencias through the Newton-Caldas Fund

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Improbable Dialogues project website:

<https://proyecto-dialogosimprobables.com/en/proyecto/>

Official launch event of the Buenaventura Strategy for Peace and Reconciliation (video, Spanish):

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=247593330318662&ref=watch_permalink

Territorial peace in Colombia: A transformative concept?

(Blog post): <https://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/2019/03/20/territorial-peace-in-colombia-a-transformative-concept/>

“*The Diplomado has had a great impact on me. I learned strategies to facilitate and improve dialogue, not only in my organisation but on a personal level. The course allowed me to realise that reconciliation is only possible when conditions are created for ‘improbable dialogues’ to take place.*”

Rosmery Zapata, Diplomado participant, Buenaventura

Judging panel

Chair: Jeremy Neathley, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

After completing a degree in Human Geography at the University of Reading, Jeremy joined the ESRC in 1990. For a number of years he worked on research methods and the development of major data infrastructure projects including the Understanding Society longitudinal survey and Birth Cohort studies.

He took on the team head role in the then Research Directorate in 2002 before becoming Secretary to both the Research Resources Board and Training and Development Board, where he led on the introduction of the ESRC Doctoral Training Centre network. As secretary to the ESRC Research Committee he subsequently took on a role in leading the overall development of ESRC's strategic priorities before assuming his Director role in 2019. His role includes overall responsibility for ESRC's strategic planning, insight and evaluation, stakeholder engagement and international partnerships.

Siobhan Campbell, Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser, Department for Transport

Siobhan is Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Central Research Team in the Department for Transport (DfT). She oversees the central science and technology, social research, behavioural science, and evaluation teams, with an interest in the Future of Mobility; building science, research and innovation across the transport sector; and the evidence required to help us decarbonise transport.

Siobhan is the deputy head of the UK Government's Social Research profession (GSR), helping provide leadership and direction to government's 1,800 GSR members. Prior to DfT, Siobhan worked in a number of government departments, including the Department of Energy and Climate Change, HM Treasury, the Scottish Government and the Home Office, on a wide range of policy and research areas. She has a PhD in psychology from the University of Glasgow.

Nafeesa Dajda, Head of Regional Growth, Satellite Applications Catapult

Nafeesa joined the Satellite Applications Catapult in January 2014. Her role as Head of Regional Growth involves creating partnerships between the research knowledge base and businesses across the UK. These collaborations ensure the pull through of great ideas related to space applications into innovative new products, services and businesses.

Prior to the Satellite Applications Catapult she worked for five years at BlackBerry managing their global University Relations programmes, BlackBerry Academic Programme and outreach activities to encourage young people to study STEM subjects, as well as a running a women's scholarship programme.

Nafeesa graduated from Warwick University with a PhD in Electrochemistry and then spent a year as a postdoc researcher in Georgia State University, America. She then spent five years at the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council in a variety of University and business facing roles.

Rita Gardner, Chief Executive, Academy of Social Sciences

Rita is an environmental geographer by training and held academic positions in King's College, London (1979-1994) and Queen Mary University of London (1994-1996) prior to becoming the first female Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), a post she held from 1996 to 2018.

She led the transformation of the Society to a world-leading, modern learned society and professional body. She is currently Chief Executive of the Academy of Social Sciences (2019) and has held a wide range of non-executive and advisory positions. Her work has been recognised with a CBE for 'services to geography', leading awards from the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the American Association of Geographers, and six honorary degrees.

Lisa Harker, Director, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory

Lisa is Director of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO), a new organisation which aims to improve the lives of children and families by ensuring that decision-making in the family justice system in England and Wales is informed by the best data and research evidence.

Lisa has 30 years' experience of advancing policy and practice to improve the lives of children. She was previously Chief Executive of children's charity The Art Room, Director of Strategy at the NSPCC, Co-Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), and the government's 'child poverty tsar'. Lisa is also a Visiting Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford and has first-hand experience of the family justice system as an adoptive parent of two children.

Grant Hill-Cawthorne, Director of Research, House of Commons

Grant is a medical microbiologist and the Director of Research for the House of Commons. After completing medicine and medical training at the University of Cambridge he went to Saudi Arabia to set up a laboratory specialising in pathogen genomics, where he completed his PhD on the use of genomics for public health microbiology.

In 2011-2012 he was an NHS Medical Director's Clinical Fellow and the Clinical Adviser to the Deputy Chief Executive of NICE. From 2013-2018, Grant was the Senior Lecturer in Communicable Diseases Epidemiology at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney. Between May 2018 and March 2020, Grant headed POST, the academic unit within the UK Parliament that bridges research and policy. He is currently on secondment to the House of Commons as Director of Research – heading the eight research service teams of the Commons Library. Grant continues as an adjunct Associate Professor in Global Health at the University of Sydney.

Peter Matanle, Senior Lecturer at the School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield

Peter is Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies and from 2014-2020 Director of Research and Innovation at the University of Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies (SEAS). Peter joined SEAS in 2001 after working as Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at Niigata University in Japan.

Peter's research interests are in the social and cultural geography of East Asian development. Within this area, his focus has been on: population, environment, and regional development in post-industrial society; the theory and practice of permanent employment in large organisations; and representations of gender at work in popular culture.



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