

Institution: University of Glasgow

Unit of Assessment - C16: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning

A. CONTEXT

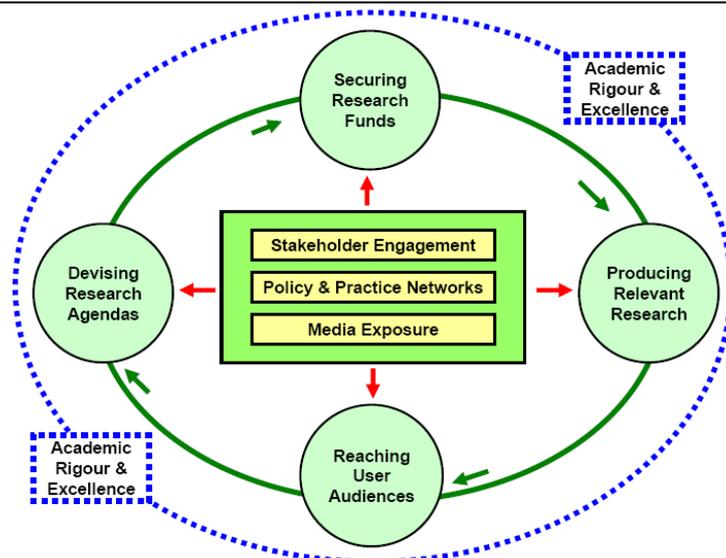
Applied research has long been at the core of what Urban Studies at Glasgow (USG) does best. Originating in the ESRC Centre for Housing Research in the 1980s, we have always had a strong commitment to shaping policy and practice agendas through close engagement with key users. Over the years, USG pioneered the importance of impact by developing extensive contacts with relevant stakeholders and using the breadth of this network to disseminate research findings via regular newsletters and to debate them through practice-orientated conferences. Applying the conceptual framework set out in Meagher *et al.* (2008, *Research Evaluation*, 17(3), pp. 163-173), we can define our key users, beneficiaries and audiences as:

- Policy-makers at all levels of government, especially those responsible for health, housing, planning and regeneration policy. Some of these work for national, devolved or local government, while others are employed by specialist agencies.
- Practitioners engaged in tackling urban problems on the ground or delivering vital urban services, such as housing managers in the public sector, community leaders in the voluntary sector, and housebuilders/real estate investors in the private sector.
- Knowledge brokers and intermediaries, connecting us to policy-makers, practitioners and the wider public. They include funders such as JRF and ESRC, professional institutes such as the CIH, RICS and RTPI, along with the local, regional and national media.

All three research groups share an explicit commitment to shaping public policy, improving service delivery, challenging conventional wisdom, and enhancing public understanding of policy issues. The fields of impact vary between research groups, but embrace a wide range of urban policy concerns. Neighbourhoods and Well-Being has a strong focus on improving health & welfare outcomes and enhancing social inclusion. Two impact case studies (Go-Well and Gangs, Knife Crime & Territoriality) illustrate this well. The interaction between housing markets and policies, and its impact on housing outcomes is a particular concern in Housing and Urban Economics, as evidenced by the case study of Local Housing Systems Analysis and the associated production of a housing affordability model for the Scottish Government. Shaping place quality through influencing planning policy and stimulating practitioner debate is an important focus in Governance and Quality of Place, as evidenced by the recently-commissioned Good Practice Guide on 'Delivering Better Places in Scotland'.

B. APPROACH TO IMPACT

Our approach to impact is summarised in the diagram opposite, as explained and evidenced in this section. USG sees academic rigour and excellence as the foundation of any genuine impact, as indicated by the outer dotted line. We seek to embed impact within the entire research process, and not limit it simply to dissemination. So the dynamic and virtuous circle in the middle part of the diagram represents schematic stages of the research process (at least for externally funded projects) each of which is influenced by non-academic users, beneficiaries and audiences.



To achieve this, USG seeks to connect the various 'mechanisms' of impact, shown in the box at the centre of the diagram, to the research process as a whole, seeing these as means to an end, not as ends in their own right. Taking these mechanisms in turn, this section shows how we aim to maximise the reach and significance of impact by embedding it throughout the research process.

Impact template (REF3a)

B.1 Stakeholder Engagement: USG's approach is to involve stakeholders in:

- **Devising research agendas:** We create space for reflective dialogue with key stakeholders to help us identify research priorities. Example: in 2008 USG brought together 37 academics and 46 practitioners from across the UK at a two-day ESRC seminar on urban design quality. We appoint experienced practitioners to honorary posts so we can use strong practice connections to test research ideas. Examples: Jim Mackinnon, former Chief Planner for Scotland, now Honorary Research Fellow; Kevin Murray, former RTPI President, now Honorary Professor.
- **Securing research funds:** We invest in developing long-term relationships with particular funders prepared to fund repeat commissions. Examples: Scottish Government Framework Agreement signed to cover 2012-15 projects; Mackenzie's work with NHS Scotland; Orr's RICS Education Trust funded projects; Pryce's projects for DCLG & the Financial Services Authority.
- **Producing relevant research:** Increasingly, we involve stakeholders and funders in the co-production of research. Examples: Bailey and Hastings' study of 'Delivering Cleaner Streets in Diverse Neighbourhoods' managed by a Project Advisory Group including Audit Commission, DCLG, local authorities, LGA, & Keep Britain Tidy; Kintrea's research on housing regeneration in Dublin, co-produced with Office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, Republic of Ireland.
- **Reaching user audiences:** Communicating findings directly to key stakeholders and funders is central to our impact approach. Examples: Gibb's presentations to senior civil servants in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff on innovative ways to fund affordable housing. Munro's work on 'Students in Cities' presented directly to senior staff of all four UK HE funding councils.

B.2 Policy and Practice Networks: USG encourages strong staff participation in policy and practice networks because such connections can make a significant contribution to:

- **Devising research agendas:** Examples: Adams, Gibb and Pryce who all served on the UK Government's Housing Markets & Planning Analysis Expert Panel until 2010, helping to shape national research priorities; Gibb's links to the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers initiated a series of scoping discussions on the practical use of housing research; Hastings' appointment to JRF Task Group to develop Anti-Poverty Strategy for UK; Wu's work with the World Bank advising governments in South Africa on local economic development.
- **Securing research funds:** Example: as well as providing advice, Adams, Gibb and Pryce all undertook research commissioned by the Housing Markets & Planning Analysis Expert Panel.
- **Producing relevant research:** Example: Bannister's ESRC project on 'Building Safer Communities' linked 32 Scottish community safety partnerships with Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh academics to promote evidence-based improvements in community safety.
- **Reaching user audiences:** Exploiting the potential of established networks is a critical way for staff to communicate new research. Examples: Gibb's evidence to the Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament, following his previous appointment as Adviser to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. House of Commons exchange between DCLG Minister (Grant Shapps MP) & Shadow Minister (Hilary Benn MP) around Hastings' work on 'Serving Deprived Communities in a Recession'. Rodgers presented his work on urban violence directly to the DFID Urban Development Network. Wang convened two international housing workshops at Tsinghua University in Beijing to help the Chinese Ministry for Housing draft new housing legislation and a national housing development plan. In addition, USG regularly attracts non-academics to its seminar series, with invitations sent out to a user mailing list of around 180. A 2009 seminar on 'Housing Cycles, Financial Crises and the Supply of Housing' with Kate Barker (Monetary Policy Committee) and Pryce & Levin (USG) attracted over 100 participants.

B.3 Media Exposure: USG aims to communicate research findings to different user audiences through varied and relevant forms of media. Increasingly, academic outputs are reinforced by:

- Research summaries used specifically to target policy-makers and practitioners, often working through 'knowledge intermediaries'. Examples: Investor Decision-Making & Property Attributes (RICS FIBRE), Street Cleanliness in Deprived and Better-off Neighbourhoods (JRF Findings).
- Press releases with newsworthy stories directed at broader public through TV, radio & press. Examples: Work on neighbourhood structures' crime rates (Livingston, Kearns and Bannister) highlighted in BBC Radio Scotland interview and matching piece in The Herald. Initial 2012 results from Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (Bailey) reported extensively in broadcast

Impact template (REF3a)

- and press media, and formed the basis for ITV programme 'Breadline Britain' watched by 3.5m.
- Websites intended to carry research to broader audience: Example: Over 4,000 unique visitors to <http://www.gowellonline.com/> (GoWell: Kearns) in 2012-13, with 28% from beyond UK.
 - Blogs & social media used to generate wider debate. Example: <http://kenqibb.wordpress.com/> in which Gibb comments on broader policy issues, often in relation to his own research. This has led to follow-up media work, including on BBC Scotland's 'Good Morning Scotland'.

B.4 Examples of University support for USG approach include:

- Knowledge Exchange and Impact is now a key component of annual performance review.
- Financial support for specific events, such as a special session for practitioners on Gibb's work on the Housing and Neighbourhoods Monitor at 2009 ISA Housing Conference in Glasgow.
- Creation of a new Knowledge Exchange Officer post in 2012 with associated Administrative Assistant to work across the School of Social and Political Sciences, including Urban Studies.
- A dedicated Media Relations Officer for Social Sciences advises on media contact & strategies.
- Website development skills provided by trained administrator located within the School.

C. STRATEGY AND PLANS

Over the next five years, USG intends to build on the numerous initiatives outlined above and strengthen our approach to knowledge exchange (KE) and impact primarily through **Policy Scotland** (<http://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/>). Launched in 2013, with Gibb appointed as first Director, this is the University's focal point for research and KE activities across all relevant policy domains. Policy Scotland is charged with maximising policy-based networks and KE outside the University and enhancing the KE and impact contribution by policy-orientated researchers within the University. Housing, health and urban regeneration are important University policy strengths and priority areas for Policy Scotland. Policy Scotland is already developing a global cities and HEI network to derive lessons from mega-event legacies. Over the next five years, working primarily through Policy Scotland and its dedicated KE resource, USG will:

- Embed stakeholder engagement as a standard element of research design.
- Take advantage of regular workshops for staff on new developments in, and opportunities for KE, co-production, novel communication and maximising impact from social media.
- Develop an integrated database of key user contacts to ensure that they are directly informed about new research findings, and that opportunities for high-level presentations are maximised.
- Develop an active sounding board or advisory group for research and KE in Urban Studies.
- Make ever greater use of newly emerging technologies to communicate research findings to a broader audience, e.g. by producing a regular research e-newsletter.
- Identify and exploit new opportunities to enable academics and expert users to engage in reflective dialogue.

D. RELATIONSHIP TO IMPACT CASE STUDIES

Each of the three case studies illustrates important aspects of USG's approach to impact.

- Investing in *long-term relationships with stakeholders* is clearly evident in USG's work on **Local Housing Systems Analysis**, which demonstrates the importance of linking research findings to practitioner training, so developing a broader informal network of reflective practitioners.
- *Stakeholder engagement* is also a core part of the **GoWell Programme**, which has held seven annual events for policy-makers, practitioners and community residents, with a typical attendance of around 100 delegates. GoWell set up a *Learning Network*, with e-updates about the research and publications sent out to over 200 policy-makers and practitioners twice a year. To increase *Media Exposure*, the GoWell Programme established a Twitter account in 2013, attracting over 100 followers in its first three months.
- *Reaching key stakeholders* was also central to USG's work on **Gangs and Territoriality**, with presentations given directly at the Home Office, DCLG and Youth Justice Board. Strong emphasis was placed on *Media Exposure*. The projects attracted very substantial coverage in the press and on television, and featured in an art exhibition. The website has been accessed 15,500 times, with approximately 1,600 copies of the report having been downloaded.