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Institution: St Mary's University College
Unit of Assessment: 30: History
a. Context <p>This submission comes from the staff of the History unit within the School of Arts and Humanities (until September 2013 part of the School of Theology, Philosophy and History), of St Mary's University College, Twickenham (hereafter 'SMUC'). In consonance with the University College's Catholic tradition, with its emphasis on the social good and common good and social engagement, historians in the Unit consider public engagement to be a major component of their scholarly work. Although in no sense confessionally partisan, much of the research of staff in the Unit concentrates on how the recording of the past and the writing of history, can actively contribute to a better understanding of human experience. In recent years its research has focused on religious conflict, social cohesion, shared traditions, public engagement and reconciliation in historical context, new Palestinian and Israeli historiography, oral history and subaltern studies and history, culture and memory.</p> <p>The Unit incorporates two main Centres as vehicles for delivering impact: these are the Centre for Religion and History (CRH), established in 2001, and the Centre for the Philosophy of History, (CfPH), established in June 2013.</p>
b. Approach to impact <p>The Centre for Religion and History (CRH) incorporated the Holy Land Research Project (HLRP) in 2008. The activities of CRH and the HLRP have centred on public engagement, including sponsoring regular, major international conferences on significant themes connected with religion, religious conflict and reconciliation in historical context. Staff in the Centre have a long history of interest in, and concern for, peace and reconciliation, especially in regard to peace initiatives in the Middle East as evidenced by the work of Professor Nur Masalha and Dr Lynne Scholefield (now retired) whose research focused on the Christian-Jewish dialogue and who is part of the Muslims in Britain Research Network.</p> <p>The CRH exists to reflect on the history of different faith traditions, and the historical role of religion, both as a source of conflict and the means of its resolution. In this respect the Centre is having an impact on all faith communities and promoting the importance of inter-faith understanding and dialogue. During the current REF assessment period members of CRH have been interviewed regularly for historical documentaries and consulted on historical public exhibitions, thus helping to shape public discourse on religious difference, conflict and its resolution. Specific examples of this include Dr Claire Norton's works on early modern Ottoman history, particularly focusing on instances of cultural transfer and interaction among communities living in border areas and other liminal spaces. Norton's work explored the role conversion played in the fabrication of cosmopolitan Mediterranean identities and how it intersected with trading networks, wider patterns of voluntary or involuntary economic migration, and the dissemination of ideas, intellectual traditions, cultural practices and material goods in Western Europe and in Britain in particular. She has convened pedagogical workshops for teachers on the subject of interactions between Islamic cultures and Europe over the past 1500 years and one of these is the subject of her impact case study.</p> <p>CRH's collaborative activities and workshops have included those with charities such as Living Stones for Holy Land Trust (UK), an ecumenical trust which promotes exchanges between Christian communities in Britain and those in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries, Sabeel-Palestinian Christian Ecumenical Centre in Jerusalem and Masalha's involvement with the Woking People of Faith. During the current REF period, Professor Mary Grey, a Visiting Professor at St Mary's, chaired the Theology Group of Living Stones for the Holy Land Trust and is a Patron of Friends of Sabeel UK, a charity which supports a Jerusalem-based Palestinian Christian Ecumenical Centre. She has been running for many years a charity which provides assistance to</p>

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the Dalit communities in India.

The Woking People of Faith is a charitable organisation led by members of different faith organisations and individuals. It helps create a more cohesive society for the benefit of all the people living in Woking, a large town located in the west of Surrey and part of the Greater London urban area. The diverse social and cultural heritage of the town includes the historic and beautiful Shah Jahan Mosque, the oldest mosque in England. Regular local worshippers at this Mosque have taken part in a key public event on shared traditions in the New Testament and the Quran. Masalha co-organised this event with the Woking People of Faith in November 2012. Norton and Masalha convened and contributed to a pedagogical workshop for teachers held at SMUC on 7th March 2013 (with support from a colleague at the British Library, Nur Sobers-Khan) entitled '*Promoting Inclusion and Critical Engagement through Education*'. The workshop also involved the Quilliam Foundation, a London-based Muslim think-tank that counters extremism and promotes religious deradicalisation and speakers included a representative of the London Metropolitan Police. The workshop argued for significant changes in secondary and primary educational curricula, designed to foster de-radicalisation and promote social and religious tolerance and a greater sense of cohesion and belonging among all British citizens. It also sought to broaden and enrich teachers' knowledge of different subjects through a discussion of how Islamic civilisations, science and culture have contributed to the development of the modern world, and how the history of Britain has been at various times closely intertwined with the history of various Muslim empires and communities. Comments and suggestions made at the workshop were later placed on social media websites.

In 2011 Masalha and HLRP colleagues were part of a successful international collaborative project funded the European Commission: Tempus, entitled: "Lifelong Learning in Palestine" (LLIP). The Tempus project is one of the most prestigious schemes in the European funding system. LLIP is a national project aiming to initiate "life-long learning" discourse and practice right across the West Bank and Gaza. The fundamental value underpinning life-long learning in Palestine is that education is a human right for everyone throughout their lives and its purpose is to foster and release people's capacities to engage with and influence their world. The project is concerned with providing learning opportunities in Palestine that are responsive to the realities on the ground. As will be seen in the case study, Masalha supported other partners in developing and delivering training workshops in Palestine. The workshops focused on the "life-wide" dimension of learning that refers to the multiplicity of sites in which learning and learning occur. This encompasses the school or other conventional educational institutions. The training facilitated the bringing together of various pedagogical packs on LLIP, and a range of educational documents, which contributed to developing national policies in Palestine.

These pedagogical packs were fine-tuned 'on the ground' with the workshops conducted in July 2013. The partners as a team made sure that the practices involved were embedded in the repertoire of skills of each of the Palestinian partners. The Palestinian partners were all involved in broad discussions of LLIP in their different areas. This was the first exercise of its kind in Palestine and skills developed can be transferred easily to other projects in the future. Palestinian partners were aware of good practice in each of their different areas. The project's main vehicle for delivering impact was through the LLIP website and other online activities. The LLIP project made use of the internet and Moodle software to report on meetings, share documents, promote internal discussion, write collectively and collect feedback for quality assurance purposes. Blogging was used to disseminate material immediately in order to facilitate discussion and advertise relevant learning opportunities. The project's events were recorded and filmed, with wide dissemination all over the West Bank and Gaza through the LLIP website and local Palestinian newspapers.

c. Strategy and plans

The School of Arts and Humanities' Research Strategy provides that future impact will be

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promoted and monitored within Centre for Religion and History (CRH) and the Centre for the Philosophy of History (CfPH). Both Centres will be key components in the next research cycle, generating new theory grounded in robust research and scholarly dialogue.

Within the Unit, key impact drivers and related activities will be as follows:

1. Influencing theory in the researching, writing and teaching of history

- Funding leaders in the field of history-theory research to become linked to the Centre;
- Annual symposia / conferences / to draw together other researchers;
- Seeking funding to engage in research which changes contemporary historical theorising and practice;
- Continued appointments of senior researchers who focus on the theory and practice of history.

2. Influencing wider religious and cultural understanding and promoting inter-faith dialogue

- Research and dissemination in the experience of migration and interfaith dialogue, resulting in changed attitudes, behaviours, policy and practice, e.g. influencing primary and secondary teaching practice, community awareness and enhance inter-faith / inter-cultural relations;
- Increasing local, national and international awareness of the role of the Church in historical conflict and its resolution; e.g. Renaissance cardinals project.
- Further fostering / supporting the research already evident.

3. Influencing the development of education and social policy in Palestine

- To develop a network of 'research associates' in advising on social and educational policy in Palestine;
- Increased production of stimulating, accessible resources for lecturers, teachers and students;
- The planned activities of the LLIP project include a review of literature on life-long learning; the setting up of LLIP websites or Web pages at all collaborative institutions; placing important educational and pedagogical documents on the LLIP websites;
- Carrying out surveys to determine local community benchmarking needs; completing survey analysis with the reports placed on the LLIP websites; video-conferencing with the Palestinian Minister of Higher Education; putting together various pedagogical packs on LLIP, along with educational documents, these feeding into future national policies in Palestine.
- Hosted public lectures about education issues each term.

d. Relationship to case studies

The reach and significance of impact in the Unit's case studies is broad, indicative of the UoA's educational scope. The areas covered are representative of sustainable best practice, providing a rich narrative that informs and directly affects the practice of history and developing historical awareness at a local, national and international level.

Norton's case study represents the impact of the Unit's research on public awareness about interfaith and migration issues, evinced through communities' changed practices in an event organised by Norton and others at SMUC in April 2013. Masalha's work on History, Culture and Memory as Sites of Life-long Learning in Palestine within the "Life-long Learning in Palestine" project is embedded in international networks that realise history, culture and life-long learning as a globally informed practice. The Project supported the Palestinian partners in developing and delivering training workshops on history, culture and learning that involved teachers, NGO workers, and organisations of Palestinian civil society, academic institutions and community centres in collaboration with European partners.

The two case studies demonstrate how the writing and teaching of history may be rethought through empirical and conceptual inquiry, and the ways human behaviour and social practices can be shaped and guided by applying historical perspectives to present-day problems; both inform and exemplify the Unit's approach to impact.