

<p>Institution: SOAS</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: 20 Law</p> <hr/> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Drawing on its wide thematic and regional expertise, the SOAS School of Law (SoL) has long defined its scholarship by reference to engagement with, and influence on, the world outside academia. Since 2008, we have sought to influence public and policy debate, legal practice and public understanding of social and legal issues such as to make a significant impact on a range of non-academic user groups and other beneficiaries and audiences both in the UK, and in our specialist regions of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In particular, key user groups and beneficiaries have included: <u>civil society organisations</u> such as Amnesty International (Welchman, Craven), the Runnymede Trust (Ashiagbor), INTERIGHTS, (Welchman), International Centre for Transitional Justice (Welchman), Human Rights Watch (Banda, Heller), Minority Rights Group (Drew, Craven), Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council (Kennedy), Musawah, the Global Network for Justice and Equality in the Muslim Family (Welchman), the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (Beck); <u>government departments, quasi-government organisations and public bodies</u> such as DFID (Oette), USAID (Newton), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia (Pahuja), the European Commission (Ashiagbor, Lau), the Government of India Planning Commission (Cullet), the UK Foreign Affairs Select Committee (Craven) and the Thailand Truth for Reconciliation Commission (Kennedy); <u>international agencies</u> such as the World Bank and UN (Lau), UNCTAD (Muchlinski), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Banda), the World Economic Forum (Kennedy) and the Asian Development Bank (Pahuja); and the <u>legal profession and the judiciary</u>, including the judiciary in Abu Dhabi (Makeen), the UAE (Foster) and Bangladesh (Menski).</p> <p>In particular, the SoL has sought to apply the insights of knowledge created in research to <u>shape or influence policy</u> within government, quasi-government bodies, international agencies and NGOs (e.g. Oette's research on criminal law and human rights in Sudan from 2007-11, which heavily influenced UN and NGO approaches to law reform in Sudan and informed UK policy-making on the comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan); <u>to influence professional standards and training</u> within the legal profession (e.g. Makeen's engagement since 2009 in training junior judges of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in copyright and international trade disputes law); <u>to inform debate amongst legal practitioners</u> (e.g. Foster's work on United Arab Emirates security and guarantee law, which has been described as 'foundational' by one of the lawyers engaged in Iraqi law reform); <u>to influence legislative change</u> and the development of legal principle (e.g. Cullet's work for the Government of India Planning Commission on water governance in 2011, or Newton's work for USAID on the rule of law in Albania in 2009); <u>to influence dispute resolution</u> and access to justice (e.g. Lau's scholarship on Islamic constitutionalism, legal pluralism and judicial independence underpinned his work with and for the European Commission, the World Bank and the UN in the area of justice sector reform in Afghanistan, as part of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy); and <u>to develop resources to enhance professional practice</u> (e.g. through Kennedy and Craven's ongoing role in advising the Qatar Foundation on the establishment of an Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in Doha).</p> <p>In addition to this wide-reaching impact around the globe, and with particular reference to the regions of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, SOAS legal scholars have also sought to influence public debate and to improve social welfare, equality and social inclusion within the UK, for example through Craven's research on state succession, which resulted in his role as expert advisor to the UK Foreign Affairs Select Committee between 2012-13 on the question of Scottish Independence; and through the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Community Leadership Programme, led by Menski since 2010.</p> <hr/> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The SoL adopts a multi-faceted approach to engaging with external users, which includes: (a) active collaboration with non-academic users in the development and implementation of individual projects; as well as (b) more structured engagements, often through appointment as an advisor or through participation in regular fora; and (c) supporting work that maps conceptual frameworks which lead to changes in public and policy discourse and practice. An example of the first</p>
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approach is Oette's work on criminal law and human rights in Sudan, which was developed in close collaboration with Sudanese academics and stakeholders (e.g. members of the law faculty at the University of Khartoum). This has allowed it to be referred to and relied upon not only in reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, but also in interventions by Sudanese civil society (such as the declarations of the Juba All Party Political Conference in 2009).

However, it is more common for the School's staff to be approached to work as expert advisors to national and international bodies based on the significance of their research and its relevance to external agendas. In the case of Sudan, Baderin was appointed as Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan by the UN Human Rights Council in 2012, producing a major report in 2013. Banda was invited to report for the Women's Rights and Gender Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on laws that discriminate against women, in response to which the UN Human Rights Council established a Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice in 2010; Cullet is Convenor of a sub-group on legal issues and member of a working group on water governance for the Five Year Plan of the Government of India Planning Commission; Kennedy is a member of the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council, a member and past Chairman of the World Economic Forum's Advisory Council on Global Governance and former member of Thailand's Truth for Reconciliation Commission (2011); Welchman is on the Board of INTERIGHTS and the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Support of Human Rights Defenders; she is also a contributor to the action-research programme of Musawah (Global Network for Justice and Equality in the Muslim Family) administered from the NGO Sisters in Islam in Malaysia. In some cases, engagement is longstanding, as in Muchlinski's role as a legal adviser (1997-date) to the UNCTAD Division on Investment and Enterprise International Arrangements Section, dealing with the legal issues surrounding International Investment Agreements; Banda's membership (2010-date) of the Africa Division of the advisory committee of Human Rights Watch, one of the world's leading independent organisations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights; and Muchlinski's role (since 2007) as adviser to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Business and Human Rights.

Such engagement is mainly focused on our core regions of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, but also includes activity within the UK and the EU. For example, in his role as deputy legal adviser to the European Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons (until 2010), Beck applied his broad scholarship of EU law to specific areas of the application of substantive EU law within the UK; whilst Ashiagbor is a member of the Academic Forum of the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading independent race equality think-tank (since 2011). The function of the Forum is to bring to bear insights from academic research in supporting the work of Runnymede, engage with the Runnymede's work, and influence policymakers.

In order to promote such engagement – and to promote the application of insights gleaned from scholarship to 'real world' uses – a variety of incentives and forms of support are available to staff. These have included pump-prime funding to the 'Crimes of Honour' project (Welchman), to bring together existing partners and key new actors to review changes since completion of a major SOAS research project in 2005; and a workshop on realising the right to sanitation in India (Cullet – see case study). In addition, the Law, Environment and Development Centre (LEDC) Public Evening Seminar Series has brought together speakers from academia, policy and legal practice, including (since 2008) from Climate Focus, Amnesty International, Third World Network, ClientEarth, The Gaia Foundation and Leigh Day & Co; whilst the SOAS 'Governance in Africa' programmes provide a forum for direct engagement, by bringing together academics (e.g. Muchlinski, Drew, Onyema), public sector officials, civil servants and managers from African institutions to examine issues of leadership and governance within African states, and the role of civil society in development.

c. Strategy and plans

Given the diverse nature of research in the SoL, our impact strategy to date has sought to create the enabling conditions for engagement with non-academic users, including institutional encouragement of *pro bono* work where appropriate (a feature of our 2020 Vision strategy) and support for smaller initiatives that can lead to significant leverage. Moving forward, support to generate impact is a growing priority, and our objective is to make this a systematic part of our research rather than simply a serendipitous outcome. For example, through internal peer review,

Impact template (REF3a)

our goal is to assist all researchers to develop strong impact plans at an early stage of writing external grant proposals, whilst we aim to provide strategic assistance in building external partnerships in the context of larger projects. One recent example has been SoL funding granted to an Early Career Scholars Writing Week (June 2013), a residential week dedicated to research, including training in dissemination strategies and the future impact of research.

A particular dimension to our institutional strategy in relation to impact involves discussion of the incorporation of activity relating to impact into existing systems and procedures for staff development, reward, promotion, probation, performance assessment, etc. The formulation of plans for impact is now embedded within the great majority of external grants, and the SoL is keen to ensure that, where appropriate, achievable plans are incorporated into all research activity planning, whether internally or externally funded. Plans involve the specification of intended audiences, communication plans for the outputs of the research, funding for specific enhancement activity, and a plan for evidence collection. This will be supported through the appointment, in 2014, of an additional member of the Research and Enterprise Office to promote research impact within the Faculty, and by the provision of appropriate training (e.g. on Media engagement). Funds will be made available both at the Departmental and Faculty levels for the promotion of knowledge transfer and public engagement activities.

d. Relationship to case studies

Whilst the SoL has only relatively recently been attentive to the language of 'impact', and given that much of the underpinning scholarship and public engagement activity pre-dates the requirements of the REF 2014, the three selected case studies exemplify the SoL's longstanding approach to external collaboration which takes advantage of the thematic and regional expertise held by SoL staff.

As outlined in (b) above, our approach to impact has, as its starting point, the public engagement undertaken by SoL staff in their work as expert advisors, as seen in: (a) active collaboration with non-academic users, a key instance of which is the Cullet case study. Cullet has worked closely with the Indian Government's Planning Commission since 2009, in particular its working group on water governance and as chair of the sub-group drafting national framework legislation for water management. (b) Structured engagements through advisory work, as exemplified by the Baderin case study. Drawing on his innovative 'harmonistic approach' to the relationship between Islamic law and international human rights law, this case study provides a key illustration where structured engagement between an internationally recognised SOAS legal scholar and government departments/international agencies, has shaped policy nationally (DFID's approach to supporting Sudan in fulfilling its human rights obligations) and internationally (as UN Independent Expert in Sudan).

The Welchman case study exemplifies a different facet of the SoL's approach to impact: (c) promoting and supporting the application of scholarship which has mapped new conceptual frameworks to 'real world' uses. As with other instances where ground-breaking scholarly work has helped define or redefine the terms of debate within the academic community – and beyond that, the policy and law-making community – Welchman's work with fellow researchers, practitioners, human rights advocates and others led to a reconceptualisation, and ultimately a new working definition, of 'honour crimes' which has become a widely accepted and widely adopted by actors within the criminal justice system (e.g. the Honour Based Violence Strategy of the Association of Chief Police Officers) and by public-facing statutory services. This type of impact – on public understandings of concepts, on public and political debate – is also a feature of Cullet's work. Cullet's research, in particular his 2009 monograph, helped to re-define the conceptual framework underpinning water law, towards one which is now informed by human rights and sustainability concerns which, when adopted by the Indian Government, has led to a draft model bill that introduces a radically new legal structure.