

<p>Institution: London South Bank University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: Social Work and Social Policy</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Application and impact is integral to the Weeks Centre and is sustained by the new research framework adopted post RAE2008. The three research groups within the Centre all adopt a strategy of working with and through appropriate user groups in all areas of research undertaken. The groups draw on their research to deliver expertise through, for example, consultancy work, secondments, knowledge transfer programmes, engaging in partnerships and collaborations with end users and potential beneficiaries, as well as dissemination practices to appropriate audiences.</p> <p>(i) Families and Social Capital Group (FSC) aims to generate research findings that impact on debates about family life and organizational supports. Users/beneficiaries are principally policymakers and social and cultural providers, at regional, national and international levels. Impact occurs via organic involvement in research processes from initiation through to public dissemination, utilizing non-academic forums, media and public bodies.</p> <p>(ii) Crime and Criminal Justice Research Group (CCJRG) delivers impact through contracted work for government agencies (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Human Rights Commission), NGOs (e.g. the Female Prisoners Welfare Project), and for local authorities (e.g. Boroughs of Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth).</p> <p>(iii) International Development Emergencies and Refugee Studies (IDEARs) researchers work mainly in international settings. Beneficiaries include, the UN, NGOs and charitable agencies (e.g. WWF), as well as UK (e.g. DFID) and foreign governments (e.g. China and Timor L'este). Their research contributes to policy debates and developments on topics such as youth violence , poverty, the environment and urban and children's health in, for example, Columbia, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Vietnam</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The Weeks Centre strives to embed impact as part of its ongoing research activity, dialogues and outcomes with non-academic bodies to produce real life benefits. Considered involvement with voluntary agencies and charities has resulted in significant social, economic and cultural impacts, selectively demonstrated below. A key element of the Centre's approach is to build processes that facilitate both short and longer-term impacts through relationships with users and beneficiaries at the levels of consultation and collaboration and which enhance professional practice.</p> <p>The three principal areas where the Centre has delivered impact during the assessment period, are (i) Informing and influencing public policy, (ii) Public engagement, and (iii) Collaboration with end users.</p> <p>Impact through informing and influencing policymakers:</p> <p>The Centre's researchers have provided information, opinion and advice during the review period to a wide array of policy making bodies and related agencies, including: the UN Development Programme, the Home Office, the Commission for Racial Equality, Gingerbread, Parentline Plus, OnePlusOne, Demos, Runnymede Trust, Age Concern, Grandparents Association, Daycare Trust, National Children's Bureau and the National Youth Agency. Examples of impact resulting from the Centre's research through such interactions include: authoring the UNDP Human Development Report (2011) for Timor L'este; informing debate on tuition fees in a House of Commons Select Committee; submitting evidence to two Government consultation exercises on <i>Measuring Child Poverty Consultation</i> (January 2013) and the <i>Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission</i>, (July 2013) and Whitehall briefings to the Department of Education aimed at reducing the over-representation of black children in educational under achievement rates (Feb. 2010).</p> <p>Partnership with the Runnymede Trust has led to a range of initiatives resulting in improved social welfare, equality and social inclusion. For example, with the Trust, FSC staff have (i) developed a programme of activities including seminars, roundtables, and conference partnerships (with the Commission for Racial Equality and Department for Local Government) on issues relating to mixed race families, (ii) contributed to an e-conference on school exclusion and racial equality (March</p>

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2010), (iii) produced a consultation document (July 2010) which has led on to a webinar hosted by Trust on black fathers; (iv) Group members participate in the Runnymede Trust's Academic Forum on Racial Equality, forming a bridge between academic work and policy/practice; (v) invited to present at a roundtable organised by the Trust on race and school exclusion. Attendees included local authority policy makers, head teachers, voluntary organisations and high profile individuals such as education consultant Tony Sewell, and Diane Abbott MP and led to a national e-conference (Feb 2010).

IDEAR's fosters economic, commercial and organizational impacts, particularly in relation to better financial opportunities and Fair Trade, working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, UNESCO and chairing Architects San Frontiers (ASF-UK). There has been consolidation through people exchange e.g. an Islington teacher appointed as Visiting Fellow (2011) via the ESRC Challenging Ideas project, which produced a Reflexive Toolkit which has been disseminated via the International Gender and Education Association (GEA) conference, 2013. Centre members have been sponsored by the Freilich Foundation (2012), Australian National University, at an international forum on ending discrimination with subsequent secondments to the Women's Unit at the Cabinet Office, Institute of Development Studies, and World Jewish Aid.

Impact through Public Engagement. This is a key approach in ensuring our research receives wide coverage. Centre staff are often called upon to provide advice to journalists and radio and television producers on a range of family, intimate relationships, marginalised communities and related policy issues. Staff regularly contribute articles in the national press and specialist magazines and provide consultation to the BBC and other television production companies. For example, a FSC researcher acted as a consultant and appeared in the BBC's highly acclaimed Mixed Britannia series (2011). Staff in the CCJRG contributed to an ITV documentary on 'Britain's Blooming Cannabis Business', itself leading to A-level media materials on 'Green Crime: Crimes against the Environment', and which interlinks the CCJRG with IDEARs interests attending to public awareness of the Environment. The CCJRG research into drug markets, crime and treatment of drug-dependent offenders led to a two episode BBC3 documentary, 'Cannabis, what's the harm?' (2011).

Other media contributions include: interviews with BBC Radio Leeds, BBC Radio London, Colourful Radio, articles in the Guardian, Daily Telegraph (see Impact Case 1) and the Times Higher Education Supplement.

Partnerships have been established with museums e.g. the V&A Museum of Childhood (via the ESRC Timescapes project), the Tate and with the Mix-d Museum. Centre staff have also organised a range of events at which research findings feature e.g. the ESRC Festival of Social Science (2012).

Impact through collaboration with user-beneficiaries

Collaboration with end users features prominently in translating our research into impact. The following provides an illustration: (i) We have worked closely with OnePlusOne in developing resources to enhance practice for those professionals involved in supporting 'mixed' couple and family relationships (Case Study 2); (ii) Under a Knowledge Transfer Partnership award (2009-11) we have collaborated with the Daycare Trust to embed research knowledge skills into the organization; (iii) a partnership with the Housing and Regeneration Department at the Borough of Lambeth provided the Council with a Framework for Action (2007-12) aimed at reducing unemployment in BME communities; (iv) Working with statutory and Third/sector agencies, such as Job Centre Plus, South Lambeth and Maudsley Mental Health Trust (SLAM), Fanon Resource Centre, Age UK and the London and Metropolitan Housing Trust, Weeks Centre staff have contributed to a consultation aimed at building cross-agency dialogue and partnerships; (v) a policy conference organised by Centre staff led to the establishment of the Lambeth Employment Skills Working Group, involving amongst others the South Bank Employers' Group and the Local Economy Policy Unit, which developed and implemented a 5-year strategic plan aimed at increasing employment opportunities within disadvantaged groups in the South London area.

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Staff have been invited to contribute to the Independent Police Commission's review on 'the Future of Policing' led by Lord Stevens and act in an advisory capacity to the Youth Justice Board. Weeks Centre staff have advised many international bodies and undertake sustained involvements with international agencies such as the UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, World Jewish Aid, Women of Africa.

Impact is continually assessed in ongoing practices of public sociology, through both invited and public events, e.g. conferences on Queer in Europe, One Year After the Riots and Young People and the Neo-Liberal Crisis, which become blog features/news articles, and foster greater democratic participation between non-academic audiences (78 posts, working papers, 20,000+ blog hits, 4000 tweets @WeeksCentre).

The Centre engages with other University resources to assist it in identifying and delivering impact. For example, the University's Knowledge Transfer Centre assisted in the development of the Centre's KTP projects. The University's Enterprise team has dedicated Business Development Managers (BDMs) assigned to individual faculties to support academics in protecting intellectual property and achieving impact from their research. The University opened its new £13M Clarence Centre for Enterprise in August 2013 to promote and support greater engagement with businesses, charities, and other organisations across London. The University's Staff Development office provides training on a range of transferable and enterprise-related skills e.g. project management.

c. Strategy and plans

Our objectives are to continue to build processes that facilitate long term impact. In line with our research strategy, our impact strategy is driven by the goals of raising the profile and reputation of the Centre, building capacity, and achieving sustainability. Key to this is the need to (i) raise staff awareness of impact and its importance, and (ii) improve procedures for identifying, collating and monitoring of impact. Over the next 5 years we will:

1. Introduce a formal impact planning stage for research projects, in line with RCUK guidance;
2. Pursue opportunities for collaborative research with key partners and end users;
3. Support staff to maximize their external visibility and impact through e.g. increased public engagement and staff exchanges with end users;
4. Grow knowledge transfer activity through e.g. KTP and Enterprise Voucher schemes;
5. Introduce evidence-gathering and monitoring procedures for impact and provide staff with training in impact monitoring and assessment;
6. Work with the University to move towards an open access publishing model to ensure the public availability of the Centre's research.

Reports on impact developments emanating from our research will be prepared and reviewed quarterly by the Weeks Centre Management Group, bi-annually by the Faculty's Research and Enterprise Committee and will feed into an annual review by the University's Research Committee.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two impact case studies align with the Centre's impact strategy and are indicative of the Centre's thinking and approach to impact, whereby research generates close policy, professional and cultural impacts, leading to real-life change and long-term collaboration.

Case study 1 reflects impact through shaping and informing of public attitudes towards racial and ethnic mixing and mixedness in Britain. Impact is delivered in the form of a high profile BBC2 TV series, viz. Mixed Britannia, and through development of a web-based resource, the Mix-d Museum, with associated materials and training programmes in partnership with a social enterprise supporting mixed race young people. Case Study 2 demonstrates impact through the development and deployment by charities and professional agencies of e-learning resources to support people in 'mixed' relationships and families and through an increased awareness and understanding by 'mixed' couples and families, and professionals, of issues relating to specific 'mixed' relationships.

Both demonstrate the Weeks Centre's commitment to engaging and involving significant beneficiaries across the Social and Policy realm.