



## Examples of Economic Impact from AHRC-funded projects

### Introduction

This short overview has been produced as an aid to understanding some of the impacts arising from arts and humanities research. The examples are taken from existing AHRC projects, ranging from small awards up to large Research Grants and Centres. They are not exhaustive; impact from research takes many forms. It can occur at any stage of the research process, from its beginning to well after the research itself has finished.

The Research Councils define impact as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. This definition accords with the Royal Charters of the Councils and with HM Treasury guidance on the appraisal of economic impact. Impact embraces all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom
- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy, and
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output

The case studies offer some, but in no way all, of the diversity and variety of those impacts. They are not, however, intended as guidance on completing the Impact Requirements sections on proposals, for which you should refer to the Je-S guidance for [Standard Grant proposals](https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandbook/jesHelp.aspx?m=s&s=1202) (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandbook/jesHelp.aspx?m=s&s=1202>) and [Fellowship proposals](https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandbook/jesHelp.aspx?m=s&s=504) (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandbook/jesHelp.aspx?m=s&s=504>).

It should also be remembered that the impacts described here will not necessarily be replicated by undertaking the same activities. The pathways to impact are as diverse and varied as the impacts themselves. These examples can, however, provide some illustration of what can be achieved.

## Case Studies

### Practice-led design research that tackles crime

The Design Against Crime Research Centre at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, undertakes practice-led design research aimed at reducing opportunities for crime.

Impacts include:

- Improving the UK's economic competitiveness by creating new innovative products, such as chairs and clips that reduce the opportunity for bag theft, and secure bike stands.
- Feeding directly into public policy by offering new ways of preventing crime.
- Creating consultative multi-stakeholder networks that deliver multi-agency approaches that generate new solutions to reducing crime.
- Delivering benefits to the quality of life by helping to reduce instances of crime.

There have also been international links. For example, *Grippa*, an anti-theft bag clip for use in bars and restaurants, was shown at the „Safe – Design Takes on Risk“ exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This attracted interest from the Manhattan Robbery Squad and Starbucks Senior Management, highlighting how relatively simple dissemination activities, coupled with the right motivation, can lead towards making links with potential users and beneficiaries.

The *Bike Off – Reducing Bike Theft* project has designed and prototyped six secure cycle parking stands, which have been used in Camden, York, Shoreditch, Brighton & Hove, and Ashford in Kent. These developments came out of collaborations with commercial partners, and through links with local councils. There has also been interest in purchasing or licensing the designs in Spain and Poland.

Research findings also contribute to public policy groups and initiatives. The Centre, for example, works in collaboration with the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science at UCL, the UK Designing Out Crime Association and Secured by Design, which is the UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of designing out crime. Professor Lorraine Gamman, the Centre's Director, is a project leader within the Design and Technology Alliance, a Governmental group established to ensure the benefits of design against crime are realised within the UK. The Centre has also provided guidance on crime reduction to the Prime Ministers Strategy Unit, the Home Office, and the European Forum on Urban Safety, amongst others.

Further details:

<http://www.designagainstcrime.com/index.php>

## **Historical research contributing to the discussion of minority rights in a European context**

A research project led by Professor David Smith at the University of Glasgow focused on the concept of non-territorial cultural autonomy for national minorities, which was first devised by socialist politicians in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire and later implemented in the independent Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during the 1920s.

Impacts included:

- Feeding into public policy on the role of minorities and multiculturalism.
- Providing expert knowledge in the drafting of laws on cultural autonomy to the governments of Romania and Armenia.
- Furthering understanding in international relations and policy.

Through this research project, Professor Smith was invited by the Romanian government to give a briefing on cultural autonomy for minorities. The invitation was issued via the European Centre for Minority Issues, and led to the Romanian government preparing a draft law on cultural autonomy that went before parliament. It did not pass into law, but it did help to shape the debate around minorities in Romania. The research has also fed into a draft law in Armenia. In addition, the research team participated in a roundtable organised by the New Security Foundation in 2008, which was in part concerned with discussing the possible relevance of cultural autonomy to a UK context.

The project also led to a joint seminar in 2007 with the Venice Commission, an advisory body on constitutional law set up within the Council of Europe. This seminar on the participation of minorities in public life was hosted by the Republic of Croatia in Zagreb. Subsequently, a member of the Venice Commission's Secretariat stated that the seminar *„succeeded in building a meaningful link between historical issues around cultural autonomy in Eastern Europe and today's wider challenges faced by most European States, which have the duty under international law to create conditions ensuring a real participation in decision-making processes for various minority groups'.*

This historically-based study illuminated broader debates on the political management of multiculturalism. It also brought to light an overlooked contribution to debates on European unity from Central and Eastern Europe, which has even more relevance now that the current economic crisis is putting increasing strains on the cohesion of the recently enlarged European Union.

Further details:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/centralandeasteuropeanstudies/balticunit/>

## **Research in anthropology, art history, archaeology, history and museum studies led to an exhibition on Polynesian visual art that had an international audience**

A research project led by Professor Steven Hooper, University of East Anglia, aimed to enhance knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Polynesian artworks and to bring a largely unknown major art tradition to greater public attention. Drawing mainly on extensive but little-known collections held in UK museums, exhibitions were held at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich (2006), the British Museum (2006/07), London, and the *Musée du quai Branly* in Paris (2008).

Impacts included:

- Drawing in visitors to the museums and regional areas, and so leading to financial benefits for the museums and for the regional economies, plus developing cultural and social benefits for visitors.
- Providing specific educational and other public events, contributing to knowledge, skills and the quality of life of participants.
- Strengthening international relationships between museums and academics in the UK and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga and elsewhere).

The Norwich and Paris venues presented the most comprehensive exhibitions of Polynesian artefacts ever assembled, attracting 22,000 and 120,000 visitors respectively. The British Museum exhibition, linked to the same research, also received over 120,000 visitors, of which over half were from overseas. The exhibitions included Polynesian artists-in-residence who contributed to linked educational programmes, such as workshops, family events, lunchtime talks, evening lectures, and other events particularly for school children.

An international conference was held to coincide with each of the three exhibitions, allowing many Polynesian academics and museum staff to participate. The project highlighted the role of cultural heritage in building bridges between different traditions and societies. Links have been enhanced between the project team, museums and Polynesian groups, involving developing plans for loans, projects and collaborative curatorial training. Among other major outputs of the project was a book/catalogue of the Norwich exhibition, *Pacific Encounters: art and divinity in Polynesia 1670-1860*, published jointly by the British Museum Press, the University of Hawaii Press and Te Papa Press in New Zealand (2006). A French edition was published in 2008.

Further information:

[www.sru.uea.ac.uk/polynesia/welcome.htm](http://www.sru.uea.ac.uk/polynesia/welcome.htm)

## **Philosophy informing public policy and debate**

The extraordinary developments of the biological sciences over the past 50 years have had a major effect on our wider understanding of science, while raising complex questions around identity, responsibility and human dignity. Genetics, for example, has become an increasingly important area of philosophical research. Professor John Dupré from the University of Exeter led a project that investigated these developments, and also trained young researchers in the philosophy of biology.

Impacts included:

- Informing public policy, including through giving oral evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Genomic Medicine.
- Helping to develop public understanding of the biological sciences.
- Developing the University of Exeter as a major international hub for research and collaboration in the philosophy of biology, and so presenting UK-based researchers as at the forefront of debate in this crucial area of public and political concern.

The project has led to the establishment of an important network comprising six major European institutions in the field. This network is holding a series of summer schools. In addition, postgraduate workshops have drawn in students from Europe, North America and Australasia, amongst others.

Public dissemination has also been an important part of this project. Professor Dupré has given numerous radio interviews in the UK, the US and Spain, plus he has contributed interviews and discussion pieces on the internet in German, Italian and Spanish, as well as English. There have also been other public engagement activities from the project team, such as participation on a panel discussion on race at the Science Museum's Dana Centre in London.

Further details:

<http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/sociology/philosophyofbiology/>

## **Practice-led visual arts research leading to an exhibition about local history and community**

David Walker Barker, University of Leeds, undertook practice-led research to produce an exhibition at Killhope Museum in Upper Weardale, County Durham. *In Search of a Hidden Landscape* included artworks that interpreted the history of the North Pennines and its lead and fluorspar mining communities.

Impacts included:

- Encouraging the local community to consider its past, to take pride in its mining heritage, and to reflect on the links between local culture and personal identity. This benefited community cohesion by encouraging visitors to value local links and connections.

- Allowing the museum to develop a new direction in representing the past, and so helping visitors to think differently about local history.
- Increasing the number of visitors to the museum and to the local area, and so leading to financial benefits for the museum and for the local economy, plus developing cultural and social benefits for visitors.

When the mines closed social and economic depression affected the area. Miners tended to be unwilling to talk about what had happened. More recently, as the ex-miners are ageing, there has been a desire to remember and record the stories of the area before they are forgotten. The exhibition was developed in collaboration with the museum and involved interviews with ex-miners. It formed a record of a significant aspect of the community's history, and was an expression of the local culture. The art provided a symbolic rather than literal narration, which provided a multilayered interpretation, emphasising connections and ambivalence. David Walker Barker considered that the project *„opened up and defined a much broader purpose for my creative research because of the unusual venue and the much wider audience it reached, and on a personal level was like gifting something back to the communities and the histories that inspired it“*.

Further details:

<http://www.land2.uwe.ac.uk/essay13.htm>

### **Research in law and ethics is addressing contemporary issues**

The AHRC Research Centre for Studies in Intellectual Property and Technology Law at the University of Edinburgh examines the links between intellectual property law and information technology law, together with work on media law, medical law & ethics, and forensic evidence. The Centre is an international research and teaching hub exploring the relationships between law and technologies in the broadest sense.

Impacts include:

- Benefits and challenges for the commercial and public sectors when dealing with intellectual property rights at the rapidly-changing coalface of technological progress.
- Improving the effectiveness of public services and policy by feeding into the complex ethical debates around the use of personal data in digital and other technologies.
- Helping to develop balance in policies and law-making in the realms of regulation and trust, openness and secrecy.

The Centre is involved in numerous government and public sector-sponsored committees and forums to provide policy advice. For example, Professor Graeme Laurie, the Centre's Director, chairs the Ethics and Governance Council of UK Biobank, a project involving a £60 million investment to establish a world-leading research resource involving blood and health data from 500,000 people. The aim is to grant wide and international access to the resource for the purposes of medical research. The Ethics and Governance Council

monitors and advises UK Biobank on all aspects of its work, including access to the resource, protection of participants' privacy, feedback of information to participants, and commercialisation of any downstream results. The Council monitors public attitudes and stakeholders' expectations with respect to the resource and provides a vital communications and advice channel for all interested in, and affected by, the project.

Further details:

<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/>

### **Design research created a new product that uses recycled glass and addresses environmental concerns**

Two design research projects led by Professor James Roddis at Sheffield Hallam University examined how to overcome the technical factors that make it difficult to convert waste glass into a useful, high value material. The main output was a composite material that was attractive, durable and sympathetic to the environment.

Impacts included:

- Improving the UK's economic competitiveness by creating a new innovative material that has wide application in domestic and commercial locations.
- Helping to sustain a spin out company and a local manufacturer by providing a high quality material.
- Benefiting the economic prosperity of an area of the UK that needs regeneration.
- Supporting sustainable development by utilising recycled resources, including previously „difficult“ waste from consumer, building and automotive waste streams. This supports EU and UK government objectives for the re-use of waste.

The developed composite material, typically consisting of 85% recycled glass and 15% solvent free resin, was subsequently licensed to Resin Building Products Ltd based in Doncaster, and manufactured under the trade name TTURA™. Funding was also provided by the EU as the intellectual property for the product was given to this South Yorkshire company, which is situated in a recognised regeneration area. Three further companies have each been given a distribution licence to sell TTURA™ finished products. TTURA™ won the prestigious Material ConneXion Award in 2004, and is sold to make kitchen tops, paving slabs, wet flooring and for various other commercial and domestic uses. Its most recent large scale application has been designed by Martha Swartz, and is part of the Dublin Docks reconstruction.

Further details:

<http://www3.shu.ac.uk/c3ri/Details.cfm?Action=DetailsOfProject&ProjectID=67>

## **Research in English literature engaged with the public**

Dr Leon Litvack at the Queen's University of Belfast is producing a scholarly edition of *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens. The work combines factual research with critical judgement informed by current scholarship in textual studies. Initially, as a Clarendon edition, it will be of interest as a reference work, and it will go on to become the standard for reprinting *Our Mutual Friend* by Oxford World's Classics and other publishers.

Impacts included:

- Providing a newly edited text of a major Dickens novel for UK publishers, creating financial benefits for publishers and a new cultural experience for readers.
- Drawing in visitors to an exhibition on *Our Mutual Friend* at the Charles Dickens Museum in London (of which Dr Litvack is a Trustee), and so creating financial benefits for the museum and the local area, plus cultural and social benefits for visitors.
- Engaging the general public in an aspect of their cultural heritage through various public engagement activities, and so contributing to their knowledge and quality of life.

The project's website serves as a focus for those interested in the novel, its genesis, composition and reputation. Dissemination activities included various speaking engagements, interviews on BBC Radio, and a boat trip along the Thames. This trip involved 100 guests who were introduced to particular sites associated with the novel, and given a running commentary on Dickens's life, his society and modes of Victorian publishing. Dr Litvack also acted as a consultant on Dickens and London for a Sky TV programme on „The Real British Suburbia“, and for ITV's „Written Britain“ series, presented by Melvin Bragg.

Further details:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/ourmutfr/index.htm>

## **Museum studies and storytelling research gathering the oral narrative heritage of Welsh cricket and making it available to the broader community**

A Knowledge Transfer project led by Professor Mike Wilson and Sophie Leslie from the University of Glamorgan set out to gather the oral narrative heritage of Welsh cricket and to explore the use of digital technology as a way of turning those narratives into artefacts and making them available to the broader community. The project coincided with a £9.6m redevelopment of the cricket ground at Sophia Gardens to turn it into the new 16,000 seater SWALEC stadium. Part of that redevelopment is a new Museum of Welsh Cricket which will house a mixture of objects, interactive displays and digital artefacts, towards which this project contributed.

Impacts included:



- Enhancing the visitor experience through new methods of display, and so developing cultural and social benefits for visitors.
- Supporting visitors in considering their own stories through the development of a constantly growing archive, populated by and accessible to visitors. This will benefit the quality of life by encouraging visitors to value their own histories and their links to the wider community.
- Drawing in visitors to the Museum of Welsh Cricket, and so creating financial benefits for the museum and the local area.
- Providing material to feed into the National Curriculum.

Stories and memories of players, spectators, umpires, scorers, tea ladies and groundstaff were collected in the form of video interviews, audio interviews, written accounts and digital stories. Along the way, the team collected almost a thousand photographs documenting cricket in Wales from the late nineteenth century onwards. These images are now held on a website as a resource for anyone wishing to participate in the project.

Stories will be on display in the Museum via monitors, as well as on the TaleEnders™ website. There will also be the opportunity for visitors to respond with stories of their own so that the archive becomes a constantly growing and living resource. Some of the stories may also be broadcast over the big in-ground screen during a season's matches, and the project will have a major presence as part of the Ashes Exhibition that will take place (with the real Ashes) in Cardiff during summer 2009.

### **An archaeological research project involved local people and drew in visitors**

*The Longstones Project*, a collaboration involving the Universities of Leicester, Bristol and Southampton, unlocked some of the secrets of a significant group of major Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ceremonial monuments at Avebury.

Impacts included:

- Drawing in more visitors to Avebury, and so creating financial benefits for the site and the local area, plus developing cultural and social benefits for visitors.
- Developing the knowledge and experience of non-academics who worked with the project team, contributing to their skills and to their quality of life.

Archaeological research is often labour intensive, involving substantial teams of people. Large scale research projects provide an excellent training environment for those keen to gain practical experience in the excavation and interpretation of heritage sites. By involving a large number of non-academics in the research, both in the research team and through public lectures and tours, the project has provided opportunities for developing skills and social networks.

The project has generated publicity and media interest for Avebury, while research findings fed into the educational value of the site. The results of the project are published in *Landscape of the Megaliths: excavation and fieldwork on the Avebury*

*monuments, 1997-2003* (Oxbow Books, 2008) by Mark Gillings, Joshua Pollard, David Wheatley and Rick Peterson.

### **Community arts-based work improving lives of refugees**

A Knowledge Transfer Fellowship, led by Dr Maggie O'Neill at Loughborough University, set out to explore the social role of the arts in social change, and in the space between ethnographic, participatory research and arts-based work, with a focus on enhancing the lives of recent arrivals to the East Midlands.

Impacts included:

- Raising public awareness on the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers to counteract the often negative messages in the mainstream media.
- Increasing number of people visiting the university as a consequence of the exhibition being documented on the Guardian Online, raising the profile among those who would not otherwise visit the university, and developing cultural and social benefits for visitors.
- Engaging with and feeding into public policy based on the deeper understanding of the reasons behind people's migration to the UK and insight into how refugees and asylum seekers cope with being a stranger in a strange land.
- A number of participating refugees found employment as a direct result of the project.

Arts-based research produced by, and with, refugees and asylum seekers can effectively highlight the cultural competencies and skills brought to the UK by new arrivals. By highlighting the different notions of culture, art and belonging that are held by both new arrivals and more established communities, arts-based research can provide a basis for overcoming cultural prejudice and misunderstanding. The project brought together a number of arts and community organisations in the East Midlands, as well as researchers and migrant groups.

An "Artists' Diversity Pool" event was held to aid networking and employability of artists and to launch the production of a directory of artists in exile and artists with experience of working with new arrivals, refugees and asylum seekers. The directory is also located online and now serves as a hub and repository for regional research and arts activity in the area of arts, migration and diaspora.

Simultaneous performance events in different locations saw new arrivals talking a walk with a local dignitary/resident from a place they call home to a special place in their city/town. The walks were followed by a series of workshops focussing on the sense of belonging, including place, place-making, home, belonging and identity. Activities

culminated in an exhibition reflecting the experiences of moving to the East Midlands through a series of artworks inspired by the project.

Further information:

[www.beyondbordersuk.com](http://www.beyondbordersuk.com)

[www.makingtheconnections.info](http://www.makingtheconnections.info)

### **Research in linguistics highlights risks to endangered languages and diversity**

Professor Suzanne Romaine is a linguist based at the University of Oxford. Her research addresses the extinction crisis in the world's 6,900 or more languages, which are at risk of disappearing often in the same locations as endangered species.

Impacts included:

- Raising awareness of declining linguistic diversity, and supporting the sustainability of vulnerable languages and cultures
- Potential to inform conservation policy

Global „hotspots“ have been identified by bringing together global datasets on the geographic distribution of languages in high biodiversity regions. The greatest linguistic diversity is found in some of the ecosystems that have the highest rates of biodiversity, and which are inhabited by indigenous peoples, who represent around 4% of the world's population but speak at least 60% of the world's languages.

By collaborating with people outside of her discipline, Professor Romaine has drawn attention to the declining linguistic diversity of the world. Although most people have heard of the biodiversity crisis, the threat to languages has received much less attention, even though languages are at an even greater risk than species. As regions with high biological diversity also represent areas of importance in maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity, conservation strategies that promote a community's economic and cultural well-being are likely to sustain linguistic diversity as well.

Pinpointing the areas that are most in need of action in conserving biological and linguistic diversity is a critical first step in developing common plans, policies and goals for conservation at local, regional and global levels. The research also improves our understanding of the human context of biological diversity and will prime further research targeted at better understanding of the factors that threaten and sustain languages.

During the project, Professor Romaine collaborated with conservation practitioners and planners at Conservation International, a not-for-profit organisation that seeks to protect the Earth's biodiversity. Follow-up research may include fieldwork case studies that target some of the hotspots identified in the analysis, and which have a high overlap between biological and linguistic diversity, to gauge the potential of working with indigenous peoples living in those areas. There are also plans to produce a short publication aimed at a general audience, including non-governmental organisations,

human rights professionals, indigenous peoples, and local, national and international agencies.

### **Classics research on antique documents engages with the wider public and makes international connections**

A digital project to make fragmentary manuscripts from Graeco-Roman antiquity (300BC – 800AD) available to scholars and the public was developed by Dr Dirk Obbink from the University of Oxford's Faculty of Classics.

Impacts included:

- Raising awareness of an aspect of our cultural heritage through the digital preservation of manuscripts, their dissemination, and through engagement with the general public.
- Strengthening international links between the UK and Greece.
- Informing discussions in the Italian parliament around archaeological sites, and leading to World Heritage status for the Villa of Papyri at Herculaneum.

Digitised manuscripts, including enhanced multi-spectral images, previously unpublished texts and English translations, will soon be available on the project's website <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk>. There are plans to enlist thousands of participants from the general public in the ongoing project of cataloguing and transcribing the huge mass of ancient manuscripts, over half a million in number. The research questions will look at ways of weighting the accuracy and editing of this crowd-sourced data. The public will have access to these results on-line in the form of controlled transcripts and translations. Dr Obbink will also be making a BBC documentary with Michael Wood on ancient evidence for Alexander the Great's most successful battle, which has revealed its previously unknown location.

The manuscripts have created particular interest in Greece, where the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs have been long-standing supporters of the project. Both Ministries have funded a series of conferences linked to the project in Greece, so that many of the manuscripts could be discussed in their land of origin. The links with Greece were further highlighted when the Greek Foreign Minister, Dora Bakoyannis, requested a visit to the project and to meet the staff on her last visit to Oxford on official government business.

The work of the project team has also informed discussions in the Italian parliament regarding the reopening of archaeological excavations at Herculaneum, an ancient Roman town on the Bay of Naples. This led to the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum being declared a World Heritage site, and so opening up funding and centring the attention of the Italian Archaeological Superintendency on the site. The Herculaneum Society project was also formed and incorporated as a charitable organisation for the preservation and dissemination of information about Herculaneum.

Further details:

[www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy)

<http://www.herculaneum.ox.ac.uk>