Introduction

Newcastle University is known around the world for its vision “to be a world-class civic university”. Our guiding principle is “Excellence with a Purpose” - understanding not just what we are good at, but what we are good for. With this in mind we seek to help address the major societal challenges of our time – ageing, sustainability and social renewal. We see ourselves as benefiting groups, networks and communities, recognising these not as passive recipients of the university’s knowledge and resources, but as valued sources of knowledge and knowledge-exchange in their own right.

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal (NISR), established at Easter 2012, is helping to realise this vision. NISR engages in the process of renewal in three main ways: first, as a thought leader; second, through the production and dissemination of high quality research and scholarship that informs policy and practice; and third, by working on selected projects on a co-production basis with partners. Our intention is to explore new ways in which a research intensive university – its staff and students – can connect with society in order to make a difference.

We see the challenge of Social Renewal as addressing the question: how can people, communities and societies thrive when faced with rapid, transformational change? In Britain and worldwide, the impacts of globalisation, technological change, demography, and the unevenness and perturbing effects of capitalist economic growth are creating challenges of great magnitude to which there are no simple or obvious responses. A crucial element of any response is to gather research-based evidence; but equally important is to deliberate and debate what we understand to be a ‘good life’ and a ‘good society’. Universities play a crucial role in both these respects.

This ‘Book of Stories’ presents summaries of some of the impacts of our work so far. They reveal a wide range of different activities in many spheres, in the UK and abroad. I hope that these will stimulate your interest in our work and give you some impression of what we are trying to do.

Professor Mark Shucksmith

Director, Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal.
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Inspirational Women of the North East
Lead Academic: Professor Helen Berry, School of History, Classics and Archaeology

Inspirational Women of the North East (IWNE) is a project aiming to redress the historic and present-day under-representation of women’s achievements and contributions to public life in North-East England. It challenges the cultural and social stereotyping of women (particularly the undue emphasis on celebrities judged primarily for their looks and body image) and offers alternate iconic images of women from various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, religions as the starting point for public debates and discussions. What kinds of role models are presented to young people in our region? How can the stories we celebrate offer different role models, particularly (but not exclusively) to girls and young women?

Preparing the photography exhibition of Inspirational Women brought together stakeholders beyond the University, specifically through the engagement of a co-ordinator who is a local skills trainer, social media expert and curator, plus academic staff and students from a variety of disciplines (fine art, history, geography). It used social media, print media, TV and a website to engage local people with nominating their favourite ‘inspirational woman’. It was an example of civic engagement in action, with a good level of press coverage via Tyne Tees television, the Newcastle Journal, and online discussions. Around 300 people became group members on Facebook and a Twitter feed provided informative channels for discussion and feedback.

The exhibition features several women who are making significant changes in community activism in parts of Newcastle that may not often engage with the University and their presence has brought them onto campus with the message that this is their University too. Likewise, women who are small business owners - a crucial part of the bottom-up economic and social regeneration of the region, were featured in the exhibition and attracted press coverage on television and in local newspapers as a result – providing a positive feedback loop that raised their profile in the region. An accompanying booklet, containing stories about the 26 women featured in the exhibition, plus online resources at www.IWNE.org, provide lasting sources of information and platforms for ongoing public debates around women’s contribution to regional life. The exhibition was launched at the Hatton Gallery in October 2013 and an estimated 5,000 people will have visited the exhibition in person by the time it finishes in December 2013.
Self-Organised Learning Environments (SOLE)

Lead Academic: **Professor Sugata Mitra**, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Professor Sugata Mitra is the originator of the “Hole in the Wall” experiment, a computer project that has increased learning among children in some of the world’s poorest areas. The project began in 1999, when Mitra and colleagues installed a computer in a playground wall in Delhi, India, and left it there. Eight hours later, neighbourhood children, who had never seen a computer before and had no knowledge of the Worldwide Web, were surfing the internet. Over the ensuing decade, Mitra introduced the same methodology, which he calls minimally invasive education, across India, Cambodia and other regions with similar results.

From the initial “Hole in the Wall” experiment when a computer was embedded within a wall in Delhi slum for street children to experiment with, Professor Mitra has shown that groups of children can complete educational objectives by themselves, using the internet. This is a very powerful discovery that helps us to rethink the transformative powers of learning and opportunity. Professor Mitra observed in the original “Hole in the Wall” experiment that children learnt well when there was an adult present who was able to give them encouragement.

This then led to the use of “Skype Grannies” - a group of retired school teachers from the North East of England, who could talk to the children in rural villages in India, over the internet and encourage the development of their learning.

In the example of Montevideo, Uruguay, Professor Mitra and colleagues have researched the positive influence of internet access for children in their learning environment. Experiments consisted of children attempting to answer ‘deep’ questions in groups, children trying to read beyond their expected levels in Spanish and English, and whether children would read better in groups than individually. The research suggests that children in groups can perform better at ‘hard’ problems than they can individually. They are also shown to be capable of researching effectively using the Internet. By 2012, teachers around the world were using these methods of Self-Organised Learning Environments to help children learn.

Professor Sugata Mitra aims to construct a physical and highly visible self-organised learning environment in a public space in Newcastle’s Science Central. The intention is to allow children from the NE to benefit from the SOLE approach, to demonstrate this to parents, teachers and the public, and to evaluate its success in this very different setting. This could be part of a wider facility for student (school and university) interaction with technologies and a place for teacher professional development, as well as exciting student learning opportunities. It would draw on the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences’ expertise and its extensive network of Enquiry Based teaching specialists. This constitutes an investment for the region for the long term, with good pedagogical knowledge underpinning the design of innovative technologies applied to learning in the STEM subjects. If successful, this might create a lasting legacy.
West End Refugee Service (WERS): A Sense of Belonging

Lead Academic: Dr Simon Philpott, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

The West End Refugee Service is a registered charity which provides support services for asylum seekers and refugees in a friendly, welcoming environment. The range of integrated services aims to address the disadvantage, exclusion and poverty which affect asylum seekers and refugees living in the West End of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Refugees are among the most vulnerable members of the Newcastle community. Many are severely traumatised having experienced either the threat of or actual physical violence. Fear, exclusion, surveillance, separation from communities and families are all common experiences among refugees. Many have been tortured, imprisoned or raped in their home country and all have suffered bereavement and separation from family and friends. Adapting to life in a new and not necessarily receptive society and often on meagre incomes compounds these problems. The situation is then made worse by the many problems of life as an asylum seeker in Britain: sub-standard housing, low income, social isolation, racial harassment, unemployment, prolonged separation from family, difficulties with cultural adaptation and the fear of being returned to dangerous situations should their asylum applications be unsuccessful.

Negative media reporting, political antipathy, a lack of educational and employment opportunities and hostility from local communities have created a climate which does little to aid the integration process of refugees. Much needs to be done to create an inclusive and welcoming society which recognises the enormous contribution to the UK that refugees can make.

Dr Simon Philpott has undertaken work with WERS and film maker David Campbell to make 5 short films which capture the stories of a number of asylum seekers/ refugees and their experience of finding ‘a sense of belonging’ as they have made homes for themselves in the North East. The films have been screened at the Tyneside Cinema to a group of Newcastle and North East stakeholders working on refugee related issues and can be found on the WERS YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/WERSvideos.

The films have also been recorded on DVD’s which will act as a resource for WERS and the University when working with schools. Teachers packs are being put together to help aid the use of the DVD’s as a teaching tool in schools. They will also be used to help raise awareness and provide insight about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers among stakeholders such as local authorities, agencies that either provide services to or come into contact with refugees, and the police force.

Challenging negative assumptions about refugees and asylum seekers is integral to the framing of the project.
Livelihoods of Post Trafficked Women in Nepal

Lead Academics: Professor Nina Laurie, Professor Diane Richardson, Dr Janet Townsend and Dr Meena Poudel, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

This research focuses on the livelihoods of women in Nepal who have been trafficked. Nepal faces a large problem of trafficking of women and this research centres upon the post trafficking experiences of women and how their lives develop. Data was gathered from and with the women themselves and illustrated how post trafficked women may be stigmatised and discriminated against, including through lack of access to citizenship and ensuing rights.

By bringing sexuality and citizenship into dialogue with debates on livelihoods this project is helping to generate a way of understanding the relationship between sexuality, gender and development. The research goes beyond the immediate 'rescue' of returnee trafficked women and combines a focus on livelihoods with the need to address the issues related to their right to citizenship.

The Advisory Group on the project play a key role in disseminating the research to relevant audiences. The project has disseminated its findings at conferences, meetings with relevant ministers and through the Nepalese press. Researchers from Newcastle University are working with policy makers locally and internationally to ensure that project findings feed into current citizenship debates and anti-trafficking strategies in Nepal and the wider South Asia region. This research is being undertaken with project partners Shakti Samuha (right), an anti-trafficking non-governmental organisation run by returnee trafficked women.

The research team have been successful in contributing to policy development by providing advisory information to the government of Nepal on the National Action Plan to combat trafficking and the Chair of the Nepali Fundamental Rights Committee. The research team have also provided conceptual input to a new large Department for International Development (DfID) anti-trafficking regional project, influencing the programme’s focus on returnee trafficked women’s rights to livelihoods.

In August 2013 Shakti Samuha received Asia’s prestigious Magsaysay award. Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay award is Asia’s highest honour and is widely regarded as the region’s equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize. Recipients are hailed as "Asia’s heroes of change" and are awarded to "honour the spirit of greatness and selfless leadership". The Board said of the decision to award Shakti Samuha: ‘In electing Shakti Samuha to receive the 2013 Ramon Magsaysay Award, the board of trustees recognizes its founders and members for transforming their lives in service to other human trafficking survivors, for their passionate dedication towards rooting out a pernicious social evil in Nepal, and the radiant example they have shown the world in reclaiming the human dignity that is the birthright of all abused women and children everywhere.’
Dr Pauline Dixon has worked for the last 13 years researching the different school management types that provide education to poor children in Asia and Africa. Learning provides many benefits that are important for improving the lives of the poorest including reducing poverty, promoting economic growth, improving health and wellbeing and promoting democracy. This work has taken Dr Dixon to slums around the world including those in India, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and China.

Her projects have included large-scale quantitative survey and census work in shantytowns and slums to discover who exactly runs schools for the poor and why. She and her teams have also tested approximately 32,000 children in developing countries to compare children’s learning outcomes (controlling for school choice, family background and innate ability) in different school management types. These data have then been used to consider how best to expand access to good schools as well as to improve school quality through pedagogical interventions and initiatives.

The results from the large quantitative data research showed that children’s learning outcomes in low cost private schools for the poor, those that rise organically from the communities themselves, were statistically significantly better than other school management types. These data and findings have been documented in academic journal articles, books, popular media and book chapters. The results have attracted the attention of international aid agencies who have now started to recognise the contribution these schools make for poor children. Dr Dixon’s new book *International Aid and Private Schools for the Poor: Smile, Miracles and Markets* uses the research findings to advise aid agencies how best to facilitate sustainable and scalable initiatives and interventions that improve school access and quality.

The Department for International Development (DFID) are now funding projects to specifically look at low cost private schools and consider how to improve the markets within which they operate. National governments have also been made aware of the contribution of these schools because of Dixon’s research, and therefore have been more supportive of their existence.
Dr Dixon has been working in Delhi, India since 2010, implementing and devising a Randomised Control Trial (RCT), which is being carried out over a five-year period to look at the effects and outcomes of education vouchers for the poorest. Around 900 children from the slums of Delhi have been provided access to low cost private schools, through an education voucher funded by ARK (Absolute Return for Kids, a London based charity) for five years costing about £100 per year. These children have been tested each year to compare their achievements with 900 children who applied for, but were not in receipt of, the education voucher.

Aid agencies and national governments will be made aware of the framework used to set up the voucher scheme. In combination with the RCT’s results this allows informed choices to be made with regards to targeted voucher funding and implementation.

In poor areas of Delhi and Hyderabad, Dr Dixon has provided learning packages to trial the use of synthetic phonics to improve children’s reading ability in English. This included teacher training, teacher manuals, lesson plans and children’s workbooks to accompany a synthetic phonics programme. The results have shown a statistically significant improvement in children’s English reading ability, as well as great changes in the way participating teachers approach and consider their own practice and delivery of lesson content. Synthetic phonics is being adopted in schools around India including those supported by the Bharti Foundation.

Taking these interventions further, Dr Dixon is now looking at the process around identifying high ability students living in poverty. Nurturing these gifted students will be by providing an armoury of skills and methods that allow them to peer teach other children living within their own communities.
Improving the Protection of Cultural Property During Armed Conflict

Lead Academic: **Professor Peter Stone**, School of Arts and Cultures

Cultural heritage includes sites, museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Professor Stone has built up a body of work understanding the destruction of cultural heritage and cultural property during times of conflict. In particular, his work has focused on the consequences of war in Iraq and has published widely on the topic. Professor Stone co-edited the book ‘The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq (Heritage Matters)’ (2008) which was described as ‘an extraordinary achievement that will stand as the definitive account of the desperate, avoidable cultural tragedy of Iraq for many years to come’ by The Times Higher Education. In its 28 chapters a wide range of contributors from across the world (including Iraqis) who were involved in the protection of cultural property in Iraq before, during and after the 2003 invasion, show through their accounts the ‘desperate, avoidable cultural tragedy of Iraq’.

The research has provided a baseline of knowledge about what went wrong in Iraq, and about what the relationship between cultural heritage experts and, in particular, the military could be. It examines societies attitudes towards the preservation of cultural and heritage resources and, the growing political awareness of their importance. Professor Stone has now developed a four tier approach to cultural property protection (long term, immediate pre-deployment, during conflict and post conflict) which it is hoped will be taken up by military practice and the cultural heritage community (Stone 2013).

To date, this research has had a number of impacts by highlighting the importance of trying to protect cultural property in times of conflict for the benefit of communities as they rebuild their lives following conflict. Professor Stone has been invited to present his research at a number of UK & NATO armed forces symposia, including ‘Culture in Conflict’ UK Defence Academy in 2012 and the NATO Civilian/ Military Centre of Excellence (CCOE) in 2012. He has also been asked by NATO to develop a training module on cultural property protection for use with middle ranking officers. He was recently interviewed on this subject on BBC Breakfast News.

Furthermore, Stone has influenced national policy. His work in developing understanding of the importance of protecting cultural property during times of conflict has played a role in informing the UK Government. In 2008 the Parliamentary Select Committee requested evidence from Professor Stone in their scrutiny of the Draft Cultural Property (Armed Conflict) Bill and in 2009 he was asked by the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) to draft evidence, on behalf of 13 cultural heritage organisations, to the Iraq Inquiry.

The research identifies the pivotal role of the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999 (Hague Convention). Professor Stone is working with the UKNC and ministers to progress the ratification of this Convention and its associated Protocols to ensure a more sensitive approach to protection of cultural property in times of conflict and post conflict. As the result of his work, Professor Stone was elected as Chair of the newly re-organised UK National Committee of the Blue Shield and as Secretary General of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield.
Antiphonal
A project about listening and attention and hearing the echoes of the past in the present

Lead Academic: Professor Linda Anderson, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

In December 2012 twelve poets were commissioned to write a poem inspired by the Lindisfarne Gospels. These poems were published as a pamphlet entitled Shadow Script, and were turned into a sound installation entitled Antiphonal by digital artist Tom Schofield. Antiphonal was sited in two iconic places: the newly renovated Lookout Tower on Lindisfarne and the crypt of St Aidan’s Church, Bamburgh. This was the first use of the crypt, which had been newly opened to the public. It was well received by members of the church and community, who took ownership of the project. So involved, they asked for there to be chairs so they could sit and listen over a period of time. The sound installation produced from the poems worked in a different way from the written page, enacting a dialogue between the poems, and demonstrating the emotive power of the human voice. The project reworked medieval themes and images, translating them and re-interpreting them for the present. It also placed poetry in new settings and involved different audiences.

The project was a communal act of making, involving a group of poets and digital artists sharing inspiration on two journeys to Bamburgh and Lindisfarne, before they embarked on the commission. Eminent medievalist, Professor Clare Lees, King’s College London, was also involved in a conversation with the poets and artists, providing relevant texts, images and stories. The installations ran through July and August 2013 but the impact of the project continues in two further exhibitions, and a radio programme. Antiphonal was exhibited, with films of its two original sites of Lindisfarne and Bamburgh, in the Sanctuary Artspace, St Edmund’s Chapel, High Street Gateshead, from 15th – 21st November 2013. This included a performance by the poets on 15th November. It will also be exhibited in the London Street Gallery, Derry from 30th November to 1st December 2013 as part of the Derry City of Culture 2013 celebrations. BBC Radio 4 is also broadcasting a programme about the making of the project on 24th October 2013.
Reading and Health in Early Modern Europe, 1500 - 1800

Lead Academic: Professor Jennifer Richards, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

This 2 day symposium, co-organised by Professor Jennifer Richards (Newcastle University) and Dr Louise Wilson (University of St Andrews), brought together international scholars to discuss intersections of the history of early modern reading and the history of medicine.

Dr Katharine Craik’s (Oxford Brookes University) opening plenary argued that early modern reading, after Longinus, involved self-identification and enthusiasm. This was followed by Dr Sara Miglietti (University of Warwick) who addressed regulating health in early modern editions of Plutarch’s De tuenda sanitate and Dr Tom Charlton (University of Stirling) who explored Richard’s Baxter’s holy reading and chronic illness. Later, William Youngman (Cornell University) traced relationships between writing and healing at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, Toria Johnson (University of St Andrews) spoke on pity and violence in sonnets, and Erin Weinberg (Queen’s University, Ontario) explored Shakespeare’s use of Galen in The Comedy of Errors. The day was rounded off by a plenary from Dr Josie Billington and Dr Phil Davis (University of Liverpool and The Reader Organisation), who linked early modern poetry to their work on neuro-imaging and using Shakespeare to alleviate depression in reading groups.

The second day began with a plenary from Dr Helen Smith (University of York) who spoke on the symmetries of early modern medical and religious texts and practices. Dr Rachel Adcock, Dr Sara Read, and Dr Anna Warzycha (Loughborough University) then presented research relating to their forthcoming collection of seventeenth-century women’s writing. After lunch, Dr Sylvie Kleiman-LaFon (Université Paris 8) examined the paradox of reading as both a disease and cure in medical treatises, Dr Kate Loveman (University of Leicester) spoke on Samuel Pepys’s eyesight, and Giuliano Mori (IULM, Milan) analysed Robert’s Burton’s use of Democritus Junior. In the final panel, Lizzie Swann (University of York) connected the early modern palate and literary taste, and Clarissa Chenovick (Fordham University) spoke on reading and penitential healing in The Faerie Queene. Professor Richard Wistreich (Royal Northern College of Music) closed the symposium with a plenary on physiognomy and the voice.

This symposium was a stimulating combination of speakers and experts exploring how early modern texts engage with the regulation of the body and mind through reading. It investigated the connections between reading and health and considered how reading was understood as an embodied practice in the period with profound implications for both personal wellbeing and conception of the healthy body politic. A 2nd symposium is planned for 2014.

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Utopography

Lead Academics: Dr Adam Stock, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics and Dr Nathaniel Coleman, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

Utopography was a workshop held in September 2013 at Baltic 39, High Bridge in conjunction with Northumbria Artist Fellow Eleanor Wright and Sam Watson’s week of activities for the Baltic ‘Figure One’ programme. Attendees at the workshop ranged from academics to local artists, members of the public and students from across the humanities. The workshop explored the importance of imagining, representing and critiquing imagined worlds across arts and humanities disciplines, and within public discourse. In exploring historical, theoretical and practical questions of renewal, the aim was to address utopia as a means of generating social cohesion, developing an interest in local environment, and exploring visions of the future.

For Drs Stock and Coleman ‘Utopia’ is both an object of historical knowledge (especially in literature and theory), and a method for critical engagement. ‘Utopography’ is H. G. Wells’s term for the activity of projecting and critiquing ideal societies. This ideal version formed the basis of the creative and critical cohesion of the group of artists, writers and critics which were brought together.

Feedback forms indicate that the workshop both challenged people’s thinking and helped to solidify existing ideas relating to critical practice across the arts and humanities. The workshop has kick-started a collaborative process developing around the ideas of social renewal and utopian thought. Artist and Professor of Critical Practice Neil Cummings has secured funding and booked the Triangle space next door to Tate Britain in London in March for another event – this time across four days. Here, the gallery space will be architecturally transformed to encourage greater cross-fertilisation of ideas by an architect from BPR Architects in London who presented work at the workshop in Newcastle. The theme for this event is ‘Evaluation’.

Funding from NISR has enabled the group to grow, and to develop events such as these as well as raising the profile nationally. Future developments which have origins in the September 2013 workshop also include a Leverhulme International Research Network bid, a Utopian Studies Society Conference in Newcastle in 2015 and a special edition of the journal Continent.
Simply Cracking Good Stories

Lead Academics: **Professor Martha Young-Scholten** and **Margaret Wilkinson**, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics.

Simply Cracking Good Stories is a project to create engaging and accessible fiction for low-educated immigrant adults who when attempting to read for pleasure, rely on books written for four- and five-year old children or written by their teachers and classmates. Dearth of accessible, engaging and age-appropriate books means these adult immigrants rarely read for pleasure. We become proficient readers by reading, and this works best when we read for pleasure. Immigrant adults with little or no schooling in their native language progress very slowly in developing basic reading skills. Slow progress is not surprising when no reading occurs outside the classroom.

Simply Cracking Good Stories is working to fill this gap. Pump-primed in 2009 by Catherine Cookson Foundation funding, further assisted in 2012 by the VC’s Societal Challenge funding and by a British-Council-funded consultation with worldsightmedia, the project has held single-session workshops in five countries and created an on-line workshop [www.simplycrackinggoodstories.org](http://www.simplycrackinggoodstories.org) for anyone who is interested to produce a short fiction book.

![Meera's Café](image)

**Meera’s Café**

Author: Jamie Warde-Aldam
Illustrator: Tess Spencer

Big Ali sits.

People pay Meera

Kevin runs!

Big Ali sits on Kevin.

Books are written, edited and illustrated to result in host culture-neutral narratives for this worldwide market. The example above shows a storyboard for the kind of books that have been produced. This book is an example of the
lowest level of a beginning reader’s book: there is only one sentence per page/per image and some pages only involve images.

In spring 2013, four new reading levels were developed and will be assigned to every book produced. This represents an additional, unforeseen development facilitated by NISR funding.

As a result of the 2013 funding received from NISR, 30 books have been written. A selection of these has been edited, illustrations have been included and the books are about to be made available on blurb.com to teachers and their immigrant adult students in the UK and in English-speaking countries around the world. Prior to NISR funding Simply Cracking Good Stories had five titles available for purchase via blurb.com. The new titles will increase the total number of books to 13. Once all of the new titles are available for purchase there will be a major advertising campaign, targeting teachers and related organisations in the UK and internationally.

Wilkinson and Young-Scholten are also currently putting together a major bid with the University of Reading to be submitted to the ESRC in November 2013. There have been no large-scale experimental studies which systematically investigate pleasure reading by low-educated immigrant adults and little is therefore known about the potential for such adults to start to read independently.
Disabled Young People’s Perspectives on Sport

Lead Academics: Professor Janice McLaughlin, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology and Dr Jacqui Rodgers, Institute of Neuroscience

Professor Janice McLaughlin and Dr Jacqui Rodgers held a workshop on disability and sport with disabled young people from across the region at The Sage Gateshead on the 12th of October. This workshop was part of the European Academy of Childhood Disability, an international annual meeting of healthcare professionals and researchers who work on disability.

This was the first time the EACD included a workshop involving disabled young people. The workshop had been designed with the input of disabled young people, in particular pupils from Thomas Bewick, Woodlawn and Beaconhill Schools.

Under the theme ‘Being Active, Keeping Healthy’, young people at the workshop debated what was important about sport to them, what sometimes made it difficult to participate and what key 3 messages they wanted to get across to people involved in organising sporting access and opportunities.

The workshop also saw presentations by disability sports regional and national practitioners, Dr Hilary Cass, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and former and current Paralympians, including Steve Miller and Josef Craig - the current BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year.

The workshop also included seven young people from Portugal who travelled to Newcastle to participate in the workshop and explore the region. While with us they had the opportunity to meet with pupils at Woodlawn School.

The workshop was made possible by funding from the RCPCH and the ESRC via Janice McLaughlin’s current project on Embodied Selves in Transition: Disabled Young Bodies. The workshop also saw the launch of 3 films made by disabled young people, facilitated by Beaconhill Arts. The films were funded by NISR and will soon be made publicly available online. Each delegate to the EACD Conference, over 600, received a copy of the films.
Aphasia is a communication impairment which usually arises from stroke. It is often long term and life changing for both the person involved and their families. Health and social care needs span acute hospital care, rehabilitation and long term community support. Understandably, the focus is often on the person with the communication difficulty, but research clearly demonstrates the needs of relatives. Whilst research has informed us of what is needed, there remains a gap between this and service provision. As such, a method for measuring the quality of care for relatives of people with acquired aphasia, and their perceptions of the care they receive is a useful exemplar for other long term conditions.

In June 2013 a consultation event was held in association with NETA (North East Trust for Aphasia) about the quality of care provided for relatives of people with aphasia, and a new tool for measuring it was launched. The aims of the session were to promote a dialogue between service providers and users (relatives of people with aphasia and people with aphasia); to gather information about existing practice; and to launch an audit tool developed during successive student projects. A simple evaluation of the event was completed and the response to having a dialogue between service users and service providers was overwhelmingly positive. Relatives felt that they had been listened to and that they could contribute to future care, by helping to form future pathways. Providers had seen care from the relatives’ viewpoint and they planned to change practice by consulting more with service users. As one respondent said, “We need to involve relatives and listen to them more to shape services and meet their own needs.” Delegates with aphasia felt they contributed to the discussion and were pleased that aphasia was being discussed in a proactive manner.

This event has been a very positive experience of open discussion between providers and users of a service. The event enabled professionals and service users to discuss the quality of care as equals. Delegates reflected on the comprehensiveness of services for families who are learning to live with the life changing condition aphasia. The discussion enabled them to identify, share and quantify barriers to transformational change such as lack of timely information, isolation from peer learning and support, or need to access services some years after the onset of disability.

The outcome of the launch event is the potential to change practice by demonstrating the value of consultation with service users, as well as by providing information and a methodology, via the audit tool, to quantify care in an audit cycle. Service users were pleased to be able to contribute to future change, but realistic in wanting to see evidence of actual change in practice as a result of such events. The consultation has also given Dr Hilton and Dr Morris a wealth of information about current practice which will feed back into future care as a further contribution to the evidence base.
Social Marketing and its application to the identification of the child with developmental delay: A literature review

Lead Academic: Professor James Law, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Early delays in child development are often indicators of later problems at home and in school. Their identification can lead to additional support from a range of early years workers. Therefore it is important that children with such delays, whether in speech and language, motor or other aspects of development are identified as early as possible. Evidence suggests that many of these delays are more common in more disadvantaged groups. However it is equally true that these populations are not necessarily well placed to access existing universal services. Professor Law and colleagues are interested in adopting a more targeted approach and are examining the potential to employ a range of techniques known as “social marketing”: the systematic application of marketing concepts to achieve tangible and measurable behaviour goals for a social good by identifying sections of the population according to need and tailoring messages accordingly.

Professor Law identified a range of literature addressing different aspects of social marketing targeting a range of health related behaviours and service user groups. Although trials are rare the intervention outcomes are often reported to be positive. Messages have been delivered through multiple points of influence e.g. TV, print, internet etc. This does not necessarily require a large budget as long as resources are used efficiently. With the appropriate pre-testing of audiences, social marketing can be delivered to different groups of people with messages that are most likely to respond to. Investing time in the development of an appropriate intervention (with suitable evaluation measures in place), is a cost-effective use of resources to ensure the greatest social gains can be made.

A number of social marketing campaigns have successfully changed awareness of a specific health issue. The extent to which they affect behaviour itself is less clear. Although social marketing techniques have been widely used in healthcare and in some aspects of service delivery to parents and young children, they have only very rarely been used with relation to child development. This review identified only one programme that specifically applied social marketing techniques to the identification of developmental delays in early childhood. Learn the Signs, Act Early (LSAE) Atlanta, USA (Daniel et al., 2009) is a campaign to help every child reach his or her full potential. It aimed to increase the early identification and treatment of autism and other developmental disorders through an application of a social marketing approach to both parents and practitioners. Launched in 2004 baseline assessments of awareness were carried out with target audiences (Health Care Professionals (HCPs), Parents and Early Educators) to gain understanding of the barriers and motivators to behavioural change.

This study focused on parental and professional beliefs rather than actual behaviours or indeed referral rates. There is a case for taking this issue further to explore the value of applying social marketing techniques to the identification of early developmental delays through the parents. The first stage in such a study is the identification of the parental perspective of how best to involve them in the identification process and to ask how the services could best meet their needs. Parents are the most significant influence on children, and parenting has profound consequences for their future lives. Persuading parents that engaging in their child’s development can make a difference is important. Engaging parents of young children in the design and development work of a tool which works for them and addresses their perspective will facilitate early community involvement in the project, helping to build skills and
knowledge in the local community. Cultural issues are key to social marketing in child development and more information about individual values is needed to understand this further.

Professor Law’s review found that social marketing has wide application to all areas of children’s developmental progress, the contribution parents make to that and how that can be enhanced. It would be possible to tease out which factors impact most on developmental milestones and build a marketing approach to address them, e.g. the negative impact of maternal depression on language skills. Once the technique has been evaluated the intention would be to move further upstream and test the model on earlier preventative work during pregnancy.
The Use of Social Media to Promote Psychological Wellbeing in Families with a Child with a Neurodevelopmental Disorder

Lead Academic: Dr Jacqui Rodgers, Institute of Neuroscience

It has been proven that children with neurodevelopmental disorders are more prone to anxiety and other mental health difficulties than children with typical development. Dr Rodgers is carrying out extensive research into developing parent based intervention packages to tackle anxiety in young children with Williams Syndrome (funded by the Williams Syndrome Foundation) and autism (funded by the Children’s Foundation). These interventions are face-to-face and group based and offer parents the opportunity to meet together over a period of weeks to participate in sessions aimed at developing skills and strategies to manage their child’s anxiety following a manualised programme. However participation in such groups requires significant practical and time commitments from the family. This may necessitate organisation and availability of childcare, time away from employment and access to adequate transport. In addition many such services are predominantly concentrated in heavily populated areas. Families who are geographically isolated or for whom transport and child care issues are problematic may experience significant barriers to accessing these services. Furthermore for disorders of relatively low prevalence, such as Williams’ Syndrome, (estimated to occur in 1/20,000 births) there may not be the ‘strength in numbers ‘ in any one geographical area to enable face to face groups programmes to be established and sustained.

Recently the use of on-line and social media platforms has been considered as a means to deliver therapy which has the capacity to reach a large population of ‘hard to reach’ families who are experiencing significant barriers to accessing traditional therapy provision or for whom their child’s condition is very rare. Dr Rodgers reviewed the developing body of literature on the use of social media and related technologies to implement psychological therapies for groups geographically or socially isolated from health care professionals and centres.

Dr Rodgers found that the quality of the research papers reviewed varied markedly. Limitations included sample sizes lacking and parents rather than the children being the main target of the intervention. The software Skype was identified as the main social media application used. Generally the methods were rated favourably by participants however the novelty aspect of this delivery method may cause participants to rate it highly.

Dr Rodgers’ future plans include the development and adaptation of the intervention programmes for delivery via on-line platforms taking into account the lessons learnt from this review. The review is able to offer some directions for our future research to make the social media method of delivery feasible. It was clear that the opportunity for parents to communicate with each other through accessible online sites is important in promoting social support and so this should be factored into future plans.
Intergenerational Learning and Dementia Project Design Workshop

Lead Academic: **Professor Liz Todd**, Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT), School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

CfLaT co-ordinated a very successful intergenerational learning and dementia project design workshop on March 1st 2013, along with other colleagues in ECLS, the Newcastle Initiative on Changing Age, Investing in Children, VOICENorth and young people and their teachers from North-East primary and secondary schools. These groups came together to consider ways of working towards intergenerational learning and a dementia-friendly society in what proved to be a stimulating discussion across the generations.

The co-design workshop, originating from the dementia challenge launched in March 2012 by David Cameron, developed out of a concept paper by Liz Todd and David Leat, in which they identified that the involvement of young people in the creation of a dementia-friendly society goes to the heart of two other societal challenges; communication across the generations and young people’s democratic voice in creating our future society.

The day was specifically designed to foster interaction through stimulating conversations and contexts such as quizzes and a marketplace of speakers with different expertise, with the aim that the participants, from a diverse array of ages, would have space to pose the questions most relevant to them. Young people were also central, with a presentation from Investing in Children on their own research into dementia-friendly communities and a range of narrative interviews being recorded with young people sharing personal perspectives.

Feedback from participants was that the opportunity for real intergenerational communication had been greatly appreciated and had promoted both knowledge-sharing and networking. This in turn has been a catalyst for school-based projects and research collaborations. The workshop is foundational to the ongoing development of a substantial project on intergenerational learning.
Young people as Researchers in Digital Learning Technologies: Conceptualising, Authoring, Using and Evaluating Digital Mysteries

Lead Academics: Dr Anne Preston and Professor David Leat, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

iLab:Learn is a laboratory for developing appropriate educational applications of digital technology. In July 2013 iLab:Learn played host to a research team made up of 12 high school students, school teachers, technology enhanced learning researchers and industry experts. The team spent a week ‘putting their heads together’ to share skills and expertise for the creation, use and evaluation of digital learning materials which promote thinking skills and collaboration.

The project aimed to address how young people come to understand the role and use of new technologies, particularly ones that are designed to be used by them for educational purposes. Central to the project was the notion of the young people involved as junior researchers in the process, whose opinions, skills and expertise contributed greatly to the development of the materials. The project involved a pre-planned set of activities designed by iLab:Learn researchers, school teachers and industry experts: From exploring the educational goals of Mysteries and the processes involved in promoting learning, to making Digital Mysteries using specially designed software for ‘authoring’ and finally, evaluating the success of these Digital Mysteries in terms of content and user-friendliness. The young people worked in groups of 3 (named ‘Dictionnaires, Llamas, #Swayducks and Silver).

The Digital Mysteries created by the young people were showcased at the end of the week at an event attended by parents, teachers and academics from educational technology. The key questions addressed in the Digital Mysteries used by parents were based on what the groups felt were important Social Renewal-links. For example: Should footballers be paid so much? Should scientists be allowed to perform de-extinction on the mammoth? Should people with little quality of life be allowed to ask people/doctors to assist their death? Should the voting age be lowered to 14 years old?

As part of the aims of the project, the research team collected a range of documentary evidence about the activities. Each group of young people was provided with a camera to take photos of the different stages of the work. A Big Brother style diary room was also set up where individuals or groups could report on their thoughts and feelings throughout the week. At the end of each day, the young people reported on what they had learned and what they had remembered from the activities. These data, as well as video-recordings of groups using the table and ‘feedback forms’ where groups evaluated each other’s Digital Mysteries, will be used as the basis for research papers focussed on addressing the issues encompassed in the project relating to the use of educational technology and research with young people.
The research team is now looking to replicate the success of the project on a larger scale to examine issues relating to access and understandings about digital technology and how technology can positively impact on communities where end-users are at the centre of the research process.
Young People’s Views of their Health, Health Rights and Access to Primary Health Services: A Review of the Literature

Lead Academic: Professor Kathryn Hollingsworth, Newcastle Law School

Claire Sands, research assistant, was employed to conduct a literature review for Professor Kathryn Hollingsworth and Felicity Shenton of Investing in Children.

The review was to explore children’s knowledge of their rights in a health care context, and specifically for this purpose, within community based health contexts e.g. GP surgeries, schools. Also researched were young peoples’ barriers to understanding, as well as enablers to understanding, their health care rights. This included the examination of a wide range of multi-disciplinary literature in order to identify any gaps in the research which could form the basis of future collaborative projects between Newcastle University and Investing in Children.

In June 2013 Claire Sands produced an extensive report for Hollingsworth and Shenton. A number of areas for future research were identified:

- The actual health concerns of young people (rather than those often focused on by adults)
- How well young people understand what their legal rights are, rather than what they think they should be (often overlap, but there is no clear evidence that young people understand they have the rights they think they should have); how and to what extent young people wish to assert those rights; and whether young people understand the legal basis of those rights (thus linking to the state’s obligations to educate children about their rights)
- How to improve the barriers to young people’s access to health care and improvements in their experiences within the health care system and the services provided (which would encourage use of services and improve young person’s health during adolescence and adulthood)
- How to ensure that changes to the provision of health care reflects the experiences, ideas and needs of young people themselves rather than adult perceptions of young person’s needs
- How well medical practitioners are trained about the needs and rights of children in accessing health care and asserting their health-related rights
- Research conducted by young people themselves

It is clear from an analysis of the research in this area that much more needs to be done to understand young people’s views on health and healthcare in England (and Wales). From the work that has been undertaken to date it is apparent that young people are ill-informed about their health rights and the services available to them. The barriers to young people accessing healthcare are numerous and include problems relating to knowledge of services, practical problems such as issues with transport and emotional and personal issues such as embarrassment and fears of lack of confidentiality and privacy.

One emerging theme from the literature was the value of peer educators (if done well) to help increase the knowledge and awareness of children and their health rights. As is frequently noted, young people are the experts
in their own lives. The research here shows that they are eager to talk about their views and experiences, and that they are articulate in the expression of the needs and wishes of themselves and their peers. Further studies with young people will undoubtedly produce a rich and colourful picture of what young people need and want in relation to their health. If their views and insights are listened to by parents, teachers, healthcare professionals and policy makers then huge advances could be made in terms of young people’s rights and healthcare provision.

The work produced by Claire Sands will directly feed in to future funding bids produced by Investing in Children (and their networks) and Newcastle University. The next step is for Shenton and Hollingsworth to build wider networks, to explore funding opportunities and to pin down specific research questions and methodologies that will form the basis of such bids.
Spiritual Wellbeing and Young People

Lead Academic: Dr Sonya Sharma and Professor Peter Hopkins, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

This project was a review of literature about young people’s wellbeing, resilience and spirituality in times of austerity. The review aimed to explore how young people are managing in times of social and political uncertainty and the strategies that are being pursued in order to manage changing circumstances.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that meaningful stable employment, training and/or education are significant to young people’s spiritual wellbeing and resilience. Such social resources and their outcomes need to be long term in order that young people sustain a sense of efficacy and esteem. Short-term programs that result in no pay or long-term work can create a cycle of instability and demoralization. Families, friends and supportive people in the community are also important and can help to create opportunities and nurture resilience.

Second, the interrelations between identity formation and resilience tend to be context specific and so it would be interesting to explore variations in young people’s experiences in different regional and local contexts.

Third, whilst this review shows that religion and spirituality help young people to cope during austere times and provides them with a sense of identity and purpose, less is known about how religious communities work with different groups to enhance wellbeing and resilience.

Fourth, looking longer term, longitudinal studies could add much to understandings of young people’s spiritual wellbeing in times of austerity, and this could usefully include considerations of the role of class, gender and location.

Additionally, little is known about how landscapes of race and ethnicity mediate young people’s spiritual wellbeing and resilience during times of economic insecurity.

Finally, rather than only focusing on the individual level, and given the significance of young people’s familial and social networks, future research could usefully explore the role of these in terms of promoting the resilience and spiritual wellbeing of young people in times of austerity.
Investing in Ourselves to Maintain Wellbeing and Resilience

Lead Academic: Rose Gilroy, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

This series of events looked at asking some tough questions about later life. The research underpinning these events emerged from workshops on co-housing for older people. This co-housing project was in response to a widespread dissatisfaction with the physical and social architecture of specialist housing. During the course of that project Gilroy and colleagues found themselves having conversations that were less about co-housing and where older people might live, and more about how older people might live. There is no road map that we can follow - the experience of our parents' generation was very different.

It isn’t easy to have these difficult conversations - our families and close friends may not want to talk about these issues either. This was Rose’s first challenge. What words can be used, what prompts can be employed to encourage invitees to attend. Rose and her colleagues Barbara Douglas from Quality of Life Partnership and independent housing consultant Moyra Riseborough(577,388),(923,676) settled on “Ok, we all know you will never be old... but just in case, can we talk about it?” This invite (right) reminds us that often society leaves having a good old age to chance.

Invited audiences of mixed gender, in their 50s and 60s, including those in and out of paid employment, responded to questions which encouraged engagement and interaction with others. Conversation cards were used by placing sets of questions on playing cards. The groups were encouraged to look at the questions and if one struck a chord they should use it to engage the others. The questions were emotive, and included those such as “how do I avoid empty days?”, “how do I celebrate my achievements”, and “where do I want to live and how?”. Despite the difficult questions, responses were positive, and participants welcomed the opportunity to explore their feelings. There was enthusiasm for the method of using conversation cards and many suggestions about making this into a kit for naturally occurring groups to use.

The issues that were raised are currently being analysed in preparation for further events and will be taken forward into publications. Rose and colleagues are also exploring the possibility of producing a conversation kit.
What Can Community Initiative Achieve?

Lead Academic: Professor Patsy Healey, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

In the present economic climate in Europe, community initiatives and social enterprises are being called upon by politicians and being set up by activists as an expanding alternative to state provision of a range of services and activities. There has been a long history of the formation of such initiatives and enterprises, and from time to time, there has been formal government encouragement. But this ‘third sector’ has not developed on a substantial scale previously. With the difficulties of maintaining the welfare state in its 20th Century form, and the potentially long-lasting economic problems facing many countries and regions in Europe, is now the right time right for a significant expansion. And if so, what encouragement is needed from formal government? Can community initiatives have a significant role to play in experimenting with new models of service delivery and meeting local needs on a significant scale?

Glendale Gateway Community Trust in Wooler, Northumberland (left) held a seminar, supported by NISR, in August 2013 to discuss and share experiences of the potential of community initiatives.

Community initiatives have diverse origins. Many ‘single activity’ projects arise from social discussions of one kind or another – in the pub, at the school gate, in a local faith group. But those with a broader agenda are often a response to a threat of some kind. Some threats are sudden – a fire, flood or earthquake disaster, the closure of a valued facility or service; the proposed redevelopment of a valued heritage building. Other threats build up slowly, perhaps as a rural community comes to recognise the wider economic impact of a rapidly falling agricultural or mining labour force, or an urban neighbourhood sees shops steadily closing. Such threats bring out capabilities in individuals which have often lain dormant.

However, institutional support – what is available and how it works – has an important role to play in generating, fostering and sustaining community initiative. Performed well, with respect, knowledge and sensitivity, this support can enrich and enhance the ever-fluid and transforming social jelly which sustains and enhances community initiative. Neglected or performed badly, such support can undermine and trample on initiatives. And performed without respect for the multiple skills, knowledge and capabilities of citizens and residents, ‘them’ and ‘us’ barriers are readily created, or else initiatives evolve which become dependent on what is offered to them, rather than their own energy and creativity.

If community initiative is to play a more important role in the public sphere than it has done in the past half-century in countries such as the Netherlands and the UK, then there is an urgent need to give much more attention to its dynamics and relation to wider institutional supports. The attendees of this seminar recognised the need for policymakers, academics, and those networks advocating more attention to this level of public activity, to rise to the challenge.
The Great North Build

Lead Academic: Rose Gilroy, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

In March and April 2012 members of the public were invited to construct a giant Lego town at the Great North Museum (Hancock). This project explored the role of planning in addressing some of the major issues which affect people’s everyday lives. Almost 10,000 visitors came along to the exhibit and 110,000 bricks were used to create the ‘mini-city’ whose size, scale and purpose was determined by the public working with University researchers. Graduates were recruited to help prepare the exhibition and to prompt the general public to think about what makes a well functioning city or community.

Our ‘city developers and planners’ were bold and ruthless. Buildings that were judged not to work or to be poorly located were demolished; new shopping areas sprang up; ministries (including MI6) were relocated from London to generate employment; a wave of crime was met by the development of a high security prison; an airport was built.

In addition, every day the public were faced with a new, realistic, challenge such as: “Department of Health research has revealed that our city has a high incidence of heart disease, how can we get people taking more exercise?”, “A major employer needs to expand but that means building on green field sites –how do we balance our need for jobs and our need to protect the environment?”, or, “There is a continued decline in the physical and social conditions of social housing to the south of the city. Do we do renovate or sell the land for new, private residential development?”. These questions prompted the public to think of responses to real life challenges, and highlighted that there are tough decisions to be made when trying to create a good place to live.

The Great North Build project facilitated greater public understanding of planning and architectural issues. It was a hugely successful method of illustrating research in an accessible way, and creating a melting pot of fun activity and knowledge - based on specific real life questions and scenarios.
Connecting Universities to Regional Growth

Lead academic: Emeritus Professor John Goddard OBE, Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies

The Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) has been investigating innovation and regional development with particular focus on the role of Universities in fostering local social and economic development since the 1980s.

CURDS research suggests that far from the ‘ivory towers’ of isolated learning and knowledge, Universities can in fact play a vital role in their regions by contributing to sustainable development, public health and the cultural sector of cities. Universities can attract investment, support all learning, engage in community development and share their knowledge through research and consultancy.

In 1994 CURDS undertook a study for the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP now Universities UK) which produced pioneering guidance on the role of Universities in the regions. The guidance was then implemented nationally in the Dearing Report, the largest review of UK higher education since the 1960s. Previous to the Dearing Report, local and regional involvement of institutions was patchy and lacked a national strategy. Professor John Goddard’s underpinning research identified the opportunities for universities to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the places where they were located.

This work has been influential in many areas of research, policy and practise, including regional studies, politics, planning and university management, and has had a wide uptake internationally. Between 2004 and 2007, the analytical framework developed in CURDS was used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in assessing how the higher education institutions contribute to city and regional development in 40 areas in 35 countries.

The key lessons have now been codified in a practical guide published by the European Commission - Connecting Universities to Regional Growth. This has been widely utilised by universities and regions across Europe and beyond such that the role universities need to play in employment generation, shaping the built environment (‘making the place’), business innovation and local civil society, is a widely accepted as a priority by most university and city and regional leaders across the globe.
The Role of International Organisations and Human Rights Monitoring Bodies in Refugee Protection

Lead Academic: Dr Maria-Teresa Gil-Bazo, Newcastle Law School

Fast developments in international and EU law in the field of asylum have resulted in an increasing complexity and fragmentation that deserves discussion at expert level.

Dr Gil-Bazo was awarded funds by the Institute to set up an international workshop bringing together a number of relevant experts to discuss the role of international organisations and International Human Rights Monitoring Bodies (IHRMBs) in the protection of refugees. In particular, it explored how these relevant actors may be filling the gap resulting from the lack of an international body with jurisdiction to receive individual applications under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The participants were invited to reflect on a number of key questions, including what are the main challenges for the effective enforcement of refugee protection?; what role can be/is played by different actors – such as international organisations, UNHCR, IHRMBs, practitioners and NGOs – in the effective enforcement of refugee protection; What issues/questions are particularly problematic when addressing issues of enforcement; which issues/questions would benefit in your view from further academic research?

Discussion took place in a very specialist way, allowing participants to enter into the necessary technical details. The Workshop took place under the “Chatham Rule” allowing institutional participants (all in senior positions of responsibility) to share and discuss freely, knowing that all sensitive information was to be treated with the necessary confidence and that neither the identity nor the affiliation of the author of any particular contribution may be attributed to him or her (directly or indirectly).

The workshop’s conclusions stressed strongly the need for continued working in this vital area, and for the research to be in partnership between Academia and beneficiaries of academic research. Further research was identified to be needed on issues such as addressing refugee issues on a global scale, exploring the meaning and content of asylum, identifying the way to incorporate decisions by IHRMBs at a national level, and exploring the scope and meaning of Article 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU on the Right to Human Dignity. Furthermore, some of the papers presented at the workshop will be published as an edited volume or as a special issue of a journal.
It is widely acknowledged that there is a global water crisis which affects our poorest countries most. However, research by Professor Castro and Dr Amezaga suggests this is not the result of water scarcity or a result in of lack of technology and expertise in the management of water – it is the inequality in the access to water which causes the problems. “Although Latin America has the world’s largest availability of freshwater resources, according to the World Bank, around 11% of the population still lacks access to clean water and 26% has no adequate sanitation facilities. Inequality in access to water is a major issue in the economic and social development of communities across Latin America.”

The challenge of providing access to water and sanitation has traditionally been tackled by engineers, scientists and bureaucrats. Taking an approach which looked at the social and political aspects, Professor Castro and project partners developed insights into access to water which had not been considered before. For example, the effects of privatisation, lack of engagement with citizens, and marketization. The main challenges facing the international community in this area are not merely technical or environmental, but are conditioned by economic, socio-political, cultural and policy-institutional processes.
This research has influenced and shaped public policy at the federal, national and municipal levels in Brazil in elsewhere in Latin America, translating into a wide variety of campaigns, policy frameworks and activities by governmental and non-governmental organisations alike. The research contributed to the first legal framework for sanitation in Brazil: the Brazilian federal Basic Sanitation Act and first National Plan for Basic Sanitation.

This research opens up a new perspective on the reasons why provision of access to water succeeds or fails. Traditional approaches focusing only on the technical challenges of providing water and sanitation fail if the social and political aspects have not been addressed.

At a fundamental level, this research seeks to improve access for individuals and communities. At a national and international level it is changing how local and national governments think about how to provide water and sanitation to their citizens.
Crofting Reform – Applying Ideas of Networked Rural Development

Lead academic: Professor Mark Shucksmith, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

During 2007-08 Professor Mark Shucksmith chaired the Scottish Government’s Inquiry into the Future of Crofting, delivering a report and recommendations for far-reaching changes in government policy and practice. The ideas in the report, and the way the Inquiry was conducted, reflect many years of research by Mark Shucksmith and colleagues in Newcastle University’s Centre for Rural Economy and its Planning school.

The research shows how people and communities can collectively imagine their future, drawing on shared knowledge and identity, networks, tangible and intangible assets and institutional capacities to actively shape the future of their places, with support from an enabling state.

The concept of neo-endogenous rural development originated in Newcastle’s Centre for Rural Economy in 1995. It proposed a new ‘networked’ model of development, acknowledging that both local and extra-local factors are critical to processes of rural development. In particular, the balance of internal and external control of development processes and how to enhance the capacity of local actors to steer these larger processes to their collective benefit are vital. This new model was a critique of the ‘top-down’ approach of exogenous development and transformed the model of ‘bottom-up’, endogenous development, based on local, participative approaches.

The Crofting Inquiry report proposed local mobilisation and community empowerment supported by generative state action and by refocused policy instruments which would operate to encourage local strategies and initiative. In terms of governance, regulation would be in the hands of locally-elected bodies, rather than an appointed Crofters Commission. Local communities, supported by HIE’s Community Land Unit, would be encouraged to engage in deliberative place-shaping, articulating their own community development strategies. Alongside these changes in governance, other recommendations sought to address unhelpful policies, by refocusing agricultural support, economic development, housing and planning policies towards support for locally-agreed place-shaping strategies.

These proposals were largely accepted and enacted in legislation. They illustrate how networked rural development and place-shaping can proceed in practice. The proposals recommended local mobilisation to be encouraged by the generative power of the state and other actors and the harmonisation of policy instruments. Using this approach, the Inquiry sought to build the capacity of crofting communities to mobilise themselves strategically and collaboratively, empowering communities at various levels.

Its recommendations informed a major overhaul of Scottish crofting legislation and governance which was aimed at reversing the decline of crofting and rural depopulation in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. This culminated in the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and the setting up of an elected Crofting Commission in 2012 to replace the appointed Crofters Commission. The focus of the reforms has been to address deeply embedded challenges to peripheral rural areas that also have resonances across Europe.
Travel to Work Areas

Lead Academic: **Professor Mike Coombes**, Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies

Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) are defined so that the analysis of local social and economic statistics for policy-making and research is more meaningful. Only by using data on TTWAs – not administrative areas like city boundaries – is it possible to accurately compare places in Britain on such key issues such as their unemployment rates. This is because the TTWA definitions are based on the commuting patterns of people in every part of the country, and as a result they represent the geography of British local economic areas.

In fact the research over several decades that underpins the method of defining TTWAs is now recognised as having created a ‘best practice’ approach to defining local labour markets which has been adopted and adapted in numerous countries across the world. CURDS research has also extended the method to define housing market areas for use in national housing policy.

TTWAs are established as the ‘default’ definition of local labour markets for the UK Government and in this role they are cited in the HM Treasury Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government (The Green Book). Over many years TTWAs have been used to assess the relative need of different areas when allocating public funds. Recent examples of this use include their citation in the process to choose which cities would receive new powers and funding through City Deals and the distribution of the multi-million pound Regional Growth Fund.

The robust nature of the definitions – TTWAs are the only official statistical areas defined by academics – has meant that they are also used for research which is critical of government policy, as in trade union research on regional pay policies.

The most persistent use of TTWA is in the publication by the Office for National Statistics of regularly released data such as unemployment statistics.
The Victoria Tunnel Project

Lead Academic: Professor Savvas Papagiannidis, Newcastle University Business School

The Victoria Tunnel runs beneath Newcastle city centre from the Town Moor to the River Tyne. It was built in 1842 to transport coal from Leazes Main Colliery to riverside staithes (jetties) ready for loading onto ships. In 1939, it was converted into an air-raid shelter to protect hundreds of Newcastle citizens during World War II. A programme of repairs has been carried out and part of the Tunnel is open all year round to the public for guided tours which include fantastic sound and visual effects. It is an award winning tourist attraction administered by the Ouseburn Trust which makes it possible to go on a journey of discovery and learn how tough life was during WW2, listen for the air-raid warning and the sound of planes passing overhead dropping their bombs, and share the memories of people who lived through the dreadful period in Newcastle's history. The Tunnel also offers the opportunity to experience life in a Victorian waggon way, learn how it was constructed and listen out for the wagons full of coal heading for the Tyne. The project is an invaluable addition to maintaining a living memory of the area's heritage.

In summer 2013 Professor Savvas Papagiannidis arranged for two student placements, supported by NISR as part of the Newcastle Work Experience Scheme, to research and prepare a business plan for the Tunnel project. The aim was not only to ensure the sustainability of the Victoria Tunnel project, but also to contribute to its future growth. The project is currently supported by a single part time member of staff, and relies heavily on volunteers. The student placements set out to review the structure, operational systems and marketing strategy of the heritage attraction in order to provide recommendations for the improvement of its efficiency and income generation.

The students on placement focused on three main areas when reviewing the project. They examined the full visitor experience from gathering pre-tour information; examined the full volunteer experience from recruitment, through training, to long-term experience; and they examined the relationship of the Victoria Tunnel with the local and wider community, including local businesses and local, national and international competitors. The students reported some key recommendations:

- Develop a new volunteer recruitment strategy that targets the individual motivations of diverse volunteer groups.
- Expand the scope of volunteering opportunities beyond tour guiding. Delegate other roles, such as social media management, to volunteers and create opportunities for volunteers to progress, such as volunteer mentoring positions.
• Implement an online booking system with a live availability feature and online payment option.
• Review the Ouseburn Trust’s website, with a focus on clear and concise information and a more visually appealing layout including multimedia features.
• Invest more time and money in social media platforms as these offer cheap marketing opportunities and user generated content, which fosters loyalty and support from visitors.
• Increase the price of a tour to £6 for adults and £3 for children in order to match competitors and easily generate additional income.
• Create themed tours in order to target alternative groups, create more homogenous tours, and frequently refresh the offer to encourage repeat visits.
• Renew and expand cooperation with local businesses by promoting current offers more effectively before the point of purchase, and by negotiating with local businesses for further cooperation and potential sponsorship opportunities.

These recommendations were well received by Victoria Tunnel team who were very complementary about the work that the students produced. This activity has helped demonstrate the University’s Civic Engagement agenda, and has enhanced the strong working relationship with the Ouseburn Trust.
Researching ‘the how’: Between community and governance on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne

Lead Academic: Julie Crawshaw, School of Arts and Cultures

Focused on engaging governance stakeholders in considering creative processes for community engagement on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, Julie Crawshaw, research assistant for the Northumbrian Exchanges project, arranged nine creative workshops on Lindisfarne.

Residents and governing representatives ‘mapped’ the island from their perspectives. This was through photography, drawing and painting, theatre, dance, and sonic collection. Through participant-observation, the research contributes a nuanced understanding of how the art experience engages participants in thinking through doing. Through taking account of material associations, the research traces how the workshops mediate relationships between participants amidst the island. In the fields of cultural policy and planning, there is a broad interest in the social role of art as a way to engage community participation. As well as engaging residents and stakeholders in participatory activity, these workshops also engaged stakeholders in reflecting on their role and approach: suggesting a role for art as a mediator towards partnership working and communicative governance.

In collaboration with the Holy Island Partnership (HIP), NISR supported the development of a series of three workshops including nine sessions as part of a total series of twenty sessions within the Northumbrian Exchanges knowledge exchange programme. Resident and professional participation in the creative programme mediated communication between neighbours, as well as reflection on the approach to community engagement by HIP. The full workshop programme benefitted twenty five participants, including twenty of the 120 island residents, two governing representatives, two part-time residents, and one visitor. Due to the enthusiasm for, and interest in the activity, the work and documentation produced was presented on the island, with the exhibition gaining 200 visitors over four days. Through an embedded development period, disconnects were revealed between residents and governing objectives. Stimulated by the development of the workshops via short residential research periods, HIP is now considering an embedded approach to development working. As discussed at a presentation at the Centre for Rural Economy (June 2013), in future development phases it is hoped that professional representatives will be encouraged to engage as part of island life.
There is a growing interest in how to capture the ‘cultural value’ of arts practice. In the HIP workshops evaluation, participants state they would like to continue to explore the island through creative activities. Encouraged by this enthusiasm, HIP professionals are also interested in integrating creative activities as part of development working. Through participant-observation of the visual art, performance and sound workshops the research makes a descriptive contribution to our understanding of how the transactions of art between people, material and things soften hardened positions to enable new conversations to take place. The creative research intervention facilitated HIP to reflect on their professional role, and consider a more embedded approach to community engagement. The study also contributes descriptions in support of understanding how the material relationships of creative practice mediate communication in support of community development and island governance.
Inbetween

Lead Academics: David Butler and Dr Vee Pollock, School of Arts and Cultures

In July 2013 David Butler and Dr Vee Pollock held a workshop bringing together key people and agencies working with working with arts and culture in rural areas. The aim was to enhance the national network developed during the AHRC-funded Inbetween: cultural regeneration in market towns project from 2012. The workshop also aimed to link to the current AHRC-funded knowledge exchange project Northumbrian Exchanges (NX) and Berwick Artists Residency Partnership (between Berwick Visual Arts and the Centre for Rural Economy) as well as bringing in other relevant regional stakeholders and practitioners. The event sought to share knowledge from the projects, identify key issues and look toward future research areas of mutual interest and benefit.

The event was focused around reflective discussion using urban initiatives in Newcastle, particularly around use of empty buildings for cultural projects, as a catalyst. Key issues to be addressed for partners as well as the use of empty buildings were the decline of town centres, the relation between artists’ agendas and public agendas (e.g. regeneration), and the ‘value’ of culture.

36 delegates attended the two day workshop from various stakeholders including Newcastle University, Arts Council Wales, Torfaen Council, Northumberland County Council, Northumbrian Exchanges, Cumbria University and artists from groups in Bewick, Hexham, Pontypool, Dumfries and Newcastle. The event enabled valuable commentary and advice on particular initiatives. The itinerary over the two days included visits to the NewBridge Project and Commercial Union House to meet with artists who have developed empty office blocks as studios, galleries, and lecture spaces. Following these demonstrations, Neon Arts Project is now using empty premises in Hexham and looking to develop the City Pool, Newcastle, as an arts venue.

Crucially, this event developed relationships which will continue to have lasting effects and create follow-on projects. The networks formed will continue to support partners and inform future research and teaching. Partners from these projects are now involved in further work including a bid to the AHRC to host a cultural value workshop on arts organisations in rural areas as well as a large AHRC standard grant proposal looking at rural arts activity and its value. Vee Pollock’s students studying Fine Art are shortly going to start a week long residency with Stephanie Misa in Berwick thanks to the relationships formed in this July event. Also, Alexia Mellor, Pontypool’s artist-in-residence during the Inbetween project, came to this event and never left Newcastle - she is currently working with NewBridge and Neon Arts, and will be starting a PhD with Fine Art in September 2014.
Northumbrian Voices

Lead Academic: Kathryn Tickell, School of Arts and Cultures

The genesis of Northumbrian Voices dates back to Kathryn Tickell’s childhood, as she grew up absorbing Northumberland’s traditions first-hand from family and friends, recording conversation and tunes to learn at home later. Recently she began transcribing dozens of these conversations and musical exchanges. “As I wrote down the words,” Kathryn recalls, “sometimes rewinding the tape many, many times to decipher a particularly difficult or uproarious bit, I found myself laughing out loud, crying, and, most of all – remembering. Several of the people were no longer alive, and it was simultaneously wonderful and devastating to hear their voices again. Others are very much part of the modern world, and I knew I wanted to continue working with these words until I had something I could share.” So Kathryn supplemented these recordings with new interviews, and fashioned them into a performance, interweaving songs, tunes and narrative into a magical, moving, humbling and often hilarious journey through the culture and lore of the North Tyne Valley.

In the words of one reviewer, Northumbrian Voices encapsulates the experience and self-expression of “people who live on the land, and who earn their living from it. People who know their surroundings as they know the back of their hand ...” Just as the featured music combines traditional, contemporary and original material, these voices both enshrine the past and speak to the future, eloquently transcending their particular locale to evoke the timeless cycles, necessities, hardships and consolations that still shape human existence everywhere.

The music and stories are wonderful in themselves. But beyond that is a performance which tells the people of the North East something about themselves and their history and identity, celebrating people’s memories, lives and culture while looking forward and taking this heritage into the future – a link between continuity and change which is the essence of social renewal.

Northumbrian Voices has been performed extensively, in Britain and abroad, to great critical acclaim and it has been released as a double CD. It will shortly be available as a DVD as well. More details can be found at: http://www.kathryntickell.com
The Real Translation Project 2013/14 - Spanish Textiles Project

Lead Academics: Angela Uribe de Kellett, School of Modern Languages and Caroline Afolabi-Deleu, Success4All

The aim of The Spanish Textiles Project was to give university students the opportunity to engage with young people and children from a deprived area of Newcastle, and to promote language learning in vocational studies, something which most pupils of vocational studies are excluded from. It did this by bringing together five 2nd year language students from the School of Modern Languages and four pupils from Walker Technology College (WTC) who were studying textiles. Working together, these nine students undertook the production of a 23-page, bilingual glossary and phrase booklet, which formed the basis of textile workshops for Year 6 primary school children at the Success4All's Summer School in WTC. Each Spanish Textiles workshop was run by a Newcastle University student and two WTC textiles pupils, with a textiles teacher present to assist. The booklet provided a great support.

The bilingual booklet is a good resource for Success4All. It introduced the pupils to the Spanish language in a purposeful manner. The booklet is an asset for the University and is possibly the start of a campaign to integrate language learning into vocational study. Amongst the WTC pupils, it promoted an interest in studying languages and perhaps also in higher education; they have started a Key Fund application to visit a Spanish fashion house in London.

In a plenary questionnaire, several students stated that the extra translational practice gave them confidence in their final university assessments. These questionnaires indicated that 100% of the students would get involved in similar initiatives in the future. They felt that their CVs had been enhanced and that they had gained an insight into a future career; they had the chance to refine their linguistic competencies through translation and gained many transferable skills necessary in the current job market, distinguishing them from other candidates (e.g. problem-solving, communication, time management, and linguistic skills); and the collaboration between students within the translation group fostered a sense of purpose and allowed students to refine their teamwork and negotiation skills. The project benefitted the university involved in a number of ways.
Mapping Print Culture in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1571-1790: Musical Print Culture in Early Modern Newcastle

Lead Academic: Dr Kirsten Gibson, SACS/International Centre for Music Studies and Dr Steph Carter, Research Assistant

This project has engaged with Newcastle’s long history of bookselling and printing. By 1800, the city was a major national printing centre; yet, while this history has been well-documented, it has ‘not yet been written as a coherent analytical and narrative history’ (John Feather). One aspect of this past has been particularly neglected - printed music in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This project has sought to recover the musical narrative by documenting evidence of musical activity, music publishing and the sale and circulation of printed music, thereby creating an important new record of Newcastle’s publishing past.

It has uncovered significant evidence that the retail book trade in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Newcastle and Gateshead was both sustained and substantive, and that printed music, while a small and specialised market, was being sold and circulated. Primary evidence of this can be found in the following: the probate inventory of William Corbett’s two Newcastle bookshops (1626), which listed ‘psalmes in foure par[tes]’; the mid-seventeenth-century Catalogue of Most Vendible Books by William London, which contained 17 contemporaneous music publications; A Joco-Serious Discourse (1686), co-published by the Newcastle bookseller John Story and containing notated tunes for four of its seven lyrics; and the late-seventeenth-century music manuscript of the Newcastle hostman, Henry Atkinson, where tunes were copied from printed sources. The research is contributing to the preparation of a large, cross-disciplinary project on Newcastle’s early print history (the ‘Mapping Newcastle Print Culture’ project).

These findings are of significance, not only for our understanding of the print history of Newcastle, but also for the history of music printing more generally since, to date, no systematic research has been undertaken into the circulation of printed music via the pre-eighteenth-century regional book trade. Excepting the 1616 inventory of York bookseller John Foster, the circulation of printed music has almost exclusively focussed on contexts closely connected – geographically, socially or culturally – to London: that is, the universities and the households of the aristocracy. Therefore, these findings prompt further research into the circulation of printed music through the regional book trade and its consumption in regional urban centres, and invite alternative narratives to the London-centric history of Early Modern, literate, amateur music-making. Already, the research has been presented at the ‘Musical Life Outside London, 1500–1800: Networks, Circulation, Sources’ Study Day (co-convened by Dr Kirsten Gibson, Dr Steph Carter and Dr Roz Southey).

A dynamic, open-access web map will make the research widely accessible by documenting the libraries, bookshops, booksellers, printers, publishers, subscribers and readers of early modern Newcastle. The project is conceived as an instance of public memory, forming a permanent record of Newcastle’s rich history as a city awash with printed texts. By celebrating its vital cultural past, the project seeks to inform, engage and inspire the city’s twenty-first-century citizens to form their own positive and enriching relationships with textual materials.
Workshop and exhibition ‘Italy, Germany and the New European Order in the Adriatic, 1943-1945’

Lead Academics: Claudia Baldoli, Philip Daniels and Neelam Srivastava, Schools of History; English and Politics.

On the 70th Anniversary of the Second World War, an event took place which highlighted how the legacy of the war years is still alive and well throughout Europe. It proposed that public discourse and scholarly debate still echoes the idea of Europe that was intended to be produced by war and occupation, but that an examination of this can lead to a different way of thinking.

Professor Tim Kirk (Newcastle University) and Professor Paolo Ferrari (Udine University) were speakers at the event’s opening workshop, and their presentations provided a critical re-evaluation of the German-Italian relationship during the occupation of the Balkans in 1943-45, and its current legacy. They sought to demonstrate that the relationship between occupier and occupied was never monolithic, and to expose the varieties of experience that existed and the differing memories that still exists. More than 60 people took part including Newcastle University students, other North East universities and the wider public.

Following these discussions, an exhibition, created by two of the most distinguished Italian historians of World War Two, focused on the Nazi-Fascist project for the annexation of the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia, and on the propaganda and cultural plans for the ‘New European Order’. This drew upon colonial relationships and the forms of cultural hegemony that existed between Germany, Italy and the Balkans.

It consisted of 16 panels, inclusive of text and original images found in Italian archives: Nazism and the Destruction of Cultural Identities; A Multicultural Crossroads: From Italian Rule to the European Union; The Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral; War in 1944 and the Exhibition ‘Bolshevism unmasked’; Propaganda on the Adriatic Littoral; The Enemies: the Anglo-Americans; The Enemies: The Soviet Union; Katyn: War of Propaganda Around a Massacre; The Enemies: The Partisans; Friuli identity and Local Traditions; The Cossacks in Friuli; Daily Life in Udine and Trieste; War and ‘Secret Weapons’; The Projects for a ‘Nazi Europe’; The Final Solution in the Adriatic Littoral; The Culture of Hatred and Separatism on a Multi-cultural Border. It also included 10 copies of original propaganda leaflets, all contextualised with captions. This was on public display in the lobby of the Courtyard at Newcastle University.

The workshop and exhibition showed the contemporary importance of borders, identity and historical memory in the construction of an integrated Europe. Examining an era when the idea of Europe was created by colonial and violent means can contribute to the construction of a European memory that is capable of moving beyond separate national memories and, instead, can be based on the ethics of responsibility.
Mother Tongue, Other Tongue Poetry Competition

Lead Academics: Dr Elizabeth Andersen, Sophie Stewart and Thomas Snell, School of Modern Languages (Routes into Languages North East)

This project was run by Routes into Languages after the success of the Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition 2012-13. Its aim was to encourage primary and secondary school pupils to explore and celebrate multilingualism and multiculturalism through the submission of a poem or piece of creative writing in a language other than English. These students were also offered the opportunity to take part in creative workshops led by trained Student Ambassadors from Newcastle University, which resulted in a half-day workshop comprising of 13 pupils whose first languages included Polish, Urdu and Mandarin Chinese.

For every participant, the competition and workshop represented the chance to develop creative writing skills in their chosen foreign language, as well as in English; but, most importantly, it offered a rare opportunity to introduce their respective mother tongues directly into their classwork, sharing their linguistic and cultural experiences with others along the way. With the help of their teachers, they could explore issues of community identity and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity present in their classrooms.

While Highly Commended pupils were presented with their prizes when organisers paid a personal visit to their schools, the winners of the ‘Mother Tongue’ and ‘Other Tongue’ categories travelled to Manchester to receive their prizes at a national event. For these two pupils, the chance to be a part of the national celebration in Manchester, each accompanied by a parent and a teacher, was certainly a highlight. Activities included international music and dance workshops with Musicians without Borders and a keynote speech from esteemed author and educationalist Qasira Shahraz. Both winners then performed their poems bravely in front of an audience of over 100 people, a beneficial experience in itself which is sure to have boosted their confidence.

The benefits of this competition were not confined to schools alone, however, as at a University level the recruitment and training of Student Ambassadors bridged two Schools (SML and SELLS) and brought together undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as UK and international students, thus providing a unique opportunity for collaboration. A new digital element has become integral to the project through the production of a promotional video in which Newcastle University academics share their own Mother and Other Tongue poems in Chinese, French, German and Serbian - soon to appear within a dedicated area of our Linguacast website. This has helped to raise the profile of the competition and the wider work of Routes into Languages among staff members, encouraging support for similar events in the future.
Supporting the planning phase of an Erasmus plus project: Interactive dual language immersive learning space

Lead Academic: Heather J Smith, (Lecturer in Education, School of ECLS)

The overall aim of the Erasmus plus project is to improve the education of Eastern European Traveller children, and Roma children in particular, in primary school classrooms across Europe. The project is built to address the persistent gaps in school attendance and the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in comparison to national averages across Europe. It is informed by the EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies up to 2020, which aims to improve the quality of early childhood education by using inclusive and tailor-made teaching and learning methods.

This planning phase began in Newcastle and Gateshead with the development of an innovative integration of two technologies working in tandem (digital table and large scale 360-degree projected displays) to act as a medium through which pupils can experience high quality dual language learning. This improved Eastern European pupils’ motivation and engagement in school at the same time as improving their cognitive academic language for learning in both their home language and English. The transformation of teachers’ prejudices towards Roma is viewed as essential to improved relations between families and the school, as well as parental involvement in the design of the activities resulting in improved understanding of institutionalised education by the Roma families.

To enable this, communication with families outside of school was sought through community organisations often run by members of the Roma communities. The key message to the families was that ‘the project would help them help their children’. Several experts working in Newcastle are now being invited to hear from project participants, which include the Head Teachers of two local Primary schools, to articulate this approach.

NISR funding enabled the success of the planning phase; and the project has now secured €261,317 for its development on the larger scale. By increasing the quality of early childhood education using inclusive and tailor-made teaching and learning methods, this project prioritised and improved the overall wellbeing of pupils and families.
Beyond Frontiers Sandpit Event

Lead Academic: Dr Joe Skinner (School of History, Classics and Archaeology)

The Beyond Frontiers project aims to work with local schools and other partner institutions in order to promote mutual respect and understanding within local communities, to celebrate the knowledge, ideas and beliefs that newcomers bring to the region and to place their experience of dislocation in the context of the North East’s long history of mobility and exchange. The sandpit explored ways in which university-based academics with research interests encompassing the themes of cultural identity, mobility and material culture studies could collaborate with school teachers, the Great North Museum and local service-providers catering for refugees. The goal was to devise a suite of cross-curricula activities that might allow schoolchildren to explore questions of cultural difference in the comparatively ‘neutral’ environment of Graeco-Roman antiquity. Rather than being solely historical in nature these activities were tailored to meet the needs of local schools as they respond to recent changes in the National Curriculum.

As a result of these discussions, there is now a clear set of priorities for future work including a pilot project with West Jesmond Primary that will commence in February 2015. A meeting was subsequently set up with staff at the school in which practical arrangements for the classroom-based activities were discussed, together with a series of follow-up sessions to be held in the Great North Museum and an associated exhibition. The latter has the potential to significantly broaden the impact of the activities devised for the classroom sessions by providing an opportunity for families and friends of the schoolchildren to come and view the work produced.

The full significance of these activities has yet to be determined; however, recent research by Turner et al. (2008; 2011) has demonstrated that imagined inter-group contact can promote positive relations between groups of different outlook and culture. Professor Rhiannon Turner (Queen’s University Belfast) is working to gauge the extent to which these activities have had an impact upon the attitudes and behaviours of those participating in the study group.

The pilot will in turn form the core of a forthcoming funding application to the British Academy/AHRC encompassing a broader range of activities involving local artists, undergraduates and schools local to the area. It is hoped that this will lead to further opportunities to forge meaningful and long-lasting collaborations with external partners and the local community and thus broaden the range of KE activities in which the university is engaged.