This book of stories provides a partial and yet fascinating glimpse of what has been achieved in the four years that have passed since the start of the Newcastle Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Account (IAA). Thanks go to the ESRC for providing the funding that have made these stories possible.

The way that Newcastle has engaged with local communities across the North East shows the University’s unwavering commitment towards the region. This book of stories also highlights international contributions in terms of environmental sustainability in local interventions as far as Kenya and South Africa, or, more broadly, in terms of supporting the effectiveness of NGO’s contributions in international climate change negotiations and national policy making. Our commitment to addressing global challenges is clearly both national and international, and the Newcastle Policy Academy and Newcastle Global Challenges Academy complement the ESRC IAA by supporting both.

This book of stories also makes me reflect on what it means to be a social scientist. And this means not to follow any facile, external stereotypes of isolation but rather to work in, for and with the economies and societies which we belong to and with and for which we can make a positive difference.

The counterpart of this is the recognition of the work of our many partners on the ground who have coproduced economic and social impact in the North East and beyond. To our partners also go our thanks, for what we have achieved and what we plan to achieve in the future would not have been possible and will not be possible without their crucial guidance and support.

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/hss/impact/
Making an impact with social science research

In 2014 Newcastle University was awarded an IAA (Impact Acceleration Account) by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to widen and deepen the impact of various projects led by social science researchers. When it began the IAA had a number of aims:

• Enhance the knowledge of Newcastle University staff and postgraduates who undertake social science research
• Increase the range, quality and impact of knowledge exchange activities with external partners
• Enhance Newcastle University’s experience of and reputation in undertaking ‘excellent research with a purpose’
• Contribute to wealth creation, to the development of policy and professional practice and to civil society

We believe we exceeded these aims and through a variety of IAA schemes have funded 119 projects working with a range of partners. This booklet is divided into four themes: local, national, international and interdisciplinary to show the diversity of projects and partnerships in the social sciences which have impacted a huge number of different groups: from local school children across the North-East to flower harvesters in the Western Cape of South Africa. We hope that you are inspired by the stories featured here - to find out more about the impact of social science and working with researchers in HaSS please visit the HaSS website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hss/impact

Working together with our partners

At the heart of all IAA projects were strong partnerships with various sectors including international companies, local SMEs, Governments, Voluntary Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups, Local Authorities and international NGOs. This ethos extended into the IAA Steering Group and awards panel, where applications were reviewed by a number of external research users providing vital feedback in shaping the focus of the IAA. This was enabled through five different IAA streams: co-production, secondment, open chair and wider impact funding (which included external engagement and knowledge exchange) alongside a collaborative ‘North East’ fund that linked to Durham University’s IAA.

Each of these streams allowed for flexible and dynamic applications that responded to partner needs. The co-production fund facilitated members of academic staff to team up with different non-academic organisations to work on research that was focused on finding solutions to needs-based problems: whether that was building temporary pop-up parks in urban space, reviewing disabled user mobility needs in Newcastle with a national charity or thinking of the longer term impact of Forest Schools on young people’s wellbeing in partnership with a local community garden project. The secondment stream enabled academic staff to develop in-depth relationships with a variety of partners, leading to a wider culture change and longer term impact within the organisation.

The open chair scheme encouraged local interest groups to group together around specific themes, for example belonging and identity within refugee communities in North-East England, and the creation of a children’s community in the West End of Newcastle. The Newcastle and Durham North East fund fostered deeper ties between both institutions and led to a number of collaborative projects: from helping survivors of head and neck cancer better enjoy their food and reviewing the support offered to local social entrepreneurs, to considering Brexit policy ramifications on Northern Ireland.

The main IAA stream funded over 80 projects across a diverse range of subject areas with local, national and international prominence some of which are featured here. This included working with the Scottish Parliament on tackling Islamophobia, running workshops about North-East girlhood, raising awareness around the culture and language of indigenous communities in Mexico, and helping shape resources for speech and language therapists.

Images from the IAA Showcase event in November 2016
(Photo credit: Zander Photography)

A view from our Steering Group

I have been a student at University, I have account managed Universities for several years and understand the meaning of the word research. As I have gotten older I have learnt more about what drives people in the private sector, such as myself, and what drives academics. In a lot of cases they are actually very similar. Ultimately, we are all striving to make things better. Throughout the last decade the private sector has changed and continues to change from output based work to outcome based work instead. Until sitting on the ESRC IAA Steering Group at Newcastle University, I was unaware of any such parallel in the academic sector. The IAA fund has changed that perception completely: projects funded by the IAA must have, and are measured on, their impact and outcomes. I think that this is a sensible move by the funding bodies that will help break down some of the barriers that still exist between parts of academia and other stakeholders, helping Civic Universities fulfil their ambitions by playing a larger part in the life of their neighbourhoods. It may even be the start of the breakdown of town and gown in some towns and cities across the country.

Richard Snell, IBM Commercial
Social Science Stories

Theme: Local

DIY Streets: Armelle Tardiveau and Daniel Mallo

Partner: Sustrans

The Pocket Park idea came about almost by accident. Fenham ward, in the west end of Newcastle, had received some funding for the Sustrans DIY Streets Project to involve local people in improving their area, making streets less car focused and more generally help them redesign their neighbourhoods putting people back at their heart. Through the IAA co-production stream the Newcastle University team supported Sustrans’ work by engaging the community through design and strengthening their aspirations as well as sparking inspiration about the potential of their local environment. To begin with various methods were used to find out how residents felt about their local area. Scale models were built, encouraging locals to interact and helping them imagine what could be possible. Temporary wooden seats were also placed along the street where cars normally parked so residents could see the impact of making these changes in a more physical way.

A keen group of residents and local stakeholders emerged out of this engagement who became the core of a focus group. Using large photographs of the street that could be sketched over, the project team fostered further discussion and imagination amongst participants. During these different stages, local people identified a need for a place where they could sit and watch the world go by. Many residents also commented that the library, swimming pool and doctor’s surgery on Fenham Hall Drive formed a community hub but that there was no outdoor space for socialising. Taking these ideas into consideration the project concluded with a temporary public/play space between the library and pool for four days, which gave members of the public, residents and other stakeholders the opportunity to experience the potential impact of a public space in the area. This temporary space showed, more than a model or image ever could, the way in which people could change their environment for the better.

All of these experiences strengthened the desire for the community and all the various partners involved - members of the City Council, local residents, Fenham Association of Residents, Fenham Library, Fenham Swimming Pool, Sustrans, Your Homes Newcastle, Newcastle University and Fenham New Model Allotments - to seek funding for what they now call a hub for Fenham Hall Drive. A group of local people, in partnership with Fenham Association of Residents, were successfully awarded £15,000 from the Department of Communities and Local Government to build a Pocket Park, which opened in May 2016. Cllr Marion Talbot, a City Council ward member for Fenham explained that:

“The pocket park will provide something for everyone to enjoy with its environmental, educational and social qualities. It has been refreshing the way residents, community groups and organisations have all joined together to make this project happen and unite with a common goal of providing something extra special for the area. This has been a real coup for Fenham. To have so many prominent professional and academic representatives from such places as Newcastle University and Sustrans all pulling their specialist skills together - to create a wonderful conversation piece that will add an extra dimension to the local community. It is forging invaluable working relationships that could prosper in years to come”.

Since the completion of the Pocket Park, community action in the area continues to grow: the newly constituted group ‘Friends of Fenham Pocket Park’ organise biannual events engaging the local community. They look to widen the park space to other areas of Fenham, as well as exploring the potential for expanding local green and social space.

Theme: Local

A Children’s Community for Newcastle’s West End: Professor Liz Todd and Karen Laing

Consortium members include: West End Schools Trust, Health Works Newcastle, West Clinical Commissioning Group, Community Foundation, Newcastle West Riverside, Sure Start, Ballinger Trust and Children North East, Newcastle City Council

There are powerful evidence-based reasons to believe that Children’s Communities or Children’s Zones should have significant impacts on children and young people’s outcomes. Research has shown that they have a real potential to transform the way services for disadvantaged families and children are delivered, and by doing so, transform communities and the life chances of the people that live there. This Open Chair project, in conjunction with the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal (NISR), has been developing a Children’s Community in the West End of Newcastle. Existing local services and structures
are sometimes seen as plugging gaps or ‘patching up’ rather than being based on the needs of the area, or on what residents themselves feel they need. Some structures are also seen as actively working against collaboration, such as payment by results (meaning that organisations retain clients for their own financial benefit). The Children’s Community Project offered the chance to have a collective voice on these issues, and for organisations to work together using a model that is shaped by attempting to influence long-term positive outcomes for children and young people. The project held a large number of activities, meetings, interviews, consultations and events with a wide range of local partners, in particular the West End Schools Trust, in order to reach consensus on the scope, size, membership and activity of the West End Children’s Community. The Children’s Community decided on four long-term aims:

- Creating a stronger community and a vision of a West End where everyone works together building a cohesive, supportive environment
- Reducing inequality by challenging poverty ensuring everyone can achieve and be healthy, and ensuring people are accepted for who they are
- Starting early and supporting transitions by getting things right from before birth, ensuring healthy child development and supporting children through key transitions in their lives
- Realising aspirations and aiming high for young people and providing more opportunities for success

The project has demonstrated that the co-production process between the university, schools, and 30-40 partner organisations (that include businesses, public bodies and the charity sector) can be very productive. One CEO involved with the project noted that:

“The West End Children’s Community is a brave attempt to introduce strategic thinking and planning for children in a disadvantaged area. The Local Authority used to take this role but no longer has the resources to do so. The Children’s Community journey so far has been difficult for organisations used to day to day service delivery to move to developing collective long-term vision and plans”.

Other qualities of this co-production process are still emerging and key facilitating elements including resources, leadership, partnership and problem solving are ongoing particularly in the age of austerity. Stringent local council cuts, changes in delivery of services to schools, cutbacks in many previously available services (such as mental health provision for young people) has meant that new solutions are needed which the project is currently exploring, seeking advice from a wide range of partners for further future collaboration.

Theme: National

The Town Hall Meeting: Dr Paul Cowie

Partner: Cap-A-Pie

This project, based in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, sought to answer the question ‘how can communities become more involved in the planning process?’ To answer it the researcher Paul Cowie and North-East Theatre Company Cap-a-Pie produced a new piece of work ‘The Town Hall Meeting’. Audience reactions to the play have shown that taking an alternative approach to planning, research can re-engage communities in a way traditional forms of consultation do not.

The play created a fictitious town, Little Rikjord, to allow the audience to have the freedom to debate issues in abstract. In the play, permission is being sought to move Little Rikjord and begin mining directly under the town. The audience are asked to put themselves in the place of the residents of the town and consider how they would react to the planning dilemma: move the town and keep the mine, or keep the town and close the mine?

This was a play in two acts. In the first act the audience have a free choice as to the future of the town. Once the audience has completed several activities (including drawing a map of the fictional town and populating it with their favourite places and buildings), they are asked to discuss solutions to the dilemma facing their town and appoint two representatives. However, at the point they make their decision they find it has already been taken by the Government; in the interest of economic growth, mining must continue and the town must be moved. An olive branch the government are offering to relocate one building from the current town. In the second act, the audience are asked to form a Community Heritage Board of four members to decide which building will be moved.

The play generated a rich resource of research material as well as engaging a network of co-researchers who have signed up to be involved in future projects. The reaction of the audiences has also highlighted the power theatre has both to move people and to immerse an audience in an alternate reality. It proved that people are passionate about place and having a meaningful say in the future of their community. Using the feedback from the audiences attending the Town Meeting play, a workshop was developed with the aim of overcoming some of the barriers to engagement found in traditional planning consultations and making the process a bit more fun. The first version of the workshop was developed in collaboration with Northumberland National Park and was used by them to consult local communities on their new local plan. Clive Coyne, Head of Forward Planning at Northumberland National Park Authority told the project team that:

“I think the main benefit was that the interactive element helped to breakdown the traditional barriers between ‘The Planning Authority’ and the local community. The workshop encouraged positive discussions between the members of the community both amongst themselves and also with the Authority’s planners on a range of planning issues.”

The project won the Sir Peter Hall Award for Wider Engagement in the RTPI Awards for Research Excellence and has been performed across the UK in various local communities.
The Role of the Family in Social Mobility: Dr Emily Rainsford

It has always been said that the family matters and that the environment young people grow up in has an impact on their future. In today’s challenging youth labour market and slimmed down welfare state, the family is even more important to support young people in their educational experience and transition into a sustainable job. For the first time, the younger generation faces downward social mobility compared to their parents and transitions from education to employment are taking longer.

This IAA project, in partnership with Youth Employment UK, focused on the role the family has in supporting young people as they move between school and work. The research identifies why and how the family matters more than ever for the prospects of social mobility.

Drawing on empirical data of 18-35 year olds from the Cultural Pathways to Economic Self-Sufficiency and Entrepreneurship (CUPESE) project, it especially focused on the capital available within the family looking not only at economic capital but also cultural (education) and social capital (trust and networks), and how this affects the prospects of young people in Britain today.

There were three main research findings from the work that featured in a longer report:

- Young people whose families had economic and cultural capital were more likely to be dependant and less ambitious, whilst young people who received less family support were more independent.
- The current generation of young people is more likely to rely on parents for financial support than the parental generation.
- Parental attitudes mattered and affected young people’s ambitions. Young people whose parents showed them that work and money are connected had a clearer and more concrete ambition to become economically independent of their parents compared with those whose parents did not make this direct link.

Overall the family matters more than just passing on capital and values, the research illustrates a direct link in how family resources impact both young people’s self-sufficiency, but their ambition too.

In the report recommendations, it was suggested that all services engaging with young people must look at an individual level and deliver tailored support to each young person as it is needed. A key element to that individual support is to understand both the young person and their family’s individual circumstances in terms of capital and values.

The main message to service providers is not just that family matters, but it is how family matters that makes a difference. It is widely recognised that people have different opportunities depending on their family, where they live and what resources they have. Despite having this knowledge, social inequalities have not been reduced and there is an increased risk of downward social mobility for young people today. Provision needs to change if all young people are to have a prosperous future, something that everyone should be working towards.

The full report can be found on the Youth Employment website: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/

Developing and Embedding “The Wild Fynbos Harvesting Guide”; Launching and Embedding Sustainable Harvesting Tools in the South African Fynbos Industry: Professor Alex Hughes (Newcastle University) and Professor Cheryl McEwan (Durham University)

Through several different IAA funded projects researchers at Newcastle and Durham worked in collaboration with the Flower Valley Conservation Trust (FVCT), a Western Cape NGO, to improve sustainable harvesting practice within the South African wildflower industry – a sector supplying high-value, ethically sourced bouquets to UK and South African high street retailers. These projects extended and strengthened existing collaboration with FVCT, whilst leading to new engagement with wider stakeholder groups. New educational tools and training programmes were developed to support FVCT’s Sustainable Wildflower Harvesting Programme and a number of resources were launched at an IAA-funded event in 2016 in Cape Town, attended by a number of stakeholder groups. As a result of the collaboration, members of the Western Cape biodiversity-conservation community and the ethical trade practitioner community in the UK have benefitted from Knowledge Exchange (KE) and cross-institutional learning on ethical consumption in South Africa.

In particular, Newcastle IAA funding supported the development of a novel multi-lingual field guide (A4) and pocket guide – there is no other comparable resource available, especially written in Xhosa: an official national language in South Africa. Field guides were provided for field officers, especially those issuing harvesting permits. Many of these workers were Xhosa speakers so having information in their own language was vital to support the biodiversity of the local area. The people who work directly with fynbos flowers, such as the Xhosa-speaking migrant workers from the Eastern Cape, now have access to multi-lingual learning resources used in training. The A4 version of the field guide was used for classroom based training for harvesters and wildflower pickers; the mini pocket guide was a key tool for in-field training, supporting FVCT staff in their roles, whilst reinforcing classroom based training. The field guides are now moving from paper to digital versions and are being transformed into a downloadable smartphone app that will be available for use offline, leading to better informed harvesters, trainers, regulators, suppliers, conservation managers and landowners with respect to wild fynbos species, its vulnerability and best practice for its continued sustainable harvesting.

Wildflowers in their natural habitat
IAA funding enabled a Newcastle researcher to spend a year-long secondment with Wallsend Action for Youth (WaFY), a charity that helps support young people through a range of activities inside and outside schools in the North-East, particularly in socially and economically deprived areas of Newcastle. Offering practical advice and guidance to all members of the organisation, the researcher learnt much more about the different ways WaFY and its partner organisations worked from the inside out. The secondment has gone beyond the standard two-way knowledge pathways and Laing became fully integrated into organisational meetings, training sessions, needs analysis and proposal writing. The organisation was also introduced to a Theory of Change (ToC) tool which has since been used to further develop and sustain partnership working and strategic thinking.

The secondment supported a culture change at WaFY and led to opportunities for a blurring of the boundaries between academia and the organisation, making this a highly successful and fruitful working relationship that continued on after the secondment finished. Through the project the researcher has become an important link between the University, her department and WaFY, finding opportunities to link partner organisations and colleagues, as well as finding different ways to engage with specific interest groups. The researcher led capacity-building sessions with an affiliate charity on the ToC approach, leading them through their organisational journey of change to help improve their strategic decision making. WaFY has also been open to the ‘critical friend’ approach that academia can offer and has altered different aspects of their working practices after constructive recommendations. This has included providing out-of-school activities advice to schools or advising on their play strategy more generally. Other help has been offered for specific issues within local schools that have requested it. For example after reported problems within one school, Laing conducted discussion groups with teen girls around negative stereotypes and attitudes. This led to a change in provision, modelling a different way of working, demonstrating that shared practice and research can also offer practical help and advice. The Chair of WaFY commented that:

“This could be the future direction for community based research: a partnership approach working in the community without pre conceived notions and responding to local needs. It does however require someone with an open mind, patience and empathy. We were very lucky that Karen has all of these in spades”.

A few years ago, David Webb was involved in an alley makeover workshop day hosted at Middletonbrook Environment City. The workshop showcased efforts by local communities to turn their back lanes and alleys into useable outdoor spaces for growing and socialising rather than left over spaces used for little other than waste management. With these ideas in mind ESRC IAA funding enabled a four month secondment with David Webb and the Churches Acting Together (CHAT) Trust to see if the same approach could be used in the areas of Wingrove and Arthurs Hill in Newcastle and focused on achieving sustainable physical change to the back lanes in these areas. The aim was also, in part, to contribute to Newcastle City Council’s 2020 group agenda of finding cost savings while maintaining services and to promote Newcastle nationally as an innovator of progressive and democratic responses to the cuts.

It began by focusing on young people engaged with CHAT, many of whom had been involved in providing music at other Reclaim the Lanes events. A result of this was an increased focus on the Slovakian community who made up the majority of the local users of CHAT activities. The secondment led to proactive efforts to build links with the adult residents on the street too, for example through door knocking and chance conversations. Home Housing offered free paint and materials and a private landlord provided a pressure sprayer to prepare the CHAT trust wall for repainting. Young people involved with CHAT took part in repainting the wall and some expressed an interest in graffiti, which led to the co-design and co-painting of a mural on the wall and on the side of the CHAT trust building.

At a chance meeting at the beginning of the project, one resident’s response to hearing about the work to reclaim the back lane in Wingrove was “yee’ve got nay chance” but the progress made since then shows that direct environmental change may be slow but it is possible. One of the shop owners spoken to was so disillusioned with the litter problem in the area that she was convinced nothing would ever persuade the council to work with residents and that even discussing the issue was a waste of time. These attitudes underline the importance of trying new ways of working that give local people a chance to influence and show the potential for releasing pent up energy by implementing a different approach. Ultimately, the experiences of people in Wingrove show that the Council can no longer expect to be able to control everything that happens in the area, therefore winning over the hearts and minds of local people will be essential if real change is to be achieved.

The project raised questions about how these various approaches might be applied in other areas of Newcastle and beyond and there is growing interest in how these active community-led interventions can be implemented. In January 2017 a workshop was held at Newcastle University with the different partners involved in the project to discuss these issues. The session was very well subscribed and around 85 people from local authorities, charities, community interest companies, Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, consultancies and arts organisations came to hear more and be inspired by the ongoing work at Wingrove.

Reclaiming the Lanes: Dr David Webb

Partner: Churches Acting Together (CHAT) Trust

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Earlier research by Dr Tony Young found that young people – especially teenagers with care responsibilities for older relatives – would benefit greatly from access to resources, information and tools that enable them to increase their confidence and skills for communicating with people living with dementia (PLWD). The project found that the content and resources available in DemTalk, an existing research-informed advice package, provides a useful starting point however it also identified a number of barriers to using the resource on a frequent basis for this age group - for example that the primary mode of accessing the internet for teenage participants was via smartphones. The advice offered did not always map fully onto younger people's experiences of, and needs related to, dementia care either.

This IAA project took a co-productive approach to engage directly with young people, responding to the importance of involving citizens in decision-making related to service needs. The team worked with a local charity Youth Focus North East alongside Newcastle University's Open Lab to co-design and co-develop a new app, Ticket to Talk that enables young people – especially young carers – to access the resources and information in DemTalk, to contribute to their own perspectives and experiences to this content and to privately share their experiences with other DemTalk users. This particular group are difficult to reach, often because of their necessarily unpredictable living arrangements, but the workshops held with young carers were crucial in gaining feedback on the various aspects of functionality and layout of the app. In September 2017, a free download of the app was made available for both Apple and Android platforms.

During this process the project team also engaged with carer services from Northumberland City Council to get word out on the work done so far. The project was also publicised to carer specific special interest groups and at a North East Dementia Alliance event in order to raise awareness of the work and present preliminary results. In September 2017, a free download of the app was made available for both Apple and Android platforms. During this process the project team also engaged with carer services from Northumberland City Council to get word out on the work done so far. The project was also publicised to carer specific special interest groups and at a North East Dementia Alliance event in order to raise awareness of the work and present preliminary results.

This joint IAA project considered the impact of UK constitutional change, including Brexit and human rights reform, on Northern Ireland. Constitutional Conundrums: Northern Ireland, the EU, and Human Rights: Colin Murray and Dr Sylvia de Mars (Newcastle); Dr Aoife O’Donoghue (Durham) and Dr Ben Warwick (Birmingham)

The rationale for the project was simple: there are many very specific ‘Irish’ dimensions to current political debates surrounding ‘Brexit’ and the potential repeal of the Human Rights Act 1998, but these are not being addressed in sufficient detail (if at all) by the current political narratives. The project shed light on these particular Irish dimensions, so as to help those affected (whether Irish or British) by these very serious looming changes to the UK’s constitutional structure. Equally, the project aimed to engage directly with policy makers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to ensure that negotiations with Westminster and/or Brussels regarding both Brexit and the HRA 1998 take full account of the specific ways in which their jurisdictions will be affected by the changes. It produced two EU Referendum video animations targeted particularly at younger voters and a large number of policy papers and thought pieces for the press. Presentations have been made before government agencies and NGOs, and the work has been cited in the House of Commons, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report, Northern Ireland and the EU Referendum and First Report of Session 2016-2017 (26 May 2016). Full details and links to animations, policy briefings, papers and thought pieces can be found on the NI Constitution website: niconstitution.org
Social Science Stories

Who Were the Marchers? The Eightieth Anniversary of the Jarrow Crusade: Dr Matthew Perry

This creative writing and historical research project between a Newcastle University social historian, South Tynedale Council, local libraries, local schools, and poet Tom Kelly aimed to enhance understandings of the Jarrow Crusade in the run up to its 80th anniversary and introduce the stories from the marchers to a new generation of school children. The project included a four-week schools workshop programme which included lesson plans and materials for teachers, a documentary film, interviews with Jarrow Crusade relatives, and a public talk. These fed into extensive commemorative celebrations including a museum exhibition.

Girls-Kind North East
Dr Sarah Winkler Reid and Dr Sarah Ralph (Northumbria University)

This community engagement project explored and challenged stereotypes of older women and sport which was subsequently screened during International Women’s Week 2018 and opened the Festival of Women’s Film in the North East on 10 March. The overall impact of both the original and the follow-on project was empowerment of local women and significant press coverage which raised awareness of issues of invisibility/stereotyping of older women in mainstream popular culture.

Entrepreneurship in Sustainable International Development: Dr Robert Newbery

Based in Eastern Africa this project explored an effective programming model for entrepreneurship education and poverty alleviation to increase the wellbeing of selected communities. The initial workshop held in Kenya had 40 attendees including many non-academic stakeholders for example local businesses and NGOs. The reception for the work was so successful that a localised action plan was enacted and a brand new membership organisation was formed which has led to the network continuing without further input from the researcher. A follow up meeting to launch this new membership organisation was held in summer 2017 and there has been huge interest from other regions in Africa to copy this model, something the project team is looking to develop in future work.

Resources for Living with Altered Eating Difficulties:
Dr Joanne Patterson and Dr Duika Burges Watson

Previous work with head and neck cancer survivors showed that their needs are highly complex (including physical and social difficulties, sensory deficits, and mental health aspects) however they had not been addressed by clinical researchers in a ‘holistic’ way. This project involved scoping workshops to find out the range of difficulties faced by patients and what support was needed. Participants identified the need for practical advice such as cooking hints and tips. Tasting workshops were held and clips and recipes are now openly available, link tbc. A number of charities and groups whose members also have altered eating difficulties also came forward (e.g. those experiencing Parkinson’s disease, Sjogren’s syndrome) as a result of these workshops. Their specific needs highlighted the demand for a more general framework that could help professional practitioners, e.g. dentists, dieticians and oncologists, think about patients and their individual altered eating needs. A clinical tool that would help aid these discussions further is now currently in development.

NOT Acting Our Age: Older Women Challenging Stereotypes and Celebrating Life: Professor Karen Ross

This community engagement project explored and challenged stereotypes of older women and engaged with a wide number of women in the local community and with several local organisations. The project had three different aspects: digital storytelling, photography and a public event. In the first part of the project, older women produce their own digital stories which were then uploaded to a community database. They then designed their own portrait and worked with a professional photographer to produce a set of images which were exhibited during International Women’s Week 2017 at Newcastle City Library and then at the Discovery Museum in May 2017* The project’s third phase comprised a flash mob in the City’s covered market which included singing and performance involving 100+ women. The project contributed to Prof Ross receiving the University’s first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award for Staff Champion. The project was extended in 2017-18 with a follow-on award which was used, among other things, to produce a short film about older women and sport which was subsequently screened during International Women’s Week 2018 and opened the Festival of Women’s Film in the North East on 10 March. The overall impact of both the original and the follow-on project was empowerment of local women and significant press coverage which raised awareness of issues of invisibility/stereotyping of older women in mainstream popular culture.

* In March 2018 the exhibition was permanently installed at Newcastle University.
Genealogy has proved to be the most accessible strand of history that people enjoy and engage with across the world. For Greeks, within or outside Greece, this has not been the case, and family history has remained unexplored due to the absence of online demographic sources. This project worked with a number of partners in Greece to release digitised census sources through an easy-to-use website, helping families search for their ancestors, a resource that was not available before the project began. The researcher later plans to engage with local secondary schools holding workshops and helping guide classes in conducting local family history as part of the experiential learning curriculum. Sessions will involve children conducting research in groups, writing up their results and presenting them to their peers. Together these streams will feed into the writing of online guides offering families advice on tracing their ancestry, the first such publication for Greek populations.

**Theme: International**

**Greek Family History: Digital Resources and Experiential Learning: Dr Violetta Hionidou**

Partners: Municipal Library of Mykonos, The Panayotis Kousathanas Library, Society of Kytherean studies

Improving the Effectiveness of Non-State Actor Participation International Climate Change Negotiations and National Policy Making: Dr Katharine Rietig

IAA funding supported a Newcastle researcher and a large number of international non-state actors (such as environmental NGOs) to provide more effective input into the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) international environmental negotiations held in Marrakech in 2016, Bonn in 2017 and beyond. At the Marrakech Climate Negotiations in November 2016, Rietig engaged with Foundation Avina (a network of 17,000 non-state actors in Latin America), the Groundswell on Climate Action coalition and the German Development Institute. Rietig became a valued expert and representative of the Research and Independent NGO constituency (RINGO) during this time and still provides input into the negotiations around national climate policymaking in various ways. Building on the connections made in Marrakech Rietig co-organised a side event in Bonn 2017 offering a toolkit of arguments useful to diplomats for convincing ministers of the importance to act on climate change from various perspectives such as civil society engagement, economic aspects, food security, human rights and climate science. The event was highly successful and well attended and since then, the toolkit has been disseminated via the UNFCCC website and email lists to government delegations.

**Theme: Local**

**Impacting on Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing: A Forest School Intervention: Lucy Tiplady**

Partner: Scotswood Natural Community Garden

Forest School is an outdoor educational experience, usually in a wooded area, that takes place regularly over an extended period and uses bush craft, games, child-led exploration of nature and reflection to support child-led learning and development.

**Theme: Interdisciplinary**

**Reading Comprehension in Aphasia: Transformation of Research into Clinical Assessment: Dr Janet Webster and Dr Julie Morris**

Partner: Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Aphasia is an acquired communication difficulty, often resulting from stroke. People with aphasia can experience difficulties getting their message across, and understanding language, including verbal and visual information. Traditionally, Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) have used paper based assessments to test language, including reading, with people with aphasia. This project, in collaboration with Newcastle Digital Institute, aimed to develop clinical practice by making a web-based assessment tool available. In a strategic event, SLTs highlighted the current lack of valid and reliable assessments of functional reading, i.e. beyond the single word, and the clinical value of this new web-based assessment. They evaluated and gave feedback on the initial prototype of the web-based assessment, which has resulted in strengthening both the assessment itself and these collaborations. The web-based assessment can record reaction times, accuracy and patterns of response, automatically generating a summary of the information. Importantly this will assist clinicians in making their assessment easier, facilitating understanding and diagnosis of a person’s reading difficulties, which will allow appropriate treatment to be developed and evaluated.
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