



EXAMPLES OF LSE RESEARCH IMPACT

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LSE recognises that impacts can arise from work conducted across the full spectrum of disciplines and areas of interest represented at the School. We are proud of the wide-ranging conceptual and concrete impacts of our research on the economy, policy, society, public debate and many other facets of life in the UK and elsewhere.

This module showcases four examples of research impact, presented here as case studies. These are just a handful of those submitted by the School to the REF2014. You can access many more examples of the diverse impacts of our research via lse.ac.uk/KEI.

Elsewhere in this toolkit you'll also find a module on **Beneficiaries of Impact**; you may find it helpful to look at that when designing your plans for delivering impacts on which you can base future case studies of your own.

PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

LSE research informed national, European and international initiatives aimed at helping kids use the internet safely, creatively and skilfully.

What was the problem?

In 2014 84% of UK homes had access to the internet. This extraordinarily rapid rise – from less than 1% in the 1990s – has offered astounding access to learning tools and global communication. However, it has also introduced new threats to personal safety from identity thieves, pornographers, predators and bullies, with particular risks for children, who are the least equipped to protect themselves.

In the early days of the internet, policymakers were split between those who sought to maximise the availability of this new resource and those who worried about the potential risks it posed. Government bodies have spent the last fifteen years addressing this balance and, in particular, attempting to establish a policy framework for the protection of under-18s.

What did we do?

Professor of Social Psychology Sonia Livingstone has led LSE research on online child protection since 1995 and has published widely in the field.

Children and their Changing Media Environment (1995–99, with Moira Bovill) was a comparative study of children's new media usage across 12 European countries. 11,000 children aged 6–16 were interviewed to assess the similarities and differences in media environments for children and young people within and between European countries.

UK Children Go Online (2003–5, with Magdalene Bober) was based on research involving internet users, non-users and parents. It identified the need for a policy that balanced maximising children's opportunity to access the internet with minimising their risk of exposure to sexual imagery and messaging, bullying, hate sites and anorexia sites.

EU Kids Online (2006–2014, with Leslie Haddon, Anke Gorzig and Kjartan Olafsson) was based on a survey of over 25,000 9–16 year-olds. It developed a classification of online risk factors and outlined a 'ladder of opportunity' demonstrating an ideal pathway that children might follow to access the internet creatively, safely and with skill.





Children, Risk and Safety on the Internet: Research and policy challenges in comparative perspective (2012, with Leslie Haddon and Anke Gorzig) distinguished between 'risk' (exposure to inappropriate material) and 'harm' (negative effects of exposure) and identified the socio-economic and psychological factors that make children vulnerable. It established that parental mediation is helpful and that offline bullying (as perpetrator or victim) is a strong indicator of higher risk of cyberbullying.

What happened?

UK Children Go Online suggested that internet access resulted in significant educational benefits to children in disadvantaged families. The UK Department for Education used this evidence to introduce its Home Access Programme (2007–2011), which offered reduced-cost safe computer access to the country's poorest children.

The Byron review of internet safety (2008) commissioned by Prime Minister Gordon Brown classified online risks according to the EU Kids Online model and led to the creation of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), a group of more than 200 organisations from the government, industry, academia and charity sectors. As an Executive Board Member and its Evidence Champion, Livingstone helped the Council to produce the UK's first Child Online Safety Strategy (2011), which led to the inclusion of e-safety in the national computing curriculum and in Ofsted's school inspection regime.

UKCCIS also updated the Home Secretary's Taskforce for Child Protection on the Internet, a 2008 report in which Livingstone had participated, which resulted in multiple safety improvements in industry provision and practice. In Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0: Universal guidelines of providers (2011), UKCCIS relied on the UK Children Go Online final report for definitions of risk and harm. Content providers, schools and non-governmental organisations now promote these definitions as the most useful in the field.

Livingstone's research on parental struggles with internet safety informed the Internet Service Providers' first Parental Controls Code of Practice, endorsed by Prime Minister David Cameron, which legislated for the automatic enabling of domestic filters unless the homeowner opts out.

Livingstone's research has been reported in national and international media over 1,800 times. She has been interviewed by, amongst others, the Daily Mail, Times and Guardian, and has appeared on Panorama, Channel 4 News and Newsnight. Since 2010, over 20,000 people have downloaded reports from the EU Kids Online website and 200,000 people have visited the site.

Livingstone has contributed to Safer Internet Day, an annual event which is organised by the children's charity UK Safer Internet Centre to promote the safe use of digital technology for young people. Its messages are heard by an estimated 10% of the UK population and 14% of teenagers, with two-thirds of the audience stating that they intend to amend their online behaviour as a result.

The Safer Social Networking Principles for the European Union (2009) was also informed by the EU Kids Online research and has resulted in higher safety standards across the EU. In 2012 Livingstone presented research findings to European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes' Coalition of Industry Chief Executive Officers, which used these findings to establish higher standards for making the internet a better place for children, including more stringent privacy settings and the elimination of child abuse images.

The European Commission also relied on Livingstone's research to establish the first European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children, which guided the European Union on suitable content for children's programmes and established The European Award for Best Children's Online Content, with Livingstone as Jury Chair. In the European Commission's 'benchmarking of safer internet policies' (2013), Livingstone's research was identified as a major source of information across member countries and the sole source of evidence in six of them.

Livingstone's research was cited in Harvard University's report to the Attorney Generals of the United States, Enhancing Safety and Online Technologies (2008), and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The EU Kids Online survey has been replicated in Brazil, Russia and Australia and adapted by, amongst others, UNICEF, Ofcom and the NSPCC.

'Livingstone's research on parental struggles with internet safety informed the Internet Service Providers' first Parental Controls Code of Practice, endorsed by Prime Minister David Cameron...'



A NEW APPROACH TO ERADICATING 'NEGLECTED' TROPICAL DISEASES

LSE Professor Tim Allen established that social factors have a crucial influence on drug take-up in mass disease eradication programmes.

What was the problem?

Over one billion people are at risk of or already afflicted by 'neglected' tropical diseases. These are parasitic and bacterial infections, largely eradicated in the developed world, that persist among politically and economically marginal populations of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

The diseases include lymphatic filariasis (or elephantiasis), which currently affects some 120 million people, and schistosomiasis or bilharzia (200 million sufferers, plus a further 600 million people judged at risk).

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals have focused attention on eliminating or controlling these diseases to help lift the world's poorest populations out of extreme poverty. To this end, international assistance over the past ten years, backed by massive donations of medicines, has enabled several countries to implement large-scale programmes, known as Mass Drug Administration or MDA. These offer free treatment to adults and children living in affected areas.

But just how effective are mass drug programmes at eliminating or controlling the diseases? And crucially, can they work on their own?

What did we do?

Since 2005, LSE Professor Tim Allen has participated in an international multi-disciplinary programme initially based at Imperial College to assess the impact of current strategies to control these neglected diseases. With medical anthropologist Dr Melissa Parker (then at Brunel University, now at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) he shared equal responsibility for the programme's social research.

Allen and Parker each carried out 16 months of fieldwork in Tanzania and Uganda and supervised a team of postgraduate researchers from UK and African institutions. Between 2005 and 2011 they looked intensely at some 100 sites in these two countries.

Their findings raised many questions about the efficacy of current strategies to control these diseases and demonstrated that the social context often played a critical role in their success. For example, many fisherfolk in Uganda were not receiving treatment for schistosomiasis (bilharzia) because they were island-based and drug distribution was centred on mainland villages.

The research also revealed poor communications, ethical challenges, disregarded side-effects, and a tendency to generalise diseases when their signs and symptoms varied within and between populations. Evaluation was also often patchy, confusing advocacy with research and making exaggerated claims for the programmes.





What happened?

The research has both improved clinical outcomes on the ground and successfully challenged world opinion on the efficacy of mass drug treatment strategies.

In Tanzanian coastal areas, the majority of the study population was resisting treatment for lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis). Allen and Parker suggested to Tanzanian officials that as well as supplying drugs, the programme could offer free surgery for men with swollen scrotums. Individuals successfully treated would then become powerful advocates for the programme. Drug take-up rose dramatically in those sites where their advice was followed: from 40% in one village to more than 90% three years later.

Similarly in Uganda, the authors used the research to demonstrate to local leaders and health officials why treatment approaches were failing and how changes could bring improvements.

In terms of wider reach, the Ugandan research showed that mass drug treatment strategies could work in combination with other approaches but commonly faltered or failed when delivered on their own. This work soon garnered attention from key figures and institutions involved in the battle against infectious diseases, many of whom endorsed Allen and Parker's argument for a 'biosocial' approach at the local level that linked biological and social factors.

The findings were discussed at formal and less formal meetings, including sessions at the UK Department for International Development and closed sessions of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in June 2009, at which representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) were present.

Allen and Parker repeated their call for a biosocial approach to disease eradication in a special issue of the Third World Quarterly devoted to the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon echoed their plea in his preface to the issue, pointing to 'knowledge gained over the past decade about the effectiveness of taking a holistic approach'.

The article provoked controversy within the professional community. Argument and counter-argument followed, including a letter from Allen and Parker published on the front page of the world's leading general medical journal, The Lancet, asking whether increased funding for neglected tropical diseases really would 'make poverty history'. The letter was timed to coincide with an international meeting in London at which governments, global health organisations, the World Bank, the Gates Foundation and 13 pharmaceutical companies were announcing a co-ordinated partnership to eliminate 10 neglected tropical diseases by 2020, involving commitments of over \$785 million and significant support in kind.

Soon the tide of opinion began to turn and Allen and Parker gained widespread support for their approach to eradicating these diseases.

At the International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases conference held in London in 2012, the respected head of the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative at Imperial College stated to a surprised audience that the kind of work undertaken by Allen and Parker should feature at all sites implementing mass drug administration programmes.

Opportunities to discuss their work followed — with government officials, with members of the UK Parliament, and at an international conference they convened in London with Dr Katja Polman of the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp.

Forty countries now have long-term plans to control or eliminate neglected tropical diseases, with close to £1 billion in funding and in-kind support promised over the next five years. Such assistance will defeat these diseases — and alleviate the misery they cause to lives, societies and economies around the world — if, as Allen and Parker have showed, it is delivered with sensitivity to social factors and local conditions.

"...it initiated behavioural and attitude change in the local population who were initially resistant to use of drugs whereas they were in dear need of treatment. This I believe was achieved through your participatory approach of research, community mobilization and sensitization."

Mayor of Nebbi District,
Northern Uganda.



MAKING EUROPEAN UNION POLITICS MORE OPEN, DEMOCRATIC AND ACCOUNTABLE

LSE research has illuminated how politics works within the European Union and helped to reform democratic processes within EU institutions.

What was the problem?

The European Union's 28 member states have a combined population of more than 500 million people. To hold their politicians to account, EU citizens need to know how the system works and what their elected representatives are doing on their behalf.

Yet politics within the European Union has long been plagued by complaints that it is undemocratic, remote and lacks transparency. Even those most closely involved, such as politicians, policymakers, journalists and interest groups, often lack key information.

Especially opaque are the voting records of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the governments in the Council of the European Union. The way in which decisions are made within the EU can also provoke controversy, as the recent furore surrounding the election of the President of the European Commission has demonstrated.

What did we do?

LSE's efforts to research democracy within the European Union were led by Professor of Government Simon Hix in collaboration with colleagues at New York University and University of California, Berkeley. Together they pioneered a method for collecting, processing and analysing voting within the European Parliament (EP) and produced an index to measure the cohesion of groups within a parliament.

Building on this work, Hix set up a website (www.VoteWatch.eu) in 2009 with LSE colleague Dr Sara Hagemann and Doru Frantescu (now its Director). VoteWatch collects, analyses and publishes all recorded votes in the European Parliament and, since 2011, in the European Council.

Hix's research has investigated how different voting systems affect the relationships between citizens and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). It found that MEPs elected under voting systems that identify their candidates, such as open-list proportional representation, have a better record of keeping citizens informed about elections than MEPs elected under closed-list systems, i.e. when votes are cast for parties rather than individuals.

Hix has also been active in the European debate about how best to elect the President of the European Commission. In a paper to the UK Cabinet Office he proposed an electoral 'college' of national parliamentarians to make the process more open and accountable. In his book *What's Wrong with the European Union and How to Fix It*, Hix supported the case for naming rival presidential candidates prior to European Parliament elections, instead of allowing the President-elect to emerge by consensus, an approach which effectively politicises the President's role.





What happened?

Hix's research, backed by the VoteWatch website, led to changes in the way important votes were taken in the European Parliament. Most EP votes were simply conducted by a show of hands, supplemented where necessary by electronic voting. A small minority of votes were conducted by electronic 'roll call', which recorded how each Member voted. In 2009, the European Parliament changed its Rules of Procedure so that all final votes on legislative proposals were conducted by 'roll call', making the process significantly more transparent.

Hix's research also influenced voting by European governments. The European Parliament invited Hix to submit evidence to its reform hearings in 2008 and, as a result, incorporated Hix's proposal that all member states should use a form of preferential voting as one of its main recommendations for reform.

Actively promoted by Hix to top-level audiences across Europe, VoteWatch has developed into Europe's leading website for tracking the voting behaviour of elected members and of governments. It is regularly consulted by non-governmental organisations, journalists, citizens and European institutions wishing to improve their transparency.

The VoteWatch website receives on average 12,000 visitors a month and over 15,000 mentions each year in print and web-based media.

In 2010, both the World E-Democracy Forum in Paris and Barcelona's Personal Democracy Forum identified VoteWatch as an example of best practice for using e-democracy tools to hold politicians to account.

The European Council has acted on VoteWatch's proposals for more open reporting of its legislative decisions and the European Parliament has discussed its proposals within its ruling body and in full plenary session.

VoteWatch has directly affected the attendance and voting behaviour of MEPs, as evidenced by the fact that those who failed to justify their voting record subsequently lost their seats.

There is also activity towards introducing competitive elections for the European Commission's President. While Europe was debating a consolidated constitution for the EU, several think tanks adopted Hix's proposal for an electoral college, which was also endorsed by the Swedish and Irish governments. Consistent with Hix's proposal in his book, before the 2014 European Parliament elections, the European political parties put forward rival candidates for the Commission President ("Spitzenkandidaten"). Not all member state governments accepted this interpretation of the Treaty, but this is now likely to become the standard way of "electing" the highest executive office in the EU in the future.

The 'democratic deficit' remains a concern in European politics. By throwing the spotlight on decision-making within the European Union, and by analysing alternative ways of selecting MEPs and the European Commission's President, Professor Hix's research is helping to address perceived legitimacy issues at the heart of European democracy.

"Overall, Professor Hix's on-going attention to European Parliament (EP) activities and advocacy for reform are important contributions to the EP's broader efforts to more transparently and effectively relate with its 500 million constituents within an increasingly democratic EU."

Klaus Welle,

Secretary-General of the European Parliament.



Child protection services in England were given a radical overhaul following recommendations based on an innovative systems engineering model.

What was the problem?

The child protection system in England was found to be rife with individual errors and poor management, leading to tragedies such as the highly-publicised death of Peter Connolly (called 'Baby P' before his name was released).

This poor performance was exacerbated by the harshly critical reaction to Peter's death leading to defensive practice that, within one year, produced an 11 percent rise in children referred to social services and a 25 percent rise in children receiving social care.

Public outcry, Parliamentary debate and several official inquiries put the system under continuous and intense scrutiny, but the underlying causes behind its serious failings remained unidentified.

What did we do?

LSE Professor Eileen Munro had been conducting research on child protection for over ten years. One of her first projects had been a systematic analysis of child abuse inquiry reports in which she identified and categorised common errors. This had led her to call for cultural reform and organisational restructuring with special attention to supervision. In particular, she had emphasised that revising a judgement on child protection in the light of new evidence or critical challenge should be seen as good practice rather than professional hindrance.

Follow-up feedback revealed that child protection workers found Munro's proposals extremely challenging to implement. Alongside psychological and emotional factors, staff were hampered by organisational issues and a chronically risk-averse culture. Computer software and levels of public criticism also contributed to an over-bureaucratised, defensive culture which had moved far away from a focus on the child.

Further research led Munro to propose an innovative case review method based on an accident investigation model normally used by the aviation and engineering industries. This radical approach has now been trialled and developed in conjunction with the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Its findings have helped to promote a new emphasis on reforming management structures and culture to drive improvement in professional practice.

Munro's subsequent book, *Effective Child Protection*, outlined the new model and emphasised the need for a combination of intuitive, analytical and emotional reasoning by child protection managers and professionals.





What happened?

This ground-breaking research led to an invitation from the Secretary of State for Education to undertake a comprehensive review of child protection systems in England. In Munro's three-stage review she proposed a shift towards a new learning culture, with the impact on children as the key driver of good practice. All 15 of her recommendations are being implemented with ongoing effects for legislation, policy and practice.

Munro's work has led directly to organisational change. A new inspection framework was introduced which shifts the emphasis away from statistical analysis and firmly towards the impact on children. Local authorities must now gather feedback and provide evidence of this impact. They are also required to monitor every child's individual journey through the care system, and inspectors are encouraged to talk to workers and users so that judgments are not based solely on written records.

Munro was also asked to help improve professional expertise. She recommended a revised career structure that encouraged social workers to stay in direct work. In conjunction with the College of Social Work, a framework for child and family social work has been developed which sets out expectations of social workers at every stage in their careers.

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards are now required to include an assessment of effectiveness, although revised statutory guidance

has been limited in recognition of the fact that responsibility for professional guidance is best left to the professions. In order to benefit families more directly, the electronic Common Assessment Form has been decommissioned in favour of frameworks adapted to the specific needs of each local authority, and the need for a new multi-agency inspection framework, able to compare national and local data, has been recognised by Ofsted.

Munro's work has had impact beyond England. The Isle of Man is using her research to improve childcare services, and she has given evidence to state reviews across Australia. In Queensland, a charity is running a 'Munro campaign' to persuade the state government to learn from her work.

The child protection system was in need of major reform. It had become dominated by a 'blame culture' in which compliance with procedures outweighed the focus on children's needs. As a result of Munro's work, reforms have been introduced which have led to significant cultural change. At least 50 local authorities have radically redesigned their work to concentrate on a family-centred approach and all local authorities are now required to appoint a Principal Child and Family Social Worker. These changes are, in turn, having a direct impact on the lives and welfare of children and their families.

"The Munro Review is a 'seminal work' which is now being used as a 'touchstone' for the way forward for childcare services."

Chris Robertshaw,
Social Care Minister, Isle of Man





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