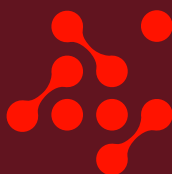




**Public and
Community
Engagement
with Research**



University of Oxford
**Public and Community Engagement
with Research Strategy**
2024-2029

(ANNEX A)

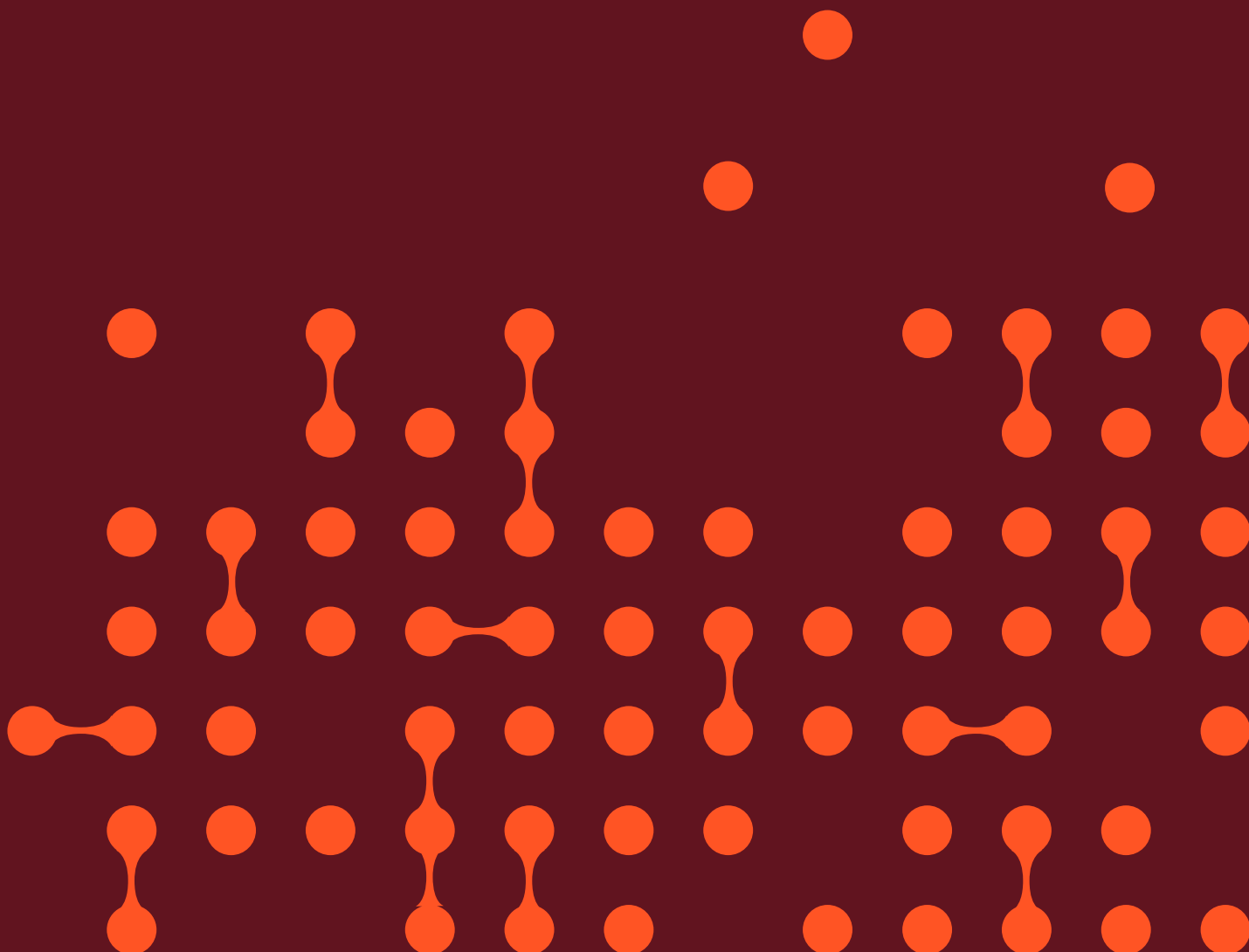




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Summary

Each division in the University supports its public and community engagement with research (PCER) activity differently, but they all have an individual who's responsible for supporting engagement and, in some cases, a wider remit, e.g., Knowledge Exchange and/or Impact. In Medical Sciences (MSD) and Social Sciences (SSD), engagement is often an integral part of individual research projects. While Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) and Humanities have research projects with engagement built in too, they also provide 'platforms' for researchers to do engagement: **The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities** (TORCH), and **Oxford Sparks** plus **Science Together** in MPLS. Engagement is supported across divisions, too; for example, MPLS and MSD have a longstanding partnership delivering training in engagement, and platforms such as Sparks and Science Together are pan-divisional.

Some departments, and some research groups, are supported by Public Engagement Facilitators (PEFs) – Professional Services staff with a remit to support PCER. A few large units in MSD (e.g., **Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging** [WIN]; **Centre for Human Genetics**) may also run a dedicated programme of engagement activities.

The Central PCER team is part of Innovation & Engagement within Research Services. Their role is to support engagement with research across the [research] University, taking responsibility for issues and activities that cut across divisions. This includes:

- ❖ developing and delivering the University's PCER strategy

- ❖ reporting on public and community engagement on behalf of the University (e.g., for the **Knowledge Exchange Framework** [KEF])
- ❖ developing and delivering events that convene PCER professionals to share knowledge and expertise; e.g., the PER Conference and, in 2023 the inaugural **Oxford Inside Out** event in collaboration with the Policy Engagement, and Regional Engagement and Knowledge Exchange teams
- ❖ creating an evaluation framework for PCER
- ❖ training researchers to plan, deliver and evaluate PCER activities.

Community engagement

When we talk about community, we mean:

1. communities of place – people who live geographically near to each other, although not necessarily near to Oxford;
2. communities of experience – people who have a shared significant life experience;
3. communities of identity – people who have a shared identity, e.g., sex or gender, ethnicity;
4. communities of practice – people who do a similar thing, professionally or for enjoyment.

These four types of community inevitably intersect. For example, Blackbird Leys (a community of place) has a larger than average Black (a community of identity) population (~12% vs 4.2% for England), who will often share different experiences (communities of experience) compared to a white Briton.

Oxford Inside Out



Background to the central P[C]ER team in Research Services

An individual with responsibility for PER across the University (now, the Head of PCER in Innovation & Engagement) was appointed in 2015 within Research Services. This role created momentum and coherence around PCER and established:

- ❖ the University's first PER strategy (see below)
- ❖ an academic champion for public engagement with research (Professor Anneke Lucassen is the current Champion)
- ❖ a PCER Seed Fund to support early PCER ideas
- ❖ the Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Public Engagement with Research (since 2024, subsumed into the new Vice-Chancellor's Awards).

The University's first PER strategy was published in late 2016 and ran until 2021. It focused on building capacity within Oxford to support and do public engagement with research. In 2022 a new Head of PCER was appointed and 'community' was added as an explicit element of the team's remit. A 'Community Engagement Coordinator' was appointed in January 2023 to support this work. A new PCER Advisory Board was convened in 2023, integrating senior academics from each division and Professional Services staff with responsibility for PCER. Its first action has been to oversee the development of the University's new PCER strategy, led by the central PCER team. The new PCER strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with researchers, PEFs, external leaders in PCER, and local communities.

Since 2017, the central PCER team's Seed Fund has received up to 50 proposals per year to support modest-

scale engagement with research projects. Often these are early-stage projects with a view to scaling up by incorporating funding requests into larger calls. In 2023/24, the team redesigned the fund to incorporate community perspectives in decision-making, ensuring that the intended groups involved in engagement have a say as to what they think we should fund.

Oxford's unique engagement strengths

All the assets mentioned above (TORCH, Sparks, etc.) are strengths within the University's engagement ecosystem. However, the following stand out as being unique to Oxford in terms of their nature and/or scale:

1. Our research on **Responsible Knowledge Exchange, Engagement and Impact**, led by Professor Alis Oancea and in collaboration with Aileen Marshall-Brown in SSD, which sets Oxford apart in terms of intellectual leadership of engagement with research and knowledge exchange more broadly.
2. **The Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)** seamlessly integrate research from across and beyond the University into freely available cultural offerings that reach millions¹ of visitors each year.
3. Our overseas research units in Thailand, Vietnam and Kenya, which excel at partnering with communities to involve them research, and evaluating the impact of such involvement. Indeed, research at these institutions couldn't happen without embedded community and public engagement as relationships, trust and involvement of local communities are vital to their work.

Harcourt Arboretum event



© Ian Wallman

¹ Data from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA); alva.org.uk

Context and wider background

Knowledge obtained through scientific investigation does not in itself have a moral dimension; but the ways in which it is pursued, and the applications to which it may be put, inevitably engage with morality. Science is conducted by individuals; as individuals and as a collection of professions, scientists must have morality and values, and must be allowed, indeed expected, to apply them to their work. By declaring the values which underpin their work, and by engaging with the values and attitudes of the public, they are far more likely to command public support.

Third Report of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, 2000. 'Science' could just as well be replaced by 'research'.

Public engagement with research is not new. Since the mid- to late-1900s, there has been recognition that universities should not be ivory towers and that their research should have relevance and impact beyond the academy. Early engagement, with science especially, tended to focus on a paternalistic view of improving public *understanding* of science. This evolved away from the dissemination of research findings in the early 2000s, to engaging *with* the public and fostering dialogue².

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, British universities began to institutionalise public engagement efforts, establishing dedicated offices and funding schemes to support activities such as public lectures, science festivals, citizen science projects, and collaborations with community groups. The Wellcome Trust, among other funding bodies, played a crucial role in supporting PER initiatives through its grants and programmes.

As 'the impact agenda' developed, engagement continued to grow as a route to impact for research that might otherwise be less applied. In general, rather than being seen as an optional add-on, engagement with research became viewed as an integral aspect of the research process that should, wherever possible, be considered as part of research design.

More recently, both the wider knowledge exchange and focused community engagement with research agendas have also expanded. The latter sits comfortably within public engagement, which has always been mindful of its audiences, but acknowledges that community engagement requires a particular mindset and approach. The former complements *public* engagement with a

greater emphasis on the commercial sector, albeit including social ventures.

In the next Research Excellence Framework (REF), 'Engagement and impact' constitutes 25% of an institution's quality profile¹. Public and community engagement (P&CE) is also one of the seven 'perspectives' of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)³. The increasing alignment of the REF and KEF sets the bar for purposeful and responsible engagement whose impact can be robustly evidenced to demonstrate excellence. The REF has significant financial consequences for Oxford. Its revised approach therefore brings opportunity and risk: the opportunity to do excellent engagement with research that helps maximise our results, set against the risk of failing to support engagement and seeing our results – and therefore our income – diminish as a result. In addition, while KEF is not currently tied to financial decisions, this is the stated direction of travel. In the last KEF exercise, Oxford's honest appraisal of its P&CE led to it falling to the bottom of that perspective within the Cluster V institutions. Taken together, there is a clear impetus for the University to bolster its engagement with research activity.

Researcher in a lab



© Oxford University Images/John Cairns

² This move was, in large part, due to the Third Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology: publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldselect/ldscitech/38/3801.htm. In the light of Covid-19, some 20 years after this report was published, it is interesting to note the following point raised in the report's summary: *Some issues currently treated by decision-makers as scientific issues in fact involve many other factors besides science. Framing the problem wrongly by excluding moral, social, ethical and other concerns invites hostility.*

³ Alongside P&CE, the other KEF perspectives are research partnerships; working with business; working with the public and third sector; CPD and grad start-ups; local growth and regeneration; IP and commercialisation.



Visiting the Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Examples of engagement with research projects across the University

Gardens, Libraries and Museums

Participatory Decolonisation Research

Pitt Rivers Museum

With Participatory Research Funding from Research England, Dr Lennon Mhishi convened a group of artists, researchers, curators, and public participants to look at and discuss objects from the Pitt Rivers Museum to re-think the contexts from which they were collected and the way in which they are used, labelled, and displayed in the modern museumⁱⁱ.

Contemporary Science and Society Exhibitions

Oxford University Museum of Natural History

This series of exhibitionsⁱⁱⁱ explores current science advances and policy issues associated with them, linking contemporary research from across the University and beyond, with the Museum's collections and audiences. Each exhibition takes an inter-disciplinary approach to a science theme, and mixes public engagement with research with contemporary art, digital interactives, and a rich array of events programming.

Meat the Future

Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Meat the Future^{iv} was an award-winning example of the Contemporary Science and Society exhibition^v series, developed in collaboration with The LEAP project (Livestock, Environment and People)^{vi}. The exhibition showcased some of the findings from the LEAP research, which aimed to understand the health, environmental, social and economic effects of meat and dairy production and consumption to provide evidence and tools for

decision-makers to promote healthy and sustainable diets.

Bodleian Weston Library Exhibitions

The Weston Library at the Bodleian has a continuous programme of free public exhibitions and events based on research from across the University. Recent research-related shows include *Chaucer Here and Now*^{vii}, curated by Professor Marion Turner, JRR Tolkien Professor of English Literature and Language at the University of Oxford; *Write, Cut, Rewrite*^{viii} based on Professor Dirk Van Hulle's AHRC-funded project "Editing Beckett"; and *Melancholy: A new anatomy*^{ix}, curated by Oxford experts in mental health research and the humanities, which explored how Robert Burton's 1621 holistic and multifaceted conception of mental health finds surprising echoes in contemporary psychiatry and medicine.

Humanities

Adult Creative Writing and Wellbeing Programme and Community Lunch days with Ark-T Centre

Participatory Research Programmes

TORCH has connected with Ark-T over several years to co-create research activities and programmes that find mutually beneficial ways of connecting researchers and public. Based in Temple Cowley, they are an Oxford community arts charity where people, art and powerful ideas come together. Our next collaboration is a Creative Writing and Wellbeing Programme for adults. The first theme will be 'Everyday Oxford' co-led by Ark-T staff and Professor Patrick McGuinness (Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages).

On Ark-T's Community Hub Days, they open their doors to the community for free drop-in activities and services. During the dementia-friendly lunch hour, we work with Ark-T to bring researchers from the University to do an interactive activity based on their area of research. Previous topics have included accidental Tudor deaths, Oxford health histories, 18th Century theatre reconstruction, the Bodleian's Gifts & Books exhibition and more.

Finding Our Way: Space, Reclamation, and the Afro-Caribbean Experience in Oxford

Professor Maria del Pilar Blanco, Medieval and Modern Languages Faculty

Finding Our Way^x brings together scholars from Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, and Euton Daley of Unlock the Chains Theatre Collective. Through this cross-fertilization of distinct areas – theatre/performance, archival history, digital storytelling, and museum studies – *Finding Our Way* seeks to reclaim a history of Afro-Caribbean Oxford through contemporary performance, storytelling as historiographic methodology, and the reterritorializations of carnival across public spaces that extend from the city centre to Cowley Road. We understand the process of mapping Afro-Caribbean movements in Oxford entails a dialectic between interactions with troubled and violent institutional archives and collections on the one hand, and the rematerialisation – through storytelling and public performance – of the individual and communal stories these archives (fore)tell. To this end, live performances at key locations in the city centre will be used to redraw an Oxford city map that focalizes Afro-Caribbean experience, past and present. Accompanying workshops will invite participants and local-community members to develop narratives through community history, archival material, and storytelling. In further stages of the project, the aim is to continue developing this digital, interactive map as a platform to facilitate participative archiving and decentralised, pluralised knowledge production.

The project is connected to *Oxford & Caribbeanity Now*^{xi}, a project funded by the University's van Houten Fund, and based at TORCH.

Misbehaving Bodies: encouraging collaborative awareness of health diversity

Professor Oreet Ashery, Ruskin School of Art

The Misbehaving Bodies exhibition^{xii} at Wellcome Collection brought together the work of two artists of different generations, Oxford University's Oreet Ashery and feminist artist Jo Spence, who died with cancer in 1992. The exhibition challenged audiences and Wellcome staff to feel and think differently about health and encouraged the acceptance of illness as a part of life.

Ashery's collaborative development – together with curators at Wellcome Collection – of the exhibition, its design, and an innovative public programme inspired Wellcome Collection to work in newly collaborative ways with contemporary artists, influencing Wellcome

Collection's professional practice to embrace artists' framing of difficult social issues. It spurred Wellcome to think about health diversity in new ways and made senior staff more aware of the need to take care of their own and their team members' health.

Diseases of Modern Life – Victorian Light Night

Professor Sally Shuttleworth, English Faculty

TORCH and researchers from the European Research Council (ERC)-funded *Diseases of Modern Life* project teamed up with the award-winning *Projection Studio* for a spectacular large scale building projection and sound show onto Oxford's original Radcliffe Infirmary.

This was a large-scale public engagement with research event, connecting current humanities research with families and young people. The audience of 2,500 people was made up of a wide range of ages and 50% of them were new audiences to Oxford Humanities research events.

Based next door in the Andrew Wiles Building and St Luke's Chapel were stalls, games and performances by researchers from the *Diseases of Modern Life* project, all themed around the Victorians' concept of the 'speed of life'.

Together, the researchers and artists developed and co-created a 5-minute video projection that shared some of the research outcomes – Victorians were worried about the speed of technology and communication and how it would affect their daily lives and mental health. The lead academic, Professor Sally Shuttleworth, shared some of these thoughts with Year 8 children from Cheney School thanks to the Rumble Museum. The children did their own responses to the 'speed of life' and how technology plays a part in our lives today, as it did with the Victorians.

Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences

Zooniverse

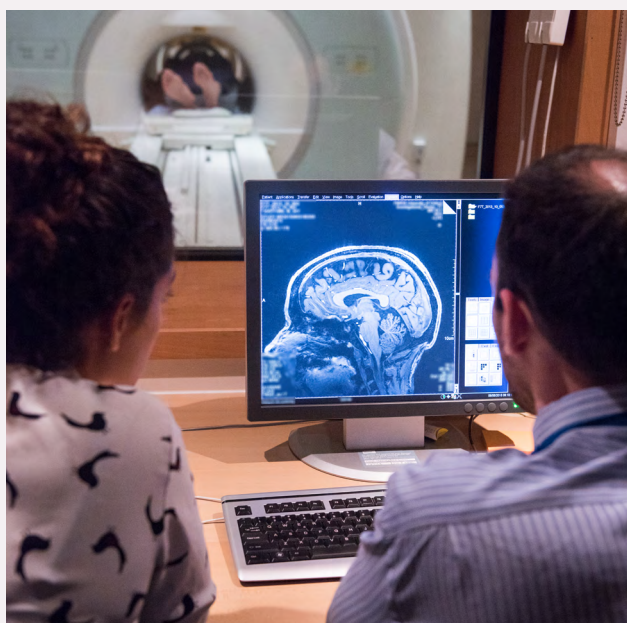
Professor Chris Lintott, Department of Physics, and many others

Zooniverse^{xiii} is an online citizen science platform where **millions** of members of the public get involved in genuine research that has a variety of impacts across disciplines, from enhancing disaster responses, to establishing marine protected zones, and discovering new exoplanets. There are 98 active projects on the platform, which was established by Oxford Researchers.

The Unbias Project

Professor Marina Jirotko, Department of Computer Sciences

This project^{xiv} co-produced a 'fairness toolkit' with young people to support youth understanding about online environments as well as raise awareness among online providers about the concerns and rights of young internet users. The group additionally develop responsible research and innovation practices for a variety of AI, big data and robotics use cases.



Plastics from Another Perspective

Professor Charlotte Williams group, Department of Chemistry

Professor Williams' group created an interactive workshop^{xv} for young people aged 14-16 in state schools that provides insights from the researchers' work on tackling plastic waste. The group's research students, post-docs and others have additionally contributed to exhibitions at the Design Museum, education programmes at the Royal Institution and 'meet the chemist' events for 11-year-olds.

In addition to the above, Professor Michael Wooldridge delivered the 2023 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, *The Truth About AI*^{xvi}, reaching people through broadcast media, live events across the country, and educational resources. It showcased a range of research across MPLS and beyond. Mike has further been involved in media engagement and producing popular science books.

There's a selection of case studies available online at mpls.ox.ac.uk/public-engagement/case-s.

Medical Sciences

Football on the brain

Professor Heidi Johansen-Berg's group, Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging

Funded via the internally managed Wellcome fund, Enriching Engagement, *Football on the Brain*^{xvii} is a four-year programme that helps players to improve their game, and fans to improve their lifestyle. In partnership with Oxford United in the Community, Ignite Sport, SheKicks Magazine, Oxford University Sport, and Football Beyond Borders, neuroscience researchers and players, coaches and fans learn from each other about how the brain impacts on fitness and technique. So far in 2024 activities have included

- ❖ delivering **staff training** for Football Beyond Borders coaches on how neuroscience impacts football;
- ❖ developing **neuroscience modules** for young footballers with Ignite; writing an insert for SheKicks magazine on injury prevention and recovery;
- ❖ continuing to develop and refine **hands-on roadshow activities** for upcoming Oxford United in the Community primary school tournaments; and
- ❖ preparing for a second **visit from local secondary students** in collaboration with the University's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Lab as part of their Oxford & Sport programme.



Top: Football on the Brain brings together scientists and footballing organisations to engage with diverse communities with a shared passion for football;

Centre: Extract from an art installation and computer game created by Yambe Tam and Albert Barbu for the Rethinking Collective Minds project;

Bottom: ParentText is a chatbot that delivers evidence-based parenting support as part of the Global Parenting Initiative.

Endometriosis: Into the Unknown exhibition

Professor Krina Zondervan, Oxford EndoCare (part of the Nuffield Department for Women and Reproductive Health) and the Centre for Human Genetics (part of the Nuffield Department of Medicine)

This exhibition was a collaboration between the Centre for Human Genetics (part of the Nuffield Department of Medicine), Oxford EndoCare (part of the Nuffield Department for Women and Reproductive Health), and the Vagina Museum (the first bricks-and-mortar museum dedicated to gynaecological anatomy). The exhibition drew on current Oxford research into the causes and treatment of endometriosis with the aim of increasing awareness among healthcare professionals and the public and reducing stigma. Over 10,000 people visited the exhibition during its six-month run, from November 2023 – April 2024, which included a programme of evening events, podcasts, and school resources^{xviii}.

Merging Minds

Dr David Lyreskog, Neuroscience, Ethics & Society (NEUROSEC) team, Department of Psychiatry, and the Wellcome Centre for Ethics & Humanities (WEH)

The Rethinking Collective Minds research project is investigating how new and emerging technologies for collective thinking, sensing, and decision-making are challenging widely accepted notions of what individual and collective agency entails. As part of the project, researchers collaborated with the arts collective of Yambe Tam and Albert Barbu who have created a public art installation and immersive computer game experience in response to their residency with the researchers^{xix}. Throughout the project games testing events and focus groups were run with students from The Cherwell and Wheatley Park schools. These events were co-designed with the NEUROSEC 'Young Persons Advisory Group', to ensure that younger people's perspectives were appropriately captured and included. The final gaming experience and accompanying sculptures were displayed at a Fusion Arts Oxford venue in May 2023.

Overseas units

Schools Engagement Programme

KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme

The Schools Engagement Programme^{xx} (SEP) was established by KEMRI with the support of Kilifi County Education Office. SEP forms part of a wider community engagement platform whose core aim is to promote an interest in science and related careers.

As part of the programme, the School Leaver's Attachment Scheme (SLAS), selects talented students from Kilifi who have just completed high school with excellent grades to go on a three-month attachment. Students gain valuable work experience in laboratories, hospital wards, computer departments and community interaction. This experience gives students an advantage over most other university first-years.

Drama as a community engagement strategy for malaria in rural Cambodia

MORU Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit

In rural communities affected by malaria, awareness and understanding of the disease is indispensable to support elimination efforts. Such communities however often record lower literacy rates compared to urban areas, so using printed media such as leaflets and posters to raise malaria awareness, may be less successful in these areas. Folk media such as folk songs, dramas, puppet shows, and dance have been used as community engagement strategies for health education and to encourage research participation. Khmer dramas, which use comedy and music to tell stories with local references and language that resonates with villagers are popular in rural communities. Considering the need to convey messages about malaria in a comprehensible and appropriate fashion, traditional Cambodian drama was used to supplement existing text-based messaging on malaria and other efforts rolled out by the local authorities and education system.

Engagement with Healthcare Workers and in Hospitals

The Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU)

Clinical trials are at the heart of OUCRU's research, conducted in partner hospitals and community settings. Healthcare workers are often the main point of contact for patients and others participating in these trials. OUCRU engages with healthcare workers and their managers to strengthen their capacity to communicate with research participants and their families. They have also conducted research to better understand and support the mental health of these key partners.

In hospitals, OUCRU has also developed programmes for patients and their families, as part of a wider aim of helping partner hospitals develop platforms and resources to support patients.

Social Sciences

Global Parenting Initiative

Professor Lucie Cluver, Dr Jamie Lachman, Dr Isang Awah et al, Department of Social Policy and Intervention

The team developed evidence-based parenting resources aimed at reducing levels of child abuse globally^{xxi}. Through partnering with citizen volunteers, NGOs, faith-based organisations, WHO and UNICEF throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and various disasters and wars, the team have reached 210 million people in 198 countries and territories. Working with partners to translate the resources into over 30 different languages and through adaptation of the resources to different contexts, delivery methods and media, they have reached families in remote and rural locations as well as being included in national government programmes in 30 countries. They have responded to the war in Ukraine, flooding in Pakistan, earthquakes in Afghanistan and Turkey/Syria and to families facing conflict in Palestine, Israel and Sudan. All resources are open-source and available online through the Global Parenting Initiative's website.



Supporting online justice and designing for inclusion

Professor Linda Mulcahy and Dr Anna Tsalapatanis (now UCL), Law Faculty

During the pandemic many court hearings moved online raising concerns about access to justice and due process, especially for disadvantaged groups. Mulcahy and team, in partnership with HM Courts and Tribunal Service, and in consultation with the public, court and tribunal staff, interest groups, practitioners and policy makers, produced a series of video guides for lay users for use in tribunals and family courts^{xxii}. This work led to a spin-off project working with HMCTS and Citizens Advice and other advice organisations to create a free, easy-to-use design toolkit supporting community legal advice workers in producing customised and accessible resources for their clients. The toolkit indicates how resources can be designed in ways that are accessible to people who are neurodiverse, sight or hearing impaired, colour vision deficient, differently abled, signers, MAKATON users, non-native users of English, have limited vocabularies or low reading age^{xxiii}.



© UNHCR/Diana Diaz, 2018

Tales from Call the Midwife

Dr Alice Watson, School of Geography and the Environment

To mark 100 years of broadcasting, the BBC teamed up with Dr Alice Watson to produce a podcast which celebrates the TV series "Call the Midwife" and its special relationship with audiences. The podcast^{xxiv} aims to record fans of the programme who have lived through or been moved by its storytelling. Alice has recorded 28 episodes released to mark the BBC's centenary funded by AHRC.

The Refugee Economies Programme

Professor Alex Betts, Department of International Development

The Refugee Economies Programme^{xxv} undertakes research on the economic lives of refugees. Refugees are trained to collect and analyse primary data to explore the conditions under which refugees can become self-sufficient and make positive economic contributions to their host states and societies. Data collection includes original qualitative and quantitative data, and they often draw upon a range of participatory methods, including working with refugee researchers.



Ethno-Ornithology World Atlas project

Professor Andrew Gosler, School of Anthropology and Department of Biology and team

The Ethno-Ornithology World Atlas^{xxvi} (EWA) is a collection of online resources including a web-based map which allows users to click on pins around the world and explore stories about birds shared by people in those locations. EWA gives local communities, academics and conservationists a space to share their knowledge, language traditions and understandings of local birds and nature. Through our engagement fellowships scheme SSD funded conservationist Dr Alberto Yanosky to work with the team to develop long term collaborations with Indigenous communities in Paraguay using the platform.

Top: Tales from "Call the Midwife" with Dr Alice Watson (pictured); Centre: Refugee Economies programme - A farmer in the Melkadida agriculture cooperative harvests onions that he grew; Bottom: Ara chloropterus (Red-and-green Macaw).



Image from a session run by the central PCER Team at Marmalade Festival 2024 called 'Sharing Power: Community Voices in University Research Funding'

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