

The logo consists of a stylized 'K' shape formed by two overlapping triangles: a blue triangle on the left and a pink triangle on the right.

**National Centre for
Academic and Cultural Exchange**

**Narrating Cultural Knowledge
Exchange: Stories and
perspectives from Knowledge
Exchange professionals working
in Higher Education in the UK**

Dr Rebekka Kill

Narrating Cultural Knowledge Exchange: Stories and perspectives from Knowledge Exchange professionals working in Higher Education in the UK

Dr. Rebekka Kill

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Background

Highlighting the work of Knowledge Exchange professionals

Evelyn Wilson, Co-Director, NCACE and Director, TCCE

As many who work in Knowledge Exchange would I'm sure acknowledge, the field itself is one that historically has been a little overlooked. Those who work in it can sometimes fade into the background regardless of the expertise and experience they bring to their respective institutions. Yet often it is that very combination of diverse knowledge sets and skills, coupled with strong networks, that makes the work of Knowledge Exchange professionals so catalytic, both within and beyond Higher Education institutions, both creating and adding value in a myriad of ways.

In our work at the National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) we focus on supporting and championing Knowledge Exchange between Higher Education and the arts and cultural sectors. We also seek to better understand, evidence and showcase the impacts, implications and potentials for such work. Part of that work means understanding the complex ecology of knowledge exchange better. And that, in turn, means hearing from those experts who work in knowledge exchange often within a specific university or other higher education institution. These are the people who support, and indeed also often instigate, all manner of partnerships, engagements and collaborations and who also often, albeit quietly, hold and shape ambitions for collaborations within and beyond their institutions. But what does this work involve, how is it spoken about and what are the perceptions of this field as it matures and gains value, through developments including KEF and the KE Concordat?

This short publication is our first attempt at highlighting some of the important work undertaken by Knowledge Exchange professionals. We have interviewed six individuals from different types of institutions, at different stages in careers and in different parts of the country. We were keen that the interviews would create an opportunity to explore and amplify views on cultural collaborations in particular, as well as capturing broader perspectives about the nature of knowledge exchange and impact.

As we anticipated, the interviews often became creative conversations enabling narratives to emerge that might not otherwise, had we stuck more slavishly to the interview template we developed. And they are all the richer for it. Many fascinating facts and insights have been revealed through these interviews and I want to pick up on just a few of them here very briefly.

Unsurprisingly, what we've heard again and again is that the nature of knowledge exchange is complex and that the term itself is still not well understood. This in some respects is a good thing enabling us to let it, as a notion, perform as an imaginary in which multiple modes and possibilities can live and co-exist. As Deborah Keogh tells us "KE is everywhere, it comes in all shapes and sizes... It's called engagement, outreach, partnerships and professional practice and everyone wants to do more of it."

Striking too was the way in which some institutions are really encouraging staff development through knowledge exchange. Alisdair Aldous tells us that it is "a fantastic way to recognise and value our academics' practice in this space where they're working with external partners, publics and communities."

Several of interviewees spoke of the unexpected consequences of knowledge exchange projects. Andrew Wray tells us about feedback from a large curatorial project between his institution and the British Museum, initially about the development of an exhibition but which also resulted in new ways of working

within the museum. “You’ve given us a new tool, a new way of collaborating that cuts across conventional historical and disciplinary boundaries.”

The need to recognise the longitudinal nature of cultural knowledge exchange was made by several including Rachael Barnwell who tells us; “Often I get emails about projects we started four years ago that have just had a fantastic outcome. Looking at how we keep track of that is one thing that I would find genuinely useful. We’ve had people who’ve been engaged in knowledge exchange activities, who have popped up somewhere completely unexpected, doing something totally different, but it’s got its roots in what we did with them. Being able to track that would be useful.”

Relating to the theme of time, of course is the sometimes quite thorny topic of Impact. Helen Sargeant tells us “One of the challenges of evaluating impact is working out exactly what the scope is and exactly what you want to evaluate. I think it’s about thinking differently about what else we can find out and that’s where capacity can be a challenge. We are trying to collect everything as we go along, from everybody involved, which is often multi-partner and multi-stakeholder. It’s complex, but there is huge potential for really interesting impact and evaluation of the process and outputs.”

It was very heartening and enlightening to hear an articulation of the deeper reflexivity associated with the profession, indicating its growing importance and maturity within Higher Education. Sian Brittain tells us “We wanted to really think about the broader world. That became even more of an imperative after Covid, Brexit and Black Lives Matter... They really made us ask big questions about what our role is, what we want to be known for and how we want to work with different partners.” She acknowledges her role in enabling academic staff as being about ‘playing an active and political role, being out there, being ethical leaders within their own fields’. That is a notion that has resonated with me most powerfully.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Rebekka Kill for undertaking these interviews with skill, sensitivity and a tremendous sense of warmth and humanity. Her intuitive approach is in great evidence in this document. And I would like to especially thank Deborah Keogh, Alisdair Alidous, Andrew Wray, Sian Brittain, Rachael Barnwell and Helen Sargeant for taking the time to talk with us and to share this rich set of insights into a sector this is finally taking its proper place. In the words of Deborah Keogh, “It’s a brilliant, messy space.”

Introduction

‘Then a Penny Dropped’: Encountering KE First-Hand

Dr Rebekka Kill

In Autumn 2021, I was asked by NCACE to do some interviews with knowledge exchange professionals from across the UK. The aim of these interviews was to collect data for the NCACE Evidence Hub. When we were setting these up we sent them some information that stated,

“The purpose of these interviews is to capture the expertise and experiences of those who have first-hand encounters of KE initiatives”

We were interested in the scale, scope, drivers, values and impacts of collaborative projects and cultural partnerships between Higher Education and the arts and cultural sector. We also wanted to know about the social, cultural, environmental and economic impact of these types of activity. It was a big ask, but one of the main aims was to showcase models of good practice. The landscape of knowledge exchange is extremely complex and until recently external dissemination was limited. We knew that there was some really excellent, highly impactful work being done in very complex university and cultural ecosystems. We also knew that there was a wealth of work and KE practice that we really wanted to celebrate and share with our community.

We worked with a group of six highly skilled and experienced knowledge exchange professionals and we ensured that their institutional background was diverse: north, south, conservatoire, post-92, Russell Group. The interviews produced huge amounts of incredibly rich data. We discussed funding, KEF, REF and impact, engagement and evaluation, motivations, opportunities and

challenges. Each interview began with one or two case studies; they were fascinating! And each interview highlighted the similarities and differences of knowledge exchange practice in different institutional contexts.

As I progressed with the interviews, the knowledge exchange professionals spoke passionately, with deep and detailed understanding of their work, and a really extensive range of complex and amazing interdisciplinary collaborations. I began to think about these important roles, within universities, and the scope and creativity that they encompass; the genuine impact that knowledge exchange professionals facilitate is remarkable. I also thought about how interesting their job titles are including: Knowledge Exchange, Innovation, Impact and Engagement, Knowledge Transfer and Partnerships. With each interviewee I explored their favourite projects and their job roles. I asked what exactly they did and what their role was in these projects, and all the answers included facilitation, relationship building, oversight and project management.

In the Knowledge Exchange community we pride ourselves in knowing about knowledge exchange, don't we? We know what it looks like, how it happens and what makes "good" knowledge exchange. We know the people who do it, the people who write about it, and people who benefit from it. But imagine for a second that you don't know. Think about those moments in life when we attempt to describe this work to certain colleagues, partners, parents or friends. How do we talk about these practices, these job roles, the projects, the communities and the benefits? Imagine that you're on the outside of this community, or perhaps a bit KE-curious (defined as someone who is actively exploring their KE side and is open to exploring KE practices). Forget everything you know about knowledge exchange, imagine you are an outsider, a complete novice. You might wonder, what Knowledge Exchange actually is? Who does it? Why, and how, does this work get funded? And who benefits from it?

Knowledge Exchange is happening in universities and specialist institutions all over the UK. Sometimes KE professionals are integrated into subject specialist,

school or faculty teams, and sometimes they work in specialist or even relatively diverse professional teams. They often have complex and varied job titles: Head of Knowledge Exchange, Director of Innovation, Senior Impact and Engagement Manager. What are these roles all about? What does good practice actually look like? How do universities support colleagues in this work? How can academics get involved? How can universities support the KE community to achieve recognition, funding, support or even visibility at work?

As I had these wonderful conversations with people, I remembered how many people I have worked with who had these kind of job titles, and I wished I'd asked them more about what they were doing. Then a penny dropped. This is what makes these interviews interesting, in a shorter, more readable or break-sized, form, what exactly does a knowledge exchange professional do? What kind of projects are they involved in? It'd be really useful to have known this ten years ago, and hopefully, dear reader, that is exactly what you can enjoy here.

Interviews

Deborah Keogh

My name is Deborah Keogh and I'm Knowledge Exchange Manager and Project Director of the new Innovation Studio pilot, launching in March, at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, based in Glasgow.

Could you describe a knowledge exchange project with the arts and culture sector that you've been involved with that you think is really good?

Because we are a small specialist, most of what we do is arts and culture related. Some of our new projects this year are about finding new ways of working with practitioners beyond arts and culture, creating new KE opportunities for our staff and students.

So the one that springs to mind is a programme called Shift. It's in collaboration with Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh. It's an intensive week-long programme for new graduates, and final year UG and PG students and takes place every September. It's knowledge exchange in action, with three institutions working together, and it's knowledge exchange in as much as it involves vast numbers of industry practitioners in delivery. We've delivered the programme three times and it's been very successful. We have between 80 and 120 participants each year, coming from all aspects of the creative arts and cultural production. We work in partnership with the Creative Entrepreneurs Club in Glasgow who deliver large parts of the programme. Shift opens up channels for our production and performing arts students to connect with GSA and QMU students, sharing perspectives and ideas. It's a really practical programme and at the end, after five days, participants leave with a clear action plan and a set of next steps to take. Much of the entrepreneurial stuff is demystified and rooted back to what people actually want to do and how they are going to do it.

How did it start?

This time five years ago, just when I started this role, there was already an ambition between our three institutions to collaborate on some aspect of professional development or support for creative entrepreneurs. We have University Innovation Funding in Scotland, and one of the requirements and ambitions of the fund was that it would catalyse better collaboration between institutions. So we dug into discussions about our cohorts of students and graduates, what was common, what was specific to their disciplines and looked to the areas of need and ideas around what we could do better together and at some scale.

It took a good 18 months, if not longer of conversation, idea exchange and planning. This also gave us a chance to get to know each other better as partners and colleagues. We got to figure out each other's strengths and interests.

What's your specific role in this project as it's evolved?

Initially, I was very involved in the shaping of it with my colleagues, in the relationship building with our external partners, and creating a space for it at the Conservatoire. Within the partnership, we took on the project management role of the programme. My role now is more strategic as we look at the ongoing growth and development of Shift, and assess its impact and my RCS KE Colleague Stephanie has taken on the Project Management aspects. We have secured some external funding to undertake a review of the last three years, and our hope is to look at how we can broaden this programme out to a larger cohort of students and graduates from Scotland's creative education courses.

Outside of the educational value, what do you think the social, cultural, economic, environmental value or impact of your project is? Is it too soon to say, or can you see impacts at this stage?

That's one of the key things that we're going to have reviewed. But it's also important to recognise the harder to measure stuff. For example, people arrive at the start of the Shift week, thinking one way about how they're going to make their work and make a living, what's in the mix, what's not, and as the week goes on, they start to consider what would a different kind of picture, and what that might look like? There's a shift in mindset about what it means to be a sustainable practicing artist. Some core work on costing and pricing and communicating what you do with clarity and strength gets to the heart of how people think about how they do what they do.

Is there anything that your institution could be doing to facilitate this kind of work better, or more effectively?

Do you mean in KE generally? It's a complex picture, but we've made good strides. This year the KE Concordat development year helped significantly; it gave us a process. We had kicked off this deep development work about two years ago through a review led by our Senior KE Fellow, Celia Duffy. The objective was to start to map all forms of KE at the Conservatoire, what is it, where is it, what does it mean to people. We did lots of interviews and it confirmed what we already knew; that knowledge exchange was everywhere, and all shapes and sizes. Everyone supported it and not everyone knew that it's called knowledge exchange. It's engagement, outreach, partnerships, professional practice; we do loads of it and everyone wants to do more of it. So that's great! It's a brilliant messy space. So it was really helpful for us to gather information, it underpins everything we are doing now, and it was great to start to weave the threads together. It also gave us a head start on the Concordat.

I think it's very interesting that you're doing collaborative work with other institutions...

That's been a key part of my role actually. In Scotland there are only 19 institutions, so we do have this really collegiate approach to things, and as the sector is fairly small, we are able to get to know one another. We have a UIF Network Manager who has facilitated conversations, events and collective learning. We have got to know our KE colleagues really well, and there is an atmosphere of mutual support. For me, coming from a Small Specialist, accessing this pool of expertise has been critical in developing my skills and a broader understanding of KE. It's also been really enjoyable and makes things feel much more connected. KE offices in Small Specialists tend to be very small.

How well is this kind of work championed within your institution?

KE work is championed now at the Conservatoire and it is an area of development and growth. Our Leadership Team is engaged and supportive, and KE will now feature prominently in our next strategic plan.

For a number of years we have run the Athenaeum Awards, a successful seed fund for staff research and KE projects. It's central to staff research & KE activity and produces a lot of really great work. This funding has been a great relationship building tool with our academic staff. It has formed a fundamental part of the research service provision and was set up in a flexible and imaginative way by a former colleague.

What are the key benefits of your projects to your institution, academic staff, external partners, and students?

KE as a practice is about continuous improvement and development and we try to mirror that in what we do and how we work. The value derived from the KE projects we produce has added some new things into the Conservatoire system,

particularly in the innovation enterprise spaces. But the benefits from the broader KE that is driven by everyone else at the Conservatoire, including students are vast. Our role now in KE is to help to bring some light to that, to articulate it, share it and acknowledge it. These are big building blocks in civic engagement work and understanding our role as an anchor institution in place-making efforts.

What are your views on the Concordat, and KEF? Do you think they're good? Are they valuable?

We don't have the KEF in Scotland, as you know. I'm really interested in the Concordat, as I've already mentioned, but we don't know what's happening next with it. We met with Scottish HEI colleagues just before Christmas, to share our positive experience of engaging with it.

The Concordat helped us all consider **how** we're doing our KE work, the culture and the infrastructure. It added a vital missing layer of insight into the mechanisms underpinning change and development, that was the real value of the Concordat. The hard work starts now.

What are the headlines of how you're doing knowledge exchange?

What are the headlines? The work packages we now have to deliver from the Concordat plans but also our online Innovation Studio pilot which is just about to launch. The Innovation Studio is a pilot project and an experiment in co-creation at RCS. We aim to collectively build an innovation community of practice, where innovation is defined in the broadest sense as a process of reflection, a space to test new ideas, and an inquiry into *the ways we work* as much as it is about *what we make*. We are so excited by this project as it really is a space for knowledge exchange in action.

SHIFT is a unique collaborative training programme for students and recent graduates from The Glasgow School of Art (GSA), the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) and Queen Margaret University (QMU).

<http://shiftintoyourfuture.com/>

Alisdair Aldous

I'm Alisdair Aldous, Director of Knowledge Exchange at University of the Arts, London.

Can you tell me about a really good knowledge exchange project with arts and cultural sector partners that you've been personally involved in?

Okay, I'll give you two, that are both historical but I think both are really good examples; one was with the Southbank Centre in London and one was with Acme Studios. At that time Southbank Centre had an issue. They were in one of the busiest places in London, but they weren't converting a significant proportion of the passing footfall into visitors to the Southbank Centre. And so they worked with us on a KTP to understand how narrative environments expertise could be used to address that.

We identified the opportunity to create pop-up experiences, on the south bank, in proximity to the Centre, but closer to the river, that would engage people in creative experiences. These experiences would have, within them, some kind of mechanism that drew people into the building. To give you an example, one was a photo booth where people would go in, they wouldn't necessarily know it was related to the Southbank Centre until they got in there. There were lots of materials in there that meant that they could come up with very creative ways of capturing images of themselves. Then those would be projected inside the Southbank Centre and they would be available inside the Southbank Centre, and also on the Southbank Centre's website. And so, people would have this experience on the south bank and move into the centre, both physically and online. This was just one of the installations that we did, but we did a number of different ones; there was one with sound and sound recording. It was very similar principles. You do something creative outside, and then in order to complete the experience you need to move inside. And ever since then, there has

been an ongoing public programme by the Southbank Centre on that river bank; it's become characteristic of their approach to public engagement.

Was it led by you, or was it co designed?

I would say the concepts were led by us. But, there was a lot of collaboration in the strategic planning and thinking, which meant that we were able to quite quickly identify potential solutions. And then really great engagement from the Southbank team in making things happen, and co-designing the implementation. It's a really big complex organisation and trying to make something that's very innovative, involves risk taking and requires new infrastructure. You've got to have a lot of buy in and it worked really well.

And then the one with Acme Studios was amazing. We worked with them on a KTP which was about helping them to come up with a design specification for new-build artists' studios. Acme wanted to provide the highest quality studio space at the lowest possible price. And they'd been able to do that for years very successfully by taking over old industrial buildings and converting them. But they wanted to explore new ways of building, and new materials, to purpose-build artists' studios at a cost that would be comparable to converting existing space, but was really high quality. And so we worked with them on that and employed an Associate for that project, who was a brilliant, fine art doctoral student. She applied fine art research methodology to understanding and documenting how artists inhabited and used space in different practices. She understood what their requirements were and fed that into the design specification for the studios. We were very fortunate that during that project, Acme had the opportunity to implement this. They were able to build the studios and deliver them at a price point that was relative to their other premises, and they had 100% occupancy from the first day. The architecture firm (HAT projects) were selected because they'd done a lot of very innovative work with new materials, and the building went on to win an RIBA Award. The really important thing for Acme in terms of the KTP outcome was that by being able to

move into this new development space, it helped them as a business, to move away from Arts Council subsidies and allowed them to become self-financing.

So, in both of those projects, what was your role? Did you write the KTP application? Were you the supervisor of the associate?

Yeah, I supported the application process and then worked as part of the project management team, overseeing the delivery.

We're talking about cultural knowledge exchange; how can we make the opportunities, the potential, more effective? Where is your institution sitting now on that? How do we make it easier? What are the problems?

In the arts and cultural sector, organisations don't typically have a structured r&d aspect to their business. Some do, but not the majority. And that means that it's quite difficult and quite challenging for them to self-identify as needing academic input. And universities are not the first people they think to partner with, or to work with.

The reason I gave you those examples of Southbank and Acme, was that in both cases, the people that we worked with didn't see it as project funding. They saw it as an opportunity to shift the organisation, and develop their business model to build more resilience. And in both cases, they're delivering their mission more effectively as a result. And I think there are loads of opportunities to do that. Universities, particularly one like ours, are really well set up to support that, because we understand the business part, and we also understand the cultural sector part, so we can navigate the combination well.

How is knowledge exchange recognised, championed and supported within your institution?

We've developed an academic career pathway specific to knowledge exchange. Academic staff can progress to Reader or Professor of knowledge exchange in the same way that they could Reader or Professor of research, or teaching and learning. We introduced that in 2017. We recognised that knowledge exchange was starting to be articulated, sector wide, as a very meaningful way of exchanging value through the application of expertise. It was a fantastic way for us to recognise and value our academics' practice in this space where they're working with external partners, publics and communities. We also do a lot of specific communications, internally and externally, so we can surface and celebrate our key projects. It works at all levels of the organisation. For example, we have academic governance structures specific to knowledge exchange and we've just appointed a new Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise so that we have specific executive board representation for our activities and our concerns. We've also got a KE secondment scheme, that is equivalent to a research sabbatical, so we buy our staff time to go and spend in an external organisation, typically either to develop a new strategic partnership for knowledge exchange, or more often to deepen the relationship with an existing partner. And we also provide impact funding, which is really about either seeding new ideas or enabling academics to extend the reach and significance of any impact that they're in the process of creating. Quite often, it's only a small investment that can unlock a lot of new opportunities.

Does UAL have a set of values around KE?

We just published a new five-year knowledge exchange strategy, within which we've published a clear set of values, goal and mission and we've also got a knowledge exchange continuous improvement programme, which is a whole set of work streams that are about trying to improve the enabling environment for

knowledge exchange within the university, and that's got a lot of different facets to it, but that's all in the strategy.

What do you think the benefits are, institutionally and to academic staff?

One of the things that we articulate is that we see knowledge exchange as a form of social enterprise; universities are there to serve a social purpose. And whilst income remains a primary indicator of performance, income generation isn't why we do knowledge exchange. In the same way as in research you don't apply for research grants to generate income, you apply for research grants to do interesting things. Things that benefit both your institution and wider society.

I think the benefit for staff is that we are really encouraging and celebrating staff going out, making a difference and using their expertise to work with external organisations, communities, whoever, to create societal benefit. And that's not seen as being in conflict with anything else that you might do. It's very much encouraged. Things like the pathway provide ways of rewarding and recognising achievements in that space and the strategy provides some really clear direction as to the areas that we're prioritising. So, there's a benefit for staff in knowing where to direct their energies.

Would you say that the majority of staff are involved? Is there any resistance to KE?

I think the advantage of having the promotion structure in relation to it means that actually you remove some of the resistance, and encourage broad engagement. It's just enabling people to do what they would want to do anyway, but giving them the enabling infrastructure for that. There's also less resistance because we don't frame it as being an income generating thing – its framed as core academic activity, which benefits from external resourcing (like research). It's not about doing something in addition to teaching and research; it's about doing what you would do anyway and capturing the value of that.

UAL's KE Strategy:

<https://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/press-office/stories/ual-publishes-its-new-knowledge-exchange-strategy-2021-26>

Acme KTP:

<https://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/central-saint-martins/business-and-innovation/staff-consultancy-and-customised-training/knowledge-transfer-partnerships>

Andrew Wray

I'm Andrew Wray. I'm Director of Research Impact at the University of Bristol. I've worked on impact developments in every subject in the university, but over the past decade I have spent quite a large part of my time in our Faculty of Arts.

Tell me about a successful knowledge exchange project that you've worked on.

I'm going to pick one that has a long history, it was submitted as a REF 2021 impact case study. In 2014 there was an opportunity to create projects around the future of documentary; looking at the way that online media were deconstructing and reconfiguring the notion of documentary. One of our professors in Hispanic Studies, who does a lot of work in Latin America, teamed up with some documentary makers to create a project, Quipu (<https://interactive.quipu-project.com/>), with two novel aspects. One was that it was a novel form of documentary creation, a new form of artistic or broadcast content and the second was a political engagement project with a community of women and men, indigenous people in Peru, who had been forcibly sterilised by the regime there in the 1990s. The project was, in many ways, a great success. They generated documentary content through traditional land telephone lines and radio that are accessible to people in very remote communities. And they presented the content back through radio, through dial in phone services, but also in an internet format. These men and women were telling their stories and thereby being given a voice. This also supported the political campaign for recognition, and compensation for what had happened. The campaign still goes on in Peru. The novel documentary format won awards at Tribeca Film Festival and additional funding to keep going.

There were lots of beneficiaries of this project. The documentary makers experimented with documentary creation, this mix of ancient analogue technology, radio for people in remote communities and novel, online web

formats, all beautifully matched. The academics got to use their understanding of working with marginalised communities to understand their story that had been suppressed and bring it to prominence. And the communities themselves benefited as their political voice was raised. This methodology has been extended by both the documentary company and by the academics to work with other areas.

Would you say that this project was led by the documentary company, or by the academics, or was it a co-design? I mean, where's it weighted?

It was absolutely co-design. In this example, if you walked into the room you couldn't tell who was the academic, or who was the creative practitioner. There were two academics, Matthew Brown and Karen Tucker from the University of Bristol, and the documentary makers; their contributions were absolutely melded together.

So, what did you do as part of the project? What was your contribution? How does someone in your kind of role work in relation to a project like that?

We're not hands on inside each individual project. We work more around the design, and the funds, and then checking in with people and then helping them design the next step.

It's facilitation initially, and then project management as it goes along. There are the elements of translating and talking between communities as the project starts up, but it's not that common to stay involved all the way through.

So quite often it's catalysing it and then stepping back?

Yeah, I mean, there are exceptions, like commercialisation; they have a longer engagement, guiding each project through to a licence or spin-out. But the key

ambition is to get the academics working with external organisations in a way that's sustainable.

Do you think that there are ways that these kinds of projects could be enabled or facilitated more effectively?

I think the overarching thing for me is to encourage greater ambition, and scale, for greater impact. Let me let me give you a different example. An archaeologist came to me a few years ago about a project with the British Museum; a touring exhibition. The academic and the curators designed the exhibition together, and it went off on tour around the world. But when the exhibition came to an end, the real legacy was that this particular exhibition forced different departments within the British Museum to work together in a new way. They were looking at trades across the Mediterranean. So, the Egyptian and Roman specialists had to collaborate and lots of others. And what they said was, we don't normally collaborate in this way. You've given us a new tool, a new way of collaborating that cuts across conventional, historical and disciplinary boundaries. And we're going to keep using that model. That was the legacy. The British Museum staff had a new way of working, a new methodology, attracting their professional practice that they would continue, even after that specific touring exhibition. I get really excited when there's new capabilities created somewhere that go on to have a longer life.

How is this kind of work supported at Bristol?

We have engagement and impact as part of our professorial promotion criteria. It is essential for academics to do something within that area. However, this varies widely from public lectures, to forming a spin-out, to changing medical practice, to changing cultural conceptions and changing our society. It's great that it's embedded but there is a tendency for this university, and probably others, to fall back on the big bucks. The hero entrepreneur stories that impress

everyone. Sometimes there can be pressure to invest in things that deliver cash rather than invest in things that deliver cultural change.

Do you have a set of key values around knowledge exchange institutionally?

There are very explicit values about why we do research. Why do we collaborate? Why do we try to create an impact around making the world a better place? We run a large central division, the Research and Enterprise Division (RED), which is well over 100 people. And together we have a set of values, some of them are basic professional values of honesty and transparency and so on. But some of them are around our core motivations - we want to see research applied and to change the world. I would say that underpins everything we do in RED and therefore drives the way that we support individual projects. I think we value projects that create social change, for example on reducing domestic violence or addressing contested histories. Not the art sector I realise but money isn't a factor, it's about social change, and this is given a high profile by the institution.

What about value for others?

There's obvious benefits to external partners but we always need to find the motivation for the academic. I'm against saying that everyone should do X percent of their time on knowledge exchange every year, every week and every day. It doesn't make any sense. So, I say to academics, that there's a time to go inward and focus on your research, and that might last years. And then there's time to look out and engage the world with your research.

What else is important?

I wanted to mention impacts of scale and persistence. There is an excellent example in the REF 2014 impact case studies from Newcastle University's English Department (<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=21724>). There's been

poetry festivals and public events in the cities of Newcastle and Gateshead over many years. The simple thing is, the academics kept going for years and years, growing that work until it became a wonderful, huge cultural celebration, with lots of other agencies involved too. It's a brilliant story of research changing the cultural landscape and of persistence over time.

This important aspect of persistence, in order to get impact of scale, is very hard to turn into quantitative measures.

Why would they have to be quantitative measures? Why can it be qualitative?

I think it's just really hard to get meaningful numbers out of some of these engagements because the financial benefits don't accrue obviously, with different beneficiaries in the chain of stakeholders. For example, if I work with a large company, and help them do something, then they sell the something as a product or service. They could tell me how much they've sold and how many jobs they've created and it's the same with spinouts. The benefits of arts and cultural knowledge exchange are not as easily quantifiable in numbers and money. So, I want to find the best way of demonstrating those benefits. I'm just really mindful of the burden being placed on universities and academics to do yet another bureaucratic exercise. Evaluation can be burdensome, as it can take as much time as the original project.

There's something about finding the right balance of quantitative measures and qualitative retelling, or case studies, or testimonials that influences the public, the arts and cultural business sector and the politicians to support the sector whilst creating a minimum burden upon those involved. It'd be very unfair if we do a collaboration with a bunch of arts and culture, SMEs, community groups or little museums, and then I make them spend days and days evaluating it. So that's why I'm very cautious about evaluation.

One advantage of REF is that in doing the case studies, you follow the impact as far as you can; beyond the university out to the world. And you try to see all the people who've been influenced by the research. And you're only reporting a small number of case studies, compared to all the knowledge exchange efforts in an institution, the ones that do report really do that deep dive very well. We should absolutely make the most of not only what happens, but how it happens.

Quipu project:

<https://interactive.quipu-project.com/#/en/quipu/intro>

Poetry: Performance, Engagement and the Enrichment of Cultural Life, REF
2014 Impact Case Study, University of Newcastle:

<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=21724>

Sian Britton

I'm Sian Britton. I'm Head of Innovation at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Tell me about a successful knowledge exchange project that you've worked on.

The one that's really been significant for the Guildhall School was Disrupt. We called it a festival – and it did culminate in a 2 day event - but actually it was a place for exploring how we can collaborate with colleagues in the creative and cultural industries. The reason why it's such a big and a significant project for us is that we took a step back from a perceived leadership position, to put the collaboration centre stage.

It came out of what used to be our triennial conference – The Reflective Conservatoire - which looked at the role and place of the conservatoire. The conference was very forward looking, and helped us to hold a mirror to our sector. It helped us think about programme development and teaching, and the future of our students. With Disrupt we wanted to break this open more, and to really think more about the broader world, and what was happening in industry and wider society. That became even more of an imperative following COVID, and things like Brexit and Black Lives Matter. All of these huge things were coming at society and institutions. They really made us ask big questions about what our role is, what we want to be known for, and how we want to work with different partners outside Higher Education.

So was it led by the partners or was it co-designed?

It was a really interesting provocation for us because we started by approaching a number of partners. By being part of that event, they also became partners with us. One big question was who's leading this? We really wanted to think

proactively about flat leadership, a completely democratic approach to creating this, which is quite a challenge when you're thinking about culminating in a two-day event. When you're producing something, you have to make decisions as a producer, you might elicit contributions, but there will always be curation. So, it was a really difficult challenge. We've just undergone a big evaluation process and our partners were helpfully very honest about things that did work and didn't work. It was a really interesting process because the partners really challenged us at every stage to think about how we could remove ourselves as the curator, the lead, or the decision maker. We awarded commissions to cultural partners, who had community based partners and there had to be a clearly expressed relationship between them. It was all funded by us and we asked for in-kind support for example marketing support from The Barbican team. But the way in which we awarded the funded commissions was to try and take a step back from being that decision maker. We asked each of our partners to nominate a third party facilitator, expert producer, or a community representative who might be experienced in other ways to to become a panellist who would shortlist all the commissions. These panellists were able to set their own criteria around how to shortlist and they were amazing. They were hugely passionate, highly skilled and really thoughtful. We had a huge response from across the UK. It was a really exciting response actually, more than we anticipated, from organisations that weren't on our radar.

The aim was to use our privilege to give the platform to someone else. This was completely endorsed and supported by our exec, which was great. It was a difficult balance because we couldn't showcase the students and we couldn't really push our academic staff; it was about platforming other people.

What was your role in it? What did you do?

Because I was the Head of Department, I was very much behind the scenes. My role was very much in the background, a support and critical friend to our Partnerships & Programming manager who was overseeing the project. I also

provided support as the budget holder, as part of the steering group, and gaining buy in with our executive team.

And thinking about that project, what would you say was the value or impact of that?

At a grassroots level, there was an impact in being able to support and give a platform to the work of community partners. We were able to directly fund activity or raise the profile of it by showcasing it. However, we also wanted to create a dynamic space for discussing, debating and showcasing best practice where arts are working in collaboration with community partners, with equity, respect and mutual benefit. This is what I think is the broader impact for the sector. My interest now is on the longer-term impact and legacy and what we can learn from this. As a second phase Disrupt, we want to focus on drawing together resources, practical tools and frameworks which will support larger arts organisations or HE institutions to establish and sustain equitable partnerships with community organisations.

Do you think that there are things that you could do as an institution to enable or facilitate more cultural knowledge exchange than you currently do? Are there things that can create more opportunities or more potential?

We're talking about this at the moment, what our knowledge exchange, not necessarily strategy, but position, needs to be for the school. There's a lot of work going on in terms of exchange with the cultural sector, as we're a vocational institution. Students, as part of their training, engage with artistic companies, individual artists, orchestras, production companies. But we're not asking the cultural partner what the impact for them really is. Our academics are engaging in work across the performing arts and beyond. And within the Innovation and Research departments, we have a number of units working in knowledge exchange within the cultural and creative sector, education, local government and the corporate sector. We know it's happening all the time but we're not

always thinking about how we capture and articulate the value. Or thinking about what the relationship might be.

I've set up a working group for knowledge exchange and brought people in from across the organisation. Already staff members are coming back and saying, I'm really glad we're having these conversations because every time I'm talking to an external partner, now I'm thinking, what's the knowledge exchange here? What's the two-way opportunity? It's opened the door to genuine exchange.

So you talked earlier about getting better at recording it, but the next level is how do you evaluate it? How, if at all, are you evaluating it? I mean, how do you know if it's good knowledge exchange?

That's a really good question. Work that is funded through our internal funding schemes will be evaluated internally, and sometimes externally. Our Disrupt project, for instance, had an external consultant come in to evaluate the project and that's been really really helpful. And she's really worked proactively with us to think about various layers of evaluation because you've got audience evaluation, partner valuation and you've got evaluation internally in terms of senior management. Understanding the impact within the school has been critical for us. But, a lot of the key work that's not explicitly funded also isn't being evaluated and I'm now starting to have conversations with people to talk about those partnerships that are really valuable to the school but we haven't really put them against any kind of set criteria beyond probably Teaching Excellence. There's so much more there. So that's the next stage for us.

We're bringing in an Evaluation Fellow to the school as a 1 year fixed term post, which is really exciting. The aim is that they think about how we become more sustainable in terms of evaluation as an institution. So how are we going to increase this skill capacity internally, and put frameworks in place.

How do you feel that this type of work is recognised within the institution?

I think that the term “knowledge exchange” is still not broadly understood. But the work that we have been doing over the past five to seven years has helped people to recognise the value of that stuff that is not always about academic programmes, but is actually about our relationship to the world. Some of it is about driving income, but a lot of it is about working in partnership and finding opportunities to contribute. For example, we’ve got our Guildhall Coaching Associates arm which is a professional development unit that delivers coaching based training programmes. It has a core remit to deliver training to professionals across a range of industries, and to generate income, but it’s also there to develop relationships and create new insights and learning. They’re working with a really ambitious programme at the moment for people who work in the homelessness sector; I think there’s 12 organisations involved. So, we’ve got to be entrepreneurial and resilient and make money but also there’s a push towards partnership. One doesn’t really exist without the other. There’s an income generating aim but there is also a search for R&D or social benefit within this.

How well do you think academics connect to this kind of work?

This is the magic question, and there’s not a blanket answer. You have to know what floats the academics’ boats, sometimes it’s money, but sometimes it’s a connection into the wider school. I think things are changing. It’s just about trying to make that initial connection, that’s often the way. Talking to them about where the benefit is or where the opportunity is for them, where it’s not perceived as an addition to their workload, and how we can provide support, resources or even investment. Finding ways to make things easier is the aim.

Do you have a set of values that you're working towards? Or do you think they're kind of intrinsic?

What do we want to be known for in this space is a really good question. The School does have a set of values that we work to across the institution, and our central proposition is about the value of artists IN SOCIETY. I think it's about adding value to the training our students experience, and heightening their employability and awareness of the world. And there's the value of us being relevant within the industry and supporting the industry; so that's a kind of synergy. There is also a huge value in us contributing back to wider society. We support emerging artists and practitioners, and staff members, who play an active role in the world around them. That might not always be about working with community groups, driving social change or working in social or healthcare contexts, but playing an active and political role, being out there, being socially responsible, being ethical leaders within their own professional fields.

Disrupt Festival:

<https://www.disruptfestival.org/>

Rachael Barnwell

My name is Rachael Barnwell, I'm a Senior Impact and Engagement Manager for Arts and Culture at Durham University. And I work in the Partnerships and Engagement Team within Research Innovation Services.

Could you describe a good example of an arts and culture, collaborative knowledge exchange project?

Durham was part of a project led by an academic in our History department in collaboration with science colleagues. They were looking at history of science in the mediaeval period, and part of the project was to work with contemporary artists at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland, as well as independent artists working in the region, to explore research topics around light. The physics of light is something that, in popular imagination, is quite a recent understanding and development, but actually, through their research, they were able to prove it has a much longer history and tradition. And this links to ideas about exploring the universe and understanding our place in it. What I liked about that project was that it was a genuine collaboration with artists. Artists were informing the research topic with their own understanding, particularly of materials and materiality; the way that substances act in certain ways under certain conditions. And they were able to provide new ways of thinking for academic colleagues through that dialogue and genuine exchange of knowledge and insight that led to a really interesting set of outcomes. The project was called Ordered Universe, and featured a light-based artwork called 'World Machine' at the Lumiere light festival. It was a way of using light as a medium, as well as the research, to explore and explain different ways of thinking about physics and our place in the universe, both in history and the present day. And it was very much a mutual conversation. They were each informing the other about the work that they were doing and what it really meant. And that, I think, was a very good example of what can happen.

So who initiated the project?

The project was initiated by a group of academic colleagues. It was a combination of history and physics; they had a research conversation internally and then the project came out of that. It was an international collaboration as well. It also involved colleagues from other universities within and outside of the UK. They wanted to work with artists to begin with, because they felt that genuine understanding of how materials behave in practice was going to be quite integral to the research. It was partly a reflection of the science colleagues' experimental background, as well as the history colleagues' recognition that they wanted to work with what was available in a time period to understand the time period.

Who led the project? Was it co-design?

I think it was officially led by the University, partly as a consequence of the funding sitting with us; but I feel like it evolved from that point. As we brought in artists and arts organisations, there was enough flex in the project design to accommodate more co-production.

And what was your role in the project?

I had a facilitative role in relation to research impact, just making sure that things were ticking over. I was just making sure it was on track and meeting things like the contractual requirements. It was more of administration; I wasn't really involved in the day to day stuff.

Thinking about that project, what do you think that the social, cultural or economic or even environmental value of that was?

We did an impact case study on it for REF2021. It impacted the artistic and commercial direction of the projection studio that the creative arts company

that we were working with. A lot of prize-winning outputs emerged from that, as well as a significant increase in the UK and international profiles of their companies. There is also a new access to university scheme that emerged from this which involved ten regional schools, and that was recognised by a national social mobility award. There's a wider public education impact in the UK, Europe, Canada and the US. And career development for particular artists.

What do you think the potential of cultural knowledge exchange is and how could that be improved? How could it be facilitated or enabled better?

I think that knowledge exchange between higher education institutions, arts and culture, and the wider community, has the potential to be genuinely transformative for communities and for academia as well. It works both ways. I think it can be genuinely transformative, and I feel like there's a real interest and energy being directed towards doing it. But we're not always quite sure what excellence looks like.

Okay, so how would that be improved? What would you suggest?

I think at the moment, we see knowledge exchange as a university as having a really tangible outcome. Traditionally, it's been commercialisation and it's been tech transfer. That's what knowledge exchange has looked like. But with the disciplines and the kinds of organisations that I work with, we can't always point to something as tangible as a new product, a new business or spin out.

Sometimes we can, but most of the time we're not working with a tangible asset at the end of a process. So, it's much more challenging to articulate exactly what that knowledge exchange outcome is. Also sometimes it's over a much longer period of time than it would be for something like tech transfer, which has a timeline and a process but it's often quite condensed. Quite often that might take four, five, six years to come to deliver on most of its potential. So, I feel like I want a better way of doing longitudinal assessment of knowledge exchange. I want something that is going to be less focused on the tangible object or thing or

economic asset or item or artefacts that comes out of it at the end of the process. And I think that's where changing our understanding of knowledge exchange is important.

And I honestly don't know what that looks like right now. I can't envisage it in my head just yet. I think there's a lot of work being done at the national level around how do we measure value in this sort of work in a way that isn't just linked to economic drivers? Also, there's a big difference in my mind between Management Information and management evaluation, we're often evaluating the effectiveness of the funding intervention, not the effectiveness of the knowledge exchange itself.

That's really interesting. Do you think there are any opportunities to do it differently? How could it be better?

I think definitely looking at a timescale and recognising that we need to look at this longer than the funding period or the calendar year or whatever period of time you pick. Often I get emails about projects we started four years ago that have just had a fantastic outcome. Looking at how we keep track of that is one thing that I would find genuinely useful. We've had people who've been engaged in knowledge exchange activities, who have popped up somewhere completely unexpected, doing something totally different, but it's got its roots in what we did with them. Being able to track that would be useful. And I think being able to use more appropriate metrics for knowledge exchange, by which I don't just mean numbers and figures, I mean, the kind of qualitative stuff that sits alongside knowledge exchange that I don't think we've squared up to yet. I want to tackle the sticky wickets. And I think that means we get so caught up in needing to prove our immediate value and worth in terms of jobs, economies, which are all valid, but which I think sometimes means that we can't articulate our case better.

So one of the difficulties though with a shift from quantitative evaluation to qualitative evaluation, is that qualitative evaluation costs money, and takes time as well. So for instance, as you were saying, a four or five year longitudinal study could cost more than the project you did in the first place.

I would really, really like in my completely unrealistic daydream about the perfect knowledge exchange world, I really want evaluation. And that's on my wish list.

How do you feel academics connect with knowledge exchange?

We're talking about it, we've got a whole knowledge exchange strategy that we're developing. And when I talk to stakeholders and funders we are talking about knowledge exchange, but that language hasn't filtered down to a lot of my academic colleagues, yet. They're often still talking about impact and engagement. And those things are related. But it feels like it's a much more urgent driver for people in my kind of role than it is for people who are carrying out academic work. My observation is that at the moment academic colleagues are not interested in the funding calls for knowledge exchange in the way that we might want them to be. So, there's a kind of resistance to that, just because we're not talking the same language yet. We're talking knowledge exchange, they're talking impact and engagement and there's work that we need to do to bridge that gap.

Hearing the Voice: <https://hearingthevoice.org/>

Life of Breath <https://lifeofbreath.org/about/>

Ordered Universe: <https://ordered-universe.com/about-the-ordered-universe/>

Helen Sargeant

I'm Helen Sargeant, Principal Lecturer for Knowledge Exchange at the University of Wolverhampton.

What's your background?

I've got a Business Studies degree and MBA, and I started off working in marketing and account management in the brewing industry, then I moved into higher education. Before I joined this faculty, I worked in externally funded departments. For the last five years, I've been faculty-based in an academic role, and my main role is working with external projects and supporting staff in bidding.

Can you describe a good example of a collaborative arts and culture higher education knowledge exchange project that you've been involved with?

Four years ago, we were approached by a colleague in psychology, whose research is based on South Asian women and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). They were carrying out research with relevant groups and wanted to use those experiences to create artwork. The idea was to address some of the stigma around that particular disease in that particular group of people. So we applied, with these colleagues in psychology and the art school for an Arts Council grant. It was relatively small, with some match funding from us; it was called Living in Silence. We worked with the researchers from psychology, who were working with the clinicians that were looking after these women and we commissioned five artists. We wanted early-stage artists and there was a competitive process. As a result of that project, 5 pieces of art work were created. For example there were some saris which were images of ulcerated colons, they were absolutely beautiful saris almost like a tie dye effect. We also had a piece of animation created, which is being used by Crohn's and Colitis UK as part of one of their national campaigns. We have an event at the House of Lords every year and we

exhibited some of the artwork there. BBC Midlands Today came and filmed the launch at our local hospital. So the reach was really quite significant.

The project was cross-faculty, it was a very new type of initiative for us in the art school dealing with these health issues, stigmatised issues, but also working with the clinicians. So it really did bring together all these groups of people, including the patients, with some of the artists working with the patients directly to understand their experiences. As a result of that, we're now working on another project, which is focusing on childlessness and pregnancy with people with inflammatory bowel disease. There are higher rates of childlessness in women with inflammatory bowel disease for various reasons. And again, we're working with the psychologists and clinicians and we've commissioned artists to create work.

**In terms of the overall project, was it co-designed, are all parties equal?
How does that dynamic work?**

The original project, Living in Silence, was a School of Art project that had funding from the Arts Council, and the hospital was a partner. With the pregnancy and IBD project, the hospital is the lead because they're the lead for the Crohn's and Colitis funding, but we are very much a partner and we're responsible for the artistic side of it; the exhibition and mentoring the artists.

What's your role in these projects?

My key role is project management and development, and I jointly wrote the Arts Council bid. My role within the faculty is to support bids, write bids, find opportunities, and I often contribute to project management. My role is very focused on knowledge exchange. We are a small team, who are very experienced and knowledgeable. Over a number of years we've developed a really supportive culture for our academic staff in terms of helping them identify opportunities, develop projects and secure funding. A key challenge is capacity, as it takes a long

time to develop projects. There are challenges working with vulnerable groups and sensitivities around some of the issues we're exploring. We have to be very careful in terms of safeguarding and health and safety.

What could be better?

We can definitely improve the promotion and dissemination of our work and that's why I've really enjoyed being involved in NCACE. It's really positive for raising the profile of what arts can do and promote some of this hidden work

One of the challenges of evaluating impact is working out exactly what the scope is and exactly what you want to evaluate. I think it's about thinking differently about what else we can find out and that's where capacity can be a challenge. We are trying to collect everything as we go along, from everybody involved, which is often multi-partner and multi-stakeholder. It's complex, but there is huge potential for really interesting impact and evaluation of the process and outputs.

How is knowledge exchange recognised and championed in your institution? And what's the structure for that? How does it work?

We are heavily engaged with our community, the majority of our students are local, our civic role within the city and within the region is implicit in everything we do, in terms of knowledge exchange.

I think the Concordat and the KEF have really focused us and we took it extremely seriously as an institution. Our model of support for staff in our faculty, supporting staff from A to Z in terms of this type of work, is obviously quite intensive and takes a lot of time, but we've found that that's the way to get results. We support them from identifying projects, linking them up with other people internally or externally, helping with the bidding and the costings; we let them focus on their areas of expertise and interest.

What do you think are the key values or key benefits of the projects that you've been involved in?

Within the art school we've got a really rich heritage and tradition of using art to support our communities and address societal challenges.

We run a Saturday club, and we focus those clubs on students that need support. We support them with materials and transport to get to our campus. It's about removing barriers which is hard as it requires funding and capacity. We persevere and we can make a difference for people.

What do you think the benefits are for researchers or academic staff who get involved?

The benefits are numerous but I think cross-disciplinarity is starting to develop more here. We're working with youth offending, criminal justice, working with law, with psychology and health. So knowledge exchange practices facilitate academics to do interdisciplinary work. Art is now being seen as a way to break down some of these barriers and to convey messages in a different way.

I still think the terminology of knowledge exchange is quite misunderstood. For example, I see the Saturday clubs as knowledge exchange. I feel really strongly that my role isn't just about research and commercial projects, it's about nought to ninety-nine as well.

What about the KEF and the Concordat, what was your role in that?

KEF enables us to be able to talk about these things on an increasingly equal footing with REF and research activity. It's been a really positive experience because we now have a formal platform to shout about what we do. I was involved in writing our knowledge exchange concordat submission, but I was also an evaluator as well. And being on both sides of that I found very interesting. And again, the context was really important there for a university like ours,

where local community challenges are so important, and we're so embedded in our place. That context is the most important issue in terms of what we do; our commitment to our communities and where we are.

Living in Silence - IBD:

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/2019/october-2019/graduate-arts-project-gives-voice-to-hidden-stories.php>



ncace.ac.uk