

## Annual Report 2023

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**2023 was again a busy year for the Centre.** We have facilitated or supported a wide range of events across diverse areas of interest and have again been heavily involved in a variety of research projects.

For the second year running, one of our longstanding Co-Directors decided to step back from their role. Professor **Andrew Russell** has been involved with the Centre for over a decade and he will be a big loss to the Centre. Longstanding Steering Group member Professor **Gary Craig** also announced that he was stepping down last year. We wish them both well in their future endeavours. Stepping up as new Co-Directors of the Centre are Professor **Gina Porter** and Professor **Pablo Munoz-Roman**, who take on this role alongside existing Co-Directors **Sui Ting Kong** and **Andrew Orton** from the Department of Sociology.

Gina has been at Durham University since 1986, first in the Geography Department, since 2001 in Anthropology. She has undertaken field research in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Brazil, Papua New Guinea and India. Her research combines ethnographic approaches with a strong interest in spatial perspectives.

Pablo, who is based in Durham University Business School works at the intersection of human enterprise, social issues and natural environments. With a focus on engaged scholarship, he explores how individuals and communities use entrepreneurial practices to overcome challenging circumstances and create better futures and is interested in the idea of impact-in-process, to bring research impact into the core of social science research.

Many thanks to all who have joined us – either virtually or in person this year – and contributed to our work around social justice, participatory learning, and tackling inequalities. The information below provides a summary of our work in 2023.

### Presentations at conferences & meetings:

- **Sarah Banks** has facilitated workshops and given presentations on aspects of participatory research, often covering ethical issues, at numerous events including: European Conference for Social Work Research, Keynote, Milan; PPI Ignite & International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research, Limerick, Ireland; Collaborative Action Research Network, Manchester; Research Ethics Association, Bath; Institute of Education, London (online); International Association for Community Development (online); National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, UK (online). She was also an invited Keynote Speaker at the European Conference for Social Work Research, Catholic University of Milan, Italy, April 2023, presenting a paper on 'The intricate ethics of participatory research: negotiating partnership, power & boundaries'.

- **Andrew Russell** attended COP28 in Dubai from November 30th to December 12th 2024, as a member of Durham University's six-person delegation, representing the CSJCA. He travelled to and from the COP by overland public transport options as much as possible to reduce his carbon footprint. While there he focussed on the future of low carbon public transport options as an issue of social as well as environmental justice.
- **Gina Porter** gave presentations of her current research around young men's mobility at the Gender urban research workshop, Cardiff University 6-7 July and at an International symposium, Migration and Mobilities Interdisciplinary Collective in Africa [MMICA], University of the Western Cape, Cape Town in October 23 with 6 Cape Town peer researchers.
- **Andrea Armstrong** gave a presentation on 'Managing military urban forests: the case study of Kamp Beverlo, Belgium' at the European Forum on Urban Forestry (EFUF) Conference, Krakow, Poland, May 2023. She was also invited to attend the 'Local climate action: moving out of silos', Place-Based Climate Action Network (PCAN) Conference, Royal Society, London, in June and to the opening of the Belgium Climate Centre, 'Maximising the impact of climate-related research', Brussels, in September.
- **Alice M. Nah** was invited to participate in an Experts Meeting in Bangkok in April 2024, marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. At this meeting, independent experts analysed the contributions of the Declaration to the lives of human rights defenders, and progress in international human rights law on this issue area. She also delivered two workshops on 'Wellbeing in Human Rights Movements', one in collaboration with Amnesty International Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, and one with FORUM ASIA in Bangkok.
- **Sui-Ting Kong** has offered keynotes/talks in the areas of participatory research methods and Hongkonger diaspora studies in 2023. They include a keynote in the Social Work Practice Research SIG pre-conference as part of the European Conference on Social Work Research 2023 (online, April 2023); a keynote conversation on post-2019 Hongkonger diaspora in the UK at the launch event of the Hong Kong Studies Hub at Surrey University (in-person, May 2023); and a talk on participatory methods and democracy for the Social Work Practice Research Centre at Helsinki University (online, May 2023).
- **Andrew Orton** presented on 'Exploring power and ethics in resource dilemmas for Christian social welfare practice across Europe' at the British Sociological Association's Sociology of Religion conference, July 2023. He also presented on 'Changing paradigms for Christian social welfare activists' at the REDI (International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconia and Christian Social Practice) conference in Oslo, Norway, May/June 2023, which had the theme: 'Contested Spaces of Diaconia: Seeking Justice, Safety and Wellbeing'. He was the invited lead contributor to a doctoral seminar at the University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic, in December 2023, which included discussion of 'Researching spirituality and ethics in social work: Using participatory approaches'.

## **Training events, seminars and workshops organised by the Centre**

- **We are Hongkongers: Contested Identities, Community and Home-Building, Project Launch**

'We are Hongkongers' is a community-based research project, led by Sui-Ting Kong and funded by the British Academy/Wolfson Fellowship scheme. The project launch was held on 24 February 2023 and was joined online and in-person by more than fifty UK-based Hongkonger community organisations and Hong Kong Studies academics. The launch event featured multiple presentations by Sui-Ting Kong, Wing-Sun Chan and Mr Alex Mak (Trafford Hongkongers), Jane Shears (BASW), Mina Ko (Welcome Churches), Richard Choi (Sutton Hong Kongers), Malte Kaeding and Heidi Wang (Hong Kong Studies Association) and Michaela Benson (Lancaster University).

A blog that documents UK Hongkonger stories has been set up after the launch event: [We Are Hongkongers: Contested Identities, Communities and Home-building – Hong Kong diaspora in the UK, about food, stories and memories \(wordpress.com\)](#)

- **‘Listening to all voices?’: The politics of ‘lived experience’**



We were involved in two events that were given the title of ‘Listening to all voices?’: The politics of ‘lived experience’ and which were held over two days in March 2023 at Durham University. On March 28th, a symposium took place, attended by over 90 people, with a keynote provided by Marai Larasi, a Black, African-Caribbean-British feminist advocate, community organiser, consultant, and also a Professor in Practice at Durham University. Marai started the day by stating that her lived experiences meant that she was unapologetically subjective in her approach to addressing issues of concern, especially those that affect women and girls of colour.

The following day, a slightly smaller gathering of around 50 PGRs gathered in the same venue to share their work as part of a PGR conference. Tom Shakespeare (Professor of Disability Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) provided the keynote speech, exploring issues of authenticity in research and the (dis-)advantages of lived experience as a researcher.

The events received very positive feedback from many of the delegates and there was a large amount of interest in continuing the discussions that took place. A new jiscmail list has been created to allow people with an interest in this area to stay in touch with each other and to share resources and developments.

You can sign up to the lived experience jiscmail list here <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?AO=LIVED-EXPERIENCE>

- **The ‘Enhancing Learning in Participatory Research’ workshop series**

This ongoing series of workshops, organised by Andrew Orton and Steve Crossley, included two workshops in 2023: (i) an accessible introduction to participatory research in April 2023, led by Steve Crossley; and (ii) a workshop for Durham University research ethics reviewers on 'Understanding ethical issues in participatory research' in May 2023, led by Sarah Banks. It has been funded by Research England's Participatory Research Fund.

- **William Leech Research Fund event, 17 June**

The Centre supported a research event organized by the [William Leech Research Fund](#) on 17th June, led by Andrew Orton. This event explored current issues for those involved in Christian social action in the Northeast of England, together with wider stakeholders working with local communities, to inform future research priorities for the [funding available](#), and support collective discussion of potential future research. It also involved researchers exploring dilemmas of limited resources, during their visit to conclude a Durham University/Uppsala University-sponsored international research project.

- **Towards inclusive criminal justice responses to victims of sexual violence.**



Eight co-produced theatre-based reflective practice workshops were delivered to Durham police officers and multi-agency partners in September 2023. A film- Us Too: Alisha's Story (funded by Durham University ESRC-IAA, Research England and Sunderland University) and training package were co- created using participatory methods by Us Too- experts by experience, Open Clasp Theatre Company and academics - Alison Jobe and Helen Williams.

Us Too were supported in the project by Association for Real Change (ARC- England). The reflective practice workshops (funded by ESRC, with co-funding from Durham Police and Crime Commissioner) were aimed at police officers and other relevant service providers in the Durham area. A Learning Disability ISVA from the Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (RSACC) joined the team to deliver the workshops. Reflections on existing practice and proposed changes to practice were recorded and will be disseminated in 2024.

#### **ESRC Festival of Social Science events:**

- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on Social Work Practitioner Research, 16 November 2023**

This event is part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science 2023, co-organised by **Sui-Ting Kong** and the BASW Social Work Practitioner Research Network. The 3rd International Symposium on Social Work Practitioner Research explored how social workers deal with complexity in their practice to promote the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. The theme of the event was 'Social Work in a Complex Society: Promoting Wellbeing Beyond Risks and a Call for Change'. It was joined by more than a hundred social workers, care professionals and researchers from European and Asian countries, offering a great chance for knowledge exchange and networking. In the event, Sui-Ting Kong, Pearse McCusker and Jane Shears also introduced the latest [Special Issue on Social Work Practitioner Research in a Globalised Context](#) published in the British Journal of Social Work.

- **Us Too Group, 17th November 2023.**

The Us Too Group, supported by ARC England, Alison Jobe, from Durham University and Helen Williams from the University of Sunderland held an event that showcased co-created short animations around women with learning disabilities and/or autism who have experienced sexual or domestic violence.

## Selection of research projects

- **What more could local policymakers do to end the need for foodbanks in County Durham?**

This ongoing research project has involved Stephen Crossley and Andrew Orton working with those attending the Wellbeing Hub at Evangel Church in Chester-le-Street, and Durham Christian Partnership, to explore what local action can take place to reduce or end the need for foodbanks in County Durham. It has been funded by Research England's Participatory Research Fund.

- **A participatory research intervention to tackle entrepreneurs' mental health problems**

Pablo Munoz-Roman led a participatory research project to develop an intervention to tackle entrepreneurs' mental health problems. Fifty entrepreneurs were recruited and a team of researchers worked with them and took them through an intervention programme. The research has led to a spin-off project called [Mind Your Business](#) and a video of the launch event for the spin-off can be

- **Investigating young men's experiences of walking to the 'bus' in low-income neighbourhoods in South Africa and UK: a comparative study built around a comparative peer research methodology.**

**Gina Porter** received follow-on funding for 2024 from the Volvo Research and Education Foundations to extend a 2023 peer research mobilities pilot with young men in South Africa and the UK to new locations, in collaboration with the University of the Western Cape and the NGO Transaid.

- **'Lived Experience and Knowledge Equity' and a South Asia Research Group at Durham University**

**Stephen Ashe** has been successful with funding for two research projects: with colleagues at Southampton, part of successful bid to the National Centre for Research Methods to produce a toolkit on 'Lived Experience and Knowledge Equity'; and as part of a successful Institute of Advanced Study bid with colleagues across Durham University to form a South Asia Research Group focussing on the theme of 'Pedagogies of the Oppressed'.

- **CLEARING HOUSE, Collaborative Learning in Research, Information-sharing and Governance on How Urban tree-based solutions support Sino-European urban futures.**

**Andrea Armstrong** was involved with this four-year project funded by Horizon 2020 coordinated by the European Forest Institute, Vrije Universiteit Belgium (VUB) ended In February 2024.

<https://clearinghouseproject.eu/>

- **Leading the BeBrit Extreme Heat Risk Knowledge, Learning and Innovation Project, funded by the Brussels Centre for Urban Studies (BCUS), May 2023- September 2024.**

This project, which includes **Andrea Armstrong**, builds on and extends a UK study on decision-making responses and preparedness to the 2022 heatwave. The project has three aims: learning (from case studies in Belgium and the UK and existing European and international city case studies and examples); comparisons (between Belgium and the UK) and exchange (a co-created, collaborative event to share experiences and expertise on the 26 September 2024, Royal Library, Brussels). <https://www.bebritproject.com/>

- **The Protection and Wellbeing of Human Rights Defenders with Disabilities**

In collaboration with Protection International and Prof. Martin Jones of the York Law School at the University of York, **Alice M. Nah** launched a [Guide on Strengthening the Inclusion, Protection, and Wellbeing of Human Rights Defenders with Disabilities](#) This landmark publication examines the heightened risks that defenders with disabilities face in their everyday lives and how ableism shapes human rights practices and expectations about participation. It will be translated into Arabic, French, Kiswahili, Russian, and Spanish, with accessible versions produced. **Mirran Morrison** has been awarded a Collingwood Undergraduate Research Internship Programme to work with Dr Alice Nah on research dissemination and impact for this project.

- **Transnational Social Work**

Transnational Social Work project is co-led by **Sui-Ting Kong** and Jane Shears and co-funded by Durham Research Impact Fund and the British Association of Social workers (BASW). The project has contributed to the development a [national CPD curriculum](#) to support internationally qualified social workers to join the UK social work profession; and to enable cross-cultural exchange between UK and Hong Kong qualified social workers to develop competent practice to support Hongkonger diaspora communities in the UK. This impact-focused project is tied to the 'We are Hongkongers' fellowship project which is funded by the British Academy/Wolfson Fellowship 2022.

A co-authored practice briefing can be found on the Centre's website:

Kong, S.T. and Chow, H. (2023). Concerns and Experiences of Hong Kong Social Workers in England and Wales: Registration and Job Seeking. Transnational Social Work Practice Briefing No.1.

Department of Sociology, Durham University. ([Click Here](#))

- **Visiting international research fellows**

The Centre has supported [Ben Lohmeyer](#) from Flinders University in a visiting fellowship to St John's College, Durham University, in September/October 2024, which included wider seminars on co-designed research with young people on loneliness, bullying and young people's everyday lives with the South Australia Youth Forum. The Centre has also welcomed Ahmad Aizuddin Md Rami as a visiting research fellow from Universiti Putra Malaysia from November 2023, as he undertakes research on community leadership whilst based in the Department of Sociology.

## Selection of publications

**Armstrong, A.**, Briggs, J., Moncur, W., Carey, D. P., Nicol, E. and Schafer, B. (2023). Everyday digital traces. *Big Data and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231213827>

**Crossley, S.**, Curry, F. and Billingham, L. (2023) 'You either go on the gang life, or you go on that football life': class, race, and place in imaginaries of South London's sports cages, *Journal of Youth Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2023.2226597

Howarth, C., **Armstrong, A.**, McLoughlin, N., Murtagh, E., Stuart-Watt, A. (2023) *The 2022 heatwaves: England's response and future preparedness for heat risk*, London: Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science.

**Kong, S.T.**, McCusker, P., & Shears, J. (2023). Editorial: Social Work Practitioner Research in a Globalised Context. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(7), 3337-3343. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad222>

**Kong, S. T.**, Jackson, S., & Ho, P. S. Y. (2023). Seeking Love and Justice Amid Hong Kong's Contentious Politics. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 7(2), Article 19. <https://doi.org/10.20897/femenc/13547>

**Kong, S.T.**, Stepanova, E., & Thanki, V. (2023). Collaborative practice research in social work: piloting a model for research and professional learning during COVID-19. *European Social Work Research*, 1(1), 84-101. <https://doi.org/10.1332/xpuv7930>

**Muñoz, P.** Barton, M., Braun, S., Chowdhury, F., Jayne-Little, N., Rowland, J., Sykes, K., Smith, J., Talbot-Jones, C., Adele Taggart, A., Jessica Komes, J. (2023) The deterioration of self-worth in entrepreneurship, *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 20. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbvi.2023.e00430.

Murphy, E., **Porter G.**, Aouidet, H., Dungey, C., Han, S., Houiji, R, Jlassi, M., Keskes, H., Mansour, H., Nasser, W., Riahi, H., Riahi, S., Zaghoud, H., (2023) 'No place for a woman': Access, exclusion, insecurity and the mobility regime in Grand Tunis, *Geoforum* 142: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103753>

**Porter, G.**, Dungey, C. with peer researchers Akoshi, M., Bullus, P.H., Houiji, R., Matomane, S., Mohammed, A.U., Musa, A.I., Nasser, W., Usman, U.N. (2023) Peer research, power and ethics: Navigating participatory research in an Africa-focused mobilities study before and during COVID-19. In Percy-Smith, B. et al. (eds) *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Conversations for Transformational Change*. London: Routledge.