

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Hull		
Unit of Assessment: 28 - History		
Title of case study: The Wilberforce Legacy: Using historical and contemporary research to meet the challenge of Modern Slavery.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor John Oldfield Professor Kevin Bales	Former Director, Wilberforce Institute Former Deputy Director, Wilberforce Institute	2013 – Present 2007 – November 2016
Professor David Richardson	Founding Director, Wilberforce Institute	1969 - Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The Wilberforce Institute critically investigates the history of transatlantic slavery to inform and to drive responses to modern slavery. In 2015 the Institute was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for its impact on society regarding: i) anti-slavery opinion-building, and ii) the quantification of slavery. This award acknowledged the prominent role the Institute played in shaping the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Institute's contribution to the development of the Global Slavery Index and Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) tool led to a radical reassessment by the UK Government of the number of people enslaved in the UK. The Institute's interactive anti-slavery opinion-building tools have driven modern slavery prevention campaigns in schools across the UK – and in West Africa.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The legacy of William Wilberforce is reflected in the University of Hull's continued fight against all forms of modern slavery and exploitation. The Hull native William Wilberforce used his position as MP to lead the British campaign to abolish the slave trade. Following a £3 million strategic investment by the University, The Wilberforce Institute was founded in 2005 and its inaugural patron was Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It is the oldest research institute of its kind in the United Kingdom. The Institute is one of the leading international research centres in the world working on slavery-related issues. Its unique blend of historical and contemporary perspectives enables the Institute to add depth and nuance to tackling the challenges of the present, particularly when it comes to the structure and organisation of modern slavery and the formulation of strategies to bring it to an end. Working with other leading historical and modern slavery research centres across the world, the Institute's activities are supported by a portfolio of collaborative external research grants worth approximately £15.5 million.</p> <p>The following key research findings (KRFs) underpin the impact:</p>		
<p>KRF1: <u>There is an urgent need to historicize the growing body of work on modern slavery</u> This key insight builds on Professor Oldfield's research on anti-slavery opinion building during the nineteenth century and its relevance to understanding the dynamics of modern social movements, including the modern anti-slavery movement.</p>		
<p>Professor Oldfield's research has been instrumental in developing the concept of an anti-slavery 'usable past' that demonstrates a continuous link between the past and the present, through what can be described as an active 'protest memory' (3a & 3b). From these ideas, Oldfield developed '<i>Stolen Lives</i>' (AHRC, www.stolenlives.co.uk) and '<i>The Antislavery Usable Past</i>' (AHRC), working collaboratively with Professor Bales whose research at the Wilberforce Institute played a vital role in raising public awareness about modern slavery from schools through to governments and international NGOs (3c & 3d). Together, the interdisciplinary team developed new methods of presenting and disseminating information by juxtaposing the experiences of enslaved people from the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries in an easy to access format.</p>		

The success of these two projects provided the springboard for further collaborative bids that explored the role of slavery and colonialism in contemporary society (Horizon 2020 European Colonial Heritage), and in 2019 this combined body of research culminated in the Wilberforce Institute being included in the £10 million Prime Minister's Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre funded by UKRI/AHRC.

KRF2: The extent of Global Slavery has been significantly underestimated

The underpinning research represents historical (Professor Richardson) and social science (Professor Bales) methodological innovation, which provides new accessible insights into the quantifiable numbers of people forced into slavery both in the past and in the present.

The launch of a multi-source online database of 35,000 transatlantic slave voyages (www.slavevoyages.org) was the culmination of a collaborative international project. The database became the basis of several publications including an *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2010) (3e). Harvard Professor and Macarthur Fellow, Henry Louis Gates, has described the Atlas as 'the Rosetta Stone of slave historiography'. In contemporary research, Professor Bales has led governmental and criminal justice understanding and awareness of the extent of modern slavery, creating the impetus for campaigns to prevent exploitation and trafficking (3c). His contribution to developing **new methodological tools for measuring the extent of modern slavery across the globe has also been ground-breaking in uncovering the hidden levels of modern slavery** (3f). His research was recognised with the \$100,000 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Promoting World Order in 2011 and his development of the Global Slavery Index has been publicly acknowledged by Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Julia Gillard.

3. References to the research

- a) Oldfield, J. (2013) *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- b) Oldfield (2020) *The Ties that Bind: Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Reform*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- c) Bales, K. (2008) *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. California: University of California Press.
- d) Bales, K. (2016) *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide and the Secrets of Saving the World*. Penguin: Random House
- e) Richardson, D. (with Eltis, D.) (2010) *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- f) Datta, M.N., & Bales, K. (2014). Slavery in Europe: Part 2, Testing a Predictive Model. *Human Rights Quarterly* 36(2), 277-295. [doi:10.1353/hrq.2014.0025](https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2014.0025).

Research grants:

1. £80,000 AHRC follow-on grant, 2015, 'Stolen Lives'.
2. £1,750,000 – AHRC project funding, 'The Antislavery Usable Past', 2014-2019.
3. £2,000,000 AHRC/GCRF project funding through 'The Anti-Slavery Knowledge Network: Community-Led Strategies for Creative and Heritage-Based Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa', 2017-2021.
4. €2,000,000, Horizon 2020 European Colonial Heritage: Modalities of Entangled Cities (ECHOES) 2018 – 2021.
5. £10,000,000 – UKRI/AHRC - Prime Minister's Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre, partnership led by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, 2019 –2024.

Prizes:

1. 2015 Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education. Slavery: the historical origins and contemporary resonances of a global problem (**EVID 6**).
2. 2018 ESRC Prize of Outstanding International Impact awarded to Professor Kevin Bales for his work at the Wilberforce Institute with Sir Bernard Silverman in 2014 to develop the Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) technique for quantifying the extent of Modern Slavery around the globe. Available at: <https://esrc.ukri.org/news-events-and-publications/impact-case-studies/revealing-the-true-numbers-of-modern-slavery/>
3. Professor Richardson's *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* - Winner of the Association of American Publishers' 2010 R.R. Hawkins Award and PROSE Award.

4. Details of the impact

The impact strategy of the Wilberforce Institute is to raise public awareness of historical and modern slavery to influence **public policy and education**. In achieving this, the Institute has prioritised two distinct areas of activity that flow directly from its key research findings:

Anti-Slavery Opinion Building (KRF1)

Pathways to Impact: The Institute has designed and delivered public campaigns to raise awareness of historical and modern slavery, using music, film, teaching aids, exhibitions and web resources. Between 2015 and 2021 the *Stolen Lives* website had 34,000 pageviews and 8,185 views of the Repairing Broken Lives video resources. Alongside *Stolen Lives* (2015), the *Antislavery Usable Past* project (2019), the #HiddenInPlainSight campaign (launched in November 2016, which placed 'human packaging' at high-footfall locations), and the #BreakTheChain campaign (launched in London 2018, using a 'human vending machine') all draw attention to the 25 million people trapped in forced labour around the world.

Impact: **The opinion-building initiatives developed by the Wilberforce Institute have been adopted by many key stakeholders and have directly informed national public broadcasting campaigns designed to bring modern slavery to the attention of the British people. This included TV adverts, *The Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* print and digital advertising (EVID 1).** As Kevin Hyland, the first UK Independent Modern Slavery Commissioner, confirms the strap line of the Hull University campaign 'hidden in plain sight' has inspired subsequent anti-slavery campaigns, helping to highlight the role that the public can play in identifying potential victims of exploitation: *"Following the 'Hidden in Plain Sight' campaign, the phrase was then incorporated into a national media campaign on modern slavery and continues to be used in the bulk of public literature. I have personally participated in hundreds of events where the term is used including a BBC Radio Four interview following this campaign by the Wilberforce Institute to discuss some of its findings and the role the public can play in helping to identify potential victims"*. (EVID 2).

Similarly, '**Stolen Lives**', led by Professor Oldfield, has been presented at over 60 different public events and has won the endorsement of teachers' unions, including NASUWT. Acting General Secretary of the NASUWT comments on the tangible benefits the *Stolen Lives* campaign has had for teachers and students: *"NASUWT commends the work of the Institute on the Stolen Lives project and felt it such an important issue that they provided a stand for Stolen Lives at the NASUWT Annual Conference in 2016, hosted two workshops at the NASUWT Women Teachers' Consultation Conference and two workshops at their BME Teachers' Consultation Conference, collectively reaching almost 800 NASUWT members. The NASUWT also committed £6000 to the project, specifically to ensure that the NASUWT website was kept updated with the Stolen Lives work and that all 300,000 of our members had free access to the project's resources on account of how indispensable they are for teachers working on this difficult, yet immensely important topic."* (EVID 3)

***Stolen Lives* has also had international impact, most notably in Sierra Leone where it proved the inspiration for an exhibition on modern slavery at the National Museum of Sierra Leone (2017), the first of its kind. Subsequently, the British Council in Sierra Leone, working in collaboration with the Wilberforce Institute, arranged for the translation of songs from *Stolen Lives* into local languages and used them as resources in its *Connecting Classrooms* programme. To date this has reached over 30,000 students and helped to raise awareness of modern slavery in Sierra Leone, West Africa. As the former Country Director and Project Lead of the British Council in Sierra Leone readily attests: *"The British Council in Sierra Leone used Stolen Lives as part of a school programme designed to initiate discussions about modern slavery through performance, debate, film and the visual arts. This programme, which I project led, called 'Open Your Eyes' (referencing one of the specially written songs for Stolen Lives) directly involved 2000 students from ages 12 to 16 but indirectly reached some 30,000 in the wider school community and far more through media outlets. This work was integral in increasing knowledge, awareness and understanding around the topics of modern slavery and human trafficking amongst the students and their teachers and not least the wider school community (parents, the police, church and mosque leaders); equally, it was crucial in assisting prevention efforts by arming children with a better education of the risks facing them."* (EVID 4).**

Finally, and importantly, the work of the Wilberforce Institute is also shared with the local schools and communities in the Humber region. Performances from *Stolen Lives* have been held locally at Hull's Freedom Festival which attracts audiences of over 130,000. Whilst the Wilberforce Institute has worked closely with the Freedom Festival over many years, the Artistic Director and Joint Chief Executive of Freedom Festival singles out the *Stolen Lives* programme at the 2015 Festival for special mention: *"We were delighted to include Stolen Lives in our 2015 programme. The two live performances, involving three local schools, had a significant impact, not just in terms of underlining and articulating the serious message behind the Freedom Festival, but also in bringing to the public a real insight into the fact that slavery continues to occur today, even in our own communities."* (EVID 5).

In 2015 the Wilberforce Institute was awarded the Queens Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education because it had *"won global recognition for its applied research into slavery in all its forms and for bringing the lessons of the past, through its ground-breaking Global Slavery Index, to the combating of modern slavery"* (EVID 6).

The Quantification of Slavery (KRF2)

Pathways to Impact: The Institute's role in developing the metrics for the Global Slavery Index (GSI) provided the first comprehensive and accessible measure of the extent of modern slavery in 167 countries around the world. Aimed at informing practitioners and policymakers, the GSI has been disseminated around the world. The 2014 GSI prompted a response from 38 governments and generated more than 700 news articles and broadcasts in all regions of the globe.

Impact: As a member of the Walk Free Expert Advisory Group (EVID 7), Professor Bales spearheaded the design, development and dissemination of the GSI which provides the key international measure of the extent and response to modern slavery (EVID 8). The GSI is used by governments, researchers, NGOs and charities around the world to support the liberation of slaves and their reintegration into society. As the lead author of the 2014 GSI, Professor Bales' research led the Walk Free Foundation to co-found the London-based Freedom Fund – a multi-million-pound NGO whose sole work is slavery eradication. Professor Bales became a Director of the Freedom Fund which has gone on to impact 765,628 lives and liberate 28,040 people (EVID 9).

As the driving force behind uncovering the hidden extent of modern slavery, Professor Bales has been at the forefront of the global campaign to raise awareness of the suffering of exploitation of 35.8 million people across the globe (GSI 2014, EVID 8). **As the world's only country-by-country estimate of people living in slavery the GSI maps the prevalence, vulnerability and governmental response to global slavery and has raised the visibility of the victims of modern slavery across the globe.** Kevin Hyland, the first UK Independent Modern Slavery Commissioner confirms the international reach of this research: *"Kevin Bales led development of the Global Slavery Index (GSI) in collaboration with UN and Australian actors, providing estimates of rates of slavery in 167 countries across the world which was used to encourage Australia to introduce their own Modern Slavery Act in 2018."* (EVID 2).

Building on the successful launch of the GSI, Professor Bales developed a new collaboration with the Chief Scientific Officer at the Home Office to co-produce the methodological innovation called Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) (EVID 10). **This resulted in a radical reassessment by the UK Government of the number of people enslaved in Britain, revised the figure upwards to between 10,000 and 13,000 men, women and children: roughly four times the figure produced by the National Crime Agency's Human Trafficking Centre in 2013.** Taken together, the GSI and MSE changed our understanding of the prevalence of Modern Slavery in the UK and provided the impetus for a new British Government Modern Slavery Strategy and Bill. Launched by the then Home Secretary, Theresa May in 2014 the Modern Slavery Bill had the full, written endorsement of Professors Bales and Silverman (EVID 11) **and came into law as the Modern Slavery Act in 2015.** The Act provides the first comprehensive powers to the Courts specifically designed for combatting modern slavery and created the position of the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. According to the 2020 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery there have been 1257 convictions since the Act was introduced, delivering justice to many more thousands of victims.

Launching the UK Government's Modern Slavery Strategy (and Modern Slavery Bill) in November 2014, Theresa May commented on the revised estimates provided by Bales and Silverman: *"The first step to eradicating the scourge of modern slavery is acknowledging and confronting its existence. The estimated scale of the problem in modern Britain is shocking and these new figures starkly reinforce the case for urgent action."* (EVID 11). The role of Professor Bales' research in shaping the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) is further reinforced by Kevin Hyland, who commended the impact of Bales' work on the quantification of modern slavery: *"[It] resulted in a dramatic reassessment of the scale of modern slavery in the UK and the figures established via the MSE continue to be widely quoted within official documents relating to modern slavery in the UK – not least in the Government's Modern Slavery Strategy 2014 which set out its approach to tackling the issue and later paved the way for the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2015."* (EVID 2).

In recognition of his contribution to developing the Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) tool whilst working at the Wilberforce Institute, Professor Bales was awarded the 2018 ESRC Prize for Outstanding International Impact for **"helping to provide the first reliable estimates of modern slavery. National and global slavery estimates, including Walk Free's Global Slavery Index on which Professor Bales collaborates, are the baseline against which the United Nations can measure progress towards its Sustainable Development Goal of ending slavery by 2030"**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Evidence 1: Portfolio of images from Wilberforce Institute and London-based media campaigns plus Home Office evaluation of government sponsored media campaign (pdf).

Evidence 2: Testimonial from Kevin Hyland, the First UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (pdf).

Evidence 3: Testimonial from Acting General Secretary NASUWT, The Teachers Union (pdf).

Evidence 4: Testimonial from the former Country Director and Project Lead at the British Council in Sierra Leone (pdf).

Evidence 5: Testimonial from the Artistic Director and Joint Chief Executive of Freedom Festival (pdf).

Evidence 6: Winner of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education 2015. (pdf of Wilberforce Institute submission and screenshot of website confirming award).

Evidence 7: Professor Kevin Bales as member of Walk Free Foundation Expert Advisory Group (pdf of screenshot).

Evidence 8: *The Global Slavery Index* (2014 & 2016), published by Walk Free Foundation (pdf of both combined).

Evidence 9: Freedom Fund Creation information (combined pdf of Freedom Fund website impact infographics, Freedom Fund 2014 Impact Report, and Freedom Fund founding financial statement).

Evidence 10: Kevin Bales, Olivia Hesketh and Bernard Silverman (June 2015) *Modern Slavery in the UK: How many victims?" Significance* (Journal of the Royal Statistical Society) (pdf).

Evidence 11: True Scale of Modern Slavery in the UK revealed as strategy to tackle it published GOV.UK news story (pdf).