

Institution: Liverpool Hope University		
Unit of Assessment: 20 Social Work and Social Policy		
Title of case study: Improving Professional and Public Understandings of Life in Palestine		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 01/01/2009–31/12/2019		
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:
Tracy Ramsey	Professional Tutor in Youth & Community Development	18/11/2013–present
Michael Lavalette	Professor of Social Work	01/01/2009–present
Kellie Thompson	Senior Lecturer in Social Work	01/09/2016–present
Steven Lucas	Lecturer in Social Work	12/09/2016–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/08/2013–31/12/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Our research on the Palestinian West Bank has enhanced levels of awareness, feelings of political inclusion/representation, and public understandings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liverpool Hope University's (LHU's) programme of student visits to the West Bank has enabled students to gain increased awareness of under-represented/marginalised cultures and communities. Palestinian families/communities hosting student visitors have reported enhanced feelings of political inclusion/representation. 2. The 'Hope for Palestine' online exhibition, showcasing Palestinian young people's artwork produced as part of our research, has had wide international reach. This has enhanced public understanding of life in the West Bank, increasing the public's ability to make informed decisions on Palestine/Israeli issues. 		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The social inclusion of marginalised people and communities is a global challenge, in relation to conflict zones worldwide, and also in the UK for social work/social care professionals. For both these reasons, social inclusion is integral to the research environment within our Unit, and to the research underpinning this case study.</p> <p>Our research focuses on the globally-marginalised experiences of people – especially young people – in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where families can feel profoundly isolated from the wider world. It illuminates resilience and resistance, and generates opportunities for cross-cultural communication and sharing, specifically aiming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop emotional and political literacies of students towards this situation, which can then be applied in other contexts in their professional lives • Amplify voices of Palestinian families/communities • Raise national and international public awareness/knowledge of Palestinian life <p>Output [1] explored Palestinian daily life under Israeli occupation, sharing the voices of Palestinian families, and particularly children and young people, who comprise over 60% of the Palestinian population. Data were collected in Palestine via qualitative interviews with 250 young people and families. This substantial testimony-based documentation of Palestinian life explains how young</p>		

people feel about Palestinian society and culture, schooling and family, and the everyday oppressions of living under occupation, such as being arrested and imprisoned and stopped at checkpoints.

The research published in Output [1] inspired the LHU trips, in which groups of c.25 LHU students, accompanied by a small number of LHU staff, spend two weeks staying in the homes of families at the Tulkarm refugee camp in the West Bank. These visits, occurring in 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2018, have involved c.110 students to date (the latter three, in this REF period, involving c.75 students). Since 2012, students have read Output [1] as part of their pre-visit preparations. During visits, students explore the geographical locations discussed in the book while exploring, intellectually, the issues that the book raises.

Outputs [2] and [3], utilising qualitative interviews with Palestinian social/community workers, explore the particular, Freirean type of social/community work that occurs in Palestine and contrasts with contemporary social work in the UK. As [2] and [3] discuss, in Palestinian social work practice, trauma is understood in relation to the collective experience of occupation. Social work is oriented towards community development and confronting social problems, with grassroots, local responses and support being cultivated to meet needs. Students taking part in visits to Palestine noted and learned from this bottom-up, relationship-based approach during their visits, reflecting in their post-visit evaluations (see sections 4 and 5) on how they would apply aspects of this approach in their future professional practice in the UK.

Output [4] is an online exhibition of 45 pieces of artwork produced by Palestinian children and young people. This artwork represents the findings of our qualitative participatory research with these children and young people. The artworks portray personal lived experiences of what it means to be a Palestinian child or young person living in the West Bank, and children and young people's acts of resistance within the occupation context.

3. References to the research

[1] Lavalette, M. and Jones, C. (2011) *Voices from the West Bank*. London: Bookmarks Publications.

[2] Lavalette, M., Ramsey, T., and Amara, M. (2018) "From the River to the Sea": Promoting Palestinian Resistance through Praxis'. In: Yu, N. (ed) *Consciousness-Raising Critical Pedagogy and Practice for Social Change*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 135–151.

[3] Lavalette, M., Ramsey, T., and Amara, M. (2019) 'Popular Social Work in the West Bank: Insights for an Internationalist Anti-Racist Social Work'. In: Singh, G. and Masocha, S. (eds) *Anti-Racist Social Work: International Perspectives*. London: Red Globe Press, pp. 57–78.

[4] Thompson, K., Lucas, S., Ramsey, T. and Lavalette, M. (2020) *Hope and Resistance through Palestinian Children's Eyes*. Liverpool Hope University. Available from: <<https://hopeforpalestine.co.uk>>.

Evidence of quality

Outputs [1], [2] and [3] underwent rigorous peer review.

[3] has been reviewed in the *British Journal of Social Work*: Threlfall, J. (2020) 'Singh, G. and Masocha, S. (eds) *Anti-Racist Social Work: International Perspectives*' (book review). *British Journal of Social Work*. Advance online publication.

Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa099>

[1] has been praised by a key individual (Chair of the British Association of Social Workers 2014–18 and Secretary of the Palestine–UK Social Work Network) in correspondence with the LHU researchers: 'The book [...] has been an important influence on the type of work we wish to do. We frequently recommend it to social workers and students wishing to know more about the contemporary Palestinian experience.'

4. Details of the impact

Introduction

Our programme of research on the Palestinian West Bank has enhanced:

1. students' understandings of under-represented/marginalised communities and cultures, and Palestinian host families' public/political participation as members of a marginalised community
2. national/international public awareness/knowledge of Palestinian life and politics

Potential growth is also being explored, with an upscaling of the student visits initiative involving other HEIs.

Impact 1: Students' understandings of under-represented/marginalised cultures and communities, and alternative approaches to social work/community development

Professional understandings

Evaluation data from LHU students who visited Palestine in 2015, 2016 and 2018 (see section 2) described beneficial impacts [A]: *'It does help in my social work, definitely.'*

Visits enabled students to gain knowledge of [A]:

- *'What it is like to grow up in a different world compared to the Western world.'*
- The community social work seen in Palestine, and ways of implementing aspects of this in their own careers, maintaining commitments to social justice values and ethics in practice.

Political understandings

Some students volunteered at the French Calais refugee camps following their Palestine visits [B]. Visiting Palestine had helped students become [A]:

- *'More critically aware' regarding 'refugee experiences' and experiences of oppression.*
- *'Much more confident' in sharing views about Palestinian issues 'with as many people as possible'.*
- *Deeper thinkers about complex issues: 'If a dominant sort of narrative is this, [then I ask] what's the other side of that? I know to always look in more depth and I think going to Palestine has definitely taught me that.'*

Impact 2: Palestinian host families' public/political participation as members of a marginalised community

Host families' feelings of having a presence in the world beyond Palestine

Evaluation data from Palestinian families who hosted students described the experience as leading to lasting connections with student participants [C]:

- *'When the students go back to their life when people say something they can say – no we have seen with our own eyes.'*
- Interviewer: *'Do they keep in touch?'*
- *'Yes social media – facebook.'*

The relationship with UK students represented a social and political 'hope' for host families [C]:

- *'Now we have not only two eyes but four eyes. Hard work but I am pleased and satisfied. I thank LHU – not enough to say thank you – all the people who have come amongst the group and help us build a concrete and historical relationship. I wish that the other unis can follow the steps and create the "hope". It is a practice not just a word. You afford the Hope to the Palestinian people.'*

Learning gains for host families' children

- *'How to build friendships and get to know people' outside their community [C]:*
- *'I built a better understanding of different views [...]. I believe now I understand more about how to build friendships and get to know people.'*
- Language skills and information about higher education [C]:
- *'Yes, these groups will give my kids a new experience. Also, to learn about the University the subjects, their ambitions. [...] For example, this encouraged my kids to understand English language.'*

Impact 3: Raising UK public awareness/knowledge of Palestinian life/politicsThe 'Hope for Palestine' online exhibition enhances national/international public understandings of life in the West Bank, and increases the public's ability to make informed decisions on Palestine/Israeli issues

The exhibition (see section 2), formerly scheduled for Tate Liverpool, moved online due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, going live on 18/12/2020. By 31/12/2020 the exhibition had recorded 8,008 visits, mainly from the UK but also with users from 55 other countries across all continents [D].

The exhibition included a webpage where visitors were able to self-report the exhibition's impacts on their knowledge and understanding of Palestine, and provide testimonies (n=96). 70% reported increased knowledge/understanding. Average self-reported knowledge/understanding on a 1–10 scale was 6.2 pre-visit and 8.0 post-visit [D]. Testimonies included [D]:

- *'Really powerful website and opened my eyes to the issues.'*
- *'My knowledge was patchy, I am now more aware.'*
- *'This has motivated me to find out even more and to take action further to help Palestine.'*

Future growth/reachProjected future increase in the reach and sustainability of impacts 1 and 2

Staff from Queen's University Belfast and Kingston University London planned to join the 2020 visit [E, F] (postponed due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic), in preparation for taking groups of their own on future visits. They now intend to join the rescheduled 2020 visit as preparation for launching their own visits, as part of a network of HEIs utilising LHU's model.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[A] Visit evaluation surveys, interviews and focus groups with Liverpool Hope University (LHU) students who visited Palestine in 2015, 2016 and 2018

[B] Blogs produced by LHU students reflecting on their visit to Palestine:

<https://oncearoundtheworldandhome.wordpress.com/2018/09/12/life-under-occupation>

<https://oncearoundtheworldandhome.wordpress.com/2018/09/08/first-impressions-of-israel-and-palestine>

[C] Visit evaluation interviews and focus groups with the Palestinian families at the Tulkarm refugee camp who hosted LHU students in their homes in 2015, 2016 and 2018

[D] Online exhibition evaluation report

[E] Factual statement from Senior Lecturer in Social Work, Queen's University Belfast

[F] Factual statement from Senior Lecturer in Social Work, Kingston University London