

<b>Institution:</b> University of Edinburgh		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Breaking the impasse on global reparations for Afrikan Enslavement		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014 to 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Nicola Frith	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Chancellor's Fellow (2014-2019); Senior Lecturer (2019 to present)	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> September 2014-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015 to present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>  <p>Led by Dr Nicola Frith, and based on her research, the <b>International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)</b> has broken an impasse between activists and academics over reparations for transatlantic trafficking in enslaved peoples. Firmly establishing itself as <i>"the one platform that has opened up space to amplify the ideas of community-based knowledge producers"</i>, INOSAAR has achieved vital trust between stakeholders in Europe, the Americas and, crucially, the Afrikan continent. Described by the Chair of the CARICOM Reparation Commission as having <i>"enriched"</i> the reparations movement by giving <i>"global visibility to the broad spectrum of viewpoints and approaches"</i> and by taking its message <i>"far and wide"</i>, INOSAAR has resulted in a global declaration calling for the active participation of Afrikan states in the reparations movement, and secured the only platform for civil society at a United Nations meeting on the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-24). Within the UK, INOSAAR research was used by Lambeth and Islington councils to pass motions in support of reparatory justice, and initiate audits of all council property for links to the slave trade. INOSAAR subsequently assisted the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) in becoming the first national political party to call on the UK parliament to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)  <p>While civil society activists have long advocated reparations as a means of redressing the structural inequalities arising from the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Afrikans, governments worldwide have largely failed to engage with the myriad ways in which the legacies of crimes against humanity are reflected in current social disrepair. By reducing the process of reparative justice to a question of financial recompense, the issue of reparations has been positioned in the public consciousness as backwards-looking, legally unfounded, and divisive. Writing in the <i>Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies</i> (3.1), <b>Dr Nicola Frith</b> stresses the detrimental impact that <i>"political silence"</i> has had upon public understandings of reparations, summarising that this <i>"misunderstood and misrepresented subject [...] tends to provoke uninformed kneejerk responses from public and politicians alike"</i>. Although focused on the Francophone world, her research findings apply to the reparations context globally, widening our understanding of reparative justice beyond financial recompense to include commemoration, memorialisation and emphasizing reparative justice processes that are driven by grassroots-led affirmative action, education and cultural representation.</p>		

To date, France is the only European nation to have legally recognised the so-called “transatlantic slave trade”, and slavery, as crimes against humanity. However, when tracing the political history around reparations, Frith found that the French state had effectively silenced activists’ voices when confronting its past crimes. Funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Leadership Fellowship, she spent over a year mapping memories of slavery in the French Republic today (grant AH/L003937/1 in 2014; grant AH/L003937/2 in 2015), using both contemporary interviews and political, media and legal archives to foreground the marginalised voices and complex and creative responses of grassroots organisations (3.2). As well as a digital map, outputs from the project included an academically-authored, public-facing report on the necessity of reparative action (3.3), and a co-edited volume examining, for the first time, the multiplicity of memories of slavery, and other forms of post-abolition labour exploitation, in the Francophone world (3.4).

As well as being silenced by politicians, Frith has found that activists have also been “*ignored academically, or worse, dismissed out of hand*” (3.5). In an effort to facilitate constructive and equitable dialogue between academics and activists, she collaborated with Professor Joyce Hope Scott on a two-day conference in Edinburgh in November 2015, with the proceedings published in 2018 in a special edition of the *Journal of African American History* (3.5). The conference was crucial in building links with grassroots partners such as the Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe, laying the groundwork for the foundation in 2017 of the **International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)**, with Frith as Principal Investigator and Hope Scott as Co-Investigator. The Network is the only one of the AHRC’s 11 funded initiatives connected with the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (AH/P007074/1) to engage with the issue of reparations, making it the only British Government-funded project of its kind.

Officially running between May 2017 and Feb 2019, but continuing to operate, INOSAAR brings theory into praxis on a global scale. The Network has held conferences involving grassroots activists in London, Birmingham and Porto-Novo, and participated in a symposium and march on Gorée Island, Senegal. It published a Global Report in September 2019, identifying learning points on, for example, the importance of cognitive justice and research from non-western-centric perspectives, the importance of language, and the acceptance of reparation as a global concern that requires a global response; one with “*the potential to offer creative and alternative models to our most pressing issues*” (3.6).

### 3. References to the research

3.1 Frith, N. (2017). Reparations for slavery in the French Republic: A national debate? *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies* 8:2, pp.1-12. <https://edin.ac/2QQXIZf>

3.2 Mapping memories of slavery. <http://www.mmoe.llc.ed.ac.uk>

3.3 Frith, N. (2018). Esclavage, mémoire, réparation. *Revue du Philantrope* 7, pp.157-73. <https://edin.ac/2QTWFCi> (Can be supplied by HEI on request).

3.4 Frith, N. and Hodgson, K. (2015). Slavery and its legacies: Remembering labour exploitation in the Francophone world. In N. Frith and K. Hodgson (Eds.), *At the limits of memory: Legacies of slavery in the Francophone world*, pp. 1-22. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press (Can be supplied by HEI on request).

3.5 Frith, N and J. Hope Scott (Eds.). (2018). National and international perspectives on movements for reparations. [Special issue]. *Journal of African American History* 103:1-2, pp.1-275. DOI:[10.1086/696363](https://doi.org/10.1086/696363)

3.6 International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations: Global Report. (2019, January). *International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations:*

Global report. Retrieved from INOSAAR website, <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/en/global-report-2019>.

#### Funding:

Nicola Frith. AHRC Early Career Fellowship. *Mapping Memories of Slavery: Commemoration, Community and Identity in Contemporary France*.

Ref: AH/L003937/1. Value: GBP60,290. Period: January 2014 - August 2014

Ref: AH/L003937/2. Value: GBP16,572. Period: February 2015 - October 2015

Nicola Frith. AHRC Research Networking. AH/ P007074/1. *Reparations for Slavery: From Theory to Praxis*. May 2017 – February 2019. GBP36,368.

#### 4. Details of the impact

For decades, reparations activists have asserted their rights with reference to UN international law; however, European governments have yet to commit to any form of reparative justice programme. In the UK, entrenched divisions between activist and academic communities have been exacerbated by the latter's support for the government's longstanding refusal to heed calls for reparations. Putting into practice Dr Nicola Frith's research on a wider definition of reparations, the International Network of Scholars and Activists for African Reparations (INOSAAR) has broken this impasse - the only group to have successfully brought together activists, academics, and other civil society groups from Europe, the Americas, and, crucially, the Afrikan continent. INOSAAR has been described by the Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE) as "*the one platform that has opened up space to amplify the ideas of community-based knowledge producers [...] pioneering in providing global legitimacy and visibility to the broad spectrum of viewpoints and approaches to Afrikan Reparations among non-state and also state actors*" (5.1).

#### Building a coalition of grassroots stakeholders

In under three years, as mapped by Frith on the network's website (5.2), INOSAAR has developed a global community of over 30 member organisations committed to a shared set of Principles of Participation. Following a dialogue between UK groups and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) convened by PARCOE in November 2017, the Jamaica National Council on Reparations and the West Indies-based Centre for Reparations Research recognised the value of this Principles-based approach. Professor Sir Hilary Beckles (Chair of the CARICOM Reparation Commission) has written: "*The reparation movement has been enriched by the work of INOSAAR, which has taken CARICOM's message about why the Caribbean is justified in seeking reparation from the United Kingdom and other complicit States far and wide. By including grassroots organizations in its activities [its collective work] benefits society beyond the academy, in particular the International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations (ISMAR), whose profile it has helped to raise.*" (5.3). In turn, ISMAR has called the Network a "*formidable new bloc*" (5.4) and "*a major new development of the intellectual arsenals necessary for tackling Afrophobia*" (5.4).

#### Collaboration with Afrikan stakeholders

In September 2018 INOSAAR co-organised a major colloquium on reparative justice in Porto-Novo, Benin - one of the primary sites for transatlantic people trafficking - with the local civil society group Association Panafricaine pour une Réparation Globale de l'Esclavage. This three-day event attracted 150 delegates from 12 countries, including Benin, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria, a mix of activists, artists, spiritual leaders, government officials, and traditional kings and chiefs. They collectively endorsed a global declaration calling upon "*Afrikan states and their diplomatic leadership to join with civil society [...] to formulate policies and establish operational committees in order to institutionalise and advocate the claim for reparatory justice*" (5.5). The declaration was signed on behalf of the High Council of the Kings of Benin by His Majesty Kpoto-Zounmè Hakpon III (5.6) who had

previously publicly apologised for the role his ancestors played in trans-Atlantic trafficking in enslaved Afrikans.

### **Achieving an international platform for reparatory justice**

The Porto-Novo Declaration has galvanised the international movement for reparation and fostered unprecedented transatlantic cooperation. The CARICOM Reparation Commission has committed to “*supporting all initiatives that will take this Declaration further*” and to “*embrace every opportunity to seek [its] acceptance by the African Union, the CARICOM Parliamentary Committee on Reparation [...] and other reparation committees*” (5.3). The United Nations (UN) has become engaged in the research, firstly by inviting INOSAAR to a 2019 expert workshop on Reparations, Racial Justice and Equality convened by its Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Later in the same year, with University of Edinburgh support, INOSAAR sent two activist members to the UN Regional Meeting for Africa on the International Decade for People of African Descent, a two-day event in Dakar, Senegal, organised by the UN Human Rights Office and African Union Commission (5.7). In this respect INOSAAR was exceptional in being the only group to have members of civil society and grassroots academia on the platform.

### **Influencing policy in the UK**

As its international coalition has grown, INOSAAR has also influenced discussion of reparations policy in the UK. In July 2020, as the issue of British links to trafficking in enslaved Afrikans was brought into new focus by the removal of a statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, Lambeth and Islington Councils passed motions on Atonement and Reparations for the United Kingdom’s Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans, which made specific reference to Frith and INOSAAR’s “*global process of engagement in the UK, the US, Africa, and the Caribbean*” (5.8a & 5.8b). Both councils announced an audit of all public landmarks, statues, road names, and works of art in their respective boroughs for any links with slavery, and resolved to call on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of transatlantic people trafficking on political and economic life in the UK today, and an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice (APPCITRJ) (5.8a & 5.8b). Frith and INOSAAR worked with the Green Party to pass a motion, based on the Lambeth and Islington Council motions, which was discussed at the national party conference in October 2020. Cllr Scott Ainslie, former Green Party MEP and currently a member of Lambeth Council, said INOSAAR’s expertise “*has been key to successfully getting the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) to be the first national party to call on the UK parliament to establish the APPCITRJ. With INOSAAR’s help, we were able to not only get agreement on the wording of the motion, but their assistance in patiently dealing with the questions and concerns of the members of GPEW helped persuade and gain the support of the Greens of Colour, the Young Greens and a majority at conference (93%). This would not have happened without them.*” INOSAAR’S work with the Green Party, Ainslie said, “*has engaged a whole new generation in the need to atone and begin a process of reparatory justice in the UK and in the US*” (5.9).

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Letter of support from PARCOE, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
- 5.2 Map on INOSAAR website <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/map>
- 5.3 Letter of support from Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Chair of CARICOM Reparation Commission, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- 5.4 ‘INOSAAR: A Formidable New Bloc in Building the Academic Column of the ISMAR!’, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <https://stopthemaangamizi.com/2017/10/05/inosaar-a-formidable-new-bloc-in-building-the-academic-column-of-the-ismar/>
- 5.5 Porto-Novo Declaration, signed by His Majesty Kpoto-Zounmè Hakpon III on behalf of the High Council of the Kings of Benin, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018.
- 5.6 Letter of thanks from His Majesty Kpoto-Zounmè Hakpon III, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018.
- 5.7 Report on the UN Regional Meeting for Africa on the International Decade for People of African Descent in Dakar, Senegal, by INOSAAR members Esther Stanford-Xosei

(PARCOE) and Mawuse Yao Agorkor (Vazoba Afrika & Friends Networking Open Forum), 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

5.8 Council Motions:

5.8a Notices of Motion, Islington Council Meeting, 9th July 2020

5.8b Council Motions, Lambeth Council, 15th July 2020

5.9 Letter from Cllr Scott Ainslie, Green Party, Lambeth, 20th October 2020