

Institution: Leeds Beckett University		
Unit of Assessment: 20		
Title of case study: Acts of love and kindness: developing new cultures of social support		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2020		
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:
Dr Erika Laredo Dr Darren Hill	Senior Lecturer Reader	2010-Present 2008-Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred:2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact: Streetwork is a methodology developed at Leeds Beckett which has supported the elaboration of a new socially orientated relational practice in community and social work. Laredo and Hill's research has impacted practitioner skills, knowledge and confidence. Their work has resulted in the design and development of a package of comprehensive training materials and follow-on knowledge exchange work with multi-disciplinary groups of practitioners both regionally and globally. Over 200 undergraduate and postgraduate social and community workers have been trained in this methodological approach. Research conclusions have been central in informing regional and international practice developments, impacting on interventions for both young people and adults. Globally, work with international NGOs in Turkey, Sweden, Italy and Catalan Professional Associations is influencing a re-shaping of health, community and social work policy and practice.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Concerned about poor outcomes in traditional social care approaches, Laredo and Hill advocate for a more proactive and socially engaged model of practice. 'Streetwork' was developed to articulate a distinct, innovative practice bringing together a range of supporting professions practising a model of care informed by concepts of compassion, kindness and inclusion. Our research evidences better outcomes result from a community-based social work practice, that is informed by the twin concepts of human rights and social justice. The methodology argues for mainstreaming relational practice as a specific transformative approach for work with marginalised people.</p> <p>Early research, funded by an Erasmus grant (G.1.) established a European platform of academics, practitioners and researchers drawn from the University of Barcelona (Spain), Charles University Prague (Czech) and HvA (Netherlands). A training package was created which the consortium delivered to a mixed group of European students over a three-year period, this has had a significant impact on the training of future generations of professionals. Social work professionals are expected to manage austerity in a way that prioritises outputs and performance, reinforcing the individualisation of welfare reform. Our research contests this model of social care by promoting an ongoing discussion about the ways in which radical social work practice can support communities by working with them towards a transformative systemic change.</p>		

Research Insights:

Since 2014 Laredo and Hill have developed a body of research examining how person-centred and relational approaches improve the resilience, engagement and well-being of vulnerable communities. The research contributes to changing professional practice and improving outcomes for socially marginalised individuals, families and communities. Early work focused on the need to develop a distinct practice, named 'Streetwork', a process we suggest as 'being with', accompanying, or simply inhabiting the spaces, both physical and intellectual, of the client group. It is grounded in a practice of working with clients, guiding them through their problems on their own terms **(3.1 and 3.2)**.

Subsequent research noted that as services become more focussed on metrics, often the most 'hard to reach', vulnerable groups become more socially isolated. Findings identified that when practice is based on open and transparent communication, putting the service user at the centre of the work, outcomes become more sustainable. Research highlights the ways that relational methodologies, prioritising individual acts of care, kindness and professional love, can be successfully implemented as a means of re-engaging those on the margins. A key finding is the importance for systems and organisations to have 'a consciously realized identity', which means being able to articulate a clear collective identity and focus **(3.1,3.2,3.4)**. To disseminate good practice, Laredo and Hill organised a variety of symposia aimed at practitioners, with a clear focus on developing their relational expertise and communication to better support behaviour change with service users. **(3.3)** To summarise, the research is interdisciplinary and informed by a focus on human rights and social justice **(3.4, 3.5)**. Data suggests that a more successful mode of support must be based on open and transparent communication, a willingness to listen, and above all to 'see' the person. **(3.4,3.6)** The body of this work has helped to forge new cultures of care and compassion, in which individual contributions are valued and make a difference. **(3.3 and 3.4)**

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

3.1 Hill, D. & Laredo, E. (2019) First and last and always: Streetwork as a methodology for radical community social work practice *Journal of Critical & Radical Social Work* <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2020.1805587>

3.2 Laredo, E. (2020) Love Actually: Reflections on a Love Ethic in Practice *Radical Community Work Journal* 4 (1)

3.3 Hill, D. Charura, D & Penson, B. (2016) *Working with Dual Diagnosis: A Psycho-Social Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan: London

3.4 Hill, D. & Laredo, E. (2020) The Personal is Political: reframing individual acts of kindness as acts of social solidarity. *European Journal of Social Work* <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2020.1805587>

3.5 Hill, D. Agu, L & Mercer, D. (2018) *Exploring & Locating Social Work: A Foundation for Practice*. Macmillan Higher Education: London

3.6 Laredo, E.A. & Chiosso, R. (2018) The Tensions and Limitations of Working with Sex Workers *Radical Community Work Journal* 3 (1)

Grants

G1. (2012/IP/19/Leeds/02; 2013/IP/20/LEEDS02-ISW £80.000) Erasmus +

G.2.(EAC-2017-0499 €80,000 2015-17) Erasmus +

G.3. €140, 000 - 602489-EPP-1-2018-1-SE-EPPKA2-CBY-ACPALA Erasmus+

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Intensive Programme (**G.1**), created an innovative training package delivered to groups of European students over a three-year period (2012-15), developing theoretical and practice capacity in future generations of professionals and having significant impact on both practitioners and academics (**5.1, 5.2**)

Immediate beneficiaries:

- 150 students
- 30 academics
- 20 practitioners

Following this work, in 2016 we were invited to the inaugural meeting of the Catalan Association of Youth Practitioners. Our research, with its focus on informal education and an understanding of young people as autonomous agents of change, helped to refocus contemporary discourses of work with young people within Catalonia informing both policy formulation and discourses about practice.

The knowledge alliance created during collaboration provided both the intellectual and competency-based framework for a range of undergraduate and post graduate courses that have been developed at Leeds Beckett University. These courses shaped over 200 undergraduates into community work practitioners who now work in a range of local social and community services. Feedback 6 months post training suggests positive impact, 70% of the respondents reported an increased level of confidence when working with the most difficult cases, and increased job satisfaction as their greater resilience helped with crisis interventions. (**5.1**)

Cultural Change

In 2015, Laredo and Hill organised a national conference to disseminate the methodology. 'Putting People First: Developing Cultures of Best Practice', brought together grassroots care workers, academics and NHS Chief executives to explore how we engage and work with people in a kinder more compassionate and supportive manner across health and social care services. Lisa Rodrigues, former Chief Executive of Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, one of the invited keynotes, reflected on the conference both in her blog and in her book *Being an NHS Chief Executive*. "Yesterday I was in Leeds with people who mainly work in the local NHS, voluntary sector and local authorities and share an interest in helping vulnerable people. The conference was called #putting people first. It was enlightening and uplifting. I observed a groundswell of support for a different way of being at work, where people bring their whole and unique selves to bear on issues that matter, where failure is seen as an opportunity for learning rather than a weakness to be vilified, and where treating patients/clients/service users with deep and real compassion is underpinned by working with love and compassion with one another."

(<https://lisasaysthis.com/category/nhs/page/3/>)

The importance of this forum and further symposia organised between 2015-18 saw the beginnings of shift in attitudes and promoting cultural change at an organisational level. These fora offered a safe space where ideas could be challenged, and new ways of working could be learned. Commenting on these meetings Dr. John Walsh, a former NHS practice Manager highlighted the impact of these spaces for new thinking to emerge. "*The merging of theory and practice was an exciting development that flowed into the work we carried out at York Street, (an NHS facility working with street-based populations) and had a major impact on its identity and focus, but in the wider work of community outreach practices locally.*" (**5.3**)

International Work:

The Streetwork methodology contributed to two global projects. 'Win-Win' and 'Leave No-one Behind' (LENO), (G.2 and G.3.) were developed using research and the Streetwork methodology in their design and implementation. Win-Win identified ways in which women

refugees and asylum seekers were keen to take part in sporting activities but unable to access them. The project worked to integrate migrant women into existing sporting activities within local communities with the aim of breaking down barriers and increasing possibilities for participation, building both resilience and sustainability.

In 2017 Win-Win gained international recognition for its innovative promotion approach of social and community cohesion. In recognition of the significance and community impact of the project the project was awarded first prize by the Italian Society for the Study of Culture and Society (*V Convegno Nazionale Cultura & Società No Profit* in the category *Cultura Socialità Tempo Libero per il Benessere della Persona I*) **(5.4)**

The project reached:

- 300 women (100 per partner)
- 50 community sport workers
- 6 youth workers

Since completion of the project, and impact from the prize, the approach modelled in this project has now been successfully adopted across all three partner cities, Leeds, Lund and Palermo and is embedded into successful community sports programming. **(5.5)**

The LENO project brought together over 100 young people and 50 youth practitioners from Cambodia, Australia, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey South Africa, and the UK and resulted in far reaching global impact. The underpinning methodology was based on a streetwork approach blending social inclusion with non-formal education methods. Immediate impact can be evidenced by the widespread dissemination of innovative and dynamic communication tools designed to overcome barriers ranging from disability to race, social exclusion, and mental health. Further impact can be seen in the innovations to contemporary professional practice in the partner countries. The success of the project has been recognised and funding has been renewed for another 3 years. **(5.6)**

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

- 5.1 Dra. Asun Lena Berne, Catalan Youth Association
- 5.2 Former IP student now social worker
- 5.3 Dr. John Walsh, email communication
- 5.4 Dottora Antonia Ferro Secretaria Generale Mazzara de Valle
- 5.5 Neco Meletli C.E.O Ifall, Sweden
- 5.6 Simon Clarke C.E.O Epic arts Foundation, Melbourne Australia