

Institution: University of Northampton		
Unit of Assessment: 21 - Sociology		
Title of case study: Increasing Employability for People Experiencing Multiple Disadvantage		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 - 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:
1. Claire Paterson-Young	Senior Researcher	2019 – 2020
	Associate Professor	2020-present
2. Richard Hazenberg	Professor	2011 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		

1. Summary of the impact

The Institute for Social Innovation and Impact's (ISII) research into the employability of people experiencing multiple disadvantage directly impacted the design and evaluation of the GBP1,300,000 Building Better Opportunities Work Readiness Action Programme (BBO WRAP) delivered by Goodwill Solutions. The research contributed to and identified nearly GBP3,400,000 of benefits for programme participants and wider society. These findings led to two years of further funding for the programme from the National Lottery Community Fund, and its redesign based upon the framework proposed in the research. Furthermore, it has resulted in ensuring delivery partners (including Goodwill Solutions CIC and Lisa Lashes School of Music) utilise evidence in their guidance and policies and are made accountable for the outcomes achieved by beneficiaries on the programme, aiding reductions in unemployment and economic inactivity.

2. Underpinning research

Claire **Paterson-Young** and Richard **Hazenberg** in the ISII have contributed to the Sociology department's research on the psychological effects of unemployment and the role of the third sector in delivering employability enhancement programmes for socially excluded individuals. They have focused on the impact of employability programmes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage including unemployment, economic inactivity, young people not in employment, education and research (NEET), and those experiencing mental health problems [3.1, 3.2, 3.3].

The team's research (2014-2019) established the negative effects unemployment has upon an individual's psychological state and well-being, specifically in relation to general self-efficacy, self-regulation and social functioning [3.1, 3.2, 3.3]. It demonstrated that designing programmes that deal with these factors is essential to improving programme outcomes (i.e. individuals' quality of life) and impacts (i.e. benefits to society of increased employment). Furthermore, the research demonstrated the design of such programmes benefits from involving the evaluation team from the very start, so that the relevant outputs, outcomes and impacts can be measured [3.2]. Establishing the social impact of a programme involves using an appropriate social impact measurement framework that can demonstrate the outputs, outcomes and impacts achieved, but also feedback into the refinement of interventions where the data suggests that impact is limited [3.4].

Paterson-Young and **Hazenberg** led European Social Fund (ESF)/Big Lottery Fund funded research on the GBP1,300,000 BBO WRAP (2016 – 2019). The programme, delivered by Goodwill Solutions CIC alongside 17 other voluntary organisations from across

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Northamptonshire, was aimed at supporting disadvantaged individuals to gain employment through work-based training and emotional support. The research demonstrated that a central focus on the underlying causes of unemployment (offending, mental health, skills gap, lack of confidence etc.) better engaged participants, resulting in improved employment outcomes [3.4, 3.5, 3.6]. The research was an ongoing iterative and developmental process, with early research articulating the necessity of having the evaluation team embedded in programmes throughout the process. Thus, early research findings were used to shape the programme throughout the delivery process, with detailed assessments to identify specific needs and additional one-to-one support for beneficiaries. This ongoing evidence-led decision-making process was a direct result of the programme evaluation model developed by Hazenberg et al. being adopted by BBO WRAP [3.2].

The Institute's research illustrated the social impact of BBO WRAP, highlighting both the intended and unintended, positive and negative impacts of its services and interventions [3.4, 3.5]. It identified the benefits of the programme to participants (ex-offenders, unemployed, carers, mental health problems), with specific impact on wellbeing, life stability, personal confidence and job search self-efficacy (areas that are central to employability). The research demonstrated a statistically significant increase in life stability ($p = .06$); a significant increase in wellbeing ($p < .001$); a significant increase in job search self-efficacy ($p < .05$); and a significant increase in personal confidence ($p < .001$) [3.4]. The social impact evaluation also identified that the programme led to positive training outcomes, new job creation and employment for the beneficiaries, many of whom were a significant distance from the job-market prior to engaging with BBO WRAP (average time unemployed of 33 months) [3.4].

3. References to the research

[3.1] Hazenberg, R., Seddon, F. A., & Denny, S. (2014). Investigating the outcome performance of work-integration social enterprises (WISEs): do WISEs offer 'added value' to NEETs? *Public Management Review*, 16(6), 876-899. [6]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2012.759670>

[3.2] Hazenberg, R., Seddon, F. A., & Denny, S. (2014). Programme recruitment and evaluation: the effect of an employability enhancement programme on the general self-efficacy levels of unemployed graduates. *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(3), 273-300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2014.900165>

[3.3] Seddon, F. A., Hazenberg, R., & Denny, S. (2014). Reintegrating socially excluded individuals through a social enterprise intervention. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 10(3), 222-238. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-08-2013-0034>

[3.4] Paterson-Young, C., & Hazenberg, R. (2019). *Building Better Opportunities: Work Readiness Action Programme (WRAP) - Final Report*. University of Northampton.

[3.5] Paterson-Young, C., & Hazenberg, R. (2019). *Building Better Opportunities: Work Readiness Action Programme (WRAP) Interim Report Phase Two (Y1 Q1)*.

[3.6] Hazenberg, R., Seddon, F., & Denny, S. (2012). Investigating the Outcome Performance of a WISE Delivering Employability Programmes to the Unemployed. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, 9(6), 40-50.

4. Details of the impact

This research enabled Goodwill Solutions CIC to develop and evaluate their programmes, which focus on supporting thousands of socially excluded individuals who are unemployed, economically inactive, at risk of offending/reoffending, experiencing drug/alcohol/substance misuse problems and have generally low levels of education. Goodwill Solutions CIC are a multi award-winning company offering a unique specialist logistics solution to retailers and manufacturers, with a turnover of around GBP4,000,000; ISII's research demonstrated that

Goodwill's programmes have created nearly GBP15,000,000 of social impact in the last five years.

Increased Support for Unemployed and Economically Inactive Individuals

ISII's research on the BBO WRAP was used as evidence by Goodwill Solutions CIC and its delivery partners to shape the programme, specifically in developing the interventions for participants and staff training programmes. Goodwill Solutions CIC and its delivery partners used the research to identify the impact of BBO WRAP on beneficiaries (people experiencing multiple disadvantage, including: unemployment, economic inactivity, NEETs, and those experiencing mental health problems) through increased support in improving wellbeing, life stability, job search self-efficacy and personal confidence and staff (training and development) [5.1].

The research '[d]irectly informed changes made to BBO WRAP based upon the evidence presented' [5.1], which led to the successful development of the programme. As the research demonstrated, this led to the delivery of effective and sustainable support for a total of 1,213 socially excluded individuals with employability skills training and job-search. It improved the employability of socially excluded individuals in Northamptonshire, reducing economic burden on the welfare state and enhancing the lives of beneficiaries. The first phase of BBO WRAP (August 2016 to July 2019) led to 143 individuals securing employment (12.1% employment rate); 63 individuals leaving a life of crime behind; 279 individuals gaining their Forklift Truck Licence; and 111 individuals securing NVQ Level 1 equivalent qualifications relevant to the logistics sector [3.5, p.3].

According to the CEO of Goodwill Solutions CIC, this has led to 'increased focus on raising the confidence, motivation and wellbeing of beneficiaries as a critical means of raising their employability' [5.1]. One of the delivery partners who participated in the programme, Lisa Lashes School of Music, highlighted additional areas of impact, including [5.2]:

- Participants gained knowledge of a creative industry which brings in GBP66,000,000,000 to the UK economy.
- Gave confidence to female artists to raise their profile in a male dominated industry tackling equality in the workplace.
- Supported all participants to be work ready with confidence, a new set of skills, CV's, interview ready with the right attitude to take their next step in life.
- Successfully guided participants into Further Education, Jobs and Opportunities and onto The Princes Trust to be able to fill in entry forms to fund their own creative ideas and businesses [5.2].

The research was presented to the BBO Steering Group at quarterly meetings, both through in person presentations and interim reports, with the BBO steering group developing a stronger understanding of the support required by beneficiaries to improve wellbeing, life stability, job search self-efficacy and personal confidence among participants in the programme and further training and development for staff [5.1]. This new strategic understanding led to the aforementioned changes to the programme delivery initiated in the second round of funding for BBO WRAP and the impact described below.

Improved and developed programme delivery

The research informed staff training programmes for delivery partners on the programme, which led to a stronger awareness amongst programme staff regarding the importance of raising confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem, as a means to raise employability, rather than just focusing on technical training and job-search. Findings from the research were used to streamline the administrative processes of BBO WRAP by reducing the burden of paperwork on

Goodwill Solutions CIC and its delivery partners. According to Goodwill Solutions CIC this included 'reducing the administrative burden on delivery staff around monitoring and evaluation' [5.1]. This allowed Goodwill Solutions CIC and the delivery partners to focus on one-to-one in-depth support of the WRAP beneficiaries.

This unique delivery style, with significant support/delivery evidenced by research, has been nationally recognised, with Goodwill being recently being presented with the Queen's Award for Enterprise (April 2020) based upon its social mission and work, providing recognition of the impact that the company delivers. The Queen's Award for Enterprise is the highest official UK Award for UK Businesses, honouring a business's excellence in international trade, innovation, sustainable development and/or promotion of opportunities. The Award cannot be applied for, rather it is conferred, and this was done on the basis of Goodwill's excellent social impact evidenced through our research [5.3, 5.4]. Indeed, evidence from our research was key in demonstrating the impact of Goodwill services/programmes [3.4, 3.5; 5.1]. This award has allowed Goodwill Solutions CIC to evidence the social impact/quality of programmes, strengthening future funding and/or partnership applications. This case-study demonstrates the high impact that can be delivered when HEIs and social enterprises engage in research-led partnerships, underpinned by commercial support and networking, in order to co-create social value and support local communities.

Generated continued funding for the Work Readiness Action Programme and shaping its further design

The team's analysis revealed that the GBP1,300,000 of funding created a total of nearly GBP3,400,000 of social impact to society, with the programme delivering a social return on investment to the funding bodies of 2.58:1. The data informed the overall evaluation of the ESF/Big Lottery programme, with interim and final research reports submitted to the funding bodies, helping to demonstrate the efficacy of the programme. This was integral in securing the programme an additional GBP1,100,000 of funding over 30 months (2019 to 2022) to deliver further support to socially excluded individuals [5.1].

The findings demonstrated to the ESF/Big Lottery Fund the efficacy of shorter and more targeted interventions and support with beneficiaries, and the validity of narrowing the focus of the evaluation and monitoring systems [5.1]. The evaluation and iterative design process led to funding for BBO WRAP Phase 2, which has a narrower focus on a smaller number of individuals being engaged in more depth to deal with the underlying causal issues of their unemployment [5.1]. The underpinning research highlighted that a one-size-fits-all approach to intervention does not work when supporting extremely disadvantaged individuals that are far from employability [3.2; 3.5]. Therefore, the focus on quality over quantity in interventions in BBO2 provides direct recognition of the research impact, with BBO1 spending just over GBP1,000 per individual supported (GBP1,300,000/1,213 beneficiaries), whereas BBO2 will be spending over GBP3,500 per individual supported (GBP1,100,000/300 targeted interventions).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Impact Statement from Goodwill Solutions CIC

[5.2] Impact Statement from Lisa Lashes School of Music

[5.3] Goodwill Solutions Wins Queen's Award (<https://www.goodwillsolutions.co.uk/queens-award-winner-2020/>)

[5.4] The Queen's Awards for Enterprise 2020 Press Book