

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> Keele University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA17 Business and Management Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Tipping the balance: towards more inclusive forms of collaboration		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012-2018		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Mihaela Kelemen	Professor of Management and Public Engagement	1996-2019
Dr Lindsay Hamilton	Senior Lecturer in Management	2008-2019
Dr Anita Mangan	Senior Lecturer in Management	2009-2019
Dr Emma Surman	Senior Lecturer in Marketing	2007-2019
Susan Moffatt	Honorary Research Fellow and Director of Borderlines (New Vic Theatre) Senior Lecturer in Marketing	2014-2017
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013-2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Collaboration between Keele Business School (KBS) and New Vic Borderlines (New Vic Theatre) has led to the development of Cultural Animation (CA), a methodology of knowledge co-production for inspiring entrepreneurial communities of practice through democratising relationships between academics, creative practitioners, organisations and communities. Participation in CA workshops and events has resulted in the changed practices in New Vic Borderlines and many other organisations in the UK and internationally. Furthermore, research has benefitted 5000+ community members who have participated in CA projects, enhancing community bonds and improving understanding on a range of issues, including food poverty, healthcare, volunteering and disaster management.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Collaborative research by KBS and Borderlines has created CA, a methodology for community engagement. This involves visual, performative and sensory exercises that give equal status to academic expertise and practical skills, connecting reflection with action and fostering exchange between academics and practitioners. The method is inspired by American Pragmatist philosophy and underpinned by Kelemen's work, which explores this philosophy from a theoretical perspective, collapsing dichotomies between theory and practice, or thinking and doing, judging the validity of theories based on their consequences for communities in the real world (R1). CA recognises 'experiential expertise' and challenges knowledge hierarchies, with enhancement of social community at its heart.</p> <p>The resulting body of collaborative research has developed this methodology for creative community engagement (R1) and documented how this enables impact co-creation in a variety of</p>		

contexts (R2-R6). This work began in 2012 when KBS researchers (Kelemen, Mangan) collaborated with the New Vic (Moffat) on a project exploring volunteering and personal communities in Staffordshire, funded by the cross-council Connected Communities (CC) programme. Between 2012 - 2019, the research team have received substantial Research Council funding to extend CA, in a variety of contexts, to co-create research with communities on a range of issues and simultaneously to influence their understanding of and responses to those issues during the research process itself.

### Key Insights

Findings that have generated impact relate to: (i) development of CA as a methodology and (ii) the contexts in which KBS researchers have employed this.

- American pragmatist inquiry starts with a problematic situation requiring democratic, reflective collaboration amongst diverse parties, applying a variety of processes of knowing. This research has translated these principles into the CA methodology (3.1).
- CA exceeds the possibilities of traditional research methods (like focus groups), by accentuating the relational, processual, creative, material and emergent nature of social life and its networks (3.1, 3.3) in a wide range of contexts (3.2-3.6).
- A portfolio of projects used CA to understand the changing nature of communities, exploring the motivations and effects of community organising (3.3, 3.4, 3.5). Research revealed untold stories of volunteering in Staffordshire, developing a typology of volunteering that illuminates complex relationships between personal outcomes (skills development and socialising) and collective outcomes (responsible citizenship and delivering essential services) (3.5). Research on post-disaster tourism in Japan demonstrated the critical role of community organising in responses to disasters (3.2, 3.4).
- CA also supports community organising, particularly in relation to health (3.3), disaster management (3.4) and food poverty (grants 1&2, 5.11). CA builds trust, facilitates practical interventions, and creates environments in which community members can shape their worlds and realise ambitions (3.3, 3.4, 5.11).
- This work has yielded new insights into impact by creatively foregrounding collaboration with marginalised communities. Impact can be characterised as what is still being used or living, including living legacies like social networks and relationships (3.1).



Above left: 'A Little Act of Kindness' (2013), docudrama directed by Moffat (3.5, Grant 6) and Above right: 'The Tree of Life' used to capture stories in Minamisanriku, Japan (3.4)

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

- 3.1. Kelemen M and Hamilton LA. 2018 **Creative processes of impact making: Advancing an American Pragmatist methodology**. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*. [doi> full text>](#)
- 3.2. Lin Y, Kelemen ML, Tresidder R. (2018) **Post-disaster tourism: building resilience through community-led approaches in the aftermath of the 2011 disasters in Japan**. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. [doi> full text>](#)
- 3.3 Kelemen M, Surman E, Dikomitis L. (2018) **Cultural animation in health research: An innovative methodology for patient and public involvement and engagement**. *Health Expect*, vol. 21(4), 805-813. [link> doi> full text>](#)

- 3.4 Goulding C, Kelemen ML, Kiyomiya T. (2017) **Community based responses to the Japanese Tsunami: a bottom up approach.** *European Journal of Operational Research.* [doi> link> full text>](#)
- 3.5 Kelemen M, Mangan A, Moffat S. (2017) **More Than a "Little Act of Kindness"? Towards a Typology of Volunteering as Unpaid Work.** *Sociology-The Journal of the British Sociological Association*, vol. 51(6), 1239-1256. [doi> full text>](#)
- 3.6 Mangan A, Kelemen M, Moffat S. (2016) **Animating the classroom: Pedagogical responses to internationalisation.** *Management Learning*, vol. 47(3), 285-304. [link> doi> full text>](#)

The quality of this research is indicated by publications in 4\* and 3\* ranked journals (Chartered Association of Business Schools). The research has been highlighted as best practice for knowledge co-production and in 2017, Audencia Business School (France) secured funding to study the collaboration between KBS and Borderlines: 'Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities of Practice through Co-creative Innovation: the Case of CASIC' (£10K, March 2017-March 2018). The research has received substantial funding from UKRI and other sources, key examples include:

1. AHRC CC Festival (£15K), Kelemen **PI** *Animating Local Appetites: a Celebration of community Food and Health in Stoke in Trent*, 2015
2. EPSRC Community and Culture Network (£24K), Surman **PI**, *Beyond the Foodbank: Using Digital technologies to escape food poverty*, 2014-2015
3. AHRC CC Legacy Grant (£84K), Kelemen **PI**, *Evaluating the Legacy of Animative and Iterative Connected Communities Projects*, 2014-2015
4. AHRC Development Research Grant (£99K), Kelemen **PI**: *Untold Stories of Volunteering: A Cultural Animation Project*, 2013-2014
5. AHRC Follow-on Research Grant (£42K), Kelemen **PI**: *Bridging the Gap between Academic Theory and Community Relevance*, 2013-2014
6. AHRC Scoping Study (£37k), Kelemen **PI**: *'Exploring Personal Communities: A Review of Volunteering Processes'* 2012-2013

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

In 2015, KBS established the Community Animation and Social Innovation Centre (CASIC) in collaboration with New Vic Borderlines which has had a significant impact on the overall Connected Communities programme (5.1).

##### Transforming community engagement practices

Prior to these collaborations with KBS, the New Vic Theatre had not undertaken any research to inform its outreach work. Since collaborating with KBS, the theatre's work has been enhanced enabling *'our theatre to develop its creative processes into a recognisable methodology'* (5.2) (3.1). Borderlines' Technical and Stage Manager has reflected on the fundamental value of story-sharing methods to the organisation's work (5.3) (3.1, 3.2, 3.3). Moffatt has been named as a partner/co-investigator on over 30 grants led by KBS or collaborating researchers, resulting in capacity enhancement for the theatre. The projects have brought new stakeholders to the theatre, including international partners such as Osaka City University and Alley Theatre in Houston (5.4).

CA has democratised organisational practices. Participants from CA workshops report using the techniques to better engage staff, communities and stakeholders, enabling *'participants to think differently about ... power, participation and the value of play and creativity in their work with communities'* (5.5). One UK Housing Association Manager reflected: *'[CA] levelled the difference between residents and managers...with this methodology people who do not normally participate felt safe and able to speak up'* (R1). A social entrepreneur who commissioned a CA intervention reported: *'the effect has been dramatic'*, increasing employee engagement in decision making. An NHS Senior Manager reflected, *'no other forum or technique we used before has been so effective in terms of collective learning and idea sharing'* (R1). Impact has also been achieved internationally. Workshops in Canada led to organisations using CA to facilitate community meetings and staff training, leading to the development of new frameworks around community engagement (3.5) (5.6). Techniques have been adopted by the Barangua Community in their

community Café in Osaka (Japan, 3.4) and led Alley Theatre to enhance their marginalised communities programme in the USA (5.2).

### Research-led engagement with diverse audiences leads to increased participation and understandings

Over 5000 community members participated in CASIC events (2015-2019). Evaluation mechanisms capture benefits such as: encouraging reflection and enhancing understandings on a wide range of issues, e.g., community health. Projects led to the expansion of the indicators of 'healthy communities' (3.3) which are more inclusive of different types of evidence. Participants reflected on how the CA method helped them to visualise change and report better understandings of their health through the realisation of community relations (5.6): *'we were in it together'* (3.3).

Participants reported personal capacity building benefits. One claimed that CA sessions helped *'expand her mind and vocabulary'* and inspired participants to consider returning to education (3.1). Some shared their experiences at conferences, including before the Cabinet Office and government departments (3.5): *'not only did this enhance their soft skills (e.g., Confidence, emotional intelligence (5.6)) it ... improve[d] ... employability skills'* (5.5). Participant enjoyment is another legacy of CA (3.1). The Chair of the North Staffs Community Food Network (NSCFN) commented *'... it's enjoyable. I find that people ... listen and take a lot more on board'* (5.7).

### Influencing Community Organising

CA was facilitative of interventions in support of communities devastated by the Japanese Tsunami, through encouraging cooperation rather than competition (3.4). Research has had considerable impact on community organising around food poverty in Staffordshire. As a direct consequence the NSCFN (a Community Interest Group) was founded in 2015 (5.8), which, in turn, led to the development of the Food Charter for Stoke on Trent (2017), later adopted by the City Council (5.7). NSCFN's Chair describes how CA methods including *'play acting and games'* provided the lived experience data that shaped the Charter, which was *'done by the people of Stoke on Trent for the people of Stoke on Trent'* (5.7). This also stimulated the development of new local Food Festivals, including Middleport Food Festival (2015) (grant 1) and citywide Stoke on Trent Festival (2017), which engaged over 3000 community members. A Health Improvement Practitioner from Stoke City Council described how *'the network and CASIC have been instrumental in helping us on our journey'* towards working to receive a Bronze Award for a Sustainable Food City for Stoke on Trent (2019) (5.9).

KBS research and CASIC have tipped the methodological balance towards community inclusiveness. This has been highlighted by Arts Council England as best practice for the development of international HEI collaboration (5.4) and by EU think tank SEISMIC as good practice for social innovation (5.10).

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

5.1 K Facer & B Enright, 'Creating Living Knowledge: The Connected Communities Programme, community-university partnerships and the participatory turn in the production of knowledge' (Bristol: AHRC 2016), p136 [https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Creating-Living-Knowledge.Final\\_.pdf](https://connected-communities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Creating-Living-Knowledge.Final_.pdf)

5.2 CASIC Brochure (2015) <https://view.joomag.com/casic-brochure/0593723001458832231?short>

5.3 AHRC, Weathering the Storm: How Communities Respond to Adversity (podcast) (February 2014) <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/readwatchlisten/filmsandpodcasts/weatheringthestorm/> (download also held within Keele's repository)

5.4 Arts Council England International HEI Collaboration Case Study: Keele University and the New Vic Theatre (30 July 2018)

- 5.5 D James, 'Evaluating the Legacy of Animative and Iterative Connected Communities Projects: reflections on methodological legacies' *NCVO* (August 2015)  
[https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/ri/risocsci/thelegacyofconnectedcommunities/FINAL%20EVALUATING%20LEGACY%20REPORT%20NCVO%20300915%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/ri/risocsci/thelegacyofconnectedcommunities/FINAL%20EVALUATING%20LEGACY%20REPORT%20NCVO%20300915%20(1).pdf)
- 5.6 Jess Steele, 'Boat, Tree, Game Buttons, how ordinary objects can spark extraordinary change: Cultural Animation and Community Organising' *Jericho Road Solutions* (2015)  
[https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/ri/risocsci/thelegacyofconnectedcommunities/Boat\\_Tree\\_Game\\_Buttons\\_Practice\\_Report\\_single\\_page\\_print\\_updated%20\(3\)%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/ri/risocsci/thelegacyofconnectedcommunities/Boat_Tree_Game_Buttons_Practice_Report_single_page_print_updated%20(3)%20(1).pdf)
- 5.7 Denis Woolley, North Staffs Community Food Network talks about CASIC (January 2019)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyrljGW-sDo> (download also held within Keele's repository)
- 5.8 Surman, Kelemen, Moffat, *Beyond the Food Bank: using digital technology to escape food poverty*, Final report for the EPSRC (September 2015).
- 5.9 CASIC Food Unwrapped, *ESRC Festival of Social Science* (November 2018)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ercaOR4kOEo> (download also held within Keele's repository)
- 5.10 SEISMIC, CASIC Good Practice Assessment (2016).