



Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund Projects 2016-17

The University's Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund is an internal grant scheme for academics and researchers to:

- Develop or pilot new Public Engagement with Research projects or;
- Improve existing Public Engagement with Research activity or;
- Evaluate or gather evidence of impact of ongoing Public Engagement with Research activities.

The fund is supported by the [Catalyst Seed Fund grant](#) from Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

The following ten projects were funded (ranging from £1500 to £4000) in response to the 2016-17 call for proposals:

1. Dr Mathias Czaika

Oxford Department for International Development

'CONTAINED – Evaluation, dissemination and promotion'

December 2016 - April 2017

The CONTAINED Project connects experience, research and creative learning, to contribute to dialogues and greater understanding about migration. The project began in 2016 as a collaboration between researcher Marieke van Houte of the International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford and Anja Meinhardt of physical theatre company Justice in Motion. Together, they have been developing and piloting a trilogy of immersive, physical and participatory performances and creative learning tools that reflect research findings. See contained-project.com.

The Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund allows us to do a thorough evaluation of this pilot project, to disseminate its outcomes and to promote the next phase. The goal of the activity is threefold: to take stock of lessons learned and take them with us into the next phases of CONTAINED by producing an in-depth and publicly available evaluation report; to share these lessons and at the same time promote and disseminate our project to a wider audience by producing audio-visual material, and; to write up an academic article based on the evaluation data and analysis.

2. Professor Marcus du Sautoy FRS OBE

Mathematical Institute

'Symmetry in Sound'

January – June 2017

At the end of the eighteenth century the courts of Europe thrilled to the strange sound of a violin bow being dragged across the side of a metal plate. But it was not the sound but the shapes that were appearing in the sand scattered on the metal plate that so excited audiences. Mathematician Ernst Chladni discovered extraordinary symmetrical patterns hidden inside the strange noise of the vibrating plate.

In this twenty-first century reconstruction we plan to take Chladni's famous performance to a new dimension. By setting up a network of Chladni plates driven by individual speakers the team will create a tessellated fusion of sound and symmetry. As well as a visual feast, the tessellating plates will also act like a huge new musical instrument whose notes shift with the changing vibrations of the plates which visitors will be invited to come and play with.

As an homage to Chladni's eighteenth century recitals, the exhibition will include staged performances that combine these musical explorations with a performance lecture explaining the mathematics and physics behind the emerging patterns and how it is relevant to modern issues of instrument design, quantum physics and even the theory of prime numbers.

3. Dr Marco J. Haenssgen

Centre for Tropical Medicine & Global Health, Nuffield Department of Medicine

'Advancing Realist Evaluation Approaches for Public Engagement: Health-Themed Science Theatre in Thailand'

September 2016 - April 2017

The social outcomes of drama performances are difficult to evaluate and little guidance exists in the evaluation research literature. This is problematic for activities that use drama to engage the public in research. In order to inform the theory and practice of evaluating such public engagement activities, we study the health-themed drama *Fishy Clouds* in Thailand, which aims to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance and research with children through an artistically valuable performance. We use a realist evaluation approach that gathers qualitative and quantitative methods from attendees and project stakeholders to understand the outcomes of the theatre performance across our target groups. We will share our novel insights with our collaborators and academic and professional audiences while developing collaborative networks and local capacity for public engagement evaluation.

4. Professor Richard Scholar

Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

'Around *Storming Utopia*: Islands and Identities in Crisis, 1516-2017 and Beyond...'

November 2016 - June 2017

We will invite the residents of Oxford beyond the University into a public discussion of ideal communities, insularity, and the actualisation of that better society sometimes called Utopia. We are working with members of the East Oxford community (through the Pegasus Theatre) to develop a theatrical show, *Storming Utopia*, which will be performed in Oxford and Venice in Spring and Summer 2017. The show will make contemporary, local, and theatrical sense of Thomas More's ground-breaking fantasy of a Nowhere Island that is also a 'brave new world' – Utopia (first published 500 years ago in 1516). It will do this by 'mashing up' Utopia with Shakespeare's *Tempest* and Montaigne's essay 'On Cannibals' and returning to More's speech about refugees in a play part-authored by Shakespeare, Sir Thomas More, to ask of Oxford today: What are the laws and customs of this place? How might these be improved? What are the risks? Who may have access to the drama, and on what terms? These are More's questions, and they all still matter today, as responses across Europe to the UK's recent referendum on EU membership focus on the insularity of the UK's current sense of political identity and ask all European citizens to ask what a better European society might look like in our shared future.

5. Dr Victoria Elliott

Department of Education

'Texts and Teachers: English researchers for schools'

December 2016 – May 2017

This project brings together the educational expertise of the Oxford Education Deanery and researchers in the Faculty of English to connect English researchers at the University of Oxford with A level teachers across the country. The demands of rapid curricular change and the needs for critical material in A level study mean that teachers of English need, but do not have access to, up to date research on the texts they teach.

This project will develop early career researchers' understanding of the A level curriculum and approaches for connecting with teachers, and bring the two sets of participants together in a one day conference held in Oxford.

6. Dr Simon Knight

Oxford Transplant Centre, Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences

'Developing an online patient advisory panel for renal and transplant research in Oxford'

November 2016 - March 2017

Renal and transplant patients have chronic health conditions that require ongoing care over many years. There is a lot of research activity undertaken in the field both in Oxford and elsewhere. We would like to ensure that this activity represents patients' needs, and is accessible to as many patients as possible. By developing an online patient advisory panel, we hope to involve as many interested patients as possible to provide us with a patient perspective on upcoming research projects and patient materials. The panel will be accessible to all renal and transplant researchers and clinicians in Oxford with ideas for new research projects. All renal and transplant patients from Oxford or its peripheral clinics will be invited to participate. The online portal will also allow us to inform patients and the public of ongoing research projects within our units, and to disseminate the results of our research to a wider audience.

7. Dr Marta Valente Pinto

Department of Paediatrics/Oxford Vaccine Group

'Whooping cough – raising awareness'

December 2016 - May 2017

Whooping cough is a highly contagious respiratory disease that, although to some extent preventable by vaccines, continues to cause a significant number of infections in developed countries, like the UK. This activity, designed to be delivered in Thames Valley's Primary and Secondary Schools, aims to inform the public about whooping cough, helping children, parents and teachers to understand more about the disease. We also aim to show the importance of clinical trials in medical research and how they can impact local and global health. The other objective is to use a specific study in this area, which will recruit children who are 7-15 years old, as an example to enable students to understand the process of making an informed decision about participation in clinical trials. The project will consist of giving two interactive workshops, designed to be age appropriated. The first session would be focused in understanding the disease and the second in the importance of clinical trials, the impact of medical research in society and how the public can participate in trials based on an informed decision. Different activities and materials will be used in the sessions to stimulate participation and engagement of the participants, like games, activity cards, videos and interactive cartoons.

8. Dr Laura Tisdall

Faculty of History

'Making History: Telling Our Own Stories'

March - April 2017

This project will encourage young people in Fenland to think about history in a new way, understanding that, at least for modern historians, oral history and self-narrative work can be as important as more traditional methods of historical research such as using archives. By teaching them storytelling skills, it will strengthen their ability to tell and perform their own stories, improving their presentation skills and allowing them to reflect on their own lives so far.

For historians, this project will pilot a new way of doing oral history, especially with children and adolescents. By giving them the skills to tell effective stories, it will enlist them as true partners in research rather than as passive interviewees.

It will address current criticisms of oral history methodology by paying attention to the form, as well as the content, of life-stories, and by allowing interviewees to put forward the truths that they feel are most important.

9. Professor Daniel Wakelin

Faculty of English Language and Literature

'Redesigning the Medieval Book'

January – June 2017

The Bodleian Library will invite contemporary artists and craftspeople, who specialize in 'book arts' today, to take part in workshops to learn about medieval manuscripts.

There will be a competition for artists and craftspeople to create new pieces of book art inspired by the manuscripts, with a medieval English work inside. The shortlisted and winning entries will be exhibited in the Bodleian Library late in 2017 alongside a major exhibition of medieval book design, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page*.

By bringing together medieval manuscripts and the work of modern craftspeople and artists, we hope to learn more about medieval craft and design through practitioners' eyes, and to encourage contemporary creative artists to continue to learn from and respond to medieval traditions of book design. The ensuing exhibition will be open to the wider public and allow others to see new and old crafts and creativity in dialogue.

10. Professor Ian Walmsley, Merritt Moore and Dr Helen Chrzanowski

Atomic and Laser Physics, Department of Physics

'Zero Point Virtual Reality Outreach (ZePVRO)'

January – June 2017

This project, Zero Point Virtual Reality Outreach (ZePVRO), will create a sensory journey combining virtual reality, motion sensing technology, powerful digital imagery, music and dance to aesthetically illuminate the mysteries of quantum physics.

This virtual reality video will be a key addition to the live production *Zero Point* premiering at the Barbican in May 2017. It will pioneer the use of aesthetic virtual reality technology to integrate science and art to stimulate curiosity and enhance education.

The goal is to create an immersive experience that will inspire excitement for both art and science.