

# DEMYSTIFYING IMPACT: HOW WE CAN MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE THROUGH RESEARCH



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# Session

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Impact – what  
it is (and isn't)

2

Impact literacy

3

You and impact  
+ principles for  
practice

# Impact: what it is (and isn't)

**Impact =**  
**Provable effects (benefits) of research in**  
**the 'real world'**



*Beyond dissemination, academic interest or reputation, citations, attention*

# Impact can be....

Something new

Something changed

Something prevented

Something preserved

Instrumental change ♦ Capacity building ♦ Conceptual change

# A very small list of illustrative examples!

- ❖ New/changed policy
  - ❖ New/changed guidelines
  - ❖ New/changed strategy
  - ❖ New/change practices
  - ❖ New/more jobs
  - ❖ New/diversified markets
  - ❖ Improved health & wellbeing
  - ❖ More/better service delivery
  - ❖ £: Profits, cost savings
  - ❖ Businesses able to survive
  - ❖ Sustainable industrial practices
  - ❖ Charities/voluntary organisations able to offer more services, leverage more funds
  - ❖ Access to and benefits of education
  - ❖ Improved equality
  - ❖ Reduced stigma
  - ❖ Animal welfare
  - ❖ Community welfare
  - ❖ Preservation of land/scape
  - ❖ Attitudes and understanding
  - ❖ Widened access / improved inclusion
  - ❖ Use of cultural venues
  - ❖ Change in media representation
  - ❖ Preserving, memorialising, commemorating or conserving heritage
- (and MANY MANY more)*

Instrumental change ♦ Capacity building ♦ Conceptual change

# If we're claiming impact, we're saying....

“We did research on \_\_\_\_\_. We connected this research to society by \_\_\_\_\_. Because of this research, \_\_\_\_\_ changed, as demonstrated by \_\_\_\_\_”



Qualitative or quantitative information from a legitimate (external) source to corroborate the claim of 'real world change'.  
May consist of a single or multiple pieces, with typical formats including testimonials, organisational reports, citations in policy documents (+ many others)

## Policy, strategy and decision making

- New / altered policy (local authority, national, international, NGO)
- Educational strategy
- Government spending
- Early Years policy
- National standards

## Teachers and educators

- Teaching practices
- Communities of practice
- Workforce planning
- Professional development
- Professional standards

## Students, student experience and outcomes

- Attainment
- Dropout
- Literacy
- Progression from under-represented backgrounds
- Pupils' mental health

## Pedagogy, curriculum and delivery

- Curriculum change
- Pedagogical practices
- Classroom practices
- Evidence-informed best practice

## Educational disadvantage

- Closing the attainment gap
- Addressing educational needs of refugees & migrants
- Access and support services for disabled students

## Monitoring and inspection

- Exam structure / timing / content
- Marking policies and practices
- Accreditation
- Inspection framework & criteria
- Monitoring of educational standards
- Quality of assessments

## Sustainability and resilience

- Halted plans for forced Academicisation
- Education in conflict zones

## Gender

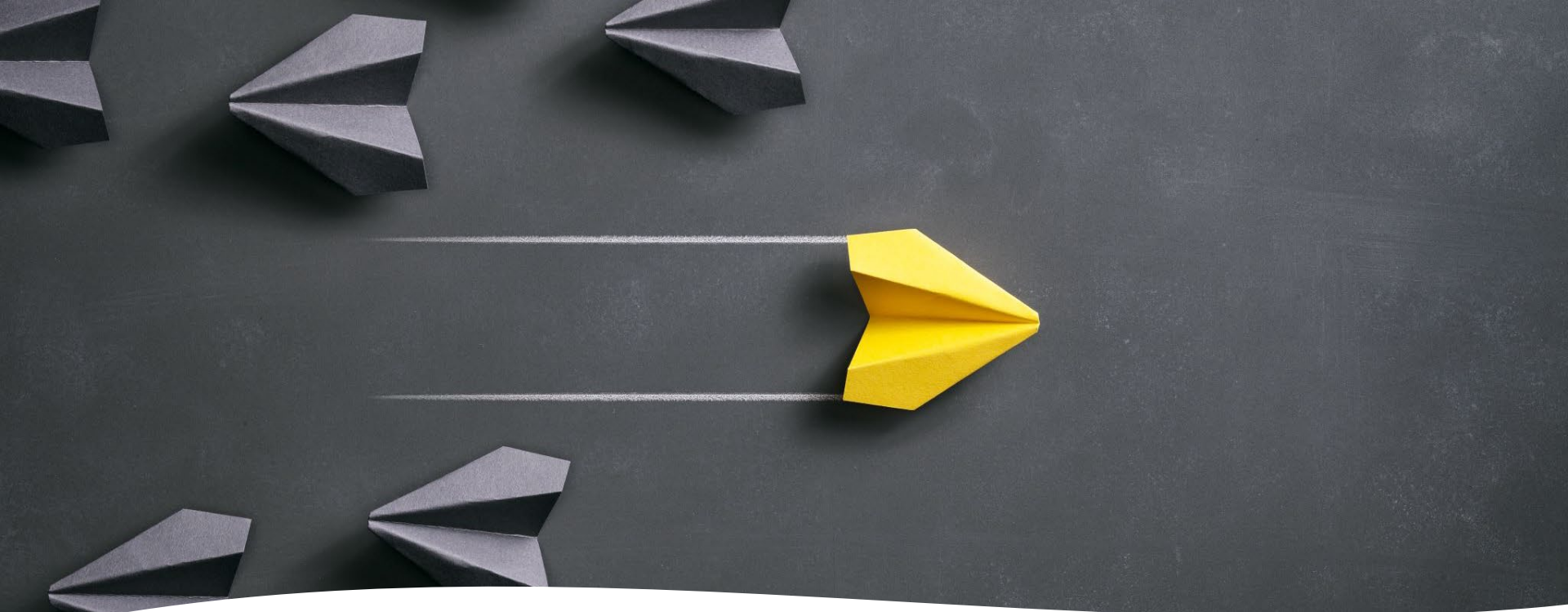
- Gender equality
- Gender diversity
- Strategies to tackle gender stereotyping, sexual harassment and violence
- Address gender achievement patterns

## Family literacy and parental engagement

## Public understanding & attitudes

## Activism and campaigning





# Some myths

- Impact *only* happens after the research (or publication)
- Impact is *only* from positive findings
- Impact is an endpoint
- Only applied research has impact
- You can't plan impact

# Drivers for research impact

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**We must:** external and instrumentalised requirements such as funding or assessment

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**We should:** broader missions, such as Sustainable Development Goals and Civic agendas

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**We/I want to:** personal motivation, often relating to passion around the subject area, lived experience or appetite for social justice.



# Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Terminology from the *Terminologia dels drets humans*  
 UNITED NATIONS. Universal Declaration of Human Rights [online]. Geneva: OHCHR, cop. 1996-2017.

Generalitat de Catalunya  
 Departament de Cultura

termcat  
 Servei de Terminologia

With the support of:  
 Govern d'Andorra

YORK U

@researchimpact

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



If impact were a person, it would be asking you *'how can you make the world better with your research?'*

# Impact literacy

- Bayley, J. and Phipps, D. (2017) **Building the Concept of Impact Literacy**, Evidence and Policy (available online) <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426417X15034894876108>
- Bayley J and Phipps D. **Extending the concept of research impact literacy: levels of literacy, institutional role and ethical considerations [version 1; peer review: 2 approved]** Emerald Open Research 2019, 1:14 (<https://doi.org/10.12688/emeraldopenres.13140.1>)
- Bayley, J., 2023. **Creating Meaningful Impact: The Essential Guide to Developing an Impact-Literate Mindset**. Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://books.emeraldinsight.com/book/detail/creating-meaningful-impact/?k=9781804551929>
- **Impact Literacy workbook**: <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/about/our-stance/our-impact>

**WHY**

The purpose /  
reason

**HOW**

The methods

**Impact  
Literacy**

**WHO**

The stakeholders

**WHAT**

The benefits  
(impacts)



*Impact is in  
the eye of  
the beholder*

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WHO: impact is a team sport



# Who? *Impact is a team sport*

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- **Within the organisation**
  - Researchers, research managers, leaders etc
- **Outside the organisation**
  - Those who might benefit
  - Those who share the same goals
  - Those who can implement
  - Those who advocate for change
  - Those can see if the change happens



# What can we mobilise?

It's not just about positive findings....

- 👍 New knowledge, insights or evidence (*'we now know'*)
- 👍 New concepts, ideas or perspectives (*'we have rethought'*)
- 👍 Insights into ways things are understood (*'we know how we know'*)
- 👍 New or modified research methods (*'we know how to'*)
- 👍 Experiences of what doesn't work (*'we know not to'*)
- 👍 A materially usable 'thing' eg. process, tool or intervention (*'we now have a thing for'*)
- 👍 A new practice or way of performing (*'we have a new way to'*)
- 👍 Newly heard voices, especially through coproduction (*'we've now heard from'*)
- 👍 A new definition or set of parameters (*'we can now specify'*)

# Some mechanisms for how



## Mobilising research

Dissemination and communication, websites, blogs, seminars, outreach, engagement, contribute to parliamentary consultations (etc)



## Mobilising researchers

Eg. outward secondments, knowledge transfer partnerships, 'in residence'



## Mobilising non-academics

Eg. inward secondments, 'artist in residence', use of University labs

Engage early ♦ Be active ♦ Establish a line of sight to impact ♦ Align to context

YOU AND IMPACT

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If impact were a person, it would be asking you *'how can you make the world better with your research?'*

What difference can you make?

# Weaving impact into your career



As a  
researcher



As a  
practitioner



As a teacher



As a mentor



As a leader



As a *mix*

- Connect into networks which are focused on change
- Skill-up
- Shift beyond dissemination
- Dive into implementation science
- Check out examples of impact
- Connect with the people who are making a difference
- Hook into what matters to you

# Principles for impact literacy in practice

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CHASE MEANING  
NOT UNICORNS

Focus on what matters,  
rather than what's  
mythically shiny and  
impressive





WORK OUT  
WHAT YOUR  
RESEARCH  
POWERS UP

What would be different  
if your research didn't  
exist?



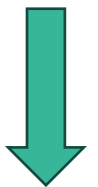
OWN YOUR  
EXPERTISE BUT  
DON'T BE A JERK

Recognise the value you bring,  
as well as the expertise of  
others.



BE YOU

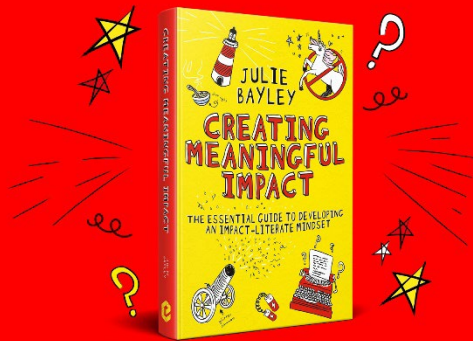
Always, and with pride.



*Unless you're a jerk*

# THANK YOU

## CREATING MEANINGFUL IMPACT:



**THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO DEVELOPING  
AN IMPACT-LITERATE MINDSET**

**JULIE BAYLEY, UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN**



**AVAILABLE NOW IN PAPERBACK & EBOOK**

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