

2017-18 SOGE Inspiration Grant Report

Nancy Gladstone and Saskia Nowicki

SoGE Inspiration Grant funding was used to catalyse and help deliver a programme of engagement to teach young people in Kwale County, Kenya about water science and management. This programme was made possible by linking with the [Gro for Good project](#) and was further supported by Base Titanium, a local mining company that engages in social outreach. Water clubs were started at 3 secondary schools and the students participated in field trips and learning activities and conducted their own group research projects. Beyond teaching about water management, the goal in starting these clubs was to help develop students' research and communication skills and to showcase career options in the water sector.



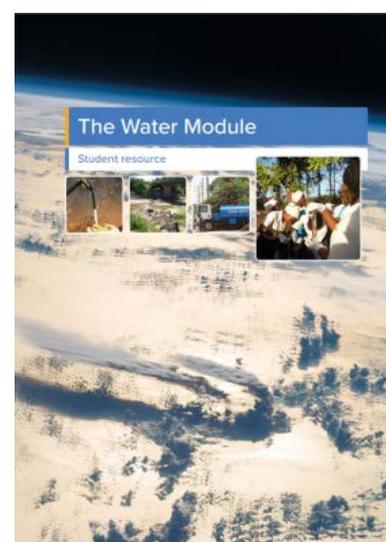
Students experiment with a model aquifer kit

An event was held on March 17th 2018, in the run-up to World Water Day 2018, to celebrate the clubs. We welcomed the Director of Education for Kwale County, Kenya, Madam Bridget Wambua, to provide opening remarks: *“You have a very great opportunity through your water clubs, guided by your teachers who are here and who can support you. We should take this as a very special opportunity for all of us.”* Following the Director's speech, Professor Dan Olago from the University of Nairobi gave a keynote address and then students then took to the stage. The students:

- Gave a series of presentations about club activities including water quality testing of school waterpoints, the installation and use of rain-gauges on school grounds, and field trips to the Base Titanium mine to see how the mine manages and recycles water in its operations;
- Gave presentations and displayed posters about their own mini-research projects into topics such as water conservation in agriculture and strategies for keeping water safe to drink;
- Carried out practical demonstrations (solar still, sedimentation with moringa)

Madam Wambua and Professor Olago then presented the schools, water clubs and club patrons with certificates of appreciation for their hard work and dedication to water-related environmental education. Schools were also presented with 2 laptops provided UK charity IT Schools Africa, preloaded with water-related environmental education resources. Students received print copies of the [Water Module Student Resource](#), which we were able to develop and publish thanks to support from the Inspiration Grant, involvement of the Gro for Good research team, and input from students and teachers at the schools.

Since this event, an additional secondary school in Kwale County has founded a club and was supplied with copies of the Water Module. Capacity for continued engagement of researchers with the schools in Kwale County is limited due to the Gro for Good project being in its final year. However, the clubs will continue to be supported in their activities by Base Titanium's Environment Programme and in November, we intend to share an educators' guide to accompany the Water Module to facilitate future use of the resource. The potential for building on this project in Kenya is now being explored with Professor Olago, with the possibility of involving geology the University of Nairobi Geology Students Association in extending outreach on the theme of water to more schools in Kenya.



Martin Coombes and Katrin Wilhelm

The *'Head-hunting: the Sheldonian Emperors'* project received £3k from the Inspiration Fund in 2017. Since the award our team has made significant progress towards fulfilling our stated aims, and we have used this support to further extend the scope and impact of the original project, including securing on-going funding. The main activities we have used the award for are as follows:

- (1) employing a dedicated archivist in the Bodleian Libraries. This has been essential (and hugely fruitful) in amassing a significant amount of information, records, photographs, and other documents relating to the heads from within the Library collections, as well as from other external sources such as the British Library, National Archives and Historic England Archives. This material is currently being used to mount a major new public exhibition at the Weston Library (see below);
- (2) acquiring, transporting and rehoming heads from the University's old stone storage repository in Nuneham Courtenay. These heads are now looked after at OxRBLs field site at Wytham Woods, and are the subject of physical research into stone deterioration process and potential preservation by the project team as well as SoGE undergraduate students;
- (3) hosting an official 'launch event' at Wadham College on 22nd June 2018. This event successfully brought together over 40 guests with a range of links in the Sheldonian Heads, to share knowledge and findings (two more Heads were found following this event), and establish new links;
- (4) taking core samples from selected heads for on-going analysis using neutron imaging in collaboration with Diamond Light Source at the national synchrotron in Didcot. We are using this to determine more about the past stone conservation treatments. Furthermore, a MicroCT scan was conducted by Ghent University. The produced 3D model of the core pore structure will be part of the exhibition at the Weston library next year;
- (5) collaboration with Angel Sharp Media Ltd. Filming was undertaken during the relocation of heads to Wytham and the launch event. A video about the project and exhibition are currently in production.

Through our activities, we have now successfully located 24 in total and recorded 14 of the original 1st generation of heads, 9 of the 2nd generation and 1 unknown.

Impact and follow-on work:

As well as the activities outlined above that were directly supported by the Inspiration Fund, the award has enabled us to progress other avenues for research and outreach. In particular, we continue to work in close collaboration with the Bodleian Libraries to mount a new public exhibition within the Weston Library for summer 2019. This will be accompanied by a major publication, written by the project team and published in collaboration with Bodleian Library Publishing, committing to an initial print run of 5000 copies. These will be available for purchase by the general public within the Bodleian's on-site bookshop. We have also successfully secured £16,000 of additional funding from the Diversity Fund for a follow-on project exploring the identities of 'Future Heads'. This project will explore suitable imagery to represent more diverse views of successful people which better reflect the aspirations of today's University staff and its students. We are also currently developing grant applications in heritage science and stone conservation from a range of UK and international bodies that will incorporate further research using the heads.

The project has received widespread media interest, including several local radio interviews, local and national newspaper features, and articles in college publications.

SoGE Inspiration Fund: An online tool for participatory mapping of cultural ecosystem services

Not-quite-final report

Alison Smith, 4 October 2018

Green space such as parks, woodlands and allotments provides cultural benefits including opportunities for recreation, learning, interacting with wildlife, aesthetic value and “sense of place”. These benefits are highly valued by local people but are usually neglected in decision-making, because they are highly subjective and difficult to assess. As a result, green space and natural areas are disappearing in many areas due to pressure from housing and infrastructure development, threatening the health and wellbeing of local residents.

We had already run several workshops for mapping cultural services on large paper maps, working with stakeholders in Warwickshire and Essex, and we planned to use the Inspiration Fund award to develop an online app that would reach a wider audience. The plan was to test the app in an ongoing project on Green Infrastructure in Bicester, and then also apply it in Essex, working with our contacts at Essex County Council. We were very lucky that an MSc student, Helen Mason, had chosen to do her dissertation on the cultural benefits of green infrastructure in Bicester via a street survey and a focus group, and she decided to complement this with a simple online survey that she developed using a free tool called Map-Me. We therefore decided to use some of the funding to pay for support staff (Jo Thompson) to work with Helen for a week, helping to test the Map-Me app at a drop-in session at Bicester Library.

Helen coded all the data using a systematic categorisation of the benefits or ‘blocking factors’ (preventing the delivery of benefits) revealed by each comment. This generated a very rich database, with 539 responses from 136 people, covering 64 green spaces in Bicester, of which 98 responses were from the app and the rest from the street survey, drop-in sessions and a focus group. The dataset demonstrated a wide range of cultural benefits, with the most frequently reported benefit being the health benefit of physical activity but other benefits including connection to nature, social interactions, aesthetic value and local identity. ‘Blocking factors’ included poor access to green space, issues with the condition (e.g. litter or broken glass), loss of green space to development, and a general lack of wildlife in Bicester.

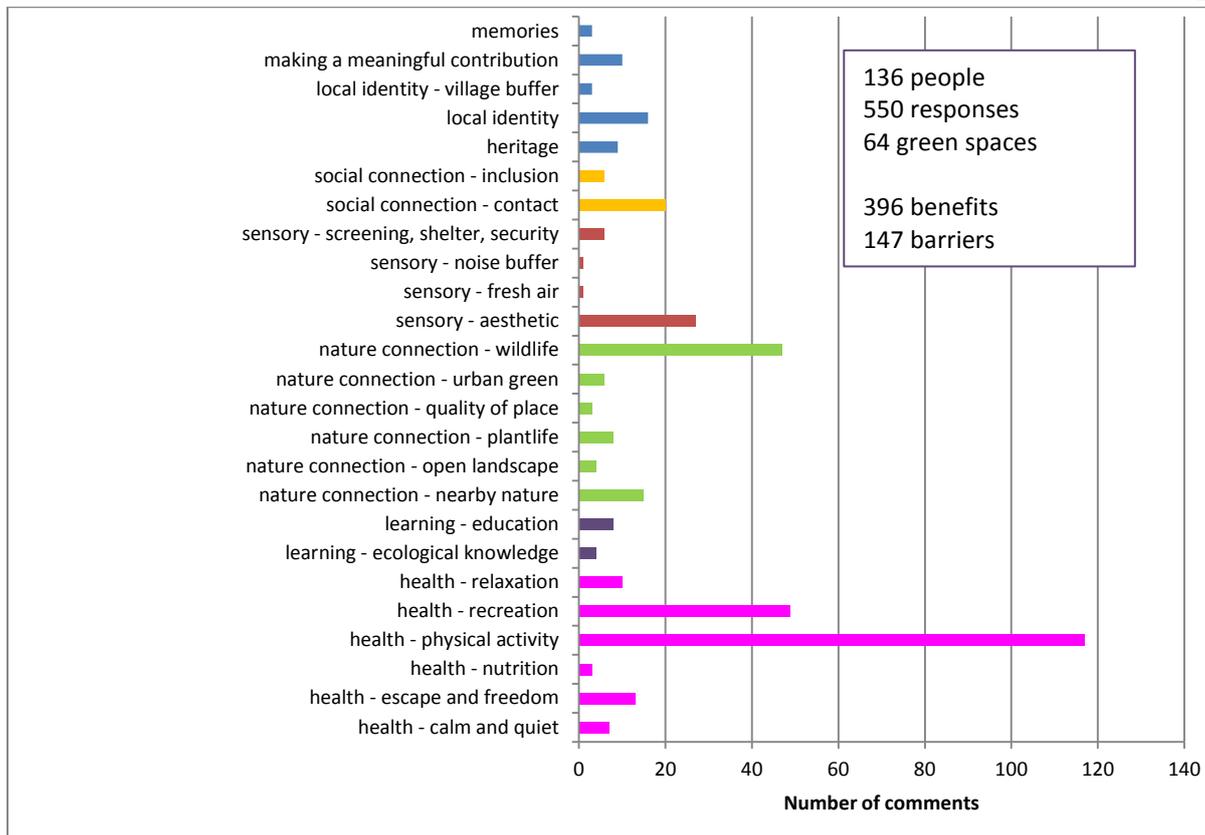
Although this data is qualitative and anecdotal, it was a powerful illustration of the values held by local people, which resonated with both Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council. Both councils were surprised by the strength of feeling that people attach not just to the larger spaces such as parks and nature reserves, but also to the small patches of grass and street trees outside their front doors. We were invited to present our work to a meeting of Bicester Town Council, and our report on the public value of green space was also included as an Annex to Cherwell District Council’s new Community Nature Plan. We now plan to use the findings from this work to inform development of a more sophisticated app that can be used in other areas.

Garth Park is always filled with locals and has a friendly atmosphere. People stop for a chat – there’s a sense of community [Male, 18-24]

Local play areas on the estate are a godsend – we don’t have to get into the car with the kids [Female, 25-44]

It would be good to have a better cycling network to get out into the wider countryside [Female, 45-64]

I walk through Bure Park on my way to work. I enjoy the wildlife, and I can hear the birds from my garden [Female, 45-64]



Heather Viles

Inspiration Fund report – Oxford Heritage Network

The Inspiration Fund money allowed me to hire two part-time research assistants for six months (Lucie Fusade and Katherine Jang, both D.Phil students within SoGE) to support me in carrying out a range of tasks scoping out the viability and nature of a proposed Oxford Heritage Network. We talked to the coordinators of some of the ONE networks, liaised with Andrew Fairweather Tall and Oliver Cox in the Humanities Division and others in heritage leadership roles within the University, and devised, tested and sent out a survey to staff and students. The survey showed a clear internal demand for a heritage network (over 80 staff respondents, including academic and professional staff from all academic divisions, GLAM, and the Estates Service, as well as over 60 student respondents), and gave a lot of excellent ideas about the type of online and other activities of most interest. Katherine produced a trial website and we started to populate it with information from participants. Lucie produced an e-newsletter which we circulated to all those who had expressed interest. I was extremely impressed with the level of interest in the network, not only internally but also from local and national heritage organisations. In Trinity Term we put together an application to the Fell Fund for a cross-divisional Oxford Heritage Network with me as PI and Oliver Cox from TORCH as Co-I. Our application was successful and we now have £40k (+ likely further HEIF funding) to get the OHN up and running over an 18 month period. We are now busy planning our launch event for Michaelmas Term, and hiring two part time staff members to run and support the network.

Jamie Lorimer

SoGE Inspiration Awards 2018 End of Project Report Applicant name & email Jamie Lorimer.

jamie.lorimer@ouce.ox.ac.uk Application title (max. 10 words): The Elephant in the Hedge Brief project description: This project brought together geographers, theatre scholars, natural scientists, conservationists and artists to imagine rewilding the British countryside with animals that have not lived here for several thousand years. It explored the potential of performance (as method and medium) for reshaping the imaginaries and practices of wildlife conservation. The Inspiration Fund supported a two-day residential workshop at the Knepp Castle rewilding initiative in West Sussex (knepp.co.uk). The workshop was attended by the three project organisers: the PI, the academic and theatre director David Overend (RHUL), and the paleoecologist Danielle Shrieve (RHUL), alongside a further 15 participants. These included two (paleo)ecologists, two conservationists; three social scientists working on wildlife conservation; three theatre studies academics; two writers, a visual and a performance artist; and an experienced walking guide. The workshop involved a series of talks and practical activities. The traces of extinct species in the British countryside were first introduced by a paleoecologist and a conservationist. An introduction to ecological approaches to performance was then offered by theatre scholars and cultural geographers. These presentations informed a guided exploration of the estate, facilitated by an artistic walking practitioner (Phil Smith) and the resident ecologist (Penny Green). On this walk participants shared their fieldwork expertise (broadly defined) and identified different means by which we might learn to be affected by the landscape and its absences. Finally, a structured performance workshop (led by Karen Christopher) helped facilitate the collaborative design of a set of performances by the project participants. We performed these at the end of the workshop. A video artist recorded the workshop and produced a short film. The photographer created a visual record, and a research assistant provided a written account. After the workshop the three investigators drafted a paper outlining our interdisciplinary approach to 'wild performativities' and recounting our experience. This paper has been submitted to and accepted by the journal *Geohumanities*. It should be published in the next couple of months. We followed up the Knepp workshop with another walking event in London (entitled London Drift), in which we organized and led a public walk through the city visiting prominent sites at which the archaeological remains of large animals had been found. We encouraged participants to imagine the past presence of these animals in the city and to think forward to means of rewilding the city. We are currently writing up this event for publication. We will return to Knepp in the autumn of 2018 for a further workshop, at which we hope to produce an audio-visual artwork for wider public consumption. We consider this project to have been successful and are grateful to the School of Geography, and to the Theatre Studies Department at RHUL for making it possible. The Inspiration Fund helped seed a novel collaboration. It has enabled us to build a new research network and led to the successful delivery of three workshops and one publication in a good peer-reviewed journal. We also had a lot of fun!

SoGE Inspiration Award 2017**Summary of the project: Global Network on Financial Geography (FinGeo)****Dariusz Wójcik****Background:**

Over the last few years, with colleagues I have developed an informal network of people interested in financial geography. In 2016 I was elected the inaugural chair of the Global Network on Financial Geography (FinGeo), presiding over an international executive committee. FinGeo is constituted as an open and interdisciplinary network of academics, practitioners and other experts interested in research on the spatiality of money and finance and their implications for the development of economy, society, and nature. Our key objectives are to: stimulate diversity and innovation in this field of research; facilitate collaboration and sharing of databases, teaching materials, and research outputs; influence private and public strategy and policy; and contribute to a broader public debate on the role of finance in the world. Finance is arguably the most globalised and networked of human activities. To understand it we need a global research network. With challenges facing London in the post-Brexit era, President Trump rolling back financial regulation in the US, and Shanghai vying to become a global financial centre by 2020, we live in exciting times for financial geography. Our long-term goal is to make FinGeo the go-to-place for researchers, journalists, finance professionals, and policy-makers worldwide looking for research and research-informed commentary on any topics related to finance and geography. There is no alternative research network or platform that addresses these issues.

Funding:

I received £4,000 from the Fund. I used it to hire a SoGE MPhil student, Marcel Metzner as a part-time assistant, on a one day a week basis, from 1 July 2017 to 1 March 2018, to help maintain the website, social media presence of FinGeo, and support me in the function of the Network chair.

Outcomes and benefits:

The funding helped me develop the FinGeo Network. We created new material for the website (www.fingeo.net) including a working paper series, blogs, and a map presenting and discussing the membership structure. Marcel attended with me the Financial Geography Lab in Frankfurt in November 2017 and ran a social media campaign for FinGeo during the event. He improved FinGeo's profile on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Overall, our membership increased from approx. 300 in June 2017 to nearly 500 in May 2018. Our members now come from over 50 countries all over the world. We closed the first year of our website's existence with a series of 13 working papers, attracting interest from publishers in launching a new journal. The working papers include 2 papers co-authored by myself and PDRAs working on my ERC project. This success in terms of size and profile also enabled FinGeo to organise the First Spring School in Financial Geography that took place in Brussels in May 2018, attended by over 30 early career researchers. Marcel helped with preparations for the event. The Executive Committee of FinGeo, which I chair, is now putting together an application for over EUR120,000 of COST Network funding and EUR50,000 from FVB (research grant council in Flanders, Belgium) in order to develop the network further. SoGE has thus become a key node of a path-breaking network in a burgeoning interdisciplinary field of research. Marcel Meztner benefited from the experience, developing skills in website and social media development, as well as event management. He also extended his network of contacts relevant to his research interests.

