GENERATING IMPACT IN TRANSNATIONAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH

Prof. Dr. Joanna Sothern: HERA Knowledge Exchange & Impact Fellow, University of Southampton, U.K. (joannasothern.ac.uk);
Prof. Dr. Wojciech Jaworski: HERA Network Chair, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan;
Prof. Dr. Tom Whitley: HERA Knowledge Exchange & Impact Fellow, Birmingham City University, U.K. (tomwhitley@bcu.ac.uk);

HERA 2009-2018

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUMANITIES-LED, COLLABORATIVE, TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH THAT WILL DELIVER NEW INSIGHTS RELATING TO MAJOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING EUROPE AND THE WORLD.

HERA
Humanities in the European Research Area

HERA leads in the practice of knowledge-exchange, public engagement and impact for European humanities research. HERA’s unique transnational structure offers the potential to capitalise on research excellence, extensive networks, and critical mass in delivering novel, thematic, humanities-based contributions to society beyond the national level.

EMBEDDING IMPACT INTO HERA: STRUCTURES AND POLICIES

HERA’s first thematic Joint Research Programme (JRP) was launched in 2009 (Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity; Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation). This has been followed by two subsequent JRP’s in 2012 (Cultural Encounters) and 2015 (Uses of the Past: a fourth starts in 2019 (Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe). The HERA partners, together with the European Commissions, have pooled €56 million to fund 57 transnational humanities-focused projects. These have supported 131 scholars, 206 postdoctoral researchers and 88 PhD students who have worked together with 123 associated partners, including business and industry, policy makers, museums, galleries, libraries and archives, media organisations, the education sector, journalists and writers groups, festivals and venues, military regiments, religious institutions, arts organisations and performing arts practitioners, heritage sites and historic buildings, activist groups, legal and financial institutions, professional societies, public sector institutions, voluntary and community groups, charitable organisations, and the general public.

PILLARS & CONFERENCE THEMES: Structures and Policies (Pillar 2)

HERA 2009-2018

Creating opportunities for humanities-led, collaborative, transnational research that will deliver new insights relating to major social, cultural and political challenges facing Europe and the world.

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All HERA projects include plans for impact. Knowledge exchange and identity non-academic partners. The distinctive nature of the JRP means that projects may be confronted with multiple local definitions of impact and researchers’ differing familiarity with its understanding. A challenge for HERA has therefore been to establish structures and policies that are flexible enough to embrace national variation whilst encouraging and promoting impact through transnational working. HERA embraces the diversity of impact and integrates it as a focus for exploration, research and innovation.

HERA gains insight data into the range, reach, depth, beneficiaries, nature and longevity of impacts generated by HERA-funded transnational humanities research through post-project reflection, including a conference specifically dedicated to impact (Amsterdam, 2017); strategic consultations, interviews and impact reports (Brookhart & Soler 2015; Whitley & Rutsch 2016). Our data is both qualitative and quantitative.

HERA proactively stimulates impact through ‘top-up’ impact awards and the appointment of 2 HERA Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fellows. The Fellows are charged with supporting funded projects and developing a scheme-wide culture of impact, creating a sustainable infrastructure for impact through events and toolkits including working with Early Career Researchers, and advocating for the humanities on national and international levels.

HERA monitors impact through its Knowledge Exchange Strategy Group (KESG) which oversees the strategic implementation of new structures and policies linked to impact, works closely with the Fellows and supports impact-focused events. KESG reports to the Board and Management Team, and is thus able to draw on insights about impact from national research and funding organisations across the continent. It also monitors projects’ self-reporting of impact via their annual and final reports.

References

Brookhart, K. & Soler, J. Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe: Assessing the Impact of a HERA Research Project (HERA, 2013);