

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL END OF AWARD REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES-167-25-0193		
Grant Title	The social conditions for successful community mobilisation: Learning from sex worker led projects in India		
Grant Start Date	12 March 2007	Total Amount	£ 242,338.13
Grant End Date	31 May 2010	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	Glasgow Caledonian University		
Grant Holder	Dr Flora Cornish		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	School of Health, Glasgow Caledonian University Cowcaddens Road Glasgow G4 0BA	Flora.cornish@gcu.ac.uk	
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Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Professor Catherine Campbell		LSE	

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

The mobilisation of grassroots communities is a core commitment of current health and development policies, but is often difficult to achieve. This research examined two uniquely successful community mobilization projects led by sex workers in India, with the aim of understanding the social conditions that support effective grassroots development. While evaluation research has typically looked ‘within’ projects to understand reasons for their success or failure, this research took a novel approach by focusing on the relationships between the projects and the powerful groups which form their wider context. We investigated the role of three key sets of stakeholders: those who had significance for the projects’ *public reputations* (journalists, celebrities), *practical, day-to-day functioning* (police, local leaders), and *strategic environment* (politicians, government officers, funders).

We found that project success derived from the projects’ strategic management of their relationships with powerful stakeholders. In addition to the better-known strategies of making polite requests, or mobilising adversarial collective protests, these successful projects engage in sophisticated political manoeuvring, offering their stakeholders incentives in return for their support. Doing politics in this way is made possible by: relative security of funding, ‘strength in numbers’, well-connected leaders, and establishing a respected public profile by challenging stigma and publicising achievements.

To disseminate transferable strategies to other community organisations, we produced a downloadable training module called ‘Getting stakeholders on your side!’, designed to help projects to analyse their relations with stakeholders and strategise about how to win their support. Producing a special issue of the journal *AIDS Care* was our principal mode of academic dissemination.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. *[Max 200 words]*

The project sought to understand factors leading to the success of community mobilisation efforts, in a context where community mobilisation is (a) a key commitment of health and development policies, yet (b) difficult to achieve – with the failures better evidenced than the successes.

While evaluation research has typically looked ‘within’ projects to understand reasons for their success or failure, our perspective focuses on the social relationships between the projects and the powerful groups which form their wider context.

The objectives were:

- “1. To produce an analysis of the key social conditions and organisational structures which support community mobilisation, by comparing two successful sex workers' organisations.
2. To promote community mobilisation under conditions of extreme poverty by disseminating recommendations for action to a range of actors in the field of development.
3. To produce useful tools for sex workers to advance their interests in social development, on the basis of the research findings.
4. To contribute evidence-based recommendations for social policies to support effective community mobilisation”

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

No substantive changes were made to the aims or objectives.

A minor change to staffing took place, after discussion with the ESRC. The original project proposal indicated that a single research consultant would be employed, to cover the case study sites in both Maharashtra and West Bengal, working with an interpreter in one of these areas. At the recruitment stage, it became evident that the project would be better served by two research consultants, one in each case study site, and thus we recruited 2 research consultants.

The duration of the project changed from the original proposal (from 25 months to 39 months), with 2 no-cost extensions being granted. The first (Mar 2008-Sept 2008) was to cover the PI's maternity leave, and the second (Nov 2009-May 2010) was to enable the completion of the major academic output of the research, namely a special issue of the journal *AIDS Care*, on the topic of 'The social context of community mobilisation' (forthcoming, 2010).

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. *[Max. 500 words]*

Design

Our comparative case study was designed to illuminate processes leading to successes of community mobilisation, assuming that much could be learned from successful, long-standing projects.

We selected two Community-Based Organisations (CBOs, i.e., organisations of sex workers) which are leading HIV prevention programmes in different parts of India (DMSC in Kolkata and VAMP in Maharashtra). Both are successful on criteria of (a) HIV prevention, (b) mobilising large numbers of women, (c) sustainability (having run since the early 1990s).

Data collection methods

Interviews, focus groups, and observation provided the primary data. We carried out a total of 91 interviews and focus groups, exceeding our original objective of 70 interviews.

Table1: CBO research participants

	DMSC	VAMP
Sex workers	8 focus groups	7 interviews 5 focus groups
Sex worker project staff	10 interviews 1 focus group	19 interviews
Non-sex-worker project staff	10 interviews	5 interviews
Totals	<i>29</i>	<i>36</i>

Table 2: Stakeholder interview participants

Public reputation (journalists, celebrities)	12
Practical day-to-day functioning (police, local leaders)	6
Strategic environment (politicians, government officers, funders)	8
Total	<i>26</i>

Recruiting representatives of powerful social groups, to speak about sensitive and often political matters, was a key factor in the project's novelty, but also challenging to achieve. It was made possible by the researchers' skilled and persistent networking.

Six months (exceeding our original aim of 3 months) of observations were undertaken in each site. Observations were recorded daily, yielding 220 pages of fieldnotes, and focused on our 2 main areas of research interest:

- (i) Organisational strategies enabling empowerment and community mobilisation, as evidenced in:
 - Routine health promotion/community mobilisation activities

- Regular weekly meetings addressing current challenges and recent successes

(ii) Events where the CBOs came into contact with their stakeholders, e.g.:

- a confrontation with police over perceived wrongful arrests
- public meetings attended by politicians
- an 'art camp' where artists worked with sex workers, attracting media attention
- meeting with representatives of a funding agency

Data analysis

Fieldnotes were written in English and interviews were translated and transcribed fully in English. Analysis was supported by the software Atlas.ti. Separate thematic analyses were conducted for each research question.

Rigour

(i) Dependability (reliability)

- Data collection: In the orientation phase, interviews and observations were undertaken jointly by the PI and researchers, to achieve consistency.
- Data analysis: Analyses were conducted jointly by the PI and one researcher, interpretation was done in discussion with the full team.

(ii) Validity

- We presented our preliminary analyses to both CBOs, in the interests of 'respondent validation' and transparency.

(iii) Transferability

Transferability to other contexts was facilitated through:

- Comparative case study rather than single case study.
- Comparing CBOs with *different* social contexts but *similar* intervention approaches.
- Articulation of the dimensions upon which the case studies are *similar* to others documented in the literature

Ethical issues

No major ethical issues beyond those anticipated in the proposal arose. Working with a deeply marginalised group, we were keenly aware of the importance of (i) absolute confidentiality (ii) avoiding any potential harm to individual sex workers or the CBOs' work (iii) seeking to make our findings locally useful.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

We summarise our project findings in relation to our 3 research questions (objective 1), highlight our primary contribution and implications for policy (objective 4).

1. How do social conditions constrain and enable successful community mobilisation?

We identified 3 interdependent dimensions of social conditions enabling the CBOs' successes.

- At a *material* level, relative security of project funding has enabled the CBOs to focus on local and long-term priorities, resisting both a ‘drift’ of aims (to match shifting donor preoccupations) and funds with conditions counter to their community mobilisation aims.
- At a *relational* level, both CBOs have forged profitable reciprocal relationships with powerful actors, enabled initially by well-connected founders/advocates with political know-how, and subsequently by becoming recognised change agents locally.
- At a *symbolic* level, both CBOs adamantly challenged the stigmatisation of their members and acquired legitimacy through ‘strength in numbers’ combined with publicising their achievements.

(See Campbell & Cornish, *AIDS Care*, Cornish & Campbell, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, papers in prep.)

Our analysis highlighted that the CBOs do not simply absorb the powerful impacts of their social contexts, but that a primary reason for their success is their sophisticated *active management* of their relationships with the powerful actors who create their contexts. Hence the following question:

2. What strategies do community organisations use to mobilise stakeholder support?

Three types of strategies emerged, each with strengths and weaknesses:

- (i) *Persuading* (giving information or verbally requesting help – low risk but without leverage)
- (ii) *Protesting* (mobilising collective protest – risks creating adversaries, but effective if the stakeholder risks embarrassment through public protest)
- (iii) *Exchanging favours* (drawing the stakeholder into a reciprocal relation – risks making compromises, but can forge sustainable relationships of mutual benefit)

(See Cornish, Shukla & Banerji, *AIDS Care*)

3. What organisational processes best enable community mobilisation of traditionally marginalised groups?

Two features emerged most strikingly:

- (i) *An articulate, resolute philosophy of empowerment*: Both CBOs adamantly insist (often against the odds) that all their activities must promote sex workers’ empowerment and mobilisation, and that sex workers have the capability and power to take important decisions and run interventions.
- (ii) *Leader-follower relationship* – The public legitimacy of the CBOs has been maximised by well-connected, culturally and politically skilled non-community advocates and leaders. The leaders’ public influence, in turn, has been made possible by representing large, organised, effective community organisations.

(Shukla et al 2008; papers in prep.)

Our primary **conceptual contribution** has been, at a general level, to suggest that development ought to be a process of producing means for poor people to exert leverage over the powerful actors who shape their environment. More specifically, we have begun to articulate the means available to poor people to do so.

These findings lead us to **implications for social policies** to promote community mobilisation (objective 4):

- Health/development policies concerning community mobilisation should incorporate '*stakeholder engagement*' as a key component expected of community mobilisation projects.
- Development agencies could play a brokering role in mobilising *political will* among a wide range of powerful social actors to create optimal conditions for community mobilisation.

For further research plans, please see 'Scientific Impact' section

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]

This project was part of the ESRC-DFID scheme.

There have not yet been many formal opportunities to engage with the scheme funders or other award holders. Anuprita Shukla (one of the researchers) took part in a workshop organised by Dr Glyn Williams (Sheffield), as part of his research on 'Embedding Poor People's Voices in Local Governance', which is also funded by this scheme. From participation in this workshop, we gained useful networking with colleagues, and exposure to the research and engagement methods of others – all of which have benefited our subsequent work.

We will continue to co-operate and engage with the scheme funders and other scheme award holders and will attend any appropriate future scheme activities that arise.

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

Scientific impacts (Objective 1)

Contributions to HIV/AIDS and development literatures

Through our scientific outputs, we seek to have the following impacts:

- (i) Within the HIV/AIDS literature, to advance a 'fourth generation' perspective, highlighting the role of social contexts of interventions (articulated in Campbell & Cornish, *AIDS Care* – introduction paper and full special issue).
- (ii) Within the development literature, to advance understandings of the means through which poor people can exert leverage over powerful stakeholders.

Summary of scientific outputs to date:

- 6 journal articles, in *AIDS Care*, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Journal of Health Psychology*, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*.
- 3 book chapters
- 2-day academic workshop
- guest-edited special issue of *AIDS Care*
- 7 invited seminar presentations
- 3 academic workshop presentations
- 7 conference papers

We have sought to maximise our impact using means that go beyond our original stated aims, by (i) producing a special issue advancing our 'fourth generation' perspective, with a wider appeal than our individual papers, (ii) negotiating 'open access' for our introductory article to the special issue.

New research capacity

The 2 Indian researchers have advanced from Masters to Doctoral level

- Anuprita Shukla is currently a doctoral student at Glasgow Caledonian University, funded by a University studentship and a SORSAS award.
- Riddhi Banerji has been accepted for PhD study at Kalyani University, West Bengal.

Economic & societal impacts (Objectives 2-4)

For international policy-making audiences (objectives 2 & 4):

We have made 3 invited contributions, based on this research, to workshops organised by AIDS 2031 (a UNAIDS-initiated consortium created to chart out the future actions required to successfully manage HIV/AIDS by 2031).

For Indian policy-making audiences (objectives 2 & 4):

Building on our findings indicating particular difficulties in CBOs' relations with 2 groups (government officers and funding agencies), we organised 2 workshops in Kolkata bringing together representatives of sex workers and representatives of these groups in the interest of

fostering more collaborative relations.

For community development workers & sex workers (objective 3):

While CBOs often excel at working with their local communities, working with stakeholders is typically more challenging. To meet this need, we produced a training module titled 'Getting stakeholders on your side!' with a supporting 40-page booklet, available in English, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali.

The training module will be incorporated into the Sonagachi Research and Training Institute's regular training programme for new CBOs. We held a 2-day 'training of trainers' workshop in Kolkata.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. *[Max. 200 words]*

Future scientific impacts

Several further journal articles are in preparation / in submission, to disseminate our full set of findings.

While local contexts were the focus of our attention in this study, the importance of the global-local interface repeatedly emerged, raising an important new research agenda, which we are taking forward as follows:

- (i) We are organising a further unfunded workshop (12 international participants attending in September 2010) and subsequent special issue, on the theme of global-local dynamics in the HIV/AIDS response.
- (ii) The interface between global aid structures and local communities responding to HIV/AIDS is the topic of Anuprita Shukla's current PhD study, supervised by the PI.
- (iii) Further research proposals are in development, to explore such global-local dynamics.

Future economic & societal impacts

We anticipate significant further impact of the training module, as it becomes incorporated into the Sonagachi Research & Training Institute's regular training programme.

The training module will be made available on the internet for downloading, and publicised in relevant fora, both Indian and international. The numbers of downloads will be recorded to indicate impact.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. DECLARATIONS

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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ii) Submissions to *ESRC Society Today*

Output and impact information has been submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> . Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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OR

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> as soon as they become available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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OR

This grant is not listed on <i>ESRC Society Today</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
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iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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OR

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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OR

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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