

Section 1 - SDP Interim Report

Title of Research Proposal

Please state the title of your proposed research:

Dignity without danger: collaboratively analysing stigma and taboos to develop innovative strategies to address menstrual exclusion in Nepal

Name of Award-holder

Please state your name

Dr Sara Parker

Research Update

The research project is on track with key milestones being reached in the first 10 months

Sept 2018 award announced

Oct 2018 Co-I and lead partner visited the UK for two weeks - this was vital in ensuring all the paper work and due process was followed and has been key to the success of running this project. Meetings with LJMU finance team, the wider research team and having time to plan ahead on reflection was essential.

Nov - Dec 2018 PI (S Parker) visited Nepal for longer than planned in the proposal to ensure the project started on time. Dr Parker presented at Nepal Sociology Conference at TU Kathmandu and the project was launched at the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival with art work, virtual reality film and a collaborative film being shown supported by a debate under the title 'Breaking Code Red'. Co-I K Standing also visited to launch project. Having a lead NGO partner Global Action Nepal has been fundamental in having clear communication with partners. Launching the project at a well established international film festival gave the project PR in Nepal and helped to bring the partners together.

Partner meetings in November 2018 led to a slight change in the partners engaged in the project - WaterAid were no longer able to participate and PSI had moved away from menstruation research hence we engaged two smaller partners to replace them (WaterAid and PSI were replaced by Assaman and Young Star). We also created an advisory panel including Lhamo Sherpa (PSI) Ganga Gautam (TU and MHMP) Sara Bauman (film maker / Uni Pittsburg and linked to partner NFCC) and Guna Raj Chair of the MHMPA.

On reflection this was a positive move as it enabled us to find partners working in all 7 Provinces and also meant that there is a smaller and bigger NGO connected to each of the SDGs - all partners sent a representative to training and data analysis workshops ensuring that the project was building capacity not only of researchers but also of practitioners.

Note Nov 2018 the project was featured as part of the BA Being Human Festival in Liverpool led by Co-I K Standing and Bee Hughes - excellent for PR expose outreach and impact.

Funding lessons:-

Funds to Global Action Nepal were received meaning we could start to plan the research training workshop in Jan 2019 - a technical issue meant that the funds to TU were held up in Dec 2018 but this was resolved in Jan 2019 (trying to send funds and communicate with people over Xmas vacation proved a little stressful and in future would prioritise funds being sent earlier. However given contracts needed to be established feel this was unavoidable as due process followed.

Jan 2019 Research training workshop ran for 4 days at the Global Action Nepal Training Centre - 22 people participated in this training along with 6 partners which both had a positive impact on capacity building at the local level and enabled the team to collaborate with partners in selecting field sites. The workshop was also central to the recruitment process and ensured that the researchers employed were fully aware of the nature of the field work and the commitment that this required. We decided to recruit 6 researchers - who would work in teams of 3 (West and East) with each team comprising of a senior researcher and 2 junior researchers which ensured we stayed within the budget allocated.

Feb 2019 Field work team in place, ethics completed and methods piloted in Kathmandu Valley. Slight delay in funds being sent meant that the researchers contracts could not be issued until the end of the month causing a slight delay to them going into the 'field'. An extra month was added onto the researchers contracts to ensure we had the time needed to not only collect the data but also had the support needed for translation and transcription.

March 2019 BA sponsored visit of Radha Paudel and Kopila Basnett to the Human Rights conference and inception meeting. This extra funding came at short notice but was excellent in terms of impact. As part of this visit we presented at LJMU, were invited to present at the Nepalese Embassy to celebrate international womens day and also gave a talk to the Tamu Dhee (Gurung) Society in Camberley.

April 2019 the PI Sara Parker made an extra trip to Nepal funded by LJMU to support other research into education in Nepal - this trip however proved vital to the success of the project and data collection as it enabled a mid point data analysis and reflection workshop to be held with the research team and also feedback meetings and consultation partners to be held. Emerging themes were identified and areas where more depth was needed also highlighted. Use of diaries and photography was also further explored during this workshop. The key learning point from this visit was the importance of the team working together and the benefit of having the PI in country. This has impacted on plans for year 2 with the PI planning to spend more time in Nepal than costed into the project to work with the team and partners on data analysis and creating impactful outputs. Having the Co-I based at Tribhuvan University was also noted as being important for the research team when they are in the field to be accepted as 'genuine researchers' rather than NGO practitioner researchers and has enabled a positive relationship to be built up in remote areas in a relatively short period of time - this has been important in developing the 'rapid ethnography' approach.

May - June - second data collection - it is important to note that the research locations are spread across Nepal and the research teams have worked well together to ensure a wide range of diverse voices have been heard. They have collected over 200 individual interviews as well as conducting focus groups, keeping reflective diaries and using visual methods whilst in the field. This has led to a vast amount of data which is currently being translated and transcribed ready for analysis in Year 2.

June both PI (Parker) and Co-I (Standing) attended the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Biennial Conference in Colorado to present initial findings and deepen our networks. It was noted at the end of this conference that more work was needed in the Global South and that more people of colour needed to be represented at the conference. In addition to this Sara Baumann (Uni of Pittsburgh) who has a strong connection with one of our partners NFCC through her collaborative film project (featured at KIMFF noted above) also attended this conference - need to look for funding to connect the work being done in USA and other countries such as Australia into menstruation in Nepal and also Asia more generally. Ideal for a GCRF networking grant bid in 2020.

July 2019 PI S Parker and Co I Stef Lotter visited Nepal for data analysis workshops with the research team and we also conducted a review of the existing educational resources with the project partners. Other practitioners were invited to the workshop via the Menstrual Health & Hygiene Management Partnership Alliance and findings will be fed back to the MHMPA in October 2019.

Madhusudan Subedi (CO-I TU), Stef Lotter (Co-I SOAS), and myself worked with our research team and partners to collaboratively analyse the data and the research team presented a whole panel with three papers on Dignity Without Danger at the prestigious Social Science Baha Conference in Kathmandu. The session was well attended and received a lot of positive feedback based on the fact that the whole team presented from the PI Co-Is and also the research teams. In addition to this two papers were presented by the Senior Researchers at the Nepal Sociological Association Conference in August 2019.

We will be working with the researcher to write up the papers for publications in the next 6 months. Currently the remaining data is being translated and transcribe ready for further data analysis.

We are currently planning the second year of the project and selecting case studies and deciding which field locations we need to revisit. We plan to employ the senior researchers on a part time basis and also take on research support as and when needed in the second year to ensure we build on the success of the first year of this project. We envisage a core research team in Nepal of 3 for year 2.

It is worth noting that we have been successful in securing just over £7k for a BA Two Day Conference on Menstruation in the Global South and Global North to be held in Oct 2020. In this bid we have included funds for key note by the leader in this field Chris Bobel to attend and also for Radha Paudel to speak given her focus on dignified menstruation. However on reflection we also need to secure funds for representatives from our other partners to come to this event (6 in total) and ideally the 3 core research team members to visit Nepal. It is important that the researchers on this project have the opportunity to have their voices heard and hence we will be seeking further funds to support their attendance at this prestigious event.

In terms of lessons learnt - one main weakness is that the time of the PI has not been fully costed into the research plans as it is proving more time consuming than anticipated.

Another limitation is the lack of funding to enable the partners and researcher to attend events overseas - however on a positive note it has also been important to include funds for the partners to compensate for their time and support for this research and it has been important that Global Action Nepal act as the lead in this both from a practical logistical point of view but also GAN have been an excellent lead partner to work with.

Financial Update

Budget for Year One (until June 2019 hence 9 months)

Total budget Year 1 £151,599 - Spent £133,294.95 Variance £18,304 under

Allocations spent

Travel 20106.74

Other (funds for workshops, workshop materials and partners in Nepal) 40163.10

Staffing & Indirect 25295.80

Indirect 13913.48

Research support (UK) 33515.03

Notes - Only 9 months of budget so funds yet to be sent to both TU and SOAS

LJMU over on travel can be adjusted this year

*LJMU pulled forward financial input from Year 3 to year 1 for SMCR conference

Also due to go out from accounts :-

SOAS funds for travel £4250

Payment for TU for researchers to continue work due to be sent to Nepal

Funds for more research support on data analysis in UK will be incurred


Financial Update File Upload

 **R245069 Dr Sara Parker submission July 201**

9 Interim report update

 27/08/2019

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Forward Plans

The next stage of the research, as planned, is to analyse the data collected and work closely with partners to identify key lessons and themes. We plan to develop a number of creative outputs which will include educational resources, visual material, radio/audio outputs, cartoons and zines as well as possibly short films. This will be done in October with the team in Nepal. Research findings will be taken back into the field locations along with a range of potential outputs to ensure we have the full consent of participants in the material that is produced. Given the sensitive nature of the topic it is important that the participants are given a choice in the way their stories and experiences are represented. The PI (Sara Parker) will be based in Nepal from Mid October 2019 to Mid January 2020 to support this process.

We plan to co-publish with our researchers and partners on the research process that underpins this research and also on the findings. We will be developing a pathways to publication plan in the second year and each of the research team will take a lead on different areas. The three papers presented at the Social Science Baha conference in July 2019 will be written up for submission to relevant journals. We are having a team meeting about pathways to publication in September 2019.

The material used in training and innovative methods that have been developed, including co-analysing data and utilising reflective research diaries and visual methods will be compiled into an online tool kit for researchers during this second year.

As planned we will work closely with our partners in developing these outputs and will employ local film makers and artists to co-develop relevant outputs. As part of this process we will continue to review educational material that already exists in Nepal to ensure that we are building on the resources that are available.

We will share continue to share our findings in relevant national and international conferences and workshops and plan to host a One day conference on Menstruation in Nepal to bring together research that is being conducted in Nepal on this topic. We are currently reviewing the work that has been completed in this area by Nepali researchers especially as Masters, M Phil and PhD level. We are exploring the option of compiling an edited book to bring this work together with a publisher in Nepal or India to ensure that the book is accessible. This will be initiated in 2019 with publication date of late 2020 or 2021.

We will engage with policy makers and the wider menstruation network in Nepal through the MHMPA and via meetings with relevant Ministries and Agencies including GiZ who have taken a leading role in supporting the MHMPA through hosting the MenstruAction Summit in Dec 2018. Consultation meetings with the Ministry of Education and National Curriculum Design team will be facilitated by our lead partner Global Action Nepal and our advisor Ganga Gautam from TU and MHMPA.

We also plan to build on the networks that we have made and explore the potential links between stakeholders in South Asia and Asia in general to develop a menstruation network – Global South / Asia Menstruation Coalition.

In 2020 we plan to be in Nepal for May 28th World Menstrual Hygiene Day to disseminate our key findings and support our partners in their work to create a Global South/ Asia Collation

In October 2020 (the final phase) we will run a two day conference on Menstruation in the Global South and Global North at the British Academy (proposal accepted and funding already secured)

Lessons Learnt

Need to allocate time for funding to reach destination - sending funds to Global Action Nepal has been relatively easy compared to sending the fund to Tribhuvan University but the systems and process are all in place so we do not anticipate any further delays.

The initial meeting in Oct 2018 in London played an important role in logistically running the project and ensuring all parties were aware of due processes which was useful.

Having a lead partner organisation namely Global Action Nepal has played an important role in the smooth running of the project.

As noted above the extra visit to Nepal by the PI (April 2019 see research update section) connected to separate research on reflection was much needed and well timed. In future need to ensure support visits are fully costed in.

The extra funding provided by the BA for two Nepali visitors to attend the Human Rights event and inception event in March was also much appreciated and helped with the running of the project and dissemination outreach impact (see below)

Dissemination, Outreach, Publications and Other Engagement

Conferences & Paper presentations

Nov 2018 Nepal Sociology Conference TU Kathmandu Nov 2018 Sara Parker Dignity Without Danger – the need for collaborative research into menstruation in Nepal

April 2019 Lidia Wojtczak (Co-I) presented paper at 44th Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions, Lancaster University, 12-14 April 2019. Menstruation, Transgression and the Othering of the Female Body in the Sanskrit Tradition

June 2019 Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Conference Colorado Parker, S (2019) Visualising Menstruation in Nepal.

June 2019 Paper presented at International Visual Sociology Association Annual Conference Saratoga Springs Parker, S (2019) Ethical Issues of Visualising Menstruation in Nepal presentation at the IVSA 2019 <https://prezi.com/riti5v0pw2or/ethical-issues-of-visualising-menstruation-in-nepal-ivsa-2019/>

July 2019 Sara Parker presented at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine– GCRF Network Meeting Ending Period Poverty by 2030 From research to impact July 4th 2019

July 2019 Social Science Baha Kathmandu July 2019 Panel Dignity Without Danger – three papers presented in total by the research team

1. Parker, Subedi and Shrestha - The importance of collaborative research opportunities and challenges
2. Parker, Adhikari, Bhatta, Chaudhary, Sunar Reflections from the field on methods
3. Baniya, Gurung & Lotter Negotiating Practice Authority and Space Preliminary finds from the field

In August 2019, Nepal Sociological Association Conference, two papers were presented:

1. Gurung, Subedi and Parker: From mysticism to taboo: Menstruation practices in Achham and Kanchanpur
2. Baniya, Parker and Subedi: Menstrual exclusion and taboos in central Tarai: a comparative study between 'High' caste Madhesi and Tamang

EVENTS connected to DWD

- BA Being Human Nov 2018 LJMU material included in exhibition
- Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival Dec 2018 – 'Breaking Code Red' Sunday 9th December Collaborative Film Showing, Art installation and panel discussion <https://kimff.org/festival/kimff-2018-festival/program-schedule>
Over 200 people in the audience of the film showing and debate
- Dec 2018 attended the MenstruAction Summit and workshops in Kathmandu as part of Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Partnership Alliance (MHMPA) the key network connecting agencies working in the field of MHM in Nepal
- March 2019 LJMU Talk by Radha Paudel and Kopila Basnet Tackling Gender Based Violence in Nepal and promoting Dignity Without Danger John Foster Building LJMU G01- sponsored visit by British Academy with over 80 people in the audience
- Light Night May 2019 Blood Rituals Menstruation Matters and Dignity Without Danger installation of work to raise awareness
- BA Summer School London June 2019 How can we challenge cultural attitudes about periods? Estimated audience reached 1,000 +
- Co I Standing – attended Plan international Let's Talk. Period Workshop for the North West Region. March 2019
- Menstruation Education Network (KS) May 2019 – UK advisory panel

OUTPUTS

Bloody Period – Sara Parker Nepali Times article Nov 2019

<https://www.nepalitimes.com/review/bloody-period/>

Parker & Standing (2019) Nepal's menstrual huts: what can be done about this practice of confining women to cow sheds? 23 Jan 2019 in the Conversation <https://theconversation.com/nepals-menstrual-huts-what-can-be-done-about-this-practice-of-confining-women-to-cow-sheds-109904>

Also appeared in various news outlets including the Independent <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/nepal-menstrual-huts-cow-sheds-women-chhaupadi-india-a8744766.html>

Hughes & Standing (2018) menstrual art: why everyone should go and see it <https://theconversation.com/menstrual-art-why-everyone-should-go-and-see-it-105778>

BA blog Hughes & Standing (2019) How cultural attitudes to menstruation have finally started to shift <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/summer-showcase-2019-how-cultural-attitudes-menstruation-have-finally-started-shift>

Outcomes and Impact

The focus on the first year has been on building the research capacity of the team and our partners and collecting data from all 7 provinces in Nepal.

We have successfully run a number of training workshops in Nepal and enhanced the research capacity of the research team and our partners. We will continue to do this in the second year and run data analysis workshops with the research team, partners and our wider network.

In January 2019, a total of 22 participants benefitted from thematic research training during the pre-selection participatory residential training. Partners sent a representative from their organisation to help build research capacity in undertaking qualitative research.

April 2019 Data analysis workshop was also attended by both researchers and partners.

The core research team of 2 senior researchers and 4 junior researchers have benefitted from the support workshops and utilising qualitative research methods in the field. Their interviewing skills and data analysis skills have improved and we all benefitted from presenting our research findings at the Social Science Baha conference in July to an international audience.

To date through our active engagement with events with the wider public and through our social media channels (Facebook Dignity Without Danger page and via twitter @DWDNepal #DignityWithoutDanger) as well as through our presentations at prestigious international conferences (SMCR & IVSA) we are raising awareness of the complexities of researching menstrual practices in Nepal. We are also making a contribution to the menstruation discourse through our active engagement in conferences and networks and have identified the need for an Asian Menstruation Network to help strengthen advocacy and engagement at the regional level.

As you will see from the dissemination section we have engaged with the public through KIMFF (Kathmandu), BA Being Human Festival (Liverpool), BA Summer School (London) and Light Night (Liverpool) ensuring the projects aims are reaching a diverse audience. Through our public events (Being Human, KIMFF Breaking Code Red, BA Summer School) we are raising awareness of the need to tackle stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation and we plan to continue to engage with the public in Nepal and further afield.

In Nepal we are active members of the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Partnership Alliance (MHMPA) and participate by attending meetings in Kathmandu, including those held with relevant Ministries, and through providing feedback on draft documents. Our partners have now all joined the MHMPA. Through our partners and advisors will be working on a pathway to policy makers plan in the second year of the programme once we have analysed our data and started to create outputs. We will present our findings and co-develop advocacy and educational outputs with our partners and the wider membership of the MHMPA to ensure the outputs meet the needs of those working in this field. It is important that we do this in collaboration with those working in this field to maximise collaboration and impact.

The creative methods we have used in the research process, such as collaboratively analysing field diaries and using visual methods, will be developed into a tool kit for others seeking to engage in collaborative research.

Safeguarding

NIL RETURN

ODA Eligibility

Nepal continues to fall within the least developed country category on the official developing country list. According to DFID (2017) Country profile - Nepal is the 16 poorest country in the world and the second poorest in Asia (after Afghanistan) in terms of per capita income. 23% of the population of 28 million people live on less than \$1.25 a day.

We have conducted research in all 7 provinces and ensured we have gone to places where the most marginal populations live in order to gain insight into the diversity of experiences of menstrual knowledge customs and exclusion. We are also working with 6 partners on the ground who are committed to promoting women's right to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) to be free of the discrimination associated with menstruation. Our research outcomes will have a direct impact on the work that they do and the populations they can reach.

Our research has taken place in inaccessible areas not only in the West of Nepal but also in mountainous regions and in the Terai. Whilst menstruation exclusion falls under the remit of WASH programmes, gender, health and education it is also emerging as a key concern within the dignified menstruation movement which places human rights at the heart of the issue.

Our research continues to support the UK Aid's (2015) strategic objective of "Tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable... to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030, and support the world's poorest people to ensure that every person has access to basic needs, including prioritising the rights of girls and women" (pg 3-4). It will enhance DFID's responsibilities towards improving the lives of girls and women through better education and a greater choice on family planning & preventing violence against girls and women in Nepal and contribute to the discourse surrounding menstruation by highlighting the importance of consider the local context in which initiatives are taking place.

Emerging Research Findings

The initial findings to date show there are a diverse range of beliefs, customs and practices which vary across Nepal and our research team have uncovered some interesting practices which suggest that menstrual customs and practices are not as fixed as presented in the media.

The findings support our claim that there is a need for more nuanced understandings of the complexities of promoting dignified menstruation in Nepal in order to develop responses that will achieve the aim of promoting women's sexual and reproductive rights. A one size fits all response is insufficient. The findings to date suggest that more attention needs to be placed on tackling the deep rooted beliefs if we are to help change the exclusionary practices which discriminate against menstruating women and girls. Our review of educational material with our partners has also revealed the need for more inclusive diverse educational and advocacy material to be produced to avoid stereotyping menstruation experiences in Nepal.

The research findings shed light on the complexities of menstrual knowledge and beliefs and the impact of intersecting factors such as age, religion, caste and ethnic group as well as geographical location (not only urban rural but differences but also geographical remoteness and influences of climate) as well as the presence and influence of traditional healers (Jhakri and Shamans). These themes will be explored in the next phase to examine the tensions that exists between religion and culture and challenging discriminatory practices. Findings suggest that more nuanced approaches are needed beyond simply banning the practice and that in some case policies aimed at addressing the problem may leave women and girls more vulnerable.

Developing material with practitioners in Nepal is central to the second stage of our research. We have enlisted a number of advisors to the project to strengthen our pathways to impact and to ensure quality outputs are developed.

Risk Register

Risk	Probability (Low, Medium, High)	Impact (Low, Medium, High)	How risks will be minimised/mitigated
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Partners withdrawing support from project	⦿ Low	⦿ Medium	Partners engaged this year may choose not to continue next year with the project but feedback to date indicates they are all satisfied with the progress being made and their involvement - maintaining good communication lines is important which is done via GAN employing a research support worker on the project
Staff changes	⦿ Low	⦿ Medium	Any member of staff on the project could leave - however if this were to happen they could be replaced. The team is very open and none of the members have plans to leave the project
Researchers in field could leave	⦿ Low	⦿ Medium	The two senior researchers are continuing to work on the project next year on a part time basis which is important for revisiting the field to have consistency. Both are completing part time studies and are unlikely to leave the project - if they did however replacement researchers could be taken on from the junior team to mitigate the impact
Natural disaster / earthquake	⦿ Medium	⦿ High	Nepal is vulnerable to natural disasters and every measure is taken to ensure field work is conducted in safe conditions with relevant risk assessments being undertaken in Nepal.

Under budget - given
spending this year

⦿ Low

⦿ Low

Highly unlikely as funds are needed in the second phase for creative outputs and creation of innovative outputs so unlikely to go under budget - PI and CO I in Nepal along with lead partner will keep a track of budgets to ensure we are neither under nor over budget
