Exploring the Meaning of Impact in Development Research

Report from Research Impact Workshop Series

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Acknowledgements
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In February and March 2020, the Institute for Global Development and collaborating academics from multiple faculties across UNSW, convened a series of workshops in which we discussed and reflected on the impact of research in the field of global development. We were fortunate to hear from six UNSW academics who presented examples of their own research to drive the discussion. Summaries of their case studies are appended to this report.

As researchers and educators in the space of global development, we hope that our work will have positive impacts on communities and individuals – whether through changing ideas and discourse, shifting policy and practice or delivering direct benefits for people’s lives. Funders or commissioners of research also expect that the research they fund will drive change. But as researchers, we also recognise that political, social and economic complexities can make change or benefits difficult to attribute directly to research efforts. Additionally, researchers themselves may have an impact merely by engaging with development partners or communities. The effects of power imbalances can lead to unintended and not necessarily positive effects.

The discussion in our workshops highlighted a wide range of such critical and reflective questions relating to research and impact in development. These included: how to recognise knowledge and its intrinsic value as a form of impact; the limitations of ‘models’ as tools for understanding or supporting research impact; the use of project design and implementation language and frameworks by donors, that does not always align well with research approaches; and finally, an acknowledgement that time and context matter in whether, how and what type of impacts are achieved.

Our workshop series was motivated by a project initiated by the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network and the Institute for Human Security and Social Change at La Trobe University. We appreciated the opportunity to engage with a wider community of development scholars and practitioners as part of this initiative.

On behalf of the team at the IGD, we would like to thank all our colleagues at UNSW who participated in the workshop series and contributed to this report. Special thanks go to Associate Professor Anne Bartlett and Dr Valentina Baù who were instrumental in developing and facilitating the workshops, to Kirsten Ridley who drafted this report, and to all those who presented case studies of their work. We hope you enjoy this report and we welcome your feedback.

Dr Sarah Cook  
Director, UNSW Institute for Global Development

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Purpose and Key Learnings

This report documents the results of a series of workshops organised by the Institute of Global Development at UNSW as part of a project initiated by the Research for Development Impact (RDI) network. Approximately 30 participants – mainly academic researchers, although some also with extensive experience in development practice – took part in three workshops, during which six research projects were presented as case studies to stimulate a discussion on how research can lead to development impacts. Some key elements emerging from the discussions are presented in this report.

The workshops provided a timely opportunity to explore and question a range of ideas, assumptions, frameworks and metrics concerning ‘impact’ in academia and in development practice. They provided examples of diverse types of impact, and of the processes through which impact occurs across a range of contexts and issues. They also highlighted the different positions of a range of institutions or actors within the development sector, spanning research, policy and practice, and pointing to the challenges of having one framework that would adequately encompass this variation.

Key concluding points were drawn from the discussion, emphasising primarily the perspectives of academics on development research. These include:

1 The need to recognise the intrinsic value of knowledge generation as a form of impact. Research, scholarship and high-quality publications have power to change practice, policy and paradigms and fundamentally alter the development field and practice.

2 All models and frameworks, as necessary simplifications of reality, have limitations, and may not provide the best tools for understanding or supporting complex research impact pathways.

3 Project design and implementation language do not necessarily translate well into tools or frameworks that are helpful to academic researchers in the development sector.

4 Time and context always matter in achieving impact through research or the use of research findings.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss these issues and challenges. Given the contemporary focus on impact and metrics, whether in academia, the development sector or among funders, the workshops provided a timely opportunity to question assumptions about such impact frameworks and metrics. They also offered a platform to explore a better language for engaging across different constituencies – academic, university management and development practice sectors – on how we define and measure research impact in development, and how university researchers do and can, contribute to development and social change.
In late 2019, Australia’s Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network launched a project on “Enhancing Research Use in International Development”. The initiative was designed by RDI to better understand the organisational drivers, incentives and ways of working that contribute to, or inhibit the use of, research to inform development policy and programming. The objective was to foster a change in behaviour among the commissioners, producers, brokers, and users of research.¹

The Institute for Global Development (IGD) led UNSW’s participation in this project.² We organised a series of three workshops in early 2020 entitled ‘Enhancing Development Impact through Research Use’ with the purpose of exploring how academics actually understand and operationalise ideas of impact through their research. A set of research ‘case studies’ were identified through a call for expressions of interest (Box 1), and these served as a starting point for discussion among participants.

**Box 1: Workshops and Case Studies**

**Workshop 1: Benefits to community practice**
- **Professor Daniel Robinson**: Intellectual property rights for traditional knowledge in the Pacific
- **Dr Alec Thornton**: Smallholder agricultural practices and procurement/value chain challenges in Sierra Leone

**Workshop 2: Benefits for marginalised groups**
- **Professor Kate Dolan**: Methadone treatment programs for female drug users in Iran
- **Professor Heather Worth**: Sex worker rights and safety advocacy in Fiji

**Workshop 3: Sectoral projects and benefits**
- **Associate Professor Jesmond Sammut**: Aquaculture nutrition and livelihoods programs in Papua New Guinea
- **Professor Andrew Vallely**: Development of cervical cancer testing protocols in Papua New Guinea

Summaries of each case study are available at the end of the report.

¹ The RDI Network is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development. This initiative is led by the Institute for Human Security and Social Change at La Trobe University and Praxis Consultants on behalf of the RDI Network, and involves universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), consultancies and managing contractors in the sector.

² The UNSW team included Associate Professor Anne Bartlett and Dr Valentina Bau (UNSW Arts & Social Sciences) and Dr Sarah Cook, Michael Burnside and Kirsten Ridley (UNSW IGD).
Attendance at each workshop was limited to approximately 30 participants from different disciplines and sectors, with experience of working in a variety of development contexts. Collectively, the extensive knowledge shared through these seminars provides insights for understanding conditions under which intended impacts are more likely to be fostered, while also challenging some of the approaches to impact that currently influence many funders, commissioners and users of research. This paper reports on the workshop discussions, highlighting some key reflections and lessons that have emerged.

As context for the workshops, RDI’s Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impacts (FERDI) was shared with participants and presented in the initial workshop. The discussions were not structured solely with reference to this model; nonetheless, in the final workshop the group reflected on the extent to which it captured key elements in our discussions, its limitations, and more generally the utility of such frameworks from a research perspective. These reflections are included later in this report.

Workshop participants explored a range of common challenges and risks associated with conducting research in developing country contexts, including the types of impacts (intended and unintended, beneficial or otherwise) that can arise, the various factors that enable or hinder intended research impact, and the difficulties in predicting or measuring the impact of research. Further considerations revolved around defining the purpose and roles of research and of researchers in fostering social change or achieving impact; the role of knowledge in change processes and whether knowledge production is or should be valued in its own right as impact, as well as the relevance of a range of research impact metrics, and the value of frameworks and models as research tools.

The remainder of this report synthesises the key points that emerged through the workshops, which have been consolidated and grouped into six different sections.

3 See Annex 2.
### Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Impact</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Benefits</td>
<td>Workshop participants identified several types of direct benefits to research groups, such as ability to gain livelihoods or income. Some participants indicated that benefits were unintended, illustrating that impact cannot always be planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Change</td>
<td>Some workshop participants indicated that research groups exhibited behavioural change following engagement with their research project. An example of this was improved community communication, health choices and a reduction in inter-communal conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Strengthening</td>
<td>Some case studies identified strengthened local capacity as an impact of their research. This was exemplified in both short- and long-term impacts. Specific examples include increased educational and economic capital, increased engagement with policy and legal frameworks and other personal development interests and opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Closely linked to capacity strengthening, this impact was identified as increased local engagement with research projects and outcomes, especially within the community through storytelling and discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Change</td>
<td>Case studies illustrated policy change as an outcome of the research process. Policy change was attributed to a variety of mechanisms including engagement with policymakers and information sharing in a variety of research and non-research settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Generation</td>
<td>Generating knowledge was a key impact identified by several case studies. This refers to how research can co-create knowledge to drive project impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Outputs</td>
<td>Contributing to research outputs was an important outcome of many case studies. This included academic journals, policy and practice mediums and other communications focussed on analysing and utilising knowledge and experiences.</td>
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The case studies illustrate diverse types of impact, as well as a variety of approaches towards achieving development outcomes or change through research. Participants reflected on the nature of impact: whether direct impacts were intentional or unanticipated, whether they were a consequence of the research, the research process, or activities linked to but beyond the research project itself. Discussions also reflected on the diverse contexts, partners, stakeholders or intended beneficiaries and the nature of engagement with the relevant communities.
Direct Benefits: Health and Livelihoods

Some of the case studies pointed to direct benefits resulting in participation from the research project activities. These benefits were generally intended, although some also not anticipated, with identifiable participants or beneficiaries in areas such as health or access to health services, nutrition, incomes and livelihoods. For example:

- The Methadone Treatment study and development of Cervical Cancer ‘test and treat’ methods demonstrated impacts linked to improved health outcomes and access to health-related services (treatment and support for female drug users, access to cervical cancer screening and treatment) including time saved due to faster treatment times or mobility of health services.
- Research into aquaculture in Papua New Guinea supported communities to farm, consume and sell more fish, and in turn improve both nutrition and livelihood outcomes for families and community members.
- Activities associated with some of the research projects led to improved outcomes for local communities: fish producers increased income from selling fish, while indigenous communities and/or national governments successfully accessed royalties for their natural resource related intellectual property.

Behavioural Change

Several studies identified behavioural change as an important impact of their research or associated activities, in some cases as an unanticipated consequence. For example:

- Drug users reduced or changed their drug use and high-risk behaviours following access to drug treatment services.
- Sex workers reported that the police and military ceased harassment following publication of key reports and media attention.
- Personal development workshops in one case led to reduced levels of family violence among participants; communications within communities, families or with local service providers improved.
- Inter-communal conflict was reduced following collaboration on aquaculture projects.

Capacity Strengthening

In several cases, researchers described efforts to support the professional and personal development of their in-country teams and research partners as a pathway to impact. This included, for example, provision of training, supporting the attainment of higher-level qualifications, or helping to access scholarships or support to study overseas (in Australia). Over the longer term, this focus on capacity strengthening resulted in greater local ownership of research and program activities, increasing the likelihood of positive impacts. Other examples included:

- Strengthening the legal capacity of local governments to navigate intellectual property or trademark law.
- Enhancing scientific skills and qualifications for local research team members.
- Videography skills among smallholder farmers, and personal development courses for research team members.
Empowerment

Participation in the research process, along with the related skills and capacity strengthening process, was recognised as potentially empowering for engaged community members and research participants. One example was the participatory video method used among farmers in Sierra Leone, with the resulting videos being used to facilitate discussion within the community as well as by the participants to present their needs to government and decision makers.

Policy Change

Policy changes were identified in relation to some of the research projects. Such policy changes were likely to have been influenced or supported by research project activities, such as the inclusion of participants in relevant trainings and workshops, the publication of papers in influential journals, media attention given to findings, and the sharing of findings through conferences and study tours.

Knowledge Generation

Knowledge production was highlighted as a key impact, as well as an essential pre-requisite for other outcomes. Examples included the evidence related to the efficacy of drug treatment centres for at risk women in Iran, and of cancer screening and preventative treatment protocols in Papua New Guinea (PNG), both of which could be used to change policy and practice. Similarly, new knowledge about the issues faced by sex workers in Fiji or successful approaches for mono-sex fishing production and other aquaculture technologies in PNG go beyond a particular project impact and inform the fields more widely.

Publications and Other Outputs

Examples were given of ways in which a range of research outputs, from academic journal articles to reports, briefing notes, policy statements, videos, and media coverage, were effective in promoting research uptake. In one case, extensive media coverage of a public report highlighting research findings related to risks associated with sex work contributed to change. The importance of research outputs being tailored to respective audiences was noted – including issues of language, format or visual content, simplified statistics and infographics. Short reports tailored to the audience were more likely to influence policy or decision makers. Conversely, however, time taken to present research findings in such formats did not necessarily lead to effective uptake. In other cases, a widely cited academic journal (in this case the Lancet) provided legitimacy and credibility to the research and facilitated adoption of findings.
## The Importance of Relationships

### Summary

<table>
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<th>Invitations</th>
<th>Invitations to collaborate with locally engaged actors often enable access and information that would otherwise be out of reach.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Partnerships</td>
<td>An ethical approach to working with vulnerable groups, including incorporating participants as partners in research design and implementation, is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Champions</td>
<td>Holding culturally appropriate research findings dissemination workshops at the end of the project, and leveraging the role of local advocates to promote the work that was done through the project, can be crucial for uptake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundary Setting</td>
<td>By remaining flexible about what the project is and is not, the researcher may create space for local people to participate meaningfully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People-Centred Approaches</td>
<td>When conducting research remotely, there is often a need to utilise local researchers for the project. These will have various strengths, many of which may be unique to a setting and therefore particularly useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks for Partners</td>
<td>There are pros and cons of compensation for participation of community members. The opportunities of research participation can also detract from existing social and economic activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Outsider’ Engagement</td>
<td>External researchers can highlight themes or create space for local conversations, sometimes allowing marginalised voices or perspectives to be heard.</td>
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A common thread in all discussions was the importance of strong relationships with local partners, communities or stakeholders for achieving impact. Long-standing relationships of trust were often critical for enabling research access, conducting research, as well as for increasing the potential for influence and uptake of findings. Relationship-building takes time and can be facilitated, among other factors, by a thoughtful research design, participatory methods and approaches, and co-authorship opportunities.
By Invitation

In difficult contexts or for work on sensitive issues, an invitation to collaborate can be an effective entry point: the drug treatment project conducted in Iran, for example, was possible thanks to this. It allowed access that would have otherwise been unattainable. The role of local stakeholders in initiating the research, and the ongoing focus on communication and engagement between the external researcher and local stakeholders, ensured partners retained a strong degree of ownership.

Partnerships in Research Design and Implementation

Participants commented on how ‘fly in, fly out’ research approaches are particularly inappropriate when working with vulnerable groups, and should be avoided. Another underlined the importance of re-conceptualising participants as partners within the research project.

Communication Strategies and Local Champions

Holding research findings dissemination workshops at the end of the project, sharing information in a culturally appropriate way (e.g. via the traditional Papua New Guinean wantok system) and leveraging the important role of local advocates to promote the work being conducted, were identified as crucial elements for uptake in the projects discussed. Relatedly, co-authorship - for example with a project or community member, traditional leader or relevant government official - was cited as another key mechanism for giving due recognition to local knowledge and contributions, as well as for supporting any uptake or use of findings.

(Not) Defining Clear Boundaries around Research Projects

The pros and cons of narrowly defining the ‘boundaries’ of any given research initiative were also discussed. For example, one of the case studies highlighted how a lack of clear boundaries of the project, including the absence of an established project name or logo, helped to foster active engagement and local ownership of the research among community members. "We gave up trying to find an acronym or name …. In the end, we didn’t have a name or a logo. Interestingly, this added value because there was no visible transition between research to (implementation), them or us... Right from the start, this was perceived as a project owned and led at provincial level."

People-Centred Approaches

The importance of long-term engagement with stakeholders, ‘meeting them where they are at’, acknowledging their own personal situation and challenges, was highlighted. In one case, the partner organisation, rather than the lead researcher was responsible for appointing the team, resulting in a team that did not have the skill profile that had been envisioned. As a result, the project adapted to reflect the diverse experience of the team, including focusing on technical upskilling and addressing interpersonal issues. This had positive results for the project and the individuals involved, but also meant that the originally intended activities had to be adapted.

“Keep everything people-centred. The research is not a means to an end. Some of the needs are personal, not just technical.”
Risks or Costs for Participants and Partners

Possible risks and costs to individuals, communities and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who engage in research processes were discussed, as well as ways in which these could be mediated or avoided. This included the pros and cons of financial or in-kind compensation for the time costs of participation by community members. It also included the potential for externally driven research projects to shift the priorities of local organisations or NGOs, thereby diverting them from their original purpose.

Advantage of ‘Outsider’ Engagement

In some contexts, outsiders (in this case, foreign researchers) may have a stronger voice or greater freedom to raise issues of concern to the community than community members or local researchers – whether for reputational, safety or other reasons. Foreign researchers may, for example, highlight themes or create space for conversations, or allow marginalised voices or perspectives to be heard – as in the case of sex workers or female drug users.
**Summary**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Safety, geographic, political, and logistical access issues can be an obstacle to conducting research and achieving research impact.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National or Local Politics</td>
<td>Local or national politics can have considerable impacts on the research, whether through restriction or provision of information, or by providing only certain, more ‘acceptable’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes affected</td>
<td>Unexpected changes in partner organisations occur, often leading to personnel or priority changes and resulting in setbacks. Researchers should be flexible and prepared to pivot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Changes</td>
<td>Exogenous factors necessitating a change in methods, activities, focus, budgets, or timeframes occur, and often require unpaid work on the part of the researcher.</td>
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</table>

A range of contexts shape the possibilities for impact – particularly the local, community or organisational context for the research project, but also the institutional and funding context of the researchers, and potentially the wider political context. External factors can affect the implementation, influence and uptake of research, each time posing unique challenges. At the same time, they can open up unexpected opportunities for change and influence, calling for some flexibility and ability to adapt to a changing environment. Conversely, a research project or intervention can also contribute to altering the context.
Access

At a practical level, safety, geographic and logistical access issues can be an obstacle to conducting research and achieving research impact. For example, the research on cervical cancer in PNG faced challenges relating to time, distance and transport in reaching women living in remote highland communities. In other cases, access can be limited due to politics, conflict or other sensitive issues.

National or Local Politics

Local and national politics, or wider political changes, can have a considerable effect on the research. In some circumstances, key research partners may be constrained, threatened, or even exiled (as in the case of one project). The international researcher’s nationality may affect their position as well as how their work and ideas are received (for example, in Iran, an Australian researcher may have easier access than an American one).

Changes Affecting Implementation Partners

Several examples were provided where the operational context of the implementation partners had created challenges for project delivery. A quite common experience was unexpected changes in personnel within partner organisations or other key research stakeholders, which caused setbacks (whether these changes were due to illness or job transitions). Another example was around reductions in planned funding. In one of the cases presented, the government department connected to the project unexpectedly had their budget cut. As a result, the research team pivoted to work more closely with NGOs as potential partners and implementers.

Responding to External Change

The need for some degree of flexibility and ability to adapt to exogenous changes was emphasised. In some cases, this involved researchers adjusting their original research plans (methods, activities, focus, budgets, timeframes) without compromising the scientific rigour of the research and analysis. They needed to respond to various issues such as funding and staffing challenges, or other practical considerations that arose during the course of the research or project delivery. Such adaptations often take additional time and effort on the part of lead researchers that may not be fully incorporated into budget and timeframes, and not fully valued or accounted for by funders, commissioners or assessors of research.
Temporal Dimensions of Impact

| Summary |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Long-term Engagement** | As with all development work, it is important for researchers to strengthen credibility with local stakeholders and gain a deeper contextual understanding through longer-term engagement. |
| **Short-term Research Funding** | Funding for development research often falls within 3-5 years research windows and as a result, requires evidence and results within these timeframes. This is rarely conducive to productive long-term engagement with local partners. |
| **Timeframes to Measure Impact** | For the majority of research projects, development impacts are likely to take place well beyond the timeframe of the project, and few research projects have resources to track or evaluate impact into the future. |

It was emphasised that good research, the development of strong relationships and the changes required for measurable impacts to occur, are all time-intensive elements of a project. Research is best underpinned and informed by extensive previous experience in and knowledge of that context, including the importance of ‘failures’ or of what has not worked to achieve impact. However, institutional and funding barriers often exist to such long-term engagement and relationship building.
Long-term Engagement and Partnerships

Most development researchers have long-standing and in-depth knowledge of specific contexts and issues – including knowledge of past projects and interventions, as well as failures. Several presenters emphasised the importance of their many years of in-country experience and stakeholder engagement, including their presence prior to their research project, in strengthening their credibility with local stakeholders and offering solid contextual understanding and insight. The process of building trust with partners, and the long-term timeframes required, were seen as critical for both access and uptake of research, and for adapting to changes or working out solutions.

Short-term Research Funding Environment

It was noted that the broader research funding environment has changed over time to possibly favour shorter engagement and more bounded projects. One participant talked about the current limited availability of long-term funding, and shared the example of a former PhD research project in the Pacific that took six or more years of fieldwork to complete, noting that funding for that length of exploration is harder to find today. Similarly, funding bodies often privilege certain types of methods and approaches that return rapid ‘generalisable’ results. In the development field, there is frequently a focus on quantitative data production, randomised control trials and monitoring and evaluation, with less funding for participatory research which requires longer-term engagement.

Timeframes for Achieving and Measuring Impact

While direct impacts are at times attributable to the research project within the timeframe of the project, this is likely to be the exception. For the majority of time-bound research projects, development impacts are likely to take place, if at all, well beyond the timeframe of the project. This means that they may not become known to or be measured by the researcher, and that there is limited possibility of attributing certain types of impact to the project. Few research projects have resources to track or evaluate impact into the future. Where long-term impacts could be identified, this was usually the result of long-term engagement with partners, through a program of work or multiple projects, often funded or commissioned by various grants and donors over an extended period. Given the importance attributed to contextual knowledge, and to the depth and breadth of relationships, such cases point to the cumulative impact and effectiveness of research.
Questioning Impact

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research as Impact</th>
<th>Academic knowledge about a society or context can create a paradigm shift in the way we think about doing development. Despite this fact, it often receives inadequate acknowledgement as development impact.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Scholarship</td>
<td>Carefully crafted scholarship creates a means to enhance debate, and persuade others of the value of new evidence or research. Such scholarship creates a bridge between practitioners, academics and on the ground practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Forms of Academic Impact</td>
<td>Research contributes to new knowledge and discussion. Research can also facilitate teaching and learning and can influence the success of subsequent funding grants for both researchers and partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Reflection in Impact</td>
<td>Reflexivity and feedback loops within the research process can contribute to transformation in research design, findings, outcomes, and the way we think about the roles and influence of researchers and other stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges of Attribution</td>
<td>In changing and dynamic contexts, it is difficult to pre-determine the impact that will occur as a result of research. It is often difficult to predict where or when opportunities for impact will arise.</td>
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Throughout the workshops, a variety of perspectives emerged about how to address the underlying questions of ‘what is impact and how is it achieved’. Different viewpoints were voiced over common concerns such as what impact means to different stakeholders, for whom research impact is intended and for whom it actually occurs, and if/how research impact can be measured and attributed.
From the diverse perspectives of academic researchers, not only was the linear ‘research production – uptake – impact’ chain questioned, but it was also importantly noted that development scholars must take into account various types of metrics – including academic publications, research funding, education and teaching, all of which are indicators of their performance. Often, development impacts are not recognised or are under-emphasised in university metrics and performance management reviews. And while some of the outcomes arising from the role of academics do have direct impact on development practice, these may go unrecognised or undervalued by development practitioners. Such impacts range from teaching and training a new generation of practitioners, publications in peer reviewed journals that reshape the theory and practice of development, and the role of such publications in giving weight and credibility to evidence and ideas that inform practice.

**Research as Impact**

An important point of debate that reoccurred throughout the workshops related to the overall conceptualisation of research in discussions of development impact and the inherent value of knowledge generation. There is an extensive eco-system of institutions involved in development related research and its translation for use and impact – academia, think-tanks, NGOs, infomediaries, knowledge brokers, and so forth. The production of knowledge or process of academic scholarship, according to some participants, receives inadequate acknowledgement as development impact. The contribution of knowledge generated, or the way that findings and arguments are presented and published as a means to change what we know about development, was seen often to be neglected or poorly understood. This occurred in the world of development practice as well as in universities, which have a different set of metrics for measuring impact. While universities emphasise peer-reviewed publications, they may fail to recognise many of the ‘impact’ related activities connected to the work of development scholars, as discussed above.

“**What do we mean by research impact?**”

“**The university doesn’t have a clear idea of impact.**”

“**How do we talk about the impact of scholarship?**”

“**Following on from the comment on our impact as scholars, I might be more sceptical on our publications as ‘impact’. I see our publications as output, as opposed to impact.**”

**The Impact of Scholarship: Do Publications Matter?**

Academics are generally more likely to view academic publications, including journal articles and books, as a form of impact; they also note that supporting early career researchers, educating students and obtaining research funding may all contribute to impact. In particular, the role that scholarship and argumentation plays in publications, can shape debates, shift discourses and persuade others of the value of new ways of thinking. These can all be critical bridges between research and impact. For some participants, it is through major research publications or books on development that the parameters of how we think about development are shifted, and this should be considered as impact. For others, publications were an output, not an impact.
Diverse Forms of Academic Impact

While the case studies were grouped to illustrate different types of impacts, or impacts experienced by different groups, what was revealed in practice was that most of the research projects could generate or contribute to a variety of different types of outcomes and impacts. Beneficiaries could range from the researchers and team members, project implementors and staff, to students, community members and government officials, as well as research participants. What also emerged was the idea of implicit ‘hierarchies’ of impact that influence what different groups (academics, practitioners, other participants) value most in assessing impact. Within the workshops, such differences emerged for example over the role of scholarship and publications as impact. Issues such as the education of students and young researchers, or the role of funding, may be less visible or valued by non-academic stakeholders in considering impact.

Examples include:

1. Scholarship

The direct role of scholarship and publications was debated as a form of impact. Examples were provided where scholarship has been able to create a ‘paradigm shift’ in the way development actors (academics or professionals) see things. While single projects alone may not generate these impacts, they are often part of a wider process of evidence generation and academic debate that can lead to long-term change in policy and practice.

2. Education

In several cases, the research projects directly facilitated teaching and learning opportunities. Australian and local research students also engaged in the research projects, and course materials were developed to inform teaching.

3. Funding

The success of a funded research project in some cases also helped researchers and their partners to attract additional grants or other sources of funding, including philanthropic funding, for associated activities with communities.

“I am convinced that the pen is mightier than anything else. It’s what we have that others don’t. I think my greatest impact is and will be writing and publishing – publications that will change the ideas of other researchers. e.g. how others perceive [the issues]. I am committed to be a scholar, and shaping the thinking of the era.”
Reflection as (or for) Impact

Another consideration that was emphasised and reiterated across the workshops was the role of reflexivity and feedback loops within the research process – the ongoing dialectic between researchers and the community, and how this transforms the research design, findings, outcomes, and the way we think about both researchers and other stakeholders. Participants noted that any theory or model looking at research impact in development should be mindful of this. Some noted how such reflection was built into projects, with reflective practices among research teams highlighted as valuable processes to support effective project management and enable continual adaptation.

The Unpredictability of Impacts and Challenges of Attribution

A recurrent point was the difficulty of pre-determining the impact that will occur as a result of any research. One cannot predict where, or when, the opportunities for impact will arise. Several of the case studies illustrated how contextual factors outside of the researcher’s control had unexpectedly, either positively or negatively, affected outcomes. Specific impacts cannot be easily navigated to from the beginning of a research project, even with inclusive design and effective partnership. Furthermore, attempting to predetermine impact may be risky, as it can raise expectations that may not be realised. Similarly, due to changing contexts, attribution of possible impacts to the research is generally difficult.

“We need to get past the discussion of scholarship or engagement – it is a dialectic. I often get stakeholders I work with to read what I’ve written and provide feedback. What do we mean by impact? Is it on them? On us? It can be and should be a two-way street.”

“It’s not about thought leadership, it’s about learning from one another.”

“We should be teaching reflection as a vocational skill.”

“Pathways may have formed thanks to luck rather than good management: a chance meeting with someone in the community with influence, some funding that became available, right place, right time.”

“Outcomes and impacts are different. It’s very hard to think about impact as it’s a long way down that path. I don’t think most of us plan for impact, we plan for outputs. We can’t see the future.”

“Maybe we need to acknowledge that we cannot predict outcomes (or impact), and therefore develop a framework which creates the space for the unexpected and the ways in which it might be adopted.”

“We should be teaching reflection as a vocational skill.”
The RDI ‘Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impacts’ (FERDI) [Annex 2] was circulated prior to the start of the series and shared at each workshop. While it did not represent a central focus for discussion, participants did provide – implicitly or explicitly – a range of feedback on the framework. The workshops thus prompted some broader epistemological discussions, challenging the utility and appropriateness of models and frameworks as conceptual aids, or as planning and educational tools for researchers.

For some participants, the framework was helpful and captured many of the types of impact or impact processes described in the case studies or discussed during the seminars. Others observed the exclusion of critical elements raised in the case studies and discussion, though noting that some of these could be incorporated into an adapted framework. A more significant challenge concerned whether models and frameworks more generally had any value from a research perspective. For some, they were seen as unhelpful tools for conceptualising research and may be even detrimental in limiting the questions and methods used by researchers. This may also reduce reflexivity in the process. Some participants suggested that a set of principles (rather than a more deterministic model) might be a more appropriate mechanism to help reflect on and enhance research impact. These might also provide a more suitable approach for supporting early career researchers to develop projects with relevance for policy and practice, and for communicating with research commissioners, funders and end users.

“I think we have to question the epistemology of this.”

“We can force any project into the model, we can force anything into a model, but it doesn’t mean the model has meaning... I am philosophically antagonistic to models – I would prefer to give people ideas and broad principles.”

“This model is too bounded... I would hate to give this model to young students because it stops you from doing the reflective work.”

“What worries more about the model is that we have a teleological idea about how research runs, based on a ‘DFAT model’. We talk about inputs, outputs, as if that’s how research occurs, and it just doesn’t.

“From a practitioners point of view, it’s not only a DFAT pressure; lots of development actors are hungry for tangible tools and resources... the model can sometimes take us to a projectised approach to research.”
Participants questioned whether such tools help us think, or limit our thinking; whether they help us articulate our thoughts or promote over-simplification. While some felt that such tools did have a place in research, others posited that models were limiting and linear by nature, and that the limited predictability of research impact made the development of models to capture the research process illogical.

Some of the key elements highlighted throughout the workshops as important for understanding research impact but inadequately captured in the current framework included:

1. Reflexivity and Feedback Loops
Inattention to the reflexive, multi-directional and didactic elements of the research process. "It doesn’t include enough about how it influences us, it seems a bit one way... it doesn’t include how you and the people you work with affect one another."

2. Knowledge as Impact
Paradigm shifts, knowledge development or scholarship as a distinct type of impact in its own right. "This impact model looks limited. Knowledge production and new ideas have impact and should be looked as an 'impact' as well."

3. Limited Control over Impacts
Recognition that progression in the research activity to research impact pathway also corresponds to a reduced level of control of the researcher over the outcomes. "There is tension here between expectations and what can reasonably be done. The best researchers should be expected to aim for is quality research with good outputs, and new knowledge that can challenge ideas. 10 years down the road that may lead to some impact, but in the intervening time and space there are innumerable influences that will inevitably exert influence on the fortunes of that work."

4. Temporal Elements
Most research impact may take long periods of time to actualise or become evident.

5. Enablers
Extensive community engagement or strong partnerships that support effective research, research uptake, ownership and impact, often takes place prior to and following a specific research project and can require considerable periods of time.

6. Cumulative Impacts of Bodies of Work
Impacts often build on bodies of work undertaken over extended periods, rather than a single discrete project commissioned or funded by one donor.
The workshop series was an opportunity for a number of stimulating discussions regarding the broader challenges of creating, conceptualising and measuring research impact in development. Overall, participants actively engaged with the opportunities for conversation, and the six case studies presented diverse and compelling research impact examples. Four key points on the measurement and conceptualisation of ‘research impact in development’ were identified.

1. Knowledge has intrinsic value – knowledge formation is under-recognised as a form of impact, from a practitioner or development impact perspective.

   A key impact of research in development is the production of knowledge. Knowledge underpins change in policy and practice, new conceptual approaches and more fundamental paradigm shifts in the way we approach and understand development. Although some research may indeed lead to direct, tangible and immediate applied impacts, a broad approach to the impact of research in development should also incorporate knowledge production as a type of impact.

2. Models and frameworks have intrinsic limitations and may not be the best tools for understanding or supporting research impact pathways.

   Change, or research impact, takes place in many different ways and through diverse processes. Such diversity and complexity cannot be easily or comprehensively captured within any one model or framework. While a model or framework may adequately capture and reflect a specific, or specific type of, research impact pathway, it cannot meaningfully encapsulate all available avenues. Similarly, the complex universe of development change actors, across an ecosystem of knowledge creators, brokers, users and funders, may not easily be captured through one model.

3. Project design and implementation language does not translate well into tools or frameworks that are helpful to researchers.

   The pressure on academics to design, implement and present their work, or the impact of their work, through a project delivery or program logic lens is often in tension with the role and purpose of academic research. There is a risk of a ‘projectisation’ of research, with researchers increasingly expected to articulate the possible impacts of their research before they know what the findings will be. This may close off avenues of enquiry and an openness to exploring important questions, where there is less certainty that impact can be achieved.
4. Time and context matter.

It was acknowledged unanimously that strong stakeholder engagement and good quality research can take long periods of time, and that the impacts of research are both unpredictable and potentially occur far in the future. Funding and structural factors that support (or prevent) long-term engagement can therefore be instrumental in fostering (or limiting) research impact.

Given the contemporary focus on impact and metrics to measure results, in development practice as in academia, the drive towards showing measurable impacts influences all our work. In academia, this is reflected both in university metrics and rankings, as well as in academic funding frameworks (for example, the Australian Research Council’s Impact and Engagement framework). This workshop series provided a timely opportunity to explore these ideas and underlying assumptions in more depth and to question these assumptions, frameworks and metrics. It also offered a space to explore a more coherent language for engaging with different constituencies – across the academic, university management and development practice sectors – in terms of what constitutes research impact in development, and how academic researchers contribute to development and social change.
Case Study 1: Treating Female Drug Users in Iran

Until 2007 there were no drug services for women in Iran, let alone services designed for female sex workers and prisoners. Following the success of a pilot clinic established by UNSW Professor Kate Dolan, seventeen years later there are now 20 similar drug treatment clinics across the country, providing services to more than 6,000 women.

Kate began working in Iran in 2007, at the invitation of a leading Iranian public health physician to provide training for prison doctors. Inspired by what she witnessed during visits to women’s prisons and drawing on her experience working with drug users and in prisons in Australia, Kate established a pilot drug treatment service and associated research program in Tehran focusing on women. This was radical in a context where sex work is a crime punishable by death, and sex workers and drug users are highly marginalised and vulnerable. The clinic provided a unique and effective service to the previously unserved population of women using drugs, and the population of women sex workers using drugs.

This one-of-a-kind women-only service delivered wide ranging benefits for its clients, including multiple health and behaviour change benefits. Unsafe sex and sex for money and/or drugs reduced, and heroin use dropped as people moved to methadone. Clients gained more information about their HIV and hepatitis C status, about which many previously had scant knowledge, as well as access to sterile needles to prevent contracting hepatitis C. Benefits were also observed in relation to social participation and integration, which were enabled through improved social functioning.

The initiative scaled rapidly. By 2011, it had “grown to treat 100 women a day, providing former prisoners and injecting drug users with treatment and services including methadone maintenance, hepatitis C testing and legal aid.” By 2014, police, prisons and other women’s services were referring clients to the clinic. The clinic was seen as a success nationally and within the region, inspiring the launch of similar initiatives. When it was first established, there were no known clinical treatment offerings for female drug users. Seventeen years later, there are now 20 drug treatment clinics for women across the country, providing services to more than 6,000 women.

Annex 1: Research to Impact Case Studies

Professor Kate Dolan (bottom left) at her book launch in Iran. Her book has been published in Farsi to make it accessible for an Iranian audience. Image provided.

4 Marion Downey (2011) 'UNSW honours NDARC academic'. Available at: https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/news/unsw-honours-ndarc-academic
Case Study 2: Improving Conditions for Sex Workers in Fiji

Professor Heather Worth and Dr Karen McMillan have been collecting evidence that gives sex workers in Fiji information to advocate for their own rights for over a decade. Their flagship publications have helped to shift public and policy maker perceptions about sex work and have illustrated how ‘bad law’ can increase the risk of violence and HIV transmission in this group.

Heather and Karen's work in Fiji spans numerous research projects and collaborations with many partners, including colleagues at the Pacific STI and HIV Research Centre at the Fiji School of Medicine (now Fiji National University) as well as members of the sex worker community in Fiji, represented by a number of groups including the Fiji Survival Advocacy Network. Their work focuses on documenting the daily experiences of sex workers across the country and highlighting the issues of most concern to them. While the pair have published over 50 academic articles about sex work and HIV and AIDS in Fiji, it was two of their public-facing reports in particular that attracted wide media attention and promoted change.

In 2010 the researchers published ‘Risky Business: Sex work and HIV prevention in Fiji,’ a report based on research undertaken with the support of AusAID. This documented the daily realities of Fijian sex workers’ lives and the implications for HIV prevention. It warned that, “as law and police crack-downs are used to attempt to eradicate sex work, this will drive sex work underground, and will be detrimental to efforts to reduce HIV transmission risk.”

Later in 2011 the report ‘Sex Workers and HIV Prevention in Fiji - after the Fiji Crimes Decree 2009’ was published, this time with support from UNAIDS. This subsequent piece of research illustrated how the enactment of the Fiji Crimes Decree in 2009 had increased the risk of violence and potential HIV transmission. It publicly documented abuse of sex workers by the military. It argued that the Fiji Crimes Decree (2009) was a law that had resulted in many negative consequences for sex workers, including increased police attention, reduced outreach support, psychological harms and the disincentivising of working in safer spaces and carrying condoms.

These reports gained significant media attention when published and this generated controversy from the Fiji military. However, sex workers reported that the military action against them ceased soon after and has not re-emerged since. As Heather highlights, the publication of such non-traditional research outputs, and the media coverage they can generate, can be a critical factor in helping to reduce military harassment and inform regional policy discourse.

Case Study 3: Expanded Aquaculture Improves Nutrition, Livelihoods, and Social Cohesion in Papua New Guinea

Research into improved aquaculture methods, combined with sustained community outreach activities, has supported the dramatic expansion of fish farming in Papua New Guinea. Over the past decade the number of fishponds has grown from an estimated 7,000 to over 60,000. In turn, fish farming has contributed to substantial improvements in household nutrition, income generation, and social cohesion.

UNSW Associate Professor Jes Sammut has led a program of research and extension (promotion) on inland aquaculture in Papua New Guinea since 2009, in partnership with Mr Jacob Wani from the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) of PNG. The program is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and NFA. As a result of increasing fishpond numbers and improving fish farming practices, the projects have seen over 300,000 families gain access to fish, improving their diets and helping address prevalent undernutrition through increased protein consumption. The projects have also supported rural livelihoods development, as fish farmers have been able to sell excess fish.

Advanced farmers, trained by the project team, have also established hatchery businesses to supply other farmers with quality fingerlings, providing valuable means of generating cash income within a largely subsistence-based rural economy.

Fishponds can be integrated into vegetable gardens enabling farmers to manage their stock when they tend their gardens. Image provided.
While the ACIAR/NFA-funded initiative was initially designed to address undernutrition, it has resulted in many additional and at times unexpected positive social benefits, from personal transformation to peacebuilding. In the associated Fish for Prisons program run by the NFA, fish farming in prisons provides fish for the kitchen and helps prisoners address idleness. Participants develop new livelihoods skills and non-violent means of supporting themselves post-release, as do their guards who can employ these skills upon retirement. Prisoners have reported shifts in their self-identity and an enhanced sense of purpose, with a newfound sense of opportunity and plans to farm fish after being released. They have also regained status in their communities and taught others to farm fish.

A decline in crime has been observed where communities have been trained. *Raskol* gangs (local term for criminal gangs) have participated in the training with impressive results. For example, in Barola, a once dangerous part of the Highlands Highway, the gangs included in the training eventually burnt their weapons and drugs, built fish ponds where marijuana was once grown, and helped build an aquaculture training hub. Some former *raskol* gang members have also become community leaders through fish farming. Further links to a reduction in violence have been observed in the Nebilyer Valley and nearby areas, where former adversaries have collaboratively built 105 fishponds and ceased intertribal warfare. Jes highlighted that working through diverse partnerships has been critical in promoting and trouble-shooting fish farming practices, educating communities, supporting the research and research team capacity-strengthening activities, and importantly, reaching particularly at-risk or marginalised groups in the community such as youth and vulnerable women in a safe way. Through this project and complementary activities, Jes and his principal collaborator from the NFA, have partnered with a wide range of stakeholders in PNG, such as the PNG Tribal Foundation, Department of Agriculture and Livestock, the PNG Correctional Services, the Sisters of Notre Dame, many NGOs, and the Maria Kwin Training Centre in Jiwaka Province, as well as fish farming communities across the country. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) is a major collaborator on the research into fish nutrition and scientific skill building of the team.

Two lessons from the project have been the importance of long-term engagement – “We have found that, to achieve impact in Papua New Guinea, you need to be in it for the long-term, embedding projects within a program of development and research. We are in it for the long haul and address each problem as it comes” – and the relevance of addressing not only professional but also personal domains.

“We worked on our own team first.”

“The research is needed to solve the fish production problems, but capacity building, pride and confidence in local researchers is equally important.”
Case Study 4: Point-of-care HPV ‘Test and Treat’ for Cervical Screening in Papua New Guinea and Other High-burden Settings

Through the application of a new point-of-care HPV test and treat strategy, cervical cancer incidence and mortality in Papua New Guinea can be halved if 70% of women aged 30-59 years were screened just twice in their lifetime.

In the last 10 years, Professor Andrew Vallely and his team at the PNG Institute of Medical Research have established a new international collaborative research program in Papua New Guinea and led the search for new cervical screening strategies in low- and middle-income countries. They have designed and led the first trials in various locations around the world of a new ‘test and treat’ screening model: this comprises point-of-care human papillomavirus (HPV) testing of self-collected specimens using the GeneXpert HPV test, developed by Cepheid. This strategy is non-invasive and received positively by women because it allows women to easily self-collect vaginal specimens for testing in the clinic.

Results are available within 60 minutes and, if positive, same-day treatment using a novel battery-operated, portable thermal ablation device (the WISAP C3) is provided. This is especially convenient in locations where health clinics are far from villages because women only need to take a single trip to the health facility; this increases timely treatment uptake and completion, and saves lives.

Andrew and his team were the first to show in field trials supported by the NHMRC that point-of-care HPV testing and same-day thermal ablation are well received by women and health providers, cost-effective compared to screening by visual inspection of the cervix or Pap test, and have excellent performance for the detection and treatment of cervical pre-cancer. Importantly, this ‘treat and test’ screening strategy was also shown to be feasible when delivered in routine clinical settings in low- and middle-income countries. It can offer significant time savings for women and health providers, and improvements in clinic flow and efficiency.

This model has now been recognised as an example of innovation and best practice. It has directly informed new WHO guidelines on the treatment of cervical pre-cancer and changed national policy in Papua New Guinea.

Acknowledgements to Andrew’s collaborators go to: PNG Obstetrics & Gynaecology Society; Provincial Health Authorities in Eastern Highlands, East New Britain, Madang, Milne Bay, Western Highlands; University of Papua New Guinea; PNG National Department of Health; Central Public Health Laboratory, PNG; VCS Foundation, Melbourne; Cancer Council New South Wales, Sydney; Royal Women’s Hospital Melbourne; Albert Einstein College of Medicine, USA; and C4 CRE partnership.
Case Study 5: Farmers as Filmmakers: Participatory Video for Postharvest Needs Analysis in Sierra Leone

Farmers in the Sierra Leone’s rural North-Western Province need to increase knowledge of and capacity for proper post-harvest handling and processing methods, which affects returns on their work. In addition, there are limited infrastructure and government extension services to support local production and access to market. Farmer capacity gaps have been linked to the historical neglect of government farmer extension services.

Dr. Alec Thornton and his research partners at Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute and Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) conducted a scoping study using video as a key method in a participatory rural appraisal in the Kambia District. The goal was to determine the technology and training needs of rural rice farmers to reduce post-harvest losses and improve rice quality.

Farmers were trained to use video cameras to record their experiences and interview their peers. The videos were then edited by Alec’s team and shared with government as a channel to communicate the challenges faced in Kambia district. This research demonstrates how positioning farmers as filmmakers can elicit active participation that directly connects rural smallholders with government to inform rural development activity and policy.

This project has made an impact in contributing much needed information on rural needs and neglect in agriculture. Video, in combination with other participatory ‘tools’, revealed potential solutions, as viewed by the farmers, to improve rural development policy and practice. The videos captured vital information for extension officers, and contributed to building trust. The use of video also strengthened dialogue by elevating what can be abstract discussions of survey data results, to familiar ‘real world’ images that an ‘audience’ of other farmers and policymakers can engage with. In doing so, farmers have a tangible output (the video) from the participatory project, which is easily accessible via YouTube, to use in public debates where farmers can play a role as advocates for rural change. The video can be viewed here.

This project also directly strengthened connections between project partners, particularly rice farmers and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute.

“As a participatory method, video provided unique opportunities for ‘farmer-researcher’ collaboration. It had an empowering impact, in particular for female farmers, to clearly communicate – in their own terms – the challenges and opportunities in rural sector livelihoods, as seen from farmer’s perspectives or, quite literally, through a farmers’ ‘lens.’”
Case Study 6: Recognising Indigenous Intellectual Property

Nature has enormous diversity in biological resources that benefits people all around the world, contributing to the development of medicines, therapeutics, agriculture and foods. But how can we ensure the benefits of these genetic resources are shared with the local people where they are sourced? Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) is a legally recognised system that seeks to ensure benefits from research on Indigenous knowledge of genetic material is shared.

Professor Daniel Robinson manages an ABS Capacity Development Initiative (ABS Initiative) in the Pacific region. The project implements the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which seeks to ensure fair and equitable benefit-sharing arising from the use of biological resources and Indigenous/traditional knowledge for research and development purposes. The Nagoya Protocol attempts to create an ABS system that returns benefits from commercialisation of biological resources back to Indigenous communities and small island states in the Pacific. The ABS Initiative receives funding from the German Government and European Union.

Daniel and his colleagues have worked with all of the Pacific Island Countries, and particularly Melanesia and Polynesia. With their support, some of these countries have now ratified the Nagoya Protocol and all are parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Daniel has helped to document case studies that inform how to effectively implement the ABS in the Pacific; he has also used these case studies to run capacity-building workshops and national consultations in countries to help develop systems to protect biological resources and traditional knowledge from appropriation, exploitation and ‘biopiracy’.

Some of the primary mechanisms that Daniel has supported are permit systems, contracts and agreements, as well as Indigenous and local community protocols. Daniel works directly with governments to develop and enhance permit systems; he also collaborates with ‘biotraders’ from the industry and with local communities to try to form equitable partnerships that allow access to biological resources whilst sharing the benefits.

Daniel has supported a number of ABS agreements, especially in Vanuatu, and is providing support on ABS agreements with Indigenous enterprises in Australia through an Australian Research Council grant with Dr Margaret Raven. Daniel has also done patent mapping to highlight which companies are patenting biological resources and identify whether traditional knowledge may have been employed: this can provide a legal basis for ABS agreements or patent challenges.

Canarium indicum: an edible nut in Vanuatu that is also used for timber and medicinal purposes. Image provided.
### Annex 2: RDI Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impacts (FERDI)

#### CAPACITY BUILDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research development</th>
<th>Research inputs</th>
<th>Research process</th>
<th>Research outputs</th>
<th>Research outcomes</th>
<th>Research impacts</th>
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#### RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

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<th>Research targeting</th>
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<th>Research transfer</th>
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#### RESEARCH UPTAKE AND USE

<table>
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<th>Capacity building</th>
<th>Product development</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Practice / systems / sector</th>
<th>Economic / societal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The development of attributes, skills and systems that increase quality and quantity of research conducts, uptake and use.</td>
<td>Contribution to new or improved products of technologies. May be through improvements to enabling environment, direct development, testing or scaling.</td>
<td>Contribution to new or changed policy narratives or content locally, nationally, regionally or globally.</td>
<td>Contribution to changes in ways of doing things on the ground and / or the beliefs or systems that govern them.</td>
<td>Changes in wider social / economic benefits such as job creation, economic growth, improved equity, social capital.</td>
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Figure 1: RDI Network (2017) ‘From Evidence to Impact: Development contribution of Australian Aid funded research: A study based on research undertaken through the Australian Development Research Awards Scheme 2007–2016’. Authored by Debbie Muirhead with Juliet Willetts, Joanne Crawford, Jane Hutchison and Philippa Smales, p.6.
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