The academic year of 2023–2024 has overall been a very strong one for the Department of Global Health & Social Medicine. We have continued to build our impressive research agenda, whilst our teaching is going from strength to strength.

We welcomed sizeable cohorts of students, for our now-consolidated MSc in Global Health, Social Justice, and Public Policy, and for both of our UG programmes: the BSc in Global Health and Social Medicine, and the renamed BA in Global Health and Social Science.

Yet it’s been a difficult winter in many ways. The cost of living crisis has presented ongoing challenges for our staff and, especially, many of our students. At the same time, events in Israel and Gaza weigh heavily, especially on those of us with personal and research ties to the region. It has been heartening to see how our community has risen to address these challenges. Under the leadership of Alysia Montrose, the School of Global Affairs introduced its own Student Support Fund to meet the needs of our students in a way that is more timely and accessible than programmes at the College level. And GHSM academics Hanna Kienzler, Rishita Nandagiri, and Nancy Tamimi have emerged as leading voices demanding action around the urgent health and humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

These commitments to addressing urgent challenges are interlinked with our efforts to increase impact, both in terms of the Research Excellence Framework and in more capacious senses of public engagement. This impact work builds on longstanding endeavours, and has also been catalysed by the community of practice cultivated by our Impact Lead Sarah Hodges.

A few of the impact highlights include: Courtney Davis received ESRC Impact Acceleration funding to deepen her longstanding engagement with the European Medicines Agency; Laia Bécares offered testimony at the UK Government’s Covid Inquiry; Ben Geiger gave oral evidence to the UK Parliamentary Select Committee on Work & Pensions; and Filippa Lentzos has been named a ‘champion of science’ as part of the UK government’s UK biosecurity leadership council.

Read more in our special feature on GHSM’s impact and public engagement in this edition.

This time has also been bittersweet with departures and arrivals. We bid farewell to Amy Hinterberger, who will be missed, and yet we wish her well in her exciting new position at the University of Washington. And I am delighted to share that Cristian Montenegro will be joining us as a senior lecturer of Critical Global Health, as of 17 June 2024. Cris is poised to make significant contributions to our department’s ongoing endeavours to contribute to the decolonisation of global health across education and research, including but not limited to global mental health, and we very much look forward to having him as a colleague.

Spring flowers are starting to bloom in London, and we’re looking forward to rejuvenation and renewal across so many domains.

Professor Anne Pollock
Head of Department

King’s Conversations podcast series

GHSM Bioethics student Meghan Boop is the host of a new podcast series.

In a world where knowledge is power and ideas have the potential to change lives, we’re here to challenge your perspectives and ignite your passion for understanding.

Welcome to King’s Conversations, a podcast brought to you by King’s College London. The series confronts pressing issues and asking the big questions, featuring conversations with some of our most distinguished scholars. Listen here.
Mapping the Public’s Health: A Participatory Mapping Workshop

On 7 November 2023, Jennifer Fraser and Thandeka Cochrane from the Cartographies of Cancer project, working in conjunction with Wellcome Fellow Philip Jagessar and the Living Maps Network, held a three-hour participatory health mapping workshop.

Jennifer Fraser presented on the history of medical health mapping by asking why and how we started mapping health. Thandeka Cochrane then gave a presentation on the difficulties of finding and generating the medical health data that goes into global public health maps, using the example of the challenges and success of cancer registries in Sub-Saharan Africa. We interrogated how maps sometimes lie, and how data can be mathematically constructed when insufficient hard data is available.

The second half of the workshop was led by the Living Maps Network who guided participants in two participatory mapping exercises. Barbara Brayshay and Jina Lee guided one half of the group in making ‘Talking Maps’. Participants were asked various prompt questions, such as ‘What is home?’, ‘Where do you go for GPs/Pharmacies?’ ‘Where did you go to find environmentally healthy spaces?’ and had to map their responses to the questions on a piece of paper. The second half of the group were taken outdoors by artist Kimbal Bumstead to use drawing, rubbings and mark making to create layered maps that tune into our sensory experience of the world, and to consider how it feels to be a body in a space.
Connect and Cope

Using Research Seed Funding from the Department of Global Health & Social Medicine, Dr Jessica Rees conducted a series of workshops across the UK in the summer of 2023.

The Connect and Cope Workshops focused on understanding cultural conceptualisations of loneliness by asking: What does the word loneliness mean to you? You can learn more about the findings of the workshop [here](#).

Mathilde Genest

Mathilde Genest one of our former MSc in Bioethics & Society students (2021-2022), submitted her adapted dissertation to the Feminist Studies Association essay competition. Mathilde was a runner up and her paper will be published in the FSA journal.

Shade Research Hub launches

Gabrielle Samuel, together with her colleague Federica Lucivero (Oxford University) have launched the SHADE research hub. SHADE sits at the intersection of Sustainability, Health, AI, Digital technologies and the Environment. The hub brings together researchers from areas of bioethics, sustainability, health policy, clinical practice, ethics of technology, computer science, and more.

The hub was established in recognition of the increasing demand for AI and digitally enabled health on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the growing desire to consider environmental sustainability. The hub will act as a space to exchange ideas and produce knowledge on issues at the intersection of sustainability, health, artificial intelligence, digital technologies and the environment, and has a bi-monthly newsletter (registration is via the website).
Research Methods Toolkit launch

Hanna Kienzler has led the development of a free online resource with the aim of giving more people the opportunity to become researchers. The Research Methods Toolkit was launched by the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health on 28 November 2023 with over 120 attendees from academic, health service, community and lived experience backgrounds.

The Research Methods Toolkit has been co-developed by a group of researchers made up of service users, survivors, academics, students, project co-ordinators and artists. Within the toolkit you will find high-quality, engaging resources that discuss research design and ethics; qualitative, quantitative, and participatory methods; data analysis; knowledge dissemination and much more. These resources come in a wide range of formats:
- how-to manuals and guides
- podcasts, videos and info-graphics
- academic articles and books

Each page explores a particular approach or method by focusing on what it is, how to use it, and what it looks like in practice. The Toolkit is designed to be accessible to all, featuring introductory and more advanced material on every page. To learn more about it, check out this animated film. It presents the key features and resources of the toolkit.

An important element of the toolkit was the creation of artwork by a survivor artist, Tony James Allen, at the Bethlem Gallery to illustrate the website so that it did not have to rely on stock imagery. The artist created a large painting and fragments of these were used throughout the website to represent how research involves pieces of knowledge coming together to create the bigger picture.

The creation of the Research Methods Toolkit has been guided by a commitment to co-production. The team follows the key principles outlined by the National Service User Network of collaboration, redefining our understanding of legitimate knowledge and placing those with lived experiences at the centre of our research.

Team members understand co-production to be more than a method. It is an ethos that runs through the entire research process – from identifying a topic, to study design, to data collection and analysis, and finally to knowledge dissemination.

Hanna Kienzler said: “For too long research has been the realm of academics when instead research should be everyone’s business. We hope this toolkit can provide the resources to those people who have questions about the world we live in so they can find the answers. This way we can generate richer and more nuanced insights to inform how our societal structures, services and policies can change for the better.”

The Research Methods Toolkit is being further developed in public and the team would like people to get in touch, ask questions, make suggestions and give comments to help understand what works well and what can be improved or expanded. There is plenty of scope to expand and the range of resources within the toolkit. Please contact Hanna Kienzler with feedback. Alternatively, you can provide feedback on the toolkit website itself.

Refugee Mental Health and Place series

Hanna Kienzler, Guntars Ermansons, Peter Schofield and Zara Asif have co-founded the Refugee Mental Health and Place Network. The network brings together researchers, people with experience of displacement, and community organisations.

Together, they explore how pre- and post-migration factors shape mental health and well-being and aim to strengthen interdisciplinary expertise and intersectoral capacity to inform health and social policy to help improve mental health outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers. The Refugee Mental Health and Place Series plans to deepen our understanding of the role of place in refugee mental health outcomes, the structural causes of mental health differences, and community sources of support.
Established in 2020, the group comprises students and staff members committed to fostering conversations, research, and activities that align with the ethos of anti-racism agendas and decolonising work. The group aims to contribute to the current efforts at King’s to achieve race equality, closing the attainment gap between Black and Minority ethnic students and White students and taking measures to decolonise education and research in the fields of global health and social medicine more broadly.

Recent activities by the group include:
On 5 December, the ARSG launched the Decolonising Global Health Archive. This academic website is dedicated to decolonising global health and higher education. It is open to all students and academics to suggest resources to add to the Archive. The group would like to thank Dr Paula Viveros Wacher for her work on setting up the Archive. Please use this form to suggest materials to add to the Archive.

The excursion group has arranged trips to the GRID at the Royal Anthropological Institute on 3 October 2023, The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) Archives on 31 January 2024 and Genetic Automata + The Cult of Beauty at the Wellcome Collection on 1 November 2023. Genetic Automata is a series of immersive and haunting digital/video installation by the artists, Larry Achiampong and David Blandy, which draws on their interests in video games, avatars and the histories of medicine and anthropology to reflect on the origins of racial classification and eugenics and challenge its continued impact on racial inequality today. Of particular interest were the eye-opening contrasts between ‘classic’ eugenics of the 19th century and the emergence of DNA testing, articulated through a series of computer-generated videos narrated by the artists. Cult of Beauty is a more conventional exhibition, inviting us to consider the changing histories of the aesthetic of ‘beauty’, how it has been shaped by society, politics and economics, and how the notion of beauty has differed across groups and cultures. Both exhibitions tackled the question of racism and decolonisation in thought provoking ways, and the response from students who joined the excursion was overwhelmingly positive.

The Conversation about Racism group is led by three trained students, and Dr Tanisha Spratt organises spaces for students to come together and chat about racism. All students are welcome.

A new seminar series initiative was introduced to invite guest speakers on issues of racism and decolonisation. The first event took place on Thursday, 7 Mar 2024, where Dr Weeam Hammoudah, from Birzeit University, the Occupied Palestinian territory, spoke about Coming of Age in Displacement: Navigating Gender, Mental Health, and Wellbeing in Palestine Refugee Camps.
Christine Aicardi was part of a roundtable discussion in August with sci-fi writer Stephen Oram and futurist Luke Mason for the launch of Stephen’s latest short stories volume *Extracting Humanity*, published by Orchid’s Lantern. In November, she was an invited expert to the workshop ‘HMG Futures – how to win in the future?’ organised by Wilton Park in association with HMG Ministry of Defence and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Also in November 2023 she was awarded £4,994 by King’s NMES Enterprise & Engagement Partnerships Fund for a six-months project entitled ‘Using creative fiction writing for participatory foresight: futures of digital twins in society’, in collaboration with the UK Digital Twin Hub (industry partner), the Science Gallery London, and freelance science fiction author Stephen Oram. It runs over six months until 30 June 2024, and will feature a creative fiction writing competition open to 18–25 years old along with several stakeholders and general public events.

Laia Becares was awarded one of SSPP’s annual impact prizes for her work that has shaped understandings of inequality during the Covid-19 pandemic and that particularly highlighted unequal impacts for sexual and ethnic minorities. This award honours a range of her recent impact and public engagement work, including publishing a report and offering testimony at the ongoing UK government’s COVID inquiry in autumn 2023. In addition, along with Anne Pollock, Laia has received funding for the Impact Acceleration project ‘LGBTQ+ Policymaking in the UK: From research to implementation’, led by Queer@King’s.

Shagufta Bhangu conducted six training sessions on research methods and medical anthropology for Noora Health, a leading health policy think tank which advises various state and national governments including India, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Wei Yang attended a reception at the House of Commons organised by UKAgeNet.

Hanna Kienzler and Zara Asif’s work was cited in the UK government’s guidance document ‘Tackling TB in inclusion health groups: a toolkit for a multi-agency approach’.

Annie Irvine was quoted in The Guardian on the topic of what factors are underlying the rise in mental-health related worklessness, in a piece which appeared online on 12 January.
Ben Geiger, from his ongoing research projects about disability, benefits and work has been giving oral evidence to the UK Parliamentary Select Committee on Work & Pensions, presenting to DWP researchers in the disability teams on their away day, serving as an advisor to the Health Foundation’s new Commission on Work & Health, and preparing a public lecture with the Academy of Social Sciences about the rise and fall of anti-welfare attitudes, and what it means for welfare policy in an election year.

Mark Eccleston-Turner continues his advisory activities related to the Pandemic Treaty negotiations in Geneva. In addition he produced a policy brief for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office on equity in international law. He submitted evidence to the UN Human Rights Council on the first ‘draft general recommendation no 37 (2023) on discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health’ and he was an author of the ‘The Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Public Health Emergencies’ which were cited in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe’s Resolution 2500 on ‘Public health emergency: the need for a holistic approach to multilateralism and health care’ and presented to an OHCHR roundtable of UN agencies, civil society, and human rights experts to help build a common understanding of what it means to secure the human rights of present and future generations.

Henry Llewellyn attended the two-day International Brain Tumour Alliance World Summit of Brain Tumour Patient Advocates in Vienna. IBTA is a global network of brain tumour patient and carer groups around the world. Henry spoke on how international cancer classifications affect care and treatment and how they are changing in an era of molecular medicine. Henry also attended the three-day Society for Neuro-oncology Sub-Saharan Africa annual conference in Nairobi. SNOSSA is a recently established collaboration between brain tumour practitioners and advocates across Sub-Saharan Africa. Henry spoke on what is at stake when cancer classifications represent only the social and technical situations of well-resourced settings around the world.

Liming Li is international investigative member (education policy) for the Gateway to Global Ageing project based at Centre for Economic and Social Research, University of Southern California. This is an initiative to facilitate large-scale data collection and analysis across countries and time to advance knowledge of ageing and policy. It is funded by the National Institute on Aging and National Institutes of Health from America. She has also written a blog published with the UK Data Service Impact Blog series on how welfare reforms targeted to single parents in the UK generated unintended consequences on the mental health of children from single parent families. She has also been invited to contribute a blog on England’s local authorities’ anti-loneliness strategies and their impact on changes of loneliness and mental health among older people.

Filippa Lentzos has been named a ‘champion of science’ as part of the UK government’s UK biosecurity leadership council. She has also been nominated by Norway as an expert to the United Nations Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons (November 2023). If there has been an alleged bioweapons attack, the UN Sec-Gen would assemble a team of investigators and the nomination makes her part of the pool of investigators that could be drawn on. She also contributed text to an October statement from the The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on peace and re-iterated the same message in a statement to the UN General Assembly, also in October.

Linda McKie, Caitlin Bawn and Dilesh Shah (SGA) were awarded a SSPP FRIF this autumn for their project ‘Retaining Care Workers: Case Studies to Support Organisational Policies and Practices (RetainCare)’. In this award, they partner with Scottish Care and the Advanced Care Research Centre at the University of Edinburgh.

Ann Kelly has served on the WHO’s Scientific Advisory Group in Emergencies (SAGE) Working Group on Ebola Vaccines and Vaccination since 2014. In that capacity, she has drafted recommendations for the compassionate use of vaccines during Ebola outbreaks, advised on Target-Product-Profiles and research protocols for accelerated approval of experimental platforms in emergency conditions. She has also provided expert advice for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Animals in Science Committee on the ethics of emergency research. She is also serving as the social scientific advisor to PATH/UNICEF’s multinational implementation of rapid diagnostic devices into frontline care to identify and treat critically ill children. She is also a social scientific advisor on the scientific board of Pan-Africa Mosquito Control Programme. In that capacity, she is helping to draft a social science research agenda for vector-control and is collaborating with architects and designers at the UNCC and University of Dar es Salaam to design a vector control brick out of sustainable materials.

Gabrielle Samuel took part in a BBC global news podcast called ‘Artificial Intelligence, who cares?’ in September 2023. Gabrielle, along with three other King’s academics, had a fantastic time recording the podcast at the Science Gallery with Nick Miles and BBC’s Technology Editor, Zoe Kleinman. In October, Gabrielle was invited as an expert speaker on AI and environmental sustainability for a roundtable event organised by policy connect, carbon connect, and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on data analytics.
The Jasper Period Hygiene Project
This non-profit organisation aims to contribute to ameliorating the health and wellbeing of women of reproductive ages through community-based projects that raise awareness on women’s health exigencies; advocate for global health actors to provide and improve resources and systems that increase the quality of life of women; and provide tailored health, care and rehabilitation services to women and girls disproportionately affected by inequities in health. They launched a menstrual hygiene project on 8 March 2023 at the Ministry of Health Basic School in Ghana.

**The maiden project:** Recognising the pressing need to raise awareness and provide support to young girls in managing their menstrual health, Peggy designed a comprehensive program which included educational sessions, practical demonstrations, and donating menstrual hygiene materials (MHM) aimed at equipping around 300 girls with the necessary knowledge and tools to manage their menstrual health effectively. In upscaling the initiative, the team collaborated with educators, and community leaders to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the project’s benefits. By involving these stakeholders, Peggy and her team ensured that the knowledge imparted to the girls would be reinforced and supported beyond the initial project.

**The follow-up project:** To measure the impact of the maiden project and to provide ongoing support to the girls, Crystal-lily led a follow-up project on 8 December 2023. This initiative aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and equip the girls with additional information and resources to manage their menstrual health. The follow-up project focused on understanding the girls’ experiences after the initial project. Through surveys, interviews, and discussions, Crystal-lily and her team were able to assess the impact of the program on the girls’ well-being and educational outcomes. The findings will not only provide valuable insights for future initiatives but also contribute to the broader discourse on menstrual health and its implications for girls’ empowerment.

**Impact and significance:** The team’s work in Ghana serves as a prime example of the transformative potential of applying classroom knowledge to address urgent social challenges through grassroots initiatives. By focusing on menstrual hygiene and empowering young girls, their efforts have far-reaching implications for the well-being, education, and overall development of these girls. The initiatives undertaken by Peggy and her team are not only empowering individual girls but also challenging societal taboos and stereotypes surrounding menstruation.


Gnan G, Asif Z, Campbell S, Kienzler H, Hatch S. A mixed methods PAR study investigating social capital as a resource for Black and other racially minoritised communities in the UK: A study protocol. PLOS ONE. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0296125


Viruses and Reproductive Injustice: Zika in Brazil

In February 2024, Professor Ilana Löwy launched her book *Viruses and Reproductive Injustice* at an event co-sponsored by the Reproduction Research Cluster and the Age of Health Series.

The 2015 Zika outbreak in Brazil resulted in severe illnesses and numerous children born with brain damage, particularly affecting impoverished, non-white women. Professor Ilana Löwy’s book is a vital examination of the health disparities and reproductive injustices behind congenital Zika syndrome. The book is essential reading for those interested in reproductive rights, bioscience of emerging pathogens and public health injustice. Löwy connects the outbreak’s history to broader issues of reproductive rights, scientific understanding of pathogens and the role of international health organisations. The book underscores the complex interplay of biology and politics in infectious disease outbreaks.

The book launch featured a short presentation by Professor Löwy followed by responses from Professor Ann Kelly and Dr Rishita Nandagiri. Professor Rayna Rapp, Professor Emerita of Anthropology at New York University was also a discussant.

The Politics of Potential: Global Health and Gendered Futures in South Africa

In May 2024, Dr Michelle Pentecost is launching her book, hosted by the Reproduction Research Cluster.

What if adult diabetes risk was a function of nutrition in-utero? What would it mean for future prosperity if countries acted on the evidence that height at age two is predictive of future human capital? In the last decade, the understanding that human health and development are profoundly shaped by early life environmental conditions has animated a global health focus on nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life. The Politics of Potential examines how new scientific understandings of the developmental origins of health and disease constitutes new forms of intergenerational responsibility that are racialized and gendered, and how these overlook the everyday potentialities that shape perceptions of the future in South Africa.

This book event will feature a short presentation by the author Dr Michelle Pentecost, followed by responses from Professor Sarah Hodges and Dr Rishita Nandigiri, and a discussion chaired by Dr Lucy van der Wiel, followed by lunch. Guests will also be able to purchase a signed copy of the book during the event.
Dr Sarah Milton
Senior Research Fellow

What’s your academic background?
I studied Anthropology as an undergraduate student at UCL (a long time ago), and then did an MSc in Reproductive & Sexual Health Research at LSHTM. My PhD, also at LSHTM, was focused on ageing and later life intimacies, and I carried out an ethnography in salsa classes and complemented this with life history interviews. Since then, at LSHTM and then for about five years in FoLSM at King’s, I have worked on lots of interdisciplinary projects mainly examining UK-based intersectional inequalities in health. More recently my focus has been on racism in maternal health spaces, and the accumulation of these experiences in the body and over generations.

What are you working on at the moment?
I’m working on a new AHRC funded research project, Reproductive Borders, that started on 1 February, collaborating with philosophy and sociology colleagues at Queen Mary and the University of Sussex, and legal scholars at Bristol University. We will explore the complex intersections between legal and racial prejudice that migrant and minoritized women in England face in instances of maternal and reproductive healthcare across the reproductive lifecourse. We’ll be carrying out ethnographic case studies and will also be creating a sensory archive of (non) maternal lifecourses, where women and birthing people share sensory content to convey their past or present experiences, to capture the ‘unsayable’ dimensions of traumatic experience around health, care and illness.

I’m also finishing up on an interdisciplinary project that has sought to improve the 6-8 week ‘baby check’ in primary care. This healthcare moment is often the first time in which a baby has contact with a GP and enters health surveillance in England that then lasts a lifetime. It is also a moment that could be so much more helpful than it currently is to new parents.

And lastly, I am developing new research on the production and use of ‘race’ categories in pregnancy monitoring, such as in the gestational diabetes clinic, and particularly focusing on mixed race categories, identities and experiences.

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?
I’m really looking forward to collaborating and thinking with colleagues at GHSM working on similar topics including racism, reproduction, health and ageing. It is also really inspiring to be surrounded by GHSM colleagues working on multiple dimensions of global and public health, and the department’s wealth of events, book launches, and reading groups is really exciting!

When you’re not working, what do you like to do with your time?
I look after my two children who are eight and four, read a lot of novels, sometimes do some yoga and regularly dream of a day when I might have more time!