

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Issue

Spring 2009

Youth Crime – an Independent Inquiry

The Nuffield Foundation is funding an Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour to conduct a fundamental re-examination of the way that society responds to troublesome behaviour by children and young people.

The Commission is being launched at a time of growing concern about the extent and impact of behavioural problems in children and young adults, and the efficacy of the youth justice system. It will seek to identify a consistent set of principles for both a fair and effective response to antisocial behaviour and offending by young people, and the minimisation of damage caused to themselves and society. The resulting principles will guide its recommended blueprint for an effective, humane and coherent approach, based on sound evidence.

Set up by the Police Foundation, an independent charity dedicated to improving policing for the benefit of the public, the Commission is chaired by Anthony Salz, a



senior corporate lawyer with a distinguished record in charity work at board level.

Work will include a review of relevant research, as well as consultations with key stakeholders including children and young people and professionals working with them in the field of antisocial and criminal behaviour. The terms of reference include an investigation of alternative approaches in other countries, including Canada, France, Germany and Sweden.

Due to report in the summer of 2010, the Commission expects to bring forward strategic proposals for sustainable reform of relevant services for children and young people, including the youth justice system. A plain-English report will be published with a view to influencing policy in this field, accompanied by the publication of a more detailed analysis of the research and other evidence considered by the Commission. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter which highlights our current areas of grant making and focuses on the outcomes of the projects we fund.

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org) can be found on our website.

The Newsletter is published three times a year and you can obtain further copies or ask to be put on the mailing list by contacting the Foundation. If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would be delighted to hear from you.

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Assessment under review

High-stakes testing linked to performance management of the education system has become prominent in educational policy development, yet there is a growing interest across the UK in alternative assessment systems – particularly on how to engage teachers in both formative and summative assessment.

Nuffield has funded several studies on these alternative assessment systems, including the Assessment Reform Group's ARIA project, described below, and this year hosted an expert seminar on the future of assessment at Key Stage 3. [www](#)



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Innovations in Assessment



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colleagues from the Assessment Reform Group, examined the most recent assessment projects across the UK and pointed to the worrying conclusion that initiatives in assessment do not always take full account of key dimensions of the change process.

Working with over 200 experts in specialist seminars, the team drew particular attention to the 'under-designing' of change especially in planning for professional learning and sustainable development. The project team has offered a set of principles and standards, derived from ideas developed in the seminars, to assist teachers and schools, inspection and advice services, and policy makers in assessing the extent to which they are effectively promoting and sustaining high quality assessment practices. [www](#)

Although the importance of teacher assessment in schools, as a complement to externally set tests, has generated considerable interest in recent years, a newly completed project has concluded that the challenges involved are not to be taken lightly.

The Analysis and Review of Innovations in Assessment (ARIA) project, led by John Gardner at Queen's University Belfast with

Assessing Key Stage 3

At the end of 2008, the Government announced the scrapping of the Key Stage 3 national tests and the appointment of an Expert Group to advise how the tests should be replaced by improved teacher assessments. In January, together with the National Foundation for Educational Research and Cambridge Assessment, Nuffield organised a seminar to assemble as much advice and intelligence as possible in order to feed into the work of the Expert Group.

The seminar was attended by key assessment academics, teachers' leaders and officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families as well as one member of the Expert Group. A number of proposals for an alternative assessment system were put forward, analysed and discussed. Although no one approach was agreed by all, the participants strongly urged government to ensure the replacement tests should not be about school or teacher accountability but should focus on "what helped teachers to do a better job in the classroom". The greatest fear expressed at the seminar was of another big new system being rushed in with unintended consequences. [www](#)

Prize-winning Nuffield bursars and fellows

A key element of Nuffield's work is encouraging and supporting people at the early stages of their research careers in science or social science. Here we report on some recent successes from Nuffield science bursars and social science career development fellows.



New Zealand adventure

Two former Nuffield science bursary students have just returned from a trip of a lifetime to New Zealand, after winning the Royal Society International Expedition Prize. Elisabeth Muller and Jamie Stefaniak joined up with the Royal Society of New Zealand to spend two weeks exploring the volcanic regions of the North Island and studying whales in Auckland.

Choice Prize

Dr Franz Dietrich and Professor Christian List have been awarded the Social Choice and Welfare Prize. Franz is a current Nuffield career development fellow, working with Professor List on the emerging

new research field of judgement aggregation. The award from the Society for Social Choice and Welfare is given to 'the author under 40 of the most important work in social choice theory'. www.sscw.org.uk



How young people spend their time

Despite widespread discussion about changes to the lives that young people lead over the last few decades, we know very little about the facts. How do young people spend their time, and has this really changed much? If there are changes, have they been for the better or the worse?

As part of the Adolescent Mental Health Initiative we invited a team led by Professor Leon Feinstein of the Institute of Education, and including Professor Jacqueline Eccles from the University of Michigan, to take a look at the evidence. Overall, their thorough review of the literature and



secondary analysis of time use data have suggested some interesting changes in the way young people spend their time now compared

with the 1970s. These appear to be best characterised by growth in economic prosperity, an increase in leisure time, a small decline in face to face social activity, changes in the relationship with paid work, and a substantial shift in the types of media consumed. Much more time is spent travelling from A to B than 25 years ago, and there is a suggestion that UK adolescents spend more time with their peers than young people in some other countries. Time spent in the company of adults may be in decline, and we are investigating this further. The report is being finalised, and a briefing paper will be published later in the year. www.adolescentmentalhealth.org.uk



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Your DNA, Your Rights

The European Court of Human Rights has given a ruling in keeping with the findings of a study by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

The study - *The forensic use of bioinformation: ethical issues* – concluded that the police should not keep DNA samples of people who have not been convicted until there is clear evidence that this helps tackle crime.

Hugh Whittall, Director of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, responded. "The DNA of innocent people should not be kept by police ... There is no evidence that removing from the DNA database people who have not been charged or convicted will lead to serious crimes going undetected. The Government now has an obligation to bring its own policies into line."

"More evidence is needed about the contribution of retained DNA profiles and samples to criminal justice. Often-quoted statistics about 'matches' to previously unconvicted people on the database do not tell us whether these cases actually resulted in a conviction, or whether DNA evidence was essential to the case." www.nuffieldbioethics.org

Information on all these stories can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

Nuffield's financial picture



The Foundation spends about £11m pa and about 90% of this is derived from its investment portfolio (worth £203m at December 2008). Like all investors we have lost money in the recent market turbulence with our portfolio returning -20% in 2008, an amount similar to most other charities. We

recognise that this volatility should be expected in the long run and we have an investment strategy that will enable us to emerge from this storm without significant damage to either our assets or our spending programmes. We have a 5% exposure to UK equities so our fortunes rise and fall with the global, not the UK, economy. [www](#)

Law improvement



Nuffield is funding a series of seminars on Making Better Law, organised jointly with the Hansard Society, to be held throughout 2009 and culminating in a report to be published early in 2010. [www](#)



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield) the founder of Morris Motors with the aim of advancing social well being. We fund research and practical experiment and the development of capacity to undertake them, working across education, science, social science and social policy. While most of the Foundation's expenditure is on responsive grant programmes we also undertake our own initiatives.

Full information on all our current activities and on how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

The Nuffield Foundation
28 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JS Tel 020 7631 0566 Fax 020 7323 4877

Children and Families

The Foundation's Child Protection and Family Justice Committee met for the last time in November 2008. The Committee had been in existence since 1995, making grants totalling about £9million over that period and engaging systematically with the issues of family law and with child protection.

The Foundation remains committed to funding work in this area and proposals will now be considered by Trustees under the new heading of 'Children and Families'. [www](#)



Assistant Director awarded Harkness Fellowship

We are delighted to announce that Harald Schmidt, Assistant Director of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, has been awarded a Harkness Fellowship in Health Care Policy and Practice. [www](#)



Honorary degree award

Andrew Hunt has been awarded an honorary degree by the University of York. Nuffield congratulates Andrew, who recently retired as Director of the Nuffield Curriculum Centre. [www](#)

