

# Psychology for Good

## Outline

Richard Docwra - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021

### Summary

We offer a consultancy service that provides a bridge between academics and civil society, helping you apply the learning from your work - as well as broader learning from psychology - to help organisations and practical initiatives seeking social change to achieve greater impact.

### Rationale for the service

Academics and researchers at universities and other institutions produce a remarkable bank of knowledge and insight. Sadly, this valuable information often doesn't make it into wider society and remains hidden behind the walls of academia, despite the desire of most academics (and their institutions and funders) for their work to achieve as much impact as possible.

This lack of impact is for a number of reasons, and one significant factor is the lack of people able to straddle the worlds of academia and civil society, and both communicate and package these insights in a way that enables potential clients to recognise their potential value, and then use them effectively. As a result, there are very few universities with the capacity to do this in-house, and very few external providers offering this service – except us!

I have an unusual mix of skills and experience that make me well placed to play this role as a bridge between academia and practitioners. I've built and led successful agencies/consultancies serving charities and other organisations seeking social change. I'm an expert in planning, communications and consultancy. I've also experience of building public outreach organisations to make complex issues (in psychology, philosophy and other areas) accessible to a wider audience. Finally, I've worked with academic ideas for many years as a writer and producer of content.

I work with a team of strategists, designers, writers and account handlers that can help to turn academic insight into initiatives, outputs, toolkits, training and projects that have real value to civil society – both in helping to improve it directly and to organisations working to do this, such as charities, local authorities and educators.

Our services not only help you get greater impact from the knowledge and ideas you have generated, but also to realise their value as an asset. Income generation is a critical concern for universities, and is likely to be an increasingly pressing issue over the coming years. Universities that can make the most effective use of their assets will be the ones most likely to thrive. Our service provides you with an additional means of generating income for the university, through several possible channels:

- Consultancy fees for specific projects, workshops and ongoing support.
- Increasing the number of funding opportunities for your Psychology department - your work could be more attractive to potential funders when they see you have a credible implementation arm.
- Making funding applications more effective - helping you gain a better success rate in funding applications for academic research, by helping you to build a stronger sense of potential social impact into research proposals and funding applications.
- Making funding applications easier - with access to our team to help you develop and strengthen the 'impact' section in your funding applications.
- Offering the possibility of applying for larger research grants, with projects that include a phase of practical application with client(s) of ours.

Quite simply, I can't think of a discipline with greater potential to apply its insights - and more people being willing to pay for them as they see value in their application - than psychology!

### **How it works**

There are two ways we could work with you to apply your knowledge:

1. As a consultancy working with you to harness your skills and insights to help our external clients.
2. As consultant working with you/your university as a client, helping you extend the breadth, value and number of your funding applications, and/or apply your research (if you have secured funds to apply it as well as conduct the research).

In our collaborative consultancy work with external clients (point 1), we would aim for your time to be used sparingly, for specialist work as and when needed. For many projects, my team and I could undertake much of the work directly with clients (after a briefing from you), and bring in additional expertise from you and your team to work with the client directly when needed. This would broaden your capacity, reach and income-generating activity, whilst ensuring that we aren't too reliant on you when you are already very busy!

We would use the following basic process when working with external clients:

- **Initial information-gathering meeting with your team** – to understand the insights you have, how these could be applied and with which sectors/audiences.
- **Build an offer to potential clients** – we would then build a proposal to send to potential clients, showing the insights you could bring, the value these could have in their work, and how we could deliver them.
- **Approach potential clients** – both we, and you, would approach potential clients with the proposal and set up meetings with them to discuss the possibilities.
- **Refine the brief** – if a specific party is interested, we would refine the brief for the project and agree costs, resources and timescales.

- **Begin the project** – we would then begin the project, with your input as needed.

Our consultancy would disseminate and apply both the insights from your team's specific research, as well as broader psychological principles, so that we are harnessing the broader foundational knowledge available from you and your team. This latter, broader insight may well be of the greatest value to potential clients initially.

## **Services**

Services could include:

- **Consultancy and project work** - helping organisations from a range of sectors to improve their work or develop new initiatives using our insights. We can act as a mixture of consultancy, creative agency and social incubator, not only helping clients to understand how they can apply your psychological insights to their work, but also helping them to actually implement these activities. The latter might include strategic planning, producing communication materials for them or helping them develop a new initiative and get it off the ground.
- **Training and workshops** - to help organisations use your insights to make their work, projects and services more effective. Presenting and providing simple but effective 'toolkits' for specific sectors could be an effective entry point for some new clients, both generating income and showing them the range of possible applications of broader work and larger projects.
- **Funded project work** - as above, but working on your behalf to undertake the implementation or dissemination part of a project that you already have funding for.
- **Internal work at the university** - helping you or your colleagues to build research proposals and funding applications, and to expand the scope of these to include the application of these insights (which we could also help you manage, if needed).
- **Content development** – helping you and your team to develop and broadcast accessible, interesting content based on your research, including insights, news and how it could be applied in the real world. We could help you develop publications, podcasts, emails, conferences, events and many other outputs.

## **Potential clients**

We could work with a range of potential clients, including but not limited to:

- Charities and campaign groups seeking change - for example, helping a vegetarian charity encourage people to eat less meat.
- Government and local councils - helping them seek better outcomes (health, environmental etc.) through more effective strategies, content, campaigns and communications. For example – Government on policy development on climate change, NHS on its covid-19 response, local councils seeking behaviour change on environment, littering, health, safety etc.

- Education and schools - helping them inform and improve their teaching methods, curriculum content and lives of their pupils and staff.
- Political parties and organisations - helping them seek social change, increase political participation and mobilise support.

Broadly, our work would cover a wide range of topic areas – anything that can help to improve society and people’s lives. Its focus could range from the broad (global policy ideas) through to the specific and day-to-day (individual behaviour change). This [report on behavioural science from the UN](#) illustrates the potential for the former, and [this toolkit](#) from the Behavioural Insights team illustrates the latter (and is a nice example of the sort of toolkit we could produce to promote our work).

### **Measuring impact**

An important aspect of any implementation project we took on with clients on your behalf would be to encourage them to measure the impact in a reliable way. Helping them use the right tools and techniques to do this could be yet another element of the consultancy service that we/you could offer to them.

By conducting tests and measuring impact in a reliable way, we can achieve a number of additional, important things, by building a two-way relationship between you (our academic contacts) and our clients:

- Potentially enabling you/the university to gain useful information from clients about what happens when research is applied in the real world - which could help the university advance its research too.
- Building an ongoing library of evidence and case studies about how your/the university’s work has achieved social impact - something that is useful for both the university in seeking more research money and us in attracting new clients, by showing them how applying academic knowledge to their work helps them achieve more impact.
- We could also ask prospects and clients what they need - what knowledge and ideas from psychology they think could add value to their work. We could then consider how much of this information we/you have available (or can obtain), and then help them apply this, or build a partnership for you to carry out more research to obtain it, if viable.

### **Arrangements**

We would sign an MOU to set out our basic principles of engagement.

I would charge clients for the services we provide and I would pay you at an hourly rate for your input into each project – with the rate to be agreed in advance.

**Richard Docwra**  
**24<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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