

SOAS IAA Strategic Grant: Helpful Tips For A Successful Impact Proposal

Insights From The 2024 Grant Recipients

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Key Steps for a Strong Impact Proposal

- Be pragmatic: set clear and achievable goals within the grant timeframe.
- Engage partners early: co-develop budgets and ideas.
- Think long-term: consider how impact will continue after funding.
- Measure impact: Define specific outcomes and tracking methods.
- Leverage the grant: use the successful project as a stepping stone for future projects.

Advice from the 2024 Recipients

- "Start with a small project and build from there, partnerships are key." Cristina Juan, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics.
- "Be practical. Focus on visible, and attainable changes within the timeframe." Marie Rodet, School of History, Religions and Philosophies.
- "Sustainability means long-term partnerships. Working with someone for five years gives them the ability to keep you accountable." Nikita Simpson, department of Anthropology and Sociology.

Defining and Demonstrating Impact

- What counts as impact?
- Impact means tangible change, not just dissemination.
- Impact can be small but meaningful shifts accumulate over time.
- Research and impact are interconnected: impact work often generates new research questions.

Lessons from Past Recipients

- "The IAA grant helped develop further research ideas, and [impact]. Addressing demand created new research." Nikita Simpson, department of Anthropology and Sociology.

Measuring & Sustaining Impact

- How to Measure Impact Effectively?
- Use both qualitative and quantitative data (interviews, surveys, videos, feedback).
- Capture long-term impact, as impact continues beyond the initial project.
- Documentation and video help extend the project's influence over time.
- Sustainability depends on strong relationships and structured measurement strategies.

Lessons from Past Recipients

- "A successful partnership should grow your network." Nikita Simpson, department of Anthropology and Sociology
- "The IAA Grant helped us incubate partnerships that continued beyond the funding period." Anna Lindley, department of Development Studies

Overcoming Challenges in Impact Work

- Be patient and allow extra time in case of slow institutional processes.
- Build strong partnerships to navigate structural barriers and gatekeeping.
- Prioritise transparent communication and long-term engagement in case of trust issues with partners.
- Be wary of unexpected challenges, stay flexible and be open to adapting your approach.

Lessons from Past Recipients

- "I hadn't anticipated how long institutional partnerships take to set up." Anna Lindley, Development Studies
- "You realise how much you don't know as you work through impact projects." Nikita Simpson, department of Anthropology and Sociology
- "Sometimes knowledge is not [easily] transmitted, and you must navigate moments of silence." Marie Rodet, School of History, Religions and Philosophies.

Building Strong Partnerships & Collaboration

- Impactful projects rely on long-term, equitable partnerships with non-academic collaborators.
- Trust-building takes time and requires meaningful engagement.
- Non-academic partners provide key insights on priorities, budgeting, and implementation.
- Co-creation leads to greater impact. Projects are more effective when designed with non-academic partners, not for them.

Lessons from Past Recipients

- "Find a non-academic partner who keeps you grounded, someone who will ask the tough questions: Will this actually help?" Nikita Simpson, department of Anthropology and Sociology
- "The idea came from the people it was a ground-up, organic response." Cristina Juan, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics.
- "Collaboration allowed us to build on existing relationships and gain credibility in the community." Anna Lindley, department of Development Studies.