(Bednarek et al. 2023)

Bednarek, Rebecca, Eugenia Cacciatori, Konstantinos Chalkias, Rhianna Gallagher Rodgers, Paula Jarzabkowski, Mustafa Kavas, and Elisabeth Krull. 2023. “Delivering Impact via the Ebb-and-Flow of a Research Team: Reflection on a Long-Term Program of Research into a Global Societal Challenge\*.” *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00218863231207873.

Bednarek et al. (2023) research how grand challenge research teams achieve sustained research impact through time across multiple projects. There is an ebb-and-flow of activities and membership and this needs to be managed. The researchers reflect on their own experience working as an interdisciplinary research team. They begin by giving a detailed literature review on the impact of research teams, including a detail case study. Then they describe the process of managing these teams through their auto-ethnographic.

“We reflect on our own experience as a team (12 researchers) that delivers impact over the long term.” “Our program of research has been focused on the grand challenge of insuring catastrophes—such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and wildfires— during a time of increasing risk.”  
The article is an essay reflecting on the authors’ experience working as an grand challenge research team (in the existing literature on research impact and research teams. “We then discuss the evolution of our research program and the research team, before presenting a framework for managing an impactful team investigating a grand challenge over time. We hope to offer actionable guidance for researchers seeking to make a significant difference through their work by contributing to the sparse discussion about qualitative research teams.

“There have been increasing calls within management and organizational studies for research impact on grand societal challenges to “make the world a better place” (George et al., 2016; Harley & Fleming, 2021, p.133).”

They acknowledge the increasing demands for impactful research on grand societal challenges and identify several barriers, including institutional constraints, knowledge translation difficulties between researchers and practitioners, and the long timescales required for impactful outcomes. These challenges are compounded by the need for sustained engagement with stakeholders and the integration of diverse perspectives within research teams.

In their 2023 study, Bednarek et al. delve into the intricacies of managing grand challenge research teams, emphasizing the need for adaptability in the face of fluctuating activities and team composition. Their examination starts with a comprehensive literature review, followed by an auto-ethnographic analysis of their own interdisciplinary team's experiences (Bednarek et al. 2023). Bednarek et al. offer a process framework for managing research teams effectively over time, with a focus on delivering impactful solutions to grand challenges. Their framework outlines strategies for forming teams, building personal and team commitment, and managing the dynamics of team performance and membership fluctuation. Key elements of the framework include clear communication of impact expectations, fostering long-term, flexible connections among team members, balancing engagement with various outputs, and accommodating team changes while maintaining continuity. This framework aims to provide actionable guidance for researchers, emphasizing the nurturing of individual expertise and passion, collaborative development of overlapping areas of expertise, and fostering supportive team dynamics.