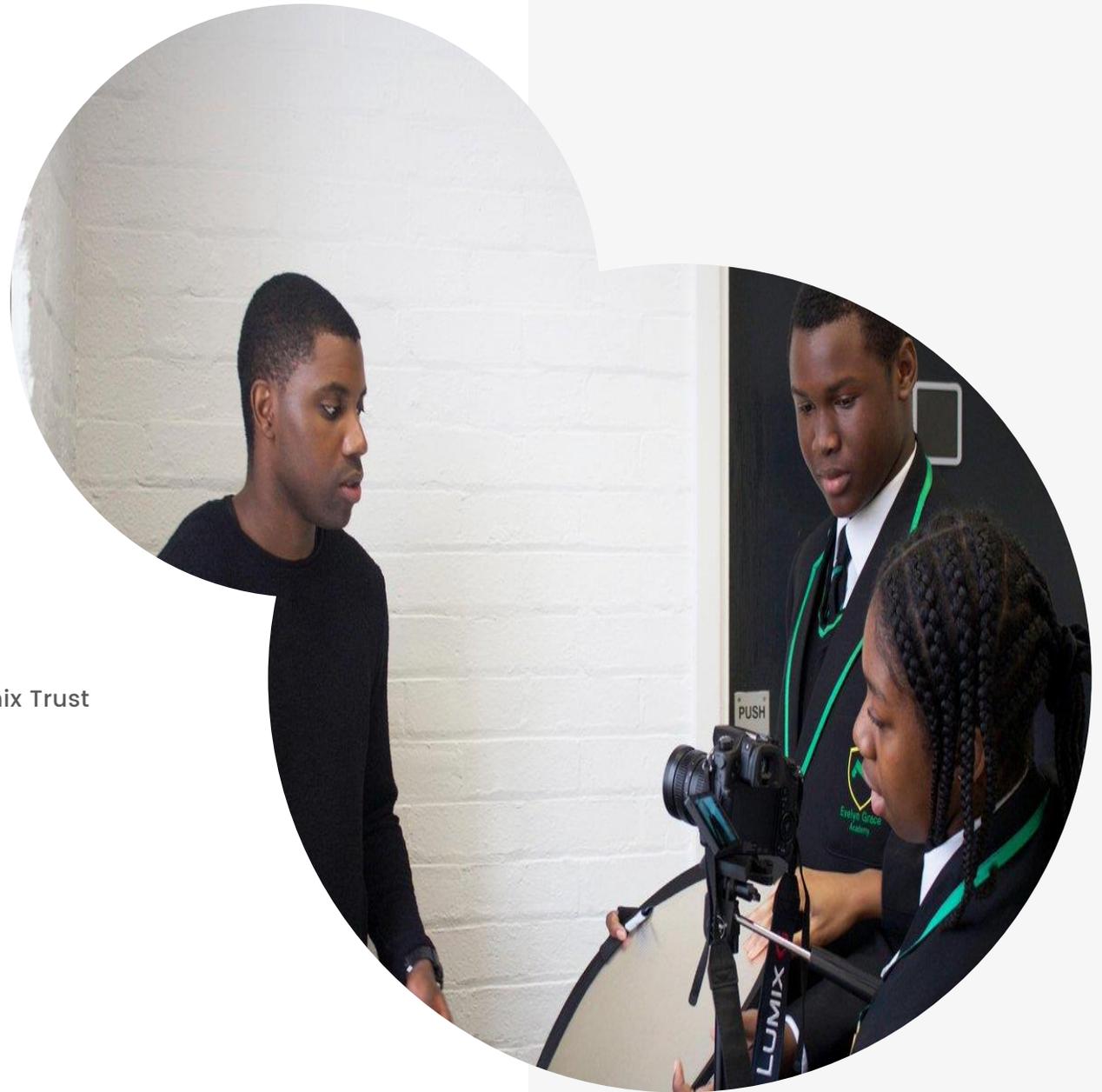




60 Untold Stories of Black Britain

A collaboration between Friends of Marsha Phoenix Trust
and Goldsmiths, University of London





60 Untold Stories of Black Britain

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Common Cause Research

This case study was produced in 2018 as part of the Common Cause Research project.

Common Cause aimed to document and explore existing collaborative research between universities and Black and Minority Ethnic community organisations. The project was funded under the AHRC Connected Communities Programme and included partners from University of Bristol, University of Liverpool, Xtend, University of Nottingham and Runnymede Trust.

We hope that these case studies will provide inspiration to those thinking of engaging in collaborative research, as well as insight into the challenges and benefits of such partnerships. Our intention in these case studies is to document the relationship between the partners from the academic institution and the community organisation. We have not evaluated the projects or engaged with the project participants. However, by capturing the perspectives of the partners, we hope to understand the structural and practical support needed to initiate and run projects involving universities and Black and Minority Ethnic organisations.

You can find more case studies, resources and information about Common Cause Research at www.commoncauseresearch.com.

At A Glance

Title

60 Untold Stories of Black Britain

Key Partners

Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust

<http://www.marshaphoenix.org.uk/>

**Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora
Studies at Goldsmiths, University of
London**

<https://www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean/>

Funder

Heritage Lottery Fund

Dates

July – December 2015

Website

<http://60untold.co.uk/>

Selected outputs

- **60 Untold Stories Portraits and oral histories**
- **60 Untold Stories Documentary film**



**Evelyn Grace Academy student volunteers
learning about oral history**

Project Summary

60 untold Stories of Black Britain is a collaboration between the community partners Friends of The Marsha Phoenix Trust and the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. The Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust is a registered charity founded in 1979 and based in the London borough of Lewisham, it provides supported housing to single homeless young women. **60 Untold Stories of Black Britain** was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and undertaken over a period of 6 months between July and December 2015.

Goldsmiths, University of London traces its beginnings to 1891 when it was founded as The Goldsmiths' Company's Technical and Recreative Institute to promote technical skill, knowledge, health and general well-being of people from the industrial, working and artisan classes. The Institute was merged with the University of London in 1904 and established as Goldsmiths College, it became a full College of the University of London in 1988. At the time of writing Goldsmiths had approximately 8,000 students from over 120 countries.

60 Untold Stories of Black Britain explores and celebrates the lives of the children of migrants from the Caribbean who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, described as the first Black Caribbean children to pass through the British educational system. The project aimed to explore their educational experiences and careers; charting the struggles, resolutions and achievements of sixty people aged between 60 and 65 years when the project was undertaken. These participants are described as the first Black middle class professionals who made significant contributions to their communities and to British society as a whole. **60 Untold Stories of Black Britain** provides a new historical perspective on the heritage of Britain and is said to fill a gap in history; providing an educational resource that engages viewers in a dimension of Black history that may otherwise remain hidden. Documenting these stories is highlighted as important in order to preserve what may otherwise become



Patricia Gordon a Project Research and Development Consultant. Photo: Jacob Bryan-Amaning

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a lost heritage, provide a learning resource across a wide educational spectrum and leave a legacy for future generations.

Sixty portraits of sixty subjects were created by four photographers, two in their 60s and two in their 20s, challenging the viewer to answer the question “Who are our Black heroes?” The portraits are accompanied by audio interviews and a documentary that were exhibited at the Professor Stuart Hall Building at Goldsmiths during Black History Month in October 2015. A website has been created where these outputs can be accessed, providing an online resource. Work was also undertaken in local schools to present the project and engage in discussion about Black history. Pupils from one secondary school attended workshops at Goldsmiths to learn photography and interview skills in a University environment. Tangible outputs from the project have been donated to the Black Cultural Archives Centre.

How the collaboration came about

The community partner interviewed for this case study was a member of the management committee at Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust when the project was undertaken and has a longstanding connection with Goldsmiths, University of London. The Founder of the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust also has a longstanding connection with Goldsmiths and is an Honorary Fellow. The initial connection with the university is described as coming about due to the lack of attention to Caribbean studies at the University, which is located in an area with a significant Black Caribbean population.

I worked in this borough (Lewisham) in community education from the 1980s, and became involved in the University with a group, we were a group of people who thought it was outrageous that Goldsmiths should be located in this area and not have anything to do with Caribbean studies. So I actually was the Chair of the working party that led to the creation of the Centre for Caribbean Studies here. So it goes back a long way. Of course over the years so many things have changed. I think that Goldsmiths was dynamic in the '80s, there were certain individuals who led and who were amazing, and came from different areas (of academic discipline). So, you had the head of Anthropology, the head of Music etc. And the whole thing culminated in Goldsmiths agreeing to have the first academic post for Caribbean Studies. And I was actually on the panel, invited to be on the panel, when that appointment was made. The idea was that there should always be a support group so that (the person appointed to the post) wasn't having to work totally on her own, that there was a space to work, because that's how we'd operated all the way along the line. But years pass, things happen, Goldsmith's became incorporated into the University of London because it did not have that status at that point in time. Changes took place and it (Centre for Caribbean Studies) came in under Literature (the University department), and (the person currently in post) is the

second person appointed at the Centre for Caribbean Studies, which has now become Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies.

(Community partner)

The creation of the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies is described as key to both the 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain project and more broadly for collaborative research about the Caribbean and people of Caribbean heritage, undertaken with communities.

I emphasise the Centre for Caribbean Studies and its role within this project, crucially the Centre, the vision for the Centre was that it would have a dual focus, that it would not concentrate simply on research about the Caribbean and Caribbean heritage peoples, but that it would involve the community in the research process. So that is precisely the function that was envisioned right at the beginning, it is a function that has been terrifically difficult to maintain as the University has been driven increasingly towards its scholarly and academic goals. So initially the Centre was much more associated with community studies, but that has changed and my own research area has been and is in literary studies. I do other things, but my research area is literature. And therefore this balancing between the academic, scholarly and community has been a troubling one – one that I've obviously been committed to, but it is that space that has allowed this project to get off the ground and to be undertaken in a collaborative manner.

(Academic partner)

The role and contribution of the founder of the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust is highlighted as significant to developments relating to race and ethnicity at the University.

And also, I think I ought to flag up (founder of) Marsha Phoenix who has done so much work over the years, over the decades, and especially here at Goldsmiths and with Goldsmiths and is actually an Honorary Fellow of Goldsmiths. And one of the things that I think I was conscious of was the fact that we used to have the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Lecture every year based here in Goldsmiths. When I came back after having retired and left school and therefore being able to come along, I was appalled to find that we were simply given a room outside of term time (for the lecture). So it felt as though Marsha Phoenix (Memorial Trust), the work of Marsha Phoenix, that whole sort of Black community development work had gone. So I thought it was important to raise the profile because it felt so very wrong. And I knew how much had gone on in Goldsmiths and those battles which had been fought in the '70s and the '80s seemed to be battles that needed to be fought all over again.

(Community partner)

The longstanding connection between community and academic partners has facilitated a common understanding about research, collaboration, race and ethnicity. This shared understanding, already established prior to the project commencing, is described as important to getting the project off the ground quickly.

We had a language in common already. No, it was really a question of creating space, understanding the constraints in terms of time and so on and getting on with it. We didn't need to spend long thrashing out a shared understanding. It would have been very, very difficult had we not already had that shared understanding to do this work in the time that we had, it would have been very, very difficult indeed. Yeah. So it was important that we already had this, we knew what was needed.

(Academic partner)

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A number of factors are apparent as being key to progressing the collaboration on 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain swiftly and for delivery within a relatively short funding timescale of six months. The factors facilitating the collaboration include: a longstanding connection between the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust, the community partner instigating the 60 Untold Stories project and the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies at the University; an established shared understanding and common language regarding research, collaboration, race and ethnicity; and a shared interest and commitment to work with communities in documenting the Caribbean, people of Caribbean descent and their heritage. The Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies and events leading to its creation are important to note because they are described as important enablers of this collaboration. A key challenge relates to maintaining the space in which academic, scholarly and community interests can come together when there is said to be an increasing focus on academic and scholarly goals within the University environment.



A view of the exhibition at Professor Stuart Hall Building, Goldsmiths.

Developing collaborative research

The idea for the project came from the community partner who was inspired to develop it in order to document stories of Black Caribbean people who were approaching retirement and indeed some had died. The community partner's own retirement, having more time to work on a project like this, combined with a desire to document and pass knowledge on to future generations are described as significant to initiating 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain.

Retirement and sleeping. And looking around me and finding colleagues who'd hit 60 and had died. And they had done amazing work, they had been pioneers – that first set of children of Afro Caribbean origin who'd gone through the system here and made a difference ... and gone, or beginning to go. So that was the thing that started it. Also I think partly as well because (the founder of Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust) was getting on in age and I think her work has been well documented. But also, it doesn't quite capture the whole feel of a whole movement and also a connection, that we were connected going through the Black consciousness movement in the '60s, going to the march on New Cross, when the New Cross fire took place, all of those things connected us. And yet we were still being talked of as 'difficult' and 'problematic'. So that was the whole thing that prompted me doing something. And I wanted to do something intergenerational because it seemed to me that if we don't tell our children these stories then they're not aware, how can they possibly be aware? We're the generation with the miniskirt and tights – tights did not exist you know. This generation take tights for granted, a telephone was a special thing that was in the house if your parents could afford it, you know. And you went and you put the money in the coin box for a public phone to make a phone call. So that whole...

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the simplicity of things and the way in which things have developed, we need to pass on.

(Community partner)

The academic partner recounts that work they had already undertaken in Lewisham to collect oral histories facilitated progressing work on 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain because some foundations were already in place to build on.

I just want to add that Lewisham has a particular significance for us and for this work, for the work with Goldsmiths and so on and we also had some groundwork of collecting oral histories in a way. I think in a way we led the field in terms of collecting a Black history focussed on the borough. So there was all of that that made ... that had already laid the groundwork for a possible work.

(Academic partner)

The community partner had previous experience of working collaboratively and brought together a group of people to discuss the idea for the project. People in this group were colleagues with whom the community partner had previously worked in community development and who also had some involvement with the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust. The University was approached to collaborate after the initial idea was developed into a project and funding secured.

I've always worked collaboratively, and what I did was link with, when I had the idea, link with a number of people who I'd worked with over the years and who also were involved with Marsha Phoenix (Memorial Trust) at some stage or another. And they came from a wide range, so it was community development workers in essence and I drew up documentation from that. And of course feeding back (progress on the project and funding) into Marsha Phoenix the Management Group, because it was to be a Marsha Phoenix project to raise the profile of the

work of Marsha Phoenix. So the point at which I came to Goldsmiths was the point at which I had a project (with funding secured).

(Community partner)

After securing the funding, the community partner wanted to locate the project at the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies at Goldsmiths. The already established relationship with the Centre and a shared interest in the research topic meant that locating the project here would enable it to be progressed swiftly. The community partner approached the academic partner and Warden at Goldsmiths to present the project to them, an established good reputation of the academic and community partners is described as an important contributing factor to securing the go ahead from the Warden.

It was already funded, and what I wanted was a venue, I wanted it to be located in Goldsmiths, in the Centre for Caribbean Studies. And I'd met with (academic partner) and presented her with the whole thing. I think also it's really important for Black organisations to, in a sense to challenge the stereotype that we take the money and we don't do the things we're supposed to do or it drags on and drags on. So it was a really tight timetable, and I didn't want it to drag on, I thought it was really crucial because I wanted something that was for Black History Month, so that was the key thing, to tie it in to October and Black History Month, hence a short period of time.

When I went to the Warden and presented this idea to him and he liked it and he said to (academic partner) you know, 'Is this a good project?' And then he instantly said 'Okay, Goldsmiths will provide the venue and Goldsmiths will also give you a part time researcher'. So, that was a commitment but that came because of (academic partner's) work and reputation. Because I came with reputation and obviously he could check that this was not you know any old Afro Caribbean person off the street coming in and wanting to do so and so and that made it possible for the wheels to start turning. So then there was the access to

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the (University) publicity machine, different departments working with schools access and so on and so on. So it was an amazing thing – because all of that was there.

(Community Partner)

Being able to approach the academic partner and senior staff at the University, negotiate location of the project at the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies and gain access to the University's resources are described as exceptional to this project, not a regular occurrence in relation to university-community research collaborations.

But I think what it identifies is that actually this research was a case of exceptionalism. Who could normally do that? How many people wanting to conduct some research can actually walk into a situation in which they were part of the creation of the actual academic research space in the first instance, can call on other important people within the community to back that up, can identify a high ranking Black academic within the institution, could even find one? You know, so all of these point to the fact I think that this case was marked by exceptional circumstances.

(Academic partner)

Without the many years of community partner involvement in the University including in the development of the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies, it may not have been possible to access senior staff with authority to make decisions about the collaboration and allocation of resources with relative ease, if at all.

Challenges relating to university-community research collaborations are said to exist even if they are not apparent in the collaboration for 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain.

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I've seen some of those (collaborative projects) where you first have to find someone in the community, the community comes to you ... it takes ... even when you already know people it takes a long time. It's challenging to work with other people on a research project within a defined space where there are clear goals, even when you know people well.

(Academic partner)

Established contact and a good relationship between the community partner and the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies, combined with a shared interest and history in documenting stories of Black Caribbean people in the local area are described as key to this collaboration.

It's challenging to work with other people on a research project within a defined space where there are clear goals, even when you know people well.

Funding

The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the application was made by the community partner with support from her son. The involvement of a younger person is described as important to the intergenerational aspect of the project and to gain a different perspective, as well as benefit from the technical skills of the younger generation.

And then thought well how do I get this funded and thought of the Heritage Lottery funding and applied to them. And I worked with my son because I thought it was really important that this should be intergenerational, and it was actually very good working with a young person because he has those kinds of techy skills and a different way of seeing things. I got on with it, having jumped from my little group (at Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust) initially and working with my son and getting the application in.

(Community partner)

An initial challenge regarding the funding application relates to making the project fit the funder's criteria. However, the allocation of a fieldworker by the Heritage Lottery Fund is described as very helpful in addressing this challenge and presenting the application in the language used by funders.

What was difficult I think initially was getting right the application in their (Heritage Lottery Fund) terms, getting the application right for HLF funding to be released was actually quite a difficult thing. But I found HLF extremely helpful, because once I'd got the first thing in and I was given a field worker, he was amazing, you know, (he) set up meetings with me and went through the whole thing carefully and talked about HLF speak, etc. Looked at where for example I

might have put down a certain sum of money for such and such a task, and he'd say, 'That's not going to be good enough,

HLF would be looking to ...' so amending in those kinds of ways. But nothing that fundamentally altered the project – it was about making it fit HLF criteria.

(Community partner)

The project was funded to be undertaken over a period of six months and the community partner did not want this project to be undertaken over a longer period of time. The academic partner highlights challenges relating to securing funding for university–community collaborations.

Well a flip side of this is that no funder is actually prepared for an academic space which has really developed so that it would accommodate the community as partners in research. So that for me, accessing funding that would do just that would be very, very difficult. It would be very difficult for the Centre for Caribbean Studies to approach HLF because we are not a community group, we are an academic institution. So that is really difficult. And the same kind of difficulties apply where I've tried in the past to get funding through the research bodies that fund academic spaces. So that is a huge difficulty.

(Academic partner)

Regarding some funders requiring an academic to submit the funding application, the academic partner notes that prior to this development there was less contact between potential university and community collaborators.

And that's a fairly recent idea isn't it [requirement of some funders to have an academic submit the funding application]? And before that it was just the two worlds did not meet. Sadly in a way the Centre for Caribbean Studies has been well ahead of the game in thinking out the idea that the two needed to meet. So the funding bodies it seems to me constantly lag behind what is needed. But until the funders are signalling that they are open to those ideas, from this space, it's a waste of everybody's time. It becomes very frustrating because you know in the past we've been turned down on all sorts of things where we've wanted to be able to work much more with the community.

(Academic partner)

The community partner relates how potential challenges can arise when some members of a community group join discussions at a later stage than others; in particular if they have previously had experience of applying to the same funders and have their own ideas about what is needed to meet funder requirements.

The only time I had a hiccup was, there was one stage, and this was when the money came through, and I was doing my feedback and I'd produced a paper each time for the group, and a couple of people who hadn't attended regularly suddenly appeared. And that was one of the longest meetings we'd ever had, because there were a tremendous number of questions about HLF and HLF funding and 'Do you realise you have to do an evaluation?' But I picked up that one of these people had had difficulty for years trying to access HLF funding and couldn't understand how I'd done it.

So the funding bodies it seems to me constantly lag behind what is needed. But until the funders are signalling that they are open to those ideas, from this space, it's a waste of everybody's time.

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This issue was resolved by the community partner suggesting that regular meetings of the group could be held to enable progress to be monitored and how the funding was being spent. In the end it was not necessary to hold such meetings and the project went ahead as planned.

In this project, the community partner successfully secured funding for the project before approaching the University to discuss collaborating on the project. Initial challenges relate to making the funding application fit the criteria and language of funders; the allocation of a fieldworker by HLF to work with the community partner is described as very helpful to addressing these issues. It is also apparent that challenges can arise if there are differing views among members of a community group about funder requirements and such situations require sensitive handling.

Undertaking the research

The 60 community participants were recruited through the community partner's network and worked with four photographers to create their portraits. Oral history interviews were conducted either by the community partner, her son, or the research assistant allocated by the University to work on the project. All of the people undertaking these tasks were either participants in the project or had established links with them and all were of African Caribbean origin.

Yes that was it – three people ... so 60 people were interviewed by all of them. The portraits were taken by four photographers, and again I'd chosen them, so there were two who were part of the 60 ... they were 60 year olds. And then two young people ... my son who's a photographer, he's one of them ... and (a community participant) who's one of the people who was photographed – her son, who is of course a photographer.

(Community partner)

The community partner worked with three people, from the group convened to develop the original idea for the project, to devise questions for the oral history interviews that would accompany the portraits. The questions are described as generic and interviewees were encouraged to tell their own stories. Filmed interviews were also undertaken to produce a documentary film and the community partner identified three areas to be included for feedback in these interviews; women into education, a local boys' school and the first soul sound system.

I identified (three) areas that I thought were really important that ought to be looked at. Women into education, because so many of us became educators. Tulse Hill Boys School because it was seen as a sink school, and yet it produced so many amazing men who are movers and shakers in society even now you



Linton Kwesi Johnson, Goldsmiths graduate and the only black poet to be published in the Penguin Modern Classics series. Photo: Keri-Luke Campbell

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know – Linton Kwesi Johnson being one of them. And TWJ, the first soul sound system. People documented reggae sound systems, they (TWJ) were a soul sound system, and actually went on to own their own night club – and I felt that that history would be lost if we didn't start to get something down about what they did.

(Community partner)

The data generated from the interviews was not analysed or edited but presented in the words of interviewees in order to maintain authenticity. The idea was to let people tell their own stories.

The 60 portraits were exhibited for the whole of Black History Month in 2015. The exhibition was fully interactive enabling viewers, via a phone app, to listen to oral histories of the subjects in each portrait discussing their educational and professional experiences in Britain.

The research assistant's role is described as being an important direct link to the project. In addition to undertaking some interviews, key aspects of this role were to liaise between different levels of the project including between academic and community partners, host school groups visiting the exhibition and give talks about the project.

Challenges highlighted in undertaking the project relate to practical issues and the space allocated for the exhibition. One issue regarding food for the opening of the exhibition, illustrates how some established systems and ways of working in the University may not be conducive to hosting cross-cultural events.

But where we battled, where we had problems was for example I was insistent that at the opening night (of the exhibition), which was the Marsha Phoenix Annual Memorial Lecture, that we had Caribbean food. And there was a whole thing about having to use the caterers that the University has because of

course all of these things are privatised aren't they? And then doing the battle to actually have Caribbean caterers. I managed it. I did a lot of talking and a lot of stroking, and I was always very clear that if I was going to make an impact and if I was going to get things done, then I needed to work through the head of the organisation. So I related directly to them (the Registrar and another senior member of staff delegated to have oversight of the project). So to get over the catering thing I didn't do the battles with the catering manager, I went through them.

(Community partner)

The space allocated for the exhibition is described by the community partner as the right location but one that required significant oversight to ensure it was sufficiently maintained and project materials were not damaged.

But one thing about having the exhibition I think that I found difficult, I think we had the right space because people could not avoid it, so it's a block over there and lots of lectures take place over there, also there's a cafeteria and that in itself presented a problem because it's about how students respect the space. And I spent a lot of time, actually I practically lived here, just trying to make sure it was tidy. Because there was no one overseeing, and I think that that's one of the things which is problematic in being an outside group putting on something within an organisation. And I was particularly distressed because one evening there was a whole presentation, I can't remember which department it was, but you know another academic department had an evening function there which is wonderful because it meant all of those people who are academics saw the project. They were located within it, so it was wonderful. But I came here on the Saturday probably around 11, 12 – nothing had been cleared up. So anyone coming in from the public would have come in to empty bottles and half eaten sandwiches and so on and so on. So I fed that back, I fed that into the Warden as part of my whole thing of 'it's really important that you all know that these are the things that I think are problematic'. So if it is a space which is being used by

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everybody, then there is a whole issue about how you ensure that that space is kept well and respected, and the portraits are respected. I actually had a run-in with one student – he was leaning against a portrait.

(Community partner)

Having the knowledge and insight regarding who these issues should be reported to and who would be the best people to help address them, combined with the backing of the Warden to undertake the project, are said to be important factors that helped to resolve the more challenging matters relatively swiftly and effectively. Both partners highlight that this is exceptional and not something that is a regular occurrence, many people would not have access to this kind of backing from a senior level in a university.

Roles and responsibilities

The plan for delivering the project, devised by the community partner, included roles and responsibilities of people who would work on the project and was agreed with the group brought together at the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust to develop the project. This is said to have worked well and a shared sense of responsibility achieved.

I actually felt it worked well because of course if you're accustomed to working collaboratively you ensure that you set up that whole thing in the first place. So we had meetings, the researcher and I talked and had meetings on a regular basis. I would meet with the photographers and we'd look at issues together. Meetings with (academic partner) or phone calls. Also set meetings with the management of Goldsmiths, so the Warden's office, so I had regular updating meetings with senior staff. So I was raising issues or letting them know how things were progressing. It also meant that I could pressure if I was having a problem.

(Community partner)

The academic partner highlights that the short timescale for the project meant it was important have clarity about the roles of people involved and to be able to rely on each other.

Well again given the time and so on it was essential that you knew what was going on, and that we could rely on each other – that was key. You know if there were difficulties we didn't mess about.

(Academic partner)

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Being able to have open and honest conversations was important and made possible by established good relationships and trust. Adapting roles as needed was also important.

I've worked in community development work for so long and working in this borough, it just naturally flows because you just automatically do the things that need to be done. There's nothing about ... you know I didn't have any hang-ups about getting a broom or clearing some of the rubbish. Because it was about the project, not about me. And I think that if you've worked in community organisations you have that kind of thing – it's not about the status, it's not about the hierarchy, it's about making the provision do what it set out to do.

(Community partner)

An initial plan setting out roles and responsibilities combined with flexibility to adapt as needed once the project was under way is said to have worked well in this project.

It's not about the status, it's not about the hierarchy, it's about making the provision do what it set out to do.

Accountability

Accountabilities for delivering the project were discussed and agreed with the planning group convened at the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust. As with roles and responsibilities, planning accountabilities in advance is considered important by the community partner.

It was planned, because you cannot do these things without it being planned. Because that's what gives people the sense that you know what you're about, and gives people the sense that you're a confident person.

(Community partner)

In terms of formal accountabilities, the community partner was responsible to the Management Group at Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust and together they were accountable to the funders. The community partner provided the Management Group with written updates on the project at their monthly meetings, this was a regular agenda item for the duration of the project. Other staff were volunteering their time to the project and the community partner briefed them about their roles and what was expected. After the initial briefings, regular meetings were held to check progress and staff could contact the community partner about any problems encountered in between meetings.

With the staff if you like, because they weren't being paid as such, I had meetings with them and I would chair. We would agree X, Y and Z. If they had a problem they knew where to contact me, and I would follow up by checking that everything's okay – 'How are things going? Are you on target?' And it was just simply making sure that people were very clear, I briefed every single person who participated in this project. I did not leave it for anyone to just read a piece of

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paper or whatever. So I had initial conversations with them and then came the whole thing after they had decided whether they wished to participate or not.

(Community partner)

The vigilance and oversight of the community partner is said to have enabled formal and informal accountabilities to be put in place and monitored on a regular basis. This enabled the project to be delivered as planned and ensure everyone was able to deliver what they had agreed.

Outputs and legacy

A wide range of tangible and non-tangible outputs have been produced.

- **Sixty portraits of the children of Black Caribbean migrants who agreed to participate in the project.**
- **Oral histories that were audio recorded to accompany each portrait.**
- **A documentary film focusing on the three themes of the project: Women into Education; Tulse Hill Boys School; and TWJ soul sound system.**
- **An exhibition at the Professor Stuart Hall Building which is part of Goldsmiths, the exhibition was hosted here for the whole of Black History Month in 2015. The curation of the exhibition, undertaken by a student studying for a Masters degree and whose mother is one of the 60 years generation, is described as important and commendable in relation to the use of the space for these particular exhibits.**
- **A blog providing updates on the project and exhibition.**
- **A website that houses the above outputs and other information about the project, providing an online resource.**
- **The documentary film was launched at a meeting of Black and minority ethnic students group in the students union. Some of the people participating in the project attended, the screening of the film was followed by discussion and sharing ideas.**
- **The community partner gave several talks to students at Goldsmiths, particularly those studying Media and Communications. The final year students on this course were using 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain as part of their own projects.**
- **Pupils from a local secondary school were invited to attend workshops at Goldsmiths as part of the project, to learn photography and interview skills and experience the University environment.**



Students exploring advanced lighting techniques for portraiture and oral history recording

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- **Follow on work was undertaken in schools after the project was completed. The community partner was invited to make presentations about the project in some local schools. In one school this led to pupils producing artwork based on the project. In another school the community partner was asked to make a presentation due to the lack of input on Black History in the school.**

I was invited to do an assembly, so I went to that school and did an assembly a year later for Black History Month. To do a Black History presentation because someone there had come across this (project) and was appalled to be working in this school and feeling that nothing was going on in terms of Black history. And therefore made contact and said 'Would you come?'

(Community partner)

In relation to legacy, outputs such as the portraits, oral histories and documentary film have been archived and will be available to future generations. The website is also a legacy providing an accessible online resource. The community partner highlights the difficulty in measuring longer term impact on people and that this was always intended to be a short term project.

And around that time you had people visiting the University, potential students, and international ones, and you'd be surprised how many of those actually saw the exhibition and talked with me about the exhibition. So lots of things happened and lots of people came across that, but it's difficult to know exactly what kind of impact it makes.

I think that it's important to have death dates, right. And because the whole thing is online, it's become a resource that all sorts of people can tap into at any time. It's also a resource that might well trigger someone say looking at the 50 year olds, because their experience would have been different to ours, and it would be interesting for example to look at you know the numbers that went on into higher education etc. But I'm not afraid of something coming to an end, I think it's really

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important. I think that certain things need to end, and that certain people need to remove themselves as well. Because

I think part and parcel of some of the issues for Afro Caribbean groups in particular is that the old guard has stayed, therefore no young blood comes in, no new ideas.

(Community partner)

The project outputs are owned by the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust and have been donated to Black Cultural Archives.

Structural inequalities

A significant structural inequality, which has now been addressed to some extent, was the lack of focus on Black Caribbean studies at Goldsmiths before the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies and a dedicated post to lead it were established. This lack of focus is said to have acted as a barrier to Black people coming into the University because there was nothing relating to their heritage and culture to capture their interest, let alone look into opportunities to collaborate. Indeed, it was the absence of attention to Black Caribbean studies that led to a working party being formed to address this inequality, which in turn led to the establishment of the Centre.

Funding is cited as a barrier to undertaking research and presents a structural inequality because a lack of it limits the research that can be undertaken. Similarly, there are said to be a limited number of people interested in undertaking collaborative research with Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and this is described as putting extra pressure on those with an interest in this area to do the work.

The funding, which is of course the huge barrier. You simply cannot do research without funding. Either in terms of the time, well you can, but given that there are so few people who are interested to do this kind of research, what it means is that it takes away, it puts pressure or extra pressure on one's time to do this kind of work. For example the work I did on the oral history and the Borough of Lewisham I did when I was working part time. So in a sense I was funding that research in part through the time that I had. Had I been employed full time there's no way I could have done that. So research needs funding.

(Academic partner)

Funding is of course the huge barrier. You simply cannot do research without funding.

A broader recognition is needed about what constitutes research and which university departments are funded to undertake collaborative research with communities.

What is recognised as research needs to be broader. We can at the moment only respond to what the funding bodies tell us is research, and there are always tremendous barriers. Again when the Centre was located within Community Studies it was easier to access funds that allowed a little bit more flexibility. Now it's firmly within an academic department and not an interdisciplinary academic space, not one that is recognised officially as interdisciplinary. Then there are even more constraints, so there are huge constraints on an academic centre that wishes to also function with a community or communities in mind.

(Academic partner)

A lack of recognition and promotion, by the university, of events that have a focus on race and ethnicity is described as a structural inequality.

Last year I came to a conference, (academic partner's) conference that she organises, an international conference and it was the most amazing experience, and I'm still knocked out by it. Well attended, people from all over the world, the most amazing papers being presented – it's peripheral, it's seen as peripheral. And that really and truly angered me, because this was a mega piece of work with the most amazing academics from around the world, and yet there was nothing that focussed it up in Goldsmiths as a major part of academic work. And when you come down to it, it's because it is about colour, it is about race, its the dynamics of race operating. And I think people would be astounded to hear that and wouldn't want to hear that in here, but how many departments, how many areas of the University put on the likes of the international conferences that

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(academic partner) holds? Where you beg for small sums of money (to hold these conferences).

(Community partner)

Space that is made available to undertake work, such as that undertaken by the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies, is important. Inadequate space can be a structural inequality because it limits who has access and can be accommodated.

I mean the Centre used to have space where people, first of all it used to be accessible, people used to be able to come and although it was very annoying sometimes, just ring the bell and say 'It says on here Centre for Caribbean Studies, we wondered what you do' da-da-da-da-da. It used to be much more accessible. Part of becoming accepted as an academic space means that I'm here – this is the space that I now have, which is the corridor. Here's my office, this is the corridor, normally this space is shared by people walking through and that is about resources, that is about making decisions about what resources this kind of work can have.

(Academic partner)

The feedback highlights that once an academic space is established to focus on race and ethnicity, it requires due recognition, respect and sufficient resourcing. Similarly, events such as conferences relating to race and ethnicity should not be seen and treated as peripheral events, they need to be supported and scaled up. Equally important, is making available adequate time and resources to enable people to engage more frequently in collaborative research with Black and Minority Ethnic communities. There are said to be relatively few people interested in undertaking this kind of research which puts extra pressure on those who do want

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to engage in this work but find they have to fit it in over and above other duties and commitments, or that they simply cannot take on the additional tasks.

Representing communities

Community participants were recruited by the community partner, initially by approaching people in personal networks who fitted the remit of the project and then by word of mouth snowballing. Initial recruitment started in London and then broadened to other parts of Britain as the initial people approached suggested others who fitted the remit of the project as potential participants.

Each person I approached and talked through the project, I asked them 'Who ought to be in there?' so that they had an opportunity to name names. And it was quite interesting actually, because the cross referencing, we tended to have gone to school together or to have worked with each other over the years, so it was quite easy to pick up the 60. Well it was quite difficult to just have 60. And once I'd got the 60, cos the criteria was set and was very clear and I stuck to that. And once I'd got to 60 that was the cut-off point and that was it.

(Community partner)

Representing community knowledge and experience was kept as authentic as possible by enabling community participants to speak in their own words and keeping editing of audio and film recordings to an absolute minimum.

The idea was that people had the opportunity to tell their own story. We didn't want to edit it, it was them speaking in their own words. Because I think that all too often our words get tidied up for us. My whole thing from the word go was about us sharing our personal experiences and so I kept it very much like that.

(Community partner)

In relation to visual representation in the portraits, the community partner briefed each participant about the process of creating these and the sorts of things they



Sherry Ann Dixon, director of Women on the Crossroads/ Mentor. Photo: Jacob Bryan-Amaning

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could think about ahead of being photographed. The photographers were also briefed about talking with each person about the procedure on the day they were photographed and how they wanted to be portrayed. However, the limited time available to deliver the project meant that once the portraits were printed it was not possible to make further changes or select a different photograph; all but a couple of participants were happy with their portraits.

It was difficult though because of the time limit. Because so much of what we had to get done, the portraits had to be taken and be ready to go to the printers over the summer holiday, so actually the timing was tight. There were two people who did not like their portraits. Now it was not down to them to choose which photographs and that had been stated from the word go and in actual fact the portraits were agreed (with each subject), but they did not like their portraits when they saw them finally. And I think that had there been a longer time ... because of people's commitment, because I did say to the photographers for example make sure you talk through with each person. And I'd briefed each person before their portrait was taken to think about how they wanted to be portrayed, what they were going to wear, where they wanted to have their photograph taken, etc., and I just assumed that because of who the people were that it would work, and there'd be no flak. So I was a bit gutted that I then had two or three people who really don't like what they saw.

(Community partner)

Representing a particular minority ethnic group is described as a potential challenge in relation to securing funding. There can be a tendency to think that a broader reach can be achieved by making a project more generic and include people from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; this can result in people adapting their original ideas in order to have a greater chance of securing funding.

There's something about the ethnicities issue, quite often people feel constrained in terms of a narrow focus on a particular ethnicity or ethnic group because you know what is BME, okay. And the pressure seems to be that if you just call it BME that would work, that would satisfy funders and so on. The difficulties come when you have to justify focussing on a particular group. So it's not in a way that people haven't thought it through, it's that they have tried to second guess what's going to make it possible for the funding to actually happen. So again I think funders need to take some responsibility in terms of allowing a little bit more flexibility. They (applicants for funding) would feel much more committed if they were allowed to follow through their idea, or felt that they could. You know a lot of funders might have been hesitant about focussing on an African Caribbean group – why not make it bigger, because then they can say 'diverse', which could mean anything of course, as we know.

(Academic partner)

The community partner feels the issue of representation is an issue that is more often scrutinised in relation to Black organisations and communities than their White counterparts.

The other thing I think which often comes up is who is Black, and who is the representative. And yet it is not an issue if a White organisation or White people come up with an idea, then you know you're not saying 'Are you representative of all White people?' It's just a given, whereas, if it's a Black organisation or Black individuals coming up with something, it's you know 'What makes you the representative? Who are you? And why should we fund you, and why not so and so?'

(Community partner)

The feedback on representation suggests that this is a complex and is multi-layered issue. Recruiting participants that are representative of a particular minority ethnic group and community, in this project the children of Black

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Caribbean migrants in the 1950s and 1960s, is one aspect. Another is how funding can influence which Black and Minority Ethnic communities research collaborations are undertaken with. Projects with short timescales can limit the amount of input community participants have in relation to how they are represented. The extent to which Black organisations and Black people are scrutinised in relation to representation of communities is described as disproportionate in comparison to their white counterparts.

University-Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations

Both partners questioned whether it is possible to have equal partnerships in collaborations between universities and Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Being confident in knowing what is negotiable and non-negotiable is described as helpful, having clarity about which areas are open to changes and which are not. In this collaboration, the fact that both partners are Black and have a shared experience has been key to delivering the project successfully.

We're both Black and we have a lot of experience in common, but a lot of the people who are seeking to collaborate quite often are not. And so really there is just so much time that one has to spend, and so much energy that one has to expend in setting up the thing.

(Community partner)

The significant work, undertaken over decades, to establish The Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies in the University, the community partner's role in setting this up, ongoing contact, a shared interest and commitment between academic and community partners to undertake collaborative research with Black and Minority Ethnic communities have all facilitated the collaboration on this project. This scenario, however, is described as rare and the Centre itself still operates under barriers and constraints that influence the amount and nature of collaborative research with Black and Minority Ethnic communities that it can undertake.

The future

There are no plans to develop the 60 Untold Stories of Black Britain project further, the initial aim of the project has been achieved and the project is considered to be completed. Both partners would consider collaborating on other projects if the opportunities arose; however, neither partner is chasing opportunities because one is now retired and the other is considering retirement. Both partners are of the opinion that opportunities to do this kind of collaborative work between universities and Black and Minority Ethnic communities are rare, they have to be chased and this requires time and other resources. They also caution against entering into collaborative projects solely because a pot of funding becomes available.

But the opportunities are few and far between – and that is the case. I mean I had a couple of people approach me when there was some funding recently, which mentioned working with Black community groups, but my God it was, as far as I could see, one of the very few pots of funding that actually stated this and so I think I must have been approached by three people. But I really am not going to take on getting to know people I don't know in order to lead funding – I'm not that naïve, I'm not going to do it. So, in a very restricted amount of time to get a funding bid together and all of that – no.

(Academic partner)

And its back to that thing about what is negotiable and what is not negotiable. And I think you develop a way of spotting where people are coming from, and how genuine they are about what it is they're approaching you about collaborating on, by the vocabulary that they use, the terminology. If they're not comfortable with the terminology then that means they've not done the thinking through, they do not have an analysis of race, the dynamics of race, and how they might contribute or not contribute to that dynamic. So you know, having worked

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for long in academia, having worked for so long in community development - you know that you're going to go down a dead end with that person.

(Community partner)

Both partners would advise future collaborators that it is essential to know who your collaborators are before embarking on a collaborative project.

You have to absolutely know your potential partners before you begin. Getting to know your partners during a research project is extremely hazardous, or can be hazardous, it could mean that one person ends up doing all the work - very likely, that has happened. You have to know your partners, you really do have to do that and be sure that you are talking the same language before you start.

(Academic partner)