



Chinese Digital Storytelling

Project:

Immigrant Experience of
First Generation Chinese
Immigrants in Swansea and
Surrounding Areas

A collaboration between Swansea Chinese Community Co-Op Centre and
Swansea University





Chinese Digital Storytelling Project: Immigrant Experience of First Generation Chinese Immigrants in Swansea and Surrounding Areas

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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

Chinese Digital Storytelling Project:
Immigrant Experience of First Generation
Chinese Immigrants in Swansea and
Surrounding Areas

Key Partners

**Swansea Chinese Community Co-Op
Centre**

Swansea University

Funder

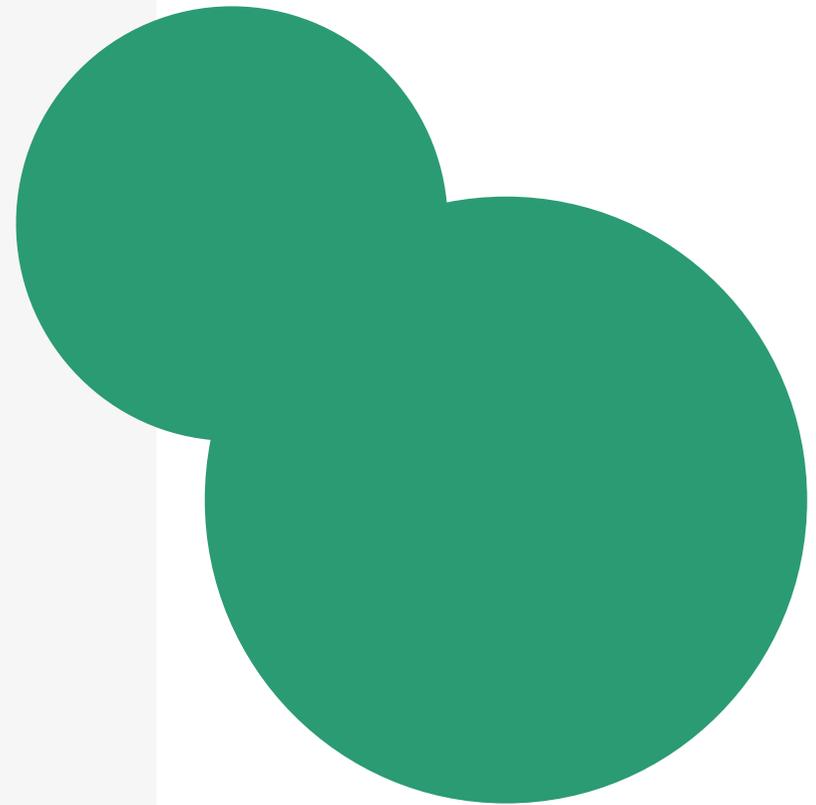
Heritage Lottery Fund

Dates

October 2012 – September 2013

Selected Outputs

- **Interviews with Chinese elderly participants**
- **A video introducing the project.**
- **A video presenting a summary of findings from the project.**



Project Summary

This collaboration between the Swansea Chinese Community Co-Op Centre (SCCCC) and Swansea University was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and undertaken over a one year period between October 2012 and September 2013. Immigrant Experience of First Generation Chinese Immigrants in Swansea and Surrounding Areas (First Generation Chinese in Swansea) set out to document the experience of the first migrants from China to settle in Swansea and local areas. The project was supported by the Research Institute for Arts and Humanities (RIAH) at Swansea University as part of their work on the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) led Connected Communities programme to celebrate and research community heritage.

Swansea Chinese Community Co-Op Centre (SCCCC) was established in 1997 by a group of people who had shared experience of encountering adversity in achieving equality and life without discrimination. The charity, based in Swansea, works with beneficiaries from across South Wales with the aim of providing support to: raise their standard of living; promote Chinese culture; and to assist local statutory and voluntary organisations to commit to equal service provision. The range of services provided by SCCC include advocacy, case referral, advice on local welfare, housing, healthcare, education and employment, social and educational activities and participation in the promotion of a diverse, multi-cultural society. SCCC had a reformation and is now replaced by “Chinese In Wales Association” (CIWA), which was registered with Charity Commission as a charitable incorporated Organisation in 2017.

Swansea University was founded by industry in 1920 as the University College of Wales and was the fourth college of The University of Wales. It became a university in its own right in 2007 and adopted the name Swansea University. The University has expanded significantly since its inception both in the range of subjects taught

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and the number of students enrolled. The campus is undergoing further expansion and development. In 2016 the University had 20,831 students from over 115 countries. Key staff from Swansea University supporting delivery of the First Generation Chinese in Swansea project were an Impact and Engagement Officer (Academic partner A) and a Senior Lecturer (Academic partner B) who both participated in the interview for this case study.

First Generation Chinese in Swansea was led by SCCCC with support from Swansea University to undertake archival and oral history research to record the stories of the first generation of Chinese migrants to settle in Swansea. Archival research was undertaken at the West Glamorgan Archival Service and Library services which revealed the earliest records of Chinese migrants in Swansea were dated a century ago. Chinese student volunteers from Swansea University worked with SCCCC to undertake archival research and conduct Interviews with 10 first generation Chinese migrants, a DVD of the interviews has been produced. An exhibition of photographs gathered during the project was held at the Waterfront Museum, with support from the local council.

The chairperson of SCCCC at the time the First Generation Chinese in Swansea project was undertaken played a key role in the promotion, design and delivery of the project, she moved on after the project was completed and after several years of dedicated service to SCCCC; she is referred to as 'previous chairperson' in this case study. The current chairperson was a manager at SCCCC when the project was under way and also played a key role, working closely with the chairperson at the time, to take the project forward; she participated in the interview for this case study and is referred to as 'community partner'.

How the collaboration came about

Swansea University secured funding in 2012 through the Connected Communities grant under the All our Stories initiative to support outreach and engagement activities and establish links with community organisations interested in documenting their local history and heritage. Communities interested in taking forward heritage research could then apply for funding to undertake their project with support from the University. Academic partner A was appointed as part of this initiative to undertake outreach work and engage with local communities.

I was brought on board to work specifically on Connected Communities as a research network activity within the University. The Connected Communities money from the AHRC had been gained by (a colleague), and the remit for Connected Communities and the AHRC money we had was to work with post-industrial communities across Swansea on community projects. So I had a remit to work closely with the community to say we can study any form of community heritage you would like to look at, what would you like to do. So I think I spent about 6 months literally driving around Swansea and the valleys sitting in church meetings, chapel meetings, you know wherever I could fit in, targeting specific communities around Swansea. I was born in the valley community, so ... I've worked in archaeology, I've worked in heritage outside of the University. So those community groups and the faith groups and the church groups – they already know me, there was no problem with me going to those church groups or going to sit in the local pub.

(Academic partner A)

It was in this context that academic partner A was specifically looking to establish links with Black and Minority Ethnic communities and asked a colleague (academic partner B), who is of Chinese origin, whether she had links with the local Chinese

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community; she did in fact have an established connection to SCCCC through previous work and ongoing contact.

I remember (academic partner A) came to ask me if I have any connection with the local Chinese community, because when she looked through the list of projects, there was lack of representation of ethnic minority groups. She was actively asking academic staff members who have that contact. I said I definitely know some. When I was doing my PhD, I was involved in a research project on ethnic minority groups and this Chinese Co-Op in Swansea caught my attention. At the time it was headed by (previous chairperson). She's originally from Hong Kong and came to Britain at the age of 11. Her family ran a business, catering business – very typical first generation immigrant. She's basically the self-made leader among her community. I've been in touch with them ever since the previous project. It just accidentally pieced together.

(Academic partner B)

Establishing contact through a colleague who already had a connection to SCCCC is described as important and may have been less successful without a broker who had an established connection to make the introduction.

I think it would be a very different task wouldn't it if it was flat engagement ... if I was trying to find a Chinese academic or a Chinese contact for that ... I don't think that would have been probably half as successful.

(Academic partner A)

Academic partner B spoke with the chairperson of SCCCC at the time, to communicate the Connected Communities initiative at Swansea University and ask whether they would be interested in participating. There was an interest from SCCCC and the academic partner suggested that one option to consider was recording the experience of the first Chinese migrants to Swansea.

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I visited the Chinese Co-Op Centre first in their office and introduced them to this project. I said that (colleagues at the University) are looking for partners, would you be interested. As I said, (previous chairperson) at the time was the head, she was always very active... she said 'we'd be interested to let people know our story'. Because I'm from media studies background, I suggested an idea of digital recording of the experience of first generation immigrants. Then she immediately felt very emotional. She said a lot about how her childhood was like --- being the one who couldn't speak English, all the difficulties they faced. She felt personally passionate about this. I think for that generation they had faced probably more amount of racism in the society to tackle than what we have today. So she said 'Yeah, you can come down with (academic partner A)'.

(Academic partner B)

At the time of this initial contact, the current chairperson was working at SCCCC as a manager and was involved in development and delivery of the project from the start. She became the chairperson and led the community forward after the previous chairperson stepped down from this role.

Academic partner B mentioned to Chinese Community Centre Co-op about heritage work and documenting this. Academic partner B had previously interviewed the founder of SCCCC, who was also the chairperson at the time, about heritage so was already linked in to SCCCC.

(Community partner)

Both colleagues from the University then went to meet with these two staff from SCCCC and all agreed to move forward with the project. The key focus was on delivering a project that would tell the story of community participants. Terminology such as 'research', 'collaboration', 'Black and Minority Ethnic' was not part of any focused discussion and this did not have any adverse impact on the

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project or between academic and community partners; the rapport between them is described as everyone coming together to tell an interesting story.

I came into the conversation after you know (academic partner B) making all the wonderful introductions, when I met (community partners) they were so wonderfully enthusiastic and passionate about what they might get out of it and what that might do for their community, I think they would have collaborated regardless of the structure. I never felt as if it was a group of academics and community partners, it was always 'we could do something cool here, so let's just figure out a way of doing it'. And it was never about you know Chinese people versus people from the University, academics... there was no grouping, it's always just been a group of people who wanted to tell an interesting story.

(Academic partner A)

After the initial introductions, preparations to establish the project moved forward rapidly. In addition to a known and trusted broker making the introductions between the University and SCCC, an element of respect and trust for the university brand is highlighted as important to agreeing the collaboration. Furthermore, there was a familiarity between SCCC and the University because Chinese students had often connected with SCCC in a voluntary capacity and the community partner had studied at and graduated from Swansea University.

I think for the whole Chinese community, the university brand is a trustworthy brand. Chinese families are very much invested in education. When it's about working with a university, the university's name just brings all the trust that they needed. I'm not sure this will be a shared feature from other communities. Another thing about why it worked out so quickly – this is a well-established community. I think probably there's one more reason is they are not unfamiliar with university people. (Community partner) herself got a Master's degree from Cardiff University. Meanwhile the Chinese community often has quite a lot of

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students currently doing degree with Swansea University with them, Chinese students who are volunteers working for the community ... so they've never been away from it [the University].

(Academic partner B)

The University connection to SCCCC came about due to an active search to establish contact with the local Chinese communities as part of the outreach and brokering work that academic partner A was undertaking. The actual connection between them was brokered by a Chinese origin academic who had established strong links with people in both environments and this is described as important. Establishing contact through a trusted broker, combined with an element of familiarity and trust in Swansea University on the part of SCCCC and their enthusiasm to document the stories of the first Chinese migrants to Swansea, are highlighted as significant to taking the project forward relatively swiftly after the initial introductions. The main focus was development and delivery of the project, discussion regarding key terminology was not seen as necessary and did not present any challenges.

Developing collaborative research

The suggestion to develop a project that enabled local Chinese people to tell their stories was suggested by academic partner B to SCCCC, at the first meeting to make them aware about opportunities relating to the Connected Communities programme at Swansea University. The idea was then mostly developed by SCCCC and a decision taken to focus on the Chinese elderly whose stories could be lost if they were not documented soon.

Development of the idea is described as being influenced by the Connected Communities agenda for this work to have a focus on heritage. Nevertheless, SCCCC liked the idea of developing work on heritage and to look at archives which the community partner had wanted to do for some time.

I think we were working within the confines of the definition of the project here, the Connected Communities project. And the Connected Communities project on paper was a heritage project in the first instance. It was multidisciplinary but it was a heritage project. So (academic partner B) was on board as a Media scholar really I think in the first instance, and therefore once the initial conversation had taken place you could see the seed had been planted with (community partner) and she was like 'Oh I really like that idea'. She was fascinated, and she'd always wanted to look at West Glamorgan Archives ... papers around immigration and you know this that and the other.

(Academic partner A)

An initial visit was undertaken to West Glamorgan Archives by academic and community partners to gauge what documents were available, and those examined revealed a significant amount of racism experienced by the early Chinese migrants to Swansea. This informed the decision to focus on the Chinese elderly, especially

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because some of those who were still living were losing their memory. People working at the archive were enthusiastic to help and support the project because nobody had previously asked to see their material on early Chinese migrants.

We went to West Glamorgan Archive and we found out those old papers. I have to say that they contain racism. News about Chinese immigrants is very small in amount and very negative in general. The representation about Chinese immigrants was featured with absence, trivialisation, and negativity. If there's anything to report about the Chinese, it must be that a Chinese did something wrong. For example, the Chinese sailors were found stealing ... We asked the gentleman from West Glamorgan Archive if he could bring out all the records of first generation Chinese people. We went through these records; Chinese immigrants were mainly in the laundry and catering business. We made decisions by the end of this visit and decided to find those people who first came to Swansea. We wanted to record the stories from them because we never know if that story is going to be lost.

(Academic partner B)

You could see there was this excitement from West Glamorgan Archive's perspective in that they've never been asked to do it before. You know nobody had ever gone in and said can you please pull us out the stuff on the Chinese community. Because it clearly is an area of research ... and part of the reason I think (community partner) wanted to do it is that she was aware there must be data out there. There was a little bit of wariness because he (person at the archive) perhaps knew that the documentation he was going to pull out wasn't going to be particularly positive in a lot of instances. But there was both a little bit of trepidation and excitement, and I think they really enjoyed the process. They'd clearly never pulled it out before, that I could see – this was a new thing for them.

(Academic partner A)

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The previous chairperson of SCCCC was also an early migrant to Swansea and knew many of the now elderly first generation migrants, this was significant to developing the project with a focus on this age group.

(Academic partner B) encouraged the Centre to engage in research. (The previous chairperson) was an early migrant to Swansea from Hong Kong and wanted to capture the experience of elderly Chinese people in Swansea and the local areas, to enable them to tell their story.

(Community partner)

SCCCC developed the idea for the project with input from the academic partners, following the initial suggestion from academic partner B to document stories of Chinese migrants. Initial visits to look at archival material helped to further refine the idea for the project to focus on the Chinese elderly; these visits also revealed that nobody had previously asked to look at this material and people working in the archive were enthusiastic and excited to help.

Funding

The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) through the 'All Our Stories' initiative, which is a partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council-led Connected Communities programme. Under this partnership initiative, the AHRC funded Swansea University to undertake outreach and engagement work with local communities. The University identified a number of community organisations, including SCCCC, who wanted to develop projects on local history and heritage and supported them to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant. A further grant was secured by the University from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to support the provision of training to the projects, including SCCCC's project, which had been successful in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

With the specific call that we were under with Connected Communities we gave ourselves the snazzy title of researching the post-industrial landscape of the Swansea valley. Part of the job of that pot of money ... which I think is about £35,000 from AHRC for two years, which is essentially my wage ... part of the job of that was to work in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery. So AHRC were working shoulder to shoulder with Heritage Lottery and providing that interface between me as the project manager, or project officer, AHRC on one side to try and work with HLF. So I had members of HLF who I was working with who were aware of what we were doing, they were part of the Connected Communities team. There was Heritage Lottery events that we attended, myself and (academic colleague), to work under a certain call which I believe was about sharing heritage, which was £1000-£10,000 of money that could be allocated to collaborative community bids. In terms of bringing them to campus and having community events where we offered skills training for community members ... and this was across the five projects. So once the money had come in from Heritage Lottery and we knew we

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were working with SCCCC, we knew we were working with five other projects, we wrote back to AHRC and said we've got five, please can we have another £35,000 to support them. So alongside the Heritage Lottery money we wrote in digital training, short film production, archiving, libraries research.

(Academic partner A)

The academic partner managing 'All Our Stories' work at Swansea University advised SCCCC to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant under this initiative. The community partners developed the funding bid themselves and did not require much input from the academic partner; this is described as unusual by the academic partner, because usually community organisations require a lot more support from academic staff to develop and submit funding bids.

They (SCCCC) wrote the bids and I remember we saw it. I did provide some academic insight into you know my role, (academic partner B's) role, and (another academic colleague) – who was also very helpful at the time. But predominantly it was (community partners), they very much had a clear idea of what they wanted to do when they spoke to me and (academic partner B). In other instances it was the other way round – I would have to write the bid and then the community would have to sign it off, but not this one.

(Academic partner A)

The successful bid written and submitted by SCCCC is described as benefitting from the significant skills and experience community partners already had in writing funding applications and their very clear, focused idea about what they wanted to achieve through the First Generation Chinese in Swansea project.

I think they got the funding without encountering too many difficulties because they had a clear and focussed idea and they have been through the bid

I think they got the funding without encountering too many difficulties because they had a clear and focussed idea and they have been through the bid application writing process before, and (the chairperson at the time) is very experienced at writing bids.

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(Academic partner B)

The community partner recounts how prior to being approached by the University about the possibility of undertaking heritage work, SCCCC had thought heritage projects were about local Welsh history that did not include migrant history.

Before undertaking this project we thought 'heritage projects' related to local (Welsh) history and not migrant history but then realised it could be about people's memories of migration too. So SCCCC applied for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund with help from the University who were already working with other communities on heritage and realised that local Chinese heritage was not being documented. At the time, HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) were promoting a programme to record people's memories so we applied for this funding.

(Community partner)

Both academic and community partners relate that the amount of funding allocated was not sufficient to cover all project costs and there was significant reliance on goodwill and for people to volunteer their time and skills. The community partner highlights an element of luck in being able to find people from within the Chinese community with relevant skills who were able and willing to provide free input to the project. Reliance on academic involvement to secure this type of funding and insufficient capacity in community organisations to apply for additional project funding, are described as potential barriers to community organisations developing their own heritage projects.

A lot of work was needed after the filming... editing, cutting, and it was a challenge to deliver on time which was short – there was only 12 months funding to deliver the project. Luckily, there was an IT expert in the Chinese community who was able to help, there was little budget to pay for IT support. It was very

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hard work but completed on time and with very little funding. This was possible because of the heavy support from the University, volunteer students and people from the local Chinese community volunteering. Funding for this work, it can be difficult for community organisations to get funding for research so there is reliance on academic involvement. Also, there is not enough time to secure funding additional to that for keeping the organisation running.

(Community partner)

Similarly, the academic partners highlight a significant amount of unpaid work undertaken by academics, university services, SCCC staff and members of the Chinese community.

In this project because the budget is actually rather small – up to £10,000, a lot of services are provided by the University for free. At the beginning I was told (by another academic colleague) ‘Your contribution is voluntary’ I said ‘That’s fine, I’m part of the Chinese community, I want to do this for my community’. So all the time we invested is voluntary. Without input from Swansea University, without the dedication from (academic staff members), without the support from Employability Office, this project wouldn’t have taken off. The community partners – they are very mature, established, they have very talented capable managers – that helps as well.

(Academic partner B)

If we write an RCUK (Research Council UK) application say to AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) or ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), you know it might not pan out in reality, but we’ll always factor in a percentage of the academics’ time. With Connected Communities I was the project officer, (Academic partner B) did it for free, (colleague leading on the Connected Communities programme) basically was costed in... but (community partners) did it for free. And when community groups come on board with a university I will

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always say let's try and go for the bigger pot so we can put in a project officer role either here in the University or in the community. It can be a huge burden for that community if you don't get that right. It just so happened that (community partner) regardless of whether she was being paid or not was going to do a fantastic job, but it is a huge ask for a community group.

(Academic partner A)

The outreach and engagement element of the Connected Communities 'All Our Stories' funding enabled this project to be realised and undertaken. Significant challenges are highlighted regarding delivery of the project on a small amount of funding, a relatively short timescale and substantial reliance on people within the University and community to provide input free of charge. Without the goodwill and unpaid input of a range of people and services, it would be difficult to deliver projects such as this to a good standard.

Undertaking the research

Academic and community partners discussed how First Generation Chinese in Swansea would relate to the context of research. The project is described as not being a traditional piece of academic research because it aimed to be beneficial to the community partners as well as academics.

I think there were definitely conversations at the Chinese community offices where we were talking around how it would actually function on a research agenda. It was never going to be hugely heavy duty academic work. Because what the community would get out of that would be limited, and we would get more out of it as academics.

(Academic partner A)

The main research activities are described as the archival research undertaken by community partners with support from the University and West Glamorgan Archive Service and interviews with the Chinese elderly undertaken by Chinese student volunteers from Swansea University. Some training was provided by the university to community partners and student volunteers on digital technology, short film production, archival and libraries research. Following initial introductions and training, SCCCC then led on undertaking the work. Academic and community partners collaborated on developing a broad structure and the community partners then led on looking at nuances in relation to cultural content in interviews, how to talk to elderly people in the Chinese community, how the students could approach the work and what they would get out of it.

I remember a couple of meetings where (academic and community partners) would just go 'Right, we'll do that, we'll do an archive visit' ... we'll also do some sessions with digital recording, we'll do a bit of media training for the students if

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they needed it ... it was very basic, and then it was very much handed over to (community partners) and they just did it you know.

(Academic partner A)

The original idea was to do an oral history project and work with someone recommended by the University with expertise in this field. However, there was very little footage available by way of photographs and other mementoes from the elderly Chinese and so the idea was adapted to film them about their memories. One reason the elderly did not have many photos from China or after their arrival in Swansea and local areas was because in those days cameras and photos were costly. So it was decided to video them as they mostly only had memories; however, this was complicated because filming and video production require specific skills. Having an academic partner of Chinese origin, with media skills, volunteering time to work on the project is described as helpful.

(Academic partner B) works in media so it was great to have a Chinese academic working on this project who had both the relevant ethnic background and skills, this is rare to find.

(Community partner)

Chinese student volunteers were recruited by the University to work on the project and spent significant time with SCCCC staff to plan and undertake the archival research and interviews with first generation elderly migrants. SCCCC had been instrumental in setting up a shelter/retirement home, Swan Garden, for the Chinese elderly and the early archival research indicated that many of them attended Swan Gardens. Among the ten interviews of the first generation Chinese migrants to Swansea, four of them were conducted in Swan Garden, and others were in their own homes across Western Bay regions. SCCCC's existing links to the Swan Garden were especially helpful in negotiating work for the project to be undertaken there.

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I don't know exactly how many years ago, they (SCCCC) worked alongside the local authority and Family Housing Association to set up a shelter home for Chinese elderly, it's called 'Swan Gardens', it's in the city centre. After the Glamorgan Archive visit, (the previous chairperson) said 'Ah, I know these old people, they are in Swan Gardens'. It turned out that a lot of these first generation immigrants are those people whom she'd been familiar with.

(Academic partner B)

Recognising that the elderly Chinese people to be interviewed and others working on the project would be unfamiliar with each other and there would be an absence of trust, the previous chairperson of SCCC organised a social event bringing everyone together to share food and meet each other.

I want to mention (the previous chairperson) and all the contacts that she brought to this project. Most of the people interviewed were above the age of 60 at least... she knows them all. There were some initial problems, such as how would the elderly trust a group of young people suddenly appearing and holding camera into their face? Without (the previous chairperson), I think that was going to be very difficult. She knows how to work with Chinese elderly, especially when their English is not that good. The elderly would be intimidated by the students from university with cameras. The first thing she did was to bringing people together. She organised a big dinner party at Swan Gardens where the elderly lived and invited all of us there. She had ... three, four or even five tables laid in the dinner hall, piled with food. Chinese elderly, community members, young students and university researchers sat around the table, chatting, laughing and enjoying the meal. By the end of the dinner party, (the previous chairperson) said to the elderly 'They (students and researchers) want to come to help us to record our stories. I know that you'd been through all the hardship, why don't we tell these stories so that younger children from the future would know?'. A lot of elderly people actually just started sharing that experience by chatting with

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each other 'Oh yeah when I first came here ... this and that happened ...' I remember there was an elder gentleman sitting next to me. He grabbed my hand and started talking about his stories. The Chinese elderly had been through so much, and they became emotional when they found out that other people appreciated their migration experience. Then (the previous chairperson) said to the elderly, 'If you're interested in participating, please sign up. Our student volunteers will help you with the consent form. We will come to Swan Gardens to interview you and you don't need to travel outside. If you need anyone to translate, we'll help you.' The recruitment process was completed in such an efficient way.

(Academic partner B)

The work at Swan Gardens to interview the elderly was led by SCCCC and the interviews were conducted by the student volunteers. Some initial challenges are highlighted in relation to the role of student volunteers and support for them to work with the elderly who were, at times, quite emotional when talking about their memories.

The students were new to both the University and to this project. Initially not many students turned up to meetings because they had other commitments and interests. Also, SCCCC was new to this work and in the initial stages this was also confusing for the elderly to understand. If one person didn't turn up then all of that day's planned work would come to a halt. A few students were committed and instrumental in getting the project moving and undertaking it. Other students were less committed and this was a challenge to motivate them and manage their input. The work was emotional, elderly can cry when talking about life so there is a need to have support in place and this can also be difficult for students and others working on the project to manage.

(Community partner)

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The community partners recognised that students working on the project were juggling volunteering and studying, they also lacked professional skills in media at that point so they were managing several demands on their time and workload. SCCCC found itself in a difficult situation because they had to accommodate everyone and be mindful of their responsibility to the Chinese community. The community partners resolved this by talking with the academic staff and looking at how this situation could be addressed.

They can't be forced because they have their own issues and are volunteering their time and efforts, so had to say to the University to be realistic in what and how much to expect from students who are volunteering their time. A community organisation does not want to get in the way of students meeting deadlines for essays, assignments and so on. So, had to negotiate and look at what was realistic for student volunteers.

(Community partner)

A further challenge was presented in relation to translations from Chinese to English and translation for video was complex due to the different Chinese dialects used by the elderly and trying to keep translations as authentic as possible. In particular, the dialect of Hakka Chinese is not one that many people can translate and it was lucky that there were a couple of people in the local Chinese community who could and were willing to help.

Overseas Chinese students volunteering did not speak dialects like those of Hakka so it was good that there were people from the Chinese community who could speak this and stepped in to help. This is an important consideration when doing this kind of work.

(Community partner)

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The funding for the project did not accommodate buying in professional skills or equipment and there was a reliance on goodwill from the Chinese community to lend their equipment and volunteer skills.

Original plan was to do voiceover and have photos but there were not enough photos so we re-thought this and decided that filming the elderly would work much better and give an embodied image. Had to borrow camera from a community member to film because there was no money to buy or hire one. So, constantly have to be creative with lack of resources. Similarly for software, community organisations do not have resources to get latest equipment or other materials that would enable a more efficient way of working. The DVD is therefore amateur but it has to be seen within the resources available (for making it) and not compare to a BBC documentary or other high quality film and feel it is a less successful or useful piece of work. Limited resources don't facilitate the best outcome, so don't compare to other better resourced outputs such as photographs, film and so on.

(Community partner)

National Census records were examined through Swansea University library services to establish the number of Chinese migrants in the UK as well as Swansea. The nature of information collected about migrants to the UK has varied between censuses and early records collected information on 'country of birth'; this is described as contributing to an underestimate of Chinese origin people in the UK because those born outside of China could not be identified through this route. Furthermore, suspicion about how census data would be used is likely to have deterred some Chinese people from participating in the national censuses.

The project and related research were discussed collaboratively and designed to be of benefit to the community. Following initial input from the University, SCCCC led on and undertook most of the work on the project with student volunteers from the

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University. SCCC's approach and input to introduce the whole project team to potential elderly participants, was an important feature of securing community participation in the project. Some challenges regarding the availability of student volunteers were addressed through open and honest conversations between academic and community partners. Limited funding and other resources created a reliance on the goodwill and contributions from members of the Chinese community to step in and help out free of charge.

Roles and responsibilities

An informal approach to roles and responsibilities is highlighted and described as working well overall. The challenges encountered in relation to student roles and responsibilities, highlighted in the previous section ‘Undertaking collaborative research’, were discussed and resolved amicably by academic and community partners. The roles and responsibilities people undertook were largely determined by their knowledge, skills and connections.

I think from my perspective it depended on the project. And this particular project there was very much a case of you know (academic partner B) introduced me to (community partner) and then I would go in as her colleague, and that trust was there. And it was very much like a mutual understanding that her strong point was the community and the knowledge and all that good stuff, and my strong point was accessing other academics or venues, or taking the students out. And it was like ‘Shall I do this?’ ‘Yeah’ ‘Shall you do that?’ ‘Yeah’. And we’re good, there we are.

(Academic partner A)

Academic partner B recruited Chinese student volunteers and those interested to sign up were directed to academic partner A, who briefed them before introducing to the University Employability Office to sign up formally.

And then essentially I say to Employability Office, you know they’re working in the Centre and they’re doing it for this reason. As long as Employability Office knew where they were going and what they were doing. They (students) kept in communication with me and I always said ‘if you need us, if there’s an academic question and (community partner) can’t answer, just ask me or (academic

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partner B).’ And they were pretty much with the community and I don’t think we saw them until they come back and they were finished.

(Academic partner A)

A shared sense of responsibility is said to have been achieved and facilitated by flexibility to help each other, have open and honest conversations and respect each other’s skills and expertise.

I said to (community partners) in the very beginning, you know ‘You guys are the experts on your community and you tell me what you want from me and when you want it, and I’ll make sure we use our resources effectively. If you need any training ...’ they didn’t actually I don’t think, but it was very much ‘You know I’m here – if you need me, shout. If you don’t, then you carry on’ you know.

(Academic partner A)

The informal approach to roles and responsibilities is described as working well, supported by an element of flexibility and availability to undertake tasks as needed.

Accountabilities

Accountabilities for delivering the project were informal and described as working well, no major challenges were encountered. There was an informal understanding that the previous chairperson of SCCCC was in charge of the project and academic partner A was accountable for reporting to the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

I think it was understood that (the previous chairperson) was in charge ... as soon as I met her I thought 'You're the lead'. But it was very much understood that she knows exactly what's going on at all times. And that was wonderful, because to have such a strong character – I was never worried about outputs because I knew they would be keeping their end up. I was never chasing them. But in terms of accountability, I had to report back to AHRC, and I knew that (community partner) was essentially a project officer from their end, I was a project officer from this end – anything I needed to give AHRC I just emailed (community partner) and I would get it, and there we go.

(Academic partner A)

The project was delivered within the agreed timescale, despite challenges encountered in undertaking the research phase of the project. A shared accountability was achieved with everyone delivering on the tasks they had agreed to take do.

And that was wonderful, because to have such a strong character – I was never worried about outputs because I knew they would be keeping their end up.

Outputs and legacy

A key intended tangible output from The Bigger Picture is a toolkit on community engagement. Ownership of the toolkit is not yet decided but it is agreed that this will be widely available.

The community partner highlights several non-tangible outcomes from the project. The Bigger Picture is facilitating reflection and this is helpful because organisations don't otherwise have sufficient time or expert input to enable this. The information generated by the project will be disseminated to other organisations so the learning will have a wider reach than just the participating organisations. Networks will be extended and existing ones further strengthened through participation in The Bigger Picture and the project will raise the profile of NAE. Knowledge, skills and experience are being gained as a result of collaborating on this project and there is potential to develop deeper relationships with the range of people involved.

The project was still under way at the time of interview, and a number of potential legacies are envisaged by the community partner including: the work of NAE to have a greater impact; more funding secured and more high-quality work undertaken based on the findings of the research; and continued social impact of NAE on diversity and being responsive to communities. It is hoped that another legacy of the project will be to contribute to upskilling the next generation of artists, curators and others who work in the cultural sector to respond to the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. The focus for the cultural sector should go beyond getting more Black and Minority Ethnic communities attending venues, and should also include looking at what needs to happen to upskill the range of people involved in the cultural sector on matters of diversity; for example, how to curate for a diverse audience.

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Several tangible and non-tangible outputs are described as emerging from First Generation Chinese in Swansea. Tangible outputs include:

- Training workshops delivered by the University on digital work, short film production, archival and libraries research.
- A video introducing the project.
- Ten digital stories of the first Chinese migrants to Swansea.
- A video presenting a summary of findings from the project.
- A DVD of the 10 interviews with first generation migrants, photographic collections and other mementoes, available from Swansea University and West Glamorgan Archive Centre.
- A launch event at the end of the project to present findings and the DVD.
- A photographic exhibition at the Waterfront Museum in Swansea.

Non-tangible outputs include the knowledge and skills gained by SCCCC, University staff and students working on the project, including in: archival and library research; planning and delivering a project on heritage for a specific, minority ethnic community group; and technical skills such as filming and producing videos and DVD. Everyone was able to extend their network of contacts. The community partner relates that community knowledge can remain marginalised when communities don't have the technical knowledge to record history.

Networks, archives, link with students, University contacts and so on. Got to know about these and learn from them. The knowledge of the community is there but not the technical knowledge to record history, so their contribution can remain marginalised – this is where university expertise and resources can be very helpful.

(Community partner)

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Undertaking research with a specific community group provided opportunities for academics to learn from the knowledge and expertise held by the community. Academic staff advised SCCCC staff about where to access information and how to access it. There was, therefore, a mutual benefit.

We very very quickly realised that when you're dealing with a specific community, so you're not just doing generic community research, you're focussed on a community, the academic staff are not the experts, they are in no way the experts - the expertise lies in the community. And actually I would say I probably learnt more from (community partner) than she learnt from me, I would say that. Because other projects I have to be the academic lead, I have to be the person in charge just to get the work done - it was very much the other way round. And I think we could learn a lot from borrowing from the Chinese Community Cooperative model here in the University, because the models that exist there are incredible - the processes, the understanding, the kindness, the supportive networks that exist in that environment - we could all learn and lean on that a lot more. But I think pushing them towards ... if there is a series of data and some material that you would want to access ... and we just interjected and said 'Oh meet so-an-so at the archives.' I would say that was the one thing that they really got a lot out of as well was having somebody to go 'Oh it's just over there, just talk to so-and-so'. But in the same way I would never have got to meet the old people at Swan Gardens. So it's that little bit of knowledge and that 'Come with me and I'll show you' opens the doors, both sides.

(Academic partner A)

There is a lack of clarity regarding ownership of outputs and it is possible that nobody has outright ownership. Generally, outputs are said to be published under the Creative Commons License which enables free distribution of copyrighted work.

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With most projects we publish everything under Creative Commons licensing, the University has their stamp on it and the Chinese Cooperative or counter equivalent community project will have their stamp on it. We worked very closely with all the archives and all the library services regarding copyright, use of materials etc. And then they are placed in a community accessible place – library services, archives – under Creative Commons licensing as a production of this project ... but it is essentially owned by no one really I would say.

(Academic partner A)

Videos and DVDs have been archived at West Glamorgan Archives and Library services, leaving a legacy that other people and future generations can access. One elderly participant in the project died shortly after being filmed and having a record of his interview is described by both academic and community partners as valuable. The digital stories have provided valuable insights about the experiences of that generation of Chinese migrants to Swansea, which may otherwise never have come to light. Learning from undertaking the project is described as a legacy that can be applied to other collaborative projects in future.

I remember the exhibition launch in the National Waterfront Museum, (the previous chairperson's) father had not long passed away. And her dad was on the film ... I was just thinking 'I'm so glad we got that, I'm so glad we got that' I mean it doesn't matter which way we did it and how we had to get the money, that has captured that little bubble of information that would have been gone and it was captured. And I can personally say there's communities across Wales and the UK that are identified as suffering racism and experiences that are widely documented – I was aware the Chinese community suffer racism and struggles, but had no idea to what level. And those stories ... I think everybody in the room was actually ... 'uncomfortable' is the wrong word, but were made aware ... had no idea it was this hard for those people, because I would assume they don't talk about it.

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(Academic partner A)

One interviewee died whilst the project was under way but the team were lucky to have captured him on film and this is a good memorabilia for the family who are grateful for this record. It turned out this man had fought in the First World War and spoke about this in his interview. Have learnt much from this project that can apply to future collaborations. Very proud of this project, now people can also go to the library and look at the archive, not many people were aware of it before.

(Community partner)

Legacy from collaborative projects more generally is described as a challenge to maintain after projects come to an end.

This is a sort of sore subject for me really because we've had ... not specifically with the Chinese Co-Operative project, but we've had so many community projects. They've all had tangible outputs, publications, journal articles, DVDs etc. ... and they tend to be non-traditional academic outputs because they satisfy Heritage Lottery rather than AHRC. But in terms of legacy, this is the sad part of working with community groups on such fantastic projects, but they drop off ... and somebody has to keep them going. And my head of college here, he's very very good and kind and understanding, that technically on paper it's no longer my job to be looking after Connected Communities projects or offering any expertise really, but I continue to do it because it's good for the community and it's good for the University. So looking after tangible outputs, they can go to archives, libraries, they can go online – the University still pays the couple of pennies a month to keep the website up ... but its goodwill essentially that keeps us going.

(Academic partner A)

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Another legacy is described as the potential to understand the impact of life experiences on individuals and communities.

From a wellbeing and health perspective I think there's a stream of research that could be looked at more closely in that once you start opening the conversation around horrible experiences through immigration, racism, all that negative stuff, there is a damage in that community, there is a knock on effect on second, third, fourth generation community groups, that without opening that conversation you don't understand why this community has a problem with addiction, alcoholism, homelessness ... and there's definitely a research, a correlation between opening the conversation around tragedy and terrible experience, particularly in immigration ... immigrated experiences ... and a legacy of community issues. I'm not experienced and I don't understand how that might work in the Chinese community, but I know in the valley communities in Swansea it is a no brainer to see industrial tragedy, unemployment versus alcoholism and addiction in second, third, fourth generation. So that's the legacy as well.

(Academic partner A)

The range of tangible and non-tangible outputs from the project are described as providing an important record of stories, historical accounts that may otherwise have been lost and people working on the project have gained knowledge and skills they can apply to future work. The archived tangible outputs will provide a legacy and resource that people can access and learn from well into the future. The outputs will be maintained in the archives, it is likely that they are not owned by anybody though this lacks clarity.

Structural Inequalities

A lack of staff in academic institutions who have knowledge, experience and contacts in Black and Minority Ethnic communities is described as a structural inequality, one that also impacts on the few staff with these knowledge and skills being over-burdened. This impacts on the type and quality of knowledge produced if there is an under-representation of people with relevant knowledge and skills to undertake research relating to Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

The community partner describes a lack of knowledge and appreciation about the experiences and hardships that migrant communities encountered as a structural inequality that contributes to misconceptions and racism.

Chinese people were part of the British culture and contributed to the economy and other aspects – this is not recognised in society, their contribution. Their work in laundries, takeaways and so on is seen as minor and the locals saying that they did not integrate, stayed in own communities, they don't speak English. But they were busy earning a living and surviving as well as dealing with discrimination. Lots of them have bad health because things like holding woks affected their muscles and the long hours in laundries, takeaways and other work. They suffered a lot of discrimination and lack of recognition for their hard work. Local White communities saw them as not doing much, watching TV, etc. but they had been beavering away quietly and supporting each other the best they could.

(Community partner)

The main structural inequality highlighted relates to an under-representation of academic staff with relevant skills and insights to engage with Black and Minority Ethnic communities to undertake collaborative research. This impacts on the

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knowledge produced and insufficient knowledge about the experiences of these communities contributes to their being demonised and marginalised.

Representing communities

Community participants in the project were determined by the focus of the project on first generation Chinese migrants to Swansea. Several such migrants had already died and those still surviving were identified through the archival searches and some were known to the chairperson of SCCCC at the time, herself a first generation migrant. The digital stories therefore represent those who agreed to participate, and their experiences are likely to be shared by other migrants of the same generation. Those participating in the project were representing themselves in the filmed interviews and this is described as an authentic representation as is possible to achieve.

**I think in terms of translating experience ... because it came from the mouths of the elderly community didn't it? So it's authentic. You know visiting the archives, seeing the material first-hand – that was done by the Chinese students with SCCCC staff. The interviews were done by the Chinese Co-Op with the students. And the words that were in the film were not narrated, were not edited, we didn't even do voice-overs and things – it was literally oral history archiving. That Co-Op as I said has a long history ... based in Swansea but also attracts the Chinese in South Wales really, it's covering South Wales. Thinking about it, it didn't even occur to us I don't think to translate anything to us – it never landed on our desk. Because it was truly collaboration and co-delivery that was led by (community partners), I don't think we ever thought 'Send the data to us and we'll translate'.
(Academic partner A)**

The community partner highlights that the project represents the experiences of a particular group of Chinese people in relation to when they migrated to Swansea; they are now elderly and their experiences and outlook are not representative of

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the younger generation or the wider Chinese community which is itself diverse and has many sub-groups.

Second and third generations try to be 'British' to fit in and clash because parents want them to hang on to some Chinese culture, this is also an issue. Now the demographics are changing, younger generations have more money. Work is needed in highlighting that the Chinese community is diverse – Cantonese speakers, Mandarin speakers and so on, very diverse. There are also poor people and refugees plus overseas students so it is not a homogenous community and many people don't see this. It is challenging to serve a diverse community with changing needs, especially on minimal or no resources. The common thread is 'Chinese migrants' but within that it's very diverse and this needs to be recognised to work out support needs and other activities that are relevant now in the present time.

(Community partner)

The Chinese community represented in the project is a very specific group and it is emphasised that the broad category 'Chinese' encompasses very diverse communities. The elderly Chinese represented themselves in their digital stories and this approach provides a means of enabling people to present themselves and their stories in an authentic way. Some translation was necessary in relation to particular dialects such as Hakka to enable interviewer and interviewee to communicate and English subtitles have been added to the video recordings; however the voice of interviewees still comes through without narration, editing or voice-overs.

It is challenging to serve a diverse community with changing needs, especially on minimal or no resources. The common thread is 'Chinese migrants' but within that it's very diverse.

University-Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations

Several points are highlighted for consideration by both academic and community partners regarding how future university-Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations could be developed and supported. Empathy, mutual benefits and vision are a key consideration.

I think one thing I see time and time again is when you have academic members of staff with the best intentions in the world who approach communities and have a very clear agenda, and either side don't understand what it's like to be in the other's shoes. So I don't understand obviously what it's like to be a member of the Chinese community, but I understand what it's like to be in a community that has challenges. So I think university agenda and community agenda are always going to be different, the benefits are always going to be different, but you have to have empathy with the other person's cause. Whether that other cause from the academic perspective is just academic enquiry, if the community don't understand the value of that academic enquiry and how actually it's going to turn around and affect them, then you're onto a losing battle because you have to empathise. It doesn't need to be because the academic has a problem that needs fixing, but you have to understand each other otherwise you're talking different languages.

(Academic partner A)

Suggestions from the community partner regarding how future collaborations can be supported relate to: putting in place systems that enable universities and communities to establish contact; and universities making their resources available to capture community knowledge.

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Have a department in universities that works and focuses on collaborations with communities, otherwise communities don't know who to approach. University has many departments so don't know who to approach and don't know about things like the 'Connected Communities' programme. Where do you start with making contact? Universities should have a first contact point for university-community collaborative work, this would really help communities to explore/initiate research that they see as relevant or want to do. People who have skills and knowledge to share with communities are needed because community organisations don't always have time and resources to do heritage work. The University has more resources and money than community organisations so collaborations can help to capture community knowledge.

(Community partner)

Empathy, common vision and language, accessible mechanisms for establishing contact between universities and communities and the use of university resources to enable community knowledge to be captured are the key points highlighted in relation to developing research collaborations.

The Chinese community is described as being willing to engage and help each other and there are opportunities for universities to engage and make an impact.

I am part of the Chinese community, I know actually they're struggling financially. A lot of achievements were made on people's goodwill. One good thing about Chinese communities is that people want to make things better for everyone. You don't need a lot of persuasion, everyone just chip in their efforts to make things happen. The Chinese co-op centre are running a lot of projects now such as the recent workshop raising awareness of autism among children and the Chinese Sunday school. It's like every project the Chinese communities are doing now, they had the back-up from Swansea University ... I really want to say that

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the university is important in supporting the community. As an academic staff member, I know how important the public engagement initiatives are. I think that's how our University has been making an impact on the community.

(Academic partner B)

The community partner observes generational changes taking place in the Chinese community both in the UK and China and also the risk that elderly people will feel more isolated in their old age. She also observes how universities are becoming more interested in Chinese language schools now than was previously the case.

There is a different concept of responsibility in young people both here and now it is also happening in China as it advances. The older generation have not prepared to be on their own in old age. Also, they are less likely to speak English so old age can be difficult without children around to translate, fill forms and so on. Now universities are interested in setting up Chinese language schools, this was not the case previously – it was only the Chinese community asking for this. Now Chinese language learning is popular with the economic opportunities offered by China, universities are becoming more interested and involved in offering language skills and so on.

(Community partner)

The feedback suggests that there are changes taking place both in the Chinese communities where the younger generation has a different outlook and experience, and in universities that have a greater interest in China due to its economic advancement. Potentially, these changes are described as presenting opportunities for greater contact and collaboration on both sides

The future

Academic and community partners working on this project would like to continue collaborating, with each other as well as other partners. However, the academic partners highlight that the interest to work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities is relatively greater in the health and social care field than in relation to culture and community legacy.

I've tried in recent months, years, past the deadline of the project when it finished, to introduce (community partner) to various academic staff from outside of our college. But it is very difficult to align academic staff who are not so much interested in the cultural significance and the community legacy. So colleagues in Human and Health Sciences they want to study diabetes in Chinese communities ... another colleague who's very interested in the increase in smoking in youngsters in the Chinese community. Well that's great, but what does (community partner) and her team get out of it? So aligning... we had a common objective ... now introducing (community partner) to an academic who actually only wants to study them because possibly they tick the box of a Chinese community in terms of smoking or diabetes. That's not an equal footing. Although identifying and working collaboratively with communities on co-produced and co-delivered research projects can be a challenge I am focused on continuing the work of the Connected Communities project as the network continues to be relevant and continues to develop. We continue to gather interest and engagement from additional researchers, professional partners and community groups that have joined the project to collaboratively design community-focused research.

(Academic partner A)

I've tried to various academic staff from outside of our college.... But it is very difficult to align academic staff who are not so much interested in the cultural significance and the community legacy.

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The community partner highlights that SCCCC would like to do more collaborative work and there is a sense of urgency to focus on the elderly in order to capture their memories and stories before these fade or they pass on. SCCCC also wants to conduct its own research to highlight the demographic changes taking place in the Chinese community and observes that universities are starting to recognise the benefits, to them and their students, of working with communities.

Would like to do more of this kind of work, the elderly have lots of memories and things to say, they are also now passing on (dying) and the memories of those still alive are fading so there is a feeling of urgency to capture them. So, there is an urgency to capture as much as possible and the focus needs to be more on the elderly than young people at this point if resources are limited. We would collaborate again and also want to do our own research on changing demographics of the Chinese community because currently rapid change is at work. More Chinese students coming here is also impacting on demographics, the economy in China is different now. Mandarin has replaced Cantonese and become the dominant language within the Chinese community. Hence Chinese In Wales Association was established to meet the changing needs and aims to carry on and expand the good work of SCCCC to the whole Wales areas. It is now working towards more close collaboration with universities to benefit both sides. There are internship, work placement and volunteering opportunities offered to the university students. The University is starting to recognise the impact of research and benefits for students. They are now looking at how to have a better connection and impact with the community; students are often sent by academics to collect data and a link with the community would be helpful for this too so that agreements and protocols are in place before students come along. Want to influence communities and younger people to support their community and capture the knowledge that exists as well as what communities want captured.

(Community partner)

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The availability of resources and academics who can be aligned to the research topics of interest to specific Black and Minority Ethnic communities, will influence when and what future collaborations emerge.