



What I'd like
you to know
about me:
Translating the
Experience of
Emotional Distress

A collaboration between Glasgow Clyde College and the University of Glasgow





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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

What I'd like you to know about me:
Translating the Experience of Emotional
Distress

Key Partners

University of Glasgow
<https://www.gla.ac.uk/>

Glasgow Clyde College
<https://www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk/>

Funder

Arts and Humanities Research Council

Dates

2014 – 2017

Website

<https://researching-multilingually-at-borders.com/>



Performers at the Solas Festival
Image: Karen Gordon

Project Summary

‘Translating the Experience of Emotional Distress’ was part of the broader international research project Researching Multilingually at the Borders of Language, the Body, Law and the State (Researching Multilingually), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and undertaken over a period of three years between 2014 and 2017. Researching Multilingually was led by the University of Glasgow and brought together an international, multidisciplinary team of researchers and collaborators from countries including Ghana, United Kingdom, United States of America, Bulgaria, Palestine, Romania, Uganda, Sierra Leone and The Netherlands, . The aim of the overall project was to answer the question, ‘How can translation and interpretation processes and practices at the borders of language, the body, law, and the state be rigorously theorised and researched, and research findings effectively represented and evaluated, in a multilingual manner?’ Researching Multilingually had three broad components: a Researching Multilingually and Translating Cultures (RMTC) ‘hub’; a Creative Arts and Translating Cultures (CATC) ‘hub’; and five original case studies. ‘Translating the Experience of Emotional Distress’ was one of the five case that focused on documenting, analysing and comparing the complex translation processes associated with understanding and supporting the mental health needs of people living in Scotland and Uganda.

This Common Cause Research case study is based on interviews with the University partner leading on the overall Researching Multilingually project, an artist-in-residence at the University and the FE College partner at Glasgow Clyde College working on ‘Translating the Experience of Emotional Distress’. Therefore, some of the feedback from the academic partner and artist-in-residence in particular refers to the broader Researching Multilingually project; as such, it does not necessarily have direct relevance to ‘Translating the Experience of Emotional Distress’ but highlights important issues relevant to the context of university-Black and Minority Ethnic community research collaborations.



The Project Team

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Glasgow Clyde College is a Further Education (FE) institution located in the city of Glasgow offering a range of vocational and specialist courses, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The focus of the collaboration for the Researching Multilingually project was to undertake work with unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee young people, aged 16 years and over, who were attending the ESOL 16+ course.

The University of Glasgow is an ancient university founded in 1451. The University offers a wide range of courses and works in partnership with overseas universities including in Columbia and Hong Kong. In the academic year 2016/17 the University had over 26,000 students from more than 140 countries.

The collaboration with Glasgow Clyde College aimed to document, analyse and compare the complex translation and interpretation processes in the provision of support to migrant, unaccompanied minors attending the ESOL 16+ programme at the Anniesland campus of Glasgow Clyde College. A core team consisting of the lecturer leading and teaching this course, a psychologist and a researcher worked with the young people using creative arts approaches to enable them to express what identity meant to them. Creative arts workshops, such as music, screen printing and poetry, were delivered by artists in residence at the University who were working on the broader Researching Multilingually project. The sessions with young people were documented, including through photographs and video. A key output of the project was 3D identity boxes made by the young people, expressing how they saw their identities. A small exhibition of these boxes was held at the University and at the time of interview, a larger exhibition was being planned to include film footage of the workshops as well as the 3D identity boxes. A number of articles have been published and outputs from the broader Researching Multilingually project can be found here.

How the collaboration came about

The University and FE college partners interviewed for this case study knew each other personally for some years before collaborating on this project. They had talked about potentially undertaking collaborative work, in particular because the FE partner's work with students on the ESOL course had not been researched.

I knew (University partner), not professionally but personally, and had been involved in conversations with her about how we could link together over the work that I'm doing and potentially work with the University. We'd had conversations about that before, because nobody had studied or researched what I have done ... and I haven't done it either because I've been too busy doing it ... so we had conversations and then the grant was given (for Researching Multilingually). And (University partner) approached me to say would I be happy to work with them on this case study, so that's how it came about.

(FE College partner)

The University partner was interested in the issue of young people being required to learn English as part of integration strategies, but who may still be deported and wanted to look at this from a practice-based perspective.

I actually think (FE college partner) of all the project partners is the person I've known the longest - I met her at an event in the centre of Glasgow I reckon 20 years ago, And when I then was putting together a project and thinking about partners I would want to look at and issues I wanted to look at, the issue of learning languages for multilingual language-rich young people, who have a difficult relationship to English because they've been required to learn it as part of integration strategies but who also may still face deportation, was an area of

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real interest to me and how we understood what I knew was some of the best practice in the field. This project has been one of the first opportunities (FE college partner) has had to stop and think about why it is that what she does is so important for those young people. So it was the way in which research was led by yes a research aim question, but actually very much about saying there's brilliant practice out there. We are looking at where the practice is, we're describing what that practice is, we're enabling different lenses to be brought onto that practice to think with it from the Arts and Humanities particularly, though often from other lenses, so global mental health is important in (FE college partner's) project. And then thinking of ways of actually enabling its enrichment through the use of the arts, through the intervention of the arts, and through the use of arts based workshops.

(University partner)

After deciding to collaborate, the FE college partner worked closely with a team from the University and detailed discussions took place in the initial phase of the project to arrive at a common vision. The FE college partner describes this as extremely important.

We had a lot of conversations before we actually started to do any of the work with the young people, and that was with the team who were involved in this. So we had conversations precisely about what do we mean by collaboration, what do we mean by agency, what do we mean by distress and what do we mean about idioms of distress. Very detailed conversations before we actually started ... before the researchers came in and started to do any work with my students.

(FE college partner)

Terminology regarding race and ethnicity is highlighted by both partners as presenting difficulties. The FE partner relates how generic terminology can mask differences in views and experience between individuals and sub- groups.

I have found that even within my class, you know I would have had lots of young men from Afghanistan, but actually they don't see themselves as attached ... they see themselves as Afghani but then there are all these other categories that they put themselves in. And one of the things I think is really important ... and again we had this (discussion) from the very beginning ... is we need to hear what they say about themselves. Because our (race and ethnicity) categories are so rigid and also so narrow. And I think for this group (of young people) that is a real challenge because their state of identity is in flux. And I think adolescence in particular is a time of changing sense of identity as well. I think it's really important to try as far as possible to facilitate young people to come to a sense of that they are many things, and all of those things are important. The fact that they're displaced doesn't mean they're still not you know a son or a brother, but it does also mean that they could also identify themselves as New Scottish if they wanted to. So you know I think that's really important, and I think trying to show that in any research ... is vital. So that we don't get into 'That's that group and they need this'.

(FE college partner)

The University partner highlights how the terminology used can vary depending on the contexts in which it is being applied and that new terminology is emerging to refer to migrants.

I've noticed with many people from the Global South, we have many names and we use them for different purposes at different times. So I can speak ethnic minority equality legislation speak in those fora where we need to, and I'm very happy to translate in those ways. And it's quite funny when I do because it all feels rather false. You know I will advocate when I'm in a room for saying 'Look there's nobody (of Minority Ethnic origin) in here, this is what we're talking about, can you make sure we've got people in the room who are experts by experience' ...

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and that's a term I'll use more and more. 'New Scots' is one of the terms we will use for anybody, like myself who grew up in England ... anyone who's come to live in Scotland as a New Scot and it's the preferred term for asylum seekers, refugees, migrants ... which is the kind of placeholder terms we use. BME communities ... all of that stuff, which all of us hate and we know it's problematic.

(University partner)

The longstanding connection between the partners, prior to embarking on the collaborative project, is described as important and facilitated an understanding about each other's work. Detailed discussions at the start of the project about key terminology and concepts, are described as necessary and important to arriving at a common understanding about their meaning and use in the context of the 'Translating the Experience of Emotional Distress' case study. The importance of recognising limitations regarding terminology used to refer to Black and Minority Ethnic communities is highlighted, as is the need to recognise the multiple and shifting nature of individual and group identities.

Developing collaborative research

The initial idea to develop a case study, based on work with unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee minors studying on the ESOL course at Glasgow Clyde College, came from the University partner and was adapted following discussions between the FE College partner and research team.

The initial idea of the project was about gender, specifically about gender and violence. Whereas we changed that because in my context the gender is not the issue, it's the fact that this group of young people are coming from an asylum seeking refugee background. And so we had to have a lot of conversations about how we could look at that idea that (University partner) initially had and then make it something that would actually work in the context that I was in.

(FE College partner)

The manner in which the collaboration came about, combined with detailed early discussions about how to take the work with Glasgow Clyde College forward, are described as important to developing a mutually beneficial approach to the collaboration.

Extremely important. There were lots of ideas, we were coming from a multidisciplinary approach. I come from you know a practitioner approach as a teacher in the classroom, (one member of the research team) is a psychologist, and other people were creative arts people ... so we all came with very different ideas. And a good example of this was (the psychologist) wanted to be able to measure the impact of creative arts, so we spent a lot of time talking about measurements and how we would measure, and actually came



Musicians at the Solas Festival
Image: Karen Gordon

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to the conclusion that we couldn't use any of the traditional Western measurements because they just didn't fit.

(FE College partner)

The importance of identifying and working with brokers able to engage and work with participating young people is highlighted by the University partner.

I've found that with (FE College partner's) project, but also with other projects, it's been really important to work with brokers. So I went to artists in residence who are really excellent brokers, they're multilingual, they're Black and Minority Ethnic, they're all different immigration tracks, they have different status, they can be employed, they're mature aged people, they're elders in their own communities. And they therefore represent in deeply embodied form the kinds of people that these young people are missing from their lives. And the kinds of people that I think (FE College partner) can point to as trusted elders, or as collaborators. And similarly I think with our global mental health partners who represent very much the kind of White middle class expert classes, but are very clear that they need to learn about how to work with these groups. So it's very much been about a learning process for us to learn what we need to learn, but also to be able to identify and celebrate and share the good practice.

(University partner)

Bringing together a team of professionals from different cultural backgrounds and disciplines is described as one of the challenges for the overall Researching Multilingually project. This requires people to step outside of their own background, linguistic assumptions and learn about how to develop new approaches and ways of working. Everybody working on the broader Researching Multilingually project was required, at some point, to step outside of boundaries which were comfortable to them and everybody is said to have found this difficult.

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I would say the points of conflict which have come have always come when we've been asking people to work in disciplines which are alien to them, possibly to work in languages which are alien to them, though less so because that was very overt in the project. Or to work with arts which are alien to them, and that has been disturbing. And I make no apology for it because it's a good thing. I think the team have all had moments and some of it has been around working with people who come from very different backgrounds and very different ways of working in all directions. Without generalising too much I can think of those coming from the Global South, those who've never been trained in the bureaucratic ways in which we work all the time in higher education, their experience of what they would call the form filling enthusiasts has been really hard to navigate. A lot of the time I've filled out more forms than maybe I would have liked to, I've done it because otherwise I'm using up all their time to report on what they haven't yet done. I think it's often been challenging to people to work in different ways, coming from different parts of the world where you don't have the luxury of being able to plan. So the dominant way normally of working in the West would be to plan and schedule time - the dominant way we've worked in Ghana has been not to do that. So we've now got ways of working where I will start the team over breakfast in the guesthouse where we'll be living 'This is the shape of the day - I could tell you what time lunch will be, but it will depend on whether we get charcoal. So if I tell you, you may be sorely disappointed, so I won't. It'll probably be between 11.30 and 3.30. I can tell you what time we'll end the day, but it will depend on whether or not our academics are able to show up in the community venue and whether or not they've got a car that day or whether the road is open.'

(University partner)

A key challenge to developing the research with students on the ESOL course is described by the FE college partner as relating to understanding how Western

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concepts of distress are understood in different languages and cultures. Discussing these issues early in the collaboration was essential to establishing a common vision for the project and also a shared language, because the language of academia can be difficult to engage with for those who are not familiar with it.

It was about the actual language used and the Western concepts of something like for example the idea of being lonely and how that relates across the different cultural concepts of my students and the identities of my students. So those conversations that we had at the beginning were really essential in kind of establishing that groundwork so that we knew what we were talking about, and also to be able to trust each other as a very multidisciplinary team. And for me personally, coming from a non-academic background in the sense I'm not attached to the University and I'm not a researcher, being able to really get to grips with this academic language, what are we talking about here. Because if I have to talk to my students about this participation we're going to be involved in, I need to know what I'm talking about. And they won't know if I don't know.

(FE College partner)

A further challenge to developing the research was to ensure that the participating students were involved in the process of how the research was undertaken and that they got something out of their participation without simply being subjects who were researched on. Achieving this required all professionals working with them to engage in building relationships that facilitated participation which was not tokenistic.

I think the challenges were really getting down to what are we doing this for and what is it about, and from my perspective how can I ensure that these young people who are extremely vulnerable are not used as, for want of a better word, 'case studies', that for them it's a process that they're going to be fully involved

in, and also very much get something out of. So for me the challenge was to ensure that everybody that worked with this group of young people were prepared to make a relationship with them that was a genuine relationship. It wasn't that they would come in and do interviews and go away again. Luckily for me everybody who was in the team completely agreed with me, but we had to talk about that because it's quite unusual, I'm not an academic but I feel that's quite an unusual approach sometimes, you know to say that this is going to take time and it's got to be genuine, and it's got to be led by ... as far as it possibly can ... by what the young people want to do, and how they want to do it.

(FE College partner)

Developing the research based on creative arts methods was discussed by the team and recognised as important, based on the FE College partner's experience of engaging the young people through these approaches, especially in relation to work on identity. Working with creative arts addresses language barriers as well as provide opportunities to practice language skills. A key aim of the project was to look at whether the creative arts enabled this group of young people to express themselves, whether this could be measured and whether it required measurement.

One of the things that we discovered and in terms of the research became important ... for me it wasn't a discovery, but I think for other people in the team it might have been, is that this particular group of young people are always seen in a position of deficit rather than in a position of plenty. They're refugee and asylum seeking young people and they're unaccompanied, so they're here alone. As the person who leads on the (ESOL) programme and teaches it, I've always used creative arts and outdoor learning as part of it. Because for me it's about giving the young people as many opportunities as possible to use language in different settings and to be able to explore the things that they can do very well. But sometimes it's very much hidden by the fact that they haven't got English,

I've always used creative arts and outdoor learning as part of it. Because for me it's about giving the young people as many opportunities as possible to use language in different settings and to be able to explore the things that they can do very well.

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they haven't got the language. And so one of the themes of the work that I do is about identity and what does it mean to be a young person from Afghanistan for example who has been a brother and a son and perhaps you know a very good student, or perhaps somebody who worked in a market with their father and then they come here and then there's a whole new identity. And so part of this project was about looking at you know how creative arts allow this group of young people to express some of those things, and can we actually measure that ... and is it important to measure it, is the other question.

(FE College partner)

Developing the research in an FE college is described as important because it is not something that is generally undertaken in such environments. Furthermore, collaborations between universities and FE colleges are said to be rare.

I don't think there's collaboration between the FE colleges and universities, very very little in my experience. And I don't think they understand each other. I think FE colleges see universities as being a place of transition, going from here to there ... if students go to university. So there may be some cooperation and collaboration on that area in terms of you know transitions and what routes, pathways ... but in terms of research affecting FE, it doesn't happen ... and the other way round I don't think. I think in FE generally there's a very very small amount of time given to any kind of research.

(FE College partner)

In relation to the overall Researching Multilinguallyt project, the University partner highlights that working collaboratively with artists from the Global South in a Western environment can require building their confidence and communicating that their work is important. This is necessary to address any doubts that they, or their art, will not be seen as sufficiently good quality.

So what's been really important for my artists in residence is that they are artists – that's what they are. The fact that they might be Black or Commonwealth or Global South or New Scots, or any of that, actually is utterly secondary. And I remember when we very first started the project I was just sketching out what their work would be and contracts and all this stuff about how we would work. They were kind of sitting there, and they were a little subdued, I would say even cowed and I suddenly looked at them and said 'Okay the thing you need to know is that you are not on this project because I am a nice person, you are on this project because this is a flagship project, this is extremely prestigious work, this is going to attract a lot of attention – and should. And for me to know that this project is doing well, my first criteria absolutely has to be quality. So you are here because I believe that of the people that I know and can trust, you are world class in what you do and you need to hold your head up high and be aware that you are on this project because you are world class at what you do. The fact that there are other things about who you are which are going to enrich our project greatly, and discomfort and disquiet our project greatly is a bonus, and it's secondary to – you're an artist, you're a poet.' It always needs navigating, because of the inequalities there isn't a way of dealing with it that is there. But it's about trying to name it in ways that aren't too judgemental.

(University partner)

The initial idea for the research topic was adapted through initial discussions and negotiations to accommodate the specific context of the environment and young people participating in the research. The feedback indicates thorough discussion about concepts, terminology and the efficacy of applying Western approaches and measurements in a cross cultural context. These early discussions also considered how participating young people would be facilitated to inform how the research was undertaken and how they would gain from participation. In the broader Researching Multilingually project, addressing the underlying concerns of staff from

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the Global South who are working in the Global North is highlighted, to build their confidence to work in a new environment.

Funding

The Researching Multilingually project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as one of its three large grants under the Translating Cultures Programme. The University partner led on developing and submitting the bid with input from potential project partners, who were happy to work in this way due to already established trusting relationships. An informal approach was adopted to involve and obtain feedback from project partners, in part this was informed by a swift turnaround time to meet the deadline for submission combined with the language of the funding application being difficult for partners to engage with.

The idea of involving the partners at a point in time has kind of dissolved now for us because we've been working with all of these partners for such a long time. The nuts and bolts of how we did it, I was picking up the phone to partners at CCA (Centre for Contemporary Arts), at the Refugee Council, at BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland), at the Islamic University of Gaza, the National Dance Theatre ... I mean all the different places where I knew I was working with partners and I'd say 'Look we've got a deadline, we've only got three weeks, are you interested in being on board? You may or may not be, we've really not got much time, so you're going to have to let me do a lot of the heavy lifting for you.' So it's because we're working with incredibly cash strapped organisations, you know we're not working with organisations who can afford to collaborate. I needed to do a lot of the writing – because I speak AHRC speak. And because none of my partners speak AHRC speak, needs to speak AHRC speak, want to speak AHRC speak, it's not going to help them at all ... but they do know and trust that collaborations with us are a good thing.

(University partner)

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The FE college partner contributed a breakdown of resources that would be needed to undertake the creative arts work with young people, the release of her time to work on the project was negotiated by the University partner directly with the FE College. Involvement in the financial aspects of the project is described as minimal and the FE College partner was happy with this.

(University partner) negotiated that I would be released off my timetable for a certain period of time per week to work on the project. And so what that meant was I had a remission on my teaching timetable, a very small remission actually, to be able to allow me to for example attend the planning meetings and then conferences and writing up. So that was the only bit in terms of the actual money spent on staffing, the other bit would have been for resources, just in negotiation with the project about well we're going to do this creative arts work and we need these resources ... so very minimally involved in the financial side.

(Community partner)

Being released for a greater length of time, than three hours a week, to work on the project would have been preferable to the FE College partner. However, not being able to predict how much actual time would be needed to deliver the project and no guarantee of the collaboration bringing in additional resources to the FE College, are highlighted as contributing to the short time officially available to work on the project.

I would have liked to have been released for more time, because I actually spent much more time on it than three hours a week. But I think that's the nature of not knowing how much time you're going to spend on something and to be honest, the fact that the College didn't necessarily see the contribution and the partnership as being something of value to the College. And what I mean by that is we didn't come up with a proposal that my organisation would be able to say

okay that's great if Glasgow University have researched this that means we can get X, Y and Z, in terms of extra funding or in terms of extra resources. So the impact at the end I think for them (FE College) wasn't necessarily seen as being useful.

(FE College partner)

Both partners highlight messages they would like funders to consider regarding the funding of collaborative research. Greater consideration about the way in which different sectors work and flexibility to resource and facilitate meaningful participation in collaborative projects in addition to regular tasks and duties, is highlighted by the FE College partner.

I think the flexibility, understanding that actually if you're working with practitioners and whether that is in my context as in in an FE college, or it's in a school, or it's in a community organisation ... you're still having to do all of that work as well as the amount of work that you do as a partner in a project. And I think sometimes that's maybe not seen as being the kind of balancing act that it can be. And I'm sure that's true of people who are involved in projects who are university staff as well, but I think the sectors are not necessarily linked in a way that help each other understand how they work.

(FE College partner)

The University partner communicates that there is a need to examine the whole system of how university-community collaborations are funded. Currently, who collaborates is based on chance meetings with people who are committed to doing the work and can put themselves at risk of burnout. Funding and other meetings should be held in places that are familiar to communities, where they feel safe and are properly recompensed for their time. Enabling collaborations with international colleagues requires additional work and resources, the people undertaking this

You're still having to do all of that work as well as the amount of work that you do as a partner in a project. And I think sometimes that's maybe not seen as being the kind of balancing act that it can be.

work should be allocated necessary time and funds to undertake the necessary extra tasks.

Turn it upside down. At the moment it's still always going to be based on chance – the chance of meeting somebody who's prepared to just make this their life's work. Not everybody does and not everybody should. And I know in managing my team they are all equally passionate about it, but there's always going to be the danger of burnout – for them and for me because it takes 20 times longer, though the benefits once you've got your collaborations established are amazing. So for funders I think if you really are serious about including people in a way that isn't tokenistic, you need to ensure a time on the territory where people feel comfortable, so you have to have your meetings in spaces which are not swipe card, finger print, biometric, you know ... they're terrifying for people who know that they are under suspicion in a hostile environment. So have them in a place which is more like you know Shoreditch Town Hall – the places that people go to. Find people who may be willing to be trained up to work on this, and pay them to do it. Some of my artists in residence are now employed for one day a week at the University which is great, that's taken a lot of doing, a lot of navigating, a lot of extra paperwork because you've got people with Commonwealth passports – all of that. But in order to enable and empower people to be able to take control of that bureaucracy I need to then fill the forms out with people too. So if you're going to do that your PIs (Principle Investigators) need more time. So there should be almost a quota premium if this is something you're really serious about – the paying for the time of people who are going to do it and that's true for my administrative staff too. I actually now think for really accurate costings for the grants that we are putting in, you need to expect to have to rebook all travel three times for anybody from the Global South, you need to expect to have to reapply for visas at least twice. And there's no right of appeal, so that's a lot of money you've got to put in. You need to be able to extend and to change and be

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flexible with your travel and your accommodation, and that's all costings ... and you need to pay for the administrative time for doing that. Because anybody who thinks they can just get somebody into the country as an academic or an artist at the moment is deluding themselves. So yeah, they need to give us money to do that.

(University partner)

The key issue regarding funding is appropriate resourcing for project partners to be able allocate sufficient time to engage in the collaborative work. This includes release from normal tasks and duties, administrative time to deal with additional tasks relating to international work and sufficient time for Principal Investigators to intervene with bureaucratic processes and form filling.

Undertaking the research

The FE College partner participated throughout the process of developing the research, as described earlier, and subsequently to designing, undertaking and analysing the data collected. Other members of the team were facilitated, before the fieldwork got under way, to spend time with and get to know the participating young people; this is described as crucial to establishing trust, build relationships and facilitate the young people to feel safe in engaging with the team.

I was part of developing that from the very beginning and will continue to be part of it through the whole process. So in those initial meetings that we had together as a team, we talked about how we would manage the fieldwork which really meant we looked at different stages of it. So it was over one academic year with my students, so we looked at the initial stages of everybody who was in that small team having some time to actually get to know the young people. Members of the team came into my classroom, sometimes they did workshops, sometimes we went out and they came with us. So for me that was really crucial because it was about building up those relationships. Because in my experience young people will trust me to bring the people into the classroom that they can feel safe with, but that doesn't mean that those people don't have to also establish their own relationships. So we did that initially and then I worked very closely with (the researcher) in particular, because we decided we would run the creative arts bits of the research, which was a crafting of 3D identity boxes ... and we would do that together in the classroom over a period of time, so she was in with me and we worked together.

(FE College partner)



Dancing at the Solas Festival
Image: Karen Gordon

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The initial time spent on getting to know the young people is described as important and very worthwhile to their feeling comfortable with participating in the project and engaging with members of the team. The data collected during fieldwork was written up by the researcher and discussed with the FE College partner who felt fully consulted on all aspects of the collaboration, including presentations about the project.

Because (the researcher) had spent quite a lot of time getting to know the young people, they felt very comfortable with her, she'd come in and work with them, we'd been to a number of different things together. When she asked if she could take photographs, when she asked if she could film, they absolutely didn't have a problem with it. So we continued to do that, then she went away with all of that data and wrote up quite a lot of it. And then I was involved in looking at it and discussing it, and her interviews with me after each session ... or after we'd worked with the young people. So really from the very beginning to the end of it I was fully consulted about everything. And (the researcher) and I in particular worked very closely together, when we went to do presentations about the work subsequently we would work together on those.

(FE College partner)

Significant time and attention was given to considering methodologies that would be appropriate to the research topic and to engaging the young people. This entailed looking at specific approaches, which were often abandoned after being deemed unsuitable for undertaking research with this particular group of young people. A key consideration was to adopt a methodology in which spoken language was not a key factor or requirement and recognise the approach adopted was not a form of therapy.

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(The psychologist) and I in particular worked at trying to find lots of different things that we could use and then very often decided to abandon them, because they were very much aimed at a particular group of young people, they were very language-heavy. And even with translations, first of all as we couldn't get all the translations and secondly I felt these young people were not in therapy in my classroom. You know they reveal and disclose a lot of things throughout the year to me and to each other, but that's not what the business of the creative arts thing was for. So we did adopt a methodology, but also in deciding to do this particular piece of creative work, it's very much about not using language. And I think that's really important because it gives, as much as you possibly can, a power to the young person to create something which doesn't need to be defined by language.

(FE College partner)

Enabling young people to engage in creative arts and outdoor learning is described as beneficial to bringing out skills and qualities that may otherwise be concealed in a classroom context, where there is a strong focus on non-creative approaches to learning languages.

I think the other thing is this idea that they are the experts in their own creativity and I'm not. So one of the things that we often do is we do a lot of outdoor learning, where we do basket making or we'd make fires for example. And one of the things that's really lovely about that exercise is that they were always much better at that than I am. And so at that point something changes because then the less academically able young people sometimes are the ones that shine. So something changes in terms of my relationship with them and also their relationship with each other. And that's what happens with using creative arts, because very often I can see a whole other part of who they are when I allow them

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to make something or create something. And in terms of the researching, the researcher was part of that process rather than somebody as a neutral observer.

(FE College partner)

Academic theories are described as being unfamiliar to practitioners working with people, they can be unaware their work has a theory attached to it even if the theory has relevance to what they do.

It's really interesting when you hear theories about what you do that you didn't know were there as a theory. So that was one of the wonderful things for me when you know somebody like (the psychologist) or (researcher) would say 'and that's like ...blah blah blah' and I'd think 'well I don't even know who blah blah blah is'. It was like oh, but that's what I do but I didn't know somebody had written about it.

(FE College partner)

The FE College partner highlights the need for vigilance regarding the application of research and theories across contexts in which people do not share the same characteristics or experience. Furthermore, some aspects of some research and theories may have relevance and be transportable from one group to another and not the whole theory or theoretical perspective.

There were times when we had quite heated discussions about it because I think this situation is a unique situation and actually as far as I'm aware, there's been very little research on this particular group of young people, particularly in the UK because I looked and I couldn't find anything. There are lots of other types of research, but they're about much younger children or they're about a particular group like for example Chinese young people within the US ... and so the discussion would be 'Well there's bits of that that are relevant but not all of it, so

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we can't take that and transport it onto this.' And we also at the same time have to understand that every young person in this group has a different story. So you can't label them all as this homogenous group, because they're not. I was lucky because my colleagues completely understood that, but it led to interesting discussions about it really.

(FE College partner)

Perspectives regarding the experience of research participants can differ between academics and practitioners based on their respective working environments and understanding, equally important to recognise is that neither has the lived experience of those they are working with.

In some cases yes (there was a difference between academic and practitioner understanding). I mean you know I was very aware that I am a White privileged middle class professional, and so for me having an understanding that although I have been doing this work for a while, I can never actually fully understand what it means to be a young person from a refugee background. I have a lot of anecdotal experience, but that's all it is. And so nobody can either, unless they're them ... and I think that's where you know no matter how much you study it and write about it, it's not your lived experience.

(FE College partner)

The University partner relates several observations and issues relevant to undertaking collaborative research between universities and communities, that arise from the broader Researching Multilingually project as well as collaborative research more generally.

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- **Disrupting established approaches and methods by facilitating artists to be involved in all elements of developing and undertaking a project is important and can necessitate a move away from traditional, established ways of working.**

(One of the artists) did a keynote with me and also a paper with (another colleague) at a conference recently in Argentina and she sang her paper. These are elements that come with migration, but they also puncture our normal ways of doing things. Our artists, as experts by experience, have been fully involved in all elements of the project and disrupting them and enabling and facilitating. We're experimenting with this as an arts and humanities performance form, in my keynotes I have asked that rather than being paid an honorarium or rather than paying for me to stay in some swanky hotel I'll take the local bed and breakfast and use the additional saving to enable somebody of Black and Minority Ethnic origin to be in the audience and them to interrupt my talk and then monitoring and watching how people respond, watching how people respond to me, watching what happens when I break the contract with the audience.

- **Communicating what is wrong with only focusing on Black and Minority Ethnic communities during Black History Month.**

And we're beginning to plan that I might do some of the interrupting during Black History Month ... you know whilst Black History Month has very laudable origins it's also the one month in a year when most Black artists can get work, and in other months they can't. It's extremely stressful for them, it means all kinds of financial decisions need taking during that month. So we're hoping to do a panel during Black History Month called 'What's wrong with Black History Month' here at the University.

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- **Undertaking research that is of value to communities, not just to universities or what they perceive as being of value to communities.**

Our colleague who worked for the Scottish Refugee Council as a Research Officer said wouldn't it be great if you guys could stop sending us Masters students or PhD students who all want to work on the same topic – usually unaccompanied minors in Glasgow. We know what we need to know about this group of people, we've already done the research thank you very much, what we need to know is why this is happening in this particular ward and that's happening in that ward. Or why this has worked and that hasn't.

- **Participatory methods to facilitate community participation and for the research to be led by questions that communities want to look at.**

Everybody said to us we want to work with participatory methods of different varieties, so we want to feel included, we want the University to use its convening power to include us. You've got a lot of resource, but please can we have access to it, we're sick of waiting until we've paid fees to be able to read your articles on what we've done or what you've interviewed us about, and any chance you could be led by our questions.

- **Exploratory research and diverse methods are important in the Arts and Humanities but are not facilitated by a key focus on research questions that follow a scientific framing, presenting the risk of exploiting data to match narrowly framed questions. Furthermore, systems such as JeS (Joint Electronic System) for submitting funding applications to Research Councils can exacerbate this issue.**

I think we are doing a huge disservice as Arts & Humanities scholars by Je-S forms that require research questions – when we first started doing research in the Arts & Humanities I didn't follow a research question I have aims, I have things I want to achieve. Much of Arts & Humanities research is about going we'll look at all of this, let's describe what we see and analyse it, let's make things and then see what we've done ... so a lot of it is retrospective interpretation and analysis. It isn't going in, extracting data, bringing it into your office, you know pounding it around a bit, putting it through various machines and then saying this is the answer. And it has its place, it can answer a narrow range of questions very well, but it certainly can't answer all of them ... and all the big questions are still intact. Just listen to the way we talk about research when we are forced into more social scientific and scientific framings ... we go in, we mine, we extract ... this is the language that has got us into this mess in the first place in terms of the colonial and post-colonial situations. We are taking stuff, we are exploiting it.

- **Performing a project can create tensions if researchers feel their data is absent from such presentations, or are unable to locate it in a performance piece.**

Where its produced conflict has been around this idea of data interestingly, around what it would mean to perform the project. So we were tasked with being involved with watching, understanding, and sometimes receiving what some call data, what others call stories, what others call cases, what others called field work. And in doing that a piece was devised, which tells the story of the project. [...] We then made a documentary and I remember in the discussions about the documentary one of our law case studies just saying 'But what I don't understand is when the law is enacted' and I said 'The law's the elephant' and she went 'Oh of course, the law is the elephant' – and we had an elephant on the stage that was doing things ... but she hadn't seen that.

Much of Arts & Humanities research is about going we'll look at all of this, let's describe what we see and analyse it, let's make things and then see what we've done

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- **Some challenges that arise in a project can be wrongly interpreted as relating to the collaboration, when in fact they relate to structural issues that impact on the collaboration. Working in an international context requires systems and structures that recognise different ways of working and adapt to accommodate the differences. For example, taking money into overseas countries can require finance and payment structures to be able to work with the requirements of those countries.**

How can you get money into the country? I think that stuff's really interesting because it's nothing to do with the collaborations, it's everything to do with the way that institutions will hang their staff out to dry who are doing things that are pioneering. So it's everything to do with lack of support for proof of concept pioneering research, and nothing to do with the supposed difficulty of working with Black and Minority Ethnic communities - it's not difficult. The hard to reach people are Theresa May - the hard to reach people are the people with their fingers on massive weaponry, the hard to reach people are not the people that we are constantly being told are the hard to reach communities or the 'under-served communities' is the other phrase that's come up recently, you know. Where actually you need the university to do a good job and serve you well ... which it should be doing in other areas as well.

Participation of the FE College partner in all aspects of developing and delivering the research was valuable enabling theoretical and other approaches to be discussed, omitted or adapted to ensure their relevance to the context of participating young people. An important component of the collaboration was the facilitation of members of the research team to spend time and build relationships with the young people prior to commencing fieldwork, creating a space in which

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everyone felt comfortable working together. Creative, arts-based approaches in which spoken language was not a key factor were important to undertaking research with this group of young people. A range of issues regarding traditional approaches to undertaking research, academic systems and structures are highlighted as having an adverse impact on undertaking collaborative research in a global, cross cultural context.

Roles and responsibilities

In the broader Researching Multilingually project, roles and responsibilities initially envisaged and agreed were revised to take into account issues that team members found challenging. This is described as necessary to manage anxieties and arrive at a better understanding about the type of roles and responsibilities that match the practice of individual team members. The revised roles and responsibilities, therefore, emerged more organically and were better suited to what staff could realistically undertake in their practice and feel comfortable with.

We've had plans and roles, we set up frameworks to start with ... and then when they don't work we just go 'Okay great' – then we've learnt from practice. And I think managing it that way has not been so much about inclusion as about wellbeing and managing anxieties. And so we were having a meeting about this with my administrative team just the other day, and we were saying you know when we first started out 'this is how it will work, this is how it will work, and this is how it will work' everybody got back and said that's great. And then nobody worked that way. So what did we do? We didn't then get all heavy handed and I didn't become the manager who said 'Why haven't you done this, this is what you said you'd do', we then looked at the practice, and what people were finding the best emergent practice for themselves, and we went with that. That means that some of the great ideas of things which we thought we would do didn't happen, but other amazing stuff did happen. I think in all of that practice I'd been trying to work out how you level and how you bring people up to the next stage that they're trying to get to. I think everybody but one in the project has been promoted or has gained another job straight away, no gap of employment. I think

it is because they're world class, but I think it's also because they have really stepped up and performed well in that improvising space.

(University partner)

The team working with young people at the FE College discussed roles and responsibilities in the initial stages of developing the project. The FE College partner took responsibility for organising the work undertaken at that site. Other team members were responsible for organising the delivery and recording of their own work with the young people. A shared sense of responsibility was achieved and is described as being facilitated by conversations that took place in the early stages.

A wider range of responsibilities are highlighted by an artist-in-residence at the University who was working on the project, including with the participating young people at the FE College.

I also found there is then the assumed responsibility to your colleagues and what their sense of what their work is, because you share the work, so how do you collectively define that work together and what is your responsibility to your colleagues ... and then the responsibility to yourself. Most importantly I would suggest there is the responsibility to your partners who you're working with, or your participants since they are the main makers of the stories, that's how I call them, the makers of the stories. That's what makes everything relevant, so yeah trying to negotiate all of those.

(University Artist-in-residence)

Early discussion, a flexible approach to revising roles and responsibilities and recognition of the broad context of responsibilities are highlighted as important to collaborative research.

Accountability

Accountabilities were discussed by members of the team working at the FE College. The FE college partner's accountabilities related to this specific case study, other members of the team reported progress and developments in the project to the Principle Investigator. There was an informal understanding about who was accountable to whom and this is said to have worked well.

My own responsibility and accountability was to my own case study. So that was decided amongst us as a team. And then I think the conversations between the people who were connected to the University went directly to (University partner) as the Principal Investigator. I didn't really have conversations with (Principal Investigator) because I didn't need to. I would have had conversations with for example (the researcher) about what we had done. She would have kept the data about that, so it was all there. And you know that I was quite happy with that because we kept very detailed and very concise notes and evidence of what we did. So I knew ... I felt quite confident that if anybody had asked what did you do on that day, then I would have the evidence to prove it.

(FE College partner)

A wide range of accountabilities are highlighted by the University partner and one of the artists-in-residence which are described as being difficult to navigate at times and include:

- **The accountability of formally being part of the process and the official requirements of the role.**
- **Institutional requirements under whose auspices the work is being undertaken.**

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- **Accountability to developing and maintaining relationships and a support structure with academic team members and external project partners.**
- **The Principal Investigator's accountabilities to the team and managing any conflict.**
- **Accountability to one's own professional field and the fields of project partners, in a project such as this the partners come from a range of different fields such as medicine, law and education.**
- **Accountability to self and avoiding burnout.**
- **An accountability to the ancestors, meaning there is an accountability that is an ethical accountability to the spirits that guide other people to their faith, journeys and perspectives. The point is, not to dismiss it in the way that the academy does with pretty much all spiritual practice.**

The range of accountabilities in a large, international project such as Researching Multilingually can be overwhelming. Furthermore, accountabilities to one's own discipline, the project and team can at times be at odds with accountabilities to the academic institution.

And that is quite an overwhelming set of accountabilities to the creative process itself and to being as true to that as you can and enabling it to flow. I think within that for me there's also all the accountabilities to the institution, and they're really difficult because they're usually in conflict with what I want to do. Just around languages and the ethics form ... the ethics form required me to say that I would translate everything into English. So I got back and said how can I do that on a project that's about researching multilingually? So there's the accountabilities in tension. The form came back once they'd had the committee meeting and it had been mangled into 'Describe what you'll do with people for whom English isn't the first language'. So rather than 'We need to work

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multilingually and how are you going to do that as a researcher?' And lots of things around the ethics process that brought up accountabilities, which are hugely in tension. So you find that the research ethics for me as an anthropologist are then fundamentally at odds with the institutional protocols that I'm meant to be following. And that then means that as PI (Principal Investigator) I have to go and sit down with the institutional protocol makers and explain to them why their protocols are not supporting the research and try and make them accountable, so I think there's a real accountability the other way round as well.

(University partner)

The informal approach to discussing and agreeing accountabilities between members of the team working at the FE College is described as working well. A wide range of formal and informal accountabilities are highlighted by the University partner, including the tension between them.

Outputs and legacy

The project was still under way at the time of interview and it was envisaged that tangible and non-tangible outputs would continue to be produced during and beyond the lifetime of the Researching Multilingually project. Tangible outputs already produced, at the time of interview, from the work with young people at Glasgow Clyde College include:

- 3D identity boxes created by the young people.
- Photographs and videos, some produced by staff and others by the participating young people.
- A number of publications, some co-written with the FE College partner.
- A small exhibition of the 3D identity boxes, held at the University of Glasgow and another larger exhibition to include photographs and video footage was being planned at the time of interview.
- Several presentations about the project at national and international conferences.
- Several creative arts workshops delivered to young people by Artists-in-residence from the University who were working on the broader Researching Multilingually project.

External organisations and different departments of the University have approached the FE College partner to become involved in and contribute to activities and events.

One of the things that happened because of this project and things that I've done, I've had other people contacting me asking me to do things. So other university



Young people at the Solas Festival
Image: Karen Gordon

projects for example ... the School of Education asked me to ... and I made a short film talking about using creative arts in schools with newly arrived young people. So I think that's as a result of somebody seeing me talk about this. And I think that'll continue, because I think there's been links made. Another one would be one of the members of the project on a different case study has got some ... I think it's called extension funding, and that's about using creative arts in schools for the newly arrived and I'm going to be involved in that. So I think the outputs will continue actually for a period of time.

(FE College partner)

Non-tangible outputs are described by the FE College partner as the most important in terms of what the participating young people gained. The opportunity to engage and learn with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, to present their stories through the creative process of making identity boxes and to do so in playful environment are considered important for the young people.

I think that's the most important thing for me actually, the non-tangible stuff, because first of all they had the opportunity to work with people who they wouldn't have met before. So they had opportunities to meet artists-in-residence, who are working on the broader Researching Multilingually project, who weren't White researchers and I think that's really really important for them to see, that other people are involved in these things - who may or may not look like them, but they certainly don't look like me, as you know their teacher. The creative process in the classroom is always for me a really powerful thing, because in these 3D identity boxes it's not a linear 'this is my story', it's a mixture of things from their past, things from their present, and things from their future, because they decide what goes into it. And of course you can draw a lot of conclusions from that but it's just very interesting to see and to allow that, then to allow the conversations that come from that and for them to work together collaboratively

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and help each other. And also just to bring a lot of fun into a classroom ... it's a playful atmosphere with what they're doing. For these young people, they don't have a lot of opportunity to play and they probably haven't played for a very long time. And so there's something for me that's just so valuable about that.

(FE College partner)

Young people participating in the activities expressed enjoying the creative work, which is described as providing them with opportunities to acknowledge their own and each other's skills and have some space to switch off from other things going on in their lives.

They talk about 'This is fun, I really like doing this' and also they begin to acknowledge that they're good at something. They'll say 'Oh you can cut that, cos you're really good at that' or 'You draw that' and I know they like it by the intense focus and concentration that they put into it. But whatever creative thing we do, generally I would say the vast majority of young people really really like it. Because apart from anything else it gives them a little bit of a space where they're not either having to think about learning the language or thinking about everything else, they're just doing something different.

(FE College partner)

There is a lack of clarity regarding ownership of outputs, the University partner thinks that funding brought in by the project is probably of more interest to the Universities than ownership of outputs.

We've ducked and dived around it if I'm really honest, they've wanted the money rather than the ownership of the outputs, because they don't think that Arts and Humanities outputs are going to produce much money if I'm really honest. You've got a real clash between an egalitarian understanding of the sharing of resource

and power and a hierarchical understanding of the sharing of resources and power. It hasn't come up yet with intellectual property, but I think it's going to.

(University partner)

Some legacies from the project are described as being apparent and that others are likely to emerge in the future. The legacies highlighted include relationships formed or strengthened, opportunities to gain valuable knowledge and experience and the opportunity to work on a high profile project that could be of benefit in future to people working on it. On balance, long-term legacy is considered to potentially be of greater benefit to the University and academic staff than the FE College partner.

There are things that are continuing to happen. I think for me personally it was a very valuable experience, what I realised as I did this project was how many people were researching into things that were so relevant to FE - not just in my context in terms of working with this group, but in so many other contexts. In terms of mental health, in terms of you know social care - all sorts of things ... and my colleagues in FE don't know anything about it. But I'm not sure that it (participating in the project) translated into something that I can use in my own context to say I would like more funding to do this, or this is an integral part of this programme, it needs to be recognised, it needs to be timetabled. And that's a bit what I talked about before about that gap between what happens on the ground and research. And I think some research definitely has an impact on policy changes and you know funding, and others doesn't necessarily. Partly because I think the relationship and the access isn't there.

(FE College partner)

One of the artists-in-residence working on the broader Researching Multilingually project highlights that for him, the relationships established through this work are an important legacy. He refers to work undertaken with a theatre company to

illustrate that strong relationships are a testimony to the work undertaken in a project.

I think that the legacy is most pronounced in the relationships I would say. So for us we are finding that our relationship with the young theatre company we worked with is going from strength to strength, so that is a huge testimony I think to the work. So yeah. I think it's going back to what we were saying earlier about relationships. I think nothing is more telling than that.

(University Artist-in-residence)

Open, honest conversations at the start of collaborative projects are deemed important for looking at potential benefits for the range of partners and community participants. This requires confidence and skills to negotiate and to request clarity, especially if there is an imbalance in power relations.

I got a lot out of being involved in the project personally and professionally. I think the University got more. I think the young people got a lot out of it. Having said that, I think because of the careful conversations that we had at the very beginning, I think there was an acknowledgement of that ... which is really important for me ... because I have had a number of requests from researchers to come in and see my class, but I'm very very careful about that. I can see immediately what the researcher's going to get out of it, but I can't see what I'm going to get out of it actually. I think for a lot of community groups and for a lot of people from non-academic backgrounds it can be very intimidating even to have that conversation, because of that sense of you know that knowledge gap and the language that's used around academia, the sense of you know we are giving you something by coming in here to do this for you. I didn't feel that about this project. I've been doing my job for a while, I am confident and experienced, and my priority is the wellbeing of the young people, I have the confidence to say no

we're not going to be doing that, or that's not appropriate – I don't think that's always the case.

(FE College partner)

Several outputs were produced at the time of interview and further outputs envisaged during and beyond the lifetime of the Researching Multilingually project. Non-tangible outputs are described as the most important for participating young people in terms of the knowledge and experience gained and contact with professionals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. There is a lack of clarity regarding ownership of outputs and though this has not posed challenges between the partners, the need for greater clarity is acknowledged. Longer term legacy of the project is described as being likely to be of greater benefit to the University and academic team than the FE College and partner; this is described as being due, in part, to the different contexts in which academics and practitioners work and fewer opportunities in the FE college environment to realise potential benefits such as, for example, increased access to funding or influence on the teaching programme.

Structural inequalities

Several structural inequalities are highlighted in relation to both University and FE College environments. They include the lack of Black and Minority Ethnic staff, the impact of this on young people and on collaborative research, a lack of recognition of the issues that impact on Black and Minority Ethnic communities and the impact of immigration related issues on staff and students.

We don't have in this institution very many people of colour, both at senior management level or even at lecturing level. From my point of view, I think that's a structural inequality in my organisation. And what that means is that as Scotland and in particular Glasgow becomes a more diverse population, for my group of students and just in general, 'where are these people who are like me?' And in terms of opportunity there are tremendous barriers facing young people from different backgrounds still - I don't think they're necessarily recognised. I think they're recognised on paper, but in reality they're still there. It means things like a young person who doesn't have any formal Scottish qualifications, how do they get into university, how do they get onto a higher level course at college. Doesn't mean you can't do it, but how do we look at that, how do we look at what the person has and is capable of, rather than the things that are on paper.

(FE College partner)

The impact of these inequalities on knowledge production is described as resulting in a narrow and limited knowledge base. Addressing this requires meaningful, not tokenistic, change.

It's about the different perspectives on things. I also feel very strongly that it's not about having somebody in a role because they happen to be from a BME

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background or another background, it's having that person in the role because first of all they're the best person to be there and also they bring something that other people can't possibly bring. And that is so valuable, because otherwise we just have this very narrow focus on things and we're seeing things through those eyes. And I think it's so important to change that, but to do it in a way that's meaningful and not tokenistic. (Otherwise) it's the same people talking about the same thing and then producing more of the same thing.

(FE College partner)

The University partner highlights challenges relating to collaborative work with overseas partners. Academic staff in the UK who are leading on, or facilitating, these collaborations can end up spending significant unfunded time grappling with Immigration authorities and regulations

We had people whose visas had not been refused but what the Home Office did four times was refuse to give them their passports in time for them to travel to the UK, in order to perform their final output of our project at the Solas festival. These are people funded by UK government money being refused visas for coming to the output of a different UK government department. I think that is now part of the reality of how we live in the UK and everybody who does not speak English as a native language or who does not have UK citizenship is subject to that suspicion.

(University partner)

Similarly, students in university can experience prolonged anxiety over their immigration status before reaching the person who can provide relevant help and some may never reach this point.

These are people funded by UK government money being refused visas for coming to the output of a different UK government department.

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I constantly find I'm just brokering and navigating, there'll be a knock on my door and it's a refugee background student who's in a real mess with their status, they've Googled who helps refugees at the University and my name comes up. They come and they're just ... they're in bits. And it's my job to say 'we've thought about this, we've got a committee, we've got structures, this is how we do it. So what I'm going to do is compose an email with you, I'll copy you in if you're comfortable with that, we'll send it to the person who's the refugee champion for the University, who's one of the vice principals, and then that will trigger what needs to happen, and all will be well.' And you know within 10 minutes I can take away the anxiety, but I know they'll have been stewing for 6 months.

(University partner)

The lack of Black and Minority Ethnic staff in academic institutions is described as a structural inequality that impacts on young people and on knowledge production due to a lack of diverse perspectives informing the knowledge generated, or attained. Structural inequalities relating to UK immigration procedures are described as having an adverse impact on international collaborations and on overseas students, this also impacts on knowledge generation and attainment.

Representing communities

Young people participating in the project are described as being broadly representative of their age group of unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking minors in Glasgow, they do not represent all of the asylum seeking and refugee population of Glasgow.

They're representative of their group of young unaccompanied asylum seekers, they're representative of the diversity of that group, and they're certainly representative of the gender of that group because it's predominantly male young unaccompanied asylum seekers that have been in Glasgow. So I think they are as representative of that group as they could be. I don't think they're necessarily representative of the whole of the asylum and refugee population in Glasgow.

(FE College partner)

The importance of recognising that participating young people are not themselves a homogeneous group is highlighted, there are important differences between them such as their country of origin and individual level of education.

Sometimes in this group of young people are also young people who've been very well educated in their own country. They're not a homogenous group, because within one class I might have a young man from Sudan who's never been to school, and a young man from Syria who was on his way to university ... and then that stops.

(FE College partner)

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The team have tried to keep the translation of participating young people's experience as authentic as possible and the young people have represented themselves through making their own artwork. Representing the young people's views and experience is described as being more difficult when other people are speaking on their behalf, such as in conference and other presentations.

There's a dilution process in anything that I do. I can't really be the voice of these young people because I'm not their voice, and so for me there's always a balancing act about how much of their voice is really being heard here. It's always very important to acknowledge that and if I'm talking about what I do, I say to a group of young people 'I'm going to say this, what do you think about it?' and then they'll say 'No don't say that' or 'You should say this', and then I'll change it. So a good example is I was doing my very first academic conference and I didn't have a title, so I said to a young man 'This is what I'm talking about, what do you think?' And he said 'I want you to say we came here broken' – and I've used that ever since, because I think well you know 'they are your words'.

(FE College partner)

Young people participating in the project were those attending the ESOL 16+ course and it is recognised that they are not representative of the wider refugee and asylum seeking population of Glasgow. Indeed, the young people are not a homogeneous group and the importance of recognising differences between them is emphasised. Enabling young people to represent their own experience is preferred but not always possible, such as when other people are representing their views and experience in presentations; this can be addressed to some extent by facilitating them to contribute to presentations to be made by other people, but there needs to be recognition that their voice is absent when others are representing them.

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University-Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations

Several points are highlighted for consideration when developing and undertaking collaborative projects between universities and Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

- Find out what the potential collaborators actually do in their work and why. Question why they would want to be involved in the research and what they are really going to get out of it.
- Power relations are a big challenge, the language of academia is a big challenge and some of that is about power. This is intimidating for those who don't have an equal share of power and it's important to look at how to have honest conversations about this.
- Practitioners working on the ground continue their work after a collaborative project ends. Academics can have their book published or the conference held, but other people in that collaboration don't necessarily have the same opportunities in their working environments.
- Look at ways of making what happens in research have some real lasting impact and legacy, this doesn't necessarily have to be a big thing, but something that can affect positive change.
- Mutual exchange is important between sectors about the work they are doing, working in silos should be avoided. Academics need to go into communities and communities need to be given opportunities to experience academic environments.

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- **Make a distinction between conflicts that are to do with race and those that are about something else, acknowledge honestly where the source of tension is coming from.**
- **Acknowledge collaborative work can be difficult, don't try to make something that is hard work look easy.**

The future

Both partners would like to collaborate on other projects, with each other and other partners. However, the proviso for both is that this would have to be under the right conditions in which it was possible to have open and honest dialogue, as was the case in this collaboration. Ideally, projects that are likely to make have an impact and make a difference would be preferred.

I'd like to think so. I think what this project tried to do is to put out inputs in a very different way, I'm not sure how well that will be received and also what difference it will make, because I don't know who's going to see that or hear it or read it. So I'm not sure. I mean I would very much like to do more work, I think there's a real value in it, particularly to try and close that gap between further education and higher education. I think the proviso for me would be that it was a similar thing that the conversations between the people you're working with were very frank and you know honest.

(FE College partner)

The University partner reflects the need to embrace uncertainty in projects such as this, which can mean that the outcome is not always clear, but the uncertainty can be a necessary aspect of projects that innovate and apply new approaches.

There is something affirming about some of the qualities that maybe as arts practitioners we kind of embrace in our uncertainty in the journey, you know the creative process, you don't know where you're going to end up. Working in all these difficult situations and under all the pressure that comes with it, I think

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there's something quite affirming that we navigate in those situations. We will see where we end up.

(University partner)