

OUTREACH to OWNERSHIP PHASE 2

IMPACT EVALUATION

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PREPARED BY:



BrightCulture

1. INTRODUCTION

Outreach to Ownership (O2O) is a cross-border research pilot programme that explores innovative approaches to inclusive community engagement across culture sector organisations in Scotland and England. Managed in partnership by Historic England (HE) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The first phase of O2O was delivered February - September 2022. It consisted of five bespoke pilot community research projects, delivered across England and Scotland, alongside a capacity-building programme delivered by HE and HES. Findings were captured by Bright Culture external evaluators and reported in impact and process evaluation reports in November 2022. At the end of Phase 1, the project partners were invited to apply for additional money to develop their pilot, increase the impact and disseminate research findings. Four follow-up projects proposed by project partners were delivered in Phase 2, March - September 2023.

Building on History: Delivered in partnership by Heritage Lincolnshire & Nottingham Trent University, the project's second phase intended to build on the first phase foundations by refining the heritage stories and content for the website by working with the Angolan Women's Centre and Linkage Community Trust. Additionally, there was a focus on trialling approaches to understand the impact of activity on participants' well-being.

Scottish Community Archives Toolkit: Informed by community groups/archives needs identified in Phase 1, the Scottish Council on Archives ran a series of workshops and offered one-on-one, hands-on support from professional archivists. Phase 2 offered groups access to support and guidance in managing, cataloguing and preserving their community archives. This phase will be completed with a bespoke online toolkit, using material generated to provide ongoing community archival support.

Inclusive Island Heritage: Phase 1 of the project identified young audiences as an under-represented group involved in heritage engagement on the Scottish Islands. In Phase 2, MSDS Marine and Moder Dy focused on delivering targeted workshops and activities with existing and new partners to engage young people with heritage and develop sustainable relationships in island settings, with the lessons learnt feeding into the island charter on inclusive community engagement.

Makey Wakey: Responding to the community partners' request for the Art House to share their research methodology from the project's Phase 1. The project's Phase 2 set out to share and discuss learning with space users in meetings. The Merrie Collective led workshops with community partners, creating a Zine to document the learning and the impact of interim use of spaces in the Ridings Shopping Centre in Wakefield.

This evaluation report focuses on qualitatively evidencing and reflecting on the impact of this second delivery stage. It should be read in conjunction with the evaluation from the first phase of the Outreach to Ownership project.

2. EVALUATION APPROACH

The second phase of the evaluation addressed several questions that build on the learning and reflections from the first phase.

- How much did partners need hub/consultant support in phase 2?
- What engagement methodologies were used across the projects, and what was effective in different circumstances?
- To what extent can the projects demonstrate individual, community or social benefits within this timescale?
- What has been the impact of participating in the research on people's skills, interests and engagement with the subject matter?
- Has the second delivery phase enabled real opportunities for co-curation and ownership sharing in the delivery process?
- Has participating in O2O led to a different view of community engagement in research with community partners and stakeholders?
- To what extent has this phase enabled the dissemination of community research and wider project learning?
- What factors impact the potential long-term sustainability of the partnerships developed through involvement in O2O?

Evaluation Feedback & Evidence

Qualitative evidence and feedback on the impact of this next phase of delivery were sought in several ways:

- Calls and an online survey with project partners to capture reflections on O2O and their projects.
- Reviewing feedback from participants and stakeholders collected by project partners.

- Calls with Facilitators and participants and the external evaluator.
 - For the **Makey Wakey** project, calls were held with The Art House's Artistic Director and two Makey Wakey Space Users.
 - For the **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project, calls were held with the two archivists who supported and guided the community groups.
 - For the **Inclusive Island Heritage** project, calls were held with one artist facilitator and two stakeholders/partners in the delivery.
 - For **Building on History**, a call was held with their lead partner from Nottingham Trent University.

3. FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING & CONFIDENCE

PARTNER & FACILITATOR DEVELOPMENT

Partners have increased their knowledge and understanding of how community groups operate, their barriers, and how to best support them. They share how O2O has developed experience and confidence in working with stakeholders, co-creating projects and developing strategies to undertake this meaningfully and innovatively.

'The ability to trial new approaches and being led by the communities has increased my skills and knowledge of how to get meaningful information from community engagement and has developed thinking around how to pilot social prescribing.' Heritage Lincolnshire

The **Makey Wakey** project has benefited the Project Manager's professional development. It has increased her confidence in working strategically and in a leadership role, which she has been able to embed into other work and plans.

Several partners shared that the workshops on research techniques in the first phase were very beneficial and have led to including development phases in future projects bespoke to the project size.

The Archivists from the **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project shared how working on the project had increased their understanding of community archives' challenges and the flexibility required when working with volunteers to ensure they are left with practical knowledge relevant to their resources.

'For me, it has been learning that I'm not here to teach them how to be an archivist. I have to pick the things that they can do and not make it not too overwhelming for them, key areas where we can make a difference. They responded well to that. Going back and seeing them for the final time, they all had relevant questions, and they could see the benefit in actually doing things in an archival way rather than a haphazard way.' Professional Archivist

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

The **Makey Wakey** project and its access to temporary space has provided young early career creatives with opportunities for progression and development that weren't previously available in Wakefield. The Merrie Collective was a newly formed collaborative of artists, photographers, writers and marketers. After working together on a photography project, they sought opportunities to embed their collaborative work, and Makey Wakey was a good fit.

The physical space provided an opportunity to develop skills in negotiating and working collaboratively, the confidence to evolve creative practice, and practical knowledge and experience in project management, planning and budgeting related to exhibitions and participatory activity. The temporary nature of the space also meant they could be experimental and spontaneous, using it in diverse ways, such as a darkroom and for exhibitions and workshops.

'There is a real lack of emerging creative community & opportunities for that demographic of people' Merrie Collective Member

'It gave us the breathing space we needed to establish ourselves and an identity. It was a good public facing opportunity, giving us some visibility in Wakefield.'
Merrie Collective Member

An artist for **Inclusive Island Heritage** shared that the facilitation of workshops with young people aged 12-13 had increased her understanding of the elements that can support success, such as ensuring that the activities are free-flowing, guiding them but ensuring they are in control of their artistic direction and supportive, light touch encouragement.

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project has enabled community groups to work with professional and qualified archivists. They have provided one-on-one tailored, practical in-person and remote advice and support, increasing volunteers' skills and confidence in developing and managing their archives. People have acquired knowledge and skills in cataloguing, processes, copyright and preserving and sharing local collections.

'Jenny Duffy, our consultant, was very understanding of our needs and flexible in her working arrangements. She provided examples and templates which are very useful and worked through procedures with us.' Community Group Member

'The days Elspeth spent with us helped us to make decisions about all our resources and how we needed to organise ourselves in order to make all our materials easily accessible. This was definitely the kickstart we needed.'

Community Group Member

Groups shared that it was very valuable to receive hands-on, in-person support from someone knowledgeable and with an understanding of the challenges that volunteer community groups face in managing and developing their archives. Using a bespoke, flexible and targeted approach to working with groups meant that the professional archivists could review policies, systems, processes and material, discuss needs, as well as demonstrate practical techniques.

'The professional expertise was the best area. Having someone with the right experience to guide a very new archives team through the basics of setting up an industry-standard indexing system was enlightening.' Community Group Member

'She has made us aware of some of the standards and best practices used in professional archives, which will help us raise our level of professionalism.'

Community Group Member

'The flexibility of the support was key to its success, and the willingness of the two parties to work to a common goal of skills transfer was achieved.' Community Group Member

YOUNG PEOPLE

Within the **Inclusive Island Heritage** project, young people were engaged in mural workshops, where they decided what they focussed on and explored. Over four weeks, five thirteen-year-old girls experimented with different mediums and materials to create a mural exploring their identity and heritage. Some drew images of themselves, sheep, fishing, and ponies, whilst others added words. In addition, the group recorded 30-second sound recordings to support the mural, which included one playing a Shetland folk tune on her fiddle and another sharing about living in a Croft house.

Participation was encouraged by creating an inviting and informal environment where the young people were listened to and respected; this was made easier as they were an established friendship group. Having an environment that was very different to school, with music, food and no creative boundaries, helped set them free in their chosen work. The artist shared how the project increased their confidence in their skills and gave the group a platform for their ideas and voices, which will be shared when the mural moves between venues.

In partnership with Grimsay Community Association in the Western Isles, other workshops were provided for secondary school children exploring diverse heritage, including animals, archaeology and the landscape, with cross-curriculum links. The young people fed back that they liked that there was a range of activities which were very interactive and hands-on with lots of teamwork.

'I really liked the walk because it was great weather. I liked being able to ask questions. Thank you for being so approachable.' Young Person

'I loved everything and found the day fun and enjoyable. My favourite part was going into the boat museum at lunchtime and the pollen workshop.' Young Person

'They enjoyed what they were doing, it was taking the learning, out of the classroom and it was very much cross-curriculum. They were using lots of different skills and I think it was quite different from anything they had done before.' Grimsay Community Association

4. FINDINGS: COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP

The second phase of O2O has strengthened relationships between O2O partners, stakeholders and the communities they are collaborating and working with, enabling diverse connective partnerships and communities with sustainability beyond O2O.

Makey Wakey space holders shared how being part of Makey Wakey has enabled the development of new, supportive and mutually beneficial relationships with other space users and small independent businesses that aren't directly in the shopping centre.

'There is a real ecosystem, everyone will share resources when putting on workshops and shows etc. A lot of opportunities come out of this.'

Space User

The Art House shared how the research project has become very practical and dynamic, empowering the communities involved, who have lifted each other up and created their own Makey Wakey manifesto.

Within the second phase of O2O, the ownership of the Ridings Shopping Centre changed, and people moved out or downsized. However, because of the project's first phase, the instinct of the space users was to support each other and work together on the solutions. For some space users, leaving spaces was stressful. However, space users and Lucy (The Art House) have ensured they feel part of the community, keeping conversations going and connecting past and present space users and offering access to spaces when needed if they have left the Shopping centre. An example was when one space user moved outside of central Wakefield but still wanted to be connected despite being in a different geographical area.

'Initially, Makey Wakey gave people a free space- but it has become a community or practice bigger than a physical space. This wouldn't have happened without the funding.' The Art House

'They started to think together as a unit and have become a deeply connected community.' The Art House

Space Users shared how being part of Makey Wakey has enabled them to connect and deepen relationships with people and build a community of users and participants in a way that wouldn't have been possible without the project. Developing relationships with other Makey Wakey members/space users has been invaluable in sharing knowledge and resources in practical ways. As well as personal support within a group of peers who understand the challenges of running activity to support other people's well-being.

The Art House were able to share the findings from Phase 1 research with the new owner of the Ridings to demonstrate the impact of Makey Wakey and encourage continued support. Findings also helped strengthen the case for a new model of Makey Wakey in Salford.

'I didn't anticipate – how important it has become to the community.... I get people just coming in and talking about the costumes and then telling me their stories, lives, and involvement with the arts. So it's really become a space where people can come and be listened to; I think that is the same for many Makey Wakey Spaces' Space User

The O2O & **Makey Wakey** project brought the Art House and Wakefield creative communities closer together. Working collaboratively on the research has given everyone a reason to be in the same room, sharing ideas and working together, deepening the space user relationships. Whilst many organisations/space users are quite different, there is overlap, which means that people using the services and attending activities may have relationships with several organisations.

Having a presence in the same physical space has had a knock-on effect in that organisations work together more, recommending people to other organisations and opportunities and checking in if regular users/participants aren't seen for a while. This has been invaluable and unusual for service support and has helped to support those most vulnerable.

The **Inclusive Island Heritage** project has been a partnership with Moder Dy and MSDS Marine, who plan to work together more in the future. The project has enabled the building and deepening of solid relationships with multiple local community partners, ensuring a better understanding of the needs of the island communities and setting them up to achieve better and more inclusive engagement in the future.

Local partners and stakeholders have been involved in both the development and delivery of the activity, offering expertise, space, advice, connections and opportunities to genuinely discuss the needs of the island communities and respond to these flexibly. Community Partners have included Grimsay Community Association, Uist Estates, Skye Local History Society, the Museum of the Isles and Skye, Lochalsh Access Panel, Shetland Amenity Trust, Shetland Islands Council, Shetland Arts, Sail Training Shetland, Moving on Project, ALICE Theatre Project, Developing the Young Workforce Shetland and Archaeology Shetland. These established and valuable relationships will be sustained with future projects already planned.

'Building links with Sally has felt like a very positive opportunity; we liked what they were doing and the ethos and also thought it was part of our growth to work with other partners and reach out to the community in slightly different ways.' Grimsay Community Association

The **Building on History** project is a partnership between Heritage Lincolnshire and Nottingham Trent University, who have a long-standing relationship. The project's second phase continued to work with the Angolan Women's Centre and Linkage, a charity in Lincolnshire that supports people with learning disabilities. It also worked with a new group of people from the Caribbean and Windrush community.

The **Building on History** project has developed new ways of working with community groups, changing the power relationship so that the communities have equal control and agency over both phases. In Phase 1, the project empowered communities to work within existing ways to recognise the heritage they care about, with community leaders running the workshops. The project had co-curation at its heart, ensuring the community groups decided which stories they wanted to share, which was built on in Phase 2.

**'Being recognised, being able to enact, record and share their heritage.
The communities were excited to be part of a project that helped them to
be creative, proud of their diasporic identity, and sharing with others'**
Nottingham Trent University Partner

The **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project has supported community groups to develop their skills and understanding around preserving and cataloguing the archival material, ultimately benefiting the broader academic and research community and ensuring access for more people to their local heritage.

As a result of the O2O project, Moder Dy and the Scottish Council on Archives have continued to build a relationship. Moder Dy spoke on an online webinar organised by the Scottish Council on Archives; they also met in person at the Shetland Heritage Conference in March 2023. It is anticipated that there will be future opportunities to work together involving Shetland Archive & Museum.

5. FINDINGS: LEGACY & SUSTAINABILITY

MAKEY WAKEY

When The Merrie Collective (Makey Wakey space users) were served notice on their temporary space in the Ridings Shopping Centre in April 2023; they all agreed that they didn't now need a new joint physical space, as they had transitioned as a collaborative after having the space for the three years. The space had helped build the energy and confidence of the collective and individually, so they were strong enough to exist beyond a physical space. It enabled them to experiment and try lots of different public-facing activities, and as a result, they have been able to refine what they do and their strengths. This confidence and clear direction of the collaboration is a legacy of the Makey Wakey project.

'The space did what it needed for us. It let us be artists. It gave us the space for development to think about our individual practices and how we work together collectively and what we each bring to it, to test skills, run workshops, testbed exhibitions.' Merrie Collective Member

Empath Action shared how the relationships with other space users and the flexibility and responsiveness of the Art House to the community's needs as it changes and grows is a significant legacy of the project. The importance of the network goes beyond the spaces, and there is a desire to continue, even if this is outside the physical space. Being part of Makey Wakey has also made them more resilient and has led to joint funding applications.

'We won't be in the position that we are now, we are only two years old, without this. We have grown massively and that is down to Makey Wakey and there are no ifs or buts about that.' Empath Action

The Artistic Director of the Art House shared that O2O has enabled Makey Wakey to go deeper and that a modest amount of money has had significant outcomes. It has benefited 20 space users directly but has connected with hundreds more through their beneficiaries. It has also demonstrated that becoming a community happens organically over time, as it takes time to develop trust, with consistency and long-term investment being crucial.

SCOTTISH COMMUNITY ARCHIVES TOOLKIT

The Scottish Council on Archives and the professional archivists have provided bespoke professional advice to a diverse range of community groups and archives in Scotland, leaving a legacy of improved confidence, understanding and ability to care for and share the archives. It has also improved the resilience of the community groups by enhancing knowledge of the bigger picture and the links between local history and wider afield, as well as opening up opportunities for future funding applications.

'They have understood that if they put their catalogue online, then it won't just be the people who are connected to the area, it will go much wider, and people will be able to make that connection. Like the west coast of Lewis, there is material that is relevant to studies they had never have thought of, because they mainly think in terms of local and family history, but actually, there is a wealth of history there that other people would use if they just knew it was there.' Professional Archivist

In Phase 1 of O2O, the project enabled the Scottish Council on Archives to understand better the challenges community groups face and increase awareness of their needs. Phase 2 focussed on the upskilling of individuals and groups through training and advisory support and creating a new online community archives toolkit and short films of the participating groups, with both to be completed in September 2023. The toolkit is an important legacy of the project, which can be updated in the future.

For the individual community groups and volunteers, various outcomes will result in a longer-term legacy. Two groups were supported in developing their ideas of how engaging a professional archivist to help with their archives could be of value to them and were helped to develop a job description to start this process.

The professional archivists made two groups, who are local historical societies, aware that the events and campaigning they do, which generates content, is evidence of their organisation's work and should be part of their archive. So, there has been an increase in valuing current-day material and historical.

In Stornoway, two younger volunteers were interested in exploring archiving as a career or further study. The professional archivist talked them through the various options and put them in touch with their local archive to increase their understanding and open up the potential for volunteering.

Delivering the project has resulted in the Scottish Council on Archives being in a stronger position to engage with future funders on community heritage projects. It has also benefitted other related SCA work, including their ongoing community archives work and developing a new portal, Your Scottish Archives. The funding has meant they could actively work with and support new groups in the way they needed and work with several professionals.

'It has been very rewarding to help community groups and get a better understanding of what they really need - less consulting and more support!' Scottish Council on Archives

BUILDING ON HISTORY

Phase 2 of the project has created a legacy in several ways; the workshops with the Angolan Women group led them to explore and share their heritage through stories, music and dancing and bringing in food, objects and fashion that are important to them. A community event was held, conversations were recorded, and photographs were taken to evidence what they highlighted as significant in their cultural heritage. Resulting in lots of content, which Nottingham Trent University students have been translating, editing and adding captions to.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time for the students to complete this work on the outputs. However, the university has a new collaboration programme with a University in India, and twenty-five students have recently started at Nottingham Trent University. They have met with representatives from the group and will work with them to finish the outputs, which will become a lasting legacy of what is important to the women from the Angolan group.

'Very beneficial. Even though there is always the feeling that these funded projects are always too short, this has ignited two subsequent projects to complete the outputs: one with a new cohort of students; the second as a volunteering project.' Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Trent University

Developing relationships with the Caribbean community to explore and hear testimony about their heritage and memories was initially challenging despite trying various approaches. Nottingham Trent University has now identified a group excited by sharing their heritage, and the university plans to develop a volunteering project to explore heritage and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The work with the community groups has developed thinking and understanding of the effectiveness of the tested structure of running a workshop about the process of talking about heritage, followed by time for the community to decide and prepare what they share, culminating in a sharing event- can contribute to positive wellbeing. In the long term, the intention is to explore this as a model for social prescribing in partnership with the NHS.

'I think the communities felt very much able to co-curate and co-create the content of the project, as well as the outputs. For me this is great, since I work within a Participatory Action Research philosophy, and I am grateful that the community was able to do so. It is great to see this flexibility from the funders.' Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Trent University

INCLUSIVE ISLAND HERITAGE

The project has provided opportunities to work with Scottish island communities and for the partners to learn how to achieve inclusive engagement. Together, they have developed a charter for engaging island audiences inclusively and will use the 'Island Engagement Charter' in future projects. The charter will be available on their websites so others can use and learn from it.

The legacy from the Uist workshops is that heritage activities developed in Phase 2 will be used to establish new workshops for young people, run by community organisations in partnership with Grimsay Community Association.

The focus will be on developing transition events aimed at young people transitioning between primary and high school to provide an opportunity to get to know older children in a relaxed environment. Partners have also been asked to run similar events in Skye. The community organisations have sought separate funding for this and are leading these workshops with support from MSDS Marine.

Grimsay Community Association have benefited from the project; it has helped them develop their schools and education programme and draw on professional expertise to develop skills. The partnership is continuing with the intention for the Inclusive Islands project team to run some train-the-trainer sessions with local people in running workshops, which will upskill people further and result in a lasting social benefit for the community.

'It's working, the projects have worked and been really successful and there is loads of potential for the future.' Grimsay Community Association

The young people who worked on the mural project on Shetland are keen to work together again, as is the network of stakeholders and partners who supported the distribution of the survey and workshop. This has opened a previously non-existent dialogue between the arts, the schools, young people's services and heritage. The mural will be displayed at Hymhus, Bigton, as the first stage in exhibiting around Shetland, alongside an interpretation panel about the project.

6. FINDINGS: DISSEMINATION

Being part of O20 has enabled the Art House & **Makey Wakey** space users to research and understand the key components that have made the Makey Wakey approach successful and of value to the community and space users. They have documented this learning and impact in a film, a report and a community-produced 'Zine', which are being used as advocacy. They have disseminated and shared their learning at conferences with stakeholders, partners and their MP and councillors. The project has also supported building a new partnership with the Institute for Place Management, a research institution based at Manchester Met University.

The findings from the first phase of the **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project was shared by the Scottish Council on Archives at the annual International Council of Archives Conference in 2022 and at the Archives and Records Association Conference in Belfast this year. The project has also been featured on their social media channels and will be included in their Annual Review. The toolkit produced during Phase 2 will be a resource available long-term and can continue to grow and improve. Much of the information was on their website but was difficult to access; funding from O20 enabled the creation of a user-friendly toolkit designed for community archive groups, which will be used to share and disseminate information and tips with groups based on learning from the project.

The partners on the **Inclusive Island Heritage** project have spoken about the project at several conferences during Phases 1 and 2. They have also shared their learning so far between partners and stakeholders; the final results will be shared on social media and in the local press.

The **Building on History** project has created websites for the communities, which they will have future ownership over and will also connect with the Your Heritage website developed in the first phase. Nottingham Trent University lead Ana Souter has reflected on the project in a book chapter, 'Co-designing for inclusive heritage to explore wellbeing and resilient and inclusive communities (SDGs 3 and 11). Choosing mentors and building relationships' with Penelope Siebert, and Alice Ullathorne in *Mentoring Within and Beyond Higher Education: Achieving the SDGs*. There are also plans for learning to be shared as part of lectures and seminars at the university.

7. LEARNING & REFLECTIONS

TIME

Like Phase 1 of the project, all partners and stakeholders/facilitators commented on how time is fundamental to the ability and success of developing relationships with new audiences and communities. It can take significant time to build relationships and trust to encourage people to take part in opportunities and then listen and develop these in ways they are interested in and meet their needs. Community groups and local organisations are often made up of part-time volunteers or people who fit their participation in the group around other commitments, which means that finding the right person and communication is usually much slower than working with commercial organisations on projects. They may also have long-standing commitments to how they work and what they do at different times of the year.

When committing to a co-curation approach, this process needs extended time and plenty of flexibility, ensuring that communities don't buy into the project and then find they are being hurried along due to external reporting requirements that are unlikely to be significant to them.

Like Phase 1, Phase 2 was delivered over a short time and the summer period, which can be very challenging for community groups and stakeholders, as people take holidays or normal activities are suspended. Whilst the projects have yielded positive outcomes, the six-month delivery was difficult and meant that activities were sometimes limited in what they could achieve.

'Because they were volunteers, it takes them longer to put things actually into practice what you have discussed. Because they are very much relying on people coming along when the can.' Community Archivist

'I think it is important to be flexible with capturing data when working with participants, especially when establishing proper partnerships. Moreover, timelines are sometimes too tight when it is important to establish collaborations and trust, engaging with difficult topics (intangible heritage, mental health, traumatic memories) and participants from older generations.' Nottingham Trent University partner

CO-CURATION

Trust, ownership, responsibility, and respect are the building blocks for successful co-curation. All projects in Phase 2 have built on their experience and learning from Phase 1 to embed a co-curated approach to their delivery. This project's second phase enabled the partners to listen to what their communities and stakeholders wanted in Phase 1 and respond accordingly in Phase 2.

Phase 2 of the **Makey Wakey** project was entirely co-curated, as the Art House returned to the community group and asked what they wanted to do next. The Merrie Collective delivered the primary outcome of the Zine, so it was made entirely by the community itself. In the **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project, the community groups worked with professional archivists to decide what support they needed in the way that best supported them. In **Inclusive Island Heritage**, the workshops and delivery approaches were designed and informed by community consultation and input. In **Building on Heritage**, the Angolan Women's group decided what and how they shared their heritage and culture.

The process of co-curation, asking questions, listening, observing, responding and coming to agreement takes time, as demonstrated by O2O. It also may involve knockbacks, risk and resilience, as was found when building relationships with Caribbean elders on the **Building on Heritage** project. Working in this way means you can't tell exactly what the process or outcomes will look like initially; it is an iterative process with many variables and dynamics that rely on trust. During this process, challenging content may be shared, and issues of consent will need consideration. You may have delivery parameters, but there will be infinite possible outcomes, with failure being one of them.

'Community engagement work and genuine co-creation takes time and so longer timescales would be an advantage. Also, phasing of projects may be advantageous - allowing for revision of plans following co-creation phases (this goes for both budgets and plans). This way, community needs can be really reflected in the way the projects are developed.' MSDS Marine

'Effecting real change- co-curation- requires real systemic risk- you have to let go of the reins. You can't contract innovation.' The Art House

ENVIRONMENT

Environment is integral to people's ability to connect, be creative and be willing to share their stories. A comfortable environment is created by the physical space and the atmosphere built around it. Ensuring the environment feels safe, welcoming and informal can profoundly impact how people interact and co-curation ability. Who owns the space and whether it is familiar will also play a role.

The **Makey Wakey** project demonstrated how a relationship with a temporary space can encourage risk-taking. The Merrie Collective saw their space's temporary nature as a strength. They approached it as a test bed, enabling a reactive responsive energy, where they experimented with several pop-up approaches. They would have been more likely to put down roots in a pristine permanent space so they wouldn't have had the same mental, creative and physical freedom.

PARTICIPATION

Identifying and building relationships with participants, facilitators and partners and getting them on board takes time, resources and confidence. Partners shared how short delivery periods impacted who they could engage with. For example, reaching individual young people who weren't already part of an established group or friendship circle wasn't feasible within the timescale. This would have required a much lengthier process, particularly in a rural area, building trust that wasn't possible through public marketing.

Older people who may have health limitations or people with English as a second language may face barriers to getting involved and sustaining engagement, so it is necessary to do some groundwork to ensure an understanding of how best to reach and support them, listening to the community leaders and the groups themselves. If you are working with communities that have diasporic identities, this might mean their heritage is mostly intangible in the UK, so it needs to be recognised and celebrated in a different way to build heritage.

LANGUAGE

The definitions of heritage, archives, art and co-curation are only sometimes universally identified or understood in the same way. When considering community research and engagement, this needs to be recognised and people's feedback listened to when language and definitions can become barriers to marketing and delivering activity. Being prepared to be flexible and agreeing on ways of talking about and defining things meaningfully with those you are engaging with can reduce the sense of 'being done to' to 'doing with.' For example, in the **Scottish Community Archives Toolkit** project, community groups had different understandings of the professional definition of an archive. It was important for the archivists not to dismiss their group's work and thoughts.

DELIVERY STRUCTURE

Within Phase 2 of O2O, the overall structure was much more hands-off from the HUB partners, as there was no capacity-building strand and no full-time HUB dedicated staff resource for the project, unlike the first phase. The community partners shared that the expectations weren't clear from AHRC, and communication between HE/HES was much reduced, which created uncertainty over project outputs and reporting requirements and made planning more challenging. In the future, if community partners are to work flexibly and responsively with their communities, the delivery structure and overarching project expectations must be clear and communicated at the start.

'I think it's been more difficult to know if we're on the right track or not in this phase. It feels like communication between AHRC and HE/HES has been slow/ not clear, and that has passed on to us. When the second phase was announced, we were told that the next phase wouldn't be about outcomes; it was all about dissemination. But as the projects developed, that changed and I felt I wasn't doing the best work I could because I didn't know what was expected of us. So if this was clearer from the beginning, I think we could have done better work.'

O2O Partner

HUB SUPPORT

Within Phase 2 of the projects, the partners, Heritage Lincolnshire, MSDS Marine, Moder Dy, The Art House, and The Scottish Council on Archives, had already established peer relationships and benefited from the extensive capacity-building support in Phase 1. This initial phase built the partner's confidence and knowledge of community research approaches and delivery structures. Resultingly in Phase 2, the requirement for advice and delivery support from the HUB partners was much lighter touch.

The feedback from partners after Phase 1 was that the capacity-building support was an integral and valued part of the project. It was seen as a unique element of being part of a funded project and led to skills and relationship development, which benefited the long-term impact and sustainability of the projects. Partners suggested that capacity building/professional development support should be a central element of future Hub support, running parallel to project funding and being something community partners, their community leaders, and facilitators can access. The organisational commitment required should be made explicit at the time of application to build this into budgets.

Ensuring that support/resources are signposted and timetabled (and have a long lead-in time) at the start of relationships with new community partners will mean that the right people can access and attend what is beneficial to them at the right time. Given the diverse requirements and set-ups of community organisations (often with small numbers of staff on part-time hours), support and resources need to be flexible, recognising that organisational needs may change and evolve over the duration of a project as they work with their communities. Professional development support could comprise of: access to group online sessions, digital resources (toolkits, podcasts, case studies from previous projects), peer-to-peer networking (in-person and remote) and bespoke one-on-one consultancy/advisory support in development areas identified by the community partners.

EVALUATION

When delivery timescales are tight, final summative evaluation and reflection can easily drop down the list of priorities, particularly if the reason for doing this and the benefits aren't apparent. Whilst reporting on outputs and targets reasonably quickly at the end of a project may be feasible, meaningful analysis, reflection and consideration of 'if what you have set out to do', has been achieved takes time.

If you attempt to undertake the final analysis and evaluation in a rush, it is tricky to gain a complete picture of what has happened and learn for the future.

Effective evaluation should start at the beginning and run in parallel to delivery. But summative final evaluation can be enhanced by building in a buffer of at least 6-8 weeks ideally (at the planning stage of delivery) between when all delivery has finished and when any internal and external deadlines have to be met. So that all evidence and feedback can be analysed and ensuring that evaluation reflects the voices of all those involved, stakeholders, audiences, staff and volunteers.

8. CONCLUSION

To undertake community research and engagement takes resources, planning, skills and confidence, which the Outreach to Ownership pilot project Phase 1 and 2 has enabled and supported. It also requires commitment, established relationships and time. Much has been achieved in Phases 1 and 2; partnerships have been developed, activities have been tested and learning reflected on from the successes and challenges.

The legacy of O2O is largely in the skills and development of the community partners, which has rippled through to their stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries, along with the investment in networks and relationships, which is leading to further opportunities to work together in response to the needs of their communities.

O2O funding has helped to raise the profile of organisations with audiences and identify gaps in support and areas of future need. Working collaboratively and pooling resources and expertise enhances the likelihood of the partner's ability to continue their work in response to their project findings. Long-term sustainability also relies on the organisation's ability to access flexible funding that can cover both core and project costs—allowing organisations to build on the work to date. For many organisations, a modest amount of money that can be used responsively over several years with their communities can have a significant impact.

Summary recommendations for a future Community Research Hub:

- **Hub Support:** Ensuring sufficient funding levels for HUB staff to support community organisations through pre-application, delivery and completion, plus managing contracts and payments, is crucial. The community partners require clear communication on project expectations, professional development opportunities and reporting requirements at the pre-application and design stage of projects.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Having wide-ranging support available at the pre-application stage and start of projects will inform project thinking and build the resilience of the organisations and beneficiaries. The HUB should utilise the expertise and experience of previous Community Partners to inform content and design of new online and in-person support and resources. Whilst also signposting people to cross-sector resources such as *'The Creative Health Quality Framework'*.
- **Time:** Short timescales are one of, if not the biggest, barriers to organisations achieving the potential of their projects. One year of funding or less (including design and delivery phases) is very short and challenging for small organisations to work in a co-curated way with stakeholders and beneficiaries, particularly if these are new relationships. Allowing organisations to take up to two years to undertake all stages (even with modest amounts of money) will make it more feasible for community organisations to deliver to new audiences. It would also enable those organisations with limited or no research experience to access the professional development resources first, creating a more extended and informed design phase.
- **Project Design:** A layered approach to delivery with Funders/Hub Partners/Community Partners/Community stakeholders and beneficiaries has proven to be a successful delivery model, ensuring that resources and activity can be directed to best fit local communities' needs and interests. Continuing with this model will ensure that, over time, even the smallest grass route organisations can benefit if budgets are flexible. However, communication mechanisms between all layers must be robust and timely.
- **Community Engagement:** Adopting co-curation methods involves risk, trust, resilience and trying and failing. Facilitating the learning from different approaches in open and safe spaces can be incredibly helpful for people when negotiating new and challenging ways of working.

Consider how external support (outside of the HUB) could be used to lead this work in peer learning. While ensuring that evaluation not only looks at the outcomes of projects but also understands the process and experience of those involved- which is where much of the value lies for co-curated opportunities.

Sustainability & Legacy: Understanding the long-term social and community impact of Hub-supported projects will require ongoing, embedded evaluation and tracking across all parts of the project structure. Building in time and capacity to revisit partners and stakeholders in 1-2 years after project funding would provide a more comprehensive picture of this.

'I've (personally) thoroughly enjoyed working on this project. It has felt like such a valuable thing to be involved in and has allowed genuine conversations about engagement, which we have been able to respond to due to the way the project has been set up and run. This has really helped in the way we have been able to develop relationships with community partners. Thank you!'

O2O Partner