Collaborate and Innovate: Learning Outcome Report
Northumbria Archives Testbed Project

1. Name of organisation and any partners

This was a project of Northumbria University (the University Library and the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences), in collaboration with The Heritage Resilience Network and several local Black and minoritised cultural organisations (Sangini, Vamos and the Angelou Centre), and other individuals in the North East of England.

2. Short overview of project including a summary of what you wanted to achieve and what you actually did during the project

As noted in our proposal, the University is keen to further develop and expand its archive infrastructure and holdings at the University Library on the topic of Black and minoritised cultural and community organisations in the North East of England. The goal was to use the Testbed fund to help the University strategically and operationally plan for this. The idea of an archive was initiated within the Arts and Humanities Research Council research project "(Multi)Cultural Heritage" and the beginnings of a community archive funded by an AHRC engagement grant "(Multi)Cultural Organisational Archives".

The National Archives Testbed project sprang from these projects and the desire to examine the possibility of an expanded "(Multi)Cultural Archive and Resource Centre" at the University. It was envisioned by community partners and the University as a resource and meeting place for students, academics, and communities in the North East. Collaboration between University and communities had to be central to this plan, since the questions of ownership, access and equity were important to all partners. We proposed for our Testbed project to conduct a series of meetings and workshops to help the University and partners develop a comprehensive strategy for this Centre. Partners themselves re-branded this archive and hub as "*HERE North East: An Archive of Cultural Activism*".

What we proposed - and what we actually did undertake - was to examine this idea in three workshops organised for 23 April, 4 June and 15 October 2021. Each session, characterised as 'Internal', 'Experts' and 'Communities', gathered stakeholders to inspect and debate the aims and aspirations of Northumbria in considering such an archive, to express a Vision for an archive, and to address Practicalities. The workshops were each 2.5-hour meetings of about 30 participants, organised by a NA-funded research assistant and paid BAME group facilitators from the North East, and all non-university attendees were reimbursed for their participation. The university augmented the National Archives funding with both extra funding and labour. The Heritage Resilience Network, a group of black and minority led heritage advocates in the North East some of whom were original partners, were leaders and breakout facilitators at all three workshops. The April and October workshops were followed by smaller meetings, continuing now and, it is hoped, into the future.

This is a short overview for reporting purposes: summaries/discussions of each workshop are attached to this learning outcome report.

3. Description of any challenges or opportunities you faced and how you responded to those challenges and opportunities.

Below is a summary only – this has been an incredibly difficult but rewarding collaborative and truly participatory process inside and outside the University. Time spent by project leader, assistants and partners bears no relationship to funds received – this is the first challenge for the project leader. Response? Worked weekends!

- Pre-workshop debates among partners around the shape and content of the workshops was both a challenge and an opportunity as we all (reps from Heritage Resilience, Angelou, Sangini, Imkaan, Northumbria staff and PhD students) had weekly intense meetings before each workshop to hammer out participants, questions, ethics, format, tech, and debriefing, and conducted follow-up meets on reporting, recordings, and next steps.

- Mobilising participants during pandemic and reaching all the stakeholders needed was a challenge. The scheduling of important participants in all three workshops was difficult and we did not have all of the people we wanted to involve. For example, the 'internal' university session was missing Executive representatives. The 'expert' session did not get all of the Black archive specialists in the UK for example Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre (AIU) could not come. The 'communities' session was oversubscribed but here it was women-dominated, plus key political, local council members could not attend.

- Challenges were presented to the central research question in planning and during workshops – power and control was raised early on as a problem. The mere initiation of this project by a white researcher at a big white institution was an issue. The possibility of hosting a Black archive at such an institution caused worries about ownership and access. But this offered, as well, an opportunity to talk out such concerns, to flag, to think differently. The conundrum was how to have community control but how could the resources of the institution be brought to contribute, without strings attached? But we began to frame this as an opportunity for grassroots to form alliances and new ways of thinking in order to develop a minority-led community archive. For the project leader, it became an opportunity to mobilise a cross-region university committee to think about how to sit at the table in support of a Black archive, but not lead the process.

- Any expectations of the PI that we could easily produce a feasibility study, had to acknowledge the difficult embedded relationships/knowledge-exchange process that had to be nurtured. This is not a simple 'engagement' process, but true participatory work that takes time, investment of resources and removal of institutional barriers. So related to this: the university did perceive this as an opportunity to raise profile by supporting a Black initiative, but the truth was the clear need to engage with a longer, resourced study with high-level engagement by Northumbria.

- Negotiating the University's own administrative hurtles was a challenge for the project, and demonstrated how difficult it would be to host a true, flexible, externally facing 'living archive' within the institution. Bureaucratic paperwork, HR and administrative roadblocks were not supportive of the qualitative, participatory approach needed.

- Thus an additional challenge: *doubt* on the part of the project leader. Was this initiative best within the institution or outside the institution? Was this even a good idea? How to resolve this problem? The opportunity but burnout problem of continuing on a difficult road to collaboration with negotiation and administrative setbacks every step of the way.

- And yet: the interest and support among members of Black and minority organisations and among university staff was powerful. People are still coming forward from communities to donate materials and oral histories – to be part of a process represent 'we are HERE' and create a meeting place for stories, heritage, cultural expression.

4. What were the outcomes of the project? (this can be positive outcomes, negative outcomes, or no outcomes at all)

The last point above has been a big outcome of the workshop series. There is such an appetite out there on the part of community members, for evidencing a history of their activities in the culture sector and in society to pass on to future generations, for contributing to an archive, and for creating a hub for Black/minority lives and histories in the North East. The final workshop brought people together to confirm the importance of this desire and to sort out a way to more forward.

On the practical side, the workshop series has stimulated a Steering Group to channel this appetite for an archive and resource hub, and develop a plan of action. Several participants have stepped up as core members of this group. Northumbria has committed seed funds to enable the group to launch and to contract a research assistant, potentially to develop a funding application to National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Testbed project leader is working within the University on several fronts. She has organised a joint meeting of key EDI academics from the Testbeds, from the four North East universities (Northumbria, Durham, Sunderland and Newcastle), to figure out ways that 'big white institutions' can come to the table as allies for a community-led archive project. She will continue to organise the array of archival materials she has collected from Sangini, Vamos, Pakistan Cultural Society, Becon/Neeaca, and the Chinese Healthy Living Centre into the University Library Special Collections as 'HERE North East'. She will produce a report on how the university might facilitate making this special collection into an externally-facing archive (and advocate for hiring an archivist at the library).

5. What did you learn from undertaking the project? What went well? What didn't go quite as well?

The Testbed series confirmed our understanding that any knowledge-exchange project in universities requires long-term attentiveness, responsibility, planning, and commitment to relationship-building on the part of institutions. There are no immediate gains, as trust and respect take time. The Testbed sessions pointed out that institutional statements of solidarity with Black Lives aims requires concrete allocation of time and resources to make real their claims of equality, diversity and inclusion. Participants discussed in detail the fear of structural barriers that would need to be overcome.

But we also learned that we had a strong 'fellowship' among the organising/facilitating team. All strong women who are volunteer leaders in various community areas, who shaped the planning and conducting of these sessions, and the ethics of care that were embedded. And we all learned about these processes and have 'messy' opinions about what worked and what did not. They are the core of our Next Steps planning.

The 'Internal' workshop asked, *Is a Black & community archive possible at Northumbria?* It moved from enthusiasm and eagerness to frustration and scepticism by the end, as we discussed internal issues and barriers such as access to online systems, complicated payment procedures, and lack of understanding of and procedures for community support.

This drove the second workshop's basic question to the 'Experts': *How do we resolve the problem of placing a community archive in a white institutional setting?* They discussed institutional barriers and gave advice on the kinds of governance models and administrative paperwork needed to share ownership of this archive.

The final workshop 'Communities' then followed up from this advice and asked *What do WE want here*? Was this archive divided from source communities and developed 'about' them or 'for' them, or must this be an archive 'by' the people who *are* the archive and who desire to make the past and heritage a living, creative thing? If the second, what are the Next Steps? And a big limitation: where will the funding come from?

A mention of using online tech to do these workshops – it was both liberating and limiting. It enabled people to attend while staying in their homes, eliminating travel arrangements and payments. We all were 'cameras on' so there was a good sense of community despite no bodily contact. But we missed food, a strong element in past events. A drawback was everyone's uneven access and ability to use tech. Also there was a sense that the screens elevated tension and anxiety.

6. If someone was thinking about taking on a similar project, what advice you would give them?

All of the above points. Community archives are 'by' the community, not 'about' or 'for' communities. That is the only way it will succeed. Watch out for bias and control, even unconscious, by established institutions and professionals. And expect a long, painful, but caring and rewarding process.

7. Do you plan to develop the project in the future? If so – how?

As noted above there will be two trajectories as a result of this process, that may or may not be braided together as both initiatives proceed.

The first is the consolidation of the (Multi)Cultural Organisational Archive now collected at the university. There is a responsibility to those community partners and individuals who donated/loaned materials that the University Library will professionalize these diverse offerings into an externally accessible, useful, coherent archive for use by communities, students and academics. This will continue hopefully with the assistance of National Archives Revealed or other sources. The project lead will advocate internally for the hiring of an archivist, and write a report based on Testbed results to set out what is required.

The second is the collaborating process of devising a plan and process for HERE North East as an intergenerational and intercultural community hub and heritage centre with the archive - a living and creative archive - as its key foundation. The vision is there but the Steering Group will tackle how to proceed, with joint support (not ownership) by the four regional universities. This will be a Black-led project and movement, a tangible legacy of Black Lives Matter and the long history of arts and cultural activism by minority communities in the North East.

Dr Susan Ashley
Northumbria University

<u>APPENDICES</u>

Archives Testbed Workshop 1 - Summary

Northumbria
University
NEWCASTLE

DATE: Friday, 23 April 2021
TIME: 11 AM – 1 PM
LOCATION: ZOOM
Funded by a National Archives "Archives Revealed" Grant

PRESENT: Maya Duncanson, Joe Street, Lucy Currie, Annette Coates, Claire Sutherland, Emmanuel Kabengele, Rima Hussein, Fiona McPherson, Lesley Douglas , **Selene Azevedo Salavessa,** Becky Cole, Ama Kondo, Andrea Phillips, Charden Pouo Moutsouka, Tim Livsey, Laura Fish, Martyn Hudson, Li Chin Khor, Kathryn Smith, Khobhi Kromel-Agamah Williams, Lauren Barnes, Ellen Cole, Brian Ward, Anita Garvey, Evie Hodgson
Northumbria team: Kath Boodhai, Hayley Mardon, Degna Stone, Susan Ashley
The Heritage Resilience Network team: Rosie Lewis, Anita Wan, Padma Rao
APOLOGIES: Nwanyieze Nwali, Jim Ward, Elizabeth-Jane Burnett, Ed Anderson
MINUTES: Hayley Mardon

The following are snippets of facilitator notes that offer an overview rather than all details:

1. **Welcome, Introductions, Overview**
   Welcome and overview of Workshop schedule. Background to the AHRC funded (Multi) Cultural Organisational Archives project and the National Archives funded Black Archives Testbed project. Introduction to Northumbria team and The Heritage Resilience Network team. Discussion on etiquette, ground rules, language, terminology and respect.

   Post-It Exercise: 'What motivated you to come here today?'
   To learn, to find out more about how to support, to develop solidarity and a sense of positivity and excitement

2. **Group Breakouts 1 'Vision'**
   Five randomly assigned breakout groups discussed two questions, and reported a summary back to the group:

   'What is your vision for a cultural archive in the North East?'
   o   An emphasis on it being more than a space. A way to bring different communities together, including intergenerational aspects
   o   Black and minoritised communities, their representation and visibility, needs to be front and center
   o   That it should foster solid interaction, be accessible and be a place of learning
   o   That it should be inclusive, involve local people and local areas
   o   Discussions of different spaces and what they may entail (e.g., a separate space in the institution, a 'Cultural enrichment hub', a space away from campus in the city centre, a space that decenters whiteness)
   o   That it should be a 'living archive'
   o   Various types of experiences that would be part of that (i.e., verbal, visual, auditory)
   o   What would be included - ephemera and conversations, not just books
   o   An emphasis on the importance of the digital as part of accessibility
   o   Importance of connectivity to initiatives like the REC and EDI, bringing them together, and in terms of accountability
   o   What are different relationships people have with archives and how meaningful are these engagements?
   o   Education is a key part of its social function and not just in an Academic/highbrow way/formal way. It needs to reach younger children, and different communities
   o   That it's more than just a repository, it should be integrated, question culture and cultural democracy be creative and performative.

   'Should this be based at Northumbria University and if so, why? & what are the challenges?'
   OPPORTUNITIES:
   o   For the University to give something back by using its financial power - place its emphasis on *investing* rather than *owning*

- o The University could be useful in facilitating access, systems, reach and resources despite the tensions in different perceptions about the archive that communities have
- o An opportunity for the University to put its money where its mouth is and provide a *tangible* example of an instrument for change. An 'instrument for making things better' at Northumbria.
- o The need for resources to ensure sustainability of archive and safeguarding of the materials

CHALLENGES/BARRIERS:
- o Size of the University, its vast cultures, numerous departments and diverse people - how to realise the idea of a 'hub' that caters to all
- o Existing negative perceptions of University – they are seen as institutions of power, intimidating places, elite, privileged and inaccessible. University as Patronising.
- o Significant questions of how to navigate issues around the ownership of the archive
- o Confronting deeper structural issues within the University - power relations, governance and the way that decisions are made The Glacial University
- o Lack of diversity at the University is a drawback – staff, students

- o There was some discussion on alternative options/models/locations for a Black and minoritised archive that would make it more open and accessible if not at Northumbria (e.g. a mobile archive) and what issues may arise (e.g. safety of communities)

3. Group Breakouts 2 - What are the 'Building blocks' needed?

Post-It Exercise: 'What could we include in a physical archive space?'
Meeting places, exhibition spaces, activism spaces, creche facility, discussion/meeting spaces, a café, digital spaces, Archival and storage spaces, class room and research space.

Breakouts
Five assigned breakout groups divided into Library/Collections, Academics, Race Equality Charter, Students. Each discussed two questions, and reported a summary back to the group:

'What Resources would be needed for an archive and why? (inc. staff, tech, finance)'
- o Prioritise funding
- o The archive must be embedded in all teaching, research (e.g. centered around modules)
- o A range of resources around community, staffing and expertise:
    - o Language support and translators, digital access and digital archiving, the involvement of services such as Research and Innovation, Special collections teams
    - o An archivist, plus staff involved in conservation and curation (none currently at Library)
    - o Local community activists and community leaders centered around Black and minorized groups
    - o Involve University and Student Union societies
- o Tensions between the University emphasis on corporate identities and Business models over the social justice angle or doing the right thing
- o Adopt a Library model (more agile and shared ownership) rather than typical archives. Examples such as UCL archives and Stephen Lawrence Centre at De Montfort University.
- o More archival and storage space, including specialist space (e.g. climate controlled)
- o Open access IT - Noted that digital archiving would also mean less resources needed

'What governance structure could we deploy? How do we centre Black and minoritised communities in this structure?'
- o Confront issues around devolving power, reluctance to change and a lack of awareness
- o Focus on community/(***shared) ownership and governance to be clear both externally and internally facing
- o Look at community-based and co-operative models/approaches to devolved leadership for guidance and to equip people with the knowledge, resources and support to facilitate a truly community-oriented archive
- o That the University should move away from a top-down approach which raises issues around white Academics and people in management/power in favor of an approach that supports Black and minoritised communities to move forward and influence positive change
- o Rather than the Executive group determining governance, the communities should propose a model to avoid issues around community 'representation'. This should be a multi-stage process with agreement by the community before being discussed with the University.
- o This should be handled in phases, be realistic in terms of time scales, be mindful of shrinking funds
- o Ownership of objects, ephemera and copyright should be detailed in agreements, include policies and de-accessioning
- o Relationship with the community should be inclusive, transparent, ongoing and that hired staff should come from the community

- o It should be embedded and supported in the University knowledge-production structures in terms of research/teaching/for academic purposes
- o Needs to be part of the Race Equality charter and policy, involving all departments rather than placed only in the cultural sector, and have an actionable plan as part of it so that each department contributes to its development.
- o Remaining allocated funds for Covid-19 be given to different Departments could be used to widen ownership, draw in communities
- o It should be Black and minority community led and independent of the university

4. Next Steps

The team will digest all input. Participants asked to reflect on the discussions, and send to Susan:
any links for further archives info or networks, any questions, and desire for further involvement.

The points raised in this workshop will guide the design of the remaining two workshops involving 1. archives experts from across the UK and 2. interested individuals and organisations from Black and minoritised communities in the North East.

An evaluation form and workshop summary to be sent to all participants.

Thank you to all facilitators and all who participated

Archives Testbed Workshop 2 - Summary

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

DATE: Friday, 4 June 2021
TIME: 11 AM – 1 PM
LOCATION: ZOOM
Funded by a National Archives "Archives Revealed" Grant

PRESENT: Hannah Ishmael; Sarah Garrod; Andrew Flinn; Kris McKie; Sadiya Ahmed; Etienne Joseph; David Morris; Tavian Hunter; Alda Terracciano; Rachael Minott
(Multi) Cultural Organisational Archives project / HERE North East: Padma Rao; Nikolas Barrera; Kai Javid; Yve Ngoo; Azin Farrakesh-Wake; Chantal Herbert
Northumbria team: Kath Boodhai, Degna Stone, Susan Ashley
The Heritage Resilience Network team: Rosie Lewis, Anita Wan,

The following are captured from facilitators' notes to offer an overview rather than an analysis of the discussions:

1. Welcome, Introductions, Overview

Welcome and overview of Workshop schedule. Background to the AHRC funded (Multi) Cultural Organisational Archives project and the National Archives funded Black Archives Testbed project. Introduction to Northumbria team and The Heritage Resilience Network team. Discussion on etiquette, ground rules, language, terminology and respect.

The first exercise used a 'jam board' to allow all participants to characterise their archive/work in archives/creative practice in 11 descriptive and expressive words:

2. 'Models' – Whole-Group Discussion

What do you think the word 'model' means? How would you interpret the word 'model' in this context?

- o I am not sure what model means in this context
- o Is crucial, in its many definitions, as it denotes a framework that can be tried and tested
- o An outline or frame that can be used to guide ways of working, communicate intent, and create a shape that others can follow or adapt
- o An aspirational system
- o Both Vision/Aspirations, but also Structures/framework for working
- o Models as "habits"? Or "ways of Being?" Could also be Governance frameworks

- o One consideration for a 'model' is how it is maintained, updated, funded etc.
- o Another is how a particular archive is preserved and accessed
- o Models are examples to follow but can be restrictive and need to be flexible to change.
- o Boundaries of how things are done but success in any area against a model indicates the ability to FIT into that model, thus historically been inaccessible to communities
- o How do we engage a new/ 'validated' model that lifts those barriers?

- o In community archives there are almost as many forms as there are community archives so models can be useful for looking at different ways of carrying out and organising the work. There is no one way of doing this work and there is certainly no one way is right. Models can be useful for working out what works / is important for the community activists that are building the archive
- o Find a different way of looking at things – most communities do not think of archive or heritage in the way that is institutional – it is more about getting together to share stories as a 'model'

3. Group Breakouts 1 – On 'Models'

Three randomly assigned breakout groups discussed two questions, and reported a summary back to the group:

- ● How well does your 'model' work for you/your organisation?

  - o Issues still with the word Model - Model is a 'jargon' that is rigid and not very malleable – need to deconstruct these ideas
  - o Static, museum, colonialist word – need to come up with something new
  - o Model = more of the same things as before, not open to change
  - o Example - Future Histories (African/Asian performing arts) was 20 years ago confronted with a 'model'– structured, had to be 'gifted' to the Nation "this is how you do it". The V&A had this gifted stuff and nothing happened. Model based on system & practice that is NOT aspirational.

- There is not one model – people organise themselves – motivation & intention – to address under representation and misrepresentation of histories.

- How to change models? A collective voice needed for change – the entire organisation. But if the organisation itself is NOT like that then how can the voices be heard?
- Start with yourself and look at own biases. Even if an expert your own ideas can change.
- 'Model' has to respond to context eg in Black communities, systems of control invoked by that word. Power and control is the issue.
- Historically validated models of how we present archival work but they have been inaccessible.
- Accessibility is a crucial issue - the fact that an archive is there does not mean that the community or users will want to access it. Access needs to be pro-active.
- Preservation, Access, Engagement as main elements of our archive. How to I present our archives and how do I make it accessible to others – a 'mobile' way of taking things to people?
- Relationships most important – collecting is a byproduct. Relationship building with donor/owners, accessibility and engagement with material is essential.
- 'Loaning' not 'donating' and also accountability checks - what is the institution is doing with the archive.

- Padmore has a Board of Trustees, Core & Active members (tension: pulling us back and taking us forward, old & young)
- Get the people who MADE the records involved in what happens to the records eg Creative Residencies – look at records and make something of them like Jazz music
- There has been a long history of communities trying to do this – eg Pan Africanism re history and recovery. Funders need to know & acknowledge this.
- Different groups think of what is 'heritage' differently
- Building a bridge between community and archive space. Making collections credible in an archive space but working with communities who don't engage with that space. Balancing these different models and expectations. Create a credible archive requires conventions and some kind of working model, don't have to follow a specific model just lay out a framework.
- The element of trust between the community, the organisation, the framework, the model – how do you build that?
- Flexibility is really important. Community habits and cultural habits – need to be understood and work with that. (Un/underfunded works brilliantly and terribly to do that.)
- Allowing for chaos and rediscovery, allowing it to form the community needs.
- "Resource Centre" is more meaningful - Past-Present-Future not just old stuff but the 3rd 4th generation's stuff too – it is theirs as well. Constant renewing the materials to reflect what is going on *now*. Important to see impact too – but do not segregate it – and make it part of the whole story/collections. These are all people, just people who have an impact [not just the organisations]

- What kind of model could work in a university setting?

  - For HERE North East archives, the conversation has been led by Northumbria - is there a democratic way of steering the project from community activists?
  - Language that we use for funders (or unis) might not be understandable. Need for feasibility study – bring ideas out of communities. Funders need to know more about us.
  - Future Histories is at a university because wanted students to have direct access but Middlesex did not do that so the owners moved it to Goldsmiths where it IS used.
  - University backing but accessibility is important – for everyone not just people in a silo
  - In a university there is a lot of structured spaces – needs to be open – example of the New York Lesbian Archive – the number of older people who wanted to bequeath was amazing – a 'living' archive
  - Problem of management/ control in institutions like universities – putting & keeping information in there in a specific way which is colonial & repressive.
  - Who using and why is key - so the New York model & constant growing/living is important. But needs to have archivists/staff in place to do that, or to digitize for maximum use rather than sitting there in a backlog. How to get Resources to do this. Generating income?
  - Partnerships with Unis – those are fraught with dangers for community orgs – eg community archives broken down in relationships; unis change their research interests. Access /decisions are problematic. Unis maybe as partners and lots of thought needed about the basis of their agreements – must be responsive to communities. Potential stability a benefit (spaces).
  - Challenge of working with Northumbria University is being wrestled with and is unresolved. Conflicted – it brings possible stability but we don't want the institution to take over or be seen to be taking over.

- o Friends of Huntley Archives at London Metropolitan Archives – black activist archive. A constituted group was set up to monitor and ensure accessibility. Negotiating terms and willingness for the university being flexible.
- o It's really about the culture of the university. The LMA model works because there's a 'Friends' group around it. Some universities aren't set up for that.
- o Still these issues in any scenario: Who is going to be choosing what goes in and what is done, as it would be from their gaze. Who should have it? Do I have the right more than somebody else?

3. Group Breakouts 2 – The White Institution

How do we resolve the problem of placing a community archive in a white institutional setting?

Two assigned breakout groups. Each discussed this question, and reported a summary back to the group:

- o The idea of the archive emerged as a strategic response for the university to change its culture in light of the events of last summer. Now is the time for them to change their way of being.
- o Look at the culture of that organisation and that institution. Is there room to build strong alliances, to transform the place. It has to be a two-way system. Change is something visceral, it's about bonding, it's about the political mindset of the higher echelons and those delivering.
- o Inspect how allyship is living and breathing within the university and what it looks like in the context of this archive. Is that limited to sponsorship? It comes down to trust. The culture of the institution, partly for them to decide what their allyship looks like in a way that enables and is nurturing. Rather than one of ownership.
- o We (in racialized communities) have found ourselves in spaces that were not welcoming. The best way to negotiate is to remember that you're in charge. It's your collection so try and negotiate the best terms possible. Will it be temporary? Will the collection be buried? Is it accessible?
- o Think of ways to signpost, work with the student groups, work with the departments that will find the collection useful. Make sure it has a digital presence. Make sure that the people you want to have access to it know about it.
- o How much emotional labour are people prepared to put in? Most people will have other work/day jobs as well as supporting the archive.
- o The problem with the universities is the neo-liberal model. The antithesis of community life. Ways of creating a circular economy, generating funding, keeping that funding within the community. What happens when an institution closes an archive due to funding cuts? Independence, being able to move the archive, circular economy.
- o Not how to resolve but do we TRUST putting this information in a white institutional space?

- o Ownership - how do you have those conversations about ownership if you're putting that material into the institution? How do we ensure trust within the university and the community, how is ownership retained by the community? The participants not necessarily an organisation, it's a movement - so how do Unis support them?
- o This is a moment in time where this opportunity has come up. Taking that opportunity and using that. We can't do it on our own but let's see how we can make it work. Jot down everything that we want to Balance these Unequal positions – ownership, lack of skills etc.
- o Needs a good agreement. It's crucial, fundamental. Partnership agreements – spend time and care and look at all the potentials within the neo-liberal context.
- o Making sure these Agreement specify use, access, follow-ups
- o Who is on the other side of the agreement if Northumbria are on the other side? How do we bring these separate organisations together and be an effective negotiator?

- o Institutions are highly resourced; we are reliant on huge institutions to serve us. We can only talk about equality when we address the communities where we need to invest money to create a level playing field. Are minoritised communities skilled enough to take on the roles in archive? The idea of equality is still not being addressed. How can we bring up [the skills] in the communities?
- o Ownership, power, relationality, who decides and how to practically put resources in place?
- o Maybe white space but if the staff/skills are not available in the community, it might be okay. But there MUST be a commitment, not lip service. Relationship building that is equal. Make sure the issues within the sector do not continue.
- o Using Non-diverse workforce to manage archival histories is a perennial issue at different levels – curation, choice & how, acknowledgement of significance. Where are all the players in a negotiated space? Might need written agreements about this.
- o Be aware of the historical realities of when things close. What happens when people leave? When the champions leave? Those relationships are key but easily lost. Legacy. How do we keep it going?
- o BCA had a bad relationship with Middlesex Uni – discussing their expectations needed to be front and centre. BCA received stuff because the Uni shut down a campus, so no home for the archive.
- o Question of Owning or Housing. See Colin Prescott, in Race & Class journal on Huntley – being the tail that wags the dog.

- o The problem of universities stealing community goodwill and work for projects, then no after care for archive participants. Duty of Care. What should the Uni offer to people? See Manchester Coming in From the Cold project.
- o Rights. Constant inattention to rights laws and obligations. Use that power to address inequalities; an embedded human right to duty of care. Heritage is a pivotal tool of the nation-state.

- o Why and do you want to have a partnership with a Uni in the first place?
- o Not sure who is driving this particular project – whether it should be a bigger project across institutions. Also that is sustainable in the long term.
- o Need to know what the university are already doing with communities and partnership – are they doing this kind of stuff already?
- o Trust and Openness? A really strong agreement needed.

4. Reflection and Next Steps
The team will digest all input. Participants asked to reflect on the discussions, and send to Susan:
any links for further archives info or networks, any questions, and desire for further involvement. A summary will be circulated.

The next workshop involves interested individuals and organisations from Black and minoritised communities across the North East, scheduled for 15 October via zoom.

Thank you to all facilitators and all who participated.

Archives Workshop 3 - Summary

DATE: Friday, 15 October 2021
TIME: 12:30 AM – 3 PM
LOCATION: ZOOM
EVENTBRITE: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/here-north-east-an-archive-of-cultural-activism-tickets-171841010087
Funded by a National Archives "Archives Revealed" Grant

PRESENT: Andrea Carter; Georgia Turnbull; Nikita Kaur; Sadiya Ahmed; Louise Evan-Wong; MUN KC; Leila D'Aronville; Pat Poinen; Asma Begum; Parvin Abdur; Malathi Natarajan; Justine King; Haffezar Khan; Yilis Suriel; Hannabiell Sanders; Amina Marix Evans; Chanttelle Gillies; Livvy Evans; Adah Reeve; Amanda Chan; Wing Chan; Jordan Mullard; Oscar Watson; Beverley Prevatt Goldstein; Ranjana Bell; Jola Olafimihan
Northumbria Team and Partners: Kath Boodhai, Degna Stone, Susan Ashley, Chantal Herbert, Rosie Lewis, Anita Wan, Padma Rao, Nik Barrera
Special Guest: Dr Ingrid Pollard
APOLOGIES: Tina Simbo; Wajid Ali

The following are captured from facilitators' notes to offer an overview rather than an analysis of the discussions:

1. Welcome, Introductions, Overview
Welcome and overview of Workshop schedule by Rosie Lewis, and discussion on etiquette, ground rules, language, terminology and respect.

Background to the (Multi) Cultural Organisational Archives project by Kath Boodhai, Padma Rao and Nik Barrera, and the National Archives funded Black Archives Testbed project by Susan Ashley.

2. Special presentation by Dr Ingrid Pollard
Northumbria University Visiting Professor and internationally renowned British artist and researcher introduced some of her creative works that use Caribbean archival materials, and her recent exhibition at the Glasgow Women's Library: womenslibrary.org.uk and see **www.ingridpollard.com**

3. Group Breakouts 1 – An archive and resource centre in the North East - WHY and WHAT

Four randomly assigned breakout groups discussed two questions, and reported a summary back to the group. Facilitated by Rosie Lewis:

WHY? Why is it needed? Why is it important?

WHAT? What is the function of this archive? What does it do? What does it provide?

Group 1

- Personal and professional, art and us - need to be recognized, work honoured
- Fragmented community, felt like there no people to form global majority. Work has been bitty, needs to be more centralized.
- Not realizing the work that has been done already, keep a timeline. Show the work of activists from past and present. Show the work that went on, many different efforts, had momentum but lost steam.
- People who are new to the region can see what has been going on and tap into the past community.
- Control and power over narrative. How we are portrayed, get our version of ourselves out there. Always seen through someone else's lens and presented that way also.
- Don't want to just see the negatives, but positives about Northeast. Celebration.
- There is not just one journey...there are a million different journeys that need to be acknowledged

Group 2

WHY?
- Future archive, intergenerational need, for children growing up
- CYP don't know about their heritage. Youth identities are not informed by an understanding of their heritage - impacting on them
- Specific communities less known about eg Bangladeshi
- Underrepresentation in history, omitted leads to not knowing ourselves and our collective narratives
- We are only just scratching the surface- our communities remain marginalised by the institutions
- We've lost nuance and what Kath referred to as 'value' not just about contribution

WHAT?
- Terms and language are important
- We need a 'visible' place at the table
- Archive should be a proactive living centre. Contemporary and useful. We have done so much research and are still learning so archive should not be fixed
- Its functions should include education. The power to change ideas about heritage for future generations
- It should be deeper. It should be transformative. Should include that 'narrative of change'
- Want to bring in the concept of 'communing' (Andrea)
- We must be informed by these urgent contemporary issues (such as the Borders Bill) in re envisioning the past.

Group 3

WHY?
- Capturing history. Our histories are untold and removed from our knowledge base. Future generations see themselves in our communities
- if we don't save this no one will ever know. Important to capture stories of people histories, so futures generations can learn from them. If not us, who will do it?
- it's nowhere else and we seem to be left out of main stream history
- to increase visibility and as an exercise in capturing histories, expertise and knowledge
- important for multicultural history for different communities to understand each other, future generations.
- a space to show respect for our past, **a space to exist unapologetically**

WHAT?
- practicality establishing a space should be the goal but how is it funded, maintained, managed?
- sharing knowledge and transferring intergenerational knowledge
- should this be an archive that everyone can access?
- I would worry if it was housed in the university. Should be in the community so people can access it. Even if it was temporarily at the university. We could spend time looking around other facilities and maybe it could travel around – Chinese community centre, Bangladeshi community centre
- main concern is accessibility. People are put off by institutions but we should make use of experts if they are at the university.
- it's a good start but it shouldn't just stop, it's got to be accessible, there should be progression, it should be expanded, it must travel, within and outside the region.

Group 4

WHY?
- It is needed for the interpretation and amplification of Black and minoritized voices/ think about the 'unusual suspects'
- Equity and anti-racism
- For our journeys and struggles knowing who we are and where we fit
- Cross generational and intergenerational. My parents as first gen, me as 2nd gen and my children as 3 gen and my grandchildren of mixed heritage. My fear -they are at risk of losing their sense of cultural heritage in the future.
- Much more positive programme and positive projection of identities
- The presentation of our histories and identities through different lenses- past/present.
- A lot of energies are being expended on parodying our histories rather than promoting it.

- The archive can't be a dead thing. Living archives = new organisations and ways of doing things – we can learn from what has been done before but change as well. Supplement the static by shaping our journeys with community groups who participated at the start -grassroots – sharing their experience in the archive project and journeys orally. Young people have the energy.
- Art and Activism – then and now - Collective representations of our divergent and intersecting and intersectional diversities
- To forge relationships across – local, regional, national and international boundaries though we are NE
- Intersectional including histories and recording of our journeys and our incredible, individual and collective genes(?) or inter-relationships. exploring and punctuating
- Emotion and triggering feelings that I have learned to internalise and do not usually think about
- A place to exist unapologetically

- WHAT?
- Record of journeys and real acknowledgement of our journeys as difficult
- Ownership and/of visibility
- A space to exist
- It needs to be beyond the arts geared towards these communities and their needs – recovery of communities (and their identities) and their needs e.g. recovery from addictions
- We need to think about structure- what can of structure do we need to have the approach/es we are calling for?
- Freelance artists can help us to express our selves
- Who has access and where is it to be accessed?
- To keep a timeline and positive ideas of our own histories
- A one – centre resource; a resource for people to tap into – who taps into it – what kind of resource is it
- For narratives of change and power and about representing change
- So many orgs have been disbanded – where is all the archive and knowledge of belonging? So, a place to go for this as our painful journeys, who listens to them?
- Need to think about the example of what has gone before eg Intercultural Arts application to the Arts Council for £750k grant to develop the use of a physical space. Unsuccessful as informed that there was lack of expertise, capacity etc. So, what can be learnt from this to develop the skills, leadership for what is needed for this archive to be successful?
- By and for us

FROM THE CHAT ABOUT WHY/WHAT:
-If we don't record the stories, it always looks like you're the first one to do it eg: Sangini has been doing Diwali for a number of years. We stopped for a year. Then a young man comes on the scene who organised a Diwali event for that year and 'declared' that there has never been any Diwali event done before; he was going to change the scenario and make it more diverse. Strangely, the so called 'VIPs' also forgot that they were attending Sangini's events and having a good time. None of them - 'mostly men' said anything to set the record straight.

4. Whole Group Discussion - WHO?

All attendees together discussed the issues, facilitated by Degna Stone:

WHO? is the archive for? Who should it engage? Who owns, develops, manages, governs it? Who do we need to work with?

- For the younger generations - as my family gets more mixed race - want them to know about my heritage, my legacy, my parent's
- Not enough young people's voices in these sorts of forums and spaces
- Re: education - more opportunities to learn about this in school
- Need to include more young people in the development and management of the archive. Narratives currently done by current generation for the future generation

- For wider society - all of should have a more positive narrative so that we're less victimised and have a more positive identity going forward.
- For everyone - our stories and experiences of Black bodies, experiences, history should spread beyond the NE. Personal experience of coming to NE was isolating.

- About connecting to present and past. In NE, huge history about Hadrian's Wall but no connection with communities today - need opportunities to look through different lenses
- Importance of the historical context - this comes first and then it's the contemporary voices. Instead of 'celebrating the first', we should question that - vital to understand what's gone on before

- It's about how new orgs can learn from what's happened before - not just written or digitised but the oral bit - supplement static archives with community groups and archives - need to share that in as many ways as possible
- What interests me is what is actually happening now - worry that there is not enough activity now as opposed to 10 years ago. Concerned that we're looking at past rather than focusing on doing things now

- Should be controlled and owned by us
- Community needs to own and manage it - needs to be co-produced with the rest of the community. Need to also reach out to other communities across UK - building a collective representation of our diversity
- Tailored by us and for us and should be a space for white people to educate themselves - it's tiring have to constantly explain ourselves

FROM THE CHAT ABOUT 'WHO':

- We need to engage with local community centres that are not "the usual suspects"; with community centres that are NOT normally engaged with multi-cultural and multi-ethnic activities.
- we should also take it to national archives and spaces.
- People we could work with: Artists, people connected to popular culture scene throughout the North East. I have heard stories from people like Yve Ngoo and others connected to the music scenes of the late 70s, 80s, 90s and 00s and they need recording!
- the passing on of our experiences orally is important - from organisation to org, past to present etc. That oral tradition
- it should start in the North East there have been so many small groups over time that are never heard
- By us for us. Tired of being tired. Tailored to us and for us but a place people can come to learn.
- Alumni of NE universities can perhaps provide continuity

5. Group Breakouts 2 – HOW?

Three assigned breakout groups discussed issues around this question, and reported a summary back to the group. Facilitated by Kath Boodhai:

HOW do we go about setting this up? How should it be managed and governed? How do we make it sustainable?

Group 1

- o We'd need to think about funding - perhaps outside the box and not just from the usual suspects...But, it would be good to get some national funding from British Council or from the Arts Council or RSA.
- o In terms of how we put it together perhaps we need to hold a public consultation?
- o Ingrid showed a photo and a voiceover talking about the photo. People bringing in their own continuous archive. Someone needs to monitor and check suitability for the archive.
- o employed 2.5 days at TWAM to create cultural diverse archive with little support or motivation. The process was extractive. Going out, asking individuals for their archives was extractive. Spent two years trying to build relationships, that's the priority not extraction. There is a new generation of material as well as a wealth of existing. Should that be the focus rather than a building? Thinking about how archives are generated in the wide-ranging expanse of geography.
- o online portal to see content for those who can't physically access.
- o Ethos should focus on not being extractive.
- o also important for white community to access.
- o We all have a stake in telling our stories to inform our future and collect our histories to connect to the past. I believe this type of archive should be driven by connections - how do we connect to each other and what stories, narratives and histories connect. Relationships, trust and connectivity driven by our communities.
- o Could it be a cooperative? Jointly governed, community asset. I think having a space is important. Something rooted in the locality, events room, helping to diversify income. Mobile/hybrid version.
- o face to face is important. Talking, learning. Any community needs to know about their heritage. Community focused.
- o HERE is an umbrella organisation for all the smaller, individual archives.
- o Space and preservation is vital. Sinking all resources into a single building could take away from the drive and vitality of this. A disperse model could be interesting.
- o Other organisations might support and house elements of the archive e.g. Customs House.

Group 2

- o Practical elements, experience
- o Learn from other archives
- o Funding, drive, want
- o We don't have history or much experience of working together
- o Must sit in our own community
- o Know what is out there, gather a list
- o Investment to get things going
- o Governance through cooperative structures
- o Wider community voice
- o Sustainable through a COOP – Connected voice example - www.connectedvoice.org.uk
- o Infrastructure?
- o See beyond, ask those big institutions, where are they, dialogue with official bodies
- o Goes to the heart, where those to institutions
- o Still tick box approach
- o FUNDING, FUNDING
- o Working with white orgs but retain black ownership
- o Must be a lead but same time University cannot be a lead
- o Paid workers within the archives for sustainability
- o Get this going ASAP so that funding streams do not disappear,
- o Needs to create education for longevity/sustainable

Group 3

- o What is the starting point and approach?
- o Try and build the question - what is the question or 'problem' or 'challenge' here?
- o What is the ethos behind the archive? Is it using existing wealth of material and/or generate new material; a living thing, continuation of activism?

- o Is it a phased approach? Need to think carefully about resources – people who can be involved who and from where, funds etc
- o The process of a phased approach can employ up to 5 multiple approaches including new audiences or unusual suspects communities; new mediums in terms of artforms, accessibility using physical/virtual/blended
- o Need to think about the approach – anti-racist, inclusion of White minorities and marginalised and mixed heritage or those who identity as mixed heritage communities
- o Be clear about who is meant by 'us' or who are the 'US'–suggestion start with 'small' communities beyond the usual ones or suspects to the 'unusual suspects' (and most minoritised and marginalised demographically for example, Deaf communities)
- o And how you make that accessible for the 'us'? Use of several different mediums in different ways – physical, digital, performative, oral and oral traditions
- o Need to think about the target audiences - use different mediums to attract and reach out
- o Digital is easier to share, disseminate.
- o At next stage, start with people who created year 1 or stage 1 of the archive – an organic, evolving process
- o Not everything for everyone.
- o Living history – try to reach widest possible group
- o The principles of inclusivity – beyond buildings. Need to reach out to communities simultaneously.
- o See previous work of the North East Cultural Diversity Arts Forum (NECDAF) and Intercultural Arts up to 2011, working across cross-section of communities artists etc. Challenges with Arts Council and funding a building or physical based. Advocacy, capacity building, bridging work. A learning curve to inform this archive? (Contact Oscar Lumley Watson)
- o The creators and artists for dissemination, longevity. Artists and creators are important – residencies
- o Hybrid e.g. the use of online and face to face. Younger people want to go out, meet face to face also – do not make assumptions that it is all technology and online for young people
- o Money and staffing
- o Archive needs to be considered within money-value
- o Governance structure will impact on infrastructure and allocation of resources in the archive and 'seeing beyond the institution'
- o Are you going to use a corporate model or co-operative model and structures to connect different voices etc
- o Organisational need vs social/people need or organisational and social need balance.

FROM THE CHAT ABOUT 'HOW':
- How do we reach the communities if they ae unaware or uninvited?
- throughout my career I've observed how much easier it has been to secure funding for 'research' consultation etc over active creative work. I suppose a lot of what is going on for me is that the archive could be seen in a similar way.
- My mom always used to say *each one, reach one, teach one.* As well as better and well funded marketing campaigns and strategies.
- Are we going to liaise/connect with organisations like embassies and High Commissions etc, which have vast collections of information that would help us to piece together and fill in the gaps with any missing information?

6. Next Steps

Everyone reflected together on what concrete steps could be taken next to plan, fund and work to keep the archive and resource centre project alive and moving forward. Participants were asked to reflect on the discussions, respond to the survey, come up with ideas, and consider joining a Steering Group. Thank you to all facilitators and all who participated. Chantal's relaxation slides closed the event.

- About ownership, networks, relationships so important – so what Next Steps
- get £500 from 20 organisations to get the money that we need
- where does BLM fit into university thoughts, how can university connect to that – good vehicle to open the debate, but Uni and its resistance - what is happening there politically?
- Important to talk about 'what is Black'
- is there was an association of all the universities – is not that a good starting point before going to other funders?
- The thing we need first is a Plan that everyone agrees with. We cannot go to the university/funders until we have a strong plan
- Need a small pot of money to do that
- Universities – a big bid at Durham to support students of colour – several regional unis. Need to tap into those agendas eg Race Equality Charter, but are we willing to compromise with institutions? We need a good case for why they would want to invest.
- Pull a steering group together and a plan. External facing – paid. Uni could still raise funds using existing partnership/project and open up to wider community.
- Northumbria needs joined up thinking – disparity within the university. Perhaps some orgs need to step back and who is using who – the power sits with whoever starts the initiative – make sure the communities are inviting people to the party without excluding people.
- Potential for a steering group to lead, come up with a plan/a bid, (who is interested in being part of the group?), Northumbria raise some funds to small contract a person. But up to the steering group to decide.
- The Multilingual library with a recording studio is willing to host activities and share a space.
- Cannot let all of this die because of funding problems – so many organisations die

FROM THE CHAT ON 'NEXT STEPS':
- Approach the fundraising by running a creative project – eg: Fee discussed a listening & recording booth for people's memories. Also Hartlepool living museum exhibit with stories added to give a creative sense of voices and perhaps bring in money.
- Need boots on the ground for the first bit of funding that leads on to the other ones; ideas excellent but dedicated group needed to get this going
- Now is the time to get this going with BLM etc.
- There are talented people out there who can do it – the cream of talent within the communities
- We need a home and we need a 'mother' to look after it
- Northumbria not the place - a big institution always says 'what do we get in return' – who has the 'substance' to do this

Links from the chat:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000y6jt
https://lesbianherstoryarchives.org/;
https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/listings/region/tyne-and-wear/african-lives-in-northern-england/
www.everydaymuslim.org/
The booklet on *African Lives in Northern England* can be ordered through caroline@s4a.org.uk. Launch on October 17th, in Stockton on October 21st and Newcastle on October 23rd. Beverley Prevatt Goldstein bpg@blueyonder.co.uk.
Contacts: Susan Ashley, susan.ashley@northumbria.ac.uk; Kathleen Boodhai, kathleen3.boodhai@northumbria.ac.uk; Anita Wan, anita@angelou-centre.org.uk.