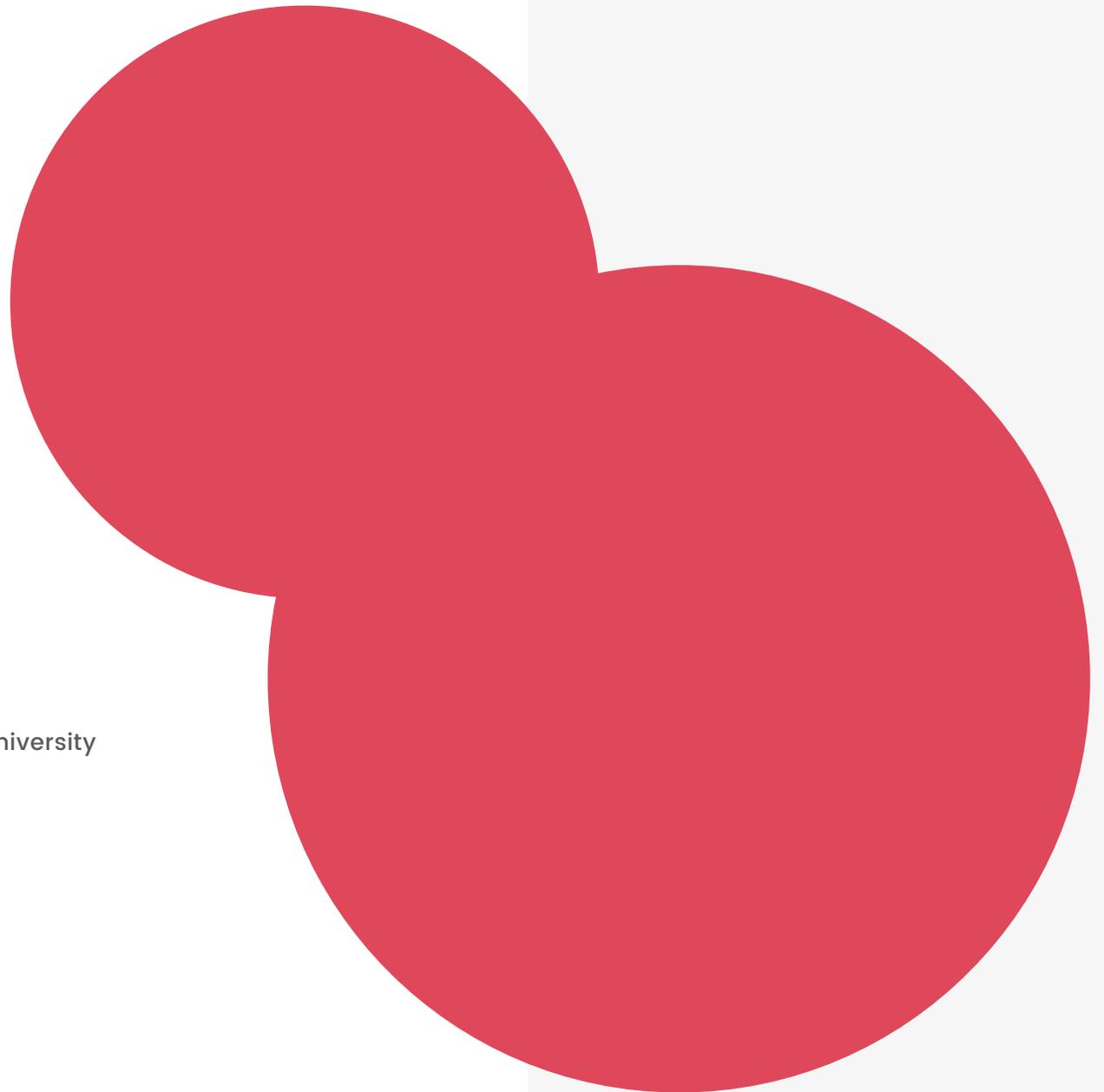**COMMON CAUSE**

Khyal: Music and Imagination

A collaboration between GemArts and Durham University

Khyal: Music and Imagination

Published September 2018

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and AHRC Connected Communities Programme.

Common Cause Research

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

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

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

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

At A Glance

Title
Khyal: Music and Imagination

Key Partners
Gem Arts

Durham University

Funder
Arts and Humanities Research Council

Dates
January - November 2016

Websites
https://gemarts.org/projects/125/khyal-music-and-imagination

https://www.dur.ac.uk/music/khyal/
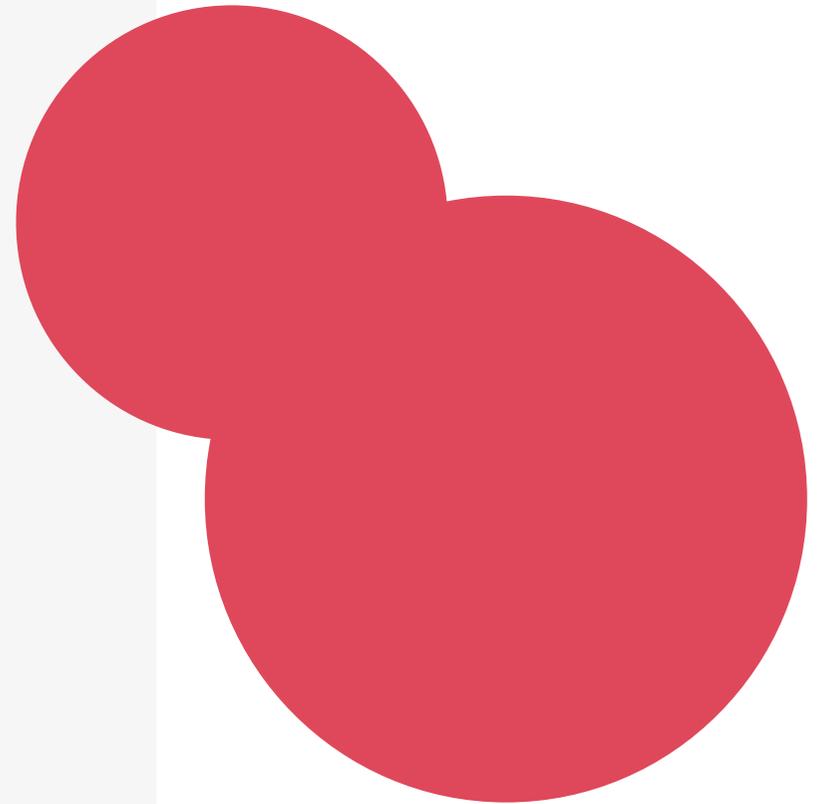
Selected Outputs
- Khyal: Music and Imagination Exhibition at the Oriental Museum
- Khyal: Music and Imagination free downloadable app
- Khyal: Music and Imagination Brochure

Project Summary

Khyal: Music and Imagination was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and undertaken between January to November 2016. This collaboration between GemArts and Durham University builds on a previous AHRC funded research project, '<u>The reception of performance in North Indian classical music</u>', which focused – among other things – on how Indian musicians and audiences experience and imagine classical vocal performance. The term 'khyal' come from Persian and means 'imagination' or 'idea'; khyal is also genre of North Indian vocal classical music. The 'Khyal: Music and Imagination' project brought together musicians, ethnomusicologists and visual artists to explore the khyal genre and stimulate the production of original works of visual art inspired by the music. The project facilitated a range of people to engage in music and imagination through a variety of venues including schools, concerts, festivals, museums and galleries. Workshops were also held in India. The <u>Laing Art Gallery</u> was a named partner for hosting the exhibition of work produced through the project.

GemArts is an arts development organisation established in 2001, it arose from and remains a part of the registered charity Gateshead Visible Ethnic Minorities Support Group (GVEMSG). Part of the work developed by GVEMSG was the application of community arts to support social inclusion and to promote community relations through yearly celebrations of cultural events, regular concerts and workshops. These events were noted for reaching out to the wider community and GemArts was established to give greater focus to culturally diverse art and the support, development and promotion of its artists. The aim of GemArts is to increase equality of opportunity for everyone to engage with culturally diverse arts as artists, producers, participants and audiences. Today, GemArts is an award winning arts organisation based in Gateshead in the North East of England. A nationally recognised leader in the South Asian and diversity arts sector, GemArts creates and programmes high quality concerts, events, festivals, workshops and commissions with regional, national and international artists across all art forms. Working in collaboration with the voluntary, public and

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private sector, GemArts has made a significant contribution in increasing arts engagement amongst under represented communities particularly those from BAMER and wider backgrounds across the region.

Durham University was established in 1832, Durham is described as being one of the leading centres of medieval scholarship alongside Oxford and Cambridge. The University has 16 Colleges, with a 19th due to open in 2019. In 2016/17 the University had 17,927 students and 150 countries are represented in its staff and student bodies.

Khyal: Music and Imagination brought together three singers of the khyal genre and three visual artists to spend time together in Durham. The singers performed in public events, the visual artists worked on original artworks inspired by khyal performances and discussions with the singers who featured in those performances. GemArts were instrumental in promoting the performances and exhibitions arising from the project to diverse communities; they also worked with the academic team to organise two schools workshops delivered jointly by a musicologist and a visual artist; children participating in the workshops were encouraged to engage with the idea of music and visual imagery and produced their own art works. GemArts were consulted in the process of project design and they helped in all stages, including the appointment of one of the visual artists. Original recordings from the previous research by Durham ethnomusicologists which informed Khyal: Music and Imagination were made available to the wider public through an interactive i-pad app which is free to download and enables users to explore khyal music. Exhibitions presenting the original research, interactive app, professional and school children's artwork were held at the Laing Art Gallery, New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, Oriental Museum at Durham University, and the MB Birla Art Gallery at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London (the latter in collaboration

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with Sama Arts Network). A workshop was held in Pune in collaboration with Studio 7, India bringing together art lovers with a visual artist and singer where participants created artwork inspired by khyal music: this work was exhibited at a public event in India that also featured music as well as three of the UK-based project exhibitions.

How the collaboration came about

The first meeting between academic and community partners is described as happening in 2010 at a social event, a concert organised by GemArts where the potential partners were introduced to each other by a mutual friend. The academic partner reflects that given their shared mutual interest in classical Indian music, they would have met at some point anyway had this chance encounter not happened. Following the initial meeting the partners continued to meet socially at events organised by GemArts and then collaborated on organising classical Indian music events, including at the University, before collaborating on the Khyal: Music and Imagination project.

> **The (Co-investigator) and myself both moved to Durham to work here. Given our involvement with working with Indian music we were interested in meeting whoever is involved in the support and promotion of Indian music in the North East. Then the actual meeting happened by chance when we went to see a concert by a guitarist, a friend of ours, we were introduced by this mutual friend to (the community partner) backstage a couple of months before we actually moved to Durham. It would have happened anyway, it happened in a felicitous manner, but if it didn't happen that way we would have got in touch with them once we moved here. At that time we didn't know about the breadth of the activities that GemArts staff are involved in. I believe that our first collaboration, official and public collaboration was the organisation of a concert in 2012 by a very old acquaintance of ours, it was the first Durham based concert that we did together with them. And since then we got involved in organising and promoting concerts mostly in Durham.**
>
> **(Academic partner)**

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The community partner recounts that the initial meetings highlighted all kinds of possibilities for working together and led to a number of collaborations on organising music events before collaborating on Khyal: Music and Imagination.

> **We were both aware of each other, so both (Principal Investigator and Co-investigator) knew that GemArts existed through our performance programme … we produce, support and programme South Asian music from classical to folk, to more contemporary styles of music working with regional, national and international artists. So (Principal Investigator and Co-investigator) had come to one of the concerts that we programmed at Sage Gateshead. And then once you start talking … I wasn't aware in terms of (Co-investigator) being Head of the music department at the University. It was great to discover that academic expertise in Indian classical music was based in the region and we started to discuss all sorts of possibilities and opportunities. So in the first instance… we co-promoted a concert in Durham around 2012, which then led on to filming and interviewing mainly international Hindustani classical musicians that were performing as part of GemArts programme, as well as co-prompting other performances over the years in Durham. I was really interested in (Principal Investigator and Co-investigator) research into how Indian musicians and audiences experience and imagine classical performance, and also the relationship between artists on stage. So that's how our collaboration developed and has blossomed over the years.**
>
> **(Community partner)**

The academic partner was invited to join the steering committee of GemArts and did so before collaborating on the Khyal: Music and imagination project. Both partners describe that spending time getting to know each other, an appreciation and respect for each other's work and a shared approach to problem-solving, were important to

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collaborating on small scale projects before embarking on Khyal: Music and Imagination which was seen as potentially being of mutual benefit.

One thing that strikes me about GemArts is that they really manage to involve different communities in the Northeast. And I think of course the organisation is excellent, they're very effective. They're efficient, they organise things strategically, there is good planning. So when in 2015 we started thinking about this Khyal project, there was no doubt, it was completely natural that this had to be done with Gem. It was a very organic process in a way. I think that working with them on Khyal upgraded our relationship – this is how I like to put it – from partners to friendship. Not only (Director of GemArts), but also with the other members of his team, really being able to discuss shared problems, find a solution together – this has been a massive support really.
(Academic partner)

Khyal was the first opportunity as well for us to actually I guess instigate a project together, you know from the very beginning and look at how we build on our current collaboration………what's the next stage, how do we take that further. And there was a range of interesting strands to this particular project where we thought we could actually create a fantastic piece of research building on each other's organisation's roles and expertise exploring the music itself, and the visual arts, by recruiting and bringing together a team of international creatives and academics, as well as engagement with communities, and schools. So the project really met with our shared vision, mission and goals.
(Community partner)

Both partners describe having prior experience of research and working collaboratively with diverse minority and majority ethnic communities; focused discussions about what 'collaboration', 'Black and minority ethnic', 'research' meant were, therefore, not deemed

necessary. Furthermore, the Khyal: Music and Imagination project was not aimed at a particular minority ethnic group but aimed to make this genre of music more accessible to a wide audience.

> **We wanted to involve artists who are not familiar with Indian music, we want them to engage with Indian music, but we want to try to make them go beyond the standard exoticism and the cultural stereotype. Now I do not know how successful one can be in that, but there was this deliberate effort, it's not about labels here … but in a way it is about you know common places. So that was the point. Since our discipline is about creating cross cultural dialogue, if we start fuelling the production of stereotypes then there's no point with this.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Similarly, GemArts works with artists from diverse backgrounds to facilitate cross-collaboration and engage diverse audiences. Research and evaluation is a key component of the organisation's work and working with a University was something the organisation was keen to do.

> **GemArts is an Arts Council funded national portfolio organisation and we receive funding from various trusts and foundations, public funding, and also sponsors and donors. Our focus is to ensure that those communities from BAMER and wider communities that are least engaged have access to high quality arts opportunities. We are committed to ensuring that creativity and diversity are at the heart of our cultural offer, and that we support artists whose work reflects creative and cultural diversity to develop their practice. We have excellent monitoring and evaluation in place, and of course we write reports to our stakeholders, on particular projects and where resources allow, we employ independent evaluators, as we are keen to show the benefit and impact of our work, as well as challenges and learning. So working with the University is part of**

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our strategic objective as academic research makes our case for creativity and diversity across all strands of our work and the wider arts ecology more robust.. Essentially GemArts started off by celebrating the three South Asian festivals ... so that was Eid, Diwali and Vaisakhi and that continues till today. And from that, that's what has been built on. Today we commission new work, supporting artists at every stage of their career, and programme over 30 performances a year presenting work in international venues to community spaces, we also deliver GemArts award winning Masala Festival in July of each year, and have a far reaching learning and participation programme engaging with thousands of people and working with around 300 artists, across all strands of our artistic programme. We have a core South Asian audience for our performance programme, however this is not exclusive, as we have developed our audiences from non-South Asian backgrounds. In addition there's lots of cross collaboration with other artists from other communities, from other ethnicities as well, this can be seen from our learning and participation programme both in schools and community settings which really does reflect the diversity of our communities.
(Community partner)

The partners met through what is described as a chance encounter and then had significant informal contact and some collaboration to deliver artistic events, before collaborating on Khyal: Music and Imagination. A shared interest in Indian arts and working in a cross-cultural context was supportive to establishing trusting relationships in which both partners could have open, honest dialogue and support each other. The focus of the project was on a particular genre of North Indian classical music and making this accessible to a wide a range of minority and majority ethnic communities.

Developing collaborative research

The idea for Khyal: Music and Imagination came from the academic partners who went on to be the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the project; the idea was developed on the basis of previous research they had conducted with a focus on the reception of music performance by both musicians and listeners. Khyal: Music and Imagination was, therefore, not intended to be developed as a piece of original research, but a follow on work with a focus on impact and engagement.

This was not a project that was supposed to develop original research. It was a development of what we did before but trying to look at audiences. [In the previous research] we knew we were doing knowledge transfer because we were transferring part of our knowledge and we were using their knowledge for our work. It was clearly a two way process, but then we realised that we've got some impact evidence here. So then we the particular follow-on scheme by the AHRC, follow on for impact and engagement, which is the scheme under which Khyal project has been funded. (Academic partner)

The academic partners ran a pilot, with funding from the University, to test their idea. The pilot project involved working with a visual artist who produced a drawing based on listening to music recordings and consulting written and AV data generated from the previous research conducted by the academic partners. It was after this pilot that the idea for Khyal: Music and Imagination was further developed in consultation with the community partner.

It was through the academic partners (where the idea for the project originated), but it was through consultation really. We developed the project over informal conversations first, and then a series of meetings and discussions and how we

could make best use of the research and resources the University had, how we bring the various strands together including previous performance and interview recordings, as well as bringing new visual artists and Khyal and Indian Classical musicians here in residence. So that was a really collaborative approach which fed into the bid writing as well. Through GemArts expertise we contributed in developing jointly the artist brief and call out for the visual artists, ensuring that this was distributed across GemArts networks and wider. We shortlisted and sat on the panel and made the final selection together. The schools project specifically as well, that really played to our strength, and we developed and shaped the workshop delivery using our expertise and knowledge ensuring that we gave a high quality experience to schools that had not had this kind of opportunity before. So it was a very two way collaborative process in terms of writing the application and developing the project from the beginning, everyone had ownerships and buy-in.
(Community partner)

The academic partner relates how the role of GemArts was crucial to developing and operationalising the idea for the project and subsequently in the recruitment of artists and the development of work in schools.

We started talking to them about you know the school workshops for example, because we were saying what is doable, what is not doable, and that's why we really needed their experience, the workshops were massively shaped by them. But at the same time when we appointed the visual artist – GemArts were on our panel – we selected them together. Also because Gem have more experience in selecting candidates for this kind of project, they really gave us that kind of confidence. And again I don't think if we would have been able to make those

decisions without Gem, because without their help we could have not shaped things in that way.
(Academic partner)

Both partners highlight that the established, trusting relationship and mutual belief in the potential and benefits of the project were important to the ease with which they were able to work together. The expertise GemArts brought in terms of project management and infrastructure made an essential contribution.

Being a professional arts organisation, there are processes that we have in place, such as a project management framework, because with small organisations it's a capacity thing as well, so when you take something on you want to ensure that there's high quality in terms of delivery as well as the final production, experience, and art produced. I think we've always been driven as an organisation to do this, to ensure that there's a management infrastructure in place so that everyone knows what they are doing in terms of their roles and responsibilities within the core GemArts team and the artists that we work with and employ, alongside external partners, because we're working on multiple projects at once. So firstly you work with people … you have to get on with people to make something work……..we have that established and trusted relationship with (Principal Investigator and Co-investigator) and Durham University already . And then after that, then there's processes, mechanisms and infrastructure that you need to make sure that are in place to make the delivery of a project successful.
(Community partner)

Indeed, the academic partner reflects that if GemArts had said the idea for the project was not workable, it would not have been taken forward. Furthermore, GemArts are an ongoing source of support and involvement with other research that the academic partners undertake.

So firstly you work with people … you have to get on with people to make something work. And then after that, then there's kind of processes and mechanisms and infrastructure that you need to make sure that are in place to make something successful.

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With Gem I think from day one we started thinking aloud really, and I was telling them what do you think about this – it was all very informal and it was at pre-draft stage. So I think we really had this chat with them which reassured us that they thought it would be doable. You know if we had that chat and they had told us no forget it, this is not doable, we would have. So even for that ... they were essential even in saying yes. GemArts usually facilitates our research... so for example last weekend we were at The Sage (a music venue), they were promoting an artist there, but they facilitated our relationship with the artist so we could go, we could record a concert for our research purposes, (Co-investigator) did a pre-concert talk also for public engagement, so it was for the benefit of everyone really. And we will give copies of the concert to Gem, to The Sage, to the artist, and we can use it for our research. So GemArts facilitate our research in an immense way.

(Academic partner)

A strong connection and collaboration between the partners is apparent in the development of the idea for Khyal: Music and Imagination, including reaching a decision about feasibility of taking the project forward. Trust, recognition and appreciation of each other's expertise, a common vision for the project and a strong established relationship were key to facilitating the collaborative approach.

Funding

Khyal: Music and Imagination was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under their 'Follow-on Funding Scheme for Impact and Engagement'. The project was funded to undertake work between January and November 2016.

The academic partners led on writing the bid with input from the community partner whose knowledge about costing the work made an important contribution. The community partner reflects that in this collaboration there was no sense of being exploited, something that is apparent in other collaborations between mainstream and community organisations.

There was a budget line that was set for our contribution, and that was a fair budget line as well. We discussed from the beginning what our contribution would be in terms of staff time, practical things such as managing DBS checks, and also in kind support. This didn't happen in this project … what happens, which I'm really critical about … there are projects with mainstream institutions whether that's universities or whether it's other organisations, using BME organisations. There are mainstream organisations and institutions who work with BME community groups and organisations and expect them to deliver work and use their knowledge and expertise without contributing any resources, financial or otherwise, to develop the BME group's capacity and sustainability. This mainly occurs when no consultation has taken place between potential partners prior to putting in a funding bid. There is a privileged position where the power lies with institutions, they have the expertise in applying for funding, and in some cases they expect smaller organisations to be grateful for even being included in the project bid. It is tokenistic and exploitative, because basically those mainstream organisations are trying to meet their own needs and their own vision without

really looking at what the needs of those community organisations are. There is this notion that mainstream organisations can cover the costs of all their delivery, a real financial value is placed on that, whereas the small community BME organisations, their contribution is totally devalued in financial terms, and where really, the expertise lies in achieving the outcomes. What's worse is when mainstream organisation name BME led organisations in their funding bids to make them stronger, and so that they are 'ticking that diversity box', with no real intention to even work with them. That's just unethical, and also leads to the vicious cycle where funding is taken away from those BME organisations and those communities that need it most to develop and thrive in the long term. So you need to ensure that consultation happens, joint decision making at all levels, that there is transparency, and that financial value and resources are allocated equitably. That's when there is a real partnership, when everyone's contribution is fully valued.....and that's what happened in this project. With the application process we fed in and we had complete buy-in to that. The cash contribution to deliver the schools workshops were fully costed up as were in-kind support such as staff time, marketing, and other factors – that was absolutely planned, we wrote a support letter as part of the application, so yes we were very happy with that.

(Community partner)

The academic partner acknowledges the in kind support given by GemArts and describes negotiating payments to them with the funder.

You know we do a lot of collaborations with Gem without really looking at the nitty gritty of costs for a lot of the project, our relationship I think is good because it's not too stiff, we are very relaxed. But on that occasion of course we were talking about a lot of time commitment from them, from us, and we had to budget everything for the AHRC. So when we came to the stage of writing the

> **financial side of the application we had to spell out what GemArts was giving us, what we were giving them. So for example GemArts you know school workshops, we covered the cost of the DBR checks, but GemArts gave us a lot of staff time as a contribution in kind. There were some costs of the workshops that we wanted to contribute to because we also thought that you know after all GemArts is a charity which is funded by the Arts Council – it would have not been right not to contribute and the AHRC understood and were happy with that. Because we told the AHRC okay GemArts is giving us a lot … we think that some costs should be covered because of the nature of the organisation and it was absolutely fine. And of course we all know in practice that when you do these things, the staff time always goes well beyond what one puts in the budget … on both sides of course.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Both partners highlight messages for consideration by funders regarding collaborative projects.

- Community projects cannot be expected to make significant contributions in kind and there should be fair recompense for their participation.
- Achieve a balance in funding projects between established partners and new partnerships. Developing projects with new partners is important but requires more support to develop and establish a mutually beneficial and trusting relationship.
- Collaborative projects that include established partners alongside new ones can provide a more solid ground for the delivery of projects, because established partners are likely to have more resilience to address challenges that new partners may find difficult to manage.
- Obtain a letter of support from community partner organisations that confirms they fully understand the project and the resources they will receive for their participation.

We all know in practice that when you do these things, the staff time always goes well beyond what one puts in the budget … on both sides of course.

It can't be a one way thing, it just cannot. Like I said some organisations are the other way - parachute stuff in, don't build any capacity in the community organisations, and they're just left. That's where this vicious cycle occurs with BME led organisations and communities – and why is the BME infrastructure not supported? And also there's all these scraps of little bits of money which these organisations have to fight over. So instead of organisations and the sector supporting each other, because there's only small amounts … they compete and tensions arise. And we know that, and that still happens to this day.
(Community partner)

* Robust systems to evaluate and monitor if the larger organisations, whether a university or community partner, deliver their side of the tasks. Don't assume that because they are larger and more trusted organisations, or have an established relationship with the funder, that they will necessarily do the work they have agreed to do.

In this collaboration the academic partners led on developing the proposal by mutual agreement and with input from the community partner. The need to consider due recompense for community partners is highlighted and that there should be less reliance on in kind support. Achieving a balance in funding established partnerships alongside new ones is important, new partnerships may carry more risk and it is suggested that this could be mitigated by bringing together new and established partners in a collaboration; however this would require steps to ensure new partners don't feel excluded by joining partners who have an already established connection and rapport. It is suggested that funders can take steps to ensure smaller community organisations are not exploited, their infrastructure is supported and larger academic or community organisations deliver the tasks they have signed up to.

Undertaking the research

The focus for Khyal: Music and Imagination was on impact and engagement, the project was not intended to be an original piece of research. The research aspect and data collected, therefore, relates to measuring impact and engagement and was led by the University with input from the community partner.

I think it was quite multi-layered, so we had a few pre-meetings, there was meetings scheduled in before the project actually started, in terms of what the roles and responsibilities are, what kind of impact … we talked about impact assessment as well, in terms of what methodologies we could use, what methodologies have GemArts in place to assess and monitor and evaluate work. So I guess … well we put all our tools on the table and said look this is what we do and the University did as well.
(Community partner)

The project is described as being multi-layered with specific interconnected components including:

- The recruitment of a visual artist done collaboratively. GemArts' participation is described by the academic partner as invaluable tool for the project.
- Collaboration between visual and performing artists to discuss and understand each other's work in the context of the project, hosted by the University.
- The khyal singers performed in live events in Durham – the concerts were co-promoted and advertised by GemArts through their contacts and networks.
- The visual artists worked on creating original artworks inspired by AV recordings of khyal performances by the three singers involved in the project and by discussions with

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the singers, with the aim of displaying the work at public exhibitions alongside the music that had inspired them.

- Two workshops in schools recruited by GemArts and delivered jointly by a musicologist and a visual artist which facilitated pupils to create their own artwork by engaging with the idea of an encounter between music and visual imagery.
- Development of an interactive i-pad app commissioned by the University. Recordings from the academic partners' earlier research, on which Khyal: Music and Imagination is based, were used in the app which provides information on this genre and enables users to isolate the sounds of specific instruments as well mixing their own sounds. The app was exhibited alongside the visual art in the exhibitions.
- Production of a booklet about the project with contributions from the artists, academic and community partners.

Presentation of the work in external venues for exhibition is described as benefitting from the input of GemArts who could promote such events to diverse communities through their networks. Such promotion can bring audiences to a venue that some communities may not otherwise access.

Durham University and GemArts are both highly respected organisations working within the region, and the final exhibition we produced, across a whole range of strands including professional art works, digital technology and work with schools was incredible and of the highest quality, culturally relevant and significant. Sometimes you have to question if the same value and appreciation is made by those running mainstream venues. We also programmed a brilliant performance in the space which brought in a very diverse audience, who had never been to the venue previously.
(Community partner)

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GemArts participated in the initial planning meetings to discuss the impact data to be collected, what methodology would be used and who would undertake the tasks to monitor, assess and evaluate the work. Data was collected for evidence of impact in a number of ways and is ongoing, for example in relation to the app and any future work that emerges such as further exhibitions.

- Data about downloads of the interactive app is collected through Google Stats
- The artists provided testimonials and were also interviewed by the academic team.
- Questionnaires were given to people attending the exhibitions.
- Testimonials are being collected from the venues where exhibitions and concerts were held.
- Teachers filled feedback questionnaires.
- Post-it notes and a wall-mounted board were provided at one exhibition venue for visitors to express their feelings.

The academic team had responsibility for analysing the data which is shared with GemArts to inform their own impact assessment. The academic team are looking to write and submit a paper about the project for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which assesses the research of British Higher Education Institutions. Challenges relating to data collection are described by the academic partner as relating to the standard challenges of making this process meaningful to people providing the data, as well as generate relevant evidence for assessing impact.

Well, for the evidence collections I think we're facing the standard challenges. So you know trying to shape our questionnaires in a way that gives meaningful questions that are immediately accessible to the person who fills the questionnaire, but at the same time it gives us evidence of impact. It's the usual problem about the definition of impact. We have a lot of evidence of engagement. Or for example we are thinking of different ways of collecting evidence, maybe not

the questionnaires but more interactive [ways], more with Post-Its and things like that. So we are facing that, I think I would say … I'm quite involved with impact, because I'm also the Impact Officer of the department, so I am quite aware of the challenges that other colleagues find in other departments.
(Academic partner)

No specific challenges between the academic team and GemArts are highlighted in relation to the delivery of the project or data collection. Early discussions to decide how data would be collected and analysed by whom and a trust in each other's expertise facilitated delivery of these aspects of the project. One challenge highlighted relates to exhibiting work in external venues that are not familiar with particular genres of work, in this case a multi-media exhibition focused around a genre of classical Indian music; furthermore, the systems and bureaucratic processes of some external venues may not be supportive of exhibiting this kind of work in a way that gives due recognition to its value. A further challenge is the collection of data on impact in a way that is meaningful for those providing it as well as generating the required evidence, the academic team are looking at finding approaches that could facilitate both issues to be addressed.

Roles and responsibilities

There was a formal approach to setting out roles and responsibilities in the funding application, in practice these are described as emerging more organically to suit the needs of the project and expertise that everyone involved brought to the table. The Principal Investigator coordinated the various components of the project and people working on it, the Research Technician took the lead on developing the i-pad app and the artists were responsible for delivering tasks they had been commissioned to undertake. GemArts took the lead on delivery of workshops though this was not set out formally and they played a key role in promoting events and activities. An established understanding between the academic team and GemArts about each other's strengths is described as facilitating a flexible and organic approach that worked well.

> **Well I think that it was good in the sense that there was this obvious mutual understanding of each other's strengths. So it was always clear GemArts had much more experience in certain things, so it came out organically. I suppose that it worked well because it was a project involving these particular people who know each other very well. If it was a larger project involving more parties who probably didn't know us as well, then I think it would have been challenging.** (Academic partner)

Regular meetings of the project steering committee also facilitated roles and responsibilities to be discussed and reviewed.

> **We also had steering committee meetings, so we were reviewing, and (community partner) always came to the meetings. So we had two or three actually throughout the year. Steering committee meetings were planned from**

Well I think that it was good in the sense that there was this obvious mutual understanding of each other's strengths. So it was always clear GemArts had much more experience in certain things

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> **day 1 from the AHRC application, they involved ... the core team including (community partner), he was part of the core team.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Roles and responsibilities were also a key part of early discussions before the project got under way and GemArts expertise in project management is described a key asset. Both partners feel an equal structure and shared sense of responsibility was achieved between them and core team members.

Accountability

The Principal Investigator was ultimately accountable to the funders for the delivery of the project and other accountabilities are described as emerging organically as the project got under way.

> **90% organic. We didn't need to change it much though. Again it was a small team and I think that ultimately I was responsible for the project, but as I said (Research Technician) was the one accountable for the app. But he was also the person that visual artists went to for the technical support. So it was obvious from day 1 what the accountabilities were … and it worked like that. I had to chip in a couple of times to get the (Research Technician) some support in a couple of difficult situations, but it was completely independent … he works independently. And again for the workshops it was a completely organic process.**
> **(Academic partner)**

A shared sense of accountability is said to have been achieved in the core team and this also helped to address the challenges encountered with holding exhibitions in external venues; core team members were supportive of each other to find solutions collaboratively. The burden of accountability is described as being carried equally.

Outputs and legacy

Several tangible and non-tangible outputs have been produced with clarity about their ownership and maintenance. Tangible outputs and their ownership are as follows:

- Three original artworks by the artists commissioned by both partners to produce these. Photos of the artworks can be viewed on the project website
- An interactive app which can be downloaded for free and enables exploration of the khyal music genre, isolation of the sounds of specific instruments and mixing the sounds as users wish. The app is owned by the University.
- Two school workshops jointly delivered by an ethnomusicologist and a visual artist. The original artwork produced by children in these workshops is owned by the children. Prints and electronic copies of their work were exhibited alongside other project outputs in the multimedia exhibitions held at the end of the project.
- Music performances by the khyal singers were recorded and there is an official agreement in writing that these are owned by the artists, the University has permission to use these for research, archiving and educational and non-commercial purposes.
- Four multimedia exhibitions at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne, the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, the Oriental Museum in Durham and the MP Birla Gallery at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London (in collaboration with Sama Arts Network). The materials for the exhibitions are stored and maintained by the University. GemArts is acknowledged as the partner in any public presentations.
- A visual art workshop with participants of different ages (in collaboration with Studio 7) and live event delivered in Pune, India.

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- A visual art workshop with adult participants (in collaboration with the Oriental Museum) in Durham.
- A brochure about the project which can be downloaded free of charge in high or low resolution.
- Public talks given by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator, there is no ownership of the talks and GemArts are acknowledged as partners in all presentations.

Evidence of Impact is being generated for the Research Excellence Framework. There are no academic papers written as yet; the nature of the AHRC grant did not require academic papers to be written, the focus being on public engagement activity.
Several non-tangible outputs are highlighted by both partners. The academic partner identifies:

- Schools work which has provided pupils with the experience of working in an interdisciplinary and cross-modal manner.
- Workshops in India with amateur adult artists who had the opportunity to work with music and visual art for the first time.
- Bringing together two cultures is a key focus of the project and participants have gained knowledge and experience from this approach.
- Artists have gained new knowledge and experience which they are using to revise previous and inform further work, thereby supporting professional development.
- Venues where exhibitions and concerts have been held have benefitted from being able to display innovative work and provide opportunities for their audiences to reflect on the encounter between music and the visual arts.

The community partner identifies wide ranging benefits that span GemArts, pupils, teachers, the University, artists working on the project and wider society.

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- Staff at GemArts gained experience of project management, from conception to completion, on a collaborative academic research project with a university; for some staff this was the first time they had worked on this type of project.
- Schools workshops enabled pupils to listen to khyal music, for many their first time, and interpret the music through visual arts. Teachers appreciated the opportunity provided to pupils to engage with music and art in this way. The evaluations of this work have provided useful insights for GemArts which they can apply to future work.
- The relationship between the University and GemArts has been strengthened.
- The app further provides opportunities for people to learn about the khyal genre and musical instruments and is not something GemArts would have been able to produce, the expertise brought together by the University facilitated this.

The wide ranging outputs and process of collaborating to develop and deliver the project are described as creating several legacies. The academic partner highlights the model for Khyal: Music and Imagination as an approach that other academics can build on, it has also facilitated dialogue between communities and demonstrates an approach to minimising exoticism of art forms.

There is a model in place that demonstrates an approach to undertaking this kind of work and in this respect it demonstrates Impact arising from Khyal. The project brings cultures together and can facilitate dialogue between communities: this is enabled in part because the project is dialogic and challenges thinking. The project aims not to exoticise and demonstrates an approach to avoid this. Though it is not always possible to get rid of exoticism completely, steps can be taken to minimise this.
(Academic partner)

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The community partner feels a key legacy of the project is the wide reach it has and this is likely to continue as interest in the project continues with further exhibitions likely in various geographic locations.

> I think the resources that have been created, again which are online as well, the fantastic visual art works created by professional artists and school children. The academic research and recordings are a key legacy and will inform future projects and knowledge exchange. The app, using digital technology, is going to enable people to engage with khyal music in a way that has never been done before There are a few publications (leaflets and brochure) that we've distributed more widely. The legacy also is about the strengthening of the partnership between the University and GemArts as well. And I guess interviews like this, because obviously that's an interest to you, and that builds on the legacy of our work. The reach and engagement with new audiences is a real tangible legacy as the exhibition and work created is now on tour, it's currently at a gallery in Leicester and will be exhibited at the Oriental Museum in Durham next. We have also had the opportunity to develop a strand of work in India as a direct result of the artists involved in the project.
>
> **(Community partner)**

Both partners feel there are equal benefits for them arising from the legacies of the project and this has been enabled by transparency, good communication, due acknowledgement and a shared enthusiasm and excitement for undertaking the project. The collaboration is described as an excellent experience.

> It's transparency really, absolutely. We talked about it, we were enthused by it, excited by the collaboration – at every level we communicated, about what we wanted to do and achieve. Whether that was the creative element, recruitment and programming, to the operational side and the structure of the project, the

delivery of the project, to acknowledgments – 'Are you happy with this?' all that you know. And then the sharing of images, on-line content and accreditation – everything from top to bottom was like that. So that's why we had a really excellent experience.
(Community partner)

A wide range of tangible and non-tangible outputs and legacies are highlighted with clarity about ownership of tangible outputs. Both partners feel they have an equal share of the benefits arising from outputs and legacies of the project. A strong relationship, open and transparent communication, shared benefits and enthusiasm for the project are highlighted as facilitating good outcomes and experience of the collaboration.

It's transparency really, absolutely. We talked about it, we were enthused by it, excited by the collaboration – at every level we communicated, about what we wanted to do and achieve.

Structural inequalities

The academic partner related that it was useful to learn about and reflect on the concept of structural inequalities in the context of university-community collaborations during the interview for this case study. Khyal: Music and Imagination itself aimed to achieve equality.

The project aimed to achieve equality in collaboration and GemArts were involved in the development and delivery of Khyal, their Director sat on the project steering group and was involved in interviews to recruit and appoint artists in the UK. The aim from the start was not to create an elite product but one that could be accessed by anyone. Schools that would not normally be able to afford bringing in this kind of input have been targeted for delivery of workshops and these have been provided free of charge.
(Academic partner)

Several structural inequalities and their potential impact on university-community collaborations were highlighted by the community partner. The motivation of mainstream organisations to work with Black and minority ethnic organisations is important to consider in the context of structural inequalities.

I guess what is the motivation for mainstream organisations of working with Black minority ethnic organisations. Is it just a tick box exercise, is it because it's basically to unlock funding ... is a partnership or the collaboration in terms of work you want to do deep and meaningful, where you're building capacity, where there's knowledge exchange, where there's a mutual respect in terms of what

you're doing? And if not, then that is structural inequality, because your motivation is wrong.

(Community partner)

The lack of Black and minority ethnic people involved in decision making structures, short-term contracts and lack of opportunities for staff progression are described as contributing to structural inequalities and lack of long term change.

You have to have people from diverse backgrounds at the decision making table, because that effects change, real long term change. Otherwise you're just going to keep on having the same issues and structural inequalities. . So, you have to ask, where are the progression routes for staff or for emergent leaders? There are barriers and glass ceilings. What has happened in the past as well … it still happens … specially at community level, there are specific projects aimed at particular communities which are time limited and under resourced. People who are in those job roles as well as running and delivering projects have to secure funding for their own positions, which means that there is very little opportunity and time for professional development as the role is not embedded into the organisation and therefore progression routes are not identified, and ultimately those positions will end should more funding not be secured. This is clearly not sustainable, and is a factor why there is a lack of BME leadership in senior management positions.

(Community partner)

The feedback highlights that the motivation for collaborating with Black and minority ethnic communities is a significant factor to consider, because it can contribute to creating or sustaining structural inequalities. Other factors contributing to structural inequalities being maintained and insufficient long term change relate to the lack of staff from diverse backgrounds informing decision making structures. This situation is exacerbated by a number of factors including: the lack of progression routes for staff to

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reach senior positions; short-term projects and employment contracts whereby those that do sit at the decision making table then have to move on when the project or their employment ends; and having to secure funding to keep the work of the organisation running as well as deliver a specific project. Embedding sustainable, long term change requires more diverse, long-term leadership at senior management level.

Representing communities

Khyal: Music and Imagination is less focused on representing communities as such and more on achieving as wide a reach as possible in terms of access to the project outputs and legacy. The element of representation is more relevant here in relation to the communities that are 'represented' on the networks and contact lists of organisations such as GemArts and others to inform and enable access to the activities, events and outputs of the project. As wide a reach as possible is said to have been achieved by adopting a range of approaches to inform people about opportunities to attend and participate in events or access tangible outputs.

> **We have tried to involve schools that otherwise may not be able to have access to the project and related workshops. There have also been spontaneous contacts that have been followed up, not just a reliance on established networks and contacts to involve in the project or publicise it.**
> **(Academic partner)**

GemArts is described as offering programmes and an approach that aims to address the needs of specific communities, the work undertaken over many years has enabled the organisation to gain and understanding of issues that impact on particular communities including barriers to accessing opportunities and events. Furthermore, the organisation has established links and presence on strategic bodies as well as with community venues and grassroots communities; this facilitates a wide reach and two way communication of opportunities, needs and views.

> **We have a whole learning and participation programme and it's about how we empower communities to engage with culture and arts, to tell their stories working alongside diverse professional artists. So we work within community**

settings, where we've had long established relationships. But also through other forums and working at a more strategic level, so I sit on, for example, Gateshead Diversity Forum, Gateshead Strategic Partnership, and on various Boards … work within the community and we establish the need before anything else really. At the core of our organisation's belief is 'to increase equality of opportunity for everyone to engage with culturally diverse arts'. GemArts have a track record of successfully delivering in partnership with public and voluntary sector organisations high quality arts based projects in estates and communities where there is minimal or no cultural provision, in areas of high deprivation, working with people from BAME, asylum seeker, refugee and wider communities across the North East…..all our participatory arts projects are free on point of entry. We know the arts and culture are a powerful way for people to address issues in their communities, enable them to express themselves creatively and be heard, build skills, confidence, relationships and social capital, and to celebrate their cultures and identities. Over the last 17 years we have developed a world class performance programmed with flagship venues like Sage Gateshead to community halls where we have presented work of artists from the UK and abroad, and have developed a really diverse audience….there are a whole range of points where audiences can access our work, and we ensure free or subsidised ticket offers to many community groups. As an organisation our trustees, staff, artists and volunteers understand the social, economic and cultural barriers faced by communities, and understand the complexities of working with specific groups such as young people, older people and women's groups, etc.
(Community partner)

Transparency is highlighted as a key feature to enabling communities to represent themselves, as far as possible, without translating and representing views, concerns or needs on their behalf. Engaging communities effectively, whether for consultation or to

participate in available opportunities, is supported by approaches that take into account the preferences and interests of specific community groups.

It's kind of again through that transparency, but as I said before because I'm from those communities, I would ensure that the community and their views are represented, and I'm not talking for them. Also there's a lot of … not particularly for this project, but we do a lot of consultation as well. So our work is participant focussed and we build relationships and trust with communities and ask them 'what they want to do', it's not about being prescriptive, more about making informed choices, empowering and giving ownership. I If we're working with communities that are least engaged, especially from those areas of deprivation, and who haven't had any arts and cultural experiences, usually they'll go to stuff that they know. So if you're working with women's groups, more often than not they will want to do textiles … and that's not being stereotypical, it's their cultural reference point, something they are familiar with and have practical experiences off. But then it's our responsibility and obligation to ask 'Have you ever thought about doing multimedia work using textiles, or using digital work?' It's about opening up those possibilities, it is about that equality of opportunity. If you don't put opportunities forward they won't take a grasp of it, they won't know what other opportunities exist. So I think we're charged as a charity and as leaders or whatever that might be … whoever it is, it's to open those possibilities to people really. And then it's up to them if they want to take it, but we support that through our artists practice and community development work.
(Community partner)

Engaging with communities is likely to be more effective if activities and events they are invited to reflect their personal and cultural interests. The outcome of evaluative work that they have contributed to should be fed back to them, how their views have been

represented and taken into account, how the data will be used and any further developments arising from the work.

> **You can look at outcomes in terms of performance and exhibition programmes. It is really important venues and organisations reflect the communities that they serve – people want to see their cultures reflected, is the cultural offer relevant to them, otherwise why would they go or take part. If you have a diverse programme and cultural offer, you will get diverse audiences. It's very important that the community can feed into that evaluation process as well, that's really important. Lots of our work like I said is independently evaluated as well, so it's not just us saying it, … we take evaluation and feedback from support workers, from participants, from artists because they're the beneficiaries. And then we collate that, put that together, and we share our finding and impact with the community and more widely, so there's that transparency around that We work with many communities and individuals who have English as a second language and where there are low levels of English literacy, so reports and evaluations need to be accessible and written in plain English so that they can be easily interpreted and explained. It is vitally important that communities can see the impact of their decisions, what they said about the project and their experience, and how that affects any future developments.**
> **(Community partner)**

Adopting a wide range of approaches to inform and invite communities to access project events and outputs, through organisations and networks with whom there is an established relationship and trust, is said to have facilitated achieving a wide a reach as possible. Building trusting and respectful relationships with communities requires time and effort to understand their needs, preferences and interests. Enabling communities to represent themselves is a preferred option to other representing them and their views; outcomes of activities, such as evaluation exercises, which do represent

their views should be communicated back to communities in an accessible way. Transparency is described as key to engaging communities in a non-exploitative way and building trust. Communities are more likely to take up opportunities and participate in activities and events that are aligned to their interest and culture.

University-Black and Minority Ethnic Collaborations

Institutions such as universities are described by the academic partner as places that would benefit from developing a greater understanding about what collaboration with communities means, by acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills that will facilitate collaborations with communities. The University of Durham is now better placed to collaborate; there has been valuable learning from this project that can now be applied to other collaborations. Communities should feel able to approach universities with ideas and give honest feedback.

Both partners highlight messages for consideration by other people thinking about engaging in or undertaking similar collaborative projects. The academic partner suggests that it is possible to do this kind of collaboration and not as difficult as it might first seem, but requires effort and hard work. Many researchers can be nervous about the impact agenda and how they might be able to demonstrate this in an academic environment, advice from the academic partner to help address this issue is:

> **If you think about the community first this will be productive and there is a need to think of projects this way round – not start with academic angle and then try to fit communities into that. Adopt a strategic approach to developing collaborative work in this way.**
> **(Academic partner)**

The community partner relates the importance of looking at the pressures on particular communities in terms of their capacity, their funding and the ethical aspects of

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developing partnerships with communities. Key messages from the community partner to others thinking about engaging in similar work are:

- Ensure whatever the vision is for the project and collaboration, that it's a shared vision.
- There has to be transparency and equality in terms of a mutually respected and valued partnership.
- Put in place measures to achieve meaningful participation and avoid tokenism.
- Consider whether there are sufficient benefits not only for the partners but also the beneficiaries of community organisations and what they want to achieve.
- Ensure there is proper resourcing for community organisations and that their capacity is built, not weakened, as a result of collaboration.

It's not short-changing someone, you know what I mean, going 'Oh well we'll just come in and do all this stuff, and we'll include these BME organisations on the application, because they have got access to these groups that we need to work with and because we've got diversity targets to meet'. It's not about that, do you know what I mean. It is about ensuring that you're collaborating in a more deep and meaningful way, creating equitable trusting partnerships to achieve shared goals and build capacity which will have a positive impact on communities and organisations that really need it.
(Community partner)

The feedback suggests there are potential benefits to be gained from working in partnership on collaborative projects. However, if the benefits are to be realised on an equal footing this requires universities to understand what is entailed in collaborative work with communities and to go beyond a tick-box, output and target oriented approach. Communities need to feel confident in approaching and giving honest ideas and feedback to universities. Collaborative projects should ensure that there is a shared

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vision, meaningful participation, transparency and that communities will benefit including through strengthened capacity, not a depletion of their resources.

The future

Both partners would like to collaborate on future projects as well as taking forward opportunities to further develop and sustain Khyal: Music and Imagination. Collaboration is seen as being of benefit to both partners, their established good relationship and trust are identified as key to enabling effective collaborations on future projects.

> **Yes we'll definitely collaborate again on new projects and continuing to collaborate on extensions of this project in relation to follow on requests and related work arising from Khyal. Collaboration is beneficial for both partners and a good relationship of trust is in place which is likely to facilitate ongoing contact and collaboration into the future.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Indeed, both partners have continued to work together to respond to requests arising from the Khyal: Music and Imagination project. They also collaborate on other more informal work that is mutually beneficial; for example, the academic partners attend and record music performances organised by GemArts which they then use for their own research and GemArts receive a copy of the recordings which they can use for their own purposes. The partners also continue to co-promote events.

> **The weekend just gone we just did a performance and the University have recorded that. You know we're talking about if there's other potential work that we can collaborate in the future. The exhibition is touring at the minute, so yeah, there is opportunity to sustain and develop and strengthen the work. The University come and record all our international concerts ...all our Hindustani classical concerts actually, most of them, when they're available. And that's used**

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for their research purposes, and we get copies of those recordings for our digital content and archives. We've co-promoted music together here in Durham, and GemArts have this series of concerts called the Riverside Ragas where we complement the concert with artist talks, with workshops, demonstrations. And as part of that, (academic partners) facilitate various talks with artists on stage as well as doing demonstrations.. So that relationship is deeply embedded, valued, respected on both sides, and we hope to develop the partnership going forward. (Community partner)

The academic Principal Investigator joined the steering group of GemArts some years ago and is now the Chair of this group. The partners meet socially and have established a friendship as well as their working relationship. Both are looking forward to future partnership work in the context of university-community research collaborations.