COMMON CAUSE

PASAR – Participatory Arts and Social Action in Research

A collaboration between Praxis Community Projects and the PASAR Project
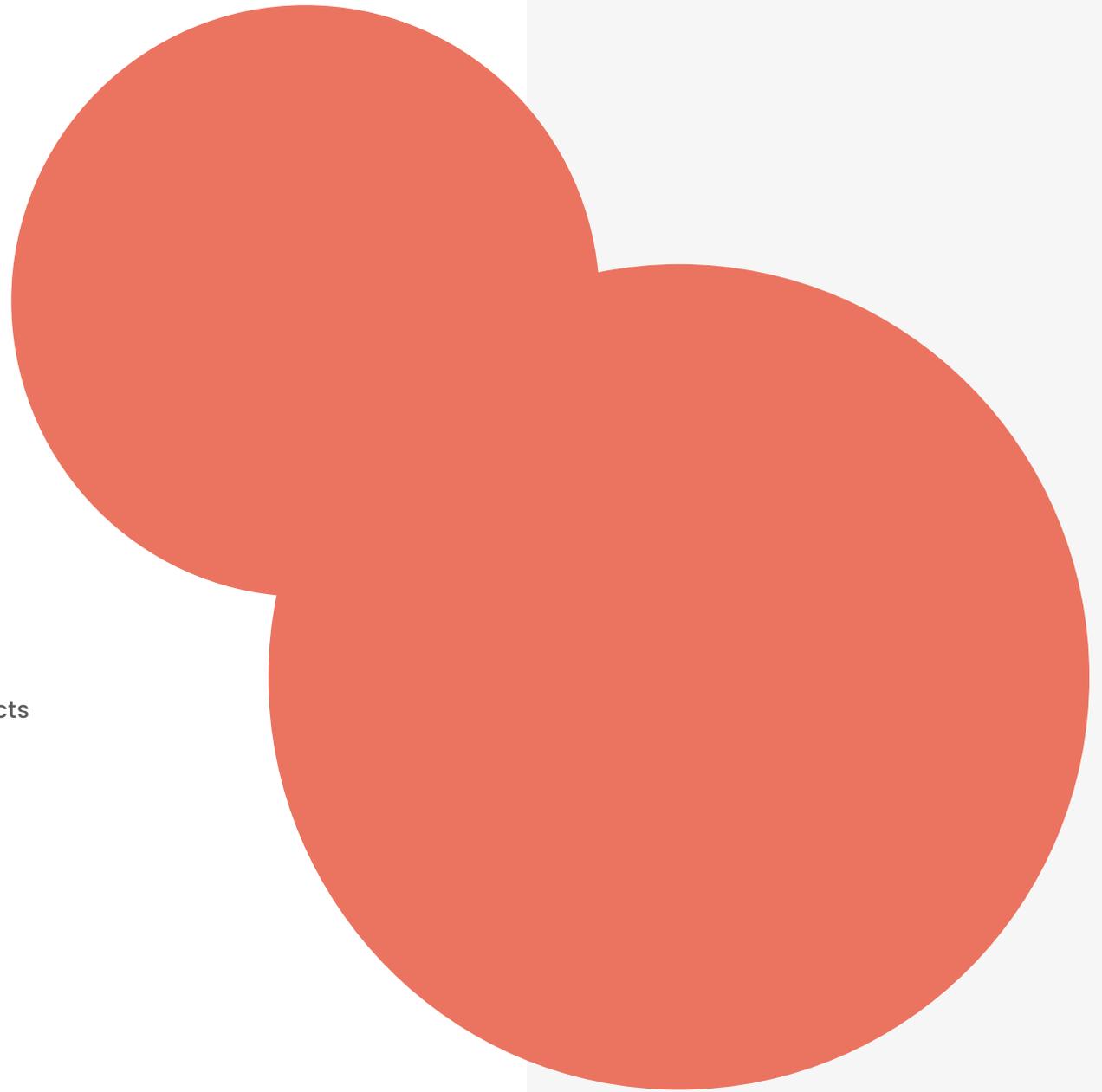
PASAR - Participatory Arts and Social Action in Research

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Common Cause Research

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

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

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

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

At A Glance

Title
PASAR - Participatory Arts and Social Action in Research

Key Partners
Praxis
http://www.praxis.org.uk/

The Open University
http://www.open.ac.uk/

Funder
Economic and Social Research Council

Dates
January 2016 - December 2017

Website
http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/research/projects/pasar-participation-arts-and-social-action-in-research

Selected outputs

- Podcast 'Is it possible to use creative methods to research migration and citizenship'
- Article 'Crisis Upon Crisis: Migrant Families With No Recourse To Public Funds'
- Article 'Migrant Mothers: creative interventions into citizenship'

Project Summary

PASAR has three interconnected strands of work undertaken between January 2016 and December 2017. This case study looks at one strand involving collaboration between Praxis Community Projects and the PASAR project, led by Principal Investigator Dr. Umut Erel and Research Fellow Erene Kaptani at the Open University, with Co-Investigators Prof. Maggie O'Neill at the University of York and Prof. Tracey Reynolds at University of Greenwich, focusing on families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and no other means of sufficient self-support. Praxis is a registered charity that provides advice, support and a welcome meeting place for vulnerable migrants and refugees in London. The charity was founded in 1983 by the Robert Kemble Trust and subsequently registered as an independent charity in 1997. Based in the Bethnal Green district of London, Praxis is a charity working with migrants and refugees in London. The services offered by Praxis include: Advice and Information; Learning and Employment; Health and Wellbeing; Community Projects; Language and Interpreting; and Shelter and Safety.

The Open University is a distance learning and research University that was founded in 1969 and the first students enrolled in 1971. The inception of the University was inspired by a desire to take action to address the continuing exclusion from higher education of people from lower income groups. The University has expanded significantly since its inception with partnerships developed to deliver higher education in other countries, an increase in the numbers of UK and overseas students enrolled and a broader range of subjects offered for study. At the time of writing 174,739 students were studying with the Open University.

The PASAR project applies participatory action research (PAR) approaches to engage marginalised communities in research as co-producers of knowledge. In doing so, the project aims to influence policy regarding NRPF as well as address the National Centre for Research Methods' (NCRM) interest in increasing the quality and range of methodological approaches used by UK social scientists. Walking methods and participatory theatre are used to bring together practitioners and marginalised groups.

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PASAR's three broad strands of work to develop methods and methodological knowledge are: migrant parents, young people and intergenerational communication; families with no recourse to public funds; and the development of training tools for social science research. The work undertaken with Praxis focuses on the strand looking at families with NRPF.

Those affected by NRPF are subject to section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 which states that people have no recourse to public funds if they are subject to immigration control, this includes welfare benefits and public housing. In this strand of work, PASAR aims to empower community participants adversely affected by NRPF to communicate their voices to those with responsibility for creating and implementing this policy.

PASAR brought together women to participate in PAR workshops that were facilitated to enable them to tell their stories about the impact of NRPF. A policy event was held to raise the profile about the effect of NRPF bringing together policymakers, practitioners, activists, performers and researchers. The women affected by NRPF presented their performance, created through the workshops, at this event to communicate the impact of NRPF on them and engage with delegates to exchange policy and practice ideas. A presentation in Parliament was also planned for June but had to be postponed due to the General Election, it was held on 6 December 2017. A policy briefing has been produced in collaboration with the Runnymede Trust and a film documenting the work undertaken has been produced in collaboration with Counterpoint Arts. Training on PAR methods was delivered to 22 participants in April 2016. A two-day international conference was held in November 2017 to exchange knowledge and highlight the use of participatory arts methodologies to engage marginalised people in research and explore broader sociological and policy issues. A toolkit has been developed for social researchers on walking stories and theatre.

How the collaboration came about

After securing funding for the PASAR project the academic partner was looking to recruit community partners working with marginalised migrants, in particular those with no recourse to public funds.

> **Approximately sixty percent of migrants who are labelled as not having access to public funds are from former British colonies. The word 'migrant' is also contested in this context because some people can live here for several years and still be referred to as migrants, when does this label cease to be used? Furthermore, those coming from former British colonies contest the use of the word 'migrant' because of the colonial roots and connections.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Recruiting community partners who matched the remit of the project is described as a challenge. In part, this was due to community organisations being increasingly overstretched with little capacity to take on additional work. Combined with the mistrust of academia among some community groups and lack of clarity about how they could benefit from participation, these issues are described as presenting a challenge to recruiting community participants.

> **The Research Fellow (part of the academic research team) attended various events and other gatherings to try to recruit people. Many people approached did not get back, they were unclear what benefits they would gain from participation and there can also be a lot of mistrust among community organisations towards universities and academics.**
> **(Academic partner)**

The Research Fellow had worked with Praxis some 10 years previously and knew a colleague still working there with whom there was an established connection. Praxis was

approached by the Research Fellow through this contact and a meeting set up between the community partner and the research team to discuss the project, what the participation would involve and potential benefits to participants.

(Research Fellow) from the university emailed me sending a draft outline of the project and asked if we might be interested in participating. It was an important project for Praxis and its beneficiaries to be involved in, so I took on the additional tasks involved to identify service users who met PASAR's remit and refer them to the research team as potential participants.
(Community partner)

The community partner relates that a key reason Praxis decided to participate was because the Open University is known and respected. Therefore, participating in the project could be potentially beneficial in contributing to change for people affected by NRPF.

A lack of time is highlighted as a barrier to discussing key terminology, such as that relating to race and ethnicity, in early meetings with Praxis. Both partners highlight that there are problematic issues regarding terminology regarding race and ethnicity and discussions about this did take place with community participants.

Conversations around race and ethnicity did occur with participants and it is important to problematise race and ethnicity related labels, absolutely. The move from the label 'migrant' to 'illegal' is an easy slide. 'Migrant' is becoming an insulting label, the term 'racialised migrants' may be better but would everyone agree with this? This needs thought and reflection. It's the power of nation states to define people, the colonial overtones that people find unacceptable and insulting. The term 'illegal' migrant is a problematic label that impacts on and stigmatises people.
(Academic partner)

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Praxis works with migrants of Minority Ethnic origin. The length of time they have been in the country and the term 'migrant' is a contentious issue for service users. After how much time do you stop being a 'migrant' and become a citizen?
(Community partner)

Other terminology such as 'collaboration' and 'research' was not a focus for discussion in the early meetings but the research team will be looking at issues that arose in relation to the collaboration. Problematic issues regarding other terminology such as co-production are highlighted by the academic partner.

There is a problem with terminology. For example, how far can a project be defined as a co-production? In this project there are a range of partners and a range of ways of working in the context and interest of community organisations. So the nature of co-production can vary depending on the context of projects and partners involved. Counterpoint Arts were another partner on this project and I've worked with them before, co-production was a more prominent topic of negotiation with this organisation (commissioned to film some outputs from the project) in terms of negotiating how outputs would be captured on film.
(Academic partner)

The academic partner emphasises the importance of recognising that community organisations are very different to universities. It is important to be clear from the start about what can and cannot be done in a collaborative project and to understand the context and conditions under which community organisations operate. Discussion about the benefits to community organisations of participation in a collaborative project like this should be a key part of early conversations.

The community partner's involvement in PASAR occurred after the project was in place and funding secured, prior established contact with a member of the research team was significant to Praxis being approached to participate. Problematic issues are highlighted in relation to range of terminology relating to race, ethnicity and

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collaborative, co-produced research; insufficient time to discuss these issues meaningfully and the differing contexts in which academic and community organisations operate are identified as barriers to engaging in discussions regarding terminology and its relevance to the range of organisations and individuals involved in a collaborative project. It is also worth noting that a reluctance in the general public to engage in conversations about race and racism is highlighted later in this case study under the section on structural inequalities.

Developing collaborative research

The idea for the PASAR project came from the academic partner, the community partner was approached at the point when fieldwork was ready to be undertaken. The academic partner's aim for the project was to undertake participatory action research with marginalised people, challenge the notion of migrant mothers being a passive drain on resources and highlight the range of factors that impact on them.

> **(I) wanted to turn this on its head and say how do we theorise citizenship to take account of the range of factors impacting on migrant mothers and the ways in which they already practice citizenship?**
> **(Academic partner)**

The community partner describes Praxis' aim as being to support the engagement of women in the PASAR research approach. The topic of NRPF was relevant to service users at Praxis who are affected by this policy. The community partner was, therefore, willing for Praxis to participate in the PASAR project but lack of capacity meant Praxis' participation and contribution was minimal and largely focused on identifying and referring clients who matched the PASAR remit to the research team.

PASAR is described as being informed by a previous project looking at theatre methods in research which was developed by the academic partner and two co-investigators, one from the University of Greenwich and the other from University of York. The NRPF strand of PASAR was also discussed with the Runnymede Trust who were aware of the NRPF policy; the already established connection between them and the academic partner is said to have facilitated progressing discussion about the idea for PASAR with them relatively quickly. The academic partner had previously undertaken collaborative work with Counterpoints Arts and this established connection also facilitated progressing discussion about PASAR swiftly.

Funding

PASAR was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through their National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) which was set up to increase the quality and range of methodological approaches used by UK social scientists. The funding bid was submitted by the academic partner and the community partner was approached after the funding was secured, this was acceptable to the community partner who cites lack of time and capacity to engage in developing funding bids even if the opportunity presents.

> **I already work on lots of funding applications and there was certainly no time to get involved in another.**
> **(Community partner)**

The academic partner relates that project costings and available resources were discussed with all partners. However, the timescale for turning around funding applications is described as a barrier to meaningful conversations with community partners in developing funding bids; especially those with whom there is no established, ongoing connection.

> **The available timescale for turning around funding applications is ridiculous, for this bid it was 2 months from the call being put out to the deadline for submission. This is just not good enough for fitting in around other work and have meaningful conversations with potential partners. There was already established contact with Runnymede Trust so this was easier to handle within the short timescale, but without this it is not possible to have meaningful engagement at the (point of) developing ideas and funding applications. With (another collaborator) it was more challenging to discuss what is co-production, collaboration, consultancy and so on; each is relevant in different ways to different parts of the (PASAR) project and these discussions require time. Another**

factor is the difference in understanding between the various partners involved in a project about the various terms and issues. It takes time to discuss these things in a meaningful way for everyone to understand and reach common ground. Short timescales leave no room for academic partners to learn from other sectors, you can't learn in this way because you complete one project and move on to the next workload.
(Academic partner)

The academic partner highlighted the following key messages for consideration by funders of collaborative projects:

- More time is needed for developing funding applications with partners in a meaningful way.
- There should be recognition about the challenges of working across different sectors and the time needed to address this.
- This kind of collaboration is very time and labour-intensive, this needs to be recognised.
- There is a need to speak and communicate with voluntary and community organisations in a meaningful way. For example, summarising research to non-academics or those with little experience of research requires time, translation, thought and effort.
- A criticism of this project has been that it did not engage with a broader range of diverse groups. The academic partner explains that one reason this was difficult to achieve is due to the research timescale available and also the fact that voluntary and community sector timetables are different.

All of this is also labour intensive when looking at emerging issues such as NRPF. There should be a parallel stream of activities that are worthy of consideration in relation to funding community collaborations and new areas of research.
(Academic partner)

Short timescales leave no room for academic partners to learn from other sectors, you can't learn in this way because you complete one project and move on to the next workload.

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The community partner did not express any concerns about being approached after funding was secured; a lack of capacity and the need to focus on securing other funding for Praxis are cited as significant barriers to community partner engagement from the early stages of developing a project. The academic partner highlights short timescales within which to turn around funding applications, combined with differences in understanding between academic and community sectors regarding key terms and issues relating to collaborative research, as key barriers to meaningful engagement of community partners in developing ideas and funding bids.

Undertaking the research

All aspects of the research design and process were led by the academic team. The academic partner describes a number of challenges in co-producing research with community partners from an early stage, including: limited time and resources to deliver the project; the impetus for the research project coming from academics; a lack of established trusting relationships, in particular when working with community participants who are coming together for the first time; and for many people dealing adverse circumstances such as marginalisation, isolation and day-to-day survival understanding and engaging with the concept of co-produced research is not a priority. However, recognising community knowledge and experience on an equal footing is emphasised.

> **Participants find it difficult to co-produce research because the impetus is coming from academics. More time would be needed to co-produce the research aspect with them and this is not enabled by insufficient time and resources. The idea of co-production is helpful but more difficult to realise with people who are not constituted as a group prior to the project, as in this project. Individuals came together for this project and did not know each other before so there was no established relationships and trust to facilitate co-production. Also, in terms of research, not all participants are in a position to pose a question; they are experiencing acute marginalisation, isolation, home and finance issues. So, they have other priorities than to get their head around and become familiar with co-produced research. Communities can contribute practical knowledge, reflection, theories and experience, this must be valued and acknowledged on an equal footing.**
>
> **(Academic partner)**

Twenty mothers affected by NRPF participated in weekly workshops of 2 hours over a period of four months. All of the women participants were of Black African and

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Caribbean descent and all had young children, the provision of crèche facilities was significant to enabling their participation.

Participants identified by the community partner as fitting the remit of PASAR were given information about the project and details about the workshops which they could sign up to if they wished. The PAR methods of participatory theatre and walking methods were specifically used to enable these marginalised community participants to have a key role in producing knowledge and influence policy and practice development. The team used participatory methods to work with and co-produce knowledge with the Praxis and the mothers' group. It is important to emphasise that the collaborative and participatory nature of the methods allowed the project and the academic- community collaboration to unfold. The community partner had seen and experienced the methods previously and found it useful to engage in this participatory approach through arts practices. The participatory theatre methods were facilitated by and based on Erene Kaptani's practice, while the participatory arts based walking methods were facilitated by and based on Maggie O'Neill's practice. More specifically, the PAR methods used were:

- Participatory Theatre to connect through emotional and embodied group storytelling, engage with social exclusion, reflect on and enact social change.
- Playback Theatre whereby the women's stories were enacted by professional actors playing their stories back to them.
- Forum Theatre enabling the women to construct and perform a scene, based on their personal experience, to other participants who can intervene and take the place of the main character to develop strategies for change.
- Visualisation exercises to create maps of everyday routes and how the women felt on these routes.
- Walking along the routes created through the visualisation exercise and talking about thoughts, experiences and taking video clips.

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The community partner describes the first workshop as being very emotional for the women participants.

> **The women attending did not know others in similar situations to them and they had not talked about their NRPF status to many people. They shared information and experiences and this was helpful, less isolating knowing it was 'not them' (i.e. not their fault they had NRPF). They found mutual support and networks were formed, talking to each other was beneficial for the women.**
> **(Community partner)**

Workshop participants created art which the community partner describes as beneficial and not something Praxis could have facilitated them to do. A performance by the women at Praxis, attended by social workers, is also described as beneficial to enable the women's stories to be seen and heard by professionals who work with them and convey some of the reality of the women's situations.

A number of challenges are highlighted in relation to PAR methods. They can be a costly process in terms of finance, time, emotional labour and require trust, skills and enthusiasm to be built with community participants. Power relations can be disguised by the assumption that all actors have equal status in the co-production of knowledge when in fact power differentials exist between researchers and the researched. Expectations need to be managed so that the contributions of community participants' are valued by researchers, policy makers and practitioners without raising false hopes.

The PAR approaches used are said to have been beneficial to engaging marginalised women in the production and exchange of knowledge about NRPF in a safe and empathetic space.

Roles and responsibilities

The academic research team discussed roles and responsibilities at the planning stage of collaboration with each community partner. The academic partner highlighted that it was difficult to gauge whether a shared sense of responsibility had been achieved at the time of this case study interview, because the project was still under way. Responsibilities are described as being shared for different aspects of the project and it took some time for them to be embedded.

The community partner describes roles and responsibilities as being decided informally and due to time constraints and other workload commitments the community partner had a minimal role, largely focused on identifying and recruiting community participants. The way roles and responsibilities worked out is described as being agreeable by the community partner because there was no capacity or time to do anything differently.

Both partners highlight challenges in relation to allocating roles and responsibilities.

> **For community organisations this is not a priority and a very small part of the work they do, not part of their core business. They work to different timescales and often can't allocate a person to focus on the collaboration due to lack of resources and capacity. Different timetables and timescales of work (between academic and community organisations). Where there is a high turnover of staff this also makes building relationships very difficult. The pressure is for survival so they (community organisations) can't engage as much as they would want to. It is time intensive to negotiate this and also to re-negotiate if people move (to another job) or other significant changes occur in the organisation.**
> **(Academic partner)**

Occasionally there was a struggle to identify suitable venues that could accommodate the workshops and crèche. Funding is an issue for capacity as well as booking appropriate spaces for the work to be undertaken. Many of the women would pop in to see (community partner) after the workshops while they were in the vicinity to check out/update on other issues and this added to capacity issues for Praxis on workshop days. But Praxis always does what it can and responded on these days the best it could, I tried to free up time as it became clear more women were likely to drop in on workshop days. It is challenging to do this work over and above the day job, especially in the early days and then you get more used to the extra workload.

(Community partner)

The academic partner relates that they are not in a position, nor would they want to, to impose tasks on community organisations because this kind of collaborative work is intensive and needs time. It is important to be flexible in working through challenges, compromise and adapt as necessary.

It is challenging to do this work over and above the day job, especially in the early days and then you get more used to the extra workload.

Accountability

A memorandum of understanding was put in place between academic and community partners, setting out an informal agreement regarding expectations. Both partners were happy with this arrangement because it provided some clarity regarding accountabilities, though the academic partner highlights that there are emerging issues that are not always possible to foresee.

> **The devil is in the detail and there are a lot of evolving issues that you can't foresee. For each collaboration there should be extra time and resources to establish and work out how the collaboration will be mutually beneficial for all partners. There is often no time for informal contact, when you can't even spend time with your own family and friends, on top of teaching, research and other tasks and this is the same for community partners. But informal contact is super important – just difficult to do amid the other tasks and deadlines to meet.**
> **(Academic partner)**

The informal approach to accountability with agreements stated in a memorandum of understanding is said to have worked reasonably well in this collaboration. More time and resources to discuss agreements, mutual benefits and have informal contact are described as important; the feedback suggests this would be especially beneficial in relation to unforeseeable events or situations that emerge once a project is under way.

Outputs and legacy

The academic partner describes outputs and legacy from the project as being a little vague in the initial stages and evolving gradually. Given the minimal involvement of Praxis in the design and delivery of the research aspect of PASAR, views regarding some outputs and legacy differ between the two partners and reflect the nature of their participation in the project.

Tangible outputs from the academic perspective include:

- Weekly, two hour workshops utilising PAR methods delivered to twenty participants over a period of four months.
- A film documenting the work undertaken made in collaboration with Counterpoint Arts.
- A toolkit for social researchers, to be written by the research team, on the PAR methods of walking stories and theatre.
- Four day training on PAR methods delivered in 2016
- A policy event delivered with support from the Runneymede Trust and with the participation of women affected by NRPF.
- A policy briefing written in conjunction with the Runneymede Trust.
- A two-day international conference delivered in November 2017 on participatory arts methodologies to engage marginalised people in research, including exploration of broader sociological and policy issues.
- Six refereed articles to be written by the research team.

Less tangible outputs from the academic perspective include:

- Theatre performances, reflective presentation and group work skills for participants, these outputs are considered as important but are not always easily recognised.

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- A certificate of participation given to all participants, this is not a qualification but an important acknowledgement of their contributions.
- Some of the women participants have formed friendships and informal networks.

The academic partner emphasises the need for sustainability and resources to be able to follow through on unplanned outputs such as supporting the women to continue meeting. With necessary funding and other resources the community partner could continue this work and set up support groups or networks emerging from the work of this project.

The community partner highlights relatively fewer outputs in comparison to the academic perspective, tangible outputs from the community perspective are:

- Engagement of women in the project which is described as being wider than Praxis could have achieved and for the duration enabled by PASAR.
- Presentation by the women at the policy event which was very useful in highlighting the profile of service users affected by NRPF.
- Performance by the women at Praxis.
- Film footage of the workshops

Less tangible outputs from the community partner's perspective include the growth in confidence of participating women and the informal networks that have emerged between them to help each other.

Both partners feel their respective aims for the project have been achieved. The academic partner describes the project as achieving more than it set out to do and that there is another layer of work needed to make the project visible and accessible. The NCRM are said to have been very helpful in this respect by publicising the project. There was greater clarity regarding ownership and maintenance of some outputs than others at the time of interview. The six articles to be written will be owned by the

research team, academic writing was still to be discussed and is a core offer in the funding application; the community partner was unsure what academic papers would be written but was hopeful that these along with any film footage would be shared with Praxis. The policy paper is co-owned by the University and Runnymede Trust and the film will be co-owned by the University and Counterpoint Arts who produced it. There was a lack of clarity regarding ownership of the other outputs which may be addressed at a later stage.

In relation to legacy, the community partner was unsure about the extent to which this would be realised because the project was still under way at the time of interview but hoped the following legacies could be achieved in the longer term:

- The research model to be carried forward and applied to other issues that impact on people who are marginalised.
- The information generated to have an impact on policy because the political will needs to change in favour of migrants.
- Follow up work is undertaken to engage other women in this approach.

The academic partner is hopeful the legacy will be to convey the message more widely about these research methods and their potential to work with marginalised groups to generate knowledge with them. However, the availability of funding is cited as a key factor to realising and monitoring the legacy of the project.

> **Funding is needed for legacy and keeping track of ongoing developments, outcomes and so on. Arts and community organisations can benefit from this work but with sufficient resources. This project will hopefully show different ways of doing this kind of research.**
> **(Academic partner)**

The different views expressed by academic and community partners regarding outputs and legacy are unsurprising given each had a different involvement in the design and

delivery of the project. Both partners have highlighted the need for greater capacity, time and resources in order to realise co-production at all stages of the project and to sustain emerging legacies.

Structural inequalities

A number of structural inequalities relating to race, ethnicity, gender and funding are described by the academic partner as having an impact on collaborative work, knowledge production and access to knowledge.

- Race is described as an important consideration in relation to knowledge hierarchies, recognising who is capable of producing knowledge and who is recognised for this.

  Knowledge hierarchies need to be addressed in terms of embodiment, blackness, whiteness, linguistic abilities, being Muslim and so on. Recognising non-verbal knowledge is important and this must be highlighted. Race is a key issue in knowledge production, but it is not talked about and must be talked about. (We) try to talk about racism and race but it takes time for people to trust and open up on these issues.
  (Academic partner)

- Gender is said to have an impact on knowledge production when female academics and community participants with responsibility for domestic tasks and duties, have to juggle these with engagement in collaborative research.

  Women, the research team is all female with domestic responsibilities, childcare and so on. They are also working with participants who are mothers. All of this can indirectly impact on knowledge production, you need to do a lot of organising before you can even start the fieldwork and undertake other project tasks.
  (Academic partner)

In relation to the community participants in this the provision of crèche facilities was an important component to facilitating the women to participate. This is described as important to both knowledge production and to accessing knowledge.

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- Funding can present as a structural inequality if the amount, type and timescales relating to available funding influence which topics are researched. Furthermore, insufficient resources to address capacity and cost issues can influence who is able to collaborate in what capacity.

The community partner highlighted two structural inequalities. Firstly, the way in which service users express themselves is different to how research and academics portray them; it is hard to translate their experience and structural inequalities arise if inaccurate portrayal and translation influence the knowledge produced. Secondly, formal learning environments are not always conducive to meaningfully engaging people who are in need/distress and this needs to be recognised; who participates and how they engage in more formal knowledge production activities can be influenced by the context of their personal circumstances.

The community partner describes the NRPF policy itself as an external impact that can influence knowledge production on this topic, because it is difficult to fully comprehend for both professionals and people directly affected by it.

NRPF is a complex, jargon loaded area and those affected find it difficult to understand, even professionals struggle with it so service users find it virtually impossible to navigate.
(Community partner)

The academic partner highlights the announcement of the General Election in 2017 as derailing a planned presentation in Parliament on the impact of NRPF.

A policy day was held where one speaker was a retired academic and also a member of the House of Lords and through this link the project was invited to be presented in the House of Commons. However, the general election was called and the event cancelled. It is now unclear if the event will happen at all. It needs

to happen so the issue of NRPF is given profile as well as the impact on those affected.

(Academic partner)

The feedback on external impacts highlights the importance of recognising how the subject of a research topic, in this case NRPF, may not be fully accessible and understood by those affected by it in a personal or professional capacity. This will, in turn, have an impact on the knowledge generated through collaborative research and it is important to be mindful of this. Political events, in this case the announcement of a general election and related purdah restrictions, can have an influence on planned activities relating to dissemination and impact.

Representing communities

Community participants were identified by the community partner, the criteria for selection and referral to the workshops was women affected by NRPF who were in current or recent contact with Praxis. In this respect, only the women in contact with Praxis are represented though the issues identified by them are likely to have relevance for other people experiencing NRPF. However, the community participants are a very specific group; that is, mothers affected by NRPF and in contact with Praxis and the project does not claim to be representative of others affected by NRPF in relation to age, gender, country of origin, those not in contact with a community organisation, those with no children and so on.

The academic partner emphasises that the focus of PASAR is on research methods and as such, it did not set out to focus on a particular community other than those affected by NRPF and these people are migrants. In relation to translating community experience, two broad levels of translation are highlighted; one which is more conducive to enabling community participants to represent themselves through creative methods and the other less conducive depending on who presents the project and the time and space available in which to do this.

> **In terms of translating community experience, this is a key focus for the project. The project uses artistic means and creative outputs, though there is a hierarchy in the sense that in theatre there can be a division between what is seen as 'real art' and 'community art'. So this can be an issue. The methods used are effective for translating community experience but in other presentations, some of which may only be a few minutes long, the translation can take different forms compared to the participants presenting a performance. So in this respect the available time and space have an impact on translation.**
> **(Academic partner)**

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In addition to how and where community experience is presented or translated and by whom, the important issue of hierarchies in theatre are highlighted which should be considered alongside knowledge hierarchies.

University-Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations

The community partner's message to others thinking of undertaking similar work is to ensure women affected by NRPF are drawn in and facilitated to participate. Covering travel expenses, providing crèche facilities and shopping vouchers is important both for recognising their contribution and it helps them in their NRPF situation.

> **It is important to recognise that these clients have challenging, chaotic lives and are transient so they may not always be available to participate in projects like this due to their circumstances and not because they are disinterested or being unreasonable.**
> **(Community partner)**

The academic partner would like to convey that it is really worth doing this kind of collaborative work with communities. It is important to pay attention to the challenges of communication across sectors because various things and terms mean different things to different people, communication is key and must be done effectively.

They may not always be available to participate in projects like this due to their circumstances and not because they are disinterested or being unreasonable.

The future

The community partner will look at the outcomes from this project and how they can inform recommendations on NRPF. Involvement at an earlier stage of developing and designing collaborative research would be a preferred option for the community partner in future and with sufficient capacity to support meaningful engagement. The importance of good facilitation of community participants is highlighted and the need to consider what skills and experience are relevant and required of facilitators.

> **It would be good to have more formal involvement in the future before a funding application is submitted so (community partner) can look at the cost of involvement for Praxis and build this in. The facilitators were good at engaging the women, this is important to note in relation to skills and experience of facilitators that are needed to engage participants. Praxis does ongoing casework with people affected by NRPF so can contribute to future research by highlighting the issues and (we) would collaborate again on similar research projects.**
> **(Community partner)**

Both partners would collaborate on research projects in future, with each other as well as other collaborators and on different topics. Future collaborations will be informed by available funding opportunities.