House of Memories

National Museums Liverpool

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage

Evaluation report

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1) Introduction

The Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage (CWYEH) project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund Innovation and Engagement scheme January 2021 – November 2022, supported the Yemeni community of Liverpool to share their cultural heritage through the co-curation of a digital collection. Led by National Museums Liverpool (NML), the project was delivered in close collaboration with community organisations including the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre (KIMC), Liverpool Arabic Centre (LAC), Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival (LAAF), the Al-Ghazali Centre (AGC), Al-Taiseer Mosque (ATM) and The Studio School.

The project started with a conversation between NML and a young person from Liverpool's Yemeni community, Abdulwase Sufian, who was looking for resources to support the care of his grandmother who is living with dementia. Abdulwase contacted NML after discovering House of Memories[1], NML's flagship, award-winning dementia awareness programme, and seeing its value but realising that it would not necessarily resonate with his family due to its emphasis on western culture and social history. Since then, the intergenerational CWYEH project has engaged more young people amongst Abdulwase's peers, and elder members of the community, to create a dual-language (Arabic and English) content package for the My House of Memories app, using museum collections from project partners – the British Museum and the Fashion Museum Bath – and objects collected and photographed by community members.

House of Memories was launched at the Museum of Liverpool in 2012, originally with funding from the UK government Department of Health, and has since expanded nationally and internationally with a range of collaborating organisations and services from across arts, culture, heritage, health and social care sectors. The programme, which includes dedicated museum-based training events and a range of supplementary resources, uses museum objects and social history collections, and the connections they have with our personal memories, family lives and community identities, to inspire, encourage and develop more person-centred approaches to dementia care. The My House of Memories app was launched in 2014, as a dementia friendly digital resource that can be accessed and used remotely in a range of formal and community-based care settings. It contains numerous themed and carefully curated digital social history collections and objects, designed to inspire connections and conversations between people living with dementia and their carers.

The programme and its digital platform therefore provided an effective, established and reputable launch-pad for the emerging collaboration between NML and the city's Yemeni community, inspired by Abdulwase's proactive engagement with the House of Memories team, with the support of his mentor at the KIMC.


The CWYEH project specifically aimed to:

- Position itself as a national digital resource on Yemeni cultural heritage for the wider UK museum sector, building on established co-production strategies developed throughout the House of Memories dementia awareness programme;

- Empower young members of Liverpool's Yemeni community to become NML's first national digital co-curators;

- Improve intergenerational bonds, health and wellbeing within Liverpool's Yemeni community;

- Enhance community identity and pride in Yemeni communities;

- Shape the aspirations of young Yemeni people to work in museum and heritage sectors;

- Enable skills development for young Yemeni people linked to project management, digital resource development and dementia awareness;

- Share new ways of working between museums and their constituent communities.

The three main targeted outcomes of the project, as agreed with funders, were:

Outcome 1	To create an intergenerational programme, to enable engagement and co-creation with Yemeni elders and young people, leading to increased cultural awareness, collection access and understanding.
Outcome 2	To showcase the fascinating objects, stories and beauty of the Yemeni community and museum collections within the My House of Memories app, to connect and support the ageing population and people living with dementia.
Outcome 3	To produce a toolkit for UK museums working with and supporting young people to create community collections that will align, connect and interpret museum collections.

Researchers from Liverpool John Moores University, including Drs Kerry Wilson[2] (Reader in Cultural Policy, Institute of Cultural Capital) and Grahame Smith (Reader in Mental Health, Centre for Collaborative Innovation in Dementia) were commissioned to evaluate the programme, as established research partners to the House of Memories programme and contributors to its existing evaluation research and evidence base.
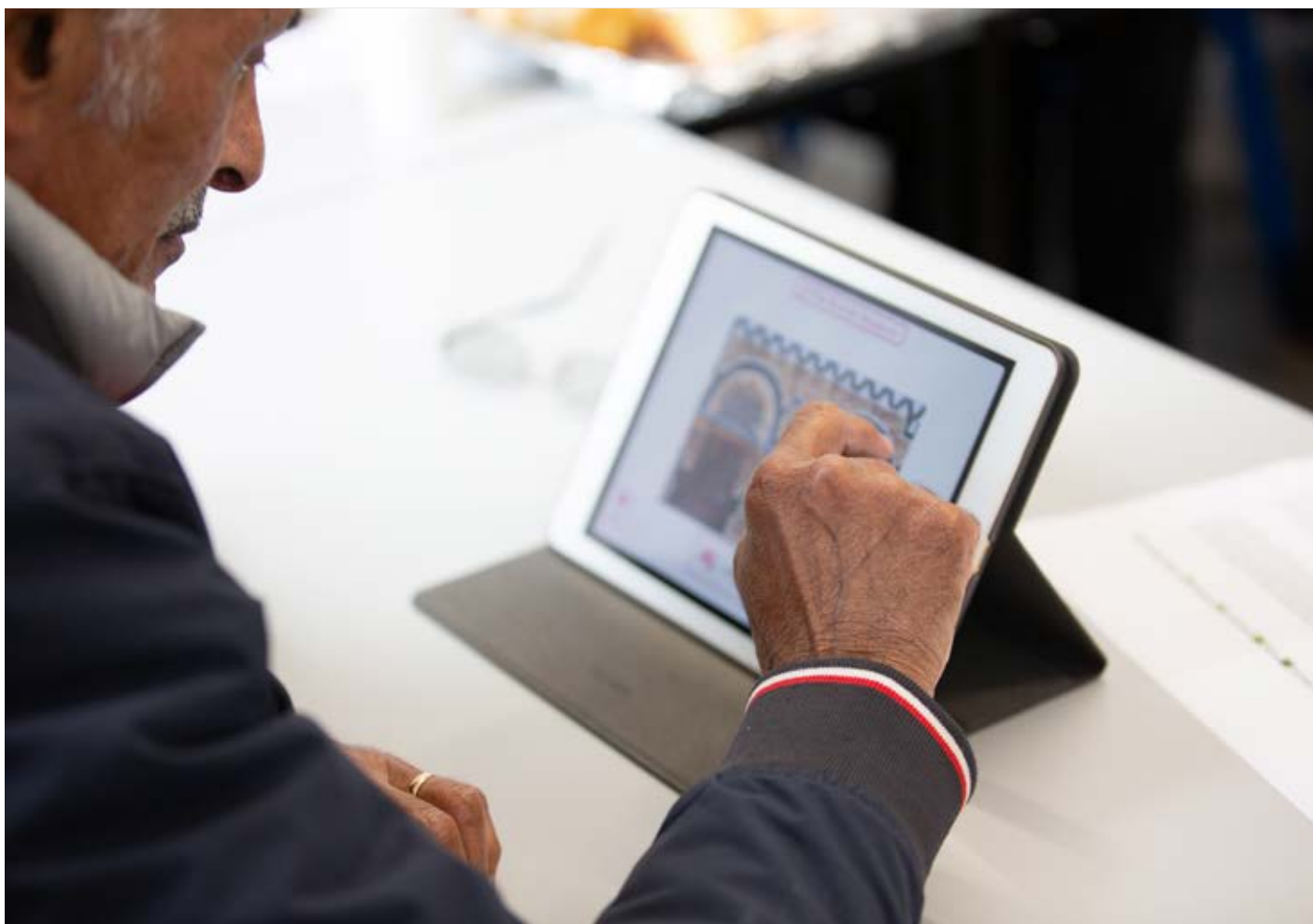
2) Evaluation aims and objectives

Conducted on a formative basis throughout, the evaluation considered the process, delivery and impact of the project[3], according to the following research objectives:

- OB1 - Consider the impact of the programme on intergenerational connectivity in the Yemeni community, and outcomes relating to mental health and wellbeing, pride and community identity;

- OB2 - Explore the developing relationship between museums and community groups, including experiences of trust, equality and empowerment and their impact on participation and engagement;

- OB3 – Profile public engagement with the project, including interest in and engagement with Yemeni cultural heritage and museum collections;

- OB4 - Track the personal and professional developmental experiences of participating young Yemeni people in relation to skills development, confidence, interest in museum and heritage work and occupational aspirations;

- OB5 - Identify the characteristics of effective collaboration between museums and community groups, including the relationship between contexts, mechanisms and outcomes, using a Realistic Evaluation approach.

A flexible, mixed-method approach was adopted, in order to be responsive to changes in project planning and delivery. The final evaluation, developed and agreed in discussion with the NML project team, was mostly qualitative in design. This was reviewed during a midpoint reflective discussion between evaluators, to ensure the ongoing appropriateness and legitimacy of the chosen approach. Methods included semi-structured interviews (10 in total), following a snowball sampling strategy, with staff and volunteers from partner organisations and community-based health and social care services and charities. Interviews were designed to fulfil OBs 1, 2, 4 and 5, and included questions and discussion prompts on prior experiences of working with the museum sector; dementia care in the Yemeni community; significance of the intergenerational objectives of the project; and learning outcomes for the wider museum profession regarding Yemeni heritage and collaborative work with different communities. Interview data are referenced anonymously throughout the report, according to thematic headings emerging from data analysis, to ensure participant confidentiality.

Social media analysis has been used throughout to meet evaluation OB3, including a thematic content and sentiment analysis of related social media posts using Twitter. These were collected for example during significant milestones including the project launch by NML (February 2021) and the celebration event at the World Museum (June 2022) for the completed Memories of Yemen app collection. The NML marketing and communications team has also shared data on targeted social media campaigns via Facebook.

Participant observation of milestone activities and events was undertaken in fulfilment of all evaluation objectives. These included for example the Yemeni Culture Day at the PAL Multicultural Centre in September 2021; the first toolkit workshop with young people at the Studio School in February 2022; the Memories of Yemen app launch and celebration event at the World Museum in June 2022; and the second toolkit workshop with young people at KIMC in September 2022. Extensive field notes were taken on the operational characteristics of such activities and on the type and levels of engagement from participants, which are referenced in the report.

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3   The revised evaluation plan incorporated the logic model co-created by NML and representatives of the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund Innovation and Engagement scheme – updated version (reflecting evaluation findings) attached as appendix 1.

A short survey was administered (in paper form) during participant observation of project activities including two toolkit workshops with young people and an app-testing workshop with the active involvement of young people and elder members of the community, designed to meet evaluation OBs 1 and 4. The 5-item survey (see diagram 1 below) included indicators of subjective wellbeing (enjoyment, pride and interest), adapted from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), which is consistent with previous House of Memories evaluation studies[4]. Using a 5-point scale, participants were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with given statements by ticking the appropriate 'smiley face' symbol, ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) on the left to 'strongly agree' (5) on the right. Survey data (from 30 participants in total) are discussed throughout the report and summarised in appendix 2.

I enjoyed learning more about the work of National Museums Liverpool	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
I understand more about how museums can support the health and wellbeing of communities (e.g. dementia care)	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
I am proud to have given advice and guidance on the Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage project	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
I am interested in collaborating on more museum projects in the future	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
I have learnt more about how my skills and interests connect with museums and their work	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺

Diagram 1 – short participant survey [project workshops]

The Lead Evaluator also participated (subject to their availability) in monthly project team meetings, quarterly Advisory Group meetings, and in regular 'deep dive' reflective conversations with the Project Manager. The team's inclusive approach to evaluation, and their care to incorporate evaluation research from the outset, has been instrumental in enabling a considered appraisal of the project's effectiveness according to the principles and practice of Realistic Evaluation[5] (OB5). This is driven by a desire for greater validity and utility of evaluation findings, via outcomes that are deeply rooted in the contexts and mechanisms of the programme under investigation. This approach encourages researchers and programme stakeholders to consider the social and cultural conditions that are necessary for change mechanisms to operate most effectively, and how they are distributed within and between various programme contexts.

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4   For more information, please see http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/crossing-boundaries/
5   Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) Realistic Evaluation, Sage Publications, London.

3) Summary of evaluation findings

3.1 Collaboration and connectivity in the community

Project management and community connection

From the outset, the project benefited significantly from the recruitment and appointment of a Project Manager (PM) from Liverpool's Yemeni community. It is impossible to overstate the importance and impact of the PM role in relation to their own cultural identity, knowledge and the trust and reassurance their leadership of the project engendered in the community. From an evaluation research perspective, this was apparent during a community visit early in the project (September 2021). The PM very generously spent an afternoon introducing the Lead Evaluator to local business owners and community members on Lodge Lane[6], and explaining local traditions, customs and everyday Yemeni community life. It was evident from numerous interactions and conversations that the PM is an enormously valued, trusted and respected member of the community. This was continually and repeatedly reinforced throughout the project, in conversation (via research interviews) with project partners, through observation of events and via the PM's effective engagement of community stakeholders and groups (discussed in more detail below).

The PM's insightful reflections on the project have been invaluable to the evaluation, especially in relation to their capacity and obligation to represent community interests balanced with their professional responsibilities towards NML as a large, civic anchor organisation. The hybrid function of the role therefore requires quite sophisticated knowledge, skills, reflexive practice and applicable learning, especially when compared to conventional community outreach roles, practices and recruitment processes in the sector, which typically prioritise museum-based skills, experience and expertise. In this context, the PM also brought a wealth of relevant, alternative prior experience and expertise in community development and engagement work, including for example experience of project managing reputable public health and safety campaigns for emergency services.

Inevitably, balancing these two responsibilities and allegiances created challenges and stress points for the PM, which occasionally affected their own work-based wellbeing. Support for practitioner wellbeing and 'practising well' is a growing movement[7] in gallery, library, archive and museum (GLAM) sectors, especially for those working with communities and in health and social care settings. It is important therefore to be mindful of and make space for practitioner support in collaborative projects of this nature. In the case of the CWYEH project, this was facilitated by a formative evaluation process, which created space for reflection and conversation with an independent researcher as the project progressed; support from project partners and community members, especially those known to the PM; membership of an established, stable team (in HoM); and consistent connections with the wider NML professional environment.

Community assets and participation

One of the challenges experienced early on in the project, and subsequently overcome by the PM, relates to the importance of asset mapping within the community in the planning stages. As mentioned in the introduction to the report, CWYEH was developed by NML in conversation with Abdulwase and his mentors at the KIMC. Following their successful application for funding, the project was subsequently launched as primarily a partnership

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6   A high street in the Liverpool 8 area, which is a vibrant hub for the city's Yemeni community.
7   See for example the GLAM Cares network based in West Yorkshire: https://twitter.com/glam_cares?lang=en-GB

between NML and KIMC in February 2021. It was only following the recruitment of the PM in May 2021 that a truly representative process of asset mapping and partnership development took place, making delivery of the project possible. Asset mapping is a systematic, strengths-based approach to community development[8], which utilises the resources, skills and talents of individuals, associations and organisations within a community. Linking in to wider community assets, including LAC, LAAF, AGC and ATM made delivery of the project possible, including access to young people via alternative, established groups; use of meeting spaces and event hosting; which significantly improved the impact and quality of the project. It was important to work closely with all significant community organisations in order to understand and plan the project around other events and religious commitments, including for example Eid celebrations.

It is understandable that NML and KIMC saw an opportunity to apply to a particular funding stream, with an imminent application deadline, which did not enable the time and space to fully undertake in-depth community consultation, asset mapping and partnership development in the project planning and design stages. This would clearly be preferable, and therefore funding schemes with open or rolling calls (i.e. no set application deadlines) may be more appropriate for work of this nature. Where not possible, other practical learning outcomes relating to planning include the importance of recruiting a PM as soon as possible once that funding is secured, so that community consultation and partnership development can be fully explored and fulfilled before any (public) project launch. In this instance, the project launch was used as a way of creating awareness within the community about the opportunity to apply for the PM post.

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8   http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Demythtifying-assets-v3.pdf

It is important to note that this caused some disappointment and frustration for project partners, which was expressed during evaluation research interviews, particularly as organisations with a long history of representing Yemeni communities and advocating Yemeni culture and heritage within and beyond the city. This was driven by a desire to share their own community-based experience, expertise and resources, purely to maximise the participation of Yemeni community members and impact of the project. Once appointed, the ameliorative role of the PM was significant in establishing direct communications and ensuring that all relevant community assets and organisations were formally part of the project. Any collaborative tensions were also mitigated by partners' prior experiences of working with NML, and their familiarity with and respect for the organisation as an anchor cultural institution in the city. Earlier collaborations between NML and participating community organisations for example include the national Moving Here[9] project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund 2005-07 and local projects including; the Celebrate L8 event in 2019; and an intergenerational project with the Somali community, funded through NML's Happy Older People network, which promotes age-friendly arts participation in the Liverpool city region. NML's relationship with partner organisations is also sustained through initiatives including Eid celebrations at the Museum of Liverpool.

Leadership, role models and peer support

Learning outcomes relating to the importance of understanding community assets have also revealed the formative role and value of effective leadership at multiple levels. Peer learning and support for participating young people has been a defining quality of the CWYEH project, beginning with Abdulwase's proactive contribution, enthusiasm and visible leadership throughout. Key examples of this include Abdulwase's participation in a radio interview with the Director of House of Memories to promote the project[10]; numerous personal mentions and commendations on social media; and a prominent role at the celebration event at the World Museum in June 2022. Abdulwase's peer leadership prompted one young person to describe him as a "cultural icon" during discussions at the second toolkit workshop at KIMC in September 2022. In further recognition of his achievements, Abdulwase has been shortlisted for the Inspirational Young Person Award, in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Culture and Creativity Awards 2023[11]. Community partners (interviewees) commented on young peoples' positive responses to Abdulwase's visible leadership and other representative elements of the project, including musicians performing at the Yemeni Culture Day event "communicating on their terms".

Role models, particularly individuals and community figureheads connected to partner organisations, have also played a significant role in the delivery and impact of the project. The PM acted as a role model, alongside colleagues who lead projects for young people as part of their work with partner organisations. One such colleague from KIMC described this collaborative aspect of the project as significant, in mentoring and encouraging young people from the community who are perhaps not as confident as Abdulwasel to take part. Young volunteers in another partner organisation also described and valued the influential mentoring role of its manager upon their lives and the opportunities created for them via the organisation. There is significant respect for community leaders and figureheads therefore, that acts as a catalyst for young people to aspire to achieve. For community leaders themselves, the reputation of NML and credibility of the HoM programme were incentives to collaborate, again building upon earlier experiences of working with the

9   https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20131106042839/http://www.movinghere.org.uk//stories/stories.asp?projectNo=44
10   https://ne-np.facebook.com/NgunanAdamuBBCUpfrontShow/videos/national-museums-liverpool-nml-secured-funding-to-deliver-an-intergenerational-p/999001027305533/
11   https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/lcr-culture-creativity-awards-2023/

museum group on different projects and through a desire for more sustainable, reciprocal collaborative relationships with NML.

It is possible therefore to begin to model the functions and impacts of leadership in collaborative community projects through the learning outcomes of CWYEH (see diagram 2 below). Key elements include the respect shown for individual community members, including role models, mentors and peers. The reliability and trustworthiness shown in community assets and organisations, and the positive reputation of anchor institutions such as NML, and reputable programmes such as HoM, are also important leadership characteristics.

RELIABILITY

Trust in LAC, LAAF, AGC and ATM as valued community assets.

Modelling Leadership in Collaborarive Community Projects

REPUTATION

Credibility of NML as anchor cultural institution and of HoM as a reputable creative intervention in health and social care.

RESPECT

Regard for individual community leaders, mentors and peers.

Diagram 2 – Emerging leadership model in community-based museum and heritage work

3.2 Getting to Know You: Understanding Yemeni Culture and Heritage Care in the Yemeni community

As well as improving our understanding of the characteristics of effective collaboration, including generic learning outcomes such as the importance of community asset mapping and different forms of community leadership, the CWYEH project has been instrumental in shaping understanding of the culture of care in the Yemeni community, and how this can inform future cross-sector collaborative projects. This is especially significant for NML as leaders in the culture, health and wellbeing field and as an outcome for HoM as a dementia awareness programme. On a practical note, understanding the culture of care within the community has informed delivery of the CWYEH project itself and facilitated the sharing of learning with additional dementia care professional services through the research process.

Fundamentally, care for older people of Yemeni heritage happens at home and stays within the community, where elderly community members are revered. Multiple research interviewees explained that due to religious beliefs and cultural values, care for the elderly in this context is considered a blessing and by no means an imposition. Care is usually undertaken by family members, but where this is not possible, older people are still cared for and supported by friends and neighbours. Research interviewees also gave several examples of how this works in their neighbourhoods, with families and households taking turns to visit and spend time with older people, cook and prepare meals for community members, and run various errands. Non-engagement therefore with external professional services is not through resistance or lack of awareness on what support is available, but simply through not being a necessary part of everyday life. As one community member described it, any attempts to intervene or provide professional care services outside the home are "trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist". Services that would potentially be useful include Arabic speaking care support at home, especially if offering a short respite period for family carers.

These discussions helped NML and the project team, guided by the PM, to adapt and shape delivery of the CWYEH project. Assumptions were made originally for example about there being existing community services where older people might meet socially, that could be accessed for project activities such as the app testing workshop, but this is not the case for reasons described above. During research interviews with health and social care services and charities, the conversations that have emerged on the culture of care in the community were described as one of the advantages of a heritage project like CWYEH, led by a museum rather than a health and social care provider. Cultural and heritage projects can be useful therefore as a platform for developing a deeper understanding of care values, practices and needs in communities. This is another potential development area for NML and HoM, utilising their existing assets and services. During the Yemeni Culture Day in September 2021 for example, 60 people visited HoM's On The Road[12] facility, a converted vehicle and mobile museum, which opens up into an immersive cinema and activity space, sharing images and social history stories from the city of Liverpool. Survey data also shows that 20 out of 30 workshop participants strongly agree that they "understand more about how museums can support the health and wellbeing of communities" because of the project, with the remaining 10 agreeing with this statement.

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12   https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/on-the-road

Responses to the completed Memories of Yemen collection on the My House of Memories app have been extremely positive, with an understanding of how it will be a valuable tool for family carers in the future, perhaps more so than young people in the community. The project as such also enabled a gentle, respectful exploration of other intergenerational community values and traditions with project partners and interviewees. This helped to shape understanding for example of gendered roles in the community, and how these are negotiated equitably, particularly in a domestic care context. Again, this helped to inform project delivery with the guidance of the PM, and to shape a collaborative awareness of and respect for each other's cultural norms. The Yemeni community and evaluation research participants have been unfailingly generous, gracious and hospitable with their time and care for the project – described by the Director of House of Memories as their "generosity of spirit" - which is another key quality and characteristic that has contributed to its success.

Community resources and collaborative responsiveness

The project has also benefited from the Yemeni community's generosity and hospitality on an operational basis. This has included the hosting of meetings and events at community venues, and exquisite catering of meetings and events with traditional food and drink. The community has shown itself to be incredibly responsive and 'fleet of foot' in this context, with the Yemeni Culture Day in September 2021 for example being organised and delivered (under the PM's stewardship) in the space of 3 weeks! Linking back to the importance of asset mapping in communities, this shows the cultural and economic value of using commercial community resources and supply chains in collaborative projects. Unfortunately this is not always compatible with corporate procurement and supply processes in large organisations, and some such difficulties were experienced as part of the CWYEH project (e.g. with invoicing and payment of small community-based caterers).

This problem is not unique however to NML and is common in collaborations between large institutions (e.g. universities) and small businesses. As per the comments above regarding funding and grant application processes, the financial management and administration of collaborative projects needs to be leaner, more agile and flexible in community contexts.

This is especially true in multi-cultural projects involving community-based assets and services. One woman based in the community who helped with event catering for example does not speak English but was required to complete formal paperwork and provide personal financial information. There were some good examples of flexibility and responsive compromise in the project, especially regarding accessibility and participation. It was decided to host the celebration event for the Memories of Yemen app in June 2022 for example at the World Museum, which is a city centre location. This prompted some debate and concern on the merits of this as a community-based project, but ultimately made sense regarding the sense of occasion, celebratory nature of the event and likely number of attendees. The NML team was also keen to ensure that the project provided an opportunity for community members to experience a museum venue as a stepping-stone to future attendance, for an audience that does not traditionally visit the city's museum spaces. In order to ensure the participation and comfort of community members, minibus transportation between the community and venue was arranged, along with culturally appropriate internal catering and additional catering from within the community, including traditional Yemeni coffee. The team also arranged further opportunities to share the app in community settings, including participation in an event as part of LAAF 2022 in the summer (Family Day on 17th July). Some community members still felt that the app launch event could have been 'bigger' to attract the participation of Yemeni dignitaries from outside Liverpool.

Public engagement and awareness

Social media analysis of Twitter engagement at two significant project milestones shows real enthusiasm for the project and the people and organisations involved. This includes content analysis of Twitter data collected and analysed for example at the launch of the project by NML in February 2021 (see Figure 1 below) and at the launch of the Memories of Yemen app in June 2022 (see Figure 2). Data analysis shows positive affirmations of the project that are celebratory (e.g. 'well done', 'congratulations'), emotive (e.g. 'excited', 'proud') and communicate relatable characteristics of the programme (e.g. 'connecting', 'community'). It is important to acknowledge that the Twitter data is subjective and self-selecting in some cases. Most Tweets at the launch of the project for example come from individuals and organisations that are closely connected to the project from within the city of Liverpool. The second sample is more objective in its orientation, with Tweets from the wider professional museum and heritage community in the UK. This data provides an interesting illustration however of public response, promotion and communication.

Figure 1 – Twitter word cloud (project launch February 2021)

Figure 2 – Twitter word cloud (Memories of Yemen app launch June 2022)

NML ran a Facebook advert for four days during March 2022, raising awareness of the project and HoM's work with the Yemeni community in Liverpool. This was targeted at people in the UK who already follow and interact with other Facebook pages associated with Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula or speak the languages and dialects of Yemen. 109,568 people were reached, and the advert was seen a total of 149,661 times, which led to:

- 1,580 link clicks to the project page on NML website[13]

- The Facebook post receiving 164 likes

- The Facebook post receiving 21 shares

- The Facebook post receiving 22 comments, including "What a good project" and "Mashallah" (an Arabic phrase to express a feeling of awe or beauty regarding an event or person). Comments were left in English and Arabic (which Facebook translates) and one follower shared pictures of their own items from Yemen.

NML ran a similar Facebook advert between 14th and 28th June 2022, encouraging people to download the Memories of Yemen content via the My House of Memories app. This received 456 'clicks', 28 likes, 1 share and 10 comments. This was ran again between 14th October and 14th November, receiving 555 clicks, 18 likes, 2 shares and 4 comments. The marketing and communications team at NML has been an integral part of the project, attending monthly team meetings and taking part in all key activities and events. This has helped to ensure that the project was professionally promoted and branded, within the core business of NML and alongside the team's other professional responsibilities. This did occasionally create stress-points for the project, for example with short turnaround of dual language (English and Arabic) promotional flyers for the Yemeni Culture Day event.

The project team and partners have engaged in additional local, regional and national activities and events to increase public engagement in and awareness of the project. These include the LAAF 2022 event described above, and participation in a Yemeni heritage event hosted by the University of Liverpool in November 2022, as part of the national Being Human Festival. The project is also now part of a national research project (as a case study) led by the University of Wolverhampton on young people's engagement with heritage[14], in collaboration with Historic England and Arts Connect. Other examples of national recognition include the project's nomination for a Collective Power Award[15], as part of the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance Awards 2022, and presentation of the project by NML and KIMC at the Museums Association conference in Edinburgh in November 2022. In short, the team continues to go 'above and beyond' the requirements of grant funding in their proactive promotion and advocacy of the project.

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13   https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/connecting-yemeni-elders-heritage
14   https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/research/icrd/5.-Literature-Review_Final-HERITAGE.pdf
15   https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/chwa-awards-2022-shortlist

3.3 Impact as an intergenerational community heritage project

Community identity, pride and wellbeing

The pride felt by project partners and participants, and within the city's Yemeni community more widely, has been the overwhelming outcome and impact of the project. On a pragmatic note, survey data shows that 22 out of 30 workshop participants strongly agreed that they felt 'proud to have given advice and guidance on the Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage project' (with 6 participants agreeing with the statement and 2 feeling undecided). In response to other indicators of subjective wellbeing adapted from WEMWBS, 20 out of 30 workshop participants strongly agreed that they had enjoyed learning more about the work of NML and 23 out of 30 strongly agreed that they were 'interested in collaborating on more museum projects in the future'.

Interview data validates survey findings, with staff and volunteers from partner community organisations giving very expressive reflections of the value of the project in reaffirming community identity and pride through intergenerational connectivity and conversation, with one community leader describing members of their organisation as being "mobilised by pride" in the project. One volunteer from the same organisation for example explained that she lives in another, less culturally diverse part of the city and that the project had provided a creative opportunity to re-engage her teenage children in conversations on their Yemeni cultural heritage and identity. Other community partners (interviewees) shared meaningful reflections on the importance of intergenerational communication in supporting Liverpool's Yemeni community to become a more integrated part of city life. The CWYEH project has resonance with other work in this area, including for example research led by LAC in collaboration with Liverpool Hope University on relationships between fathers and sons and educational attainment[16] with Yemeni and Somali young people.

16   https://liverpoolarabiccentre.org.uk/activities/

The sense of pride generated by the project within the wider community was palpable during public events including the Yemeni Culture Day in September 2021 and the celebration event to launch the app in June 2022 at the World Museum. The atmosphere at the Yemeni Culture Day was especially joyful, as one of the first significant opportunities for community members to convene together post-lockdown (coronavirus pandemic public health measures), but also as an opportunity to share Yemeni culture and heritage with a range of people and other communities from across the city, including traditional music, dance, dress and language. The event was attended by over 300 people including the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Mary Rasmussen, who commented in subsequent correspondence with the project team that she "was made to feel so welcome and I loved the dancing, singing and happy atmosphere. I could have stayed all day".

The Memories of Yemen app launch event had similar very warm, celebratory qualities, with a particularly discernible sense of pride from and in the young people involved in the project from older members of the community. Two young people led an 'in conversation' session, reflecting on their experiences of taking part, with one commenting "I'm really proud to be Yemeni and to talk more about it". Both were commended for being a credit to their community from NML's Director of House of Memories who also described the collaborative network that has developed through the project as "a family now". Feelings of pride also feature prominently in the social media analysis summarised in section 3.2 above, with the word "proud" itself occurring frequently in content analysis, along with positive affirmations such as "brilliant" and "inspirational".

Trust, equality and empowerment

Community members directly attribute the strength of pride felt in the CWYEH project to their sense of ownership in the process and outputs co-created, through active co-design and production with the PM and NML team. This began with the renegotiation of how the project could be delivered (and effective problem solving) in collaboration with all relevant organisations, especially regarding connections with young people, as described in section 3.1. The resulting inclusion of faith-based (e.g. the Al-Taiseer Mosque) and community-based organisations was described by one interviewee as "fully collaborative and equal". The collaborative process therefore has enabled a reflective re-establishment of trust and equality between community organisations and NML, building upon prior project-based experiences of working together. This was reinforced by the formation of a formal project Advisory Group (AG) in August 2021 with terms of reference, consisting of respected community leaders representing partner and key stakeholder organisations. At the request of AG members, meetings were held in person in the community (e.g. at the Al-Ghazali Centre) rather than online, helping to ensure a community presence for the project and its administration.

Alongside the AG's functional purpose in supporting delivery of the project, AG members would also have liked to use this platform to collectively review certain aspects of the process in terms of understanding community life and how this could be managed more effectively (expanding upon points raised in section 3.2 above). Community members expressed an interest therefore in more space for "learning and listening". In this context, all project partners would like more integrated and sustainable working partnerships with NML. Specific ideas included: a greater museum presence at community-based meetings and events; a more formative role in the organisational development of the community sector; acting as a bridge organisation between community assets and other public services (e.g. in health and wellbeing or learning and education contexts); and more frequent project-based initiatives and partnerships with all culturally diverse communities. One suggestion to help achieve this included a permanent link worker role, similar to that of the CWYEH Project Manager.

Empowering young people to narrate the project through enhanced intergenerational relationship building has been particularly impactful, with AG members and project partners expressing their pride in Abdulwase and all participating young people repeatedly throughout the project. One interviewee from a partner organisation shared that giving the city's Yemeni community "such a strong voice" has made them feel quite emotional. The project was described as a meaningful launch pad for sharing the under-represented history of relations between the Yemen and the UK, with particular pride felt in Liverpool's leadership of the project as a multicultural city. The origins of the project from within the community – starting with a grandson's desire to connect with his grandmother through their shared cultural heritage – and NML's enthusiastic response, gave the project an emotional resonance that has helped to nurture feelings of equality and trust throughout its development.

One staff member and young volunteer from a partner organisation (interviewees) described the Yemeni community as "humble", or as one that is traditionally quite introverted and does not typically like to "show off". The opportunity to "tell [our] own story" via a reputable platform and to such a professional standard has helped to empower participating young people to promote the project themselves using own social media platforms. Videos of the Yemeni Culture Day for example, which were shared by young community members via their own YouTube channels, went viral across international Arabic speaking communities, creating a powerful example of positive, intergenerational narrative building on Yemeni culture and heritage. One of these young people had only been in the UK for six months at the time, which again speaks to the power of the project in city-wide community participation and integration and in celebrating and promoting connections between the Yemen and the UK.

Personal development of participating young people

The project has provided a meaningful platform therefore for the personal development of young people, through opportunities to participate in the delivery of the project itself and through additional opportunities that have emerged via wider professional networks within

the museums and heritage field. One community partner (interviewee) commented on the value of the project in exposing the community's young people to the variety of roles and professional responsibilities in museums beyond the more conventional roles associated with collection management, conservation and curation (e.g. project management; marketing and communications; health and wellbeing support). Survey data also shows that 10 out of 19 young people taking part in toolkit workshops strongly agreed that they had 'learnt more about how my skills and interests connect with museums and their work', with another 8 participating young people agreeing with the statement. Observation notes from both toolkit workshops further evidence participating young peoples' enthusiasm for the project.

Sixteen young people in total took part in workshop 1 run by the NML project team at The Studio School in Liverpool city centre (February 2022), including students from years 7, 9 and 11. Following an initial demonstration of the My House of Memories app by the project team, and opportunity to use the app themselves, there was a lot of lively participation in the feedback discussion, with positive initial responses including:

- "I would spend hours and hours on this app – it's so interesting" [with reference to the social history content]

- "I like the way you can format the screen – I really like it" [in response to accessibility question]

- "I would probably show it to my Mum" [evidencing potential for intergenerational engagement]

Students intuitively commented on and recommended having different cultures represented in the app, with a participating teacher advising that 38 different languages are spoken in the school. Students made some very pertinent comments about migrant communities and their own mixed heritage. One girl of Azerbaijani heritage for example commented on how much she liked the My Memories feature in this context, and the option to add own objects and images. The discussion on different cultures acted as a very natural segue into introducing the CWYEH project and developing the Memories of Yemen app, with a group discussion on what advice they would give on working with young people in the future. There was a lot of animated chat during this section, with students asking questions. They visibly enjoyed being consulted and having the opportunity to contribute. Recommendations made during feedback included:

- advertising the project via social media platforms connected to Liverpool (e.g. via a promoted tweet);

- targeting on TikTok according to age range and geographic area; making use of young people's interests in design and animation;

- posting demonstration videos (e.g. memory boxes);

- putting together top tips on photographing objects;

- using an online 'upload' tool with consent/permission form, description box etc.

- consulting young people during school hours (especially if means getting out of class!)

The main voluntary contributions from young people (throughout the whole CWYEH project) came in the form of content curation, with the PM working with existing groups based at partner organisations to encourage and support the taking and sharing of photographs of objects at home and in the community (shared for example using WhatsApp). This image collection process was haphazard and problematic at times,

with learning shared and developed during workshops and in the resulting project toolkit (summarised in section 4 below) in order to refine and improve future practice.   In other opportunities to participate, thirty young people in total volunteered at the Yemeni Culture Day in September 2021, with roles including managing the event registration desk, helping with catering and event hospitality, and helping to host and facilitate the House of Memories Yemeni heritage collection space. The space enabled showcasing images of objects collected and photographed so far in the community, and the collection of objects donated for the Yemeni memory suitcase. Young people were enthusiastic, eloquent and engaging in their conversations with visitors to the space, with AG members commenting on the value of this experience in particular for their personal development. All young volunteers, who were recruited from existing partner organisation volunteer groups, received a certificate from NML in formal acknowledgement of their contribution to the event.

Twelve young people took part in the second toolkit workshop at KIMC in September 2022, which was run by the NML project team in collaboration with KIMC colleagues and Dr Josh Blamire from the Institute for Community Research and Development (ICRD), University of Wolverhampton, as part of the 'Value and Meaning of Young People's Engagement with Heritage' project. Most participants had some prior experience of the CWYEH project, and were invited to reflect on the process, including any recommendations for what worked well or what could have been done differently. Discussions focused on collecting and curating objects (digitally); planning and organisation of different activities and events, including the Yemeni Culture Day, app testing workshop with community elders, and app launch event; and young people's preferences for recognising and acknowledging their contribution to the project. Group members were then asked for recommendations on how to formulate their advice and feedback into a usable toolkit.

There have also been paid opportunities for young people to take part, both in the original project and though satellite activities including the ICRD research. A cash incentive was offered (funded by ICRD) to take part in the jointly run second toolkit workshop at KIMC in September 2022, enabling the research team to develop a case study based on the CWYEH project. One of the most redeeming features of the CWYEH project for participating young people, as revealed in workshop discussions, has been the level of peer support and feelings of "genuine teamwork". Involvement in the ICRD research has facilitated more such peer networking opportunities for some members of the group, who attended an additional research event in Birmingham in October 2022 accompanied by a KIMC staff member, which brought together all case study projects and groups from different parts of the UK.

Paid opportunities through the original project include voiceover work for one highly engaged 17-year-old girl, who recorded the Arabic voice descriptions for digital objects in the Memories of Yemen collection in a professional studio environment. This impressive young person's attitude, skills and contribution was highly commended by NML team members, including a professional actor who does regular presentation and facilitation work for the HoM programme. Other examples of longer-term engagement with NML include two young people from the Yemeni community becoming part of NML's Youth Engagement Forum, with the support of the project PM and community leaders. Following Abdulwase's example, with his nomination for the LCR Inspirational Young Person Award as a fitting legacy, the project has facilitated meaningful opportunities for young people to develop their confidence, skills and employability through engagement with museums.

4) Learning outcomes and the Memories of Yemen toolkit

As stated in the introduction to the report, one of the main expected outcomes of the project was to 'produce a toolkit for UK museums working and supporting young people'. This was published online by NML in November 2022, including a downloadable PDF guide and accompanying video series[17], complementing the Memories of Yemen digital collection available via the My House of Memories app, and other resources including the Yemeni House of Memories suitcase. The toolkit provides advice and guidance, based on learning outcomes from the project discussed throughout the evaluation report. Examples are summarised under evaluation objectives as follows:

Intergenerational connectivity in the Yemeni community

- The toolkit acknowledges the significance of having Abdulwase as an "inspirational young person" who "can inspire and motivate the wider community";

- The importance of appropriate and relevant mentorship in the community;

- The importance of consultation and communication with community elders and leaders.

The developing relationship between museums and community groups

- Recommendations include 'avoid making assumptions, share plans and have meaningful conversations';

- Appoint an appropriate and dedicated Project Manager;

- Identify local community organisations, key influencers and stakeholders early on in the project process.

Public engagement

- The toolkit recommends adopting a range of multi-lingual communication methods, where possible;

- Being conscious of any cultural sensitivities, consent and permission when producing promotional materials (e.g. photography);

- Supporting community members to be advocates for your project.

Personal development of young people

- To increase engagement, offer an incentive, or paid opportunities to participate, where possible;

- Acknowledge and recognise contributions, especially those involving professional skills and responsibilities;

- Identify opportunities for young people to stay involved with your organisation after the project has finished.

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17   https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/toolkit

Characteristics of effective collaboration

- To ensure meaningful collaboration, spend time getting to know the community, in the community itself;

- Awareness and observance of customs associated with faith and cultural norms in the community are particularly important;

- Consult with a range of appropriate community members, stakeholders and leaders regularly (e.g. via an Advisory Group).

In summary, and returning to the three main targeted outcomes of the project outlined in the 'Introduction' section above, the CWYEH project represents a high-quality intergenerational approach to the co-creation of museum collections. The collaborative process has enabled a rich awareness and understanding of Yemeni culture and heritage, which though proactive promotion and advocacy of the project has extended well beyond immediate participating communities and museum audiences. The value of museum collections and resources in connecting and supporting ageing populations and people living with dementia in multi-cultural contexts and communities has also been actively promoted throughout, with a particular emphasis on the value of heritage projects in developing a mutual understanding of and respect for care practices and values in different communities. The formative approach adopted to professional learning, reflective practice and evaluation research has also enabled the production of a rigorous, evidence-based toolkit to inform wider professional museum practice in collaborative collections-based work with diverse communities. As such, House of Memories is now setting a high benchmark for equality, diversity and inclusion standards in museum practice[18] and continues to be an evidence-based exemplar of best practice in the culture, health and wellbeing field.

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18   See for example the bilingual House of Memories Cymru programme: https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/house-of-memories-cymru

Appendix 1 – Summary of survey data

NB numbers indicate total completed surveys returned to evaluator, not total number of workshop participants.

- Toolkit Workshop 1, 28th February 2022, The Studio School (n = 12)
- App Testing Workshop, 18th May 2022, Al-Ghazali Centre (n = 11)
- Toolkit Workshop 2, 10th September 2022, Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre (n = 7)

Workshop title * I enjoyed learning more about the work of National Museums Liverpool Crosstabulation

Count

		I enjoyed learning more about the work of National Museums Liverpool			
	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree		Total
Workshop title	Toolkit workshop 1	0	3	9	12
	App testing workshop	1	3	7	11
	Toolkit workshop 2	0	3	4	7
Total		1	9	20	30

Workshop title * I understand more about how museums can support the health and wellbeing of communities (e.g. dementia care) Crosstabulation

Count

		I understand more about how museums can support the health and wellbeing of communities (e.g. dementia care)		
	Agree	Strongly agree		Total
Workshop title	Toolkit workshop 1	2	10	12
	App testing workshop	4	7	11
	Toolkit workshop 2	4	3	7
Total		10	20	30

Workshop title * I am proud to have given advice and guidance on the Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage project Crosstabulation

Count

		I am proud to have given advice and guidance on the Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage project			Total
		Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	
Workshop title	Toolkit workshop 1	2	2	8	12
	App testing workshop	0	2	9	11
	Toolkit workshop 2	0	2	5	7
Total		2	6	22	30

Workshop title * I am interested in collaborating on more museum projects in the future Crosstabulation

Count

		I am interested in collaborating on more museum projects in the future			Total
		Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	
Workshop title	Toolkit workshop 1	1	2	9	12
	App testing workshop	1	2	8	11
	Toolkit workshop 2	1	0	6	7
Total		3	4	23	30

Workshop title * I have learnt more about how my skills and interests connect with museums and their work Crosstabulation

Count

		I have learnt more about how my skills and interests connect with museums and their work			Total
	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree		Total
Workshop title	Toolkit workshop 1	1	4	7	12
	App testing workshop	1	3	7	11
	Toolkit workshop 2	0	4	3	7
Total		2	11	17	30

Appendix 2 – Logic model

Inputs	Processes [mechanisms]	Outputs	Outcomes [short-term]	Outcomes [long-term]
Funding from Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund Innovation and Engagement scheme	Community asset mapping and formalising of organisational partnerships	Memories of Yemen digital collection, hosted by My House of Memories app	Strong feelings of pride and other indicators of subjective wellbeing (enjoyment and interest) in community	Sustainable NML & Yemeni community organisational partnerships in city of Liverpool
House of Memories resources (e.g. core team; app platform)	Multi-level collaborative leadership, peer mentoring and support	Yemeni memory suitcase (part of House of Memories physical dementia care resource collection)	Personal development outcomes for participating young people, including skills and confidence building	Wider professional learning in national museum sector on co-producing digital collections and community engagement
Infrastructural support and resources from National Museums Liverpool (e.g. marketing and communications)	Engagement of existing community and volunteer groups through organisational partners	Connecting with communities to create heritage collections – a guide for cultural organisations (digital toolkit)	Professional learning on collaborative process, including community asset mapping and functions of collaborative leadership	Improved professional understanding of collaborative leadership and practice in national museum and heritage sector
Appointment of a dedicated Project Manager	Digital engagement and communication with community groups and public (e.g. WhatsApp; social media promotion)	Public events series including Yemeni Culture Day and app launch event	Professional learning on health and social care values, traditions and practices in Yemeni community	Greater diversity in professional museum and heritage sector workforce [regional/national]
Community assets (partnerships and networks)	Formation of Advisory Group with terms of reference and regular [quarterly] meetings	Promotional videos and printed materials	Community appreciation of value of museums in health and social care	Greater understanding of health and wellbeing benefits of participation in museums and heritage in different multicultural communities
Use of community resources (e.g. venues; catering)	Monthly project team meetings	Evaluation report	Access to and awareness of different roles and career pathways in museum and heritage work for participating young people	Enhanced national and international public awareness of Yemeni culture and heritage
Voluntary support and resources (e.g. event facilitation; translation and interpretation)	Formative (integrated) evaluation process		Positive public engagement with project via social media	
Appointment of external evaluator				