



The Angelou Centre

**Evaluation of
the BAM!
Sistahood!
Project –
Development
phase**

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1. Introduction

This is an evaluation of the initial six-month research and development phase of The BAM! Sistahood! Project which focuses upon the cultural, social and political heritage of four generations of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women in the North East of England. In the long-term, the BAM! Sistahood! Project aims to engage diverse communities, traditionally omitted from many regional heritage projects, in the unravelling, mapping, researching, archival and promotion of North East BAMER women's unique cultural and political identities and heritage by:

- Engaging four generations of women to actively participate in the research, retrieval, content management and archival of BAMER women's heritage
- Unravelling, mapping and researching North East BAMER women's rich and diverse cultural and political heritage
- Supporting, educating, and 'skilling-up' BAMER women in digital and physical archival skills, knowledge and understanding
- Creating the North East's first digitised BAMER women's archive in partnership with educational, cultural and heritage organisations
- Culturally embedding and promoting BAMER women's heritage in the North East

The purpose of the evaluation is to ascertain the extent to which the project through the development phase has established the foundations for this work.

2. Methodology

The evaluators bring unique expertise in the community development field and through this initial evaluation, aimed to embed a reflective learning process that draws upon the skills, knowledge and experience of everyone involved in the BAM! Sistahood! Project. Sue Robson was responsible for overall management, co-ordination and quality assurance of this evaluation project and the design of the evaluation methodology and tools. Gaynor Clarke carried out the desktop research. Sue and Gaynor jointly carried out the fieldwork, data analysis and report writing.

The evaluation methodology has combined qualitative, quantitative and interpretative methods to identify evidence of the outcomes and the effectiveness of the project's methods and practices.

- **Desktop research:**
 - Internal monitoring and evaluation processes
 - Minutes and notes of internal and external meetings
 - Internal and external policy documents
 - Participants learning records
 - Photographic, digital and recorded evidence

For a full list of documents accessed, see appendix 1

- **Semi-structured interviews and conversations** with participants and the project team, some of which were carried out by the evaluators at the following events
 - The BAM! Sistahood! Heritage Celebration Event
 - End of Research and Development Phase: Reflection and Dissemination - Friday 31st January 2014

The questions asked of the project participants are in appendix 2

3. Evaluation findings

Using the original application the following thirteen evaluation points were identified as being central to the measurement of the success of the research and development phase towards laying the foundations for the two-year project (see matrix used to gather evidence in appendix 3).

The thirteen evaluation points were researched and evidence or data collected from desktop research, discussions with staff and women involved in the project, the Sistahood website and attendance at events organised as part of the project or incorporating the results of the work of the group. There is a huge amount of evidence readily available; this evaluation has used evidence from less public sources.

3.1 Small group work in heritage and educational settings

There were five days of initial training in October 2013. Planning and discussion took place with key partners, this included a Museum visit, Future visioning, a visit to Culture Lab, technology in development, Lo-fi prototype production followed by a critical review with a final celebration and dissemination of results.

The project also carried out research from secondary sources; in libraries, museums and county records offices, including diverse contemporary heritage, research and documentation skills and sharing heritage via social media. Public events or groups have included library events, social 'lives heritage' events and group activities planned that will help share, discuss and learn about black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee women's heritage. The research carried out included primary and secondary sources, Visits to the City Library highlighted important gaps in the availability of relevant material. January 2014.

"In searching through the archives at the wonderful City Library in Newcastle, the lack of information about BAMER women amongst the last seventy years of North Eastern history archives has challenged us to think about different ways to look for hidden clues."

Project participant (from website)

The WEA supported a facilitated visit to the Hatton Gallery to further research BAMER women's heritage. In total twenty-four volunteers registered for the project, initially there was an average of twelve women per session. However, by October 2013, this had increased to an average of fourteen per session and numbers were consistent until the end of January.

Theoretical working methods blended a feminist community development approach to ensure the engagement and participation of a wide range of BAMER women with theoretical and technical input from the partnership with Culture Lab and City Library. The following comment from a practitioner from a partner agency involved in project demonstrates how individual and collective empowerment was derived from these processes.

"The women were sharing their stories about their experiences as young children in primary schools in England. We talked about how forty years ago, if you were called 'Parveen' the teacher would say, "I can't say that, I am going to call you Pauline." Then others started telling their stories and they all had similar experiences in primary schools. You start to realise there is a system going on – women were sharing bad experience, but it was powerful.

3.2 Scoping, mapping and starting to piece together a timeline

A session on timelines¹ enabled the women to compare their experiences, backgrounds and stories and to put their personal experiences in context with national and international events.

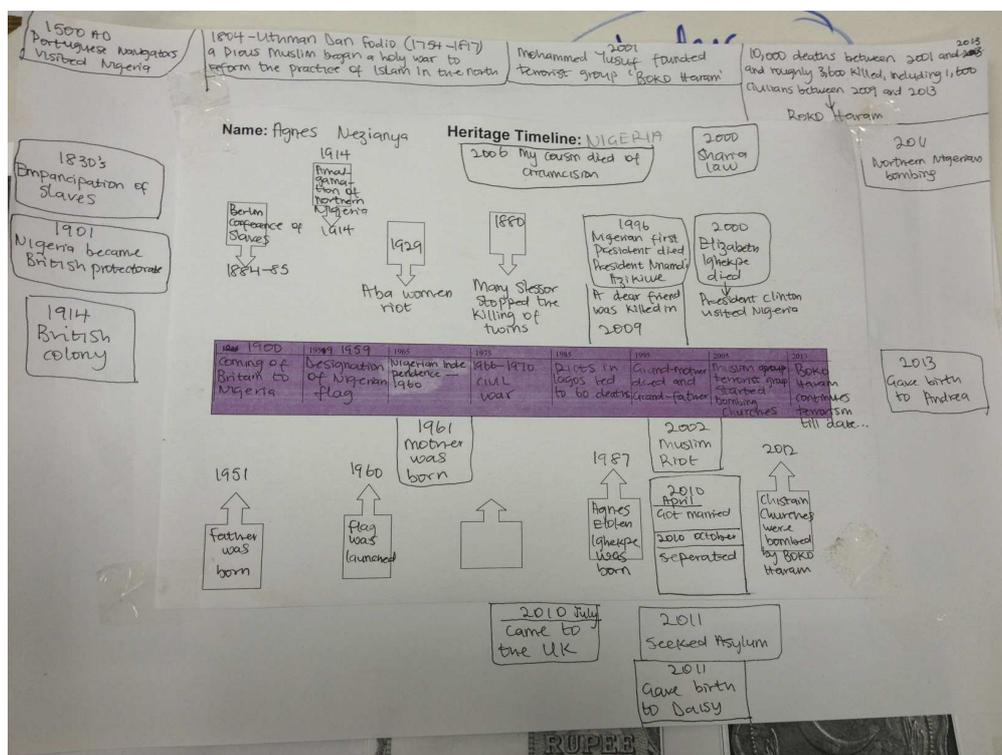


Figure 1: Example of a timeline

Evaluations carried out by staff provided further evidence

- X for instance had connections to many different countries but associated specifically with Burundi. She talked at length about the different countries her family was from. She drew flags and wrote lots of notes.
- Y said how she had learnt new things about Nigeria. She extended her initial timeline to include other aspects of history she felt were important before 1945. She included aspects such as emancipation of slaves and Nigeria becoming part of the British Empire in 1914.

¹ Session 3, 17/10/2013



Figure 2: Participants research and discuss heritage objects

Each session began with an overview of the previous session, reminding participants of the ground rules and importance of confidentiality. In session two, participants looked at what heritage is and what are the current themes of heritage in their lives. This was carried out using the following tools, flipcharts, sharpies, phones, laptops and cameras. In this session, there were 14 women from 12 cultural backgrounds (: Sierra Leonean, Indian, Moroccan, Libyan, Tamil, Indian, Pakistani, Nigerian, Mixed Caribbean, Algerian, Congolese, and Bangladeshi)

Areas of heritage discussed included dress codes, children, language, education, work, morals, values and beliefs, lifestyle, home, religion, music, art and literature, history, borders, objects, traditions, sexuality, food, marriage and governance and laws. There was a discussion regarding whether there were recurring themes or groupings and where there was any interconnectedness; the following areas were considered by the group to be linked in some way.

- **Cultural & Aesthetic:** Signs & Symbols, History, Language, Tradition, Food, Art, Literature, Music, Dress Codes, Education, Religion, Morals-Beliefs-Values
- **Political & Social:** Governance & Laws, Education, Communities, Religion, History, Economies, Language, Borders, Tradition, Sexuality, Food, Visual Art, Literature, Music, Children, Home, Education, Work, Money, Morals-Beliefs-Values, Lifestyle
- **Family & Identity:** Dress, Relationships, Marriage, Dress Codes, Leisure time, Sexuality, Religion, Language, Borders, Tradition, Food, Dress codes, Education, Work, Morals-Beliefs-Values, Lifestyle, Home

These areas were then considered through the groups understanding of the following.

- Racism and/or Assimilation expectations
- Gender
- Class and caste
- Sexuality
- Ability

In preparation for the following session brief consideration was given to how heritage can be documented and recorded, it was decided that it would be carried out using:

- Material Objects
- Evidenced objects: photographs of or recollections of
- Documentation: oral/visual records/renditions
- Second/Third hand accounts, re envisioning

There were women taking part in this project in a number of different stages including consultation, group sessions and events. One hundred and twenty-four women took part in the consultation. The age range of those taking part in the consultation covered 4 generations including ages from nine to 66. In the consultation stage, 21 different nationalities were involved. The women involved in structured session ranged in age from 15 to 66 and came from 15 cultural backgrounds (: Sierra Leonean, Moroccan, Libyan, Tamil, Indian, Pakistani, Nigerian, Caribbean, Algerian, Chinese, Romanian, Zimbabwean, Ghanaian, Congolese, and Bangladeshi)

3.3 Methodological use of participant centric consultation, research, prototype design pilots and skill based media training

Records were made available of the session plans and evaluations of all seven sessions completed to the end of December 2013, in addition participants produced a range of personal material and research findings relating to their personal experience and the their own heritage.



Figure 3: Using digital cameras to photograph heritage

Participants were very clear in discussion with evaluators about the overall sense of worth, confidence and empowerment they gained from their involvement of the project, for example.

“I learned about heritage about myself, who I am – deeply. I learnt about my own forefathers and other cultures – it was very informative.”

“We are mainly stay at home wives and mothers, but now we know much more and things have opened up for us. We have much more because of this project and the Angelou Centre.”

Project participants

“We want to break the barriers for women, instead of saying ‘I am too old’, ‘I don’t know how’ – it’s important for wider society for them to know how to use the technology.”

Project volunteer

Alongside this, participants were able to describe the knowledge they had gained in technical and theoretical terms

“We learn to access the media – cameras, computers, film; we have a blogging website.

Project participants

Group sessions indicated inclusive methods, which engaged participants and ensured that the robustness of the proposed functionality was tested in practical ways. The evaluation and presentation of the material indicates organisational methods are sound.

3.4 Robust administrative systems involving the entire organisation working to support and integrate the project

The project is linked closely to the Angelou Centre administration, using existing registration forms, enabling women to attend from other groups. All material is produced under the Angelou Centre logo. Accounting procedures are utilised. There is evidence of discussion with and awareness of other staff not immediately involved, the projects findings and outcomes are included in generic Angelou Centre events and celebrations.

The Action Plan for the continuation of the project includes a range of examples of the integration of central administration practised in the Angelou Centre. This gives credibility and strength to the organisation of the Heritage project including.

- Regional Budget and accounting system in place (SAGE system & Nominal Codes created) including monthly breakdown and cash flow.
- Paperwork system in place
- Allocated staff Accountable
- Project and Participant monitoring, policies and procedures put in place & all administration proformas:
 - Human Resources,
 - Petty Cash/budget,
 - Service user registration, volunteer,
 - Sessional paperwork,
- Policies and guidelines available and shared with partners across region- files in place per Heritage Hub

3.5 Sound and tested set of protocols and policies to ensure equitable treatment of all BAMER women, staff and volunteers as well as taking steps to measure and deal with any risks a project such as this may face

The policies and protocols exercised and practiced by The Angelou Centre are incorporated into the project in particular the following are relevant;

- Aims & Objectives
- Equalities & Diversity Policy
- Volunteers Policy

- Respect Policy

In addition, the following policies were created for the Sistahood BAM Project:

- Learning Strategy, Evaluation Framework and Participation Framework

Protocols and policies which ensure equitable treatment are evidenced in the original application for the research and development stage and are clearly intended as central to the project in the Ethics participation plan form Newcastle University and the session plans. There is evidence of the achievement of this aim from evaluations of sessions, in the range of languages women speak, the arrangement of crèche facilities, the understanding that attendance and time keeping may be difficult, the acknowledgement and attention paid to issues arising in women's lives that may not be directly related to the heritage sessions.

Discussions with women taking part showed they identified positively with the diversity of experience and appreciated the value of difference. This was demonstrated in their readiness to share their work with those from other backgrounds. This is a response from one of the project participants when she was asked whether she felt the women involved in the project had been treated equitably.

“I experienced this positively, it was great. We learnt about language, clothes, we brought food and shared each other's food. We have shared so many things”

Project participant

For this project participant, although “The Angelou Centre is doing a brilliant job” of bringing women together and developing a sense solidarity among BAMER women and using digital technology to increase their visibility, the visibility of African cultural heritage in the North East remains limited.

“The experience was very productive and instructive. There were lots of learning and lots of different women, but I found myself under the banner of ‘BME.’ There are similar issues but I am an African woman and African women are less visible, than Asian women particularly in the North East. Any African is classed as a refugee and faces abuse.

In the North East, there are statues, cathedrals, remembrance, China Town and there are Mosques – what do African people to say they have been here? What will there be in twenty years? Then people and policy makers will understand.”

Project participant

The women who took part in more rural elements of the project particularly those in Northumberland felt that there was less appreciation of the issues and difficulties in rural areas, where transport was more expensive, distances to venues further, childcare less available and links with other BAMER women and sympathetic projects more difficult. Coupled with fewer resources being made available for work with BAMER communities in rural areas this represented a considerable disadvantage and inequality. This comment was made by one of the facilitators.

“There needs to be more practical things, like resources for language facilitation and translation. A facilitator for ICT, the woman wanted a course and more money for transport, particularly in Northumberland.”

In the Research and Development stage, 50 % of the research and development funding was directly spent on the work carried out with the women: £5400 was spent on direct participant costs, including travel, activities, and events.

£5690 spent on childcare, language support and facilitating engagement. This was adequate in urban settings but rural development would require an increased investment in these support costs

Comments on the website relating to BAMER women’s contribution and its perceived importance were discussed. The Research and Development Coordinator was clear that there is considerable underestimation of BAMER women’s skills and experience in understanding the cultural diversity, inhibitions and understanding. This understanding can assist in the purposeful involvement of more women in this project and other relevant projects and community groups. These skills include;

- Being able to translate a particular dialect of Nigerian pidgin English that allowed 3 elder Nigerian women to participate in the heritage café sessions,
- Links into diverse and unknown and invisible community groups such as the
- Association of Baoule North East, (Akwaba Nord East), a tribal African group originating from the Ivory Coast with over 25 members who are based in Gateshead but also have links to other smaller tribal associations across Tyne and Wear.

“Volunteers and women who are able to be active in heritage projects not only have important links into diverse communities but can also be a connection to other organisations, for example whilst working with North East Refugee Service and Investing in People and Culture in Middlesbrough, BAM Sistahood! Project volunteers from that area were able to link up with three women’s organisations (Straightforward, Women’s Roma Assembly & Empowering Women) that would have been impossible for a stand-alone heritage sector project without cultural expertise to make links into these organisations. Whilst the additional support and infrastructure based mainly around linguistic support, crèche, travel and access routes to additional services (bearing in mind the multiple barriers that participants face) is also crucial.”

BAM! Sistahood! Project: Activity Plan Draft 2: January 2014

In relation to “taking steps to measure and deal with any risks,” significant attention was paid to the safe use of media and information technology.

“We try to make it easier for the women to use the digital technologies; to take the barriers away from them and make it easier. At the same time we have to make sure women know about security, for example privacy settings, because women could share something that was damaging to their communities if it was taken out of context. We have to make sure the women are safe.”

Project staff

Discussions with women identified the positive effect of social media training in their confidence that they knew how to use social media safely.

“I come from a village in Pakistan. When I first came to the Angelou Centre I could barely speak any English, I did lots of courses and then I found out about this project. I have learnt about digital technology; what is right; what is wrong and how to use it. I want to make an animated film about life in Pakistan that goes out on a big screen.”

Project participant

3.6 Shared vocabulary for understanding the sensory and aesthetic potential and limits of digital technologies

There is undoubtedly vocabulary that to those unfamiliar with digital technology is highly complex. The range of methods used to increase understanding of the technical work included training and research sessions at the Angelou Centre. This knowledge was increased by a session exploring “What is a Prototype?” which introduced to the principles of the ‘prototype’ delivered by Culture Lab researcher Rachel Clarke.

Complex concepts such as digital technology and prototypes can often mean that following the principles of accessibility and inclusion is difficult without considerable experience of methodology in working with groups. This is one of many examples of the approach and methods used to ensure participation and understanding.

“A Prototype is:

- First attempt at an idea
- Actioning an idea
- Bring an idea to share
- Puzzle – one picture with different ideas”

Wikipedia provide the following definition: A prototype is an early sample, model or release of a product built to test a concept or process or to act as a thing to be replicated or learned from. From session plan “What is a Prototype.”

From <http://www.bamsistahoodproject.org.uk/category/digital-prototypes/>

Overall there was an issue of the limited knowledge of the women in all aspects of technology including Word, Excel and Social Media which is regularly addressed by the general programme organised by the Angelou Centre, this more basic training ensured a reasonably level starting point when the more specific knowledge relating to prototypes was addressed.

The methods used to engage the women ensured the technical skills and knowledge were taught but also ensured the women were then given freedom as to how to use them. Technology was used as a means to an end and not an end itself. The technological understanding was not negotiable but the way it was used was within participants’ power. This made participants feel knowledgeable and in control of their own stories. These principles are reflected in the following comments to the evaluators.

“Always we have discussions about what the women want to do. But we also recognise that the women don’t have the experience and we have to guide them around the use of technology and introduce new things in every session.”

Project volunteer

We try to get away from the barriers of using digital technology and get on to what we want to archive and share. We learn the skills of digital technology; then we choose what heritage we want to share ourselves.”

Project participant

<p>Prototype Session 1: Rachel Clarke</p>	<p>Session 1 Outline: Creating storyboards: Visualising our ideas One of the first things we do when developing a prototype is to understand how technology can help us achieve something. In this session we will create visual storyboards of how you imagine you might document and share your heritage using technology. We will present this to the group for further discussion and feedback.</p> <p>A group of 5 women mapped out initial ideas for documenting and sharing their heritage. The group reflected on particular aspects of their own heritage they were personally interested in and then drew inspiration from existing available technologies to create storyboards. These ideas included an interactive map with women’s voices, an interactive table that photographs objects and includes oral stories, a culture watch that compares and updates differences in culture and a mobile phone app for sharing animations about cultural histories. Session 5 - 14/11/13</p>
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“There appears to have been considerable success as women who were interviewed were able to explain and discuss their understanding, in relatively simple terms but showing a full understanding.”

From session evaluation

3.7 Development of a constructive and practical approach to digital platform design

The evidence, initially from desktop research, showed a range of meetings, consultations and session plans and evaluations, which show the commitment to involving women in the digital platform design.

Example 1

In session 2 of the initial programme women were asked to look at their heritage and then to begin thinking about their storyboard, this enabled them to first engage with their own ideas and experience before tackling the more complex issue of digital technology.

Session 2:

Making a mock-up: Making things tangible

With the storyboards created in the previous sessions we focused on specific details of the interaction with technology you wish to use. A group of 6 women worked on developing their ideas further based on the original storyboards and ideas developed in the previous week. We recapped on the initial ideas and clarified whom the prototypes might be for. The prototype ideas included an interactive map, a culture watch and a short animated film. Cardboard mock-ups were created including visuals and materials. One participant had not been to previous sessions, so a complete re-cap was outlined before starting the mock-ups.

Session 2:

In this session, we explored visual channels for communicating about a project (website, prints, newsletters etc.) and how the cultural meanings embedded in styles of layout, colours, fonts and logos influence the targeted audience's perception of a project. We also discussed how objects and photographs can tell the story one's heritage by giving it a visual presence and identity. This laid the foundations for the next session, which will focus on the participatory design of the basis of the project's visual identity, and result in the production of inspiration boards.

Evaluation

The session was positive and moved forward as planned. The participants understood the exercise and engaged with it in a productive way.

Session notes and evaluation session 7 21/11/13

Example 2

The following publicity was uploaded on the BAM Sistahood website to encourage new members.

"This work will involve training BAM! Sistahood! Project participants in digital design, social media and other technologies that will include everything from basic IT right through to film and sound editing. We will also get the opportunity to be involved in prototype building at the Culture Lab studios, with a hands-on approach to creating digital platforms and technologies that engage BAMER women's communities and the wider public in BAMER women's heritage journeys. Session plans and evaluation"

Example 3

This evaluation report was posted on the website and illustrates the range of applications available to convey different information.

"In the following session, we had a visit to Culture Lab to have a look at some of the ideas they have been working on. We looked at Gadgeteer, which is a prototyping toolkit made by Microsoft to connect different components together when people want to make their own computers. Tom Smith showed us how this had been used to make 'Squidge' a toy, turtle game controller and Andy Garbett showed us NewsHack, a citizen journalist display. We also saw Feedfinder, an app to help breastfeeding mums find suitable places to breastfeed and Teresa Almeida showed us some e-textiles using different fabrics from around the globe."

3.8 Development of a series of exploratory digital prototypes

There are various examples evidencing the range of exploratory digital prototypes that the women have devised and been involved in developing, such as session notes, exhibition, workbooks and discussion with women. These have been displayed on the website and have been shared at events and celebrations organised by the Angelou Centre, where the women involved have spoken confidently and with pride of their achievements, for example.

"Yesterday we did some filming and video, it was brilliant. We were just listening to a woman. A woman can share her heritage through media and filming through using her own voice. We developed confidence."

Project participant

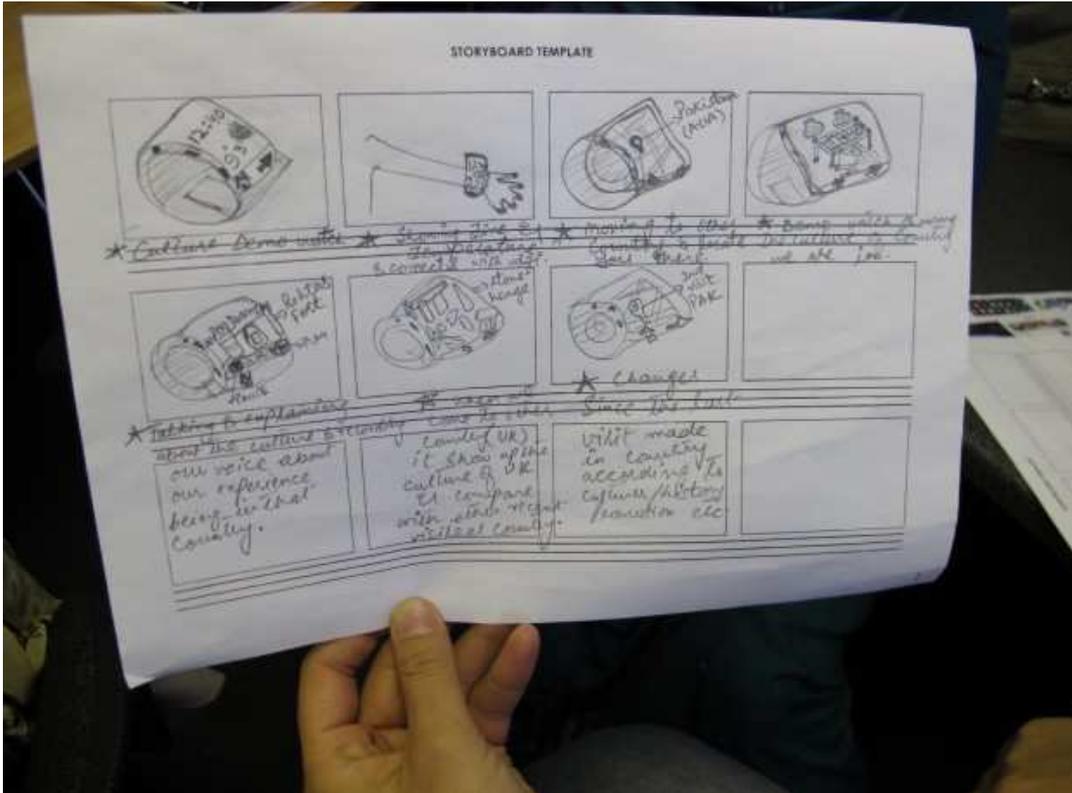


Figure 4 Brainstorming ideas to create useable digital tools for diverse and wider communities to further engage with heritage

Figure 5 -Modelling and mocking up prototype design ideas



3.9 Women involved in the development phase beyond consultation alone

The evaluators have witnessed, observed and have evidence in numerous areas of the project which illustrate the involvement of the women in all aspects of the design and planning of the project. It is evident from discussions and presentations that the women are fully involved and understand the complexity of their work. In addition, they have ambitious ideas for the future work of the project.

“The Angelou Centre is doing a brilliant job - there has been a lot about using digital technology to be more visible. The project needs to develop more of a presence and to bring the women outside as they build confidence. The next step should be to integrate the women – have volunteer placements so people start to relate to each other.”
Project participant

The planning, evaluation and development of ideas fully reflect the women involved. The examples are numerous and the following examples are intended to provide a flavour of the involvement.

“A lively discussion followed this workshop about the different greetings, which referred to respect for elders, deferral of power to the wife in marriage ceremonies as demonstrated by kneeling and bowing. A suggestion was made to film the different greetings as a way of reiterating both difference and similarity between cultures; greetings being something that is done across the world to welcome or acknowledge others and yet they can also reveal different levels of respect, power and status.”

Session 7 evaluation

“How would you like to share your heritage?” - A session with women from Ivory Coast in the early stages of research and development project October 2013

- Large celebration event where we are able to demonstrate and be proud of our heritage and learn about others heritage
- Be able to present our special crafts and skills- libraries/community centres
- Have heritage sessions with other women’s groups
- Get rid of myths about Africa- get rid of the racism by showing people who we are
- Be able to show our own children and other peoples children more about our countries, villages and heritage
- A blog just for the Ivorian women’s group, so people can see our heritage
- A way to link back to our families and culture on the Ivory coast, a way to digitally connect and show all the changes we have made.

“In the following session, we came up with more concrete ideas of our own, thinking about the kinds of heritage we wanted to work with and share with others in the future. We came up with loads of ideas including ways of connecting object histories to inherited pasts, an interactive map with women’s voices, a culture watch that compares different countries and how they have changed over time and sharing films about women’s lives on mobile phones and tablets”

Digital prototype session (from website)

Every aspect of the evidence illustrates the involvement of women in every stage of the programme; the increase in numbers could show the success of the programme to engage women even though they are from a wide range of class backgrounds, educational achievement, religions and cultures.

“Session evaluations show the involvement and individuality of the responses of the women participants. These three straightforward questions, underpinned or founded consultations with groups of women have given the volunteers a touchstone to keep returning to and something to consider when thinking about how we engage other women.

- What does heritage mean to you?
- What is your heritage made up of?
- How would you like to share that heritage?”

Project coordinator evaluation

3.10 Proposed project deployment tried and tested

The Action Plan produced for the Delivery stage of the project shows meticulous planning coupled with a flexible approach to design and working methods. This provides a positive insight into the ability of the project and the partners to approach the future project with expertise and the ability to address the challenges that arise.

The project illustrates a planned and organised approach in testing methods and relationships and ensuring they will withstand the pressures over the life of the project. All aspects have been evaluated and changes, or proposals for changes, made. There is clear evidence that the project, the Angelou Centre and the Heritage partners have robustly investigated the risks. Some issues relating to the priorities on the University resources have already been highlighted and addressed. When difficulties are faced in advance and not at a point of crisis, this indicates a forward thinking approach and a commitment to making the future project work. There have been some discussions with heritage partners who are not necessarily able to commit for two years. Successful negotiations and discussions have confirmed the involvement of the Social Inclusion Digital Economy (SIDE) project, which is part of the School of Computing. The School of Computing overall continue to support the project in the development of the website and have been consistently supportive of their continued involvement.

Flexibility is evident in planning and evaluations, the sharing of the work on web site.

3.11 Partners, practitioners and institutions willing to learn and adjust their practice accordingly

There is evidence of embedding “positive working practices with traditionally excluded communities into institutionalised heritage settings” in session plans, meetings, the website and the sessions carried out by partners and external agencies. It is also evident from events and celebrations attended by the evaluators that key staff are aware of the many issues and nuances to be taken into account when working with traditionally excluded communities. However, in this initial stage of the project’s development it is has not been possible to ascertain whether there is a genuine commitment to organisational transformation or whether this is reliant on the particular individuals involved. The levels to which the project impacts upon the protocols, policies and practices of partners and external agencies should be subject to vigorous and ongoing evaluation.

The Culture Lab research worker Rachel Clarke felt that they were able to demonstrate the wider impact of the long-term engagement of the Culture Lab in the project.

“The BAM Sistahood project is seen as an exemplar of the different forms of participatory practice that are possible around digital technology and engagement with heritage”

Rachel highlighted that she had learnt from both staff and participants, including ways of engaging women with different needs on their own terms and being flexible and open in methods used.

“The staff, volunteers and learners are all an inspiration in how they work and what they do.”

Rachel Clarke, Culture Lab

3.12 Influence of the potential directions for the Creative Exchange programme and the Angelou Centre BAM! Sistahood! Project

The research and development stage of the project has enabled group work methods and essential technological knowledge to be intertwined with the direct experience and heritage of the women involved. There are a number of areas that have been identified which will influence the direction of the future HLF project. These include:

- The development of heritage hubs formed as part of the research and development stage in Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Northumberland and new hubs will be formed in South Tyneside, Hartlepool and Stockton.
- The concentration on specific areas of heritage identified by the women themselves including textiles, clothing and food.
- The use of other creative media to address these heritage and cultural areas, including photography and film both media having been identified by the women involved as areas they wish to explore to depict their ideas.
- The further development of digital prototypes.
- Introduction to Digital Arts & Social Media, creatively exploring digital processes and introducing them to others.

From Action and activity plan, 2014

The following points were identified by project facilitators in the evaluation, indicating the value placed upon networking and sharing different experiences and cultures, amongst both facilitators and participants.

“More networking among the facilitators working in different areas to share with each other.”

“More bringing people together from different geographical areas to share different cultures, for example wedding cultures and things like that.”

Project facilitators

4. Conclusions

This initial evaluation has found the BAM! Sistahood! Project research and development phase to have established solid foundations for culturally embedding and promoting BAMER women’s heritage in the North East of England. This is a testament to its theoretical and methodological basis. Blending tried and tested feminist community development methods and approaches with ‘skilling-up’ women in digital and physical archival skills, knowledge and understanding, has ensured the engagement and empowerment of a wide range of BAMER women. As a result, the women involved in the project feel more confident and knowledgeable, in control of their own stories and equipped with the means to share them widely.

Four generations of BAMER women from different nationalities, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds have actively participated in the research and development phase. Integral

to this initial success, is The Angelou Centres' sophisticated understanding and application of intersectionality (i.e. the power differentials between women). In the future project, concentration and commitment needs to focus upon the policies and robustness of partner agencies protocols and policies to ensure that they are flexible enough. Also that those implementing these policies and protocols are experienced enough to ensure that proven methods of working with BAMER women are used at all times. This may require training delivered by The Angelou Centre to ensure all partners are aware of this in the same way that Angelou Centre staff and volunteers are aware they need training in the technology and language used in relation to the digital prototypes.

This initial evaluation has found the needs and priorities of BAMER women as driving the research and development phase of the BAM! Sistahood! Project and it is imperative that in all aspects of future development, that their views are consistently sought and listened to. There is always a danger that external contributors will not be aware of the importance of ensuring that the women retain ownership of the project and its development. Thus, future funding needs to ensure that the Angelou Centre are not dependent on changing their plans, project development or working methods in order to meet the funding demands of partners if and where those demands are contrary to those of the women involved.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Now that the foundations for culturally embedding and promoting BAMER women's heritage in the North East of England have been established, investment must follow to sustain and develop this further, this should include:
 - 5.1.1 A concentration on specific areas of heritage identified by the women themselves including textiles, clothing and food
 - 5.1.2 The use of other creative media to address these heritage and cultural areas, including photography and film to explore to depict BAMER women's ideas
 - 5.1.3 Further development of digital prototypes
 - 5.1.4 Introduction to Digital Arts & Social Media, creatively exploring digital processes and introducing them to others
 - 5.1.5 Involvement in other heritage project and sharing work with other groups
 - 5.1.6 Further development of heritage hubs in Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Northumberland and development of new hubs in South Tyneside, Hartlepool and Stockton
 - 5.1.7 Better structures and systems for networking among the facilitators working in different areas to share with each other and bringing women together from different geographical areas to share different cultures
- 5.2 The theoretical and methodological basis of the project blending feminist community development methods and approaches with digital and technical skills, knowledge and understanding must remain central to future heritage projects and proven methods of working with BAMER women are used at all times.
- 5.3 Future heritage projects with BAMER women need to include a budget for education and training for partners in feminist community development methods and approaches and in the technical competencies required for research, retrieval, content management and archival of BAMER women's heritage
- 5.4 All partners involved in future heritage projects with BAMER women must have a dedicated commitment to understanding and applying intersectionality and this is

reflected in organisational policies, protocols, practices and staff development and training plans

- 5.5 Funding arrangements for future heritage projects with BAMER needs to ensure that the Angelou Centre are the lead accountable body and responsible for strategic overview and policy.
- 5.6 The shared learning of partners and the extent to which project impacts upon the protocols, policies and practices of partners and external agencies needs to be captured in ongoing internal and external evaluative processes. The cost of evaluation needed to be included in future project budgets.

Appendix 1: Documents accessed in evaluation

General

- BAM! SISTAHOOD! HERITAGE PROJECT website - 70 Years of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee Women's Heritage in the North East of England²
- Heritage Lottery Fund proposal
- Tyne and Wear Museums proposal.

Partnership planning

- Meeting notes planning, evaluation and development September 2013 to December 2013

Newcastle University Culture Lab

- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Participatory Framework & Prototype Workshops Consent Forms Project Start
- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Participatory Framework & Prototype Workshops Information Sheet
- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Researcher, Staff and Volunteer Workshops Information Sheet
- APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROGRAMME INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND NOT SUBJECT TO CLINICAL ETHICS PROCEDURES (NRES)
- Newcastle University Risk Assessment

Session planning and delivery

- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Prototype workshop plan
- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Participatory Framework & Prototype Workshops Consent Forms Project Start
- BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project Participatory Framework & Prototype Workshops Information Sheet
- THE ANGELOU CENTRE BAM! SISTAHOOD! PROJECT Research Exercise
- THE ANGELOU CENTRE BAM! SISTAHOOD! PROJECT Interview Exercise
- BAM! Sistahood! Heritage Project Volunteer Training & Development Newcastle's Volunteer Skills
- (from Volunteer Action Plans)
- Session notes and planning for consultation, Heritage awareness, digital prototypes and Women's Café.

Evaluation and development stage reporting

- BAM! Sistahood! Heritage Project Action Plan Objectives & Outcomes
- BAM! Sistahood! Project: Activity Plan Draft 2: January 2014
- BAM! Sistahood! Project evaluation matrix (development phase)

² <http://www.bamsistahoodproject.org.uk/>

Appendix 2: Questions for participants

Area of evaluation	Question
1. Small group work in heritage and educational settings alongside the Angelou Centre with key partners	<p>a. How have you found working in a group of women on this project?</p> <p>b. Can you me about anything you have learnt anything from the project? From working in the group?</p>
3. Methodological use of participant centric consultation, research, prototype design pilots and skill based media training to ensure that the functionality of the project is tested alongside its organisational and theoretical working methods	c. In what ways do you feel that you have been involved in shaping the projects' development?
5.Sound and tested set of protocols and policies to ensure equitable treatment of all BAMER women, staff and volunteers as well as taking steps to measure and deal with any risks a project such as this may face	d. We have found a lot of information about the project that suggests it is treating women equally, whether they are staff, volunteers or participants – do you feel that you are treated equally with other women? Can you give and example of how?
9 Women involved in the development phase beyond consultation alone - Women involved in the heritage related and digital research, regular digital training and heritage sessions alongside crucial timeline mapping and historical primary and secondary source research	e. Although I have been working on evaluating the project – I don't really understand the term 'digital technology' – can you explain it to me?
12.Influence of the potential directions for the Creative Exchange programme and the Angelou Centre BAM! Sistahood! project	f. Is there anything the project could have done differently or better that could be changed in the future?

Appendix 3: Evaluation Matrix

Area of evaluation	Progress to date	Source(s) of evidence
1. Small group work in heritage and educational settings alongside the Angelou Centre with key partners		
2. Scoping, mapping and starting to piece together a timeline informed by intergenerational participants		
3. Methodological use of participant centric consultation, research, prototype design pilots and skill based media training to ensure that the functionality of the project is tested alongside its organisational and theoretical working methods		
4. Robust administrative system is put in place by the Angelou Centre one that involves the entire organisation working to support and integrate the project		
5. Sound and tested set of protocols and policies to ensure equitable treatment of all BAMER women, staff and volunteers as well as taking steps to		

Area of evaluation	Progress to date	Source(s) of evidence
measure and deal with any risks a project such as this may face		
6. A shared vocabulary for understanding the sensory and aesthetic potential and limits of digital technologies in relation to people's experiences of heritage		
7. The development of a constructive and practical approach to digital platform design		
8. The development of a series of exploratory digital prototypes		
9. Women involved in the development phase beyond consultation alone - Women involved in the heritage related and digital research, regular digital training and heritage sessions alongside crucial timeline mapping and historical primary and secondary source research		

Area of evaluation	Progress to date	Source(s) of evidence
<p>10. Proposed project deployment have to be tried and tested in order to ensure that the working methods are appropriate as well as flexible enough to withstand economic, social and cultural changes over the 24 months of the full project</p>		
<p>11. Partners, practitioners and institutions willing to learn and adjust their practice accordingly (to embed positive working practices with traditionally excluded communities into institutionalised heritage settings)</p>		
<p>12. Influence of the potential directions for the Creative Exchange programme and the Angelou Centre BAM! Sistahood! project</p>		
<p>13. Informing the aims, projected outcomes and actual deployment of the full BAM! Sistahood! Project</p>		