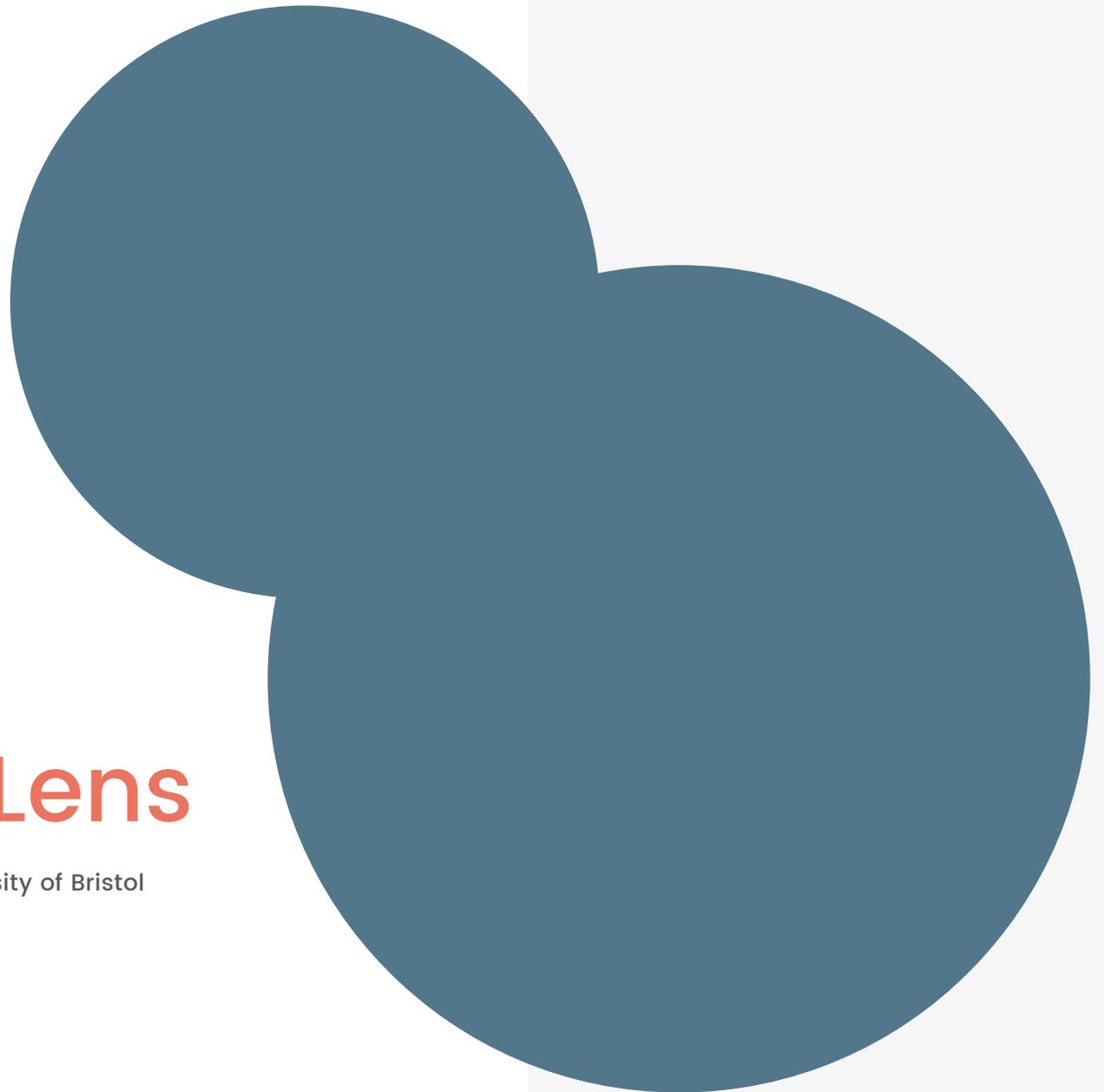




Green and Black – PhotoVoice: Through My Lens

A collaboration between Ujima Radio and University of Bristol





Green and Black – PhotoVoice: Through My Lens

Published September 2018

A Common Cause case study published by University of Bristol
and AHRC Connected Communities Programme.



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Common Cause Research

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

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

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

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

At A Glance

Title

Green and Black – Photovoice: Through my Lens

Key Partners

Ujima Radio

<http://www.ujimaradio.com/>

University of Bristol's Cabot Institute

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cabot/>

Funders

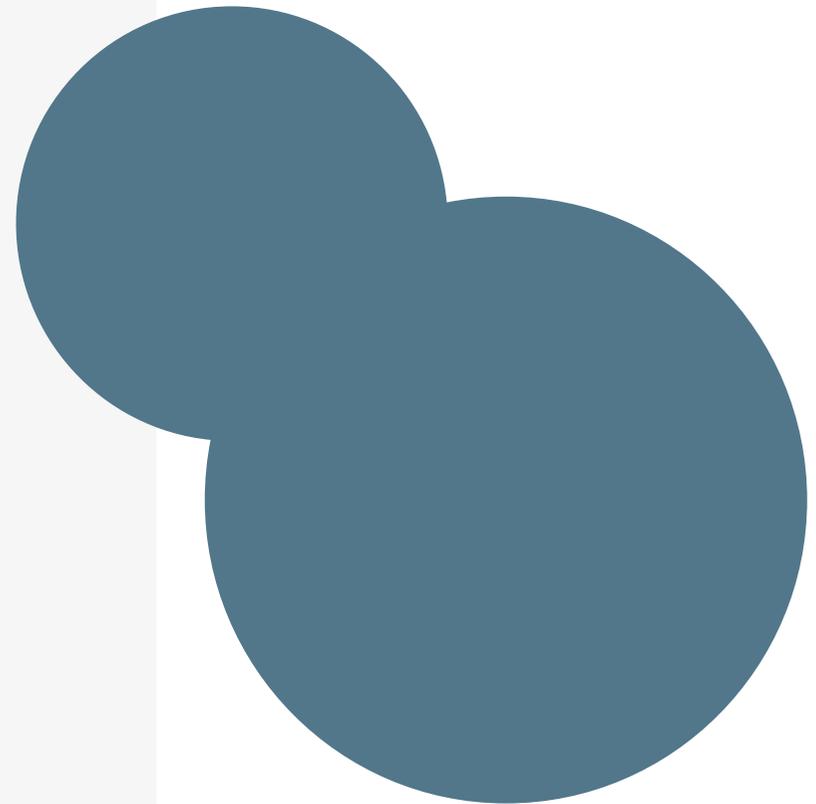
Bristol Green Capital Partnership CIC, the University of Bristol Cabot Institute Innovation Fund, the UK Natural Environment Research Council and the European Research Council

Dates

2017

Selected Outputs

- [Green and Black report](#)
- [Green and Black review](#)
- **[Green and Black Ambassadors pilot project report](#)**



Project Summary

Photovoice: Through my Lens (Photovoice) is part of the wider Green and Black initiative that was first launched by Ujima Radio in Bristol, to highlight and address the exclusion of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Bristol's environmental sustainability efforts. In June 2013 Bristol was awarded the status of European Green Capital 2015, the events and activities organised to celebrate this achievement were not inclusive of Bristol's Black and minority ethnic communities; an issue highlighted by Ujima based on feedback from its on and off air contact with communities. In 2014, the University of Bristol's Cabot Institute and Policy Bristol came together with Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Ujima to explore how to tackle this concern together. One outcome of this coming together was that Ujima were funded to organise events and activities during 2015 to explore issues of inclusion, which are summarised in the Green and Black Conversation report. A Green and Black Ambassadors programme was set up in 2016, as a pilot initiative, to recruit and support ambassadors who could lead on and take forward work to address the exclusion of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Bristol's environmental sustainability efforts. The Green and Black Ambassador's initiative is funded by Bristol Green Capital Partnership CIC, the University of Bristol Cabot Institute Innovation Fund, the UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the European Research Council (ERC). Photovoice is part of this initiative, it is was developed and taken forward during 2017 as a three month project by the first two ambassadors appointed to the programme. This case study is based on interviews with one of the ambassadors working on Photovoice and the Director of the Cabot Institute at the University of Bristol.

Ujima Radio was first launched in 2008 and became a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2010. In addition to broadcasting a range of programmes designed to meet the interests of Black and Minority Ethnic communities, Ujima also provides: economic and community development opportunities; a media platform for communication; community development and increase in social

capital; and training and consultancy for community organisations, businesses and individuals.

University of Bristol dates back to 1876 when it was established as University College, Bristol. The Bristol Medical School was incorporated into the College in 1893 and the foundation of University College Colston Society in 1899 drew influential figures into supporting the college. University status was granted in 1909 and the institution has expanded significantly since its inception. In 2016/17 the University had over 23,000 students from over 120 countries.

The Photovoice project is one of the first projects to being taken forward by the first two Green and Black Ambassadors, working from their base at the organisation Up Our Street. The focus of the project is to work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities living in the Easton and Lawrence Hill areas of Bristol. At the time of interview, the project was still under way and using the medium of photography to engage communities, with the aim of facilitating them to tell their own stories about how they view the environment. Community participants were given disposable cameras and asked to take photographs that depicted what they did and did not like about their environment. The photographs provided a point of discussion in interviews and group discussions organised by the ambassadors. An exhibition of the photographs and other outputs from the project will be held locally and there is also an intention to tour the exhibition. Photovoice and the ambassador posts are part of a pilot project that will inform the recruitment of further Green and Black ambassadors in the future and the development of further projects to provide meaningful opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic communities to engage with environmental sustainability activities and programmes.

How the collaboration came about

Ujima Radio and the University of Bristol's Cabot Institute were in contact prior to the Green and Black Conversation being set up. The work that Ujima had undertaken before Bristol was awarded European Green Capital in 2015, indicated that there were challenges to engaging Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the Green agenda. Following the announcement of the European Green Capital award for Bristol, Ujima highlighted the wider issues of inclusion, engagement and communication that presented barriers to participation in events organised by the city. This led to discussions between Ujima, Bristol Green Capital Partnership and the University of Bristol and it was decided to fund an initiative led by Ujima, known as the Green and Black Conversation, undertaken in 2015. Issues highlighted through the work undertaken in this campaign indicated that the factors contributing to marginalisation of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in European Green Capital activities, were similar to the city's overall problems in relation to inclusion.

The Green & Black Campaign was an Ujima Radio initiative to have a conversation about the connection between the Green communities and especially African and Caribbean communities. It really took off in 2015 when we were the Green Capital. Reports on the Green Capital have confirmed that it was a success. But the independent audit, commissioned by Mayor Rees, also argued that it suffered from Bristol's chronic problems around inclusion. This had already been recognised and led to a conversation, led by Ujima Radio in partnership with the Green Capital Partnership and Cabot, in late 2015. We funded that (Green and Black Conversation) via a variety of workshops, initially with BME community members, and then bringing the different communities together and having conversations. There's a report about that and it explored but did not identify

clear evidence or even accusations of active exclusion, but it did identify an accumulation of non-welcoming or rather naïve activities that effectively excluded. These include venue, accessibility, the time that people have to put in to things, how welcome they felt – a range of issues that, to be honest, are fairly well understood ... But of course when you hire people to throw a big event they are not necessarily experts in these issues. Also, as we began to probe it, there was an increasing observation that this was not just about the Green Capital year; it's about the University, which is mostly Caucasian, and the large Green organisations and Conservation groups, which are also mostly White ... a wider perception that the Sustainable movement is kind of a White middle class movement in general ... That opened up a whole wider range of questions around the structural challenges. You know it's not just about change of venue – it's about who is involved? And so pulling some of that together led to the Green & Black Ambassador's concept. One of the other key observations from the sustainability sector was a genuine desire 'to get BME communities more engaged'. Well first of all the counter argument which was quite strong – 'they are engaged, they're engaged in their own way, they're just not engaged with your Green agenda, your environmental agenda'. So [the Ambassadors] had a whole bit around the media showcasing [BME initiatives] and there was a bit about developing skills and also building the profile of individuals ... basically the Green & Black Ambassadors encompassed those three ambitions.

(Academic partner)

The community partner interviewed for this case study had worked with Ujima prior to becoming a Green and Black ambassador and relates that these early conversations between Ujima, the University and other partners had been occurring for some time.

We were in touch with the University a long time before this project. So from the ... even before the inception of Green & Black sort of Bristol University were in conversation with Ujima and Bristol Green Capital Partnership. Sort of getting ideas together, making this project (Photovoice) happen and Green & Black was a project that came out of that (conversation) as well.

(Community partner)

As community researchers, both Green and Black Ambassadors working on Photovoice have a grounding in research. After appointment, they were allocated an academic advisor they could approach for advice and support with their research; the Director of the Cabot Institute was a mentor. All four people have experience of academic environments and have engaged in collaborative work on other projects. The key focus of Photovoice was to work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities and therefore matters relating to race and ethnicity in the context of environmental sustainability were a topic of ongoing discussion. The project is largely focusing on the Black African and Caribbean community in two geographic areas of focus of Bristol; this is in part due to lack of capacity to develop trust and meaningful engagement with other communities, within the very short project timescale of three months.

When we started doing the Photovoice project, we wanted to go across all of the different minority groups, but we realised that we didn't actually possibly have the skills or the knowledge or the capacity to access all of those communities. Because I'm of mixed heritage – Black African, and (the other ambassador's) Caribbean, so we felt that it was probably better for us to access those communities and especially through Ujima that focuses mainly on those communities as well, which is who we work through for Green & Black. So we focussed on them just because we did not have the capacity to work with other groups. And we were very aware of that from the beginning, and through

Photovoice as well we were aware that those were the groups that we could only mainly access. We used to work with a woman and she did a lot of work with the Somali community and this was for a different research project. But I think working with her we realised how easy it was for her to speak to the Somali community, and it was harder for us because we didn't have that relationship there. We had the other side where people were sort of telling us off for only focusing on Black African communities or Black Caribbean communities. When really I don't think people do see that you have to have a different set of skills to access those different communities properly.

(Community partner)

The intention is to broaden the reach to other communities after this initial pilot project is complete so the lessons emerging can inform further development of work with diverse communities.

Ujima Radio was driving it and they tend to have strongest links with the African and Caribbean community. That was where we started, and an extensive conversation we've had is at what point do we begin to open it up - because there's a lot of people who do want to open it up... racially, by class ... you could also argue that White working class residents of south Bristol are not really engaged. Do you diversity through religion? So those are all things we considered ... and we are considering throughout the whole project. We are desperately keen to open it up and have a proliferation of dialogues but not until we've really learned and embedded the lessons from this initial bit first.

(Academic partner)

The initial conversation instigated by Ujima about the lack of inclusivity in the Green Capital events is described as significant to shaping the subsequent collaborative work, and it has also enabled people in the partnership to understand

the issues better. This required having some challenging conversations at times, but working through them enabled a way forward to be realised.

There was a whole buzz of this type of conversation going around... even when everybody was thrilled with the year and happy. Arguably, at times, it might have been more inclusive than many previous events in Bristol. It was just nowhere near as inclusive as it needed to be, as people wanted it to be. But I think what really kicked [The Ambassadors project] off was just a good conversation between myself and people in the partnership and at Ujima Radio. The Green & Black Conversation took it further and really probed what do we mean by inclusion, what do we mean by who's engaged, who's not, right at the beginning.

From the start, the ambassadors was framed - although many people misinterpreted this - very much around a dialogue, but a dialogue that would give voice to BME communities, or specifically the ones that we were engaged with, and challenge existing structures. There are a lot of people out there who say 'Ah well this is brilliant, this about getting some Black kids out into nature'. Well okay... that's great if that happens, but that is not really the point, it's about getting Black kids out into nature so that wild life trusts and conservation organisations and universities can see who have we been neglecting, who have we not engaged with. And we want to ask them (and ourselves): 'okay [the Ambassadors] brought them out there once, now what are you doing to change your policies?' So it's a more provocative proposition than it seems like on the tin.
(Academic partner)

The financial support from the University and other partners is described as important to realising the Photovoice project. There is a mutual benefit in that the University benefits from skills and expertise the ambassadors bring to engage communities in research.

Financially it was significant because I don't think this project would have been able to happen without the financial support from the University. That's like been a big huge thing – they've been pushing for us to use our skills. Because they're academics and they don't know how to access communities, so I think they saw us as a really important resource. And wanted to sort of nurture that and fund that ... so it's been really important for us. And just supporting us in terms of like mentoring really and giving us advice on academic kind of stuff that maybe me and (the other ambassador) don't have.

(Community partner)

The initiative undertaken by Ujima to raise the lack of inclusion of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the Green agenda is described as a catalyst for conversations with the University. These conversations enabled wider discussion about the barriers that exclude communities from participating in certain spaces and events in the city. The concept of Green and Black Ambassadors and the Photovoice project emerged from these conversations. The initial focus of Photovoice is on engaging Black African and Caribbean communities, in recognition of the fact that engaging diverse communities requires time, skills and expertise that are specific to engaging particular communities; the intention is to broaden the reach to other communities in future, informed by the learning gained from the Photovoice project in this pilot phase.

Developing collaborative research

The idea for the Photovoice project came from the two ambassadors and was further refined with input from an academic adviser at the University. The ambassadors were looking for creative approaches to engage communities and avoid research methods that communities find difficult to engage with, indeed the word ‘research’ can itself be off-putting to communities.

So me and (the other ambassador) were looking for creative qualitative methods that would engage people from all walks of life maybe who don't all speak English. And that seemed fun really, because there are a lot of research methods that aren't really engaging and put people off I think. And as soon as you mention ‘research’ to people, people are kind of like ‘Oh I don't really want to do it, cos it's probably going to just take loads of my time and I'm not going to enjoy it’. So we sat down and spoke to (academic advisor) at Bristol University, she actually specialises in looking at sort of different ways of getting data from things. And she spoke to us about a project that she'd done using something called Photovoice, and we got really excited about it because it is using photography, and photography's really easy – anyone can take a picture, it didn't have to be a professional photographer. The way she explained it, it allowed people to just sort of actively go into their community and show you an answer to a question without necessarily having to speak about it or write it down. So we wanted to go ahead with it, because it seemed quite perfect. So we started from the conversation with (academic advisor) doing Photovoice, that's how it kind of came about.

(Community partner)

The academic partner recounts that the ambassadors were keen to have a research component that was different to traditional research approaches, his own skills would not have provided the necessary support to take the project forward and allocating an academic advisor was a good option.

That (Photovoice) was largely their idea. They were very very keen on having a research component to the project and learning from what they did, so that everyone could get the most out of it. But what they quickly realised is there was a challenge in sort of doing the bog standard interviews and questions, and quite quickly they began to ... they were recognising that a lot of the quantitative survey methods were not really giving them necessarily the information that they wanted. So they were very keen on having a dialogue with people, but they were keen on sort of having a new way of opening up the conversation and getting new voices in. And this is where (academic advisor) came in. We occasionally brought academic advisor in to just be a bit of a provocateur and also to keep an eye on my approach ... because at the end of the day, although I'm very passionate about this and I'm very passionate about interdisciplinary research, I am a biogeochemist ... so (academic advisor) was a great sounding board for (the ambassadors) to probe alternative ways to capture voices of different groups.

(Academic partner)

The aim of Photovoice is described as being broadly twofold: firstly, to enable community participants to express their thoughts and views about the environment in their own words; and secondly, to communicate to the wider environmental sustainability sector the ways in which Black and Minority Ethnic communities are already engaged in this agenda.

The aim of the project is to see how people from BAME communities view their environment through their eyes using their own language ... not having another

person sort of come in and tell the story for them. We wanted to use it as a direct way for them to just express what it looks like to them when they go around in the area and what it means to them. In Bristol we'd noticed that there's a big sort of gap really between diverse communities and the environmental and sustainability sector. And we wanted to use this project amongst other projects to sort of show the environmental and sustainability sector, that there are already similar things to what they're doing happening in diverse communities, and diverse communities are getting really excited about these things, but just in a different way, and want to get engaged but they're not being invited to be engaged. Yeah that was the motivation.

(Community partner)

The academic partner also describes the aim of the project as being twofold, to give communities a voice and then to place their voices and opinions in places of power and influence.

I think it's probably fair to say that there is a research project embedded in Photovoice, but I think we have to be honest and say there is a little bit of a political project there as well. The research project is to actually begin to understand the perceptions. The political project is to put those voices and opinions in places of power and influence and to begin to disrupt things.... about making sure that a lot of the anchor institutions, the stakeholders recognise these voices. I feel the need to emphasise that because I do think that a lot of times people just see it as certain communities just not being engaged with the environmental movement. And they deeply and profoundly are; just because they don't come to your event does not mean that they're not engaged.

(Academic partner)

The ambassadors' idea for Photovoice was further refined with the academic advisor whose support is described as invaluable. It helped develop a methodology

Diverse communities are getting really excited about these things, but just in a different way, and want to get engaged but they're not being invited to be engaged.

that would generate relevant research data and engage communities. Impressions about research and indeed the word ‘research’ can be off-putting for communities to engage with; using participatory non-traditional approaches to research are described as important to enabling meaningful engagement with communities. The aim of Photovoice is described by both partners as being twofold, to empower communities to express their own views and experiences on environmental sustainability and to locate these in positions of power and influence. In particular, there is a need to highlight that communities are already engaging in this topic, just not in the way generic mainstream approaches want to engage them through methods and opportunities that are inappropriate and inaccessible.

Funding

Photovoice was funded through the Green and Black Ambassador's initiative by the University's Cabot Institute and the Green Capital Partnership, additional funding was also secured from the National Environmental Research Council (NERC). Initially it was envisaged that Photovoice would be undertaken over a three month period between August and November 2017, this timescale was being revised at the time of interview. The academic partner describes the unusual situation of the University being both a partner and a funder in the collaboration.

Once we had the idea for the ambassadors, Ujima Radio wrote a proposal that was then sent to the Green Capital Partnership and Cabot, and then we both funded it. In the Cabot Institute we took it to our Steering Group and they approved it, so there was no conflict of interest, and I think the Green Capital Partnership did the same through their Board. So initially we were the funders and we were the partners ... And then later on we extended the project through a grant from the NERC engagement fund. So lots of messiness in terms of how to keep it going in terms of funding.

I should say one other dimension was that we learned very very quickly through the [Green and Black] Conversation how much the voluntary sector was being invited, encouraged to attend, but to some degree was being exploited because we were taking advantage of their time. If I'm there on behalf of the University at a Green Capital event or any type of event, I'm being paid for it – they're not. So one of the things that was embedded in the ethos is that it would be properly costed and properly funded every step of the way. So that's not just funding the

ambassadors who we appointed, but it would be funding Ujima Radio for their operating costs and such.

So this was a little bit complicated on our part because of course we were partners but we were also the funders. Cabot Institute has an innovation fund and it is open, but obviously when the Director is championing a project that undermines [fair process]. We have a Steering Group that looks at this; I took a step back and Ujima independently proposed what they wanted to. I wasn't involved in the judging and assessment of that – that was done by our academics ... against projects that would have been entirely academic and interdisciplinary within the institution. Later, we worked together to obtain funding from the NERC Engagement Scheme.

(Academic partner)

The two ambassadors are based at an organisation called Up Our Street and funding was identified to be able to pay this organisation.

All of that funding (to Ujima from Cabot, BGCP and NERC) ended on 1st July. We were keen to continue it... so we scraped together the funding for Up Our Street, for the window of time that we're specifically talking about – the July, August, September Photovoice project. So Photovoice has been a bit ongoing and evolving, but this most recent Photovoice project is quite distinct from the previous ones where we went out to wildlife trusts and such ... because it's the first one that was envisioned and thought about as *place based*; the other ones have been community based but not thinking about place. And of course that's what Up Our Street is very keen on, so that's why that was great to work with them.

Trust to me is ... you know it's not an even thing, because power is not even, so if power is not even then trust can't be even. So I've always felt that the

organisations we're working with were trusting us, and that trust meant obligations on me, and obligations to do my best, if possible, to find money... or do my best not to go for funding for me but to support their applications. So yeah, finding the little bit of extra money for PhotoVoice was I think well within the ethos of the project.

(Academic partner)

The ambassadors were not in post at the time the original bid was submitted by Ujima, the costing for this Photovoice project was developed by the University and Ujima and was shared with the two ambassadors.

Photovoice was meant to happen earlier on in the year and we didn't have the capacity at that time to do it. And then we decided to try and get it done within the last few months, so from August to like the end of September, but it's been extended now. So for this particular project we needed extra funding. (Academic partner) stepped in and said we'll help fund you just to get this project sort of up and running, the Photovoice project, and that's when we were hosted by Up Our Street to help us do that. A lot of our project goes through Ujima, so we have a radio show, and all of the stuff needs to be collated on Ujima. So the costing was sorted between (the academic partner and Ujima). But it was shared with me and (the other ambassador), so we had a copy of what was going on and where the money was going ... (academic partner) was open for us to say to him 'Oh this isn't right' or 'We might need more for this' or less for this.

(Community partner)

Both partners highlight messages regarding funding this kind of project.

- **Consider longer term funding of projects that don't necessarily have a wide scope and breadth but take an in depth look at a particular community, place or topic.**

I think (one message) would definitely be do it more long term. Another really good lesson is that the funders need to perhaps be a little bit less ambitious in terms of the scope and breadth and impact. So the NERC scheme was for projects up to £20,000 and we got £10,000 from it. Which was great to continue the project past the initial funding. But you know, all combined, that was only about 6 months. There was a follow up scheme from NERC and we did apply for it but I knew I didn't have a chance of getting funding, because they wanted a network of academics around the country. I appreciate that being the ambition, but how do you do a network of academics around the country who are going to do deep, meaningful, trust-based collaboration with their local communities? It's just not a model that engages any sort of marginalised community. It's a great model for doing outreach and doing very worthy and very fantastic engagement type of activity, but it is not a good model for building dialogue between academia and those communities. So I think the funding needs to recognise place, it needs to recognise the fact that you need deep relationships ... you can still learn lessons that you can share with the rest of the world, but you're not going to like change the world, you need to really focus in on these sort of local things ... and then hopefully you could scale them up later. Still put in the funding for three year projects to really develop them and allow them to grow. We've been doing this (work with Ujima) basically 4 months at a time.

(Academic partner)

- **Recognise the importance of supporting the voluntary sector and the relative financial privilege within which universities operate.**

They (the voluntary sector) need the foundation funding that allows projects to work on top of it. They are losing that. In some ways the universities don't have that problem – we do have the core funding. So we should view that again as a position of privilege that allows us to support the voluntary sector.

(Academic partner)

- **Systems and capacity for administrating finance in community organisations are different to mainstream organisations. This can complicate payment of staff salaries and ensuring appropriate systems are set up before a project commences would be helpful.**

Ujima Radio they're a radio station and they don't have the capacity to give people wages and things like that. We didn't have like a finances team basically. So I think maybe some advice, even for universities, would be to make sure that if they are funding a project, make sure that that community organisation can have the capacity to distribute the money properly.

(Community partner)

Securing funding for Photovoice demonstrates an approach that is different from the usual process and arrangements for securing funding; in this collaboration the University is both a funder and a partner. Ujima led on developing and submitting the initial bid to the University and the Green Capital Partnership for the broader Green and Black initiative; subsequently the University accessed additional funding to support delivery of Photovoice. The partners highlight several messages for consideration regarding funding of the voluntary sector as well as specific

They (the voluntary sector) need the foundation funding that allows projects to work on top of it. They are losing that.

collaborative projects, including: enabling voluntary sector organisations to meet their core costs and avoid exploitation of this sector; longer term funding for projects without overly extending their breadth and scope but allowing for more in-depth exploration on specific issues; and ensuring voluntary organisations have relevant capacity and systems to manage making financial payments.

Undertaking the research

The research has been led by the ambassadors with support from an academic advisor at the University and this is described as working very well. A key facilitating factor in this arrangement is that the ambassadors felt able to lead the research and access advice from the University as necessary. The ambassadors have a background in community research and therefore already had experience and skills, without this they would have needed more support.

I think purely because me and (the other ambassador) are community researchers so we already have a certain set of skills. So we had that background. Without that background it would have been very difficult, we would have needed so much more help from the University with this project. I mean we've still got to go to them to get them to like verify if this bit of like methodology is okay. At the moment we're looking at the photographs and we've noticed that people haven't used all of the pictures ... all of the pictures in the disposable cameras ... so we were wondering as to do a Photowalk instead of just a Photovoice project, ... we were going to have to go back to (academic advisor) and see if that's okay, if it changes everything, how that works, does it make it sort of invalid data. Like we don't quite know. So that's ... we're relying them for like academic advice and making sure that our research is as sound as possible.

(Community partner)

The ambassadors being based at Up Our Street, which is a community research organisation, is also described as helpful. A key challenge relates to coordinating times to meet up because everyone, academic and community partners, have multiple roles and demands on their time.

That's (meeting with academic advisor) been brilliant, when they've reached key milestones and they needed feedback on various things about how to take next steps forward. We were very lucky with (the ambassadors) because they both worked for Up Our Street when they weren't on Green & Black. And Up Our Street is a community research organisation, so again they were getting mentoring in terms of developing the research skills there. But I would say you know that there were challenges with this because the fact that they had jobs and lives and ... we were really strict on the days of the week that they were working – we were only funding them for two days a week, they had a clear relationship with Up Our Street that we were not going to eat into by disrupting [work patterns]. So they were working Thursday and Friday ... (academic advisor) was unavailable on most Thursdays. When you're working with people on the sort of shoe string approach where people are only working a couple of days, they're working in multiple other jobs, I think that is not an ideal situation to really get a more fluid working dialogue. It was great that (academic advisor) was always there when they needed her, and they really valued it, but it would have been nice if there was also just a little bit more of a lighter ongoing touch going on, you know, almost coffee room type of conversation ... and again that's a consequence of the very limited amount of funding that was there.

(Academic partner)

The methodology for engaging communities was kept as simple and creative as possible. Community participants were given disposable cameras and asked to consider three questions when taking their photographs:

- **What do you like about the place in which you live?**
- **What do you not like about the environment in which you live?**
- **Why does climate change matter to you?**

The photographs taken by community participants then provided a focus for conversation with the ambassadors who conducted audio interviews to capture feedback. This work was still under way at the time of interview, the intention was to bring together the photographs and audio interviews for an exhibition.

A key challenge to engaging communities in research relates to the impact of previous negative experience, or impressions, about participating in university research projects.

I think to communities to hear ‘research’ means someone’s going to come in and use ... or someone’s going to come in and take, and that’s it. I mean it stems from this very short term nature of research that universities tend to do. So they’ll get funding to carry out a certain amount of research with a certain amount of time, normally like 3 or 5 months or something, unless there’s a huge bit of funding and then it can be a long term thing. But because of the short term nature it is a very quick ‘We’re going to get what we need and then we’re going to leave’ and people in communities do notice that.

(Community partner)

Negative experiences of previous research undertaken by the University had an impact on engaging some communities in the Photovoice project.

I think the only other challenge that we’d faced sort of as a repercussion of maybe what the University had previously done and this was when we realised that we didn’t have the capacity to go to other communities as well. So we visited someone who’s I guess kind of a gatekeeper person to the Somali community, and we went to him and asked him oh can we speak to the elders, and is there a way for us to get people excited about our project and get them engaged. And he came back to us sort of seeming a little bitter about how a lot of universities ...

and Bristol University and UWE ... have gone to the community and done loads of research projects, but have never actually quite given anything back. And he seemed like he was just at the end of his tether and was like 'If you want to work with us, then you're going to have to sort of work with us for quite a longer amount of time and then get to know people and maybe do some kind of event for them and feed the elders before you can do the research' because they feel like they're just being used. So ... not necessarily directly the relationship we have with the University that's had any problems, but clearly it's been problematic for us to deal with the aftermath of what other research projects have left behind.

(Community partner)

Some of the benefits from working collaboratively on the Green and Black initiative, including the Photovoice project, are described by the academic partner as the personal and institutional learning that has taken place.

Because of the nature of the project, the benefits have been quite profound in many ways. It has elevated I think the stature of Cabot and the University ... on one level to be seen to be doing this. But you know I don't really rate that, that much ... What I rate actually more deeply is for organisations to recognise that we can be a trusted partner and to recognise that we were a partner that was willing to learn from them and evolve. Before he was Mayor, I was spending a lot of time (with the current Mayor) during the Green Capital talking about social justice issues and how climate change is really a social justice issue, and he said 'Absolutely' and he said 'It's also a racist issue' ... and it is absolutely a racist issue, absolutely – He said: 'So how come if I go to Green Capital events I don't see any Black people there?' And I said 'You know to be fair you come to OUR Cabot events you won't see many Black people in the audience OR on the stage'. So as a consequence we have tried to give voice to a greater diversity of people and organisations through our events and such. So to me we have gained

credibility not because we've done that, but because we've listened and learned and I think that that has been of great value. As a researcher, as a scientist, as an academic, I can't even begin to describe how much I've learnt and how much it has affected much of what I do. You know my research can be a little bit esoteric, but in terms of how I present my research, in terms of how I frame it, in terms of how I engage and act with my community has been fundamentally transformed by this process.

(Academic partner)

Support from the University in undertaking the research is described as giving confidence to the ambassadors that the approaches and methods they were using were validated. The community partner highlights that it also provides the academic world with an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the research that community researchers undertake and for communities to have a different experience of research.

Doing community research as community researchers we want the academic world to sort of respect what we're doing, and also communities to look at what we're doing and not go 'Oh it's just about academic people' – this is for us as well. So on the university side to have them look at it and say 'Yeah this is great' or 'You need to do this to make it better' – that's so valuable to me because then that means that through their validation the academic world would somehow you know respect what we're doing. So on that side it's really important. It shows that they've acknowledged that, because we're working in a community ... not necessarily that we're the best equipped people, but because we're working in a community we have the resource of access and knowing how to speak to certain people in the community. And for the academic world to go into a community and speak to people and do research, that's a huge barrier for people, and they don't always know how to approach it and can be very sort of ... too scientific. And

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then that will even more-so push more communities away. So for them to give us the space to do what we need to do in the way that we want to do it, it works for us, because then it means that we can just get on with it. And it works for them because then it means that they're not going into a community and making mistakes.

(Community partner)

University research institutes, such as Cabot Institute, are described by the academic partner as having some flexibility to work with non-traditional research approaches and this facilitates collaborations with communities.

I think some of it is down to the mere fact that we have these University Research Institutes that have a remit to do things that are not business as usual. And although our budgets are small we've got complete control over those budgets, so we can do little things, little creative things. And it's not just that we have that [budget], but that *we're challenged to do new and different things* – don't do business as usual. ... and that sits at the highest level of the institution, so I think that quite helps. We are at an institution that uses the language of civic engagement, uses the language of coproduction, uses the language of addressing needs ... you will hear the senior management talk about the income disparities in our cities ... so I feel that creates a permissive environment. We could push further and say 'Okay but has the university come through and given you £50,000 to continue the project?' – no it has not. So you know there's a bit of glass half full, half empty bit.

I think you know it'd be quite interesting to see if what would happen if you took some of those pieces out. For example, if I was doing this entirely as a member of the School of Chemistry rather than through the Cabot Institute, then I think people would have been very supportive but they probably would have said just

don't let it interfere with your teaching and research. So all of those structural things, I think, really gave a huge amount of permission, encouragement and flexibility to participate ... from the University's side.

(Academic partner)

A key challenge is described as likely to come at the end of the project because of the limited time in which Photovoice has been undertaken. This means there may not be enough time to do any follow up work with community participants.

I think the main challenges comes at the end because it takes much more time to deliver on it. From the project there are some absolutely powerful and evocative images ... what we need to do is we need to go back in to those photographs and get some thoughts and commentary about them to actually give them voice. Because you know an image is very very powerful ... and they're very emotive, and it clearly conveys our main message that people of all backgrounds are profoundly concerned about the environment around them, absolutely ... but of course with any image the viewer can bring their own interpretation to it. And if the whole point is ... you know I'm not necessarily certain I want to bring my White middle class interpretation of the photo, I would like to actually hear what people were thinking. So again to actually go back, follow up and do that – it always just takes a lot more time than you think, always takes more time.

(Academic partner)

The ambassadors having access to an academic advisor at the University is described as an important cornerstone of this collaboration, an approach that has enabled community researchers to direct the work while having access to expertise when needed. The ambassadors being based in a community research organisation is also described as supportive to developing research skills relevant to research with communities. The Green and Black initiative and Photovoice have been beneficial in enabling personal and institutional learning that have occurred in the

University, they have also presented opportunities for academic staff to learn about and respect the work of community researchers. Research institutes within universities are highlighted as having greater flexibility to engage in non-traditional, creative approaches to working with communities. The key challenges in undertaking the project relate to: dealing with the aftermath of previous university research with communities that has left negative experiences and impressions; and insufficient time for undertaking the project while juggling the responsibilities of different jobs and for developing any follow up work. Otherwise, the approach to undertaking research in this project is described as working well.

Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are described as emerging informally and have worked well in Photovoice. The academic partner provided a mentoring role to the ambassadors, an academic advisor provided technical advice and support on undertaking the research, the ambassadors took responsibility for developing and delivering the project and Ujima had oversight of the project as part of the broader Green and Black initiative.

Just the informality of it all has been so helpful because if it was very rigid it would just make everything take a lot longer. (Roles and responsibilities) were predetermined before the project started but there was still like an allowance for blurred lines. So (academic partner) really is just there to mentor us, and if we need advice on something we can just go to him and see if everything's okay. (Academic advisor's) there on the research side to sort of show us or give us advice on if our research is right, if we're doing anything wrong. So they're all quite predetermined, but even so like if we need to ask (academic partner) for research advice he would be there to give us research advice ... and (academic advisor) for mentoring advice ... they would be there to do that as well.

(Community partner)

A shared sense of responsibility was achieved in that everyone had an equal say; however, the ambassadors carried the main bulk of responsibility for the project.

So the main sort of line going under Green & Black has been coproduction, and so we acknowledge that we need to all be on the same equal level playing field at the table,

having an equal say in everything. Kind of with a focus on me and (the other ambassador), but still us all having the same kind of input.

(Community partner)

We all wanted to have shared responsibility, but we did want to put most of the responsibility on the ambassadors, as the practitioners, right. Because with the responsibility came the ownership, and I guess it would be sort of analogous to ... (you know this is a terrible analogy), to a PI (Principal Investigator) who gets a grant and then hires a postdoc. Yeah they have a shared responsibility to deliver it. The research council might actually look at the contract and say the PI has the main responsibility. But in reality you want the postdoc to really own it and drive it ... to take it forward.

(Academic partner)

No particular problems are highlighted with roles and responsibilities, an informal approach and flexibility in defined roles are described as helpful.

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Accountability

The main accountability is described as being between the University and Ujima but is described as light touch; Ujima and the ambassadors are expected to produce a report and the university will help them with this.

We tried to make the accountability really light, but the one thing we did require both for the Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Cabot is that we required that Ujima and the ambassadors would have to do a report with the evidence, documenting what had been achieved and the evidence that it had made a difference... that could be quite qualitative, and Photovoice will contribute to that evidence base, so I think there was a bit of accountability. But even that ... the accountability was designed from a shared perspective, because the accountability was always discussed in the language of 'We all support it, we all want it to go forward, so we're asking you to produce this report' – which will in the end help all of us. It provides the evidence base allowing us to go get more funding together. So there was a bit of accountability, but we tried to keep it really really light.

(Academic partner)

Regular updates also helped to keep track of how things were working out.

It has worked so far. I mean we all informally check each other, so we sort of ask ourselves are we accessing the community properly, or are we being open enough about everything. I think we all kind of do that in conversations with each other, so between me and (the other ambassador), or between us and Ujima, or Ujima and University and all of us. I think that's how it's been working.

(Community partner)

The academic partner describes that the tricky issue has been ownership of the Green and Black initiative, how this is taken forward in the future, by whom.

Where we ended up... was a more difficult place given the complicated history and the nature how it was co-created ... co-funded, and different people coming in and out ... was the ownership, and therefore how do we take it forward. We really struggled with having the mechanism and the freedom of people just being able to take it forward, because sometimes different organisations can't apply for things (funding) ... or they can but they don't have time. So I think that's where it has been a lot trickier ... and I think we finally have begun to unravel that a little bit.

(Academic partner)

Although no significant accountability issues are highlighted in delivering Photovoice, accountability for ownership and taking the work forward in future have been trickier to resolve but are being discussed.

Outputs and legacy

At the time of interview the intended tangible outputs were photographs, audio interviews, an exhibition and workshops to discuss and disseminate the findings.

We've got the photographs, you know we're going to be collecting audio interviews, speaking to people about those photographs. And the idea is that we're going to use this in ... it's going to be called Mind the Gap, and it'll be a series of talks and like a workshop on like one day. So we're talking about all the work that we've been doing including Photovoice. And then we want it to be a kind of travelling exhibition around Bristol, around different events, because it's quite easily transferrable to other spaces and communities. That's the idea, so we hopefully will make it happen.

(Community partner)

Ownership and maintenance of outputs was described as a grey area at the time of interview and one that was under discussion between academic and community partners. Potential complications regarding ownership are highlighted when there are several partners in a project. The ambassadors are keen to ensure ownership by the community is also discussed.

So this is something that we haven't actually spoken about. It is something we need to speak about. Because for the community in terms of us hitting our kind of line of working with the community, we want them to have ownership but we haven't had that written like in stone, nothing's been written in stone. It's very blurred at the moment.

(Community partner)

Non-tangible outcomes include the learning that the ambassadors have gained from direct work with communities, using non-traditional research approaches. Community participants have learned some photographic skills and importantly, they have engaged in increasing their knowledge about the environment and sustainability. The University has gained knowledge about working collaboratively with communities and the factors that impact on their participation in the Green agenda and sustainability.

Potential legacies are highlighted by both partners. For the community partner these focus on increased awareness in the University about the importance of a longer term view in engaging with communities; and an increased awareness in communities about the environment and sustainability.

I think the longer term legacy, is making the University aware that they have to have a longer term view of going into communities, because the short term approach is just not effective - the short term approach ruins relationships with communities. And we've seen that by speaking to people. By speaking to the elders as well ... there was a group called Golden Ages and they had a similar sort of feedback towards us about feeling quite cold towards universities. So it's this longer term approach is like so integral, if they want to work with communities they have to put in the time and they have to build those relationships and the trust. And not just disappear at the end of it as well, they have to just kind of stick around and think about what's going to be in it for the community, not just what's going to help their research, but how will it benefit the community as well. (For communities) awareness is the main thing really, and getting people excited about environmental subjects and sustainability is mainly what we want to get out of it. Just people even talking about it, that's the most important thing for us, because that's how communities operate, people talk to each other about stuff and people get excited because they're like oh my neighbour's just been talking

to me about this because they took part in this thing, you know. So if we can get people to talk about those issues then that's really invaluable to us. And hopefully that's what will be the legacy of the project.

(Community partner)

Both partners talk about legacy from the overall Green and Black initiative and using the work undertaken so far to inform the recruitment of more ambassadors.

The other really really interesting wild card in this is that we view the ambassadors as an ongoing scheme, you know, we envision having lots of ambassadors, lots of graduates. But we're in a very interesting place right now... (one of the ambassador's) is doing a PhD, so that's well and good, but therefore, we have (the other ambassador) who is not an ambassador, she is the ambassador. So I sort of view her - by doing the inaugural programme - that she basically has co-ownership as well, and that she has the freedom to drive bids and ideas forward. But obviously you know in 10 years' time if we're able to get the funding, able to keep it going, and we've had 20 ambassadors, they can't all be running off and writing bids under the Green & Black banner, right? So yeah so it's all ... it is a bit grey and I think you know that's a ... that is not ideal right, because you know it works because we have trust, but actually trust can be frayed without the foundation for actually making tough decisions.

(Academic partner)

The extent to which legacies from the project can be realised will depend on securing resources and also discovering whether future funding is secured collectively by the same collaborators in Green and Black, or they do this independently, or in collaboration with some but not all current partners, or bring new partners on board.

Intended tangible outputs at the time of interview emerge from a short-term, three month, pilot project and are intended to inform further development of the Green and Black initiative. The ownership and maintenance of outputs was still to be discussed. It is hoped that outcomes and legacies from the project will include: increased awareness in academia about the importance of longer term contact and building trust with communities; increased awareness among communities about issues relating to the environment and sustainability; and the recruitment of more ambassadors informed by the work undertaken for Photovoice.

Structural inequalities

Photovoice is part of the broader Green and Black initiative and both came about to address the structural inequalities contributing to lack of Black and Minority Ethnic community engagement in Bristol's Green agenda and related activities. The issues were highlighted by Ujima which is a Black-led community organisation. The academic partner reflects that the lack of diversity in any field impacts on knowledge production, because it excludes diverse perspectives; furthermore, the lack of diversity in the Green sector, which is described as booming, excludes some communities from the economic growth generated by this sector.

I just think that any knowledge production in any field, even in a strictly disciplinary way is fundamentally undermined if you don't have diversity ... fundamentally, you know, you're viewing things through a very male White-centric view. Any academic discipline, any research discipline thrives from a diversity of ideas and diversity of perspectives. And when it comes to coproduction I think that issue becomes magnified. For Photovoice, I think if you want to do coproduction around an arts project policy, then absolutely not having diversity in the academy is terrible. Of course, one might argue that if the academic or environmental sector was diverse, we wouldn't have needed this project. The lack of diversity was the problem was the motivator and driver of this.

So diversity is essential. And we came up with sort of three fundamental rationales for that in this context. One is that environmental issues are socially unjust so you absolutely need to have people involved. The second was that in order to address environmental issues you have to have mammoth societal change, so you've got to take everybody along for the journey. But the third is

that, in Bristol in particular, the Green sector is booming, it's a huge area of economic prosperity, whether we're talking about community garden initiatives or major windfarm renewable energy sectors. So if that's White then we are excluding ... we are excluding different communities from the economic growth of the region. So there's multiple dimensions of why it must be inclusive.

(Academic partner)

Photovoice has focused on Black African and Caribbean communities and as the community partner has highlighted, this was necessary within the time, resources, skills and expertise available to the project. Projects that focus on specific community groups need to acknowledge this to avoid exacerbating structural inequalities that arise from knowledge generated in specific Black and Minority Ethnic communities being applied to all diverse communities.

And probably this was one of the major ... not debates, because we're all agreed on this... but discussions. Constantly centring our conversations around the fact that we have focussed upon a very narrow (community)... it's still multiple communities ... there are also implicit communities. I kind of think that even when we say the 'Black and Caribbean population' I don't think we mean the Somali population ... and we see that from like the actual demographics you know. So we're talking about the traditional, historical St Pauls community as such. We all agreed that it was necessary to focus on a single community, because you damn well better know that's what you're doing. But we continually recognised the limitations of that.

(Academic partner)

The community partner highlights that structural and institutional racism contribute to how particular communities come to be perceived. Progressing areas of work is often dependent on having the right connections, this impacts on the type of projects that are initiated. A further issue contributing to structural

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inequalities relates to being invited to meetings but feeling too intimidated to share knowledge, for fear that it won't be taken seriously.

I'm thinking of structural racism and institutional racism (in relation to structural inequalities) ... I guess like people are kind of expecting certain communities to react in a certain way, and just purely based on them thinking certain communities are a certain way. Ujima Radio as an institution in Bristol, we hold a lot of sort of cultural capital and a lot of weight in terms of the people that support Ujima or even like kind of the social circles that Ujima go in. And when I say Ujima I mean like the people up top, the directors ... and they get invited to a lot of events and things that maybe smaller community organisations or just smaller groups, or just people don't always get to go to. And one reason why the Green and Black Project kind of started was because they were in a space where there were academics so they were sort of informally talking about this idea. So this all formed because they already had those contacts and connections that could make it easily happen. But for (academic partner) just to get this to happen – I don't think we'd be here right now. And it's really intimidating as well, because I mean there's been times where me and (the other ambassador) have been invited to board meetings and stuff, and there's people from big organisations there, and sometimes I'm sitting there, kind of like 'I don't really know ... are they going to take me seriously?' – because I'm not part of that world. So if that's difficult for me, then it's going to be really difficult for other people as well.

(Community partner)

Photovoice came about as part of the wider Green and Black initiative that itself aimed to highlight and address structural inequalities in the Green agenda in Bristol, which failed to engage Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The lack of diversity in any discipline, including academia, is described as contributing to

knowledge being generated on the basis of narrow perspectives. Indeed, issues such as the Green agenda risk being less successful if diverse communities are not engaged and this further contributes to their exclusion from participating in the economic growth generated by this sector. The generic term 'Black and Minority Ethnic communities' encompasses a wide range of communities, initiatives focusing on specific communities need to be explicit about this so there is clarity about who is and is not being represented. Structural and institutional racism are described as contributing to incorrect assumptions about communities. The dependence on established connections to progress ideas and projects excludes those who are not well connected; those who do participate in taking projects and ideas forward can feel intimidated from contributing knowledge and ideas in environments where they feel they cannot participate on an equal footing and their contributions will not be taken seriously.

Representing communities

The initial intention for Photovoice was to reach and engage diverse Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the Easton and Lawrence Hill areas of Bristol. However, it became clear as the project got under way that the limited time and resources would not facilitate building the relationships and trust necessary to engage all communities and the decision was taken to focus on Black African and Caribbean communities. Academic and community partners acknowledge that this is not ideal but necessary within the available resources and timescale of three months. Photovoice is a pilot project and the intention is to secure funding to appoint more ambassadors in the future, to undertake further work which would facilitate broadening the reach into other communities. Recruitment of community participants for Photovoice was publicised on Ujima Radio and through the networks of partners working on the project.

Community participants are representing themselves through the photographs they take and the decision to use photography was taken to enable people to express their own views and ideas. Representing the views and perspectives of community participants as authentically as possible is considered essential. The academic partner's view is that sometimes translation is necessary to give context to what is being said.

In many ways. If you look at some of our initial reports (written by Ujima) and things we've reported and some of the blogs we have written, those are their voices. Or even me writing an article - but filling the article full of their quotes and their voices and perspectives - I think that's absolutely essential. There is an obligation. The whole point of this project is to provide a platform for marginalised voices.

It can be complicated. We've not done much of this, but we might have to translate a little bit at some point. To make sure the right lessons are learned. This is not from the Photovoice, but from the other conversations we had where people are saying, for example, some of these venues [for Green Capital events] 'They're just really off-putting', 'they're too posh', 'We don't feel welcome there'. Now I get why people are saying that, but we held it at X venue just because X, as posh as it may be, would let people use it for free. So there was no sort of exclusion going on. But there was a lot of naïve thinking. I think you'd want to be careful about just saying people 'felt excluded from X' – that might be what people said, and it might be honest, it might be real, but I think that there's a little bit of translation or interpretation that needs to be done there. I've not done any of that, and God knows if I ever will, but I can imagine what fraught terrain that would be.

(Academic partner)

This pilot phase of Photovoice focuses on Black African and Caribbean communities in two geographic areas of Bristol. Photography as a method for engaging and working with participants enabled them to represent themselves and their photographs formed the basis of discussion with ambassadors; this approach is considered better for engaging communities in research than traditional approaches whereby participants respond to pre-set questions. Some translation of community views is described as inevitable when people represent these on their behalf; including as much of their material as possible, such as photographs and quotes, can address the issue of authenticity to some extent and providing context for participant feedback is considered important.

University–Black and Minority Ethnic community collaborations

Informal contact and conversations, ahead of working in partnership to deliver collaborative projects, are described as important by both partners. The community partner relates that collaborative projects are easier to take forward with people where there is established contact and relationships are in place, progressing collaborative work by approaching the University from scratch would be more difficult.

I think if ... say if we'd approached Bristol University as just a whole entity and not as like singular people, it would have been a very different story. And also that informal relationship between Ujima and Bristol Green Capital Partnership and (academic partner), being able to informally meet and talk and stuff – I think that's been really integral to approaching ... well Bristol University mainly. If it was just the University and we had to start up with relationships from day 1, it would have been a lot harder.

(Community partner)

Similarly, the academic partner relates that informal conversation can plant the seed for ideas that inform development of collaborative work.

The first conversation I had with (Director of Ujima) about this was at a green event, and he said 'You know what I run into: "we will eventually".' Another powerful thing that someone said [during the Green and Black Conversation] was that 'The green capital's been okay, it's been better than other things. We get invited to the events. *But after the agenda is set*'. (Director of Ujima) also told me

of someone coming in to a BME group and wants to talk about environmental issues, and the speaker will say 'Right, so what you need to do is all become vegans and eat organic food'. That's not going to go over well, but more importantly, that community is smart and they are engaged, and they're going to say 'We know how much food you waste, we read the newspapers. My grandmother is raising her own food in the garden, and is able to cook a meal for an entire week from one chicken'. So who's more green, who's more sustainable? And that conversation was sort of the thing that really kicked the whole thing off for me. It demanded that I make sure that diverse voices were respected.

(Academic partner)

Both partners highlight messages for others about undertaking similar collaborative projects. The academic partner highlights three broad areas for consideration: paying community partners properly and being mindful not to exploit them; academics can learn a lot from engaging with communities; and there is an obligation to take action that addresses the exclusion of some communities from having a voice.

Well I suppose the first message would be find the money for the community partners ... for the coproduction community everybody knows that, but I think a lot of the academics who want to do outreach or engage do not know that. So I think it's absolutely essential in all cases, but especially when they are helping us resolve our problems, our challenges, our inadequacies of dealing with some of these structural racism issues. So we're just doubling down on the damage we've done to them if we're exploiting them and getting them to do the learning for us. So if you're not willing to pay partners, then just go pick up a book and figure it out yourself. So I think there's a real obligation to get the funding for them. I think the second thing I would say is that you will learn a huge amount about yourself and about your institutions, and even about your research by engaging with

[marginalised groups], because straight away they bring in fundamentally different perspectives ... I think that's probably a universal rule to any marginalised group. And I think the third thing I would say is that we have an obligation to do this, that ... you know and this is deeply embedded in the ethos of the project ... but you know we sort of started from the point that the environmental community is not diverse. Well the same thing can be said about pretty much every university in the country. So it's not enough for us to simply sit back and say well we're not diverse because we don't have students applying to come here. I think there's a point where you can't just be a passive recipient of the flaws of society, you have to get out and try to change it. So I think we have an obligation to go out and engage communities, work with them. And although we might go out in a way that is to sort of promote them and lift them up and give them a platform and a voice, and that is the right thing to do – in doing so you'll actually learn a hell of a lot at the same time.

(Academic partner)

The community partner also relates three broad areas for consideration: establish contact and build relationships before collaborating; develop a common vision and objectives for the project; and communities should be confident in communicating that their knowledge and expertise are of value to academics.

Through my experience of working with (academic partner), I think it's really important to establish a certain point of contact before you even have an idea of a research project, maybe start up a relationship with someone at the university who would be excited about what you're doing and you can just talk to about ideas and see if there's anything that they'd latch onto. And build up that relationship with them ... I think that that relationship before doing the research project is so important. Because you need someone that will want to carry on doing it, and without that it might just end up being a kind of 'We're going to give

you money for this' and then that's it we don't really care. Yeah definitely establishing a really sort of good relationship based on the same ideas and passions that you all have. And there will always be someone at the university that would be excited about what you're doing, so that would be quite easy to find. Being able to coproduce from the same page is integral, cos then you're not going to be looking down on anything that other people are doing and vice versa. And I guess it just makes sense to move forward from that kind of basis really. Collaborate with universities knowing that you have knowledge that they're not ever going to be able to have, because they don't work with communities as strongly as maybe you have already been doing, like you're the expert at your community. So being able to use that and have awareness of that and be like 'You need us to do your job properly' ... yeah acknowledging your worth and expertise as a person, work in the community is really important, and to be able to use that when building that relationship with the university and explain that that's invaluable to them, it's necessary.

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The future

Both partners intend to continue working collaboratively in the future, in particular to apply the learning from Photovoice and the broader Green and Black initiative to inform further expansion of the programme and recruitment of more ambassadors. The community partner relates that work with the University of Bristol will continue in the foreseeable future, but it may also be useful to look at potential other collaborators to broaden options for developing collaborative work.

I think we're really set on staying with Bristol University, just because of how open minded they've been. And that thing again about giving us the space to do what we need to do without directing us has been really helpful. Personally I'd really like to work with UWE more, to not just be like going down one sort of like alleyway I guess. And maybe there might be different opportunities or different ways that UWE could help us more than Bristol University, I don't know. Basically we're talking about trying to fund the rest of project and we're not quite sure where that money's coming from. And obviously Bristol University isn't an endless resource of money. So funding is just a really big issue we're finding at the moment, because we're trying to apply for a big pot of funding so we have a longer term like outlook for the project.

(Community partner)

Partners in the Green and Black initiative are considering options for securing funding, the nature of funding and other resources secured will determine how the initiative is developed and taken forward in the future.