

***Moving Hearts***  
**Museums, artists and universities collaborating**  
A working paper

**Abstract**

This working paper examines collaborative processes between academics at King's College London, the UK Migration Museum (or UKMM), an Australian artist Penny Ryan, in creating *Moving Hearts (MH)*, an arts-based action research project exploring migration and belonging funded through an international social justice grant from the PLS Alliance. In the Spring of 2018, *MH* brought together hundreds of people in London to make 1000 anatomical-shaped clay hearts and reflect on their connection with migration and belonging. The hearts were then displayed in a pop-up art installation created by Ms Ryan at the Migration Museum. The paper briefly introduces relevant literature on collaboration between universities and museums and then evaluates *MH* against some of the characteristics of successful collaborations as identified in the literature. Participatory modes of evaluation (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016) are used in this paper to analyse how the institutions, individuals and communities contributed to the project: what their expectations were, to what extent they were met, what resources they brought in and how this all played out in implementation of the project. For *MH*, digital communication prior to the commencement of the workshop was key and therefore the role of digital mediation is also explored. The tentative recommendations this paper proposes for similar collaborations offer suggestions for developing effective communication from the outset of a project, highlight the requirement of flexibility in partners, and provide ideas for how participants' perspectives could be included in shaping a project.

**Introduction**

In the UK, but also more broadly, the evaluation of projects within the cultural sector is often driven by funders' requirements, while other approaches, such as participatory evaluation, have been so far used too little (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Yet, it is crucial to grant more attention to participatory modes of evaluation if evaluation is "to play a role in helping cultural organisations and practitioners learn from their activities and their audiences" (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 9). This working paper, which evaluates the collaboration between King's College London, the UK Migration Museum and artist Penny Ryan, in creating *MH*, uses

participatory modes of evaluation by including the institutions, individuals and communities in the process.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than being driven by the funder's agenda, we explore the value for the partners involved of working collaboratively to create an outreach art-based project: the museum, the university, and the artist. The report provides wider recommendations for projects based on university-museum partnerships especially. It complements the AHRC-funded research conducted as part of the Museum University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) (Bonacchi and Willcocks 2016) by analysing in-depth a collaborative project with aims similar to some of the projects mentioned in the report – delivering public engagement, developing new audiences.<sup>2</sup> We examine how the collaborative process emerged, how it developed, what the problems and opportunities encountered were and how the learning process developed for all three collaborators. In this working paper we focus primarily on the collaboration between the three main actors and grant less attention to the engagement of participants and their role in the evaluation process.

## **Background**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both museums and universities have granted increased attention to collaborations that reach out and engage various communities and actors in their work. This happens in different modes, but a general trend can be observed towards establishing connections with communities and supporting their development using tools and expertise accumulated by museums and universities. As for the universities in the UK, the Research Excellence Framework agenda is driving researchers to prove the applied and impactful nature of their research. In museology since 1980s an approach called 'new museology' (Vergo 1989) has gained growing prominence: museums increasingly concentrate on the social relevance, inclusiveness and participation in their work (Arnold-de Simine 2013; Schultz 2011; Simon 2010). This includes collaborating or consulting<sup>3</sup> with various partners, such as: source communities (Harrison 2005; Peers and Brown 2003) community groups, NGOs, governmental organisations, schools or universities, to create exhibitions, educational

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<sup>1</sup>Ideally, participatory evaluation should actively involve in the process "all of those involved in the project under scrutiny" (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 127).

<sup>2</sup>The MUPI report offers a mixed-methods review based on responses gathered in March 2016 from museum and/or university professionals, while this working paper uses several qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews, participant observation, photographic material) to provide an in-depth examination of one project.

<sup>3</sup>For the difference in meanings of the terms 'collaboration' and 'consultation' and for a discussion of a distinct connotations and use in Europe and the US of the latter, see: Boast 2011, 57.

programs, cultural or artistic activities et cetera.<sup>4</sup> With regards to research undertaken at universities, one form of closer engagement with communities and institutions is through embracing participatory/collaborative paradigm (axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology<sup>5</sup>) in research projects.<sup>6</sup> Often, in such partnerships or collaborative projects, coproducing new praxis knowledge, which can be understood as theoretically-informed action, is declared as one of the aims. Another way is building partnerships with GLAMs (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) as part of taught modules (Kingsley 2016), internship programs (Addario and Langer 2016; Ford 2016) or developing holistic models where the two institutions work together “to bring scientific research to the public in compelling and transformative ways” (Bell et al. 2016, 293).

*MH* sought to be a participatory project, but there was a significant power imbalance inbuilt in its structure: it was the university staff who initiated the project as arts-based action research, received and administered the funding, and made the main decisions about how the initiative was to run and to what extent the museum partner and the artist were to be involved. We explain this in the following section in detail: we describe how the *MH* project developed, how various partners got involved and what their roles and responsibilities were. However, before that some insights from academic literature on collaborative projects and what makes them successful are presented to provide a broader framework for evaluating *MH*.

## Collaboration

Collaboration, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary has two meanings: (1) “the action of working with someone to produce something”, “something produced in collaboration with someone” or (2) “traitorous cooperation with an enemy” (Oxford Dictionary 2018). In this working paper we refer to the first meaning.<sup>7</sup> Many organisations seek to work together with partners from the same or other sectors, as in the case described here a university and a

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<sup>4</sup>For examples and analyses see: (Boast 2011; Harrison 2005; Kahn 2000; Morse, Macpherson, and Robinson 2013; Peers and Brown 2003).

<sup>5</sup>Epistemology signifies the relationship between the research and the known and it “implies an ethical-moral stance toward the world and the self of the researcher” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 91); ontology “raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world” (ibid) and methodology “focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge about the world” (ibid).

<sup>6</sup>It sees reality as participative: “it is subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos” (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba 2011, 100); its epistemology assumes “experiential, propositional, and practical knowing” (ibid) and findings are to be co-created. In the methodological approach the practical gains primacy, language used is “grounded in shared experiential context” and inquiry is a collaborative action in which participation is political (ibid.).

<sup>7</sup>Yet, it is worth noting that the second one when used in English and some other European languages, has connotations to the Second World War signifying the cooperation of members of local populations with the Nazis occupying a given territory.

museum, to achieve something they would not be able to do by themselves. They aspire to gain 'collaborative advantage' by working in partnership (see: Huxham 1996, Vangen and Huxham 2003). So far, much of the research on collaboration in the museum context focuses on creating exhibitions and displays (see for instance: Boast 2011; Harrison 2005; Kahn 2000; Morse, Macpherson, and Robinson 2013; Schultz 2011). *MH*, on the other hand, was a more multi-layered initiative: it involved hands-on workshops, an installation, a public forum, and all these elements informed the research elements of the project.

Collaborating "means working together, but it does not imply that the process is efficient nor that the product is effective or accurate" (Dixon 2013), the collaborative process is a compromise (Kahn 2000, 71). Researchers agree that there is no particular formula for empowering and successful collaborative partnerships (Harrison 2005, 210; Maloney and Hill 2016, 247). Yet, Beth Maloney and Matt D. Hill (2016) outline some fundamental elements that can help guide effective collaborations.<sup>8</sup> First of all, investment in time and resources (material and or financial) of all involved partners "makes for an integrated, equitable venture and a successful experience for organizations and participants alike" (Maloney and Hill 2016, 247). Secondly, "realistic and mutual understanding of goals, accountability for activities, and clear institutional agendas help yield productive outcomes. A focus on the end result and the needs and interests of all partners involved is key." (Maloney and Hill 2016, 247).

However, the second element they characterise might be challenging to address in projects which are open-ended in terms of their end results. It might be then more beneficial to focus on the relationship and experience of each partner, as Fern Silverman and Bradford Bartley (2013) suggest. For them, successful partnerships "preserve the integrity of each partner and, at the same time, maintain a focus on the purpose of the relationship" (2013, 156). More specifically, the power imbalances should be neutralised, and all partners should feel safe and valued; everyone involved in the collaborations should be constantly adjusting in the process to respond to the needs of the other partners as they are gradually learning more about them in the process (Silverman and Bartley 2013, 156–57). In that way knowledge flows two ways and "collaborative partnerships are therefore distinctively adaptive, requiring ongoing learning from all partners." (Silverman and Bartley 2013, 157).

The elements mentioned above: commitment of time and resources, understanding of goals and interests of all partners and creating a relationship characterized by a two-way (or

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<sup>8</sup>See also: Michael Winer and Karen Ray, "Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey" (St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994).

three way) flow of knowledge; are used as general guidelines against which *MH* is evaluated in the following sections. Yet, we also identify other more specific elements which were crucial in shaping this collaboration and evaluate to what extent these were effective and how they could be improved. This includes: the role of digital mediation<sup>9</sup>, roles and responsibilities, and inclusion of participants in the evaluation process.

### ***Moving Hearts as a collaborative project***

*MH* was a collaboration between Australian artist Penny Ryan (supported by Jonathan Shaw), King's College London (Professor Anna Reading and Dr James Bjork supported by a PhD Student Aleksandra Kubica and BA Student Vinya Mehta) and the UK Migration Museum at the Workshop (Head of Learning and Partnerships Emily Miller and Education Officer Liberty Melly). Another partner that was involved, Claytime, supported the project by providing clay and firing the hearts. *MH* was funded through an international social justice grant from the PLuS Alliance.

The project built on Ms Ryan's *Connecting Hearts* project run in 2016, which involved 1000s of people in Sydney reflecting on their connection with people seeking asylum, particularly those in detention. Ms Ryan was invited by Professor Reading and Dr Bjork in December 2016 to create a similar project in London using the framework of participatory research paradigm and engaging various institutions and communities in London. During more than a year of preparing the project, Professor Reading and Dr Bjork invited the UKMM to join, the team at King's expanded to include two Student Assistants, Ms Ryan established a connection with Claytime, and the team in London used established connections to reach out to various communities and organisations, such as schools or community festivals, to host a workshop.

In the Spring of 2018, *MH* brought together hundreds of people in London to make 1000 anatomical-shaped clay hearts and reflect on their connection with migration and belonging. The 21 workshops run by Ms Ryan were two hours and a half long each, and every heart that was made was inscribed by a person who created it with a message reflecting on their connection to the workshop's theme. In the conversations and messages, particular uncertainties related to the results of the EU referendum and the recent discussions around refugees and migrants, in Europe and beyond, emerged as core topics. The heart-making workshops in various locations throughout the city, the procession from King's College to the

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<sup>9</sup>Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszyńska point out that in evaluating projects in the cultural sector it is crucial to include a consideration of the role of digital technologies (2016, 9).

UKMM at the Workshop in Lambeth, and the forum and installation at the Museum, were attended by people from various communities, of different backgrounds and interests and with diverse personal stories and motivations. During the workshops, procession, installation and the forum, the academic team from King's gathered ethnographic data about the participants and the project's evolution through participant observation. Participants were also invited to sign up for a follow-up study after the installation; more than one hundred did.

The workshops, free and open to anyone who registered, were held at King's College London, the UKMM at the Workshop, London Southbank University, Claytime Pottery Studio, Telegraph Hill Community Centre, and there were three closed workshops: two with the Mora Muslim Women's group in North London, and one with a group of students at a secondary school in South London. Each workshop attracted on average between 10 and 20 people. Altogether, the total number of people who attended the 21 workshops was 303 adults and around 20-40 children. The project was linked with the current exhibition at the UKMM at the Workshop: 'No Turning Back, Seven migration moments that changed Britain' and all participants were encouraged to visit the exhibition, either during or after the workshop if it was held at the Museum, while visiting the hearts installation on the 24 and 25 March, or on another occasion. Nine out of 21 workshops were held at the Museum and it can be estimated that the workshops, together with the installation, procession and forum attracted between 150 and 300 new visitors to the Museum.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the project also brought new people (non-students) to the university sector, e.g. Mora Muslim Women's group attended the launch of the project at KCL and an organisation for homeless people recovering from addiction sent participants for a workshop at South Bank University.

The installation, in the form of an enormous spiral formed of 1000 hearts accompanied by a tent made of messages written by visitors of the installation of *Connecting Hearts* in Australia, was created by Ms Ryan with the help of volunteers (most of them were participants of workshops) in the fire engine repair hall of the Workshop, downstairs from the Migration Museum. For two days, the installation was open and free for anyone to visit and more than 250 people walked the spiral, unwrapped a heart from cloth and then most of them (150) inscribed it with a message with their feelings or thoughts about migration and belonging. Before the installation opened, on the 24 March in the morning dozens of workshops'

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<sup>10</sup>Around 100 people attended the workshops, at least 60-80 people who visited the installation or attended the procession or the forum had not been to the Migration Museum before. Additionally, dozens of those who participated in the workshops elsewhere declared they planned to visit the Museum as they heard about it for the first-time during *MH*.

participants and others interested, who found out through social media, took part in a procession carrying hearts from King's College London at Strand to Migration Museum at the Workshop in Lambeth, and many then stayed for a joint lunch cooked by Delica sisters, a refugee catering enterprise. In the afternoon some workshop participants and spiral or Museum visitors joined a public forum, *Talking Hearts* to discuss reimagining migration for the 21<sup>st</sup> century within the main exhibition space of the museum. From the afternoon on the second day of the installation, visitors could take with them a heart of their choice for a five pounds donation to the Museum.

After the installation was disassembled by Ms Ryan and volunteers, 100 hearts were given to the Transition Town Tooting, some were distributed among participants or supporters of the project, and 400 were kept at the Museum or KCL to use in potential future installations and projects.<sup>11</sup> From May 2018 the team from King's began the follow-up research process: participants who signed up for the study were invited to share their stories of migration and belonging over email and a smaller group (less than 20) were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. We received five stories and we interviewed ten participants in June 2018. Furthermore, a group composed of research team members and participants met in June 2018 to sort and interpret more than 150 messages inscribed on pieces of cloth by visitors or the spiral. In April and May 2018, Ms Kubica also interviewed all the partners involved in the collaboration about the process. The analysis in the following sections uses the data gathered by the team at King's through this research process, which involved participant observation of the workshops and other elements of *MH*, participation in the process of creating the project, interviews, photographic evidence and messages inscribed by visitors of the installation.

## **Partner's involvement**

### **Motivations and expectations**

Professor Reading and Dr Bjork were awarded the seed grant from the PLS Alliance in July 2016 and the idea for creating *MH* in London emerged from conversations between Ms Ryan and Professor Reading in December 2016. For all the team members at King's a part of their motivation to join the project was because of its focus on migration, and everyone had a personal and scholarly interest in the topic and was keen to explore how it could be examined collaboratively with other partners and how art could be used in the process. The study

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<sup>11</sup>One such installation has already taken place: at KCL during the Culture Media and Creative Industries Graduate Conference on 15 June 2018.

conducted as part of the project aimed to explore the connection of workshops' participants to migration and belonging. Professor Reading had substantial experience leading arts-based research projects, Ms Kubica and Ms Mehta had some experience with running collaborative projects but not necessarily involving art, and for Dr Bjork engaging in an arts-based research project was a new experience but he contributed his historical knowledge of the topic of migration. Most people in the team had some background in working with museums (as volunteers, project coordinators, researchers or experts) and particularly the Student Assistants were engaged or had contacts with the UKMM before, either as volunteers or through their friends who volunteered.

Migration Museum was approached as the most suitable institutional partner for this project in London, and the initial meeting between the UKMM team and Professor Reading and Dr Bjork took place September 2017, but the three partners started working together more intensively: discussing and planning the project, in the Winter of 2017/2018. For the Migration Museum team, *MH* was seen as a project which could bring in more visitors, because of its focus and connection to the current exhibition, but also as a way to build a more lasting partnership with King's College London in order to, among other things, expand the network of researchers who could support the museum in developing future projects. Yet, the UKMM team noted in the interview that should the project have been organised later in the Spring, in April or May, then more people could have been attracted to come as the weather would be warmer<sup>12</sup>. This is one of the ways in which the power imbalance between the university and its partner was demonstrated: King's decided on the project timeline, taking into account the museum's other projects but being most influenced by the limitations of the academic calendar.

It was also another project where the Museum hosted art as a vehicle to explore migration, and the Museum's team was keen to compare it with other art-based projects they had engaged with. Yet, Museum staff struggled with combining the work required in the *MH* project with their other responsibilities because the organisation's team was very small, and each person involved in multiple projects at the same time. For Ms Miller the opening event of *MH* held at King's was a crucial moment for her in understanding how the Museum's work connected with the project and what could be expected in terms of project outcomes. That this realisation came at such a late moment, after a few months of developing the project together, points to the evolving nature of participatory research as the learning comes from the ongoing engagement.

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<sup>12</sup>The team from King's decided about the timing of the project. March was selected as a suitable time because of a number of factors, such as the expectation that the seed grant projects should be completed by Spring 2018, or considerations of the King's academic calendar (the second semester finishes at the end of March).



The artist, Ms Ryan, was curious as to how a project which she had created in Sydney could be adapted to the UK context with local partners in London. She was keen to hear people's stories and observe the engagement and responses of people in London to the project. Her partner, Jonathan Shaw, was similarly keen on exploring how Ms Ryan's Australian project could be adapted to fit a local context in the UK. During the months of preparing the project, the discussion about what focus to choose specifically for *MH* was an evolving one between Professor Reading, Dr Bjork and Ms Ryan. Initially, they considered identifying a UK-linked equivalent to the very specific reference point in Ms Ryan's first project: the detainees on Nauru and Manus islands. For instance, references of detainees in the UK or specific links to Brexit were considered. Eventually, a more generic approach was adopted, with a very loose connection to the post-Brexit atmosphere but a non-binary approach and a conscious openness to all sorts of migration stories included on a continuum of 'migranhood' (see: Reading 2020).

### **The flow of knowledge**

The team at King's, and especially the two senior scholars, because of their role in administering the funding and because *MH* was conceived as a research project, took a leading role in shaping the collaborative process. For Ms Ryan it was difficult at the beginning to understand the connection between the art-based intervention and the research dimensions of the project, but through the process of working together and communicating more frequently when preparing and then running the project, it became clearer to her how art and research could be combined. Similarly, for one of the Student Assistants the goals of the project and the involvement of other partners was too open at the beginning, but it began taking shape as the project developed with the learning about other partners and their perspectives. Also for the rest of the King's team it was important to see the project as evolving, informed by learning about the partners and their interests in the project and adapting to changing circumstances. For instance, because of the strike of the University and College Union taking place on the days when some of the workshops were scheduled at King's campuses, there were some last-minute decisions and arrangements required to find alternative locations.

For the UKMM team, because they were not able to commit much of their time to the project, it was reassuring and helpful to know that the other partners were not relying on them too much in preparing the project. They also said in the follow-up interview that they were glad to realise early on during the collaboration that they could rely on the other partners to some extent in helping the Museum to arrange the workshops in their space and organising the events for the final weekend. In the interview conducted after the project, the learning that the UKMM team emphasised was around the potential of collaborations for connecting the museum with

new audiences, bringing in different ways of doing things (by academics and an artist). The UKMM employees did not mention learning anything new about the topic of migration itself.

### **Time, resources and digital mediation**

The King's team and Ms Ryan and Mr Shaw were most involved in running the project. The team from the UKMM provided the infrastructure for the workshops run at the Museum and helped to prepare the installation and the forum. Yet, because they had multiple projects running at the same time, it was not possible for them to contribute more to the process. Both the Museum and the rest of the partners valued the contributions of the Student Assistants who served as links between the Museum and the other partners (for example, Ms Mehta was responsible for part of the communication and Ms Kubica had the keys to the Museum space and was responsible for the space during the workshops held at the UKMM). The UKMM team pointed out, however, that they wish that the roles and responsibilities of various partners were more clearly defined from the outset of the project because it was not clear for them, for instance, who was the main partner responsible for promoting the workshops.

With regards to communication, the KCL team and the artist mentioned that before the workshops started it was often difficult to arrange things with the Museum team over e-mail because they were so busy and delayed responding. However, as many partners explained in the follow-up interviews, in the process they quickly learned that face-to-face meetings or phone calls in general proved to be a much more efficient way of communicating than writing e-mails. All the partners also said that Skype conversations and face-to-face meetings in general were the most efficient channels of communication and they helped to build a relationship of trust. In general, conversations over the phone, Skype or face-to-face meetings were not only seen as most productive for discussing things between the three partners but also in contact with other supporting partners who hosted workshops, provided clay or contributed in any other way.

The artist also in some ways found the experience of collaborating with the Museum challenging because the Museum staff were constantly busy and apart from the two Museum team members who were involved in MH, neither the curators nor other members of the staff spoke to her about the project. This could be interpreted as an indication that this collaboration was rather 'top down': it was the university that controlled most of the resources and money and the museum brought in less of their limited staff resource to the project. Then, Ms Ryan thought that perhaps some of the hearts could be included in the current exhibition of the museum or potentially in its other exhibitions or other projects, and she had hoped that the curators would have approached her if they were interested.

Generally, all the partners agreed that the contribution of Student Assistants (one funded by a placement grant as part of her AHRC doctoral grant, and the other funded from the University 'KURF' scheme (King's Undergraduate Research Fellowships) for undergraduate research assistants as well as by the PLuS grant) in planning and conducting the project were crucial for running the project. Similarly, the on-going technical and general help and support from Jonathan Shaw who aided logistics, running the workshops, bringing hearts to Claytime to fire them, wrapping them, among other things, as well as help of numerous volunteers throughout the project, were all indispensable for making the project happen.

### **Engagement of participants**

Most of the participants of the project (around 80%) were women, and around half of the workshop participants were between 20 and 45 years old (Reading 2019 forthcoming).<sup>13</sup> The majority of participants of the open workshops found out about them on-line: either through Eventbrite, TimeOut, Migration Museum website, Facebook, or internal communication at KCL. The later workshops were also attended by people who found out through word of mouth and decided to attend because someone else recommended it to them. However, the digital tools of communications were crucial for promoting and administrating the project, especially Eventbrite as a platform through which participants could register for the opening event, workshops and procession. Some of the team members from KCL and the artist mentioned that they did not expect that so many people would find out and register for the workshops because it was an event suggested to them by the Eventbrite algorithm, as something that might be of interest based on their previous choices.

As for the follow-up interviews and research process after the installation, the participants who were interviewed by the end of June 2018 and those who contributed to sorting the messages left by the spiral visitors reflected the profile of the majority of the participants: they were all women, all older than 20. A few of the interviewed participants, as well as those who responded to the email invitation to write their story, mentioned that the workshops were important for them because they could connect with other people living in London who had migration backgrounds. Some also said that they thought that during the workshops there was a temporary sense of community created. Many of the participants reflected on their own journeys to London and experience in adapting and said that projects like *MH* helped them to feel they were not alone because they could meet people with similar experiences of adapting

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<sup>13</sup>More about the profiles of participants can be found in Reading, Anna 'Moving Hearts: How Mnemonic Labour Transforms Mnemonic Capital'. *Journal of Memory Studies* 2020 Forthcoming Special Issue.

to a new place and of feeling isolated, learning a new language and culture. For most participants it was crucial that *MH* involved physically making something with their hands; they said they enjoyed it a lot and one person mentioned that she was particularly happy to make the hearts because she knew that through this she was supporting something bigger, which included not only her but all the other people who participated. A few participants mentioned their personal interest in initiatives where art is used to facilitate conversations or raise awareness and they mentioned as one of the reasons for participating willingness to learn about new ways in which art can be used.

Although in this report we are not able to analyse the participants' perspectives in detail, answers given to one of the questions asked in the interviews are worth exploring. The question was: "what do you think should be done with the hearts?". While asking the question, it was indicated that a few hundred hearts could be kept at the Museum and they could be used for other projects, installations, or sent to people. The answers given to this question are interesting for this report because reactions demonstrated how participants engage in a collaborative process of shaping the project. For a few participants this question seemed an empowering one. It invited them to imagine various ways in which the project could reach out to different communities within London, bring out a political message or bring the questions related to migration and refugees in a different, more engaging way to decision makers. Most of the interviewees asked also about the plans that the team had now with continuing the project or using the hearts, and a few people said that they hoped that a similar project might run in other places in the world.

### **Tentative recommendations/learning points**

- For all partners getting to know each other and developing trust was an incremental process which built up as the collaboration process developed, and this follows how Fern Silverman and Bradford Bartley (2013) define knowledge flows in effective collaborations. Yet, analysing the development of this project shows that in collaborations where partners are in different geographical locations for some part of the preparation process (here, the UK and Australia), it is particularly crucial to establish effective ways of contact using digital communication. Early on in the process, partners realised that Skype and phone calls, as well as face-to-face meetings when possible, were the most productive channels for 'getting things done', but addressing this from the start, so establishing the preferred modes of

communication and deciding on the frequency of contact as one of the first stages in planning the process, could improve the flow of knowledge even further.

- In terms of the first steps in the collaboration, the discussion about the details of roles and responsibilities is crucial for some partners and this should be taken into account while planning a collaboration. Even if a project is a very dynamic and evolving one, like *MH* was, it seems useful to early on incorporate a discussion about the general steps involved in organising the project with a timescale, indicating which partner is to take responsibility or co-responsibility for each element.
- Another issue which appears to be worth addressing early on in the collaboration process is the time and resources that each partner is able to invest in the project, taking into account a complex overlap between institutional division of labour and individual division of labour in the project. With *MH*, as with most projects where partners are working together on an intensive and evolving project, and at the same time they collaborate for the first time, it was difficult to predict early on how much labour would be required and when exactly. Perhaps a general discussion around respective resource constraints that collaborators are under might be helpful for offering all partners an idea of what to expect from each other.
- As for the collaboration process, the flexibility of the funding was beneficial for *MH* as a project that was evolving and changing. In this case, the staff had a budget they could use and specific spend was decided depending on the need.
- Similarly, the flexibility of the partners was beneficial for the collaboration: by the time that the workshops started in London the partners had established the most effective ways of communicating and urgent problems were solved very efficiently within the team or between partners. Flexibility and a degree of independence of the individuals or teams within an organisation is crucial for making decisions quickly and adjusting to the constantly evolving processes of collaboration.
- Engaging participants in the research process and inviting those who are keen to co-create elements of the project on a voluntary basis could offer new perspectives and insights on the project's relevance and shape the development of a collaboration. It might also provide ideas for follow-up projects where participants or community groups can be involved as partners. The relationships established through *MH* between various institutions, groups and individuals in London, but also between institutions in London and partners in Australia, led

to further activities and outcomes such as publications, teaching materials, another joint project of KCL and UK Migration Museum, among others.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The stories gathered through *Moving Hearts* is used in teaching materials of various modules at King's, the collaboration is described and/or mentioned in journal articles, presentations and lectures delivered by the academic team from KCL. For instance, it has been discussed at various events for researchers, curators and students in the UK, Sweden, Estonia and Australia. Furthermore, it has fed into a larger King's Together funded project with the UK Migration Museum which aimed to document, for the Museum, the 'Time to Breathe' Exhibition and extend their audience reach. This follow up project, 'Remixing Migration' has resulted in an augmented reality prototype being trialled in a London school. The collaboration has additionally led to the UK Migration Museum being provided with the first Collaborative Organisational Residency at the Arts and Humanities Research Institute with a funded intern from the London Arts and Humanities Partnership. This, in turn is planned to develop into an international collaboration with museums in Australia and Poland.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Professor Anna Reading, and Dr Edward Stevens, as well as Dr James Bjork, for their valuable comments on the earlier versions of this paper.

## For further information about the project and project partners, see:

Moving Hearts: Exploring the Right to Belong:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVHFnnbFW1g>

Migration Museum website: <https://www.migrationmuseum.org/event/moving-hearts-workshops/>

Penny Ryan's work: <http://penny-ryan.squarespace.com>

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