

Windrush Intergenerational Project case study

Authors: Isioma Ikediashi, Project Manager, African Community Centre, and People's Collection Wales.

The Windrush Intergenerational Project was developed by the African Community Centre (ACC), working with young people in local schools, to research the lives of the Windrush generation who arrived in Wales from the West Indies between the 1940s and 1970s.

The project sought to bridge the gap between older and younger generations, especially with regards to passing down culture, tradition, journeys, settlement and other experiences. It records and documents the amazing contributions that Black and Ethnic Minority migrants have brought to the UK, and to Swansea/Neath Port Talbot in particular.

In total, the project celebrates the lives of ten elders, a combination of members of the Windrush generation and other persons whose contributions have made South Wales a multicultural society.

Curriculum links

Key Stage 3 & 4: History, Digital Competence Framework, Literacy Skills

DCF: Producing:

3.1. Planning sourcing and searching

3.2. Creating: Use a range of software tools and techniques to create a collaborative project with a range of multimedia components

Project design and funding application

The [African Community Centre](https://africancommunitycentre.org.uk/) in Swansea came up with the idea of researching and documenting the stories of the Windrush generation in Wales. We wanted to create an opportunity for the young people who accessed our services, and possible new ones, to engage with our West Indian elders and families; to learn about their challenges and successes and hopefully be impacted by the differences they made to their communities.

We shared the idea with our young people and they were excited about the project, and gave their support to developing a project.

An enquiry form was completed and sent to the Heritage Lottery Fund, followed by further conversations and support to design the project. We shared the idea with the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery and they supported us as our heritage partner.

We also sent out requests for support from local schools and other organizations in Swansea and received their support. This included Pentrehafod Comprehensive School, Swansea College of Art UWTSD, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Cardiff and Tata Steel. These partners provided free training, facilities and equipment, and visits to their sites.

An application was sent in to HLF in 2016 and we were granted the funding to deliver the Windrush Intergenerational Project for 18 months from March 2017.

<https://africancommunitycentre.org.uk/projects/windrush-intergenerational-project/>

Project plan

Approximately 15 young people from the ACC 'I Can'* Project in Swansea will come together with the 'Windrush' generation (older West Indian people who arrived Swansea and Port Talbot from the 1940s to 1970s) to explore the culture, heritage, journey, settlement and integration experiences of these people. This will incorporate short interviews with the Windrush people, interaction through cultural games, visits to places of interest (e.g. Tata Steel, where many of them worked), traditional recipes and food tasting, production of short video clips, the design and printing of a booklet acknowledging the project and documenting what has been learnt for the public to access on the People's Collection Wales website.

Our heritage partner is the Glyn Vivian Art Gallery who will work with the young people doing research and training, and we will also launch the project at the refurbished gallery. The final exhibition will also be featured there at the end of the project. The booklet and video clips will be distributed to the schools who have supported us. The project will be colourful, informative and capture West Indian/South Wales heritage before it is lost forever. And we will discover if anything has changed in current times.

*The 'I Can' Project seeks to encourage disadvantaged young people, particularly from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds to come together and enjoy diverse activities in a safe environment. The project aims to break down barriers, promote participation and community cohesion, and make young people's wellbeing a priority.

Project launch



The project launched in April of 2017 with dignitaries, Windrush elders, young people and community members in attendance. We held the launch at the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery.

[Project launch images](#)

Training and research

We arranged a number of training and research sessions to equip the young people with the skills required for the project. Much of this training was provided free of charge by our project partners.

Writing interview questions workshop. Sarah Younan, Youth engagement Coordinator at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, facilitated the sessions on how to draft interview questions. The young people worked in groups to make up their questions and to interview one another. The sessions helped the young people think about important details to capture when interviewing, how to make a complete story from the interview questions and to gain confidence when conducting interviews.

Arts skill workshop. The lead artist Tim Stokes lead a full day workshop of sketching techniques, live drawing and painting. The young people researched famous artists and in particular, Tamara Madden whom the majority had chosen to be their art inspiration for their arts award. They also had a skype meeting with Tamara where they asked her about her life, migration, art, inspiration etc. One of the young people painted one of Tamara's pieces.

Research and art skill workshop. The project manager and lead artist on the project went into Pentrehafod Comprehensive School to meet with the young people on the project and held a whole day of researching the Windrush people and story; researching other art inspirations; mixing colours and painting and planning for their arts award.

Learning to film using cameras and Dictaphone. The lead artist Tim Stokes taught the young people how to use the DSLR cameras to film and take pictures. They also learnt how to use Dictaphones to record audios.

Oral History training. Beth Thomas, Wales [Regional Networker](#) from the [Oral History Society](#), delivered oral history training. The young people learnt about storage formats, how to use recording equipment, preparing the interview space and interviewees.

Video editing and Photoshop. Over 2 different days, the young people were trained on editing videos and Photoshop by our lead artist. They edited the recordings from all their interviews.

The Interviews

Jackie and Rob Jones. Jackie arrived Wales in 1972 to train as a nurse. She completed her training and worked over 3 decades in hospitals in Wales. She is married to Rob with 2 beautiful daughters and 2 lovely granddaughters.



[Jackie and Rob Jones interview 1](#)

[Jackie and Rob Jones interview 2](#)

Mr Leonard Lawrence. Mr Lawrence was born in Jamaica. He moved to the UK in 1960 and came to settle in Port Talbot. Mr Lawrence worked in Tata Steel as a construction worker. He was famously known and admired for his strength and knowledge on the job which earned him the name 'Lenny the Lion'.

[Leonard Lawrence interview 1](#)

[Leonard Lawrence interview 2](#)

Elva Headman, Joyce Hall and Nena Lawrence. Three friends who came from Jamaica (separately) and settled in Port Talbot in the early 60's. All three trained and worked as nurses throughout their careers.

[Elva Headman, Joyce Hall and Nena Lawrence interview](#)

Rudis Perbenton. Rudis came from the Dominican Republic as an artist in the 90's. He exhibited his art across galleries and schools in Wales and taught art to schools as well.



[Rudis Perbenton interview](#)

Irving and Lil Saunders. Irving came from Trinidad & Tobago to settle with his father in the 60's. Lil arrived from Jamaica to the UK in her 20's and they both trained and worked as nurses. Both married, Irving is retired while Lil still works as a nurse. They both have 2 lovely sons who were raised in Swansea.

[Irving and Lil Saunders interview](#)

The young people's interview on their own experiences. Toward the end of the project, one of the young people conducted video interviews of everyone to record their experiences of delivering the project. This was a really valuable way of reflecting on what we had learnt.

[Young people's interview – What did you enjoy?](#)

Tamara Madden. The young people interviewed Tamara Madden, a Jamaican born painter who migrated to the US in her teens. Her life experiences in Jamaica had a great influence on her art work, as she used painting to depict ordinary black people as strong, powerful royals. The young people interviewed her via Skype before she died in November of 2017. They learnt about her life and the work she had created.



[Tamara Madden interview](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamara_Natalie_Madden

Visits and trips



Tata Steel. The young people went on a tour of the Tata Steel facility in Port Talbot with Mr Lawrence who had worked there in the 80's. [Tata Steel visit](#)

Margam Park. The young people went with Mr Lawrence to Margam Park and recorded him as he shared his memories of spending Sunday's with his family at the park. They also visited a local café around the area where he used to spend time with friends.

St Fagans National Museum of History. The project manager took the young people to St Fagans to see how Welsh history is communicated and shared at the museum.

National Museum Cardiff. Sarah Younan, Youth engagement Coordinator from Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, invited the young people to a behind-the-scenes tour of National Museum Cardiff. The young people saw spices and herbs collected from across the world; learnt about taxidermy and saw the stuffed animals; they also saw many museum collections from Africa and learnt about interpretation of the collections. We then had a workshop afterwards to discuss how we would collect and interpret the stories of the Windrushians.

Arts Award

[Arts Award](#) is a range of unique qualifications that supports anyone aged up to 25 to grow as artists and arts leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world through taking challenges in an art form - from fashion to digital art, pottery to poetry. The awarding body responsible for Arts Award is Trinity College London.

The young people spent over 40 hours documenting evidences and reflecting on those evidences for their Arts Award. About 5 of the young people worked on their write ups and reflections, shared their skills with friends and school mates and visited art events which was submitted towards the award. They gained bronze certificates for their work.

<https://blog.artsaward.org.uk/discovering-windrush-through-the-arts>



Video editing and developing booklet



The young people had 4 day sessions of editing the videos, selecting photos for the booklet and transcribing all the interviews gathered. They split into groups and each were given different interviews to transcribe. They discussed and identified sections for the booklet, the page numbers and the design cover for the booklet. They learnt how to print onto T-shirts and made their own inscriptions which were printed onto t-shirts. They wore the t-shirts to the project celebration event.

During this time, one of the young people conducted video interviews of everyone to record their experiences of delivering the project.

[Windrush Intergenerational Project Booklet](#)

[Young people's interview – What did you enjoy?](#)

Project celebration event

On Friday 17 August, the African Community Centre held a celebration event to showcase the young people's work and to celebrate the lives of the Windrush elders. The Windrush elders, young people, partners and stakeholders and community members were invited.

The event drew many from the West Indian communities, other community members and organisations, the High Sheriff of West Glamorgan, Henry Gilbert, and the Lord Mayor of Swansea, David Phillips. Leonard Lawrence, one of the Windrush elders who was interviewed, spoke at the event about his life experiences and about taking part in the project.



<https://africancommunitycentre.org.uk/diversity-in-development-the-story-of-the-windrush-project/>