

The Arts & Cultural Needs of Birmingham's Pakistani Communities **Research Report** Transforming Narratives Project

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Executive summary

Transforming Narratives – a focus on the arts and cultural needs of Birmingham’s Pakistani community.

Transforming Narratives is a landmark initiative which seeks to establish Birmingham City as a leading international centre for contemporary South Asian Arts. The aim of this project has been to focus on the Pakistani community.

A mixed-methods approach was taken to gather the data. This included a literature review of key documents on delivering services, especially the arts, in a diverse society. This gave rise to a number of questions which were used to design a questionnaire as well as to organise a focus group. There were 61 responses to the questionnaire and 15 people participated in the focus group and 11 video interviews were conducted with 11 creative practitioners.

Between the early 1950s and now, the Pakistani-Birmingham community had grown from 200 to 200,000. The community has been the largest ethnic minority in the city for nearly 20 years and second largest ethnic group. It has been reported that Birmingham is currently home to the largest number of Pakistanis in the world outside Pakistan. It’s a highly religious community. Given their diversity, it would be fair to describe them as a ‘community of communities’.

Pakistanis are generally a deprived community. Their young suffer from educational underachievement. The economic activity amongst Pakistani women is very low. Within Birmingham it has been found the community are excluded from centres of opportunities and power. These factors have implications for the provision of the arts.

Findings

At the outset it was explored what art means. It was found the dominant images ethnic minorities had of the arts “were opera, ballet, Shakespearean theatre, classical music and art in galleries. This image was often off-putting and seen as elitist; something for “posh” white people. For some minority communities, arts provided a sense of cultural continuity; a link with “home”, history and the past. Older respondents expressed a deep commitment to passing on their cultural heritage to their children and involvement in arts was a way of doing this.”

Lack of time and money were mentioned as barriers to arts attendance, but people were willing to make time and spend money on activities they were committed to. Lack of information about the arts events was a barrier for some communities. The primary research pointed to a number of cultural barriers. 74% of respondents to the questionnaire identified cost as a barrier while 40% said the venues did not offer halal food. They also

pointed out that for their community, socialising was frequently based around the extended family and the broader ethnic and religious community. This included weddings, visiting relatives, religious activities at mosques and community organisations.

Interviewees pointed out a need for different models of provision, with an inbuilt Positive Action that makes it easier for those communities and individuals who are unable to pay.

With the help of literature, it was shown that a diverse workforce that is representative of the people it serves is more likely to help ensure that the interests of all groups are considered in the decision making and the policy making process becomes more inclusive.

Respondents spoke of Birmingham arts organisations being 'white' who would benefit from Pakistani staff as well as culturally competent staff. More specifically, they pointed out that the arts need staff who 'speak the language' of the Pakistani community. Many people spoke of the Indian dominance within arts in Birmingham. People criticised Indians being appointed to posts where maybe an Asian was required. This meant fewer or no opportunities for communities such as Pakistanis.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were offered. These included:

- That there should be Pakistani-conscious policies and practices within the arts;
- That institutional racism within the arts should be investigated and addressed;
- That there should be ethnic monitoring that specifically caters for the Pakistani community;
- That Positive Action should be undertaken to address Pakistani underrepresentation amongst the audience, employees and decision makers;
- That all arts sector staff should be enabled to become culturally competent and religiously literate with reference to Pakistani-Birmingham;
- That no organisation should be funded unless it has a Positive Action strategy for the Pakistani community; - 61% questionnaire respondents agreed/strongly agreed that Birmingham Arts organisations should not be funded if they do not cater for the Pakistani community.

A number of self-assessment mechanisms have been offered to help the arts community to focus on the Pakistani community.

Background

Transforming Narratives is a landmark initiative which seeks to establish Birmingham City as a leading international centre for contemporary South Asian Arts. One of the aims of this multifaceted project is to focus on the Pakistani community ('the least engaged community with arts'); to map artists from the community who live in Birmingham and to seek out what knowledge they have of existing platforms and projects that are available in the city. Parallel to collecting the experience of Pakistani artists (singers, painters, poets, dancers, photographers, etc) this project will also engage with the Pakistani audience that attends South Asian Arts events in Birmingham.

Transforming Narratives is managed by Culture Central and being delivered in partnership with The British Council and 12 diverse Birmingham-based cultural partners.

Transforming Narratives wants to make sure that its development is informed by more marginal voices in the community. Therefore, it has commissioned research to understand the views of Pakistani-Birmingham on contemporary culture, their engagement with the city and their experience of the city's cultural life as well as their sense of connection with their country of origin.

Methodology

The report¹ is based on three main sources:

1. **Literature review:** Through a brief literature review, a number of documents have been considered in order to identify the key issues in the context of this report. This has given rise to a number of questions which were used in our primary research which has been conducted through a questionnaire and focus groups.
2. **Questionnaire:** a questionnaire was designed, with questions covering the main areas that had been identified by the research brief. In addition, there were questions that had arisen out of the literature review.
 - There were 61 responses. 96.7% of the respondents described themselves as Pakistani. Most were between 41-60 years of age. Half of them were born in

¹ The report has been written by Dr Karamat Iqbal. Based on the concept of 'autobiographical sociology', he has drawn on his deep knowledge of Pakistani-Birmingham gained over 50 years. His recent work that is relevant to this report are his books: Dear Birmingham and British Pakistani boys, education and the role of religion.

Pakistan and the other half in the UK. 32% were female. 65.6% were male. 77% described themselves as Muslim and 10% a Sunni Muslim and 10% as No Religion.

3. **Focus group and interviews:** this involved a mixed gender group of 15 people. Some of the discussion was conducted as a group which was supplemented with individual interviews. Quotes from the focus group and interviews are interspersed throughout report. These are presented in italics and are indented.

Findings

Profile of the community - Pakistani-Birmingham – from 200 to 200,000+

Birmingham has had many ethnic communities settling amongst its population, leading to the city being described as ‘superdiverse’. According to the author of this concept, Vertovec², previously Britain had a few large communities of citizens originally from Commonwealth countries or formerly colonial territories. However, now there is an increased number of “new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade.” At times it appears that the new situation is now the focus of debate. This report, however, is concerned with one of the communities from the earlier times when the word ‘super’ was not spoken of, i.e. Pakistani-Birmingham³.

The national profile of the community changed from the 1950s onwards as follows:

Pakistani presence in Britain 1951-2001⁴

1951	10,000
1961	25,000
1971	119,000
1981	296,000
1991	477,000
2001	746,612

According to the 2011 Census, there were 1,124,511 Pakistanis in England and Wales.

² Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial studies* 30(6) 1024-1054.

³ Amir Saeed, Neil Blain and Douglas Forbes (1999): *New ethnic and national questions in Scotland: post-British identities among Glasgow Pakistani teenagers* *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 22 Number 5 September 1999 pp. 821–844. The authors discussed the issue of hyphenation in identity. They spoke of ‘Pakistani-English’ upon which I have based ‘Pakistani-Birmingham’.

⁴ Peach. C. 2006: (2006). *Demographics of BrAsian settlement, 1951-2001* in Ali, N. *A Postcolonial People – South Asians in Britain*. London. Hurst & Company.

The Pakistani presence in Birmingham was similar in its development to the national picture. In 1951, it was estimated that only a few hundred of them had settled in the city. However, this was soon to increase in response to the enactment of the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 which removed their right to enter Britain which had been granted by the British Nationality Act of 1948. Later, there was also significant migration from the Mirpur district of Azad Kashmir, as a result of the building of the Mangla Dam in the area which had affected around 100,000 people. Many had settled in Birmingham.

Pakistanis have been the largest ethnic minority in the city for nearly 20 years. Similar to the national development of the community, in the city, their numerical presence changed rapidly from the 1950s. Beginning with 200 in the early 1950s, their numbers had changed to around 6000 in 1961, and, by 1981, the figure had reached 40,565, constituting 4.1 per cent of the total population of the city. By 1991, Birmingham had the largest Pakistani population of any British city, with 104,017, comprising 7.1% of the city's population. This had led the Council's Race Relations Unit (BCC, 1991) to acknowledge: "Ethnic Minorities form 21.5% of Birmingham population. There are nearly twice as many "Asians" as Black groups and the Pakistanis form the *largest* single ethnic group" (my emphasis). By 2001, Pakistanis made up 11% of Birmingham population. According to the most recent data (Census 2011), there were 147,000 Pakistanis, comprising 14% of the city's population. According to one prediction⁵, by 2026, 21% of the city's population will be Pakistanis. Another report, commissioned by the City Council⁶, has pointed out that by 2026, the largest minority group, the Pakistani community, will have increased to 232,000, 19% of the population overall. Changes in age of the Pakistani community is a significant factor in the city. By 2026, the community will make up about 20% of both the older (62,400 40-64 years; 12150 65+ years) and the younger (69,100 0-15 years; 88,750 16-39 years) working age population.

The community are here to stay. While settling in the city, early members of the community felt that perhaps one day they would return 'back home' to their place of birth. However, this was soon pointed out as a 'myth of return'. While many in the community maintain close ties with their country of origin they are firmly rooted in the city's landscape.

According to a government report⁷ Birmingham is currently home to the largest number of Pakistanis in the world outside Pakistan. The same report also predicted that Birmingham is set to become the first majority Muslim city in Europe, a prediction that has support from

⁵ Dorling, D. & Thomas, B. (2008). A Short Report on Plurality and the cities of Britain. Birmingham: Barrow Cadbury Trust.

⁶ Marsh, 2015: <http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/cmist/archive-publications/working-papers/2007/2007-12-population-forecasts-for-birmingham.pdf>

⁷ Tackey, N., Casebourne, J., Aston, J., Ritchie, H., Sinclair, A., Tyres, C., Hurstfield, J., Willison, R. and Page, R. (2006). Barriers to employment for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain. London: Department of Work and Pensions.

the schools' data where Muslims were the largest religious group in 2011. Pakistanis make up three quarters of Birmingham's Muslim population.

Pakistanis of Birmingham are a 'community of communities'⁸ given their diversity. People have come from many towns and cities of Pakistan (and Kashmir). This has included: Attock, Ghurghushti, Nowshera, Peshawar, Jehlum, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Multan, Faisalabad and Sialkot. There are a range of languages spoken amongst the community. A Birmingham City Council report⁹ showed the following languages amongst Pakistani school children in the city's schools: Hindko; Kashmiri; Mirpuri; Panjabi; Pashto; Pothwari and Urdu.

According to the British Academy¹⁰, nationally Punjabi and Urdu are the third and fourth languages, with Bengali as the fifth language.

The following languages were identified by the survey respondents: English, Punjabi, Urdu, Pahari, Pothwari, Mirpuri.

In order to succeed in Birmingham, amongst the Pakistani community, you won't succeed unless you acknowledge and respond to the diversity within the Pakistani community i.e. the Pashtoon, the Punjabis, the Kashmiris and so on. At a broad level its Pakistani but on the ground you are a Pathan, a Punjabi, a Kashmiri.... We have to champion whatever people's lived identities are.

Deprivation and exclusion amongst the community

Upon arrival in Birmingham as elsewhere in the UK, Pakistanis, like other immigrants were faced with a 'free-market' and difference-blind approach of treating everyone the same even though people had different needs, circumstances and historical trajectories. This was because "...the Government had to maintain that there was no difference between immigrant Commonwealth citizens and indigenous Britons" (p369)¹¹.

Pakistanis are one of the most deprived communities. Historically, given the vast majority of the Pakistanis originated from rural and under-developed areas, their education level was much lower upon entry to the UK compared to many other migrant communities. Within the immigrant community, they were, therefore, likely to lose out to the more advantaged Indian community or the more organized and vocal Black Caribbean community. This poor start of the Pakistanis was to lead to the community remaining behind other ethnic minorities which continues today. The most recent government report¹² has pointed out that unemployment rates amongst the Pakistanis were amongst the highest. It has also pointed out that more than half of the Pakistani children lived in households in poverty, while nearly a third of the adults in the community experienced "severe material

⁸ Based on the Parekh Report: The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000)

⁹ Birmingham City Council: Home Languages summary 2010

¹⁰ <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Multilingual%20Britain%20Report.pdf>

¹¹ Sutcliffe, A & Smith, R. 1974. Birmingham 1939-1970. Oxford: OUP

¹² Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018: Is Britain Fairer?

deprivation compared with 17% of White British, where the families were most likely to receive income-related benefits and tax credits. The community also had the highest rates (at 5.9%) of infant mortality. Having been referred to psychological therapies, Pakistanis were amongst those least likely to attain recovery. The economic activity amongst Pakistani women is very low.

Research has shown wholesale exclusion of Pakistanis in the city¹³. This showed that there was a city-wide under-representation of Pakistanis as employees. According to the Birmingham Council data on ethnicity and employment, out of a total of 349,135 jobs in the city, just under 6% were held by Pakistanis, well below their statistical presence in the city. The community had lost out as the city moved away from its reliance on manufacturing jobs, towards a service and commercial sector. According to the local Pakistani Community Development Network, poverty and unemployment continue to impact far more heavily on the community. If the Pakistanis are in work, many are likely to self-employed in the taxi business, takeaways and retail businesses. For them, the public sector had largely failed the Pakistanis. For example, the 2001 Birmingham Stephen Lawrence Commission pointed out that there was under-representation of Pakistanis in the Council's workforce, by 4.9% - indicated by the gap between their presence in the Council's current workforce (2%) and in the local population (6.9%). This became worse, with under-representation, in 2013, increasing to 9.6% - 3.9% in the Council workforce compared with 13.5% in the local population. Pakistanis are generally under-represented on the governing bodies of organisations in the city.

Pakistani young people are the most underachieving ethnic minority group. Each year over 1000 Pakistani young people leave Birmingham schools without the benchmark qualifications of 5+ A*-C at GCSE¹⁴. 7% of the Pakistani young people have been found to be NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Pakistanis are a deprived and disadvantaged community. Often they have more pressing needs to focus their energies on, like finding a job, than the arts.

Plays derived from the experiences of Pakistani people in Britain are popular among young Pakistanis: 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Pakistani Women

According to a government report¹⁵, Pakistani women in the UK have a wide number of experiences that are informed by culture, religion, education, class, age and location.

¹³ Iqbal, K. 2013. Dear Birmingham Bloomingdale: Xlibris

¹⁴ Iqbal, K. 2018. British Pakistani boys, education and the role of religion – in the land of the Trojan Horse. Routledge.

¹⁵

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920001118/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf>

However, they pointed out the change that was taking place in this respect. Unlike the previous generations, younger women aspire to working and developing their professional careers. They are thus becoming more visible in all walks of life, corporate, media, political and community based, and that leadership is being demonstrated through a growing number of women who are taking a leading role in politics and other arenas as councillors, mayors, journalists, and by women in high profile jobs in the public sector.

Importance of religion

Pakistanis are generally more religious than many other communities. According to the last census, the two most religious wards in the city were Bordesley Green and Washwood Heath, both of which are mainly Pakistani areas. Within schools, where Pakistani children are close to becoming the largest pupil ethnic group, in response to the question: 'my religion is important in my life', 89% Pakistani children said they strongly agreed/agreed¹⁶. The Brum Youth Trends report from Beatfeeks showed that whereas overall young people identified the least with religion, young people in B10 and B11 identified strongly with their religion; the latter being mainly Pakistani wards. It is worth pointing out here that even the non-religious within the Pakistani community are often found to have religious sensibilities that need to be understood and respected.

Observations

Art and minorities

At the outset we explored what art means. According to one report¹⁷ the dominant images ethnic minorities had of the arts "were opera, ballet, Shakespearean theatre, classical music and art in galleries (particularly abstract modern art)". The respondents found this image off-putting and elitist. In turn, they assumed that such provision was mainly for "posh" white people. The report also found that for older people in ethnic minorities, the really important art was that which related to their own heritage, which "they did not always feel that the dominant definition in society included these activities". Elsewhere, they cited research which pointed out the perception that "arts provision in Birmingham was predominantly "White" and therefore "culturally and socially irrelevant" to ethnic minority audiences." The report pointed out that "where arts events were attended, the degree to which people from ethnic minorities felt welcomed, included and valued had a significant impact on whether they returned."

It was pointed out that for minority communities, arts in its various forms provided a sense of cultural continuity, a link with "home", history and the past. It was found that people who

¹⁶ Iqbal, K. 2018. British Pakistani boys, education and the role of religion – in the land of the Trojan Horse. Routledge.

¹⁷ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160204124320/http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/arts-whats-in-a-word-ethnic-minorities-and-the-arts>

were not interested in mainstream arts were nevertheless interested in arts related to their own cultural heritage. "... the arts served to bring the community together across the generations. Many older respondents expressed a deep commitment to passing on their cultural heritage to their children and involvement in arts was a way of doing this." "Arts events which people felt related to their own cultural heritage provided a sense of pride, ownership and belonging and seemed to access deeper emotions than mainstream arts."

We need to carry the story of the ancestors, but it is even more important that we open up the minds of the youth and our communities and the children because they're going to carry it forward. They're our future; not just the future of the Pakistani community but of the whole city community.

With the arts events which related to people's cultural heritage, they were able to feel: "this is something which is ours". This also became a means of projecting one's culture to the wider population – "this is what we are like." Such events could give people a sense of being valued within Britain. Elsewhere, it has been pointed out "that people were more disposed towards visiting exhibitions that presented their culture in positive terms and recognised their communities' contribution to British society."

We might enjoy a mainstream arts event, there is always a deeper sense of satisfaction when the event relates more closely to our own personal background and experiences.

Issues the Pakistanis experience around participating in culture in the city

Although lack of time and money were mentioned as barriers to arts attendance, people were willing to make time and spend money on activities they were committed to. Conversely they pointed out that even with more time and money they would be unlikely to attend mainstream arts events. They did not want to "waste" their money on something they would not enjoy.

Lack of information about the arts events was a barrier for some communities. The lowest awareness levels were found amongst people who socialised primarily within their ethnic community or spoke little or no English. Language was a barrier, especially for the older respondents who had little or no English. For them events in mother tongue languages often had a particular resonance. This was especially so for older people. "Events in mother tongue language had a particular resonance for them, as they could understand the nuances of the language, the meaning and the humour which might be lost on them in English language events."

Cultural barriers.....there are some but they can be overcome. For example, when the Mac or the Rep put on transport for communities such as Sparkbrook (a mainly Pakistani area) they have been able to overcome the barriers, with absolutely amazing turnout from people who would have otherwise not participated. For three, four years now we have continuously broken the cultural barriers.

I, a Pakistani woman, worked with a well-established community group in Sparkbrook. The women are mostly religious; you can see that with their niqabs and the hijabs. They may have a cultural

mindset that music is haram (not allowed). But once they are reached, once they have experienced it..I've seen the women; when the workshop took place the barriers were tackled head-on. The women were now taking part; they were on the stage, dancing, we could see that these were the women who in the beginning. To begin with they were hesitant; 'this is not for us' but by the end of the whole project they were actually on the stage.

Ours is a community whose culture is dynamic and evolving. What maybe a taboo one year may actually be integral to the next. Some of the older generation would tell you that in the 1970s they were not allowed to go to the cinema because it was seen as a bad thing. As we saw, not long after films became acceptable.

When asked to identify barriers to arts participation in the questionnaire, 74% identified cost as a barrier while 40% said the venues did not offer halal food.

Within the Pakistani (and other Asian) communities, socialising was frequently based around the extended family and the broader ethnic and religious community. This included weddings, visiting relatives, religious activities at mosques and community organisations. This was particularly so for older people who socialised mainly or exclusively within their own ethnic community. Given the 'community' living of some groups, they were influenced by others in their network. Not having friends or family who were interested in attending arts events could be an obstacle as could their disinterest or more active discouragement.

It is not unusual to find that people from working class backgrounds – which describes a large section of the Pakistani community – report that they would look and feel out of place in mainstream arts venues. Some groups experienced racist exclusion such as through the publicity materials generated by arts venues/organisations, which sometimes reinforced the view that ethnic minorities would not be found either among artists or audiences. Some felt that they would require specialist knowledge to “decode” the event or its expected behaviour in order to fully appreciate the arts.

The question of relevance was a factor too. In the arts such as opera, ballet and much theatre, the perceived manifestations of “arts”, were assumed to have little to do with the lives of ordinary people and to be difficult to relate to. Some also felt that the audience experience would be passive and thus unengaging. They, especially young people, preferred activities that involved an element of social interaction and participation.

There were some gender issues identified. Older men frequently socialised in all male groups, playing sport, watching films or Urdu dramas or poetry readings (mushairas). Women demonstrated an active interest in a wider range of social activities than their husbands. Research¹⁸ has pointed out that some of the Pakistani women felt inhibited and restricted by the demands of the broader community and by their husbands' lack of willingness to take them out other than to family events. They referred to the cultural

¹⁸ Helen Jermyn & Philly Desai: Arts - what's in a word? Ethnic minorities and the arts

barriers preventing women from engaging in many activities outside the home and said that the broader community would disapprove of them if they wanted to go out more.

The Birmingham Cultural Strategy 2016-19 pointed out that ethnic plurality was becoming the norm and that “by 2024 Birmingham is predicted to become a 'super-diverse' city having no single ethnic group in a majority.” The document also pointed out a number of barriers to participation including disposable income, available child-care, transport, ready access to information as well as the socio-political perceptions that ‘culture’ is either generically the domain of others or something specific to ourselves. However, the document stated that “barriers can be surmounted by activities that are collaboratively devised and locally undertaken.”

We need to change the models of provision, with an inbuilt Positive Action that makes it easier for those communities and individuals who are unable to pay.

Cost is of course an issue. If they don't have the means to access the arts they're not going to do it. they can't go, they can't travel, they can't take the kids they can't afford the music tuition for the kids...the community maybe spending what it can to send a child to read the Quran, they have no money left for other activities for the child. Learning a musical instrument is very expensive for many families on the breadline.

Many of the Pakistanis live in deprived areas. If the arts are not reaching those areas then they're not reaching the Pakistanis. Many of the city centre venues are in another place, in another world.

If the targets of the above Birmingham strategy have been achieved then more children and young people are likely to be taking part in more arts and cultural activity within the school curriculum and in out of school activities. However, Darren Henley¹⁹, Arts Council England, has pointed out the arts exclusion of some young people: “We know that there is startling evidence that those from the most educationally deprived backgrounds are least likely to engage with cultural activities, perpetuating the cycle of exclusion.”

This may be a particular problem for young Pakistanis. Given their disadvantaged contexts many of their schools are even more likely to have cut back on the arts curriculum²⁰²¹. Furthermore, as some of the arts provision in schools is likely to be offered as an extra-curricular activity and Pakistani children are unlikely to be in a position to benefit from it given that many attend after school religious classes at mosques and Islamic Centres²², they are, therefore, further excluded from such provision.

¹⁹ https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Cultural_Education_Challenge_Darren_Henley_speech.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42862996>

²¹ The Warwick Commission report pointed out that “there has been a significant decline in the number of state schools offering arts subjects taught by specialist teachers”
https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_final_report.pdf

²² http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/88343/1/WRAP_Theses_Iqbal_2017.pdf

Representative diversity in the arts

It is suggested that a workforce that is representative of the people it serves is more likely to help ensure that the interests of all groups are considered in the decision making and the policy making process becomes more inclusive. This is based on the theory of 'representative bureaucracy', according to which it is believed that the beneficiaries benefit from the discretionary efforts of bureaucrats and that such efforts are a function, in part, of the attitudes, values and beliefs that result from the bureaucrats' social background. It has been argued that representative bureaucracies are beneficial to ethnic and racial minorities. In other words, they are more likely to receive a better service if those providing such service are from the same ethnic or racial background.

Elsewhere²³, it has been argued that a more representative bureaucracy, therefore, could lead to more effective public policy simply because citizens change their views about the state and the bureaucrats that they encounter. Second, a bureaucracy that accurately represents its citizens serves as a strong positive symbol that the governance regime is open and non-discriminatory. In a polity such as France that stresses its commitments to equality, such a symbol has

According to the National Audit Office²⁴, there is clear link between workforce representation, service delivery and knowledge of customer population. Others²⁵ have similarly pointed out that customers are more responsive to suppliers with their own traits. "Therefore, customer service and satisfaction would be enhanced when market and customer diversity is matched by internal service diversity i.e. language, cultural and ethnic differences are harmonised in such a way that the customer and supplier may 'speak the same language'...". Elsewhere, they state that matching internal employee diversity to population diversity can "enhance awareness of customer needs, improve the organisation's ability to segment and target differential groups more effectively, provide a more accurate means of communication with the target audience...". They also pointed out that diversity in the workforce enhances creativity, flexibility and innovation in organisation.

With reference to the role of ethnic minority teachers serving diverse schools it has been argued²⁶ that they provide role models, act as brokers between their employing organisation and the community being served. They are also able to act as a 'bridge' between, and 'translators' of, minority and dominant cultures. This may be equally true for ethnic minority arts workers.

Many Birmingham arts organisations are white. They would benefit from Pakistani staff. They would also benefit from culturally competent staff. More specifically, the arts need staff who 'speak the language' of the Pakistani community

There can be a diversity tick box approach with a focus on getting a few black and brown people. What is not realised is that Pakistanis are not benefiting.

²³ Meier and Hawes: Ethnic conflict in France 2009

²⁴ National Audit Office. 2004. Delivering public services to a diverse society,

²⁵ CIPD (undated): Managing Diversity – linking theory and practice to business performance

²⁶ Iqbal, K. 2018. British Pakistani boys, education and the role of religion – in the land of the Trojan Horse. Routledge.

There were a number of comments on the Indian dominance within arts in Birmingham. People criticised Indians being appointed to posts where maybe an Asian was required. This meant fewer or no opportunities for communities such as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Kashmiris. However, whenever this point was made people qualified it by saying this was not because they were somehow anti-Indian but more that they were for Pakistanis, at least in proportion.

When the few opportunities there are to make appointments and they go to people in the Indian community this simply adds to the dominant white-led narrative which excludes the Pakistani community and their arts and denies them the opportunities to participate fully as audience.

If it's going to be an Indian it needs to be someone that we might have seen in our community.

The Indian community has embedded itself in the arts, in a whole range of ways and in a whole lot of places. Whenever I go to meetings I come across Indian community members but rarely Pakistanis. our community hasn't pushed ourselves and are also maybe deliberately excluded by the arts bodies.

When we compare the Pakistani and Indian community we should not forget that we are not comparing like with like. The latter are generally an advantaged community whereas the former are a disadvantaged community.

There is no getting away from the fact that the Indian community is much more ahead in its engagement with the arts; as audience, as workers, as decision makers. For example, if an activity is put on in a library in a Pakistani area and the same activity is put on in an Indian area the latter would have much greater take up.

When you go to the mac or other such mainstream arts places you notice certain things. You notice it's all white. You notice the lack of black or brown faces. You certainly notice the lack of Pakistani faces. Where are the opportunities; for the apprentice, the arts finance officer, the graphic designer, or the programmer? You have mainly middle class and bourgeois outlook in such places, playing it quite safe, ticking lots of boxes. In such an environment it takes someone really strong (from an outsider or other group) to go in and make a mark. The only answer is to have some sort of affirmative action programme, to compensate for the past disadvantage, to help fast-track. Getting the placements in the arts and supporting them.

The questionnaire shed some useful light on this subject:

- 84% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: It is important to have Pakistanis working in the arts.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: Arts organisations should reflect the Pakistani community in their workforce.
- 71% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: It is easier for arts organisations to engage when they employ Pakistanis.

Cultural competence

Here it is worth pointing out that even where the workforce does not reflect the population it serves, it can still provide services that meet the needs of diverse communities. However, to do so requires the organisation and its staff to be appropriately trained and enabled to be

culturally competent²⁷ about the Pakistani community. Given the size of the community such cultural competence would be required to be at an advanced level that would include fully understanding the diversity *within* the Pakistani community. At the level of organisation this would involve conducting research on the community, hiring staff who are have the required level of cultural competence as well as for the system as a whole to act as an advocate and champion for the Pakistani community.

Anyone trying to reach the Pakistani community including outreach would need to speak the language. The 'connection' between the arts and the Pakistani community is essential, not just as a moral imperative but as a business imperative i.e. it means bums on seats.

We did something about Islamic arts. There was a senior person with responsibility for the arts. He goes: "but I just (original emphasis) don't (original emphasis) get (original emphasis) it." He didn't understand the Sufi artist that the young person was trying to promote. The community would have loved it. These are the gatekeepers.

There is a certain stereotype that works in the arts. If you try to present or showcase a Muslim film they might say: is this a terrorist film? It takes a certain type of person to deal with that.

People running the arts are ignorant. One asked me: So where do you come from? I am a Mirpuri, a Kashmiri. Oh yes, she said. I have come across taxi drivers from there. Her response made me despair. She was in-charge of key decisions in Birmingham Arts.

Religious literacy

A particular aspect of cultural competence is religious literacy (which has been raised by a number of reports, most recently by the Commission on Religion and Belief²⁸). Such literacy involves having the skills and knowledge to engage in an informed and confident way with faith communities. As well as skills in understanding and assessing religious statements and behaviour, it enables one to discern the difference between valuable and harmful aspects of religion and religions; appreciating religious architecture, art, literature and music without necessarily accepting all the beliefs that they express or assume; and making reasonable accommodation between people holding different religious and non-religious worldviews. Such literacy has been likened to emotional intelligence; a matter of knowledge, but also an ability to be informed, aware, at home with diverse religions; the ability to conduct oneself well when questions of faith and belief come to the fore". According to the above Commission there is a need for such literacy amongst civic leaders and providers of services in a religiously diverse community, such as Birmingham.

²⁷ Cultural competence is the ongoing process by which organisations and service providers respond respectfully and effectively to people. This is done so with due regard to their context and needs and in a manner that recognises, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of people involved.

²⁸ <https://corablivingwithdifference.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/living-with-difference-online.pdf>

It is critical that the cultural and religious sensibilities are accommodated by the arts community. If we are delivering to the majority of Pakistani community, who happen to be Muslim, it's very important that their religion is respected. Otherwise they will not be accessed. Secondly who delivers; if they have an understanding of the Pakistani culture that would make a massive difference. If they're reaching women who are also Muslim then being a Muslim woman would be an additional asset.

85% of the questionnaire respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: It is important for arts providers to understand the Pakistani community.

Diversity in the arts; a social justice and a business imperative

In its 2015 report, the Warwick Commission²⁹ points out that diversity of creative talent and participation is essential to the expressive richness and the economic and social prosperity of the ecosystem.

It is a mistake to think that the under-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals, women, deaf and disabled people and low-income groups in the Cultural and Creative Industries is purely a social justice issue. It is also very bad for business, diminishing the breadth and depth of creative perspectives, audiences and consumers.

A lack of diversity and under-representation also damages our international reputation and trust in the UK as a diverse and tolerant society.

They identified a number of challenges for the Cultural and Creative Industries. These included “low cultural and social diversity amongst audiences, consumers and the creative workforce”. Of particular concern to the Commission was the fact that publicly funded arts, culture and heritage, which were supported by tax and lottery revenues, were “predominantly accessed by an unnecessarily narrow social, economic, ethnic and educated demographic that is not fully representative of the UK’s population.”

A report by Davies³⁰, on entry to the museums workforce commented on the use of volunteering as a source of staff recruitment. The source is seen as a sign of commitment to museum work: ‘Doing unpaid voluntary work is seen as a necessary rite of passage to prove commitment and employability. Perpetuating this rite of passage gives an advantage to those young people whose background means that they can afford to work without being paid. It disadvantages anyone who does not have adequate resources to do this.’ It is possible that this entry route to the workforce discriminates against Pakistanis. During the research I came across one Birmingham arts organisation which ethnically monitored its Arts Volunteering scheme. Pakistanis were the missing community, not a single one had participated.

²⁹

https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_report_2015.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=13718>

The issue of representation was the focus of a recent article, on the Stage website³¹. Here Mohammad Shawab Iqbal starts by focussing on how in the old days the artistic leadership of London theatre was “a bastion of white, male, middle-class privilege.” But the situation had changed for the better. The question that this raised was: what is the situation in Birmingham?

For Iqbal, the matter that deserved attention was the lack of ethnic diversity among executive directors. He pointed out that leadership and power, after all, went beyond the artistic office. He pointed out that executive directors ensured an effective infrastructure was created for artistic visions to be realised. Therefore, it was important to widen the pool of voices influencing key decisions, 2whether these are to do with business plans, executive-producing a season or creating an inclusive workplace culture.”

For Iqbal, it is important that “people of colour must have equal access to every area of decision-making in the industry.” We just need to change it to ‘Pakistani’. He goes onto say: “it further perpetuates a colonial image that only our white peers are capable of doing these jobs – a stereotype that not too long ago was attached to artistic directors.” He recommended that Positive Action should be taken to recruit the next wave of executive directors.

People who are making key decisions in the arts just don't understand what is going on nor do they care

It is critical that Pakistanis are involved as trustees. If you have an all-white board of trustees who are they going to be able to reach! It will be people like them. That is a detriment. But if you have a board who are mixed, with a cross section of people, which reflects the city's communities then we might get somewhere.

Positive Action; an example from the Museums Association

It is argued that a diverse workforce plays an important part in audience development and education. This is both in terms of the range of audiences and the service they are provided. The strong connection between having a representative workforce and what the museum can offer to visitors was summed up in this quote: “A workforce better reflective of the audience of a museum will serve that audience better.”³²

A Museum Association report³³, made a case for Positive Action. In its view such ways to target particular under-represented groups “will have a significant role for some time to come”. They also argued that this would benefit from an approach that covers several parts of the cultural sector. For them such Positive Action included entry level recruitment.

³¹ <https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/2019/shawab-iqbal-its-not-just-artists-our-theatres-also-need-diverse-executive-directors/>

³²

<file:///C:/Users/Welcome/Documents/Transforming%20Narratives/Key%20reports/Diversify%20Final%20Report.pdf>

³³ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=13718>

According to the West Midlands hub: ‘If we wish to attract a diverse workforce which reflects the communities we serve, we need to have a number of pathways into the profession which allow staff to work up... to achieve whatever their full potential is’

Diversify³⁴

This Positive Action scheme, from the Museums Association, ran from 1998 to 2011. It set out to make museum careers more accessible to people from Black, Asian and Minority-Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds through targeted ‘positive-action’ training to prepare them to apply successfully for jobs in museums. The scheme was subsequently expanded to include disabled people and people from low income households. In all, 130 individuals and around 50 museums and galleries participated. Following are some evaluative comments on the scheme from those who had participated:

- 98% felt that Diversify had either been “very important” or “important” to them starting a career in the museum sector
- 90% gained work in museums after completing Diversify training
- 74% are still working in the museum sector (as of June 2011)
- All management-level trainees secured employment in museums soon after completing training.
- 61% are working in museum management or are on track to work in museum management, the key long-term aim of the Diversify scheme

Diversify participants typically trained for one to two years, combining their masters qualification with a varied amount of paid work experience.

The scheme showed that there are plenty of bright, motivated minority-ethnic people who want to work in museums. Nearly 80 people were trained as part of the scheme; many of them now work in museums and say that without Diversify supporting them with paid work-experience and a museum-studies qualification they wouldn’t be in the sector.

It was pointed out that there should be real change to entry routes to the workforce such as a shift to more non-postgraduate routes. There should also be new innovative approaches to internships/volunteering such as paid opportunities. It has been shown that interns are more likely to consider a career in the sector where they have had the opportunity to see things close-up. Representative Bureaucracy and Policy Tools:

The report points to a ‘circular problem’; the lack of diversity in the profession discouraged people from different backgrounds from aspiring to enter it, perpetuating the imbalance.

³⁴ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=955792>

Arts Ambassadors³⁵

This was a scheme developed in Manchester, to develop Black and minority ethnic audiences. The Ambassadors can also be known as “opinion –formers”, “connectors”, “champions”, and “community advocates”.

The role acts as a communication bridge between two parties. The word comes from the world of international relations and is another term for a diplomat. For the Arts Council England, the term Arts Ambassador is used to mean: “A Community Networker with the objective of spreading the word about arts and cultural events and/or representing the views and aspirations of a target community.”

Usually, an Arts Ambassador is in some way representative of a target audience or is closely connected to a specific community. Their primary goal is to stimulate positive word of mouth or other methods of communication such as email and text messaging. The message is passed on in a personalised way and that the Ambassador is motivated out of genuine personal enthusiasm, even when not paid to do so. The personal endorsement gave the Ambassador technique its effectiveness, “offering an immediate, live and direct form of communication. A skilled Ambassador can address many potential customer concerns on the spot and is able to overcome some of the key barriers to arts attendance”.

The barriers can be cultural/representation, emotional, barriers to participation in decision-making and barriers to access to information. In evaluation, it was found the Ambassador had been successful. 43% of respondents to a survey conducted during the project cited the Ambassador as being their primary motivation for attendance. They contributed to attracting new audience such as in Birmingham Repertory Theatre’s presentation of The Ramayana; majority of whom were of South Asian origin.

More specifically, it was found that Ambassador can help with targeting as they ‘speak the language of the target market’. They can:

- bypass customer cynicism about marketing messages;
- help to cut through a barrage of arts and entertainment choices;
- provide support in sourcing and engaging with community networks; and
- help to gather feedback from the target market.

Case study: the work of the Sidney Nolan Trust – a possible model for reaching diverse communities

The writer of this report was the evaluator of the programme, It’s My World’ at the above organisation. The programme had been created in response to the needs expressed by Creative Cohesion West Midlands (which serves the Pakistani and mainly Kashmiri community) and St Basils. They articulated the need for their particular communities to be provided with time and space away from everyday pressures. The latter explained that their young people welcomed a warm and non-judgmental approach and to being trusted with activities. For both organisations the work of The Trust often meant a first; both because of its rural location and its unstructured, non-

³⁵ <http://culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/A-short-introduction-to-arts-ambassadors..Mel-Jennings..2003.pdf>

judgmental but supportive approach to art. Both organisations have communicated that, without the project, accessing the countryside and art in this way would be an unlikely opportunity for their members.

The project began with three introductory workshops - one at a community centre in Saltley (for CCWM) and at two of the St Basils projects in Acocks Green and Hall Green. The idea of running introductory sessions was suggested by Shafaq, based on his long-term experience in youth and community work. This helped to bridge the inner-city world of the participants with what was to be offered at The Rodd. It was found that the pre-workshops sessions helped to 'sell' The Rodd to the young people. The sessions were an opportunity to build relationships with young people. As a result, they were much more comfortable going to The Rodd.

Some of the young people who came along to the introductory sessions went on to visit The Rodd. A number of others, who had not been able to attend the pre-workshops, also joined them. One young mother who brought her five-week-old baby to The Rodd had only found out about it the day before and decided to come the morning of the trip. "I didn't think I'd like it - but I've loved it - I'm so pleased I came".

All of the participants in the CCWM session in Saltley subsequently took part in workshops at the Rodd. The workshops were oversubscribed by this group, so they were divided into two to enable everyone to have the opportunity to visit The Rodd.

A welcoming environment

Participants reported that the Rodd felt "like home - like my family". At the end of a workshop and shared lunch prepared by the group from CCWM two mums and the Trust's project coordinator hugged. "Thank you for coming - I'm so glad you could come - it's been really good getting to know you better". The response from the two women was of great thanks and both explained that being at The Rodd was like being at home - their homes in Birmingham and their home countries. It felt as if new connections and friendships were being fostered.

Staff from partner organisations pointed out that the sense of trust created during a visit to The Rodd was very valuable in making progress in developing relationships and enabled them to do important work of their own. They also reported that on the homeward journey, and in the medium-term future, the effect of spending time at The Rodd had a marked positive effect on behaviour and self-confidence.

The evaluator pointed out in his report: "based on my observations and the evidence gathered I am of the view that the programme has achieved its aims. As intended, it enabled participants to find their voice by offering opportunities and working creatively with the whole family in the safe, relaxed and friendly environment of The Rodd. The programme offered a space where the physical environment and creativity intertwined and where everyday concerns and pressures of the participants were set aside. The careful selection of artists, suitable for the participating organisations and individuals, had the desired outcome. They, alongside the Trust volunteers, created the conditions for

everyone to learn and be creative together, leading to a democratic and empowering experience for all involved.

It was found that over the life of the project its impact was observable. Parents, who might initially have been inhibited themselves or were not confident to let their children participate in arts activities, had changed positively in order to benefit from the programme and all it had to offer.

The programme successfully bridged the white, rural and arts-based world where the Trust is located with the urban, diverse and disadvantaged world inhabited by the participants where there is little opportunity or access for art and creativity. The staff of both partner organisations were hands-on in the workshops and the general activities on offer. They took part in all the activities alongside the young people and children. They made their own discoveries, of creativity and of nature, which offered an encouragement to the young people. Given their normal existence within a hostile and unwelcoming world, people from both organisations appreciated the inclusivity and being welcomed unconditionally and without judgement.

There has been much discussion on low levels of access to, and participation in, the arts, by ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged groups. With that as a backdrop, the positive action taken by 'It's My World' in reaching out to these groups is an example of good practice. By working closely with Creative Cohesion West Midlands and St Basils, it was possible to tailor-make the programme and deliver it in a way that best suited the target groups.

The programme challenged and changed people's attitude towards art and creativity. The project enabled the participants to see art in a wholly new light. The flexibility and the person-centred approach taken to deliver the programme was counter to people's normal experience of art, with a clear right and wrong way of doing things. For people who normally saw photography and pottery in a rigid manner there was encouragement to view the outcome without a right-wrong binary. It also sowed seeds which may possibly bear fruit in the future.

Relationship with the traditional cultures in their background

People visited their country of origin:

- Frequently 21%
- Often 46%
- Rarely 33%

Activities they engaged with that originate from their heritage:

- Music 95%
- Food 81%
- Mela 61%
- Films/movies 68%
- Poetry / mushaira 63%
- Dramas 53%
- Dance 44%
- Theatre 46%
- Photography 42%

How people engage with the activities

- Through social media 82%
- TV 67%
- Blogs, websites 57%

There were a range of responses, between low level to deep connection. People visit for family reasons but also to reconnect with the arts and culture of the land.

Experience of living/working/studying in Birmingham?

Overall, people were generally positive about living in Birmingham:

The most important aspect of living in Birmingham is that it is a super diverse city with people from all round the world. There are many Pakistani from all parts of Pakistan, I have friends who are Mirpuri, Punjabi and also Pathans and we all went to school together and we have friends from other communities including Indians, Pakistani, Kashmiri, Irish, English, polish, Somalians, Nigerians and it's the whole world in one big city.

Birmingham is the most welcoming and mixed city in the UK and the only place that I would choose to live

Birmingham is a cool place with lots of multicultural things for everyone

I was born in Birmingham; it is where my parents settled with other families from Pakistan. I've made many friends from different culture through my school days and college. When I left to Study in Manchester, I couldn't wait to come back to Brum because we are more accepted in Birmingham and in Manchester there was much more racism and you get called 'Paki' - no one would dare say that to you in Birmingham

I have lived in Birmingham for 67 years & enjoyed every minute of it. It's my home.

People engaged with a number of arts venues as follows:

- Birmingham Rep 87%
- Star City 90%
- Mac 73%
- NEC 57%

Music was the most popular activity they had attended, followed by film and melas.

Arts and community cohesion

There were a number of comments about the positive role of the arts to promote community cohesion in Birmingham, given that a number of reports have identified Pakistanis as a segregated community.

Arts has a definite role. It can bring people together. It creates spaces, shared spaces, for people to come; doesn't matter who you are, where you come from.

We should absolutely focus on a clear agenda of cross-cultural and community cohesion. And the arts and the artists have a clear role to play in that process.

We need to work inclusively, with Pakistani artist who are not narrow minded. They can help with the cohesion agenda.

Once people start coming, once the segregated Pakistani community come and see other communities...the Jamaicans and the Rastas, who are interested in that picture or that song, or that performance...they look at a Pakistani artist who is working with Sikhs, with the Hindu, he working with a Bosnian, he is working with a Jew, whatever, but they're all into that art. It is the art or the activity that unites them. This will then start to break the barriers. Then people start to realise that you can be into Islam, you can be a Hindu, you can be none of the above, as long as you remember that you are a human being. I think the barriers; we've created ourselves and we can equally knock them down.

It's a particular challenge for artists who cross cultural boundaries such as a Pakistani who mixes black, white, Asian, Pakistani cultures. We need progressive artists who can engage at grassroots community level

The Pakistani community has privileges in the UK that they don't have in Pakistan. We have freedoms in the UK that we don't always have in Pakistan. It could be to do with issues to do with women, to do with minorities. Maybe even political issues. In the UK we have opportunities (could have more), to develop, to challenge, to innovate, to address issues in the community to create social change. Maybe addressing sensitive issues such as abuse, exclusion of women.

The arts are a way of expressing whatever it is you wish to express, however you feel. It's not about fitting into a framework. There are people who lead lives that are hidden from their community or their parents. They are listening to music that others would not approve of.

The writers, the artists, can give an expression to the beautiful things in our culture as well as the ugly things.

Iqbal would be good subject to promote cohesion. He encouraged the promotion of love tolerance and respect between people groups.

Arts and Islam

There were a number of comments which focused on the positive role of the arts in relation to Islam:

Through arts we can help to make religion mainstream, make Islam more palatable.

Islam is often focused on rules at the exclusion of aesthetics, the beauty, the kalam, the philosophy. Theology seems to be rule based when it is actually broader. And the arts can help with that process.

If you look at Muslim art, it was about diversity and inclusion.

How about we get the young people to design mosques. The process as a whole will raise issues about belonging in the British context.

We know there is Muslim art across the world, in history. But where is it in Birmingham? There is massive potential in creating that here. To do so you have to shift your outlook. The art can play a big role.

All the arts movements have come out of desperate situations. We are in a desperate situation. Who is writing about islamophobia? Who is writing songs about it, short stories, making films, writing novels...

We need to create an Islamic, Pakistani, British art; because that's what we are, our multiple identities, our uniqueness.

In addition, it was pointed out that music and the arts in general can help to present a softer, more inclusive image of Islam.

To make the Islamic religion more accessible; don't make it scary as it often is. Show things through the art; like art, like music. So, make it become something together. To present religion more positively; in a beautiful manner. Islam is beautiful. We need to present it as so to the kids. You can't just hit them with a stick because they got something wrong at the mosque. It's like the first time I heard the Holy Quran recited, it was beautiful singing. I was amazed. I was only young. I heard it. It came through me. It touched me. It made me realise how beautiful, how artistic, how much depth...it made me realise everything (multidimensional). It challenged my thinking. Islam was no longer scary. It made me realise that this religion is so pure, so beautiful. It's something I want to do.

When I was challenged for playing my guitar by a maulana I asked him: does Allah taala give everyone a gift? He said 'yes'. I said: 'what's your gift?' he said: to be a maulana. I said: do you know what my gift is? He goes: what? I said: it's to play the guitar. I said: who told you your gift? He said: Allah told me mine. I said: he told me mine in the same away. Who are you to tell me it's wrong, when Allah tells me its right. He sat back and accepted my point.

Islam...everyone can enjoy it. you just have to listen to the azaan.

When people say art or music is haram; they are basing it on culture, not religion.

There is a progressive dimension to the arts and music within the Pakistani community. It rarely gets a look in.

The challenge is for the arts world to connect with a religious community.

Reciting the Quran, the azaan...these are beautiful things. We have to acknowledge that. Islam contributed massively to the arts; we have to acknowledge that. It might just help the older community, the mosques, to connect with the young people.

Religion and music

It has been said that some Muslims are opposed to music. This was explored during the focus group. The findings generally contradicted this statement.

Music as an art form can occasionally throw up issues with reference to religion of Islam and yet there are people in the community who have found a way to continue their activity. As example it is worth citing the longstanding contribution of the Oriental Star Agencies which has made a real contribution to establishing music amongst Pakistani- Birmingham. Furthermore, it pioneered some of the early development of Asian music in general including Indian.

Every year we bring together music and Islam together: Urs for the faqir from Khari Sharif and Milaad un-nabi – birth of the Prophet. We can attract 500-600 people.

Pakistanis are more likely to engage with certain type of music. For example, Sufi music is always popular. They would engage with Bollywood music. Sometimes it is necessary to have separate male/female.

There are occasionally groups within the Pakistani community who say music is haram. But even they will access some types of music such as qawwali. Maybe we should look at story telling. Maybe we should look at theatre. If people want access according to their religious or cultural needs we should give it to them. It's important to engage first then we can explore, stretch their boundaries, take them out of their comfort zone, broaden their horizons.

Most Pakistanis like music. They approve it. They don't see it against Islam. There are nasheeds, singing in praise of the Prophet. Only the Salafi (also called Wahabi) have some problem with it. Even they will promote recitation of the Quran. And Arabic poetry.

Message to Transforming Narratives

In the questionnaire people were asked if there was anything they would like to say to Transforming Narratives. The following are some of the responses:

This is a good project, and we look forward to more shows which involves artists from Birmingham and Pakistan and more needs to be done for our young people to stop them drifting into gangs especially with all the youth clubs closing down

More shows like Sigh of the Musafir please - REP Theatre was a nice place and I really enjoyed the show along with my friends. It told the history Pakistani community and was very positive

You're doing a great job. The fact that you are actually promoting Pakistanis is refreshing as usually they are associated with negativity. I am doing my dissertation around this topic -

belonging, identity and sense of place and I feel like your work is really invaluable to our community. Thank you:)

Please put more shows about Pakistanis and tell their stories like you do of white people and ordinary stories not just bad ones about us as terrorists and religious people but ordinary people of Birmingham

Please do more events for young people especially Pakistani and Bengali and Somalian. Build it and they will come

Yes it is about time we are asked and are getting involved with the Arts. For too long Pakistanis and Muslims in general have been portrayed with negative and racist lens. we are only in the news or the public eye if the stories are about Islamophobia or criminality.. we are an all rounded community, with a rich history of arts, crafts. poets and musicians..and if course great cricket.!!!

Support your local artists

Please make sure you reflect the city and its different communities as our elders and young people have very little entertainment and spend most of their time watching satellite channels from back home

It's a great project and I wish it success. I look forward to more events like the Sight of the Musafir and the Bangladeshi Exhibition about Restaurants

Connect with young people but take account of the elders needs too. They are now a growing group who need to participate to avoid social exclusion

I love this city and I love working in the arts. But I am tired of speaking on behalf of Kashmiris. I am tired because part of the problem is Kashmiris themselves who don't know what they don't know. I am tired of seeing my Kashmiri friends going posh and losing their identity. I am saddened by the loss of aesthetic sensibilities of my father's generation. I think these processes are part of mainstream capitalism.

Then we have cultural leaders of our arts institutions who seem apprehensive about dealing with Kashmiris because of the conflated divisive narratives championed in the mainstream. They are still uninformed and there is so much ignorance still in the 21st century about who we are.

There are enormous challenges we face but while we are 'other' nothing will really change and the few creatives on the ground will continue to work in pockets.

On the horizon looms the next generation that is being either culturally cleansed and/or subjected to puritanical theology.

There is strength in diversity, and I will believe it people talk to me in Kashmiri just like common Punjabi/Urdu expressions enter the mainstream. I don't even mind being insulted in Kashmiri - at least part of this beautiful language could live on. Much love and respect and I commend you for this timely endeavour.

Pakistani Artists require support to establish themselves-with local galleries such as the Ikon/Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery-which have promoted artists from outside the city, ignoring the wealth of talent in Birmingham. I have exhibited at the Royal Academy in London/Leicester Museum and Art Gallery asked me to exhibit there-however Birmingham-where I have been resident has ignored my requests-so I can see why Pakistani artists can feel negative about the cities lack of community involvement.

This will definitely help Pakistani community to bring in more arts and culture and have more events on regular basis

Please employ or engage with people of Pakistani origin

Must give equal share to Pakistani Artistes, musicians & organisations

This is a very good project and we really enjoyed Sigh of the Musafir - please put on more shows like this. We learnt so much about our history and also it paid tribute to our parents' generation.

I think all policies should address the Pakistani needs.

This is good thing please put on more shows and keep up the good work

Looking forward to hearing more about your shows and good luck

Engage with different types of south Asians- Young, old, rich, poor, educated or not. There is not just ONE community. There is so much diversity within it and institutions haven't yet scratched the surface and aren't engaging with people to understand the nuance

They need to remember that Indians are not the majority of people in Birmingham and they are not the voice of Pakistanis or others. They have their own identity and culture. They have dominated the mainstream providers funding for far too long and do not meaningfully engage with Muslims. Despite a large number of Muslim artists that appeal to Pakistani people the cost and interest is only available to a few. I believe there is a need for equity and the voice of non-Indians to be heard and listened to respectfully. I am fed up of people who have no connection and understanding of the communities' needs being my voice when asking for art productions. There is a great inequality and the real reason is 'divide and rule'.

The Pakistani community have much to offer themselves as well as others. To celebrate past and existing contributions will enable growth not just for the Pakistani community but the wider community.

It has come late. I hope this community's voice is now heard.

The request is More depth vs surface, to engage at a more meaningful level with a real understanding of values and origins

Please address the issues as an issue you are facing yourself and it is your personal issue not as it's your job and you are getting paid for this.

Important initiative please make sure you engage the communities as widely as possible

Please support more Pakistani / Kashmiri folk music

Very good initiative and wish you all the best. I look forward to seeing more events and shows over next few years

Good and positive project, please keep up the good work, I wish you all the best and look forward to more events and activities.

Very good - I enjoyed the launch and Musafir show and Bangladeshi food event by Mohammed, please do more especially for all the family

Hopefully this will give us more things to go and see - best of luck

Hope you do something to change and not just get funding and run off with it

This is a very good project, it's about time that the Pakistani community was given a platform and put on an equal footing with all the other communities in Birmingham. It's great that the African Caribbean community have events all year round and also SAMPAD do lots of work to support the Indian community, we need the same for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis - I will support and tell me friends and family to come to the events.

Message to the CEOs of a Birmingham arts organisation

During the focus group and interviews, people were asked if they were face to face with the CEO of a particular arts body in Birmingham. What would they say. The following are their responses:

- *You are privileged to be living and working in our wonderful super diverse community. Who are you reaching out? Who are you serving? You need to build up your audience base as a business imperative. There are vast numbers of unreached people. They need to be reached.*
- *I would say allocate specific posts of money for particular communities.*
- *Artists should be funded from our communities. They would then encourage others to follow.*
- *Senior arts people should be engaged with local communities, to know us more. If they won't leave their offices then they should not be in that job. If they have been there fifteen or twenty years and they've done nothing to figure it out then what's the point of them. They should move on and let others more capable to take over and sit in their place.*
- *There should be funding for community arts venues. They are near to the community. They can make contact with the audience. Such venues should be supported. Many such places are supported by volunteers, with little outside support.*
- *The decision makers should attend focus groups such as this, to listen to what we are saying.*
- *I would challenge the Birmingham Royal Ballet to commission their biggest commission, their main commission, to be a ballet that reflects and celebrates Kashmiri, Pakistani culture. I would challenge them to connect with the audiences, to break new grounds, find a new aesthetic and do it in a non-tokenistic way. And I would like them to do it in the next 12 months.*

- *I would say the same about main house theatres. Put your money where your mouth is. Commission programmes and plays about the Pakistani communities. As a city we need to break down the barriers that divide our communities.*
- *Here is a community that has contributed massively to the city. It has helped to rebuild the city and served it in many different ways. It has untapped arts potential. We can genuinely create new narratives and new aesthetics. It's an opportunity, not a threat.*
- *Support local artists. Support local community venues. Progressive artists should be supported. Those in Pakistan should be supported and then brought over to the UK. Steps should be taken to support community engagement. The Pakistani community should be given ring-fenced space within the calendar of major arts venues such as the mac, the Symphony Hall.*
- *The arts have a big role to play in tackling sensitive issues within the Pakistani communities.*

Recommendations

To begin with the end in mind we could ask the question what does the ideal outcome look like? The answer could be, to paraphrase the Birmingham Cultural Strategy, that the following outcome would be achieved:

- The cultural voice of Pakistani residents is valued, enabled, developed and shared.
- More Pakistani people are involved in cultural activities in the city, as creators, participants, audiences and leaders.
- The profile of artists, audiences, participants and cultural leaders in the city better reflects our Pakistani population.

According to the above strategy, the sector employs nearly 55,000 people, including 17,000 freelancers in the Greater Birmingham areas in more than 6,000 organisations. Given the size of the community, it would be reasonable to expect over 8000 Pakistanis to be employed. There would be corresponding change in other roles such as members of decision-making bodies and non-executive directors.

Here, it is worth reminding ourselves of two key factors. One is on the diverse nature of our society, while the other is how the Arts Council wishes to respond to it. The first³⁶ points out that we will become more diverse and such diversity will become commonplace, with nearly a third of the UK's population from a BAME background by 2030. Also, that diversity will spread beyond the cities. In the context of this report this means that the Pakistani community will have grown and spread throughout the city.

The second, is an undertaking by the Arts Council³⁷ that, by 2030, the diversity of England will be fully reflected in the organisations they support, and in the culture they produce.

To achieve a vibrant, diverse culture that speaks directly to the experiences of all parts of our society, we need to see the organisations the Arts Council invests in

³⁶ <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-07/future-proof-dec2016.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Findings%20report%20-%2010%20year%20strategy%20autumn%20consultation%202018.pdf>

drawing consistently on talent from all parts of our society. This is not currently the case.

*By 2030, Arts Council England will **only** invest in organisations that have a governance, leadership and workforce that reflects England's diversity.*

The 'carrot and the stick' approach was explained. The 'carrot' is about promoting and encouraging good organisational behaviours, values and practices, while the 'stick' refers to the law and restricting access to funding to those who won't embrace diversity. For the latter, it was pointed out that a radical shake-up was needed if real culture change is to happen: "Policies [should] stipulate that a percentage of staff have to be representative of the community they serve" and that "diversification of audiences and staff should be a requirement of funding and accreditation".

The MA thinks there is a case for funders and strategic bodies taking a harder line on funding, as well as demonstrating leadership through their own practice and offering support to museums through advice, policy development and strategic thinking.

With the above as a backdrop, the following recommendations are offered for consideration, based on the literature review and the primary research undertaken amongst the Pakistani community in Birmingham.

Pakistani-conscious policies and practices

There should be culturally responsive arts provision that pays full regard to the context and needs of the community.

There are many organisations with little or no communication between them³⁸. Maybe we should have a network that helps to circulate information amongst the community.

Set up a Pakistani Arts Forum, with an advisory role but also a place for networking and bridging the grassroots communities and the mainstream arts.

To overcome cultural barriers, to change mindsets, takes time. We have to stick with it.

There should be a directory of Pakistani arts organisations and brief bios of the artists from the community. This would help to share the knowledge within the community and beyond.

I am a member of the Allama Iqbal society. We promote Urdu poetry. Our recent event attracted over a 100 people. It was held to mark Eid, as a cultural not a religious event. This had the full participation of women. We are currently looking for a 'home'. This could possibly be a Birmingham Poetry Centre that also promotes other poetry from the subcontinent- Tagore- and possibly poetry in general.

We would like more to be done to promote Urdu, given that it is the second language in Birmingham. It's a cultured language and would be ideal as a vehicle for the arts.

³⁸ At the focus group people were mentioning organisations or activities which others were unaware of

Institutional racism³⁹

There appears to be a 'colour-blind'⁴⁰ and one-size-fits-all approach being taken in the arts world. Hardly any of the reports and documents investigated during the literature review talk about institutional racism. The sector cannot be prone from this evil. There should be proper investigation to explore the problem. Muslims also suffer from Islamophobia.

The situation was better before until 9/11 happened. Since then things have deteriorated with the Pakistani community being excluded

The Muslim label is placed first on Pakistanis before their ethnicity. And we know that label is discriminatory, based on islamophobia. We've been put in a pot, in a box, as a Muslim and Muslim equals terrorism. The discrimination has continued to this day, for nearly 20 years, with the result that the Pakistani community has been left behind, left out, of all funding opportunities. 11 September played a big role. All these decision makers see us as Muslims and then use the label to discriminate.

We have multiple identities; we take from all different cultures and become who we are.

Monitoring

Given the size of the Pakistani community in Birmingham, it is important to gather accurate data on their current and ongoing participation in the arts as audience, employees and board membership. There should be ethnic monitoring undertaken that gathers specific data on the community by using 'Pakistani' category. Furthermore, data should be gathered for the sub-groups within the Pakistani community; e.g. Kashmiri, Pashtoon etc.

62% of the respondents said they would describe themselves as 'Pakistani'. The rest was equally divided between Asian, Muslim, BAME, British Pakistani, Kashmiri.

Lack of monitoring data due to the fact that often categories such as minority BAME Asian are used but not the specific category of Pakistani.

Positive Action

³⁹ Defined by Macpherson (1999) as: The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

⁴⁰ Discussed in Iqbal 2018: British Pakistani boys, education and the role of religion. Routledge 'Colour-blind' is based on the assumption that differences such as racial group membership do not make a difference to outcomes. Such a belief among dominant White people can be traced to a lack of personal understanding about how race shapes life experiences - how it privileges some and disadvantages others. Although colour blindness is presented as a way of equalising race-related inequalities, in reality, it acts as a 'silencer' - a way of quashing questions about the continuing racial stratification of the society. A related concept is 'deracialised'. It has been argued that unless a policy is consciously interrogated for race equality impacts, it is likely to disadvantage minorities. In the context of education, the Dept for Education (2000) has pointed out that: "A colour blind approach can mean that factors important to the education of minority group pupils are overlooked."

In order to avoid the colonial model of arts provision and make sure the Pakistani community are active participants as audience staff and are able to 'speak' as decision makers, steps should be taken to address underrepresentation of Pakistanis as audience, staff and board membership. This could be a sector-wide and city-wide scheme or steps that are specific to particular arts or organisations. All volunteering, recruitment and employment approaches should be reviewed. There should be partnerships between arts organisations and the organisations that serve the Pakistani community. This should include places of worship, especially in relation to reaching young people.

Art can save young people. It can provide an alternative and a positive narrative to... (all the negative stuff that is going on). There is a huge need for young people in our community to be able to access music and art that is relevant and relates to their heritage.

We need to carry the story of the ancestors, but it is even more important that we open up the minds of the youth and our communities and the children because they're going to carry it forward. They're our future; not just the future of the Pakistani community but of the whole city community.

The cost of venues is very high. There should be a policy to offer special and reduced rates for unreached communities such as Pakistanis.

There are people in our community who are developing artists; they need help. Where is that going to come from? The mainstream arts world has to appreciate that. Where are the collaborations? Where are the opportunities for those artists to do opera or other forms of art and music? How are the young people going to know what opportunities there are, what possibilities are there for them to explore?

One Birmingham arts organisation monitored its Arts Volunteering. The one community that was absent was the Pakistanis.

There is plenty of volunteering activity in the community. In the absence of funding they've carried on regardless with people giving of their time for the good of the arts and their community

Cultural competence

All arts sector staff should be enabled to become culturally competent and religiously literate with reference to Pakistani-Birmingham.

The trouble with the arts has been that Those responsible for them have lacked and continue to lack the understanding of communities such as the Pakistanis. So, they have tended to take a 'white' approach. They will do good work sometime generally, but they are not effective. They stereotype. They get things wrong; they screw up sometimes.

Funding

With reference to the Arts England undertaking, the 'stick' approach should be adopted for the Birmingham arts organisations. No organisation should be funded unless it has a Positive

Action strategy for the Pakistani community. After 2030 the organisations should only be funded if their audience, workforce and board members reflect Pakistani-Birmingham.

Link Pakistani objectives with organisation's KPIs and the promotion of the staff should be linked to the achievement of Pakistani targets.

What is being done, what could be done to get corporate sponsorship from the Pakistani business community? What about merchandised events? There needs to be a business-model strategy that helps to create revenue streams.

When asked about this, 61% questionnaire respondents agreed/strongly agreed that Birmingham Arts organisations should not be funded if they do not cater for the Pakistani community.

General developments

Based on the model of a published report⁴¹, the following ideas are offered to make the arts more accessible and inclusive for the Pakistani community:

- **Proportionality in funding:** funding should be ringfenced in proportion to the Pakistani presence in the city, given the community is second largest in Birmingham.
- **Shift the image of arts:** use promotional materials that reflect the Pakistani community and a broader definition of the arts should be utilised
- **Raise awareness of the arts amongst the Pakistani community:** in particular, word of mouth and personal recommendations should be encouraged. "Organisations should seek to create a buzz about events and develop relationships with communities and influential individuals within targeted communities." A Pakistani Arts Ambassadors scheme should be considered. They may act as role models for others.
- **Creative programming and ticketing arrangements:** "Asian communities, for example, tended to go out in larger family groups and therefore family discounts might be attractive..."

85% questionnaire respondents said in the Pakistani community, Arts activities are a part of larger social, religious or cultural occasions such as festivals, religious occasions or weddings:

- **Develop understanding⁴²:** community outreach (if people won't come to art, take the art to the people), workshops, the opportunity to meet the artists and backstage

⁴¹ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160204124320/http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/arts-whats-in-a-word-ethnic-minorities-and-the-arts>

⁴² Having written the final report, the author of this report is familiar with the work of the Sidney Nolan Trust who tried this successfully with two Birmingham organisations, involving their programme 'It's My World': Creative Cohesion West Midlands and St Basils.

tours are example of activities that may encourage people to feel they are equipped to engage with particular art forms.

There should be a team of arts outreach team to make contact with and serve the least engaged but second largest ethnic group.

When performances are taken to the community and its venues the participation generally improves.

There was a black woman who accessed certain stories the minority community. She was asked how she didn't it. She said: I looked. To look and find such stories and talent and potential one has to look in the right places. But before you can look you have to make the contact. You have to know they are there.

There are lots of Pakistani organisations, large and small. There are three or four main women's associations. Very active in the community. They should be approached. There are welfare associations in the community who could be contacted.

Our local library has had a Pakistani writer and the take up from the Pakistani community was very good. yet we know that if the same activity had been put on in a city centre venue maybe a third of the audience would have participated.

- **Create engagement:** for young Pakistani people in particular, “participation (i.e. creating plays, music or sketches etc) generated more enthusiasm than the prospect of sitting in an audience for a long period of time, therefore events which link-in participation may have more appeal”. “In addition, the unease people experienced may diminish if arts were placed in less traditional spaces such as community centres, temples and colleges.”
- **Product development:** The funding system and mainstream arts organisations/venues should consider supporting the development of new work from Pakistani artists. “Support could also be directed at local groups, theatre companies, musicians and other artists who regularly perform at community events within” the Pakistani community.
- **Community partnerships:** Mainstream arts organisations could forge links with Pakistani groups who may be involved in arts activities, help develop these activities and link their own programming to important events or dates in the communities.
- **Assistance with organisation:** mainstream arts organisations and venues could also provide assistance with the organisation of Pakistani arts, for example helping with the administration involved in getting artists from abroad, hiring large venues, support with funding of such events and so on.

Self-assessment on diverse needs of communities

The following list has been adapted⁴³, in order to focus on the Pakistani community.

Arts organisations are encouraged to ask themselves the following questions:

- What kinds of shows are programmed throughout the year?
- Who works in the organisation, from front of house to senior management team and board?
- What is the ethnic make up of each cast, creative team, curators, artists etc.?
- Who does your organisation engage with and how (through outreach and education programmes, friends' schemes and business networks)?
- What does the season brochure look like and how and where is it distributed?
- Have you genuinely integrated the principles of diversity and access into your corporate and artistic plans?
- Are you prepared to review your existing programme and make changes?
- The critical success factor is an organisation that is diverse in terms of staff, board, supply chains, advisors and partners. What steps are you taking towards achieving this?

To assist with such a process the following questions have been adapted⁴⁴:

- How much do you know about the make-up of your Pakistani customers and the significance this may have on the way you need to deliver art services fairly and effectively?
- Do you have information on the service delivery needs of your local Pakistani community, both in terms of those that are being served well and those they are not?
- Do you have quantitative information on the make-up of your local Pakistani customer base?
- Are you engaging with a wide range of stakeholder and expert groups to improve the way in which your services are delivered to your Pakistani customers?
- Are you engaging with them at an early stage but after sufficient preparation?
- Do you provide appropriate support to these groups to sustain the relationship on an ongoing basis?
- How do you involve them in evaluating progress?

Pakistani exclusion in Birmingham

'Dear Birmingham – a conversation with My Hometown'⁴⁵ was the result of research conducted across a range of public bodies in the city. The aim was to find out the extent of Pakistani involvement in the city's organisations, as staff and on their governing bodies. The findings indicated that there were serious levels of underrepresentation, when compared against the Pakistanis in the service user or general population in Birmingham. The arts and creative organisations were not included in the research.

⁴³ <http://www.cultivate-em.com/uploads/reaching-black-and-minority-ethnic-audiences.pdf>

⁴⁴ CIPD (undated): Managing Diversity – linking theory and practice to business performance

⁴⁵ Iqbal, K. 2013

The following questions are based on the research that had been undertaken for Dear Birmingham. If they were asked of your arts and creative organisation, what would the answer be?

1. How many Pakistanis are there in Birmingham?
2. How many Pakistanis are there amongst your service users?
3. How many Pakistanis are employed in your organisation, especially at senior level?
4. How many Pakistanis are there on the organisation's governing body, such as Non-Executive Directors?
5. Is there underrepresentation of Pakistanis (when 2,3, and 4 are compared with 1)?
6. If the answer to 5 is in the affirmative, what steps are being taken to address the underrepresentation?