Kajal Nisha Patel

Project in Practice Portfolio
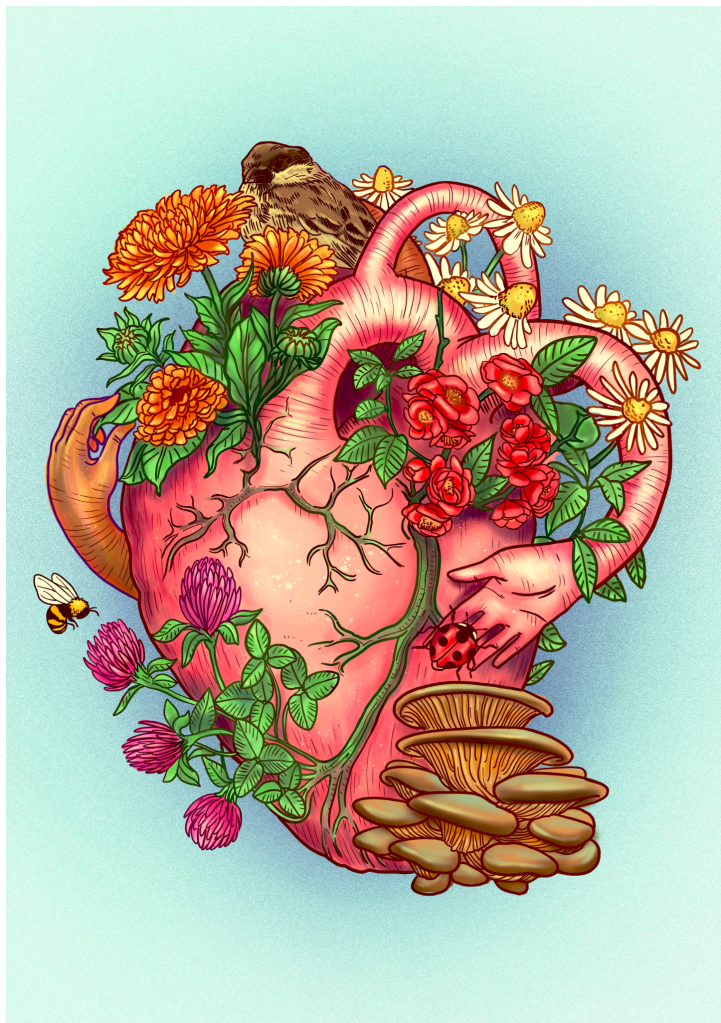
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Project Summary

Introduction/Project overview

Ways to Wellbeing was a participatory project, which took place between May - June 2021, against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. A series of nine socially engaged interventions responded to an urgent need for sustainable methods of care, amidst a climate of uncertainty and crumbling healthcare infrastructure. *Ways to Welllbeing* (hereafter *WtoW*) evolved as a consequence of this state of emergency. The programme is detailed to explain our conceptual approach, its rationale and our collectivist vision for collaborative social practice.

The project was supported by Near Neighbours, Church Urban Fund from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Launched in 2011. It was set up to encourage different faith communities to forge better relationships while improving local neighbourhoods. The funding was flexible in its expectations of outputs, target audience and participant numbers. This enabled the project to unfold in a creative and dynamic way. *Lightseekers*[1] co-directors Marie Lefebvre and Kajal Nisha Patel led collaboratively, to plan, manage and deliver the programme. Seven additional practitioners were commissioned to lead sessions. Due to pandemic lockdown conditions, the project could only be promoted via social media networks and leaflet drops in limited venues such as health food shops, pharmacies, post offices and food banks. Altogether, 191 spaces were booked, with 135 live attendees.

Through this assignment, I explore some of the tensions that I have experienced to exist between community art and museum practice. These tensions largely stem from my experience with socially engaged processes and desire for social justice. The museum values framework (MVF) is used to describe areas of tension while exploring the museum as a communicative space that can also be used for research, evaluation and training.

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[1] Lightseekers is a community arts organisation, founded in 2008 by Kajal Nisha Patel

In this project summary, I consider *WtoW* as a pilot project under consideration for delivery within a gallery/museum. Any discussed concepts, theories and methodologies have informed and shaped my own knowledge and professional processes.

Main Activities

The programme was curated to reveal some of the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental processes, which contribute to individual and community wellbeing. These aspects were considered as a holistic spectrum through which participants could begin to understand how personal wellbeing could be managed and healing or transformation may occur. Shared problems and experiences were broadly identified, along with common professional needs, while occupational, intellectual and professional health were considered as part of this process. Nine online sessions were consequently delivered, across two months, in two parts. (Appendix 1a, 1b)

Part1. Individual wellbeing (Sessions 1 - 6)
The first six sessions focused on personal health, with activities on yoga, mental health, diet/nutrition, reflexology, pranayama (breath control), and the importance of connecting with nature. Techniques were provided to manage individual wellbeing, including mental and physical pain/discomfort, anxiety, stress and improving sleep. It was acknowledged that participants may have a variety of complex needs, which were prioritised to build interest and trust in the project. Participants also learned through presentations and discussion. Session 2, on mental health provided a framework to understand emotions and associated feelings. Session 3, (diet/nutrition and the gut) allowed clearer connections to be made between anxiety, depression, stress and how this may lead to a variety of physical health issues. In summary, participants engaged in mental and physical relief activities, while building a better understanding of the mind-body connection.

Part2. Collective wellbeing (Sessions 7 - 9)
The final three sessions were scheduled to cultivate some of the relational elements of the project. The aim was to nurture interpersonal connections through

conversations where shared problems and concerns could be discussed. Session 7, introduced ethically sound business principles and self-reflexive methodologies to encourage value-driven social entrepreneurship, collectivist in nature. Session 8, focused on community waste and repair, re-use and recycling. This session also stimulated participants to formulate their own ideas for the final workshop. Session 9 brought the whole project together as we shared, discussed and gained feedback for our personal project ideas. Peer to peer learning took place, as we considered how community networks may provide sustainable solutions for our personal and professional needs.

Rationale and approach

A feminist ethics of care shaped our approach. Due to mutual interests and experiences with gallery education, charities and service sector jobs, it was decided that cultural, essential and service sector workers would be targeted as key recipients for the project. Under C-19, these workers were likely to be experiencing the burden to expend higher levels of unpaid *'emotional labor'* than usual. Emotional labour is the process of managing or regulating feelings to fulfill the requirements of a job (Hochschild, 2012). After identifying a need for care within the above industries, *WtoW* was initiated to introduce holistic processes through which suppressed emotions could be released.

The *'hidden costs'* of socially engaged practice are described by (Belfiore, 2021). She highlights the failure of cultural policy and project-based funding to fulfil its duty of care towards artists and communities, describing this as a system of exploitation and a moral issue. In her essay, the main categories of *'hidden costs'* are revealed as (1) psychological and emotional, and (2) financial. Jean Tronto outlines four steps, aligned to four moral qualities within the processes of care.

1. Attentiveness - caring about. 2. Responsibility - caring for. 3. Competence - caregiving and 4. Responsiveness - care receiving (Tronto, 1993, 2013). These can be related to our own processes as follows. Tronto explains attentiveness as the suspension of self-interest and a desire *to care about* or for an unmet need. This can

be understood as the first phase, and *why* our project was conceived - we simply wanted to care for our community. The second phase of responsibility can be described as when the burden *to care for* was accepted by the project team. The third phase of competence could be described as the commissioning of skilled practitioners to share *caregiving* and *to care for* others. Lastly, part two of our project during which those who were *cared for,* began to consider the importance of the previous three phases as part of their own processes for personal and community wellbeing. This community of support demonstrates how Tronto's framework of care may work in practice. The aligned moral qualities can help us to understand the value and importance for a personal imperative behind collectivist systems of care.

Key Findings/Outputs

I would now like to consider Hofstede's research framework for cross-cultural communication, which explores how a society's culture affects the values of its members, and how these values relate to their behaviour (Hofstede, 2011). I consider the second dimension, individualism vs. collectivism (IDV).

Table 3. Ten Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist Societies

Individualism	Collectivism
Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only	People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty
"I" – consciousness	"We" –consciousness
Right of privacy	Stress on belonging
Speaking one's mind is healthy	Harmony should always be maintained
Others classified as individuals	Others classified as in-group or out-group
Personal opinion expected: one person one vote	Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group
Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings	Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings
Languages in which the word "I" is indispensable	Languages in which the word "I" is avoided
Purpose of education is learning how to learn	Purpose of education is learning how to do
Task prevails over relationship	Relationship prevails over task

Hofstede's research can be understood as a framework, through which a collectivist culture was encouraged during Part 2 of our project. While Part 1 may be considered as individualistic in its intention, this formed an important foundation through which basic needs could be identified and served. Sustainable access to local wellbeing services and professional support were realised as outputs, along with the social aspects of our project where interpersonal communication occurred.

Our project attempted to create a unique model for peer to peer learning to occur. While professional practitioners were invited to lead sessions, our final workshop was designed to dissolve power relationships so that all members' skills/ideas could be recognised by the group. Commissioned in 2009, The Paul Hamlyn foundation reported engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK (Lynch, 2011). Some of these organisations managed to shift the role of their community partners from beneficiaries to active agents and partners of the museum. The strongest work emerged from these museums. *WtoW* built 'active partnerships' vs what Bernadette Lynch calls 'empowerment lite', which includes practices based on 'helping-out' and 'doing-for' and when community partners are treated as 'beneficiaries' rather than 'active agents'. The collectivist values outlined in Hofstede's table are in line with the goals of our project.

Ways to Wellbeing and The Museum Values Framework

While online delivery enables connection with a wider audience, organisations such as the World Museum, Liverpool may allow us to create a multisensory experience. Contained within their archives are 400,000 plants and fungi, including seed plants, ferns, algae, mosses, lichens and diatoms. Such resources would make a valuable contribution within Part 1, Session 6 of our programme which connected participants with nature. Davies, Paton and O'Sullivan describe four modes, which describe overlapping museum frameworks (Davies et al, 2013). The *forum* mode is centered around individual/societal wellbeing and sharing/involving are prioritised. It uses a collectivist model, in line with Hofstede, where a sense of belonging and we-identity are understood as important values. In this mode, a museum welcomes its users as its co-owners, while visitors are encouraged to understand its collections. The forum is described as a healthy space for debate, contestation and even partisan agitation.

Such museums are appealing sites for delivery as they are more recently linked with concepts of social justice and social inclusion. Due to their resources museums hold enormous potential to establish what Jurgen Habermas describes as a '*Communicative Space*' for action (Habermas, 1987). The MVF could be used to build trust between individuals by recognising differing values, which form the foundations for a new set of shared group values.

While the notion of training and education for community artists has been debated as a contentious issue since the 1970's and early 1980's, (Hetherington and Webster, 2017), Belfiore asserts that specialist training and institutional support for artists is important. Without this training, the described hidden costs will continue to be shouldered by socially engaged artists.

In Appendix 2, the spreadsheet breaks down project overheads, time/cost/pay analysis, along with anticipated and actual received income. Individual tasks and responsibilities, hours worked, along with an hourly rate of £3.32 per hour are shown. This spreadsheet provides a clear breakdown of the financial costs (as described by Belfiore) which are usually hidden. In its current form, *WtoW* is unsustainable as a long-term initiative.

Martha Morris highlights key considerations and strategies while offering useful templates for effective project management (Morris, 2017). These templates can be used to allocate staff time while factoring in resources, such as admin, finance, marketing, along with objects, overheads and other physical resources such as the building itself. The project's feasibility could have been considered at the outset by modifying the provided sample templates, as shown in Appendix 3. Morris highlights that good project planning can help us to foresee such problems, and in the worst case scenario, the project might need to be cancelled altogether. In the case of *WtoW,* the project could have been heavily scaled down. Doing so would have avoided project directors from absorbing the burden of responsibility for all project related tasks. Appendix 2 shows how museum/gallery infrastructures may have freed the project team from such duties as admin, design, advertising/marketing and managing social media. This is a clear cost-saving advantage, with regards to the overall amount of cultural labour expended by lead practitioners.

Literature review

To inform my approach to this project, I have undertaken a review of relevant literature on the hidden costs of socially engaged practice. The key issues identified by this literature fall into three main categories, cultural policy, social justice and care.

Professor Mark Banks offers 'creative justice' as a provocation to highlight some of the injustices contained within the systemic fabric of cultural work (Banks, 2017). He describes the income disparities between the elites and the majority, who are rewarded at the expense of ordinary workers (Banks, 2020). He paints a bleak picture of the government's response to C-19 and its failure to protect arts and cultural workers. Nuala Morse provokes us to consider *'a way out of the impasse'* (Morse, 2020). She highlights a general trend within critical scholarship, to 'redeem participation', with museum discourse which advocates for more and better forms of participation. Instead, the 'hidden costs' as described by Belfiore, need to be considered if museums are serious about working with groups beyond their core audiences. Both Banks and Belfiore propose an alliance between cultural policy researchers, artists and creative sector professionals, as we push towards a moral economy and social justice–driven, cultural policy agenda.

Hofstede's research framework considers the importance of a collectivist approach to socially engaged practice but this would require a radical shift in understanding around what should be considered as core and what is peripheral in the museum's work. The Hamlyn report expresses a clear desire from participants for leadership that places public engagement at the core of a museum or gallery's values. This was seen as a prerequisite for effective public engagement (Lynch, 2011). However, a precarious industry of socially engaged workers is unlikely to bring about the necessary changes required to cultivate long-term strategic partnerships with researchers, grass roots organisations and active agents. Hetherington and Webster's research empowers socially engaged workers to consider the community arts movement of the 1970's and early 1980's and its focus on social justice and political change, alongside education and training for effective practice.

Martha Morris describes generation Y millennials (born between 1980 - 2000) as being more comfortable with collaboration, consensus and multiple means of communication. Furthermore, a shift in thinking around the career goals of this generation, compared with baby boomers (born 1940 - 1959), see the former as less inclined to commit to working in a single museum, over time (Morris, 2017). In an era of privatisation, this presents the museum with challenges as the model for community and socially engaged art can be replicated, and artists can work across different sectors. Davies et al. suggest the use of MVF as a planning tool to identify the museum's niche. It may even enable museums to defend or establish their role as a community centre.

> 'It seems likely that museums will need to specialise more in the future (Hatton 2012) not simply in terms of what they collect [...] but also in terms of who they serve and how they operate. (Davies, 2013)

The MVF is an important tool for creative sector professionals to evaluate and account for their activities, while working with any arising tensions.

Conclusion

Although *Ways to Wellbeing* was an independent project, museum research can be used to inform and shape more robust projects for the future. The foundational idea behind *WtoW* is that care is essential for human health and survival. An ethics of care shaped our processes so that collectivism could be cultivated as an ideological goal. However, the time/cost/pay analysis shows that the burden of care was shouldered by the project delivery team. Our desire to deliver an ambitious programme which would care for others was prioritised over our own health and wellbeing. For *Lightseekers* to be sustainable, we must ask *'at what point is caring for others detrimental to our own health/wellbeing?'*.

Using museum research and project management strategies such as those described by Martha Morris, artists can begin to reimagine their roles as community organisers and skilled project managers. With the right training and support, agency and clarity may be experienced so that our processes can be recorded for the purposes of evaluation. In doing so, evidence-based research on the impact of arts for health and wellbeing can be used by scholars, to bolster capacity within the arts and cultural sector. While personal experiences of working with galleries/museums is often conflicted, museum research and practice has positively informed *Lightseekers'* work. We will therefore continue to work across sectors, using research-informed approaches to enable ongoing self-reflexive processes.

Learning Journal

Week1. Task1.

When I first read my assignment brief, I was in-between jobs and projects. I had just left a role with Derby QUAD, during which time I was employed as Creative ESOL coordinator. I was expected to organise online English learning classes, to those for whom English is a second language. This was a challenging project on many levels and with hindsight, I would have delivered the project with an entirely different approach. I am drawn to write about this project since it was carried out under Covid-19, and constitutes 'work-based learning'. I feel that this project may provide enough scope to consider institutional cultures, values, and key theories, as suggested in the learning resources/guidance.

Considering some of the questions highlighted within 'scope of the project', my impulse is to write about the Creative ESOL project, since it has been delivered and enough time has passed for reflection. I think this would make an interesting project to consider developing for this assignment; Largely because there were lots of ethical issues which emerged during the delivery of this work. Not only do I feel this project holds enough potential for improvement, but we have just submitted a proposal to the Baring Foundation to deliver a modified version of this project. The new proposal was written after considering the importance of research and evaluation within socially engaged processes; particularly participatory action research methodologies such as PVMSC (Participatory Video. Most Significant Change). Having studied and written about the scope of such methodologies for participatory storytelling and learning, along with its focus towards advocacy and policy change, I feel this would be a compelling project to develop for my studies. Also, the process of delivering such a large project under lockdown felt like I was working alone, even though I was managing people as part of a small team - I feel that some of the literature, surrounding project management and people management will be valuable for my learning.

During this period (April/May 2021), I am also in the process of organising a funded project, called *'Ways to Wellbeing' (*hereafter *WtoW).* This project is scheduled to

deliver nine online sessions during May and June 2021. This would also make a good case study, though it has not yet been delivered. I wonder if it would be more useful to choose this project since it is still young. I am project-managing this initiative, in collaboration with *Lightseekers* co-director Marie Levebvre.

Currently, I am feeling a little nervous about this assignment. I am juggling a lot - Despite trying to simplify my life, I seem to have just as many things to do and it feels like a very big challenge to do everything well, and look after my mental and physical health at the same time. I am in the process of delivering at least three freelance projects, tying up loose ends for my last job, as well as planning delivery for our *WtoW* project. I am also due to start a new job in June. All of these responsibilities, plus my coursework is making me feel a little overwhelmed. However, I am trying to complete one thing at a time, then move onto the next task. This seems to be working for me.

WtoW has been pinned down, very clearly as a concept, as far as an independent online project goes. Since it was funded with a community development grant, the project was conceptualised without much input from any external stakeholders, including the funder itself. The scope of the project is broad without any strict conditions, other than what we had proposed in our application. This has made it easy for us to reach a wide range of people, across many different sectors in local, national and international settings.

For the purposes of this assignment, although I am delivering this project independently, I will consider how this project might work within an art gallery or museum. In its current form, I will therefore consider this as a pilot project. I am interested to know how galleries might incorporate such a project into their public programme. I plan to reach out to educational programming staff to discuss how this might work within a gallery context. I think these discussions might help me to understand the processes of planning, gaining support from volunteers and to reach out to their existing audiences. The issue of ethics is key to these discussions, since there will be a much wider range of stakeholders. The project may need to adhere to institutional agendas and work towards any strategic goals of the organisation, and our participants' needs are at risk of becoming a secondary consideration.

WtoW is currently planned for delivery towards a broad audience. The same model may pose some problems for delivery within a gallery. We need to consider risks, such as instrumentalisation, tokenism, exploitation, along with data collection for surveys/evaluation, etc. I want to ensure that participants understand exactly what their involvement is, why we are collecting data and how we might use it. I feel that such information is often skimmed over, within the small print of a form. How can we make this more clear? Is there a way to involve participants in this process, whereby they are empowered to communicate with the organisation, directly to provide constructive feedback/criticism about our processes? It would be useful to speak with relevant organisations and my mentor about these issues.

Key Learning:

- Make a decision about which project to develop (Creative ESOL or Ways to Wellbeing)
- Look after my mental and physical health
- What are the risks involved in delivering Ways to Wellbeing in a gallery?

Week2. Task2

I found it useful to learn about the MVF (museum values framework) and used this to identify the different kinds of management roles. It was also useful to contrast this with Martha Morris' definitions, in which she determines the difference between leaders and managers. This helps me to consider my own position within projects. There are situations when I need to be a leader, while there are other situations when I need to be a manager. Leadership seems to be more of an adaptive role, shaped by values, whereas management seems to be about making sure things happen in a specific/formalised way. I found the section on ethics and decision making helpful. (chapter4, pg57). Good leadership is clearly about trust and in the absence of trust, issues such as lack of productivity and stress occur. Good values (honesty, integrity and fairness) are at the core of good leadership - My work *is* underpinned by these values. This section explains the importance of respect within the organisation, keeping promises, sharing credit and handling problems. Ensuring that ethical policies are in place, while following up on ethical violations, etc is clearly an important way to build trust within a team. It is a valuable explanation which helps me to think about the skills I would like to develop as *Lightseekers* grows. It makes me think about the importance of having a clear mission statement which outlines our values. These values must be embedded throughout the organisation and it is my responsibility as company director, to ensure that we have clear policies and procedures, which can be actioned in light of any ethics violations.

When Eleonore Belfiore talks about the 'hidden costs' shouldered by socially engaged artists, this resonates with me personally. After so many years, working long hours and taking on the burden of responsibility for the care of participants beyond the project, this feels like an ethical violation on behalf of the funders and/or museums/galleries I was employed by. While it was a personal choice to do this, there still remains an important question around cultural policy and who ultimately has the responsibility to care for participants after projects are completed. In his article, The work of culture and C-19 Professor Mark Banks talks about the injustices of cultural work, especially the disparities in income between the elites who are rewarded at the expense of ordinary workers. Eleonore's research/interviews with

socially engaged artists, on the moral failure of cultural policy, along with Mark Banks' book, 'Creative Justice' both highlight the importance for artists to work collaboratively with academics. I have so far touched on Nuala Morse's book/research within her book, 'The Museum as a Space of Social Care'. Unfortunately, I came across this literature a little late for this assignment, but I am very interested in this idea of Museums being more like community centres. In their paper, Davie, Paton, Sullivan explain that museums will need to specialise more in the future - They explain that The MVF can also be used as a planning tool and this may enable museums to defend or establish their role as a community centre. Banks, Belfiore and Morse are advocating for better forms of participation and I would very much like to study their research in detail.

I have always found it difficult to explain the complexity of delivering socially engaged projects due to the wide-ranging roles and responsibilities. The MVF is a useful way to understand the overlapping roles (team leader, facilitator, guardian, business manager) and how they may work in different modes (club, temple, visitor attraction, forum). This helps me to understand that roles vary, depending on the context. It also helps me to identify my strengths and which area of management I would like to work in, alongside what kind of museums are better suited to my own processes within socially engaged practice.

Over the past few years, I have reconsidered the way I describe my role/job. When I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease in 2018, I began to simplify my life and decided that I could no longer 'hustle' the way I have been for so long. I decided to 'get a real job'. It felt like I was going backwards at the time. It took me two years to get a job. Despite my skills/expertise, I was getting rejected over and over again. At this stage, I was looking for work, beyond the museum/gallery sector. I decided to work with a careers advisor, who gave my CV a makeover. He made me realise that I was underselling myself, and that if I wanted to, I could make a lot of money in the private/commercial industry as a project manager. He advised me to use different job titles - I began to call myself a project manager. Three interviews later, BINGO! - I got a job with the Derby QUAD. I now feel unattached to titles such as socially engaged artist, because this does not make much sense to anyone outside the industry (or within in, at times!). I would very much like to do a Prince2 course, or equivalent on

project management. J. Davidson Frame uses 'accidental professional' to describe those who find themselves designated project managers - This is me!

Key Learning:

- Socially engaged artists must be well trained, informed and empowered.
- We must begin to recognise ourselves as skilled leaders who have the capacity to manage large projects.
- Understanding my own value is surely the first step in defining a set of values for *Lightseekers*
- Consider doing a Prince2 project management course.

Week6. Task3

For this task, I will again turn to Eleonora Belfiore's research on the moral failure of cultural policy. She asks us to consider the mechanisms of systemic exploitation within socially engaged practice, along with the unacknowledged costs which are shouldered by artists, when we work on publicly subsidised projects.

In the context of my own work within galleries, I have found this to be a recurring issue. This has happened on three separate projects, in two different organisations. All of these projects were short-term delivery and were completed within the space of 4-6 months. On all occasions, I was tasked with making new connections with members of the community, including emerging artists, activists, refugees and asylum seekers. It is always a huge challenge to make these connections, and I find this to be the most stressful part of any socially engaged project when I work within galleries. I find it much easier to reach out and engage people/communities in creative activities when I am working on community art projects. This is possibly because there is more freedom to work within a space which is already familiar/used by the group. The approach I usually take is to find a community group which meets regularly, and then take my project to them - This has always worked out well, as it provides social workers with some respite while I/we deliver creative activities. It always feels like an uneven distribution of power when community groups are invited into museums/galleries, since these spaces are often unfamiliar/alien to new people. Museums/galleries are often located further away than a local community centre.

I also find it easier to work with community groups because there is less pressure to 'produce' outputs, like an exhibition, etc. While many funded projects do expect certain outputs, there is often less pressure than when working within galleries, to make these outputs aesthetically perfect. I feel there is more emphasis on process, during community projects and I have time to enjoy speaking and getting to know people.

While there is much more pressure to abide by legislation, DBS, safeguarding, health and safety, etc when working within galleries, I feel that it is much more difficult to stay true to my core values...namely a duty of care towards participants. Working with community groups within community spaces is more of a negotiation,

whereby there is a process and discussion around whether the group is even interested in participating in the activity I wish to bring them into. In the case of all three above-mentioned gallery projects, the groups were invited into the gallery to participate in a series of workshops. They were introduced to new and exciting activities and learned new skills. There was no real support system through which participants could be supported to nurture/cultivate these talents. Therefore, this duty of care was either neglected altogether or in all two cases, passed onto myself, as lead artist/practitioner. In one of these projects, participants requested ongoing classes in metalwork and sculpture and were willing to pay for these sessions. Unfortunately, the project had to end. I feel that, with community projects, the rules of engagement are more transparent and clear, whereas with gallery work, there is a pressure to 'bring people into the gallery', or 'engage' people with creative activities and to demonstrate value.

Through her case studies, Eleonore Belfiore identifies this as a common and recurring issue. She describes this as a 'burden of care', which socially engaged artists shoulder. She problematises short-term delivery of participatory work and highlights the failure for cultural policy and project-based funding to fulfil its duty of care towards artists and communities. She goes on to say that this is a moral issue. I agree that this is a moral failure, because through this system, funders and organisations can neglect their own duty of care because socially engaged artists are often driven by their beliefs and a strong ethical and political drive. Moreover, these duties are often carried out with little or no pay, training or support. All of this has been harmful for my mental and physical health.

In the context of *WtoW,* I feel that it was much easier to work within our values. There were certainly some ethical issues which came up, namely when we decided to record the sessions. This was a decision we made after participants had registered for the project. We did however tell all attendees before we started recording and will email them to ensure there are no objections. This was however, a privacy and safeguarding issue which should have been considered at the outset of the project. I feel that this issue would not have occurred if we had been working within an institution, as consent forms are part of most organisations strict policies and procedures. As mentioned in my first learning journal entry, however, I feel it is

important for participants to understand what is actually written in the consent form and how far content may be distributed.

Key Learning:

- What are my personal core values, when I am working with people on socially engaged projects.
- Do these values run through the organisation and within the team and are these values reflected through the project.
- How are problems dealt with/what are our processes? How do we keep a record of our learning and use this to inform any future work?
- How do we ensure that participants understand what they are signing up to?

Week10. Task4

WtoW was an emotional rollercoaster. Like all good things, it began as a small seed and a simple idea, to introduce people to a range of health and wellbeing activities which I have personally found useful and important in my own well being journey. I was energised, full of life and optimism, back in May as I had just enjoyed a few months off work and I felt on top of my university coursework. I'm currently feeling burnt out again.

WtoW became an opportunity for me to explore new ideas with the group, such as reflexology, diet/health and connecting with nature. The success of this project is largely down to the collaborative nature of its delivery with co-director Marie Lefebvre, who joined *Lightseekers* shortly before the project commenced. She helped to maintain a better level of professionalism and things went more smoothly than many of my past projects. Having someone to discuss ideas with, made the process of decision making easier. Although there were areas of disagreement, on the whole we worked very well together and resolved issues swiftly. She shares my vision for social change and has an interest in the arts - this made it easy to discuss ideas. Although I wrote the funding application, Marie contributed a lot towards the final programme. The project itself went very smoothly, although there were many things we would have done differently. We feel that it would have been less stressful if we had started to plan the project earlier. This is a key learning outcome. Although we used project management tools such as Asana, I feel that I personally could have utilised these tools more effectively to keep on track. I also feel that a flexible admin worker would have reduced a lot of the stress. This person could have been responsible for social media, emailing practitioners and participants and other small but repetitive/ongoing tasks.

In terms of the project in practice, I set out with the intention to talk about the merits of *WtoW* within a gallery/museum. I wasn't really sure what was expected of me, in terms of the assignment itself. I felt inclined to explain what went well on the project, while making a case for how *WtoW* might successfully work in a gallery. I feel like I have over-complicated the task at hand - I have a tendency to do this, when I should have kept things simple. I do, however, feel like I have learned a lot through this process. It is useful to know how many tools/information are out there to help me in

my practice. While I enjoy learning on the job, I also understand the value of researching methods for best practice. It is also really useful to learn about key concepts, theories and frameworks such as the Museum Value Framework. This helped me to understand different types of museums, and the kind of audiences they are trying to attract through their programmes.

Understanding these frameworks is reassuring, especially after speaking with education/participation directors and their strategic plans for programming. It helps me to understand how my socially engaged processes need to remain flexible and adaptable for delivery across different sectors, cultural organisations, museums/galleries.

I've really enjoyed keeping a learning journal. I have been meaning to keep a personal diary for years, and I really need to find time to do so, as this process has been *so* useful. Writing in this way helps me to understand the successes and failures of the project. While anyone viewing *WtoW* from the outside might perceive it as a successful project, the hidden costs, as Belfiore describes, are real and pressing issues for the lead project delivery team. The costs that we shouldered were unsustainable and we need to take this forward as part of our learning if we decide to deliver *WtoW* again. The spreadsheet that we produced as part of our evaluation is telling, and highlights the complex set of roles/responsibilities that we undertook. We are yet to see what the real outcomes of the project are, because we are yet to send out a project evaluation. This is largely down to bad planning and running over the projected time schedule. Evaluations should have been done immediately after the project was completed. We received very positive feedback during and after the sessions, though we would like more in-depth evaluation feedback for our own learning and to report back to funders. Perhaps this distance will be a useful way to evaluate how our workshops have impacted our participants over time.

Key moments include when both Marie and I were able to actually enjoy the project sessions, along with the group. With better planning, I feel that we would have both benefited from the sessions ourselves. I feel that this determines the success of any socially engaged project. While it is a professional undertaking, it is important that the project team feels connected to their own labour. I use Kark Marx's theory of

alienation to determine the success of my work. Am I alienated from 1. myself, 2. others, 3. my labour, 4. nature. If I am alienated from any of these things, there are still a lot of improvements to be made. This also applies to the process of completing my assignment. There were periods when I enjoyed this process and there were periods when I felt tired, disconnected and overwhelmed. I would like the good times to outweigh the more difficult times.

A few weeks after delivering *WtoW,* and while I was writing this assignment, I became very sick. I briefly considered mitigating circumstances, but honestly I just want to move onto new things now. I am a victim of hustle culture, but I am trying to exemplify good practice, especially if I am trying to endorse wellbeing as part of a healthy lifestyle. The irony of getting sick after delivering a course on wellbeing is not lost on me! I want to use what I have learned during this process to improve my working practices, so that I am not burnt out. I think I am slowly getting there.

Key Learning:

- Write a project plan/schedule as soon as funding is agreed.
- Keep a project diary, to record arising issues.
- Log problems and record how these issues were resolved.
- Employ a flexible worker to undertake admin tasks.
- Remain flexible/adaptive. Build on strengths - be confident about my processes/knowledge/skills.
- Be realistic about project deliverables - scale back project if needed.
- If you are not enjoying the process, something needs to change.
- Am I alienated from 1. myself, 2. others, 3. my labour, 4. nature.

Mentor Contacts

Mentor Contact 1. 17th May 2021

We opened with a pleasant informal discussion about my interests, practice and current projects. I advised Geraldine that I am always overwhelmed with work and that after a very stressful role as ESOL coordinator for Derby QUAD, I am trying to focus on the *Ways to Wellbeing* project (hereafter WtoW). We spoke about my autoimmune disease since 2018, and how this has shifted my focus within socially engaged practice from visual art (where outputs are usually exhibitions, etc), to health and wellness, through art and yoga. We discussed how this is a huge shift in the way I approach socially engaged practice from agenda-driven work, towards relational outputs. I told Geraldine that I'm not sure whether to focus my assignment on the ESOL project or *WtoW.*

We spoke about some of the challenges which I face as a minority ethnic female, working within the art and cultural industry, while also discussing Ingrid Pollard's photographic project, 'Pastoral Interlude'. We discussed similar stories of myself feeling alienated within rural spaces, with one recent situation in Matlock Bath, during which I experienced a shopkeeper being aggressive towards me. Gerlaldine was empathetic to this situation and informed me of her interracial marriage with a Black man, with whom she has a daughter. We discussed the affective experiences of growing up in cities and the countryside, pondering whether rural life is preferred by teenagers. I feel it was an interesting discussion, as much of my personal practice deals with rural to urban migration, and class divisions between rural and urban spaces. I am also interested in the perception that people of colour are disinterested in ecology, nature and the environment, since our ancestors were connected to the land. This is especially true for my own family, since the 'Patel' caste are historically known for their expertise in agriculture. My focus on wellbeing and the birth of *WtoW* stems from my disconnection with nature and a desire to connect with it. We agreed that this disconnection is common with people of colour and urban dwellers - this is partly why such a project may be of value to a wide range of people.

Geraldine told me that she works in the Botany department, which piqued my interest further and helped me to make a decision about which project (ESOL or *WtoW*) I should develop as part of this assignment. Given my current interests in wellbeing, and my personal mental and physical health needs, it was clear that I should focus on *WtoW*.

Our conversation helped me to consider the value of bringing a programme like *WtoW* into museums/galleries. I explained my reservations about doing so, but Geraldine advised me that it is often about finding the right people/places to work with. I agreed and said that I may need to look beyond Leicestershire for such institutions. We discussed an article I had just read, about what culture actually is and how it is made. It was helpful to reaffirm that in delivering *WtoW* in a gallery/museum, I am hoping to reshape its culture and inject new ideas into it.

Mentor Contact 2. 7th June 2021

It was very nice to catch up with Geraldine again. I was pleased to tell her that a very large number of people have registered onto the course already, and this is the most popular programme I had organised to date. Due to lockdown closures, we could only promote the project online, in pharmacies and other essential spaces. We agreed that there is a clear demand for *WtoW*, and it could easily work as part of a museum's public programme. We discussed how we could track any interest and collect data/feedback so that it can be used to inform future projects. This data could also be used to attract future funding.

I told Geraldine about the demands of this project, and some of the consequent oversights. Our approach was to lead this project with a very small team (2people), and that there are so many aspects/different skills required (marketing, copywriting, design, art direction, social media, comms, project management, facilitating sessions, etc). Our small budget restricted our ability to employ help, as needed, but we felt that the project may benefit from the departmental resources within a gallery, as this would save us time and precious energy.

I explained that we had approached the project using a collectivist model which was informed through a feminist ethics of care. This required us to think about the moral values behind our approach, and that we could not 'cut any corners' so to speak.

We felt the project benefited from the freedom of being delivered outside such spaces, there may however be some interesting organisations which can complement our vision. She advised me that some galleries may have gardens, within which the session 'Think Like A Tree' (connecting with nature), may work, eg. Fermynwoods Gallery (Northamptonshire). We also discussed the possibility of collaborating with several galleries, to benefit from the collective audience numbers of each space. Given that this was an online programme, there was no reason this could not happen and the prospect of utilising expertise, space and other resources across different organisations is exciting to me.

I'm feeling quite confident about my project in practice and *WtoW* in general after speaking to Geraldine. She reassured me that any issues can be used as part of my learning within my project in practice. I think it is easy to forget that we are all in the process of learning when we do these projects. Before speaking to Geraldine, it felt like *WtoW* needed to be perfect, but I have changed my perspective a bit. I need to remember that this is a brand new programme and concept for *Lightseekers* and that I must be self-reflexive if/when things go wrong.

Mentor Contact 3. 13th July 2021

We met later than anticipated, due to ill health caused by burnout.

Overall, we felt that *WtoW* went very well, in relation to outputs/outcomes. Our programme was very popular with 191 spaces booked and 135 live attendees. Outputs included nine online sessions, which were recorded for online dissemination at a later date. 7/9 sessions were led by other practitioners, whereas two sessions were led by the project leads (Myself and Marie Lefebvre). I advised Geraldine that the project went smoothly when other practitioners were leading, but it was a bad idea to run/lead sessions if we were project managing in future. Geraldine advised me that these additional activities probably caused unnecessary stress/burnout, as we were already overstretched. Much of this stress was due to managing bookings/social media marketing, etc, and this could have been alleviated if a contractual/flexible worker was hired to manage these tasks.

We felt that the project was perhaps too ambitious, that both myself and Marie were that way inclined and we had not prioritised our own health and wellbeing. In hindsight, the project could have been scaled down. I told her that I was reading Martha Morris' book on 'Managing people and projects in Museums'. The book contains resources and tools which can be modified for our projects. I told Geraldine that I was planning to have an evaluation meeting with Marie, and we would use these tools to create a time/cost analysis of our project. This spreadsheet will help us to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the project.

We did not originally plan to record sessions, and decided *after* practitioners had been commissioned, that we would record and potentially disseminate recordings. Since we hadn't received prior consent, this formed a grey area with regards to the privacy of the content which was recorded. Of course, we informed all participants that the session was being recorded, and we stopped recording when it was time for the Q&A. Prior to recording, we also advised all participants that they can switch their cameras off and change their name, along with instructions on how to do this. We felt that this information could have been better communicated beforehand, via a

consent form. This did however, raise issues around our own processes surrounding ethics/consent. It was very helpful to discuss this issue with Geraldine, as I was experiencing feelings of failure/bad project management. She however advised me that this is a key learning outcome which I must carry forward into future projects.

The key takeaways from this conversation surrounded how this project may look if we were working with a gallery/museum. The issue around safeguarding/ethics/consent would also have been considered much earlier, had we been working with an institution due to the safeguarding/privacy policies and procedures which are already in place. All of the arising issues/problems helped me to consider the role that larger organisations can play, as we improve our own processes.

Having worked independently for so long, without much support/guidance, it is easy to fall into a trap of thinking that all learning happens 'on the job', or that external help is not required.

Statement of Learning

In this statement, I summarise what I learned from this assignment and what this process taught me about some of the different components of socially engaged practice in museums and galleries.

I focus on three areas:

- Combining theory and practice
- Key learning
- Long term vision

Combining theory and practice

My work has always been very personal, so it is important for me to consider why I am doing this in the first place. My drive to study this course was fuelled by a decision to bring a level of criticality to my practice, because I had often experienced something to be missing.

This absence of knowledge was largely experienced in 2014, when I was co-commissioned to deliver a project with Sunil Shah at The New Art Exchange in Nottingham. Sunil works as a writer, artist and academic, and this collaboration helped me to understand how critical theory can transform practice. In 2016, I was awarded Leverhulme artist at The University of Leicester. I have since delivered several freelance art projects for the departments of Media, Communication and Sociology, The School of Law and The School of Criminology. Working with academics, along with my own processes within socially engaged work has encouraged me to understand the importance of academia.

Since my Leverhulme residency, I see my work through a triangular framework which includes art, activism and academia. I previously felt a tension or conflict between these areas, but this process has helped me to better realise how I can work more strategically across all three arenas. The project has provided me with important knowledge to foreground my practice with critical theory.

Key Learning

My key learning relates to ethics. Eleonora Belfiore's research resonated with me, deeply. She mentions that socially engaged artists are driven by their ethics or beliefs and this was certainly true for me. I experienced my work to be meaningful because I felt that I had a purpose. This is still very much the case, but I would like to be more effective and efficient in my work. While there is enormous value in 'on the job training', this can also lead to slow learning or if and when the experience arises. During these projects, I often found myself working in the absence of a clear structure. It has become clear that my ad-hoc processes for project delivery were detrimental to my mental and physical health. Bad planning and lack of a clear vision has made me feel that I cannot stop, because projects never felt finished.

My project in practice has helped me to acquire important information which will help me to be more practical, while also working within my core value system. The Museum Values Framework (MVF) helped me to understand the ways in which different museums/galleries operate, (CVF, competing values framework), and how my role as project manager may function across such spaces. Now that I have a basic understanding of these infrastructures, I can better appreciate any limitations which may hinder my ideas within them. Belfiore's case study highlights that artists often feel responsible for participants learning beyond the project; this has been true in many cases for me.

Absorbing Belfiore's research alongside the MVF means that I no longer feel personally responsible for projects. The MVF and Martha Morris' book on managing people and projects in museums, are both important tools for my personal and professional development. I have already begun to use the tools and techniques provided in Morris' book, such as Asana (digital project management software) and planning templates, which I have modified. These templates have helped me to define clear aims and objectives for the project, while also considering how the work fits within our strategic goals. A series of templates are provided and I look forward to modifying them further, and synching them with Asana (Appendix 4) for excellent project management. These tools have helped me to enhance my working processes, through better time management, resource allocation and risk management. Most importantly, I am working towards clearer aims/objectives and

deadlines and I know when to stop. This will be beneficial for my mental and physical health.

Long term vision

Lightseekers was established in 2008, in response to the lack of opportunity available to me within the arts/cultural sector. I consequently began to apply for community funding and was commissioned to deliver projects, during which I learned on the job. In many cases, my processes felt reactive rather than responsive. I found myself applying for funding or delivering projects, largely based on funding or commissioner's requirements. Each project was unique in concept and execution. While this demonstrates creativity, I now feel that any work carried out under *Lightseekers* should be more niche. Just as the MVF suggests the planning tool for museums to identify their niche, we also need to identify our niche. During past projects, different conceptual approaches were adapted and applied to meet the commissioners or funders needs.

This assignment has helped me to identify my biggest strengths, and to define a clearer vision for *Lightseekers.* As we move forward, it is likely that we will work towards longer-term projects which are more sustainable. This project has encouraged me to better understand business strategies, so that they can be effectively applied alongside the above-mentioned project management tools.

I realise that a large community of artists, academics and third sector professional's are available to support me as I develop my skills as a creative professional. I hope to draw upon their expertise, to inform my own processes within academia and socially engaged practice.

The process of learning was intense, satisfying, stressful, even painful at times. There were moments of joy and contentment, whereas others were full of exhaustion and overwhelm. Overall, it was a positive experience and I look forward to sharing my knowledge with others. Most importantly, I not only feel prepared, but excited to begin my dissertation.

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Appendix

Appendix1a. Promotional Leaflet

FREE

Physical Health • Sleep • Diet • Mental Health • Movement • Emotional Health • Spiritual Wellbeing • Community • Social • Environment

Ways to Wellbeing

9 online sessions
14th May - 13th June 2021
10:30am - 12:00pm

Lightseekers

Appendix1b. Promotional Leaflet

May

Fri. 14th	Kajal Nisha Patel Nilu.Yoga/Lightseekers	Yoga/Movement	Physical asanas for strength, flexibility, and balance.
Sat. 15th	Shabnum Popat Quetzal	Mental Health	How trauma affects emotional wellbeing, and methods to process emotions.
Sun. 16th	Japjeet Kaur Shuniya Kundalini Yoga	Diet/Nutrition	Gut health as key to both physical and mental health.
Fri. 21st	Rosie O'Connor Reflexology	Reflexology	Guided reflexology for deep sleep.
Sat. 22nd	Kavita Hinogari Samarpana Yogshala	Pranayama (breath control)	Regulating the nervous system through conscious breathing.
Sun. 23rd	Samantha Woods Seeds of The Forest	Think Like a Tree	Thriving in challenging times through nature connection.

June

Fri. 11th	Durgha Ramji Flow Finder/ Mindful Warriors	Find Time	Strategies to increase productivity and achieve your goals. (bullet journalling)
Sat. 12th	Dr Marie Lefebvre Leicester Fixers Charlotte Booth WasteNotR Leicestershire/TLCC	Community Repair & Re-use	Creating space and making connections through repair and re-use.
Sun. 13th	Collaborative Session	Networking and Reflection	Building better communities. Sharing and discussing new ideas.

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NEAR NEIGHBOURS
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Contact
Kaj: 07944 948 392
Marie: 07402 650534
lightseekers9@gmail.com

lightseekers.uk

Appendix2. Time/cost/pay analysis

Activity	Detail	Team Member	People Required	Days Required	Days. Total	Activity. Cost
Planning/Admin						
Funding Meeting	Understanding application process	KNP	1	2	2	£222.00
Concept Development	Writing, planning, creative thinking	KNP	1	12	12	£1,332.00
Writing Application	Writing, editing, budget, research	KNP	1	5	5	£555.00
Liasing with funders	Editing application, phonecalls	KNP	1	2.5	2.5	£277.50
Planning Meetings	Developing concept/ideas	KNP/ML	2	10	20	£2,220.00
Liasing with 9 practitioners	Planning. Emails, Whatsapp, Calls	KNP/ML	1	9	9	£999.00
					Admin Total:	**£5,605.50**
Design/Creative						
Illustration, Branding, Design	Leaflets + Illustration	KNP/ML	1	3.5	3.5	£388.50
					Design Total:	**£388.50**
Advertising/Marketing						
Leaflet Distribution	Visiting multiple venues	KNP/ML	2	4	8	£888.00
Leaflet Distribution	Visiting multiple venues	Volunteers	7	0.5	3.5	£388.50
Social Media	Design, etc	KNP	2	2	4	£444.00
Radio/Podcast Interviews	Planning/Delivery	KNP/ML	2	2.5	5	£555.00
Videos	Liaising with video editor	KNP	1	3	3	£333.00
					Adv'g Total	**2275.5**
Copywriting						
Writing, Editing.	Online. Press. Session. Marketing	KNP/ML	1	13	13	£1,443.00
					Copywriting total	**£1,443.00**
Delivery						
Session set up	Zoom set ups	KNP	1	0.25	0.25	£27.75
Session Delivery	Live events. Facilitating/Hosting	KNP/ML	2	9	18	£1,998.00
					Delivery Total:	**£2,025.75**
Completion/Evaluation						
Survey Design	Questions/Google Surveys	ML	1	1	1	£111.00
Survey Analysis	Admin	ML	1	1	1	£111.00
					Completion Total:	**£222.00**
Project Overheads						
Design/Creative	Illustration - Indre Rimšelytè	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£200.00
Design/Creative	Graphic Design - Sonal Patel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£200.00
Delivery	Practitioner2 - Shabnum/Quetzal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Delivery	Practitioner3. Japjeet Kaur	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Delivery	Practitioner4 - Rosie O'Conner	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Delivery	Practitioner5 - Kavita Hangargi	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Delivery	Practitioner6 - Samantha Woods	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Delivery	Practitioner7/9 - Durgha Ramji	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£200.00
Delivery	Practitioner8 - Charlotte Booth	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Design/Creative	Video Editing. Nikhil Mistry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£300.00
Advertising/Marketing	Printing - Seeded Leaflets	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£200.00
Advertising/Marketing	Printing - A5 Leaflets	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£100.00
Advertising/Marketing	postage	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£15.00
Advertising/Marketing	website	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£60.00
Meeting Costs	lunch	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£20.00
					Project Costs Total:	**£1,895.00**
Total			1.85	58.75	108	£12,039.23

Days Total	108
Desired Daily Rate	£111.00
Desired Minimum Hourly rate	£15.00
Actual Hourly Rate	£3.32
KNP/ML labour (Desired Daily Rate * Total Number of Days)	£12,039.23
Project Overheads	£1,895.00
Total Project Cost:	**£13,934.23**
Near Neighbours Grant	£2850
Defecit	£11,084.23

Appendix3. Sample template

Proposed Project: Ways to Wellbeing II

Submitted by: Kajal Nisha Patel	**Date:** 8th July 2021

Project Objectives: ● Introduce participants to methods of personal wellbeing and professional development, so that they can take control of their own lives.
What opportunity will this realise for Lightseekers?   ● This project will help us to create a stronger vision for the work we want to do in the long-term.

Project Deliverables:
    ● 3-6 sessions, comprising physical, mental, professional health sessions.
      Number of sessions dependent on available budget.

How will success be measured: (evaluation techniques)
    ● Clinical measures. Increased access to practitioners' services.
    ● Participants report that they have enhanced their health.
    ● More ease in their day to day lives, due to new practices we have introduced.
    ● Increased confidence to discuss topics, enhanced awareness of links between different ailments.

Assumptions:
    ● What are the available resources?
    ● Whose help do we need?
    ● What commitments are needed? From who?

Constraints/Risks:
    ● What could derail the project? Further lockdowns.
    ● What are the most likely risks for failure?
    ● A reluctance to participate for cultural/safety reasons (stigmas).
 	
These events will be most effective in person.

Budget: To be confirmed
    ● Facilitators
    ● Creative (Graphic design/illustration, video editing)
    ● Admin (flexible worker)
    ● Project directors
    ● Advertising/marketing

Draft Schedule:
    ● Month 1. Draft concept/schedule. Confirm delivery team. Planning. Making contacts.
    ● Month 2. Potential partners agreed/confirmed.
    ● Month 3. Creative. Liaising w/designers, printing. Producing marketing materials.
    ● Month 4. Advertising/marketing. Press. Leaflet distribution. Social Media.
    ● Month 5. Project Delivery. Evaluation.
    ● Month 6. Editing Content for online delivery. Content distribution.

Potential Partners: ● To be confirmed.
Additional Comments or Information:

Project Approval Date:	**Project Manager Assigned:** Kajal Nisha Patel
Approved by:	**Signature:**

Appendix4.

Asana, project management software