

COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021: UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK RESEARCH PROJECTS



Collaborative Project Open Showcase Event at Fargo Village, Coventry

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COVENTRY
UK CITY
OF CULTURE

COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021: THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH

Coventry UK City of Culture created an opportunity for university researchers to make important contributions within the City of Coventry, its Cultural Strategy and across wider regional priorities in areas such as health, transport, policing, citizenship, economic growth, migration, cultural inequalities, homelessness, heritage and environment.

The University has supported more than 100 research projects. Researchers worked with over 60 artists, 25 micro/SMEs and over 50 public and third sector organisations. Through our partnership with Coventry University, we launched six funding calls between 2017 and 2021, enabling new collaborative research across both institutions, and through Coventry Creates, with local artists directly. Our research has also attracted new income for fellowships, artistic commissions and research projects from, for example, AHRC, ESRC and ACE.

Much of this work has been shaped and conducted in collaboration with partners from across the region, strengthening existing relationships, as well as forging new ones. This touches on much of what a university does and aspires to do, providing a creative means of contributing to the social and economic health and prosperity of the city.

Through its monitoring and evaluation work with Coventry University and the Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project, the University has also demonstrated the wider social, health and economic value of culture to Coventry and beyond. Through its programme of public engagement across Coventry, notably the Resonate festival, the University has also shown the relevance of its research to our local communities. The Warwick Institute of Engagement will continue to build on this strong foundation.

Our researchers, in collaboration with their creative and local partners, have undertaken fantastic work and have made a significant impact in the region. I would like to acknowledge the brilliant support that they have received from colleagues in Research & Impact Services, the Warwick Institute of Engagement, the Global Research Priorities and colleagues working on the Warwick Cities of Culture Project.

Coventry UK City of Culture and our part in it, have created a lasting legacy in how and what we research, in our relationships across the region, and in our determination to make lasting and positive impacts across the city-region.

Professor Jackie Hodgson

Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

In this brochure, you will find an array of our research projects within the following themes: Connected Coventry, Coventry Communities, Coventr Eats, Coventry Stories, Transforming the City and Improving Health & Wellbeing, City of Culture Case Studies for Change, The Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project and Getting Creative with Sustainability.

In addition to these projects, we have also undertaken **Coventry Creates**, an initiative that united researchers with local artists to produce digital artworks in response to university research – you can discover more about Coventry Creates in the sister brochure to this publication and on our University of Warwick Coventry Creates webpages.

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Connected Coventry

A STITCH IN TIME AND PLACE

Many cultures have distinctive textile crafts, and how textiles are decorated often celebrates the culture of their creator.

This project connects groups of young people in different parts of the world to create designs through coding and stitching, exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage.

The project utilised Turtlestitch, a freely available software that enables the generation and stitching of patterns using a digital embroidery machine.

This project is ongoing and is led by Professor Margaret Low from WMG at the University of Warwick.

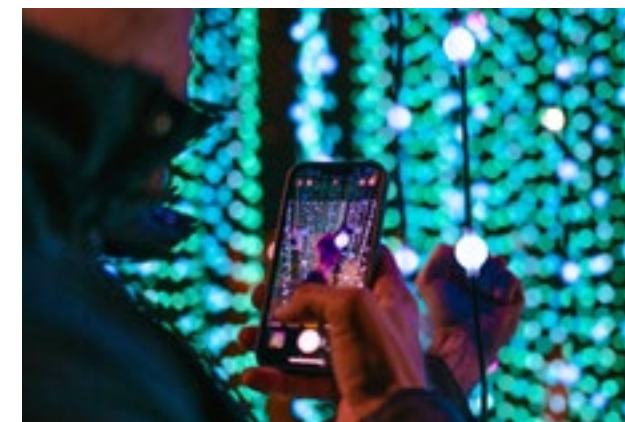


SOCIAL ACTION VIDEO INITIATIVE (SAVI)

Co-designed with City of Culture and working with their community partners, SAVI 2021 centred on a smartphone filmmaking project with young people in Coventry.

Through a series of workshops led by Dr Michele Aaron and a local filmmaker, participants gained practical and critical skills in digital storytelling. Short films about a personal or local social justice issue were produced and showcased at CVX in August 2021, and at Screening Rights Film Festival in November 2021.

The project was led by Dr Michele Aaron from Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick, and is funded through the Connecting Cultures GRP's 'Connecting cultures through co-production' call.



THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL LANGUAGE TRIPS PROJECT

Learning a second language in school can enhance career opportunities, and provides enhanced social and communication skills and a better understanding of other cultures and histories.

With exchange programmes paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, children haven't had the opportunity to visit overseas schools. In addition, most primary schools have de-prioritised languages.

To help rectify this and help make Coventry a City of Languages, Warwick's School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC) worked with teachers to boost language learning.

The project was led by Professor Katherine Astbury from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Warwick.



SCREENING RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL

The Screening Rights Film Festival was an international festival of social justice films.

The Festival came to Birmingham and Coventry in 2018, and featured screenings of some of the most interesting and highly acclaimed new films, as well as post-screening discussions with directors, producers and writers.

Screening Rights aimed to instigate debate on the potential of film to trigger personal, social and political change. Dr Michele Aaron (Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick) was the Festival's Director, and in 2021 the Festival was hosted at Warwick Arts Centre, where it enjoyed its best-attended and most successful year.



COVENTRY: A CITY OF CULTURES

Since at least Roman times, the land occupied by the modern-day city of Coventry has been a cultural crossroads.

Its unique character is a manifestation of complex cultural interactions. This project successfully introduced local schools and the general public to Roman and Medieval Coventry through school workshops, public lectures and online resources.

This project involved the University of Warwick, Coventry University and the Herbert Gallery. The project was led by Dr Paul Grigsby (Classics and Ancient History, University of Warwick and Dr Daniel Anderson (Centre for Arts, Memory and Communities, Coventry University).



SEEING THROUGH OTHER EYES: COVENTRY AND THE TWINNED TOWN AND CITIES MOVEMENT

Coventry has been a leader in twinning since the Second World War.

Today, we are twinned with 26 cities, though exchange activity with each of these cities varies. This project explored Coventry's history of twinning and asked: What has driven this movement in Coventry? What is the value of exchanges between schools?

The project celebrated Coventry's history of twinning, in particular by supporting online and face-to-face links between schools here and abroad. It was led by Dr Michael Hammond (Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick).



JOURNEY > ARRIVAL

This project used new immersive technologies to develop new ways of communicating and interpreting the stories of refugees in Coventry.

In partnership with Ludic Rooms, participants co-created immersive story responses to the theme of journeys and arrivals and reflect on the challenges they face as part of their integration process after arrival in the UK.

These immersive stories provided a powerful tool in social action campaigns involving host and refugee communities.

Professor Vicki Squire (Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick) collaborated with Dr Danai Mikelli, (Media Production, Coventry).



SHAKESPEARE WUZ SHAKESPEARE IZ HERE: THINK-TANKING COVENTRY 2021

This project gathered around 15 Warwick graduates and associates from across the humanities who are now working in the UK's creative industries.

Many were writers, directors and producers or administrators. They worked together to develop business models that support funding bids and investment during a two-day think tank session.

Led by Professor Carol Rutter (Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick), the session focused on table proposals for development into a final project deliverable for Coventry City of Culture 2021.



NEW MIDLANDERS

Through a series of guided workshops, asylum seekers and refugees developed self-reflective photo artworks.

The creation of self-reflective photo artworks and testimonials from people fleeing persecution allowed researchers to explore how photography can engage with and support communities. The project highlighted how photography can help bridge cultural divisions, and conveyed critical issues facing refugees in the UK.

This was a collaborative venture with Dr Darryl Georgiou (Art and Design, Coventry University), Tarla Patel (International Student Office, Warwick), Dr Harbinder Sandhu (Warwick Medical School) and colleagues at Coventry Peace House.



LANGUAGE POLICY AND LOCAL CURRICULUM INITIATIVES OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS

Across the UK, there is a mounting sense of crisis about the declining engagement in language education.

In a linguistically diverse city such as Coventry, it's particularly important to understand how language education contributes to the development and maintenance of language skills.

In this interdisciplinary project, researchers from the Department of Applied Linguistics and School of Modern Languages and Cultures came together to explore the provision of and participation in language education in Coventry from contemporary and historical perspectives.

The project has developed a profile of the teaching of Community Languages and Modern Foreign Languages provision in Coventry. It provides a resource for schools and community organisations in developing their local language education policies and approaches.

WINDRUSH STRIKES BACK

Workshops and events during 2017, 2018 and 2019 held in Birmingham, Manchester and Coventry featured art, speakers and activities for children and families.

They united a range of people from different backgrounds to learn and share knowledge and experiences about the Caribbean's fight for climate justice, an intergenerational celebration and reflection on the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the HM Windrush.

During some of the later workshops, attendees learned how to become 'Decolonial Detectives' to help the team research the presence and perspectives of African Caribbean people and their histories.

The project was led by Dr Leon Sealey-Huggins from Global Sustainable Development at the University of Warwick.



WORLD WIDE WINDOW

This project explores the theme of the "city as networked screen and interface" and explores how site-specific networked projection can be used to connect communities.

It utilises the current technological capacity to reconfigure understandings and experiences of time, space/place, and sociality through projected live portals.

The project is run by Dr Richard Wallace (Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick - pictured right), Dr Adrian Palka (SMPA, Coventry University) and Dr Glenn Noble (SMPA, Coventry University).



Coventry Communities

RE-VOICING WORDS: EMBODYING VOICES THROUGH POETRY

What happens when poetry is performed by different voices?

How does this affect the performance space and reception of the poem? When is re-voicing poetry appropriate and how might re-voicing poetry bring communities together? What are the ethical and political implications?

Dr Karen Simecek led this project to investigate these questions in collaboration with the poetry organisation Poet in the City.

The team designed and delivered a series of workshops for the poetry community focusing on voice, embodiment and performance space for its potential to empower those who have been marginalised in society. Their voices helped form a poetic manifesto, a poem and essay published in Poetry Review.

The project was led by Dr Karen Simecek from the Department of Philosophy (University of Warwick).



ART-MAKING: COVENTRY'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

What does the practice of art-making signify in Coventry, a city rich with histories of arts and engineering? How has lockdown fostered or limited our own art-making practices? How important are public arts and art-making to the people of Coventry and young people?

This project brought together the views of the city's people, sharing them at events at the Daimler Powerhouse Creation centre opening.

The project was led by Dr Jo Trowsdale from the Department of Sociology (University of Warwick).



READING & WRITING THE CITY

Research into the relationship between minority and majority groups has mostly focused on the majority group's attitudes towards the minority. Little research has been done from the opposite perspective. So how do members of a minority group feel towards the majority?

This question is particularly relevant when it comes to immigration. Immigrants are expected to make an effort to integrate into their host society. But how do immigrants perceive this society?

The project delivered an online workshop for users of Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) to explore their experiences of and feelings about Coventry and their life in the city and the wider country. Through creative writing workshops, they were supported to create a poem about the city and their experience of living there.

The project was led by Dr Friederike Schlaghecken from the Department of Psychology at the University of Warwick.



FOLESHILL SCREENINGS

Foleshill Screenings united researchers, filmmakers, and archivists to explore the role of community co-produced film and archive television in supporting sometimes vulnerable or 'hard to reach' communities.

The team recognised that community-centred cultural engagement (involving and engaging with members of a community) plays a key role in creating and sustaining connections that support individual and social wellbeing and builds community resilience.

This project included the launch of the Social Supermarket (pictured) at the Foleshill Community Centre (FCC).

The project was led by Kat Pearson (CDA PhD Candidate, Film and Television Studies) and Dr Lopamudra Patnaik from the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University).

Whilst this project is now officially complete, it did lead to two other projects funded by the University.



CELEBRATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

Coventry has a rich heritage of large-scale civic and religious events - from medieval mystery plays to royal and noble visits to the city and surrounding area.

The legacy of such public, performance-based occasions remains relevant to Coventry's contemporary multicultural, diverse community. Celebrating this heritage offers a way to harness memories and sustain the future socio-economic stability of the city's diverse communities.

The project brought together scholars, curators, archivists and performance practitioners with postgraduates and early career researchers, across nationalities and disciplines to present a conference open to the public as part of City of Culture 2021.

The project was led by Dr Margaret Shewring from Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick.



STUDIO VAN

Studio Van combined the arts expertise of Coventry University with the outreach and participation expertise of Warwick Arts Centre.

The pilot project aimed to provide a mobile space for academics and community participants to experiment with art materials and create new work. The aim was to test the viability of purchasing a mobile art space to be jointly owned by the partnership.

Dr Vishalakshi Roy (Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick), Helen Cuthill (Associate Dean, Enterprise and Commercial, Coventry University) and Professor Richard Tomlins (International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship, Coventry University) collaborated with New Art West Midlands on the project.



URBAN VILLAGE: THE ROMA’S ALLOTMENT PROJECT

Urban Villages brought together Roma and non-Roma people to co-create a short film, images and a digital scrapbook exhibition that focuses on the experiences, identity and voices of the Roma people.

The project and film allowed the Roma community to share their stories and voices with relevant stakeholders and the wider community help understand their needs, foster closer links and challenge stereotypes. The film was screened to the public by the Belgrade Theatre via an online event.

The project team included Dr Heidi Ashton (Centre for Culture and Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick) and Rosa Kostic Cisneros (Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University).



REIMAGINING WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL, POLITICAL AND CIVIL INSTITUTIONS

This project united individuals from the School of Law, the Centre for Lifelong Learning and colleagues at Coventry University, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, Foleshill Centre for Women, Women’s Aid, CRASAC, as well as local artists. It aimed to explore ideas around a piece or an event on the theme of reimagining women’s experiences with institutions.

The institutions involved included criminal justice (legal), political parties and movements (political), and marriage (civil).

Encounters with these institutions can be exclusionary, discriminatory or challenging. The final project was featured in the Shop Front Theatre Coventry.

The project was led by Dr Laura Lammasniemi from the School of Law, University of Warwick.



LITERACIES FOR LIFE IN THE CITY OF CULTURE

This project established Coventry Community Writing Centre, offering free support and feedback on practical writing tasks.

The centre was located in Coventry’s Central Library and was open on Tuesday afternoons during Summer 2020.

The project also collected examples of official writing—such as formal letters—that people have received and experienced as unclear or problematic.

The research team analysed these documents and experiences to understand the linguistic and communicative landscape of real-life writing in Coventry.

Through the project, researchers helped to instigate new writing practices, leading to a more inclusive linguistic and communicative landscape.

The project was run by Dr Christopher Strelluf (Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick) and Dr Catalina Neculai (Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University) who worked on the project with Coventry Libraries.



IDENTITY AND RESETTLEMENT AMONG YOUNG REFUGEES IN COVENTRY

In recent years, Coventry has welcomed and helped resettle several hundred refugee children and their families. This research project provided a case study of a Coventry school’s involvement in this process of resettlement by working with refugee and migrant children from the Middle East and North Africa. Researchers utilised the data to support the work that schools undertake with the children in the city.

The researchers had previously worked with creative arts and community organisations to explore the process of social identity formation in adolescent Syrian refugees. Through collaboration with Positive Youth Foundation (PYF), researchers identified key focal points of assistance within a broader city-based network of support for migrant children.

The project was a collaboration with the Positive Youth Foundation, Dr Michael Wyness and Monireh Partovi, (Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick) and Dr Annamaria Pinter (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick).



Coventry Eats

MAKING ALIEN-LAND HOME-LAND: A VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN COVENTRY

This project investigated the lives and sense of belonging of the Chinese communities in Coventry.

Working with multiple local organisations, the project brought together members of the community, volunteers and artists to present a visual exhibition by using food as a shared cultural artefact.

The project was led by Dr Kailing Xie (Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick).



EATING INTO ELSEWHERE

Dr Emma Meehan and Dr Carol Been (Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University) and Carmen Wong (Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick) collaborated with the Coventry Irish Society and other Irish organisations in Coventry to create a series of cook-along interviews.

Hosts invited participants from their communities to watch performances, mirroring the ethnographic cook-along with interviews with five migrant Coventry cooks.



UNMADE, UNTITLED

This project aimed to tell former Warwick PhD student Carmen Wong's auto-ethnographic experience of 'unbelonging'. It engaged audiences in ritualistic kitchen practices where making a meal helps provide a feeling of belonging.

Community organisers, such as Belgrade Theatre, City of Culture and Grapevine, hosted performances in their kitchens.



COOKING CONNECTIONS COVENTRY

This project brought together artist-researchers from Coventry University and the University of Warwick, and participants recruited through Groundwork's Cook Together Eat Together network. It explored how creative food-based sensory activities can support well-being for older people in isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Food boxes containing ingredients, recipes, menu cards and sensory prompt cards were delivered to participants' homes. Researchers engaged with participants to conduct a guided cooking activity and sensory mindfulness meditation and to collect feedback.

The project was led by Dr Elaine O'Sullivan, Postdoctoral Research Assistant at Centre for Dance Research (Coventry University), Dr Emma Meehan, Assistant Professor at Centre for Dance Research and Co-Investigator for Sensing the City project (Coventry University).



COVENTRY COOKS: COMMUNITY CAFE

This local community food initiative stems from PhD research into childhood obesity across different ethnic groups in Coventry.

Traditional recipes from individuals and community groups in Coventry were collated and shared, and their nutritional value highlighted.

The project also made suggestions for adapting the recipes to British produce and, where necessary, altering them to improve their health properties.

Dr Marie Murphy (Warwick Medical School), Dr Oyinlola Oyeboade (Warwick Medical School), Dr Rebecca Johnson (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, Coventry University), and Mark Hinton (Community Development Manager, University of Warwick) worked with Coventry City Council Public Health Department and Groundwork West Midlands to deliver the project.



Coventry Stories

SHOWCASING COVENTRY’S MEDIEVAL WEAVING WITHIN COVENTRY’S CITY OF CULTURE BUILT ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITION

By the late 14th century, Coventry was one of the largest and most important towns in England and was the regional capital of the Midlands. Its success was based on the sale of raw wool, and later manufactured and finished woollen cloth. Coventry was particularly noted for its blue cloth.

Working in close collaboration with Dr Mark Webb of the Medieval Coventry Charity, Professor Alan Chalmers from WMG prepared a virtual reality exhibit showcasing Coventry’s illustrious weaving past, as part of an exhibition on the history of Coventry’s built environment.



CALL THE MIDWIVES: SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN’S INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH SERVICES IN COVENTRY

This project explores Coventry’s South Asian women’s ‘hidden histories’ of seeking healthcare, including childbirth, antenatal care and elderly care. Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted BAME communities.

An art exhibition was held at the Herbert Art Gallery in Coventry, designed to help root women’s contemporary experiences to that of their relatives and ancestors’ historical experiences.

The project was designed to benefit the participants, whose knowledge across generations will anchor and give context and meaning to their experiences. The research will also help local government officials and public health policymakers to consider women’s experiences of accessing health services when developing new policies.

The project was led by Dr Saba Hussain (Sociology, Coventry University), Dr Kindy Sandhu (Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University) and Dr Shahnaz Akhtar (Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick) in partnership with Foleshill Women’s Training.



COVENTRY’S WINDRUSH STORIES

The Windrush Scandal and the high numbers of deaths as the result of Covid-19 are two of most recent challenges facing the Windrush community in Coventry and Britain.

While there has been some coverage of these events nationally, those within the community have yet to tell their own stories. Using digital storytelling techniques, in collaboration with an organisation called Septimus Severus, this project worked with the community participants in the curation and telling of their own ‘Windrush Stories.’

The project was led by Dr Meleisa Ono-George from the Department of History at the University of Warwick, and funded by the Warwick Institute of Engagement.



GHOST TOWN

This project takes television programmes made in and about Coventry out of the television archive, and re-screens them around the city. It provides encounters for the people of Coventry with their histories via the television archive and initiates conversations about the city’s past, present and future.

Professor Helen Wheatley works with colleagues from the Centre for Television Histories in the University of Warwick, and a range of partners including Culture Coventry, Coventry Cathedral, the Media Archive for Central England (MACE), Kaleidoscope and the BBC.



VIRTUAL MEDIEVAL COVENTRY

Alan Chalmers (WMG, University of Warwick) is creating full multi-sensory virtual environments with Dr Mark Webb of the Medieval Coventry Charity.

This exciting project, with assistance from local business Hollywood Gaming, will allow the public to experience the three industries of Coventry's medieval past.

The public will experience the sights, the sounds and even the smells of the dyeing, weaving and tanning industries.



SPON END STORIES

This project created a story about Spon End - one of the oldest parts of Coventry.

It encompassed local voices to narrate the memories and histories of the people who live, work or simply pass through the suburb. Stories were collated in a booklet and accompanied with quotes, maps and photos of the area. A launch event took place, and the team worked with the local community to capture real stories and experiences.

The project was led by Dr Marijn Nieuwenhuis from Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick.



QUEER IMMIGRANTS OF COLOUR IN COVENTRY

How do queer people of colour relate to the city of Coventry?

Led by Dr Somak Biswas (Department of History, University of Warwick), the project focused on the history, politics and practices of a community that has existed in Coventry since the 1970s.

Through multi-sited archival and interviews, the project reconstructed how the queer community of colour have experienced Coventry even as they sought refuge, often in the face of intense homophobia, Islamophobia, and racism.



HEAR OUR STORIES: UNDERSTANDING HOW STRENGTH AND RESOURCEFULNESS SHAPE AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF AGEING, HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN COVENTRY

Since the post-war period, Coventry has had an established African-Caribbean community, which is also part of a rapidly ageing society.

Through a series of workshops with a group of older African-Caribbean females, this project drew upon participants' life stories to explore the interplay of 'strength' and 'resourcefulness' and how it shapes their experiences of ageing, health and wellbeing in Coventry.

The project was led by Dr Ravi Thiara (Department of Sociology, University of Warwick) and Dr Geraldine Brown (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University).



MAPPING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN COVENTRY

The Votes for Women campaign was a long and difficult struggle fought by women and men in streets and neighbourhoods across Coventry.

The Mapping Women's Suffrage in Coventry project plots the diverse locations, lives and activities of many unknown Votes for Women campaigners.

Led by Professor Sarah Richardson (Department of History, University of Warwick), the team have worked with local schools and community groups to help populate the project's interactive map and provide a rich picture of the history of women's suffrage in the city and a fresh look at those behind the movement.



Improving Health & Wellbeing

ARTS AND HOMELESSNESS IN COVENTRY

Since 2012, Arts and Homelessness International (AHI) has advocated for the role that arts and creativity can play in helping to build resilience, well-being, skills and social connections for those who are or have been homeless.

This project centred on two initiatives: a legislative theatre project and an arts and homelessness festival which took place in October 2021.

Led by Professor Nadine Holdsworth, a research report examined initiatives pioneered by AHI, supported by Coventry City of Culture 2021, to re-think and re-position how arts and creativity can change perceptions, policy and outcomes for those who are or have been homeless in Coventry.

The report outlines the profound impact that arts and creativity can have on the lives of people who have been or are homeless, including increased confidence and skills and improved social connectivity.



EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF BECOMING A PARENT IN COVENTRY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Having a baby is extremely emotionally and physically demanding. The experience was worsened by the huge disruption to society, health services and support networks caused by Covid-19.

The project captured the experiences of new parents from Black and Asian backgrounds who have experienced pregnancy and childbirth in the pandemic. It ran in collaboration with MAMTA (Child & Maternal Health Programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Women in Coventry).

Researchers spoke with 12 mothers who live in Coventry and had babies during the pandemic. The conversations were used to create a video designed to open up discussion around the challenges of becoming new parents during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to help increase engagement with peers and health care providers. The work is also being written up for publication.

The project was led by Dr Sarah Hillman (Warwick Medical School), Professor Jeremy Dale (Warwick Medical School), Professor Debra Bick (Warwick Medical School), Dr Julia Gauly (Warwick Medical School) and Dr Becky MacGregor (Warwick Medical School).



DIGITAL PARTICIPATIVE VISUAL ARTS INTERVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Dementia is a devastating condition that affects around 850,000 people in the UK. So how can digital visual art play a role early on in the disease?

Researchers developed and improved an existing digital arts app named ArtonTheBrain (AoTB) utilising locally-created art. AoTB was first trialled among older people living in long-term care facilities in Boston, USA, and resulted in substantial improvements in wellbeing.

This project offered an opportunity for collaboration and co-creation between academics, practitioners, museums and the public to design an adapted digital participative visual arts intervention for older people with dementia. This growing and vulnerable population and their carers are often excluded from the visual arts sector.

The project was led by Dr Michael Loizou (Centre for Postdigital Cultures [CPC], Coventry University) and Dr Deborah Biggerstaff (Warwick Medical School).



LIFE FUTURES

How has Covid-19 transformed our understanding of life and sociability?

This project explored creative and philosophical responses to the pandemic. Together with local artists and cultural stakeholders, the Life Futures project promoted debate on the conditions of life and creation during the pandemic, and a collective exercise of imagining new possibilities for a post-Covid future.

The project created the conditions for artists to produce new work, engage with topical issues and expand their network internationally.

The project was led by Dr Daniele Lorenzini (Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick), Dr Federico Testa (Institute of Advanced Studies and Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick) and Professor Carolina Rito (Centre for Arts, Memory and Communities, Coventry University).



HOMELESS MONOPOLY

This project created a prototype board-game featuring real life testimonies and scenarios of homeless and ex-homeless people in the Coventry area, that were contributed to through a partnership with Coventry Cyrenians - a charity supporting homeless and vulnerably housed people in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Co-developed with Dr Jackie Calderwood from the Disruptive Media Learning Lab, Coventry University, the game was piloted with local schools with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging empathy in young people towards issues faced by Coventry's homeless and street sleepers.

Professor Nadine Holdsworth (Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick) led the project with Coventry Cyrenians and Jacqueline Ann Calderwood (Disruptive Media Lab, Coventry University).



CAN'T WE DO IT OURSELVES?

The Coventry Family Health Club was the 1940s dream of GP Dr Kenneth Barlow, who wished to discover if people could plan and build their own self-sufficient community.

The ideas behind the Coventry Family Health Club inspired researchers to encourage local people to think more about healthy eating and how food can help build communities.

Dr Sophie Greenway (Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Warwick) and Dr Marina Chang (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University) collaborated with the Moat House Community Trust to run a series of public events, including film screenings and discussions, in June 2018.



COVENTRY 2021: CITY OF BREAST FEEDING

The UK has one of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in the world.

This project provided a unique opportunity to highlight the importance of breastfeeding. The team interviewed women to explore the stigma surrounding breastfeeding and understand the support available and the barriers faced by women in Coventry. They created a series of videos of women breastfeeding their babies and talking about issues around breastfeeding.

The voices and images of Coventry women breastfeeding were seen and heard in the lead-up to and during Coventry City of Culture 2021.

The project was led by Dr Joanne Fisher (Warwick Medical School).



THE PERCEPTION OF TOUCH IN YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

This research project involved developing an interactive dance theatre show in collaboration with children and families from socioeconomically deprived areas of Coventry and Leamington Spa.

The project knitted together arts and science to examine the perception of touch in young children and families, exploring how the subjective and psychophysiological perception of touch changes depending on the environment and emotional relationship of those being touched.

This was a collaborative venture involving Professor Sotaro Kita (Psychology, University of Warwick) and Dr Sara Reed (Media and Performing Arts, Coventry University), working with Wriggle Dance Theatre, Warwick Arts Centre and Coventry Library Service.



VIRUS HUNTERS

Launched in 2018, this project engaged citizens to discover viruses in bodies of water. This unique project engaged members of the public to provide samples and help with data analysis, working with local primary schools to collect samples and adults to help with the analysis.

This project was designed to raise public awareness of viruses and bacteriophage (bacterial viruses), and understand more about how common they are and how they might be used as disease treatments.

Ian Hands-Portman, Saskia Bakker and Ellie Fletcher (undergraduates from the School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick) worked with the Freshwater Habitats Trust and local schools on this project.



SOCIAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK: ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Tackling social deprivation was central to this research project, which involved a variety of academics exploring social isolation and loneliness.

The project aimed to raise awareness and understanding amongst urban planners of the effects of social isolation and the need for social urban spaces.

As part of this project, Dr David Jenkins and Professor Kimberley Brownlee (Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick) ran events in 2021 to engage with Coventry residents to gather ideas on the importance of social rights for health and well-being.



CANLEY STORY GARDEN

What might community gardening, creative learning and outdoor eco-pedagogies offer children, young people, families and senior citizens?

Dr Rachel Turner-King (Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick) and Dr Jen Kitchen (Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick) are exploring creative learning pedagogies that enhance outdoor learning and wellbeing through workshops, activities and talks.



TRANSMISSION

Transmission was a project designed to showcase and share insights into infection, both viral and bacterial. An innovative mix of lectures, practical demonstrations and dance, the project equips audiences with a better understanding of the role of science in researching and combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

This was a collaborative project between Professor Kevin Moffat (School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick) and Highly Sprung Performance with Dr Lauren Acton, Dr Phil Gould and Dr Jess Rollason (School of Life Sciences, Coventry University).



ROUTE 10

Route 10 was a research and development project which used dance theatre to highlight health inequality in Coventry.

On average, life expectancy can drop by ten years dependent on which area of Coventry you live in. The Number 10 bus route travels between those areas that are more affluent, and areas of deprivation. Inspired by the bus route, this project saw a bus taken over as a theatrical space.

The project united academics from Coventry University and the University of Warwick with local company Mercurial Dance to develop this exciting and novel approach.

The project was led by Dr Alan Dolan from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick.



TOGETHER/APART: EXPLORING THE GLOBAL LEGACY OF PARTITION THROUGH ARTS PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

August 2022 saw the 75th anniversary of the Partition of India (1947). An event of far-reaching historical significance, it saw violence and killings on a horrific scale and millions displaced across a newly imposed border.

Artists and researchers have responded in a range of ways to this anniversary and this ongoing legacy. They have been unearthing untold stories, often traumatic, and capturing them in writing, imagery, theatre, poetry and visual art.

The together/apart programme ran from October 31st to November 9th 2022 and offered a range of events that bring together artists, researchers, teachers, students and the public. It enabled participants to learn about the complex and layered stories of partitions, and reflected on how arts practice can interact productively with research and teaching to work on this difficult theme and others like it.

Following the success of this programme, the team are exploring funding options for ongoing work, and feeding into a new project with Soul City Arts to dramatise letters sent and received between members of the Indian diasporas.

This programme was funded by SMLC and IAS, and led by Dr James Hodgkinson from the School of Modern Languages.

Transforming the City

EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN

Emerging from Lockdown was led by Professor Jackie Hodgson (Warwick Law School; Centre for Operational Police Research) in collaboration with Dave Allen (The Grid Project).

The UK lockdowns were backed by police powers of dispersal, the use of temporary barriers to control public mobility, and the ability to issue fixed penalty notices and fines for social gatherings.

Through interviews with 25 people in Coventry in 2021, this research asked how people have experienced this loss of freedom and what their new-found liberty looks like as they emerge out of lockdown and return to the city.

The responses were woven into a fictionalised story, written by Georgie Evans - "Blinking in the Light" - and then narrated by actor Bharti Patel in a short film alongside images from the Coventry Grid project.



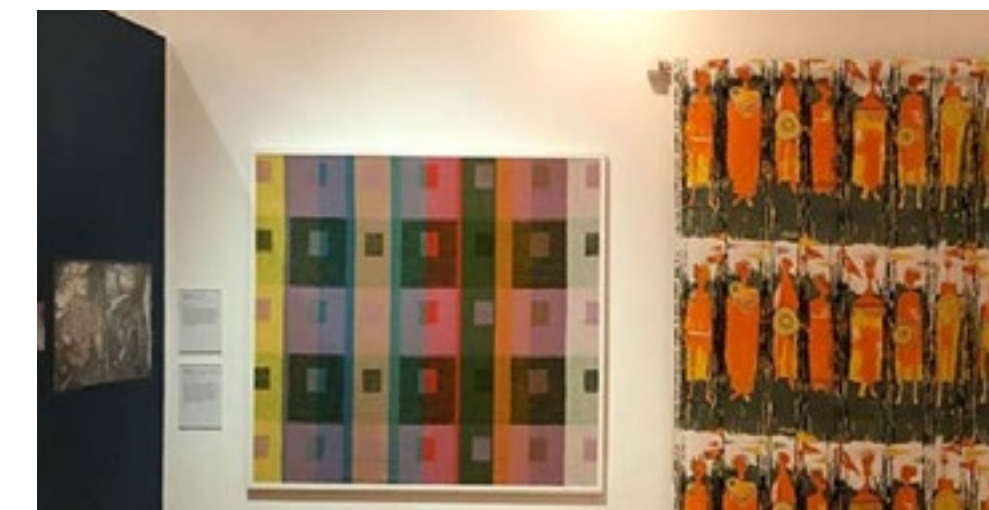
MODERN MERCIA: POST-WAR ART AND DESIGN IN COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE, 1945-70 EXHIBITION AT LEAMINGTON SPA ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Modern Mercia was a collaboration between Professor Louise Campbell from History of Art at the University of Warwick and a curator at Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum.

It was an exhibition showcasing paintings, sculpture, architectural designs and homeware owned by Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry Cathedral, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, the University of Warwick and private collectors.

The project combined expertise in order to create an exhibition examining post-war art and design in a regional context.

Professor Campbell intends to follow up the exhibition with an investigation of the architecture and culture of Britain's post-war art colleges.



SAMPLING SOUNDS OF COVENTRY'S FUTURE

What does the future of Coventry sound like?

This project focused on interactions between the city and its universities in the making of Coventry's future and what that sounds like.

Coventry residents collected field recordings of the city, while researchers also worked to gather archival sounds of Coventry's past. Creative practitioners were invited to respond to these sound samples by creating compositions and performances. The project hosted a series of soundwalks throughout the city, and culminated in a final public event at Fargo Village in Coventry in October 2021.

The project was led by Professor Noortje Marres (Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, University of Warwick), Dr Naomi Waltham-Smith (Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, University of Warwick) and Dr Nirmal Puwar (Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London).



SNAKE PARK: COLLABORATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN GREEN SPACE

Reclaiming "Snake Park" was a collaborative effort between local communities and researchers to re-design and transform a green space next to the Coventry Canal.

The project involved refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable communities. Storytelling played a key role in the process, with support offered for the people to tell their personal stories. These stories helped to create connections, celebrate diversity, and find a common ground for sharing cultural backgrounds.

As a result, many of the people used to living in urban areas were able to reconnect with the environment, and it enhanced the community's appreciation of the value of green areas.

The project was run by Dr Leon Sealey-Huggins (Department of Sociology, Warwick), Dr Sergio Ruiz Cayuela (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University), and Tulika Gadakari (Faculty Research Centre for Arts, Memory and Communities, Coventry University).



RECLAIMING COVENTRY CANAL FESTIVAL

The Coventry canal is a unique element of the city's industrial and environmental heritage. The Reclaiming Coventry Canal Festival brought together Coventry's vulnerable communities to symbolically reclaim the canal.

Over 25 volunteers were involved in arranging the activities with local organisations, and the festival was attended by over 250 members of the community. After the festival, attendees moved to the waterway while local artists performed from the top of a barge along the canal.

This was a collaborative project involving Coventry University, Coventry Peace House, Dr Sergio Ruiz Cayuela (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University) and Dr Alastair Smith (Global Sustainable Development, University of Warwick).



PLANNING FOR REAL IN CANLEY

Canley is one of the University's closest neighbourhoods and home to many of our students and staff.

Planning for Real is a nationally-recognised community planning process where residents offer ideas on how to improve their local area. All the ideas were collated into a locally made 3D map of the area, and the various ideas were presented and discussed with people from Canley. The residents were able to work with stakeholders such as Coventry City Council to draw up a realistic action plan for change in the area.

Our team supported delivering training for community leaders with the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), and creating the 3D map of Canley based on more than one thousand suggestions from over 650 residents.



"I DON'T WANT YOUR HOPE, I WANT YOUR ACTION"

This project investigates the ways digital arts and live performance can be used to enhance young people's understanding and engagement with climate change.

This collaboration with Coventry's Climate Action Network (CAN) invited youth participants to explore local and global questions of environmental and ecological degradation.

Participants took part in workshops using theatre, ethnography and digital media to encourage important conversations about the global crisis.

This ongoing project is led by Dr Rachel Turner-King from the Centre for Education Studies at the University of Warwick, the project positions Coventry youth as active co-researchers.



CREATING AN INTELLIGENT CITY - FROM URBAN TEST-BED TO SOCIAL LABORATORY

Real world testing of autonomous vehicles is ongoing in Coventry and the West Midlands.

These trials are testing several features including vehicles' ability to interact with other road users, connected traffic lights, emergency vehicles, and emergency braking alerts. But how does this impact and benefit the city and society?

The project examines and addresses the potential questions and challenges that AI poses for society and democracy

The project is led by Professor Noortje Marres (Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, University of Warwick).



TO WALK WITH WATER

Research suggests that the regeneration of water in a city requires new values of culture, creativity and compassion. This project aimed to create a more inclusive urban river environment in which young people play a key role.

Professor Joanne Garde-Hansen led the Walk with Water project during Coventry City of Culture in two parts from 2019 to 2021.

Walk with Water 1: Resilience, Young People and Urban River Values

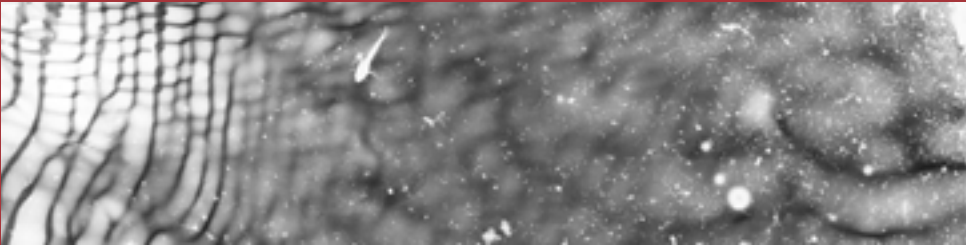
Professor Joanne Garde Hansen (Centre for Culture and Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick) and Jana Fried (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University) worked with Talking Birds and Antitype Films to deliver the project.

They collaborated with poetry writer Liz Mytton to explore how, through a soundscape tour, they could engage young people in new content creation and storytelling for water resilience.

Walk with Water 2: Flow, Flora and Fauna

Further funding was secured to lead Walk with Water 2, working with Agro-Ecology and Water Resilience, Coventry University. Artists Jo Gane and Shiam Wilcox assisted to further develop creativity in supporting a local network of artists.

Both Walk with Water projects have formed the basis for a wider exploration of water values in an international collaboration entitled Amphibious Screens (2022).



CONCRETE CINEMA: EVERYDAY

Concrete Cinema was a community-based, cinema-inspired artistic project, designed to inspire conversation around the materials that make up the city, and the kinds of buildings that we want to see, live in, and work in.

Four local artists - Laura Dicken, Benedict Drew, Antonio Roberts and Michael Lightborne - were involved in the project to create outdoor projection installations which were displayed across the city centre in 2022.

Concrete Cinema is part of Coventry Biennial and CineCov - a 12-month programme to transform the Coventry into a cinema for its year as UK City of Culture by Flatpack Festival.

This project was led by Dr Michael Pigott (Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick).



**#THISISCOVENTRY2022: EXPLORING
CULTURAL LEGACY AND SOCIAL VALUE OF
CREATIVE AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN
THE CITY**

This project explored the legacy narrative in the context of Coventry City of Culture.

It provided creative and social enterprise organisations in the city with an opportunity to come together to develop and plan a vision for the future. This project looked beyond City of Culture 2021 and explored the legacy and the value for local organisations and communities.

Dr Haley Beer (Warwick Business School), Melissa Smith (Feel Good Community) Richard Tomlins (International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship, Coventry University) and Gabriela Matouskova (Social Enterprise CIC, Coventry University) collaborated on the project.



SENSING THE CITY

Taking place over three years, Sensing the City was a practice-based research project involving site-specific studies of urban rhythms, atmospheres, textures, practices and behavioural patterns in Coventry.

The project culminated with the Metropolis exhibition which took place in July 2022, at Metropolis, the former Drapers bar in Coventry City Centre. The upper room was taken over with 'Urban Sensographies', an exploration of what kind of city we want and how we can get there.

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the project was led by Dr Emma Meehan (Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University) and Professor Nicolas Whybrow (Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick) in collaboration with Dr Michael Pigott (Film and TV Studies, University of Warwick), Dr Natalie Garrett Brown (Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University) and artist Carolyn Deby.



Coventry City of Culture

CASE STUDIES FOR CHANGE

POLICING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY: WM POLICE AS CITY OF CULTURE PARTNERS

How can the police use the City of Culture as a platform to engage the public and improve public perceptions of policing, whilst simultaneously helping to manage crime and protect event attendees?

West Midlands Police (WMP) was a principal partner of the City of Culture Trust in the delivery of Coventry City of Culture. In addition to the obvious community safety aspects of running a city-based major cultural event, this collaboration was underpinned by numerous shared values and objectives around community engagement, public safety and protection.

The project sought to understand the potential for police partnerships around arts and culture to positively impact in reducing crime, protecting vulnerable people and increasing diversity in recruitment.

Over 100 interviews and focus groups were carried out to understand the impact of WMP's partnership in the design and delivery of City of Culture, public safety and perceptions of policing.

The study was funded by the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, as well as the City of Culture Trust and West Midlands Police.

The project was led by Professor Jackie Hodgson, School of Law, Director of Centre for Operational Policing (COPR) and the Research Fellow was Dr Rachel Lewis, School of Law, COPR.



FAITH AND CULTURE

To what extent, and how, did programming and cultural leadership develop to reflect and represent the citizens of Coventry and the region?

This research examined City of Culture activities through the lens of culture and faith, focusing on three specific cohorts in three areas of the city. It used a range of data collection methods including literature review, focus groups, interviews and the personal reflections of research subjects, and it will seek to use creative visual means to capture findings for a public audience.

The team comprises academics from Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations: Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, Dr EJ Milne, Dr Dan Range and Dr Dilwar Hussain.



INTEGRATING THE ENVIRONMENT

This was the first time that the environment has been prioritised within the delivery of a City of Culture. This study evaluated how environmental issues are embedded within the overarching planning, governance and organisational delivery of Coventry City of Culture 2021.

The research teams are based at the Coventry University Centre for Business in Society and Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience research centres. The focus study was led by Dr David Bek; his fellow researchers were Dr Jordon Lazell, Dr Geraldine Brown, Dr Jennifer Ferreira and Dr Margi Lennartsson-Turner.



CIVIC, CULTURAL & BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

What effect has the title of UK City of Culture had on civic, cultural and business partnership co-working and to what extent can these partnerships be sustainable?

This project addressed how the City of Culture's transformational vision for Coventry and its residents is enacted, lived with, and experienced by residents in key positions within the City's communities. Scholars from the Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies will unearth in-depth stories of three networks within the city and the effects the title has on them.

This three-part qualitative study was carried out through a series of in-depth interviews, focusing on those outside of the larger city institutions to ensure that diverse voices were heard in order to understand the overall impact. The findings tell a story of the expectations, experiences and effects of the programme and its role in the future of the city.

The project's principal investigator was Dr Vishalakshi Roy (Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies) The team also included Dr Heidi Ashton, Dr Jonathan Vickery and Dr David Wright.

VOLUNTEERING, WELLBEING AND CIVIC

This project involved a mixed-methods study to examine how the CoC volunteering programme has impacted those taking part.

The team worked with the City Host programme and the Monitoring and Evaluation team to measure the impact of volunteering on mental wellbeing and civic pride, measuring it over time and comparing with other populations.

The focus study suggested that the programme increased City Hosts' wellbeing through many mechanisms, particularly by increasing social connectedness and a sense of belonging.

The team comprises Dr Oyinlola Oyeboode (Associate Professor in Public Health at Warwick Medical School) and Dr Rebecca Johnson (Assistant Professor in Public Health at Coventry University).



The Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project

The AHRC-commissioned Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project is led by the University of Warwick and highlights the importance of universities and of research in the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme: from the bidding process for the title, through to delivery, evaluation, and legacy of the programme.

The project has a particular focus on increasing the use of arts, humanities, and social science research to match the scale of opportunity for evidence-based learning afforded by the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme. It is committed to sharing insights and data that can benefit and inform the UK City of Culture Programme and other place-based cultural investments, mega-events, and initiatives.

This includes a series of published papers (The Future Trends Series) that discuss ways of thinking about the value of culture: the importance of research in understanding the place of culture in everyday lives, its impact on local people, society, economy and wellbeing and prosperity at large; and how this research-informed approach connects with the needs of policy making.

Each title in the series presents an expert analysis of current and future trends concerning key concepts or ideas, supported by case study evidence from Coventry UK City of Culture 2021.



All abstracts and papers can be accessed on the University of Warwick webpages and via scanning the QR code.



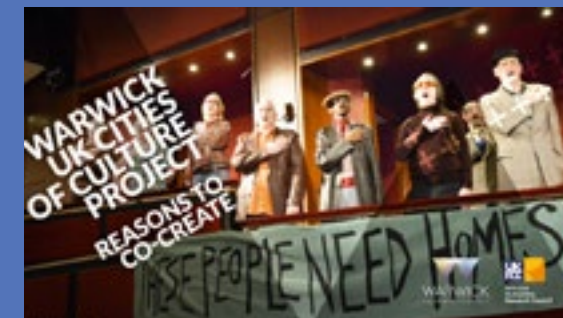
PAPER 1:

INNOVATIONS IN ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT



PAPER 2:

SOCIAL VALUE CREATION AND MEASUREMENT IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR



PAPER 3:

REASONS TO CO-CREATE



PAPER 4:

ADDRESSING CULTURAL AND OTHER INEQUALITIES AT SCALE



PAPER 5:

MAXIMISING AND MEASURING THE VALUE OF HERITAGE IN PLACE



PAPER 6:

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE ON WELLBEING



PAPER 7:

BUILDING TRUST IN POLICING THROUGH ARTS COLLABORATION

Getting Creative with Sustainability

Building on the theme of collaboration and creativity, Getting Creative with Sustainability was a new initiative involving local artists and creatives working with Warwick researchers and regional organisations around the theme of sustainability.

These exciting knowledge exchange-based collaborations saw the three parties involved sharing knowledge and insights around sustainability research in its broadest sense within the context of the organisation or region. These projects enabled researchers, local organisations and creatives to work together via artistic collaboration.

We have funded six projects as part of the programme which is led by Professor Jackie Hodgson (School of Law and Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research) and managed by India Holme (Research & Impact Development Manager).



HUMANITARIAN ENGINEERING: CREATING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

How can partnerships sustain humanitarian engineering education?

Students undertaking the MSc Humanitarian Engineering are challenged to tackle actual societal challenges such as the environment, energy and sustainability. The programme is underpinned by the UN SDGs and emphasis is placed on investigating complex humanitarian issues from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives to develop balanced, intelligent, and synergistic solutions.

Led by Professor Georgia Kremmyda from the School of Engineering, the project sought to showcase and celebrate relationships

between students, academic staff and external stakeholders, by demonstrating creative ways in which the learning triangle of education, research and society is enhanced.

The project was run in collaborative partnership with creative advertising and video agency, Horizon Collective, and it has established partnerships with charities, NGOs, consultancies and industry collaborators

A short video will be produced, featuring interviews, case studies and quotes about collaboration in the field of sustainable development.

The project is designed to enhance public engagement with humanitarian engineering, introducing it to new audiences. As new partnerships are formed, the team aims to promote engagement in knowledge exchanges locally, nationally and internationally.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):





ASSESSING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF OUR SPACES

This project investigated the social value of the Warwickshire County Council 'Our Spaces' programme; a project aimed at helping to reinvigorate public spaces in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic by installing functional public art interventions in seven Warwickshire towns.

In this project, researchers worked with the Our Spaces commissioning team to examine how the artistic interventions benefit the public realm, focusing on the health and wellbeing impacts of spending time in public spaces, the public appreciation of space quality, and the use of the spaces before and after intervention.

The project involved two local artists, breakdancer Marius Mates and textile artist Julia O'Connell.

Together they created a unique performance combining textiles and dance as part of the Our Spaces installations activation.

On the experience, Julia said: "I have loved this opportunity to develop my practice in a completely different way and with a new collaborator, expanding my improvisation skills in live performance and gaining a deeper understanding of movement-based work."

Led by Dr Nikoleta Jones and Leigh Walker from the Institute for Global Sustainable Development (IGSD), the project helped form a partnership between researchers at the Institute for Global Sustainable Development and Warwickshire County Council.

The project has resulted in a report which is due to be published shortly. It also enabled the researchers to build a strong relationship with Warwickshire County Council, and they hope to explore further research collaborations in future.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



TAKING THE LEAD: ARTS FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Underground Lights is a member-led and trauma-informed community theatre organisation. Formed in 2018, it is run by and for people experiencing homelessness and/or mental health issues.

The organisation connects to a sustainability agenda by employing creative methods including theatre and dance to improve the health and well-being of its members.

Their mission is: "To be a safe and inspiring creative community, for people on the margins of society, that is owned and run by us."

The project united the lead researcher (Professor Nadine Holdsworth, Theatre and Performance Studies), Underground Lights and the Belgrade Theatre Coventry.

Researchers tracked weekly creative workshops run over 12 weeks (April - July 2022) at the Belgrade Theatre with 24 Underground Lights members exploring themes of community, compassion and connection.

It culminated in a shared informal performance, discussion and creative evaluation document.

The final report, "Taking the Lead", examined how Underground Lights facilitates opportunities, providing a compassionate approach that promotes safe spaces and interactions for its diverse members. It also looked at the strong partnership between UL and the Belgrade Theatre, as small-scale and large scale arts organisations.

Professor Nadine Holdsworth's work in this area is part of an ongoing body of research to re-think and re-position how arts and creativity can change perceptions, policy, and outcomes for those who are or have been homeless.

Underground Lights also demonstrates how creative processes can support work towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):





ACTING ON CLIMATE: USING DANCE, DIGITAL ARTS AND DRAMA IN STEM EDUCATION

This project extends the impact outcomes of an ongoing longitudinal participation in a global, multi-sited ethnographic study led by Professor Kathleen Gallagher (University of Toronto) entitled Global Youth (Digital) Citizen-Artists and their Publics: Performing for Socio-Ecological Justice (SSHRC) along with research partners based in Canada, Greece, India, Colombia and Taiwan.

Over the course of 2022, a team of Warwick researchers, external artists, and young people from schools in Coventry worked collaboratively and creatively in response to the global climate crisis and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The diverse network includes locally-based FLUX (an education consultancy specialising in STEM public engagement and creative education), digital artist Ashley Brown and Luke Newbold, creative director of Lens Change Ltd.

Led by Dr Rachel Turner-King (Education Studies) and Dr Bobby Smith (Theatre and Performance Studies), the project received funding to focus on the ways the dance, drama and digital arts can enhance Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and STEM/STEAM education.

The young people created short live performances that will be shared as part of a documentary and an online teaching resource for schools, youth theatres, climate and environmental activists

and educators. Their work was presented at an international conference held at Warwick in July 2022 and the digital educational resource will be launched at a sharing symposium in partnership with Warwick Arts Centre in February 2023.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



PAINTING THE CITY GREEN: ARTISTIC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FOR MICROMOBILITY AND MORE

Coventry Council identifies that 39% of West Midlands's Green House Gases come from transport, the vast majority being from cars. The University of Warwick generates c.8,300 car journeys in the single peak morning travel hour, many of which are from within a 30-minute cycle of the campus. A modal shift to lower carbon intensity and more active travel patterns are a high priority in the Council's Transport Strategy (2022).

An objective of the Government's Environment Act is to create new wildlife corridors across Coventry to support the resilience of other species through processes such as urbanisation and road construction.

Led by Dr Alastair Smith (Global Sustainable Development), this project supports a Green Micromobilities Living Laboratories project, engaging stakeholders - including the WWT and Coventry Council - to co-create knowledge and visioning for a Micromobility Green Corridor between the University and the City.

The project cements a long-discussed partnership between the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Coventry City Council, connecting these organisations to two local creatives.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):





CO-CREATING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN FOLESHILL: A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND THE COMMUNITY IN COVENTRY

Coventry City Council was recently awarded funding to provide energy efficiency for occupiers in Foleshill, a deprived part of Coventry. However, the uptake amongst residents is low.

This project funded workshops to co-create materials that help residents understand practical sustainability measures, the benefits of energy-efficient homes and how barriers to uptake can be overcome.

It brought together members of the local community to share their views, along with researchers from the University, officers from Coventry City Council and artists who used mixed media to record and create materials to promote a wider understanding of the initiative.

The project resulted in a short animation video which aims to show the meaning of a warm home. For this video, a spoken word piece was created with a local family to describe what a warm home means to them. This was overlaid with an animation by local animator Josh Leach, which depicts a cosy home environment, and how sustainable energy can help achieve this.

This project was led by Dr Jonathan Clarke from the Department of Global Sustainable Development. It helped to support the establishment of a partnership between researchers within the Department of Global Sustainable Development and Coventry City Council officers, promoting sustainability and climate change action.

It sought to understand the wider impacts resulting from energy improvements, such as household health and finances. It also acted as a pilot in developing future research bids between researchers and the local council focused on improving energy efficiency.

The project links to the below Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



The majority of the projects featured in this guide have received some or all of their funding from one or more of the following sources:

The University of Warwick’s Global Research Priorities (GRPs). Our GRPs respond to complex global problems that can only be tackled through collaborative research excellence. The GRPs unite academics from different disciplines to address some of humanity’s most pressing issues.

The University of Warwick and Coventry University City of Culture Open Calls. These calls were funded by Coventry University and the University of Warwick from various sources, such as (but not limited to) HEIF, Higher Education Innovation Funding. HEIF helps to support knowledge exchange between higher education and the wider world that benefits society and the economy.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AHRC is part of UK Research and Innovation, a new funding body that works with universities, research organisations, charities, businesses and government to support a strong UK research environment. The AHRC funds research in the arts and humanities - including post-graduate training.

The University of Warwick Public Engagement Fund. This fund acts as a contribution/pilot fund to support larger projects and is exclusively for the support of Public Engagement with Research.

The University of Warwick Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) ES/T502054/1. ESRC IAAs provide UK research organisations that have a strong base of social sciences research with funding to support impact.

