

## Inclusive Heritage in Superdiverse Places: Redesigning inclusion in heritage content, practice, and policy in Leicestershire

### About the Project

This project will explore how access to, and participation in, heritage can be achieved in superdiverse places. Inclusive heritage has been found to be a 'fundamental condition for social cohesion, trust, and society's overall wellbeing' (Dorpalen and Gallou 2023). As one of the UK's first superdiverse cities (Vertovec 2007) where there is no ethnic majority, it might be expected that Leicester's heritage sector and provision is equally diverse. Yet, Leicester's large Indian community is routinely used as a proxy for Leicester's diversity, to the exclusion of other groups. This lack of inclusivity is recognised in the Leicester Leading cultural strategy (LCC 2024), which notes that diversity has not equated to 'inclusion, community cohesion and equality' in the heritage sector. This project will ask how the heritage sector can embed a community-driven approach which challenges current ways of working, to develop heritage provision which properly reflects the communities it should serve.

As a cultural hub, Leicester city is the largest of several centres of heritage activity in the county which could be supported to operate collaboratively to ensure that currently marginalised groups are actively included in the activity of the sector. The project will therefore incorporate South Asian groups and organisations in two local towns, Oadby & Wigston and Loughborough.

The project will map current participation in the cultural heritage sector by Leicestershire's highly diverse South Asian community and assess the diversity of heritage provision available to these communities in the city and county. This will enable excluded communities and gaps in provision to be clearly identified. The project will work with key stakeholders to prototype, test, and evaluate new approaches to inclusion across the sector. These stakeholders are:

1. Cultural heritage sector organisations from across the county (e.g. Inspirate, Charnwood Arts, Leicester City Council, Culture Leicestershire).
2. The project will develop a 'pathway to inclusive superdiverse heritage' which weaves together practice and policy recommendations for the cultural heritage sector and a toolkit for community organisations, focusing on embedding a community-driven, polycentric approach to inclusion.

## About the Project

3. Members of underserved ethnic, national, and generational communities. This is likely to include people with links to Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, Bhutan, and Afghanistan, and young people from the South Asian community.

4. Local community groups representing currently underserved groups within the South Asian community (e.g. Equality Action,)

5. The project will develop a 'pathway to inclusive superdiverse heritage' which weaves together practice and policy recommendations for the cultural heritage sector and a toolkit for community organisations, focusing on embedding a community-driven, polycentric approach to inclusion.

This project has been co-created and is supported by researchers from Loughborough University, the De Montfort University and partners at Inspirate. The successful candidate for this project will be enrolled at Loughborough University.

## Project Aims

The overall aims of this project are :

1. Map which groups within the South Asian community are currently excluded from participation in the local heritage sector, identify their needs, and understand the cultural assets of these groups;
2. Understand the specific challenges of achieving inclusive heritage in 'superdiverse' contexts;
3. Work with community stakeholders, cultural organisations, and policy-makers to co-create and test a policy and practice 'pathway' to inclusive superdiverse heritage in Leicestershire.

## Supervisory Team

1. Lead Academic Supervisor: [Professor Emily Keightley \(Loughborough University\)](#)
2. Academic Co-Supervisor(s): [Professor Christine White \(De Montfort University\)](#)
3. Academic Co-Supervisor(s): [Dr Allan Watson \(Loughborough University\)](#)
4. Community Supervisor(s): [Jiten Anand \(Inspirate\)](#)

## Key Details

Host University:	Loughborough University
School / department:	School of Communication and Media
Start date:	Monday 28 September 2025
Financial offer:	Tuition fees covered in full (worth approx. £15- 17k across full PhD programme). Monthly stipend based on £19,237 per annum, pro rata, tax free.
Working hours	Full-time (minimum 37.5 hrs per week)
Working Style:	Primarily in-person at host university. Flexible working supported. Working pattern to be agreed between successful candidate and lead supervisor.

## Competencies

Collaboratory Core Competencies		
Category	Competency	Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)
<b>Comprehension and evaluation</b>	Strong understanding of the project and its subject matter.	A / I
	Analytical, researcher mindset with keen attention to detail.	A / I
	Communicate complex concepts with clarity and precision.	A / I
	Able to identify connections, patterns, gaps, and irregularities in information/data.	I
	Able to interpret data/information confidently with logic and empathy to derive meaning.	I
<b>Social and emotional</b>	Demonstrable experience of responding effectively changing contexts, information and demands.	A
	Ability to persevere in the face of challenges/failures and to remain constructive in developing solutions.	A
	Demonstrable passion for learning with clear drive and curiosity to undertake this specific research project.	A / I
	Willingness to immerse oneself in the research subject matter and make a contribute to new knowledge through a PhD.	A / I
	Strong desire to make a positive community impact through the research.	A / I
	Willingness to think deeply about complex concepts and engage with academic ideas and theory.	A / I
<b>Preparedness and potential for success</b>	Experience of working, collaborating and communicating effectively with different stakeholders.	A
	High level of self-motivation and ability to work with minimal guidance.	A / I
	Strong organisational and time-management skills with the ability to balance and prioritise multiple tasks.	A / I
	Ability to identify potential challenges and complexities and thoughtfully consider possible solutions.	A / I
	Able to identify the technical, personal, or professional skills required for a task and take action to develop these.	A / I

# Competencies

Collaboratory Core Competencies			
Category		Competency	Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)
Community Context		Genuine desire to undertake community-engaged research over more traditional approaches to research.	A
		Understand the impact of and need for the inclusion of diverse experiences and points of view in research.	A / I
		Appreciation/understanding of the importance of community insight and experience in the generation of new knowledge.	A / I
		Awareness/understanding of the broader societal context related to the subject matter of the project.	A / I

Project Specific Competencies			
Essential	Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)	Desirable	Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)
Experience of engaging with the South Asian community	A / I	Experience of creative/arts practices	A / I
Strong appreciation for the local cultural and social make up of Leicester communities	A / I	Experience of partnership working e.g. with community organisations, cultural organisations, and/or local government	A / I
Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with diverse communities about sensitive topics.	A / I	Experience of using design thinking and relevant design software applications.	A / I
A working understanding of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	A / I	Fluency in one or more South Asian languages	A/I
		Experience of community activism	A / I

## References for Further Reading

- Leicester City Council (LCC) (2024) 'Leicester Leading: A stronger, more inclusive cultural and creative economy 2025-2030'. [leicester.gov.uk/media/1xepha1q/8015-lcc-cultural-and-creative-industry-strategy\\_web-1.pdf](https://leicester.gov.uk/media/1xepha1q/8015-lcc-cultural-and-creative-industry-strategy_web-1.pdf)
- Friis Dam, R. (2025) 'The five stages in the Design Thinking Process'. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process>
- Smith, L. (2022) 'Heritage, the power of the past, and the politics of (mis)recognition'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 52(4) pp549-642. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12353> <https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85132591019&origin=inward&txGid=b83eaac1a6d4c898bbaadb5632a93abd>
- Vertovec, S. (2024). Contexts, categories and superdiversities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 47(8), 1678–1683. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2317958> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/01419870.2024.2317958?needAccess=true>
- Gallou, Eirini (2022) Heritage and pathways to wellbeing : from personal to social benefits, between experience identity and capability shaping. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 3. 100084. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2022.100084>) <https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/82327/>
- Nataraj, P., & Keightley, E. (2025). Remembering voices: Singing and critical cosmopolitan memory in the Bengali diaspora. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494251321257> <https://lupin.lboro.ac.uk/viewobject.html?cid=1&id=431276>
- Unknown (2017) 'The Bengali Influence in the Streets of Whitechapel' <https://landmarksinlondonhistory.wordpress.com/2017/11/30/the-bengali-influence-in-the-streets-of-whitechapel/>
- Schofield, J. (2017) "Heritage on Exile": Reflecting on the Roles and Responsibilities of Heritage Organizations towards Those Affected by Forced Migration, *Journal of Contemporary Applied Archaeology*, 3(2) <https://journal.equinoxpub.com/JCA/article/view/10477>