*Table 1. Case study describing activities promoting relationship-focused engagement with a community group*

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|  | **Description** |
| **Activity** |  |
| Introductory emails to the community group leader | Introductions limited to name, institution and broad research area (e.g., nutrition, physical activity).Request to have an introductory meeting virtually or face-to-face depending on their preference.Contact who connected researchers to leader of the community group (also known as “introducer”) copied into email.  |
| Introductory meeting (V) | Meeting lasted 30 minutes.Community group leader (MH), the introducer and two members of the research team (OG and MS) present.Meeting was focused on introductions and planning a face-to-face meeting with the community.The group expressed interest in seeing the university campus, so we invited them to lunch at the University to discuss opportunities for working together in a mutually beneficial way |
| Meeting at the University at the request of the group (F2F) | Three members of the community group and two members of the research team (OG and MS) present.Meeting focused on getting to know the community better. We asked questions on the history of the group, aims and activities, how they fared during the COVID-19 pandemic and any current challenges. In return, the research team also shared ideas and suggestions on how some of the challenges might be addressed. e.g., they sought engaging and fun activities for group members during meetings. OG volunteered to visit the club with friends to sing for and with the elders. MS also suggested exploring holding physical activity sessions with elders by physiotherapy students. Group members also asked questions about the University and the roles of the research team. They expressed gratitude for hosting them at the University as some of them had never been, despite living in the area for years. Conversations continued about the city (Southampton) and the UK and how things (shops, food, racism, fashion) have changed over the years. Initial hesitation to engageThe PAN-Co-POWeR project was then explained by OG and MS, providing details on why it was set up and its aim. This resulted in some group members describing some of their negative experiences with research. Some had taken part in research and never heard anything back about what the research found, so they felt used and disrespected. They described examples of receiving pages from research projects all in small prints without any support on how to complete them but with a request to send the completed form back. These experiences led to hesitancy in being involved with the project. We assured them that the intention was to avoid these issues, hence the need for engaging with the community as partners on the project. They eventually were open to being involved and emphasised that it was due to how the research team had been organised, respectful and attentive to their concerns during the meeting. The leaders of the community group were pleased with the meeting and invited the researchers to visit the community group at their own venue the following week. |
| Introductory visit to community group (F2F) | OG paid a visit to meet with members and have individual conversations. OG also participated in group activities with members like dancing, playing games and helping to serve lunch to the elders. By the end of the visit, the members of the group individually were more open and receptive to OG and a relationship was starting to be built. They invited OG to come again the next week. It was also at this point that the community leader volunteered to become a PPIE partner |
| Recruitment visit to the community group (F2F). Start of participant recruitment | The leaders gave OG the opportunity to address the group, sharing about the research project, its relevance and giving room for comments, questions and suggestions. It was at this point that active recruitment of research participants began. Based on different conversations with OG, some members were already interested in the project but many were still sceptical, believing that nothing would improve even if they tried.  |
| Continued engagement visits to the community group (V, F2F) | This is the most important part of relationship-focused engagement. Although, some group members had taken part in PAN-Co-POWeR, either as participants or as PPIE partners, the researchers maintained communication with the group, visiting at different points of the study. This led to the building of a thriving relationship with the group, evidenced through invites from the group to special activities like Christmas parties as well as the group taking part in research activities including visiting the House of Parliaments to co-present project recommendations.  |

*Virtual (V), Face-to-face (F2F)*

*Table 2. A case study describing co-production of a Black History Month Public Engagement event.*

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| **Aim:** To hold a public engagement activity to mark Black History month in October 2021, because of its relevance to the PAN-Co-POWeR research project.**Co-production approach:**1. Emails from researchers to two PPIE partners about the idea and requesting a meeting to discuss. The two PPIE partners volunteered to be involved in this activity following an email to the core PPIE group.
2. First meeting: a) researchers explained the idea of the event to PPIE partners; b) sought their opinions on whether they agreed with the need for such an event; c) all explored ideas on what the event might entail.
3. The meeting produced an idea and a joint decision to invite another work package within the wider Co-POWeR consortium, focused on creative arts, to collaborate so the event would be engaging and exciting for members of the public to take part in.
4. Colleagues in the creative arts work package accepted the invitation to collaborate.
5. A joint planning meeting with all members of the team in attendance: PPIE partners (JN, RP), OG and MS from the PAN-Co-POWeR research team and creative arts colleagues (see acknowledgements).

**Valuable contributions from PPIE partners:** 1. Making the meeting Co-POWeR focused rather than Black history focused to avoid tensions. This meant discussing issues affecting ethnic minority communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This also meant all members of the public felt welcome to attend the event without thinking it was for a specific ethnic group.
2. Using the event as an opportunity to invite members of the public to take part in the research project as research participants.
3. A focus on wellbeing and providing support during the event, due to sensitivity of how sharing experiences (verbally or through visual or written art) can evoke painful emotions.
4. Offering a debriefing session afterwards for people who may need one.

**Co-produced event:** Event title: ‘Telling your Untold Pandemic Stories through Art’Date: 14 October, 2021 Platform: Virtually via Zoom.Chairs: Co-chaired by OG (lead researcher) and JN (PPIE partner)Event content: 1) Introductions and a short creative video about the project; 2) The rainbow of Wishes activity27 and; 3) Creative conversations using documentary videos.Feedback: 23 people attended the event. A feedback poll completed by 17 attendees, gave the activity an overall satisfaction rating of 88%. Through this activity, a member of the public who attended the event contacted the research team to express interest in participating in the PAN-Co-POWeR project as a research participant. |

*Table 3. Examples of PPIE feedback and how suggestions were actioned in PAN-Co-POWeR*

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|  | **Response** | **Action** |
| **PPIE Feedback** |  |  |
| Use of “dear all” or “dear PPIE partners” in emails made people feel they were excluded from the discussion and they were then unsure whether a response was expected from them | Immediate action  | Addressed emails with name of recipient.Directing emails to people based on previous personal conversations where available.  |
| Changes to wording of official documents and statements including information sheets | Joint solution | Lay documents produced to accompany official ones, explanatory zoom or phone calls with participants pre-interviews/focus groups |
| Payments for PPIE affecting people on benefits and tax implications for those working or retired | Joint solution | Support provided to PPIE partners through Citizen’s Advice Bureau; official letter of support provided by PAN-Co-POWeR for Job Centres explaining that PPIE activity differs from employment28; public workshop in collaboration with NIHR 5-Nations Project to discuss solutions to manage the complexity of this problem in future research |

*Table 4. Impact of PPIE contributions on the co-production of PAN-Co-POWeR’s Transformative Action Workshop*

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|  | **Initial idea for project closure activity by the researchers** | **Co-produced project closure activity** |
| **Workshop type** | Dissemination event | Transformative Action Workshop |
| **Workshop aims** | Disseminate research findings including a presentation on methods, outputs and results | 1) Give an overview of PAN-Co-POWeR research findings and recommendations, and2) Kick-start the recommendations being transformed into action through joint efforts by the government, community and relevant stakeholders |
| **Event format** | Conference or seminar style | Round-table discussions |
| Virtual | Hybrid |
| **Attendees** | Researchers, members of the public, research participants, PPIE partners and relevant stakeholders | Three groups of attendees:1. Community groups and members of the public, including PPIE partners and research participants
2. Policy makers and stakeholders from national, community or local charities, organisations and councils
3. Research and academic community
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| **Session chair** | Co-chaired by researchers and PPIE partners | Co-chaired by researchers and PPIE partners and a team of facilitators comprising representatives from each attendee group |
| **Session structure** | Research presentations, question-and-answer and discussions | 1. Research presentation shared with attendees before the session via email
2. Brief overview of research presentation at the start of the session
3. Questions and answers
4. Round-table discussions
5. Feedback from round-table discussions
6. Reflections on the session allowing each attendee group to reflect on what they could do to kickstart the translation into action of recommendations from the project into their own settings
7. Lunch and end
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| **Session outcomes** |  | Positive feedback from attendees. Attendee groups left with a clear plan and commitment towards reducing inequalities and promoting physical activity and nutrition. Continued communication from attendees and PPIE partners for a whole variety of reasons, including possible project ideas that could be impactful for their communities; interest in taking part in future research projects; or just heart-warming check-in messages.PPIE partners could also see that they had contributed towards ensuring the co-produced recommendations from this project which they had taken ownership of from the start were not just “left on the shelf” but were effectively shared with relevant stakeholders who committed to taking action.  |

*Table 5. Advice from PPIE partners to the research community*

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| **Advice** | **Explanation** | **Illustrative quotes of experiences** |
| **True inclusion** | True inclusion is in diversity and not segregation. People from ethnic minority backgrounds form an integral part of the general community and should be treated as such and not as an opportunity to fill up a quota. Underrepresentation exists but it is time to take actions to get it right. If the word ‘community’ is being used, then it needs to be the whole community; not a separate community, or a disadvantaged community. Most research projects where active PPIE with ethnic minorities occurs are often projects focused on ethnic minorities. So, these communities are being reached because the focus is on us. This is still a form of unequal treatment. True inclusion involves carrying out projects that include every group in the community.  | *“I find it interesting that the only projects you see making efforts to reach us are those targeted to us. So these are equality, ethnicity, diversity related projects. That is fine but that is not enough. What about the general UK population projects on cancer, on diabetes, on health, on wellbeing etc? We don’t see those projects making the same efforts. So it is almost as if we are being included to be separated again. We want to take part in ethnic minority projects but we also want to take part in projects for the general UK population because we are a part of the general UK population”*  |
| **Building Relationships** | PPIE is about building relationships with community and this was prioritised by PAN-Co-POWeR. This relationship allowed honest conversations and reflections months after project end. Researchers need to prioritise building honest and trustworthy relationships with the community.  | “*On other projects I have been on, I often do not bother to engage anymore because that relationship was not there*”.  |
| **Two-way Reach** | The importance of engaging diverse communities in research is far-reaching. There seems to be fear about reaching specific underserved communities but this fear needs to be overcome. Researchers often claim they want to reach underrepresented groups but the key question is: “Have they put the right things in place in order to reach these groups? Are meetings well planned or are we being reached as an afterthought?” Reaching out to communities is a two-way process. Things must be put in place to ensure the people you want to reach can also reach you. Following on from the example in the quote, sending the one message to about 200 people is fantastic but the question is, when that message reaches them, are they able to engage with the information? Is it in the right language, are the right words being used? How will interested people contact you? These are all important questions to address.  | *“I was in a meeting focused on developing policies and documents to address stroke but that meeting was so much geared towards the typical middle class 50-60 year old white man. I knew this was not representing the whole community and I suggested that they go out into the community. It was amazing what they found out when they did so. They visited a temple and were able to access this WhatsApp group with over 200-300 people and just like that more people in the community were getting to know more about the stroke services. That wouldn’t have happened if they remained in that typical meeting room”.* |
| **Reciprocity**  | Reciprocity in relationships is important. One-sided relationships and engagement should be avoided. As much as PPIE partners can give to a project, they can also receive from the project. This type of mutually beneficial relationship promotes that sense of belonging and true community which fosters better engagement  | *“I was involved in one PPIE activity and it became apparent that the reason they wanted me in the room was because they wanted the one person who looked different. It was a complete waste of my time. The wordings and invite for the activity didn’t seem like that because it had the usual inclusive, diverse and representation words but in reality, it was token play. I had to step out because I had more important things to do”.*  |
| **Time** | Good engagement and building relationships takes time. PAN-Co-POWeR researchers didn’t get it right from the start. There were periods of no engagement, no relationships but the way out is to keep at it and be ready to build those honest relationships. Researchers need to take the time to plan engagement, to build relationships, to do the work, to seek feedback and to be flexible in their approach. Some things need to take a lengthier and different route from your plan and that is okay. Time is critical and taking time to work with communities is important | .. |
| **Prepare to be uncomfortable** | Learn to be comfortable with discomfort. Conversations about race, ethnicity, and experiences of discrimination are uncomfortable and they are lived experiences that cannot be silenced. So, researchers need to be prepared to hear people’s truth. This sort of discomfort is sometimes necessary to drive change. Being uncomfortable, however, is not a negative thing and should not prevent engagement. Have compassion for that part of you that is growing in a positive way. This can be managed by getting the right training and tools to manage such situations.  | *In a previous project: “I once attended a PPIE meeting and someone was expressing an experience that was real and authentic to them but it was very obvious that the researchers were uncomfortable because it was racial. They just didn’t have the tools to manage that situation and it left an awkward situation. This eventually made me and other public partners feel uncomfortable as well and we started to question whether we should be there.”* |

*All quotes were from PPIE co-authors who consented to having their quotes reproduced in this paper.*

*Table 6. Outcomes of adopting these engagement strategies in the PAN-Co-POWeR project*.

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| **Outcome** | **Description** |
| **Inclusion of ethnic minorities** | Widespread inclusion of ethnic minority communities (six PPIE partners and 48 research participants from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities, aged 18 to 86 years)  |
| **Trust-building** | Evident in the active participation of people who had initially declined to take part in the project.  |
| **Community wellbeing and impact** | Qualitative feedback indicated that study participation increased confidence, wellbeing and willingness to engage in future research among research participants and PPIE partners. Example quote: “*I heard someone refer to us as hard to reach groups but now this project has given me the confidence to speak up and tell them that PAN-CO-POWeR did it. They reached us and made us feel valued. Other projects can do the same”* PPIE co-author. |
| **Co-production** | Active engagement and support to ensure project aims were achieved. Co-production of messaging (posters) and strategies to improve physical activity and healthy eating among ethnic minority communities in the UK. |
| **Active engagement** | Four PPIE partners from PAN-Co-POWeR and 14 from the Co-POWeR consortium attended a policy event at the UK Houses of Parliament in Westminster in June 2022 to co-disseminate project recommendations with policy makers.31 Four PPIE partners (one virtually) also attended the final project conference in Leeds in January 2023.  |
| **Consortium-wide impact** | Overall enrolment of 51 PPIE partners from ethnic minority communities across the Co-POWeR consortium (overseen by Southampton PPIE Unit) achieved by joint efforts by the researchers and PPIE partners across institutions in the consortium |
| **Future engagement of PPIE partners** | Following recommendations for continuity of engagement by PPIE partners, an initiative was set up (with internal funding from the University of Southampton) to co-produce a PPIE database of partners from ethnic minorities, termed the Co-DICE project (Co-production of a diverse community engagement database). The purpose was to support development of research projects by enabling more diverse PPIE to better reflect the general population in research.  |