Aisha Ali Haji, Rehema Baya, Emily Brady, Helen McCabe, Yasmin Manji, and Sophie Otiende.

Participatory Photography, Ethical Storytelling and Modern Slavery Survivor Voices: Adapting to COVID-19

Key Findings

Conducting a truly participatory research project between partners in the Global North and Global South brings challenges in normal circumstances, yet when the COVID-19 pandemic forced our project to pause, we overcame multiple additional challenges to successfully complete it. This chapter considers how both we, the research team, and the survivors of modern slavery who were participants in the research project *Survivors Voices, Stories and Images* adapted its initial project brief to conduct a successful research project in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst considering what shortcomings could be better addressed in future. In particular, we note that, when considering participatory research methods: (1) a need for flexible aims, objectives and outputs is essential, (2) research should be survivor-led, and (3) additional resources to allow for unforeseen circumstances should be integral to research.

Research Context

Modern slavery is an issue that continues to have a global impact. In 2017 the International Labour Organisation estimated that on any give day in 2016, 40 million people were victims of modern slavery, of whom 71% were women and girls.[1] In Kenya, modern slavery continues to be a significant issue: the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report labelled Kenya a Tier 2 country[2], and the 2019 Global Slavery Index awarded Kenya 5/10[3], indicating that whilst improvements have been made there is still more that can be done in the country. Yet it is not just governments who are combatting the problem; NGOs make considerable efforts to support survivors of modern slavery in the country. One such organisation is Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART). Since 2010, HAART has dedicated itself to raising awareness of, and supporting victims of, human trafficking and forced marriage. A crucial component of this work, that is frequently overlooked by governments, is empowering survivors themselves with the tools they need to serve as leaders in their communities. As Minh Dang asserts, "treated as an afterthought, most anti-slavery efforts assume that there are no survivors in the room, or the voices and agendas of survivors are not critical to the agenda of an event, publication, or exhibit."[4] Within these contexts, HAART and the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham decided to collaborate on a project entitled: *Survivors Voices, Stories*

[1] International Labour Organisation, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* (Genva, 2017), 5.

[2] U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, 20th Edition, June 2020,* https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf, Accessed 9th February 2021.

[3] https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2019/data/country-data/kenya/, accessed 17.2.2021.

[4] Minh Dang, "Survivors Are Speaking, Are We Listening?," *Walk Free: Global Slavery Index 2018,* https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/resources/essays/survivors-are-speaking-are-we-listening, Accessed 10.2.2021.

and Images: Survivor-Led Empowerment Through Ethical Story-Telling And Participatory Photography.[5]

This project aimed to empower survivors of modern slavery through the practice of ethical storytelling and participatory photography. Adopting a survivor-led approach to these methodologies, the original intent was to run workshops to train survivors in both photographic and storytelling techniques, working in a collaborative space with other survivors, whilst maintaining space for individual reflection and activities. As such, this project marked the first meaningful combination of these two methodologies in the context of modern slavery. In terms of participatory photography, Wang asserts that there are "three main goals: to enable people (1) to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through large and small group discussion, and (3) to reach policymakers."[6] These goals intersect with those of ethical storytelling, which privileges ethical and survivor-led approaches to narrative. Ball asserts that ethical storytelling far beyond the production of ethical materials:

> Storytelling in advocacy can also benefit society by contributing to participatory democracy and ensuring that a diversity of voices is heard in public debate. By challenging the monopoly that privileged, well-resourced individuals and organisations often hold over public discussion and debate, storytelling creates space for the wisdom, experience, analysis and aspirations of marginalised people and communities.[7]

Combining participatory photography and ethical storytelling, therefore, orientates survivor participation and consent at the centre of the project, whilst privileging a 'do-no-harm' approach. As such, this project sought to intervene in existing practice to advocate for the role of survivor-led, participatory methodologies that worked across multiple modes of representation.

This paper will specifically focus on the process of research, rather than the research findings or specific outputs produced by the project. Orientated around the experiences and insights of the practitioners, this paper explores the practicalities of adapting a participatory research project against the backdrop of a global pandemic. This paper was co-written by the entire research team, and draws from monthly catch-up meetings between various members of the team and Research Assistant Emily Brady. This allowed the team to track their adaptations and reflections on the project, which are presented in this paper.

The project was co-led by Dr Helen McCabe and Sophie Otiende, who is a pioneering survivor leader. McCabe is the Rights Lab's lead on forced marriage. The UK team also comprised a cultural historian, Emily Brady. The Kenyan team of experts also included: Aisha Ali Haji, a freelance writer and practitioner of ethical

---

[5] This project was funded by the Antislavery Knowledge AHRC GCRF Network+ Grant. For more information about the project see: https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/politics/akn/AKN,Single,Page,Projects,-,Rights,Lab.pdf. We would like to acknowledge the support of Worldreader as well as HAART as project partners.

[6] Caroline C. Wang, "Photovoice: A Participation Action Research Strategy Applied to Women's Health," *Journal of Women's Health*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 28 May 1999, https://bestler.public.iastate.edu/arts_based_articles/1999_Liebert_Photovoice.pdf, 185.

[7] Rachel Ball, "When I Tell My Story, I'm In Charge" Ethical and Effective Storytelling in Advocacy," *CIC Fellowship Report 2013*, Victoria Law Centre, http://ssrn.com/abstract=2689990, 18.

storytelling who served as Storytelling Consultant; Rehema Baya, a photographer and practitioner of participatory photography who served as Photographic Consultant; and Yasmin Manji, a therapist who worked with Otiende to ensure survivor well-being throughout the process. This team worked to create a survivor-led programme of workshops that equipped participants with the tools to both tell their own stories and take their own pictures on their own terms.

Initial Project Aims and Expectations

The primary aim of *Survivors Voices, Stories and Images* was to empower survivors to tell their own stories and take their own images that conveyed their experience of human trafficking. This would produce powerful material that would not only provide an opportunity for survivors to develop skills and express themselves, but also to challenge stereotypical views of victims of human trafficking. As such, we planned to hold an initial series of workshops, in which participants would be taught storytelling and photography skills, and encouraged to tell their own stories. The group of 5-6 survivor participants would then work both within group and individual settings to refine their skills and stories. It was originally envisioned that these stories would be the participants' own narratives, conveying their lived experience of modern slavery. Ultimately, the survivor participants would then have the option to share their work and influence policy makers. As such, the main aim of this project was to empower survivors and cultivate survivor leadership through participatory research methods. Our original plan was to publish the narratives in accessible forms, and hold exhibitions of the photographs in Nottingham and Nairobi, recoding and analysing audience reactions to gauge impact and see whether our methodologies successfully helped challenge stigma, stereotypes, and lack of knowledge.

This would have allowed us to platform and promote the work produced by survivors, whilst furthering understanding of participatory research methods. However, our plans were derailed in March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to proceed with the intended activities.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Project

We were due to commence in-person workshops in March 2020, but the team decided we would cancel them, due to COVID-19. Not only were we concerned about the health-impacts of in-person workshops (which, under existing government guidance in Kenya might still have been legally possible), we were also concerned about the ethics of proceeding, particularly the question of placing an undue burden on participants, of whether this was an appropriate time to be doing research with them, and whether the payments we were offering would act as an inducement and undermine free consent. COVID-19 led to loss of income and increased vulnerability for most survivors of trafficking, including the group that we had selected for this group, who were considered stable. At HAART, 5 out of 10 victims that they had worked with previously became vulnerable and in need of direct services during the pandemic.

In April 2020, however, it became apparent that the survivors recruited to this project wished to proceed. The main reason cited for proceeding with the workshops was that the activity would give them something to do during the pandemic, as they felt idle. The survivors also expressed a need for community by being surrounded by

other survivors during this time. Thus, the team reconvened to determine how to do this ethically and safely – and therefore remotely. That survivor-participants in Kenya were themselves instrumental to re-starting the project (and within weeks of the pandemic causing us to pause) reflects the survivor-led intentions of the research.

In order to conduct this research ethically and safely in a remote context, the project underwent substantial revisions. Within this chapter, we reflect on these alterations and adaptations within the context of COVID-19, and what approaches were necessary to overcome the considerable challenges posed. As such, we will highlight our individual experiences in order to reflect on best practice of conducting participatory research methods during a pandemic. These include, but are not limited to: (1) technological adaptation, (2) ethical adaptation, (3) empowering survivors and ensuring well-being, and (4) managing academic outputs within a survivor-led framework.

Due to the survivor-informed methodology employed, there was always fluidity built into our research programme, particularly around the structure and content of workshops, though we had set a total number and general desired set of outcomes in line with our funding and research questions. We intentionally designed the research in order to allow the participants to shape the content according to their own needs and aims. Nonetheless, we noticed that several significant adaptations were necessary in order to complete the project in these challenging circumstances. This section will contain excerpts from monthly interviews with practitioners – the discussion of workshops will focus on the Kenya-based strand of the team, and the overall project administration and analysis of findings will focus largely on the UK-based team.

Adaptations Made to Workshops in Kenya

The first significant adaptation made was the shift to remote working, and holding the workshops virtually, rather than in person. This meant that consideration had to be given to the technology used, and the sizes of groups.

Delays to the project due to COVID-19 meant that our research timetable overlapped with other work HAART were conducting with survivor-participants, in collaboration with Walk Free, a part of which involved equipping survivor-participants with mobile phones on which to collect relevant data. The Walk Free project focused on survivor leadership and their contributions to the Global Slavery Index. Therefore, on top of the workshops, these survivors also received training and mentorship on survivor leadership from Minh Dang and Sophie Otiende. This overlap made it possible to continue with our research remotely, as it meant all our participants could be connected to each other, and to the research team, via their phones, and could take photographs with the phone's cameras (and share their images easily with Beya and the rest of the research team).

Participants were given an Oppo A12, and we pre-installed software including Google Meet, Zoom, WPS Reader (an Office suite necessary for reading PDF documents and versions of slide-presentations sent to all participants), Google Drive (to save images to), WhatsApp, and an email account application. Participants were also given an individual, anonymised, email address to use for the project.

The technology used in workshops was the subject of discussion with survivors, and provided significant insight into survivor-led methodologies. Of particular note was

the preference for the video-calling software Zoom. Whilst many academics in the UK were discouraged from using Zoom at the start of the pandemic, due to potential security risks, survivor-participants found the software preferable as it granted them the agency to choose – and change – their own names, or go by just their initials. They also thought that Zoom was easy to use and, because of its easy integration with Google Calendar, it was easy for them to simply click on the link on the calendar invite. Workshops were recorded, but recording did not start until all participants had changed their names to their preferred initials.

Using software that survivors already had experience with in their daily lives – such as Google services – not only made the project more accessible and user-friendly, but it also suggested a familiarity to the project where more academic software may have intimidated and overwhelmed participants.

Moreover, we noticed that Zoom was proving a bountiful platform for cultivating community. As academics and researchers we thought perhaps participants might experience "Zoom-fatigue", but participants embraced the ability to connect via Zoom. Otiende rightly noted, in October 2020, that perhaps we had been taking too much for granted, and that it was a sign of *all* the team's "privilege" (in her words) that we could get tired of Zoom, because we were "participat[ing] in a million webinars" due to COVID-19.[8] This was because we were all already embedded in communities of fellow researchers, artists, activists, friends and family who could meet, and even increase usual activity, online. But this was not the case for our participants.

Our experience shows that to create a community you do *not* need to be in-person, but can be online, so long as the commitment and support (technical and personal) is there: "there's nothing can limit you from doing exactly what you want online".[9]

The overlap with other research involving survivor-participants, and the move to remote workshops, meant we could – and also felt we should – increase the number of participants. Our original projected number had been constrained by funding (as we would refund travel costs as well as pay participants for their time and expertise), and remote working meant more money was available. Moreover, we felt it would be unfair to exclude any participants who wanted to engage with this research as well as the work with Walk Free, and for that reason repurposed some other parts of the budget (with our funder's permission) to increase the number of participants, and the amount of hours the Kenyan team would need to work to support their work. Our number of participants increased from 5-6 to 16.

Having additional people in the group meant not just a wider pool of participants and materials, but a more diverse and extended community. In particular, we could include participants in more remote and rural locations: we had seen our inability to do so in the original plan as unavoidable, but a limitation. This group of 16 was separated into three smaller groups (two of five, and one of six) according to geographic proximity – two groups in Nairobi, and one on the coast. (For context, the highest case-rates of COVID-19 have been reported in Nairobi and the coastal areas

[8] Sophie Otiende (Project Lead), interview with Emily Brady, 26.10.2020.
[9] Ibid.

around Mombasa.[10]) These smaller groups were suggested in order to encourage maximal participation for all survivors involved in the research.

Having a larger total group of participants than originally planned allowed for a wider sense of community, yet keeping workshops to 5-6 people according to geographic proximity allowed people to still actively participate in workshops without fear of being side-lined or spoken over. This also prevented survivors from feeling intimidated by speaking in front of many people.

The process of gathering informed consent was also altered from our initial plans. Whereas originally an in-person workshop would have been held in which the project would have been explained in detail, survivors could have asked questions, and ultimately would have signed a physical form, any physical interaction was deemed unsafe in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research team's trained counsellor (Manji) took on responsibility for talking participants through the project on a one-to-one basis (on Google Meet), and securing their informed consent. After having the project explained to them (including confidentiality, anonymity or use of pseudonyms, and data security etc.), and what it would require of them made plain, and their questions about it answered, the participants were asked to type "I consent" in the chat if they did consent to take part in the research. Manji then took a screen-shot capturing the video and the chat.

Alternatively, Manji recorded phone calls with the participant where they said "I consent" after a similar process of explanation and ability to ask, and have answered, any questions about the project. These technological adaptations to obtaining informed consent were of crucial importance to this project, as the principle of ethical storytelling in particular relies on the full comprehension and willing participation of any and all participants.

Whilst the project had always intended to use both group and individual sessions with survivors, as is customary in the practice of participatory photography, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the need for individual, one-on-one meetings. Not only did survivors require more reassurance and feedback, they also sometimes were reluctant to admit that they did not understand a concept in group discussion. As such, the practitioners were required to offer more individual support than originally envisioned. We noticed a need for this as early as the first photography session (September 2020). Whereas, in in-person workshops, there would be a chance for participants to ask individual questions with some degree of privacy, and there would be built-in elements of one-to-one supervision and feedback, this is almost impossible in a group Zoom session (or any online session). Participants were therefore reaching out more frequently than originally anticipated to Baya and Ali Haji for further instruction, feedback and reassurance, and Baya noted she had to be "open to communication at any time".[11] All work with survivor-participants can involve needing to be "a bit more patient and … a bit more understanding"[12], but this was increased in terms of taking time to explain, and support, work in the digital space. Given this experience, this was another good reason to have split the participants into smaller groups, as even in these smaller groups our experience was that people could be shy of asking questions and admitting they did not understand

---

[10] https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/ke. Last accessed 26.2.21.

[11] Rehema Baya (Photographic Consultant), interview with Emily Brady, 13.10.2020.

[12] Rehema Baya (Photographic Consultant), interview with Emily Brady, 15.09.2020.

or needed more support in front of people who were (at least at the start) strangers. (This applies, of course, more widely than only to work with survivors.)

Because participants sometimes appeared to have understood the particular task in the workshop, but would then follow-up for detailed support and explanation one-on-one, revealing that they had not entirely understood the concept of the assignment, we also started sending personalised feedback to participants, rather than sharing general feedback in the next group workshop. This helped participants have a record of things they might want to consider adjusting or changing, and the feedback from experts. As Baya rightly notes “sometimes with learning you have to go through the same lesson a few times so that you’re able to understand it” – but this made the research much more labour-intensive for the researchers than we had initially imagined.

In addition to more one-on-one sessions, we found we were required to be more flexible with language than previously thought. This involved greater use of Swahili by researchers than originally imagined. Though we had capacity for this in the Kenyan team, it involved making changes to the existing syllabus. More significantly, we also found it was necessary to create a programme that was very localised and relevant to the lives of the survivor-participants. This also meant significant changes had to made to the planned syllabus once workshops on story-telling had already started.[13] The team also had to incorporate a Swahili interpreter on the calls to assist with translation, and ensure that participants who were only conversant with, or much more comfortable working in, Swahili were fully accommodated.

As such, the COVID-19 pandemic required in the Kenyan researchers to adapt the project significantly in order to cultivate a positive environment and culture for survivors. From technological changes, to increasing group size, to gathering informed consent, to increasing the number of one-on-one sessions, restricting the syllabus, and speaking in multiple languages, the project transformed in both predicted and unforeseen ways. These decisions and transformations were always informed directly by the survivor participants, who were vocal about what elements of the project were working, and what were not. As such, the workshops in Kenya demonstrate the importance of flexibility in survivor-led participatory research practices.

Adaptations to Overall Project

Originally our project was envisioned to last twelve months, including planning, enacting workshops, and distributing findings. COVID-19 meant we had to pause the project – our funders also kindly allowed no-cost extensions to planned projects, and adaptations to respond to the global pandemic. In order to carry out the our research, the team had to have several discussions about how to deliver this project under new circumstances.

One of the most important discussions that was held was the shifting of resources allocated to the project as a result of COVID-19. Initially, the project had budgeted to allow for two physical exhibitions – one in Kenya and one in the UK – and travel costs for team members from both the UK and Kenya to visit each other. However, as a result of COVID-19, it became apparent that completing these activities was

[13] Aisha Ali Haji (Storytelling Consultant), interview with Emily Brady, 16.10.2020

impossible. We therefore sought approval to redistribute those costs to other areas of the project. As mentioned above, it became quickly apparent that not only could we afford to reimburse survivor participants for their time at a higher rate than previously indicated, but that we could recruit more participants as well. As such, the number of participants to 16 individuals. Indeed, this exceeded even our revised estimation, as our June 2020 Project Amendment document stated we hoped to increase to 10 participants. As such, we were able to platform and support more survivors than anticipated as a direct result of the shift to virtual learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our original plans for dissemination also had to be changed in response to the pandemic. The primary output of this project remains the forthcoming Worldreader publication which, at time of writing in February 2021, is currently being compiled. The idea that survivors could turn their stories and images into a readily accessible publication had been one of the foundational components of this project. Partnering with Worldreader importantly allows these stories to be shared with people across the world in a highly accessible fashion. Not only do Worldreader host many texts in languages other than English (including Swahili), their e-reader platform is designed to be accessible from almost any mobile phone, and is entirely free to readers (and without adverts). Their aim is to encourage reading across the globe by providing interesting and accessible reading material. Our partnership with Worldreader means the stories produced by participants can be shared with a global public audience, not just with other practitioners and academics, and in a wide range of countries on both the Global South and Global North where survivors of human trafficking often face marginalisation and stigma, including some of the countries where people from, or now living in, Kenya have experienced human trafficking and exploitation.

Our initial plan involved analysing data from Worldreader about where these stories were being read, and general demographic information about who was reading them and how they were engaging with them. In part, this was aimed at empowering our participants by showing them concrete evidence of other people engaging with their work – in part it was aimed at showing NGOs, policy-makers and academics who work with survivors that narratives generated through ethical story-telling techniques could have global impact, and to therefore encourage their adoption. COVID-related delays have meant we have not yet uploaded the narratives to Worldreader, and so we have not been able to analyse any data to date, but this remains a core part of our on-going research in this area.

As it is an e-reader, our plans to publish with Worldreader were unaffected (apart from how quickly we thought we could have finished narratives to share with them) by COVID-19. However, other key outputs such as a physical exhibition and conference papers were effectively derailed by the pandemic. Thankfully, in the case of this project, the survivor-led nature of the outputs meant that flexibility had been a cornerstone of the outputs suggested. This meant that we were able to adapt to the shifting circumstances to devise an alternative plan for still impactful outputs.

For example, members of the team have been able to present collaboratively at a range of different online events – importantly, members of the team from Nottingham and from Nairobi have been able to present together, which would have been more difficult (not lease because much more expensive) pre-pandemic. This is an important benefit of the shift to more online events cause by the pandemic, particularly regarding access to dissemination events for researchers and scholars in

the Global South (and access to their research and expertise for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers in the Global North).

In addition, we have designed an online exhibition, which will mean our outputs have an even wider reach than the original plans for exhibitions in Nottingham and Nairobi. A website need never “close” (unlike a physical exhibition) making it accessible to people in multiple countries and time-zones. And although some people will be barred from accessing it because of a lack of access to technology (such as smartphones, laptops or an internet connection), our survivor-participants will be able to see the exhibition, and show it to family and friends, via the phones they received as part of the project itself. Moreover, we can more-easily track interaction with and reaction to the photographs online, as well as record anonymous demographic data automatically through the software. This has great advantages for our research into the impact of the work produced by participants in our project, and how members of the public engage with it, and with what results.

By adapting to the shift to virtual spaces, therefore, new opportunities for impact and engagement can be embraced. Crucial to this are notions of flexibility, which are built into the methods we chose to use. It has been exciting for the whole team to see where participants wanted the project to go. Of course, our methods mean researchers have to cede control of the project, which undermines the usual power-dynamic in research between “the researcher” and “the researched”. In our case, too, this involved ceding power from a research institution in the Global North to survivor-participants in the Global South, which also makes it an interesting case-study in what can be possible in terms of challenging hierarchical relationships and legacies of colonialism. Our project has proven our initial hypothesis that ethical story-telling and participatory photography could both be used, in tandem, as part of meaningful work with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking to give them control of their narratives. COVID-19 aside, it has also shown that deliberately flexible and participant-led methods can be powerful tools in doing research in a changing, and often uncertain, world – we hope with wider application than just the context of human trafficking in Kenya in the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also shown what is possible for research teams from institutions with very different histories; geographical locations; financial, social and political statuses when working together in a participatory and deliberately co-operative manner.

Positive and Negative Consequences of Adaptation

The impact of COVID-19 on this research project cannot be understated, yet these impacts were not consistently negative. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic response generated innovative research practices both to support, and at the request of, the survivor participants. International collaboration became easier than ever before, as presenting remotely via online events became easier than ever before, and everyone became much more proficient with MS Teams, WhatsApp and Zoom (and such technology because ubiquitous). On the project itself, the decision to change our outputs and the impact of the Kenyan travel ban meant that there was more space for participants in the project, and made it more accessible to participants than ever before. Crucially, the project provided a space for survivors to connect with each other and cultivate a community. At a time when many survivors of human trafficking were isolated, and cut off from their regular support networks, this project provided a safe space for survivors to tell their own stories, take their own images, and develop

new skills. Indeed, people who may have otherwise been unable to travel (even with financial support) due to issues such as childcare could now participate in the project.

It is important to note, however, that the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic were on occasion negative, and subsequent adaptations were not universally successful. Indeed, we as a team worked within a considerably volatile and stressful time in order to complete this project, and some additional burdens and disappointments were inevitable. One particular consequence of the shift to virtual learning was that more pressure fell on the HAART strand of the project than originally intended. This included extra costs such as translation, editing, and increased numbers of one-on-one meetings, and increased technical support in terms of giving feedback on photographs and writing samples. This was exacerbated by the increase in participants from 5-6 to 16. Whilst the Rights Lab strand of the project offered additional administrative assistance where possible, the burden of most extra work fell on the Kenyan team due to their geographical location, expertise and confidentiality agreements with participants. The research team were all working on this project part-time, and everyone experienced increased pressures in their professional and personal lives due to COVID-19. If we were to re-plan the programme, we would change our proposed timeline accordingly and allow for a longer period of time for producing the artistic outputs, and gathering data for later analysis about their impact. Whilst the HAART team succeeded in delivering a series of workshops that empowered and engaged survivors, we have learned that future projects of this nature should ensure that, in survivor-led projects, additional costs should be set aside to ensure that any additional work that is required can be accommodated.

Conclusion and Considerations for Future Projects

In the case of our project, the decision to proceed with the research in a virtual space was at the direct request of the survivor participants. As such, the survivor-led nature of the project meant that we were able to proceed with this core value intact despite disruption from COVID-19. Thanks to the flexibility of the team, and the adaptability of our project's funders, we were able to deliver a project which, whilst not what was originally intended, managed to keep consistent with the original ideals of the project. At the core of this project was a dedication to ethical practice and survivor well-being, which informed the decision-making process. However, we noted that the unexpected costs of working remotely – including increasing need for survivor support in one-on-one contexts – were unanticipated, and could have been better reflected in the re-budgeting of this project. Our key recommendations for those seeking to run a similar project in future would be:

1. Have an open conversation with funding bodies about expectations in survivor-led projects, especially as pertains to outputs. Likewise, prepare to be flexible with your own anticipated outputs.
2. Ensure that funding is allocated to cover unanticipated additional costs, especially as pertains to direct participant engagement.
3. If possible, look to pool resources with other projects with similar aims.

4. Establish a regular means of communication and accountability with the wider team – we utilised regular recorded catch-up meetings on MS Teams which allowed us to track the developments shared in this chapter.

Whilst there is no easy roadmap to a successful survivor-led research project, particularly when challenged by the impact of COVID-19, the adaptability and resourcefulness of the team and – crucially – the survivor participants in this project resulted in the production of original material that makes a significant intervention in the field of participatory research studies and in conducting participant-led social work and research in the Global South.