Assessing the Affective Impact of Community Archives:
A Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

All community-based archivists have stories that demonstrate the importance of their work to the communities they serve. From the teenager who discovered what their grandmother's handwriting looked like, to the artist who got inspiration from traces past generations left behind, and the activist who learned a new political strategy from historic records, ***community archives change lives.***

Yet these stories of impact can be difficult to systemically track and use for the benefit of community archives. This toolkit provides community archives with the tools to collect, analyze, and leverage stories about the emotional (or affective) impact of their organizations on the communities they serve and represent. By systematically interviewing stakeholders to find out how community archives are life-changing, organizations can collect useful data that can help articulate stories of their value to potential funders and make stronger cases for support, ultimately leading to increased budgets and capacity that ultimately strengthen community archives and the communities they serve and represent.

We know that the people who make community archives function are already over-burdened with work and under-resourced, so we hope this toolkit can demystify the process of demonstrating affective impact, making it easier to translate community members' stories into increased organizational support.

We will now define and discuss some of the key concepts and terms employed by this toolkit.

What is a community archives?

U.K.-based archival studies scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd define community as "any manner of people who come together and present themselves as such and a 'community archive' is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality."[1] While the community archives phenomenon is little-understood in the American context, such organizations often coalesce around a marginalized identity, including ethnic, racial and religious identities, as well as sexual and gender orientation, political affiliation, economic status and physical locations.[2] It is these marginalized identity-based community archives that this toolkit addresses.

These archives are often formed in reaction to the failure of mainstream archives to tell the accurate and complex stories of marginalized communities, resulting in mistrust of those institutions. Community-based organizations and projects invite and empower communities to have a stake in their own history, often through practices that value and

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[1] Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy and the Mainstream." *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 75.

[2] Michelle Caswell, "Toward a Survivor-centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives." *Archival Science* 14, no. 3-4 (2014): 61.

encourage the participation of their users and larger communities. Such organizations may vary in size, governance structure, financial capacity, relationship to dominant institutions, and the nature of the identity and community being documented. Yet, community archives are united in their insistence that marginalized communities take ownership of their own historical representations as a means of empowerment.

What is affect? What does it have to do with archives?
We define affect as "those visceral forces beneath, alongside," feeling and emotions, encompassing the conscious, the semi-conscious, and that which is "*other than* conscious knowing;" the non-cognitive, non-linguistic and non-rational forces that undergird thought, action, and relationships.[3] For the purposes of this toolkit, participants demonstrate *affective* impact when they express changes in emotions, or how they *feel* about themselves, their communities, or the world, as a result of interactions with or at community archives. Such affective impact may be positive or negative.

"Symbolic annihilation" is a term used by scholars to describe how members of marginalized groups are absent, under-represented, or misrepresented in mainstream media and archives. At the UCLA Community Archives Lab, we are particularly interested in the feelings associated with symbolic annihilation and are building theories and generating models to assess the emotional impact of encounters with archives.[4] Representation—or its lack—in archives has a powerful affective impact, our research asserts.

We propose the term *"representational belonging"* to describe "the ways in which community archives empower people who have been marginalized by mainstream media outlets and memory institutions to have the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them in a variety of symbolic contexts."[5] In one study, our research team interviewed seventeen community archives founders, staff and volunteers at twelve sites in Southern California to confirm that such concepts resonate with lived experience.[6] Based on this empirical data, we proposed a tripartite framework (*Figure 1*) for discussing the impact of community archives in the wake of symbolic annihilation: ontological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "*I am here*"); epistemological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "*we were here*"); and social impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "*we belong here*"). This model acknowledges the personal and social

[3] Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010): 1.

[4] Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez, "'To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing': Uncovering the Affective Impact of Community Archives," *The American Archivist* 79 (Spring/ Summer 2016): 56-81.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Michelle Caswell, Alda Allina Migoni, Noah Geraci and Marika Cifor, "'To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise': A Framework for Understanding the Impact of Community Archives," forthcoming.

dimensions of records and archives, and provides a conceptual tool to begin to assess their impact in affective terms.
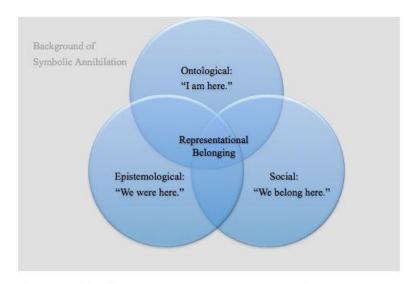

Figure 1: The Impact of Community Archives in Response to Symbolic Annihilation

We see the robust self-representation of marginalized groups in archives as an important first step towards building liberatory archives.

What is impact?
When we talk about impact, we mean a noticeable or observable change in something. Over the past fifteen years, several frameworks have been proposed to assess the social, economic and pedagogical impact of museums, libraries and archives. Peter Brophy, in his assessment of the impact of information services, defines impact as "…any *effect* of a service, product or other 'event' on an individual or group…" that can have positive or negative, short term or long term results.[7] For example, when we demonstrate people learned something important or useful by using archives, we say archives have an educational impact. When we demonstrate archival use stimulated local economies or imparted marketable skills in volunteers, we say they have an economic impact. When we demonstrate that archives helped support claims for legal redress or reparation, we say they have a social justice impact. This toolkit provides resources for assessing the affective impact of community archives by providing models of how to document changes in people's emotional well-being as a result of their involvement in and use of community archives.

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[7] Peter Brophy, "The Development of a Model for Assessing the Level of Impact of Information and Library Services," *Library and Information Research* 29, no. 93 (2005): 43–49. 44.

What is qualitative data?
When we collect qualitative data, we try to understand the world through the words of our research participants. In this case our research participants are interview subjects or focus group participants who are members of the communities served and represented by community archives. Instead of trying to measure their interactions with archives by counting or performing a statistical analysis, we collect and analyze qualitative data to surface complex ideas, experiences, and themes held in common, using our participants' own words to guide our research findings.

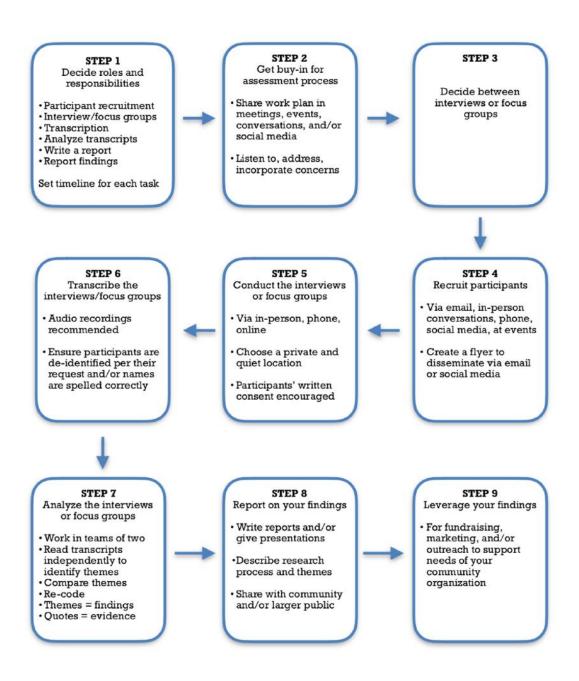**Why bother assessing the affective impact of community archives?**
Community archives are under-resourced and often struggle to sustain themselves financially. It can be difficult to demonstrate the value of preserving and making accessible traces of the past when marginalized communities are facing urgent political crisis in the present. And yet the work that community archives do is essential for building strong and healthy communities. Despite the importance of community archives, foundations and government agencies have largely ignored this sector in the U.S., due to priorities and policies that favor large, dominant, predominantly white institutions over small, local, archives coalescing around marginalized identities. Community archives often lack the time and capacity to meet the bureaucratic demands of funding agencies, including mechanisms to assess their value and measure their impact. When their impact is explored, it is often done using quantitative measures, such as how many people used archival collections or how many new collections were acquired or processed. While these numbers are important, they do not paint a full picture of the impact of these organizations on the communities they serve and represent. To help illustrate their impact, community archives practitioners could benefit from methods to systematically elicit and document *stories* about the ways that their work has changed people's lives. These stories of qualitative impact can then be shared with community members and potential funders in presentations, grant applications, solicitation letters, and marketing materials that can help make the case for funding particular community archives. We hope that the tools provided in this toolkit will elicit stories that can be leveraged to catalyze resources in support of the vital work of community archives.

USING THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed for founders, board members, staff, volunteers and researchers to assess the affective impact of community archives using easy-to-follow steps. Every community is different and community archives reflect the values of the communities they serve and represent. The following workflow is meant as a flexible, suggested starting point; feel free to alter it to suit the specific needs of your community.

STEP 1
Decide roles and responsibilities

- Participant recruitment
- Interview/focus groups
- Transcription
- Analyze transcripts
- Write a report
- Report findings

Set timeline for each task

STEP 2
Get buy-in for assessment process

- Share work plan in meetings, events, conversations, and/or social media
- Listen to, address, incorporate concerns

STEP 3

Decide between interviews or focus groups

STEP 6
Transcribe the interviews/focus groups

- Audio recordings recommended
- Ensure participants are de-identified per their request and/or names are spelled correctly

STEP 5
Conduct the interviews or focus groups

- Via in-person, phone, online
- Choose a private and quiet location
- Participants' written consent encouraged

STEP 4
Recruit participants

- Via email, in-person conversations, phone, social media, at events
- Create a flyer to disseminate via email or social media

STEP 7
Analyze the interviews or focus groups

- Work in teams of two
- Read transcripts independently to identify themes
- Compare themes
- Re-code
- Themes = findings
- Quotes = evidence

STEP 8
Report on your findings

- Write reports and/or give presentations
- Describe research process and themes
- Share with community and/or larger public

STEP 9
Leverage your findings

- For fundraising, marketing, and/or outreach to support needs of your community organization

Step 1: Deciding Roles and Responsibilities
While we have tried to make the process as simple as possible, assessing the impact of your organization takes a significant commitment of time and labor. We estimate that at least 40 hours of labor are needed to complete the following steps.

The tasks can be completed by a single dedicated individual or by a team of people. If a team is conducting the assessment process, it is important to delineate roles and divide up responsibilities at the outset. You will want to establish responsibilities for the following tasks:

- Participant recruitment
- Conducting the interviews or focus groups
- Transcription
- Analysis of transcripts
- Writing a report
- Reporting findings to those in leadership, development and marketing roles

Deciding on clear roles and responsibilities upfront will streamline the assessment process and prevent miscommunications. Establish a realistic timeline for accomplishing these tasks.

Step 2: Getting Buy-In
Once the roles, responsibilities, and timeline have been established, it is important to get key stakeholders on board with the assessment process. Propose your work plan to the organization's board of directors and/or staff or volunteers at board meetings, membership meetings, events, instruction sessions, and in one-on-one conversations. Talk to your community members about it. Post it on your organization's social media pages. Use the examples in this toolkit to explain why the assessment process is important and how it can strengthen marketing and fundraising efforts. Listen, address, and incorporate any concerns stakeholders may have.

Step 3: Deciding Between Interviews or Focus Groups
Once key stakeholders are on board, you will need to decide if you are going to conduct one-on-one interviews with community members, or if you would like to conduct focus groups. A focus group is a guided discussion with several participants in conversation with each other. Interviews allow participants to express themselves privately, taking as much time as they need to have their voices heard. In focus groups, group dynamics may influence the tone and substance of the conversation, for better or worse. In some focus groups, a single participant may dominate the conversation, discouraging full participation from other attendees. In other focus groups, the group dynamic enables a richer conversation, with participants responding to and building off of each other's thoughts and feelings. Some communities disparage the discussion of private emotions in a public setting; for others, public displays of emotion are common. Logistically, one-on-one

interviews take time to set up and conduct, while focus groups enable the collection of data from many participants in an hour or two.

Interviews	Focus Groups
One-on-one conversations	Group discussion
Participants can express thoughts and feelings privately and at their own pace	Group dynamics may influence tone, substance, and length/frequency of individual responses
Enables a more focused conversation with one individual	May enable a richer discussion because participants respond or build off of each other's thoughts and feelings
Requires more time to set up and conduct, but can be scheduled at participants' convenience	Data collected from multiple participants in 1-2 hours

There is no single correct answer for how to engage your participants; pick the format that is best for you, your community, and your organization.

Step 4: Recruiting Participants
Participant recruitment can take many forms. You may directly recruit participants in-person via conversations and reference interactions, or at public events. You can also call and email community members to recruit them. You may create a recruitment flyer (see Appendix 1) that provides information on how to participate. Flyers can be posted at events, at the reference desk, and at other community centers. You can post recruitment materials on social media. In all cases, make sure to respect the privacy of your community members and honor their right not to participate.

If you choose to organize focus groups, be aware of potential power dynamics between participants (brought on by differences such as race, gender, and age) as you determine the composition of the groups. Additionally, consider the power dynamics between participants and interviewer/ focus group leader. Depending on context, an interviewer/ focus group leader perceived to be an insider may elicit important sensitive information that an outsider could not, in other cases such perceptions of insider-status may prohibit the sharing of information. Do your best to ensure focus group participants will feel comfortable expressing themselves in a group setting. Limit focus groups to a maximum of six participants each.

Schedule interviews or focus groups at times and places that are convenient for your community members. Communicate with your participants if you are offering any incentives (such as financial remuneration, reimbursement for transportation costs, or food) in exchange for participation. Explain how their participation will help the organization by strengthening grant proposals and marketing materials.

There is no magic number in terms of the quantity of participants to recruit. A basic rule of thumb is to include as many participants as is necessary to get a wide range of responses. If you find that interviews or focus groups become repetitive without generating new themes or ideas, you can consider data collection to be "saturated" and you can stop scheduling new interviews or focus groups. In our experience, we have found a wide range of valuable data interviewing and conducting focus groups with as little as 10 participants per site.

Step 5: Conducting the Interviews or Focus Groups

Interviews may be conducted in person, over the phone, or online. While online focus groups can generate useful information, it is best to conduct focus groups in person, if possible. In our experience, interviews can last between 20 minutes and an hour, while focus groups can last between an hour and two hours. Make sure to choose a location that is private and quiet, where the participants feel comfortable. If your community archives has a space big enough for a focus group, holding it in that space after-hours works well. If not, you may find a meeting room at a local public library, community center, or university. Restaurants and cafes are not ideal due to ambient noise and commercial expectations. We have found more people are likely to attend focus groups in the evenings and weekends, but the right time depends on the needs of your particular community.

The questions found in Appendix 2 can help guide your interviews or focus groups. They are meant to be rough guidelines used to direct the conversation, but feel free to tailor them to suit your community's context and to ask follow up questions in response to participants' answers. We have found the question "Can you please say more?" helpful in soliciting further information when a participant says something of interest. If participants veer off topic, feel free to gently guide them back to the questions. Encourage the full participation of all focus group participants by directly calling on those who have not spoken much. You may say, "We haven't heard much from you. What do you think?" While it is good to take notes, make sure you are actively listening to responses and paying attention to group dynamics.

Depending on the location and time of day the interview or focus group is scheduled, it is ideal to feed participants (if budgets allow for it). At a minimum, provide bottles of water. Given that participants may be expressing emotional responses, it is a good idea to have tissues on hand.

It is strongly recommended that you get written consent from each interview or focus group participant at the beginning of the session. See *Appendix 3* for a sample consent form. Your consent form should include consent to record the session. It should also enable participants to decide if they would like their names and affiliations to remain confidential (that is, that they will *not* be identified by name in subsequent reports, publications, marketing materials, or grant applications), or if they would like to be identified by name if cited in subsequent reports, publications, marketing materials, or grant applications. Community archives that are located within university settings may be subject to ethics

approval before their Institutional Review Board (IRB) *prior to* conducting interviews or focus groups. If your organization is part of a university, contact your institution's review board for more information.

Interviews and focus groups should be recorded so that they can later be transcribed. Note taking, while helpful, cannot adequately capture exact, detailed quotations. We recommend using two different recording devices simultaneously in the event that one does not work. (We have experienced data loss ourselves, so we cannot stress how important it is to have a backup.) You can use the recording feature on a smartphone, the audio record feature provided by QuickTime Player, a digital recording device, the record feature on Skype or Zoom, a video camera, or even an audio cassette tape. Check in advance to make sure your recording method works.

Step 6: Transcribing the Interviews or Focus Groups
We recommend having the entirety of your interview or focus group recording transcribed. Transcription is a time-consuming process. There are many companies that you can find online that you can pay to transcribe your recording. Given the small budgets with which most community archives operate, we recommend you transcribe the recorded interviews and focus groups internally; we have found that the close listening required by transcription enables us to become more familiar with our data, so we often prefer to transcribe our own recordings. Alternatively, you may ask a volunteer or intern to transcribe the recordings for you.

After the focus groups or interviews have been transcribed, check to make sure the names of all participants who do not wish to be identified by name are not included in the transcript and that, for those who do wish to be identified by name, that their names are spelled correctly.
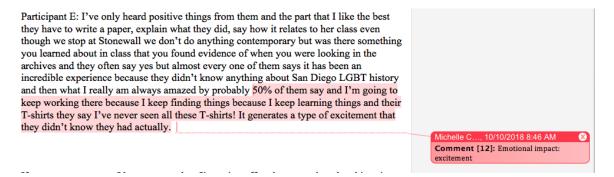
Step 7: Analyzing the Interviews or Focus Groups
Once you have completed the focus groups or interviews and have had the recordings transcribed, the transcripts will serve as your "data," or raw material, to assess the impact of your community archives. This data is qualitative, that is, consisting of the words that your focus group or interview participants said in response to your questions. University researchers may use software to identify and track themes in large amounts of qualitative data, but no software is necessary to analyze the transcripts from your focus groups or interviews. Our research team has found that it is easy to keep track of reoccurring themes by simply using the Insert>New Comment feature in Word documents and then comparing themes across transcripts to develop consistent vocabulary. Below are the steps you can use to identify and track reoccurring themes in your transcripts.
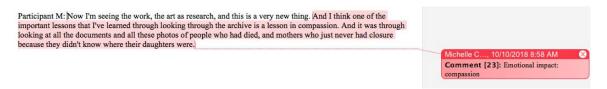
1. Work in a team of at least two people. Assemble all of the transcripts in word documents.
2. Working independently, each team member should read through all transcripts, using the Insert>New Comment feature in Word to identify an important theme from the transcript.

Illustrative quotes should be highlighted, and themes should be described using just a few words in the Comment. The words used to describe the themes should be short and general.
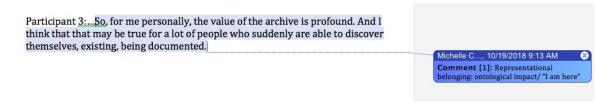
In the example below, a researcher identified the theme "emotional impact: excitement," in the highlighted quote, in which a focus group participant was talking about the ways her students engage with archival materials.

> Participant E: I've only heard positive things from them and the part that I like the best they have to write a paper, explain what they did, say how it relates to her class even though we stop at Stonewall we don't do anything contemporary but was there something you learned about in class that you found evidence of when you were looking in the archives and they often say yes but almost every one of them says it has been an incredible experience because they didn't know anything about San Diego LGBT history and then what I really am always amazed by probably 50% of them say and I'm going to keep working there because I keep finding things because I keep learning things and their T-shirts they say I've never seen all these T-shirts! It generates a type of excitement that they didn't know they had actually.

Michelle C…, 10/10/2018 8:46 AM
Comment [12]: Emotional impact: excitement

In the following example, a researcher identified the theme "emotional impact: compassion," in the highlighted quote, in which a focus group participant was addressing her own reaction to seeing materials in an archives.

> Participant M: Now I'm seeing the work, the art as research, and this is a very new thing. And I think one of the important lessons that I've learned through looking through the archive is a lesson in compassion. And it was through looking at all the documents and all these photos of people who had died, and mothers who just never had closure because they didn't know where their daughters were.

Michelle C…, 10/10/2018 8:58 AM
Comment [23]: Emotional impact: compassion

In the next example, a researcher indicated both "representational belong" and "ontological impact" because the participant's comments indicated that seeing her community represented in community archives changes her way of being in the world.

> Participant 3:…So, for me personally, the value of the archive is profound. And I think that that may be true for a lot of people who suddenly are able to discover themselves, existing, being documented.

Michelle C…, 10/19/2018 9:13 AM
Comment [1]: Representational belonging: ontological impact/ "I am here"

3. After each team member has identified themes in all of the transcripts, the team should meet together to compare the themes that they found and to develop a standardized vocabulary, or a master list of words to consistently identify each of the themes across the transcripts.

The example below is a portion of a standardized vocabulary collectively generated by our research team. There is not a single standardized vocabulary that this toolkit can provide; the themes in your standardized list should emerge organically from your transcripts.

Affect
Affect: alienation
>   from mainstream institution,
>   from community history,
>   from larger society

Affect: amazement
Affect: anger
Affect: chills
Affect: crying
Affect: demoralizing, discouraging, invalidating
Affect: draining
Affect: enjoyment
Affect: Excitement
Affect: exclusion
Affect: Gratitude
Affect: healing
Affect: Hope
Affect: intense
Affect: pride
Affect: tactile or visceral
Affect: trauma and loss

The following is a list of themes our team developed in relation to symbolic annihilation:

THEME: Symbolic annihilation/ identity/ representation [SA]
SA: Disparity between mainstream media and community collections
SA: Disparity between mainstream archives and community collections
SA: Representational belonging/ seeing yourself
SA: Failure of mainstream institutions to document marginalized groups/ absence
SA: Misrepresentation:
>   in media,
>   in mainstream archives,
>   in CBAs

SA: Community archives fill gaps left by mainstream institutions
SA: Respectability politics
SA: Lack of POC in LIS field
SA: Lack of LGBTQ awareness in LIS field
SA: Impact of lack of representation/ misrepresentation in mainstream archives
>   Ontological impact
>   Social
>   Epistemological

SA: Impact of representation in CBAs
>   Ontological impact

Social
Epistemological
knowledge of one's own community
community education
on students
Identity formation
On broader society
On academy
Personal consequences
Politicization
Solidarity between communities
Legitimacy

SA: Identification with subjects in records
SA: Connecting family and archival histories
SA: Combating stereotypes
SA: Historical accuracy
SA: Counter narratives: New narratives/ stories/storytelling
SA: Diversity of formats
SA: Perception materials doesn't exist (at all or in archives)
SA: Dispersion of sources
SA: Self-definition
SA: Intersectionality (or lack thereof)
SA: Symbolic value of records

Again, we suggest that, rather than use our themes, you develop your own list of themes based organically on the themes expressed in your interviews or focus groups.

4. The transcripts should then be reviewed, changing the names of identified themes if necessary to reflect those listed in the standardized vocabulary. Themes should be consistently identified using the same language. For example, if a theme is originally identified as "emotional impact: excitement" in the first round of coding, but the team later determines that the standardized term for that particular theme will be "affect: excitement," then the comment inserted should be changed to reflect the standardized theme.

5. Based on the standardized vocabulary, the team can develop a list of important themes that arose from the transcripts. These themes are your findings. The quotes that are highlighted can be used as data, or evidence to support your findings.

The example below highlights an edited excerpt from an article the team published on the spaces of community archives.[8] In this case, we identified the theme "community archives as home-away-from-home." We then used quotes from our focus groups to illustrate and support our claims that community members spoke of community archives as second homes. Read through the following article excerpt to get a sense of how quotations from your focus groups or interviews can serve as "data" to reveal and support broader themes.

Theme: Community Archives as Home-Away-From-Home

Across sites, users spoke about community archives metaphorically as home. The conception of home varied significantly between communities and individual participants. For some, home is a welcoming space in a hostile climate. For others, home is a space where their experiences and those of their ancestors are validated. For others still it is a space where intergenerational dialogue—sometimes difficult and unsettling—occurs. In some cases, community archives were discussed as extensions of or alternatives to the domestic spaces of home, where previously-taboo conversations could be started. Although the conception of home was far from uniform, participants uniformly described their sites as intensely personal spaces.

For two of the participating archives, users described the spaces as a form of home where the experiences of their ancestors is validated. Located on a residential block, La Historia Society bears a strong resemblance to a home, with framed graduation and military portraits and family photos lining the walls. Marlene Rodriguez, who has lived in El Monte her whole life, described the importance of seeing family members on the walls of the museum, "When people come over here, I think that's what they think, 'This is a part of me. Those people on the wall, they're a part of me.'...I think it's really important, you know, that you feel at home when you come here, you feel like you belong."…

Users of UCI's Southeast Asian Archives (SEAA) also referred to the space as a home, despite being located in the library of a research university. Andy Le, a recent UCI graduate who is now an advisor for the UCI's Student Outreach and Retention Center, said:

What I felt with this unique treasure at UCI is just this home-away-from-home feeling.… [cont...]

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[8] Caswell, Michelle, Joyce Gabiola, Gracen Brilmyer, Jimmy Zavala and Marika Cifor, "Imagining Transformative Spaces: The Personal-Political Sites of Community Archives," *Archival Science* 18(1), 2018.

> This was really a second home for me, and finding that sense of belonging... where I can just take a
>
> break from my academic courses and find time to understand my family's history and bring more
>
> value to the degree that I was earning, that it was more than just a piece of paper, but it was
>
> representing my family's history, their journey coming to the US, and also being a role model for
>
> the youth that I've worked with as an undergraduate.
>
> Judy Wu, a professor and chair of the Department of Asian American Studies at UCI, described SEAA as:
>
> ...such a welcoming space, that not only is it oriented towards students and community members,
>
> but just anyone who wants to access or work with or be inspired by the materials. I've definitely
>
> worked in archives where I felt like I was told all these regulations of what not to do, where they
>
> are basically trying to protect the materials *from me*. I feel like this is a space where you are
>
> welcome.

The process outlined here can help surface themes that articulate the impact of a particular community archives on the community it serves and represents.

Step 8: Reporting on your Findings

Written Reports:

In the previous example, our findings were reported in an academic, peer-reviewed journal. While you may be interested in distributed your findings to an academic audience, there are many other more community-oriented ways of reporting your findings to your community. You may write a report that describes your research process and details the themes you discovered. You could make copies and distribute the report to your board of directors and to your users. You could post the report online to reach a broader audience. You will have to decide if your report is for an internal audience of staff, volunteers, and board members, or if you would like to share it with the broader public.

Presentations:

You might present your findings to the community archives' board members or membership, or to the interview or focus group participants. Our research team has presented our findings back to focus group participants at several sights and found them very eager to learn about the findings and excited to see how their comments help contribute to knowledge about the organization and the community more broadly. Such involvement with the results of your research is considered a best-practice for community-engaged research.

You may also be interested in reporting your findings beyond the community served and represented by the archives. Professional conferences, archives "bazaars" or open houses, and local history days are all great opportunities to share your findings. Again, as in written reports, you will have to decide if your findings are for an internal audience or for the broader public.

Step 9: Leveraging Your Findings

Most importantly, your findings can be used in the organization's fundraising, marketing, and outreach materials to best support the needs of the community. Below, we use the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) as a case study to demonstrate a few examples of how you can leverage your findings to support your community archives.

Case Study: SAADA and "Where We Belong"
In 2015, researchers from UCLA's Community Archives Lab interviewed South Asian American academics who use SAADA's materials in the classroom and in their own research. These conversations helped develop the community archives impact framework presented on page X and, more specifically, demonstrated that SAADA was helping South Asian Americans assert "I am here," "We were here," and "We belong here," all of which are phrases that emerged from our interview participants.

Both the impact framing and the specific phrase, "we belong here" were then put to use by SAADA's Executive Director, Samip Mallick, to help develop new projects and write grant proposals to fund those projects. Below is an excerpt of a grant proposal that SAADA submitted to the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage for a project entitled, "Where We Belong: Artists in the Archive":

Please summarize the project in 75-100 words

The South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) will convene a multidisciplinary cohort of artists for a year-long discovery process to investigate how collaboration between artists and archives might effectively counteract the symbolic annihilation of immigrant and minority communities. Results of the discovery process will be shared with the public in a number of ways, including through a one-day capstone conference at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania where the artists will present prototypes of new creative works. The project's findings will guide SAADA's future community-engagement initiatives, such as the possible development of a digital artist-in-residency project.

Describe your project. What are you trying to discover? Answer in 1000 words or less.

With support from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, SAADA seeks to discover how collaboration between artists and archives might effectively counteract the symbolic annihilation of immigrant and minority communities.

Communications scholar George Gerbner was the first to use the term "symbolic annihilation," to claim that "representation in the fictional world signifies social existence, absence means symbolic annihilation" as applied to the symbolic world created by television. Media studies scholars now use the term to describe the ways in which minoritized groups are ignored, misrepresented, or maligned [cont...]

in the media and in the historical narrative. To be symbolically annihilated is to be an eternal outsider whose very existence is presumed to be an impossibility. In the wake of this absence, marginalized communities fail to see themselves or their place in the world…

In her recent research, Dr. Michelle Caswell (SAADA Co-Founder and Assistant Professor of Archival Studies at UCLA) explores both the absence of historical materials related to South Asian Americans before the emergence of SAADA as well as the archive's ability to promote feelings of inclusion both within the South Asian American ethnic community and in larger American society. Through interviews with members of SAADA's Academic Council who have used the archive in their work, Dr. Caswell's research reveals the ways in which SAADA counters the symbolic annihilation of the community it serves, and instead produces feelings of "representational belonging," having the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive. As one research respondent stated, to see oneself reflected in the archive is "to suddenly discover yourself existing."

What role can collaboration between artists and archives play in countering the symbolic annihilation of South Asian Americans? How can archival materials inform artists' creative works as they grapple with questions of identity and belonging as members of a new immigrant community? What affective impact will exploration of their own identity and community history have on the artists themselves? Will the resulting artistic works, created through a process of engagement with the archive, have a greater impact on the community's feelings of representational belonging than accessing the archival materials themselves?
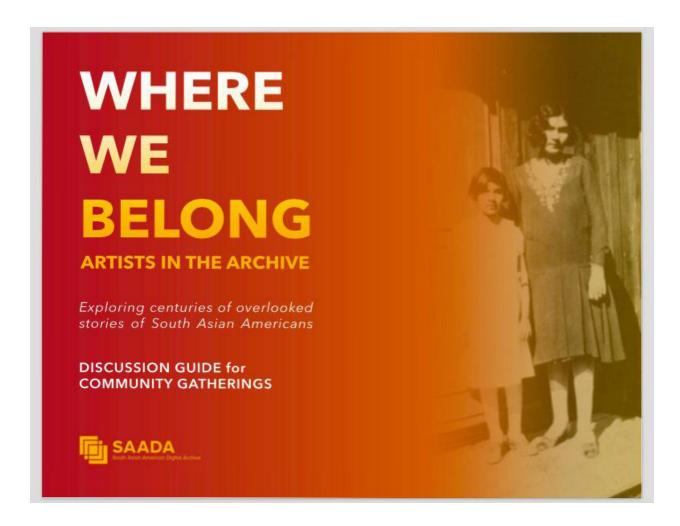
SAADA will convene a multidisciplinary cohort of artists for a yearlong discovery process to respond to these questions, and ultimately work towards understanding how collaboration between artists and archives might help to counteract the symbolic annihilation of immigrant and minority communities….

By engaging in three concurrent streams of discovery: impact on the artists, impact on the community, and impact on the organization (described in greater detail later in the proposal), this project explores the potential of an entirely new methodological approach. Namely, this project seeks to discover whether by rethinking, remixing, and reimagining materials in the archive, value can be added to these materials in a way that enhances their potential for impacting symbolic annihilation and representational belonging in immigrant and minority communities beyond the value of the archival materials themselves. This project has potential great impact not just on our organization, but also on other community-based and major cultural heritage institutions interested in more thoughtfully engaging immigrant and minority communities. Through this discovery process, we seek to understand how collaboration between artists and archives can help others to find themselves suddenly existing.

You can see how affective assessment research was used throughout the proposal excerpt. The grant proposal was successful and the project was funded by the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage. The resulting program, "Where We Belong: Artists in the Archive," drew hundreds of community members to an event in Philadelphia in 2017 to view new artwork created by South Asian American artists using materials from SAADA and to discuss the impact of representation in archives, art and media. (For more information on that event, please visit: https://www.saada.org/wherewebelong). The participating artists were then interviewed and select attendees participated in a focus group in order to assess the project's impact in countering symbolic annihilation and asserting representational belonging. These findings were then reported back to the funding agency, which, in turn, gave SAADA another grant for a related project.

SAADA's Executive Director, Samip Mallick, then further leveraged the framing and the artwork that was produced during the project to create a discussion guide that enabled community members to have private conversations about the importance of representation in archives, art, and media in their own homes. SAADA's outreach kit instructed participants to view and listen to art work created for the "Where We Belong project," and then discuss its emotional impact.

Below is an excerpt from that discussion guide:

The full discussion guide can be downloaded here:
https://www.saada.org/wherewebelong/eventkit/1

Community members who participated in these discussions found new connections with archival materials and with SAADA, in turn increasing community support for the organization. This community support may, in turn, lead to donations of money, time, and collections.

As the SAADA case study illustrates, findings from interviews and focus groups with your community members can be used to inspire new projects, get funding and attract new users. We hope you use this toolkit to do the same!

Be in Touch. Do you have questions about how to use the toolkit? Have you used the toolkit to assess the impact of your community archives? We want to hear from you! Please email Michelle Caswell at caswell@gseis.ucla.edu and let us know.

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Foundations and Government Agencies Interested in Community Archives

- National Endowment for the Humanities, Common Heritage Program (https://www.neh.gov/grants)
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (https://mellon.org/grants/)
- Institute for Museum and Library Services (https://www.imls.gov/grants/apply-grant/available-grants)
- Your local state humanities council

Appendix 2: Questions to Ask/Interview Protocol
The following questions can be used to guide interviews and/or focus groups with members of the community served and represented by your community archives. They are meant to be a guide to structure the conversation; please feel free to diverge from the questions here to meet the specific needs of your community and to ask follow up questions.

1. Biographical and Demographic Info
   ● What field are you in?
   ● Would you describe yourself as a member of the community this community archives represents?
   ● How are you involved in this archives? Are you a user? A volunteer? A board member? A donor?

2. Use of the Archives
   ● Why do you come to this community archives? How often?
   ● How does being at this archives make you feel?
   ● How long have you been using the materials at this community archives?
   ● What materials have you used?
   ● How have you used them?
   ● In your own words, what has been the impact of the work this archives has enabled you to do?
   ● What is your research here about? How did you come to be interested in that topic?
   ● What is your experience like using this community archives? What works well? What could be improved?
   ● Can you tell us a story about something you found in the archives and how you used it? How did it make you feel?
   ● How central are the materials you found here to your work?
   ● If this community archives didn't exist, what would be different for you? For your community?
   ● Prior to using this community archives, had you looked for materials documenting your community in other archives? If so, what did you find? Can you describe this experience? How did it make you feel?

3. Impact
   ● How did you first find out about this community archives? What was your initial response to it?
   ● Do you feel the records in this community archives are representative of the community you were interested in or apart of? Why or why not?
   ● How would you describe the importance of this community archives to someone who has never seen it before?

4. Conclusion
   ● Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to discuss?

Appendix 3: Sample Consent form
Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The purpose of this research is to understand the affective impact of community archives on people who use such archives. To this end, the **interview/focus group** questions are designed to encourage respondents to articulate and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about their experiences using archives, and their opinions and attitudes about this community archives site specifically.

If you agree to participate, we will ask you to speak to us about your use of archives as part of an **interview/focus group** for no more than **two** hours. The focus group will be recorded for research purposes. We shall respect the right of respondents to refuse to respond to questions they are uncomfortable answering, or to withdraw their participation in this study at any point of the research process. If you would like a copy of the transcript, please contact **INSERT YOUR NAME**. If you have any question about this research, please feel free to contact **INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION**.

Do we have your consent to participate in the interview/focus group and to record it?

____ Yes

____ No

Do we have your consent to cite you by name?

___ Yes, you may attribute quotations to me and identify me by name in scholarly publications.

___ No, I prefer not to be identified by name in writing.

Please fill in the following information.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

Email Address: _____