M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)

PROJECT TITLE	
Understanding language heritages, supporting literacies and cultural enrichment	

LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution	University of Nottingham			
Lead regional city	Birmingham ☐	Coventry ☐	Leicester ☐	Nottingham ☒

PARTNER ORGANISATION	
Name of organisation	Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature (NUCoL)
URL for organisation website	https://nottinghamcityofliterature.com/

The project

A unique opportunity to research language heritages, and to influence the development of cultural educational opportunities in Nottingham, working with Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature. You will develop a theoretical framework for documenting, safeguarding, and supporting multilingual *and* local English-language heritages to enhance cultural opportunities and support literacies for young people.

Research in multilingualism and in varieties of English have typically been treated separately, in separate silos of education / modern languages on one hand, and English linguistics on the other. This is a missed opportunity to increase understanding and appreciation of *everyone's* language heritages, whatever form that takes. You will change that, by developing a theoretical model for documenting, safeguarding and supporting multilingual *and* English language heritages, drawing on the notion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Your research will produce results that will enhance cultural opportunities and support literacies in Nottingham, especially for young people.

By the end of your project, drawing on your academic research and your placement with Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature (NUCoL), you will produce a briefing, recommendations, and an action plan for mobilizing language heritages in Nottingham.

For your research thesis, you will investigate the following research questions:

1. What theoretical frameworks exist for describing, documenting, valuing and safeguarding heritage, especially ICH? How can they be synthesized and then adapted to incorporate language heritage – and the cultural knowledge and experiences expressed in it – as a form of ICH?
2. What are the local needs to support and safeguard language as ICH?
3. What examples of good practice already exist, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, for **i.** documenting and safeguarding language as a form of ICH, and **ii.** public engagement to raise awareness of and encourage positive attitudes to such language heritages?
4. What is the extent and nature of the participation and collaboration, in Nottingham, of educational, political, private-sector and third-sector organizations, and other stakeholders, in safeguarding and supporting language heritages? How could it be enhanced?
5. With a particular focus on cultural opportunities for young people (14-25) in Nottingham, to what extent can language heritages be mobilized to **i.** support literacies skills development, **ii.**

to enhance cultural engagement opportunities, and **iii**. help bring about a positive change in wider attitudes towards linguistic diversity?
6. In particular, what role can creative engagement with personal and community narratives of language heritage (as explored in recent NUCoL activities)

Process:

You will learn to use a variety of research methods for this project. These are likely to include:

- workshops with young people to help shape and refine the focus of the research project
- desk-based research. For example, you will examine existing policies, strategies, and toolkits of local stakeholders and community groups in Nottingham(shire). You will also research previous work in the area of supporting the language heritage(s) and multilingual identities of young people, e.g. *Multilingual Manchester*, *Story Valley*
- a survey of Nottingham stakeholders (community groups and cultural and educational organizations)
- interviews and/or focus groups with representatives of selected groups and organizations
- site visits and observation, e.g. visiting Saturday morning "complementary schools" teaching community and heritage languages (such as Arabic, Polish, Ukrainian).

Place:

You will be based approximately one day a week at Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature (NUCoL, currently using office space at Lakeside, University of Nottingham; likely to move to Nottingham Central Library by the time the studentship starts). At NUCoL, you will gain practical experience in working for an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation, in project management, and in working with partners. You will be mentored by the NUCoL Director, Hannah Trevarthen.

For the remainder of your time, you will be working on your research, supported by your academic supervisors Prof. Nicola McLelland (University of Nottingham) and Prof. Natalie Braber (Nottingham Trent University), whom you will meet at least monthly, as well as by the NUCoL Director as non-academic supervisor. You will have access to the postgraduate room in the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, which has hot-desking space for research students.

Person:

Besides an excellent academic record, the ideal applicant for this studentship will

- have a strong interest in language(s) and cultural education
- have excellent interpersonal skills, including being able to network with others and build connections with a wide range of people
- be able to work as part of a team, but also be confident working independently, with support of your supervisors
- enjoy research with a practical orientation and with the potential to bring about change in Nottingham

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE. Please email the lead university supervisor if you want to find out more about this CDA project.	
Lead HEI Supervisor:	Prof. Nicola McLelland
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	Nicola.mclelland@nottingham.ac.uk