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# **Diversity Matters Programme Year Three 2020 - 2021**

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## Introduction

The Diversity Matters Programme (DMP) is now in its third year and is a new programme for London Museum Development's (LMD's) 2018 – 2022 Programme.

The overall objectives of the DMP are to increase:

- The number of non-national museums that embrace and embed diversity practices
- Engagement with museum collections and exhibitions from visitors of all backgrounds
- Participation in public programmes and activities from visitors of all backgrounds
- The diversity of the museum sector's workforce
- The diversity of the museum sector's board of trustees

Over the 4 years this programme will showcase how museums are embedding diversity and creating organisations, collections and public programmes, which are representative of their respective communities. It will also support emerging diversity practice to enable museums to better reflect the diversity of London and empower its audiences, staff and content creators to feel more represented and want to further engage with museums, collections and public programmes. Each year the programme will be evaluated and the programme will evolve based on feedback we receive from museum staff.

The DMP supports Arts Council England's [Creative Case for Diversity](#) agenda. At the heart of the Creative Case for Diversity is a requirement that arts and culture in England should reflect the diversity of society and local communities. It recognises both the value of diversity in enriching our arts and cultural offer, as well as ensuring all artists have access to the opportunities and resources to create truly excellent work that reflects the presence, stories and voices of all our communities. London's non-national museums, with support from LMD, will need to show how they contribute to the Creative Case for Diversity **through the work they produce, present and distribute**.

### ***Diversity Matters Programme – Training Series***

For Year 3, staff decided to completely review how the training session was delivered and what content was covered as part of the session. Two important factors fed into LMD's re-thinking this element of the programme. Firstly, upon reviewing responses from delegates of the Year 2 session, staff took on board the sector's feedback that whilst the content covered was incredibly important and useful, a lot of information was covered in a short period of time. As such, delegates suggested that the session could be split, enabling delegates to delve further into the content presented and discuss the themes in more detail as part of these sessions.

Secondly, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic meant that the MDO Training had overhauled the training programme so it could solely be delivered online via digital means, to ensure LMD were still meeting the training needs of London's non-national museums. As such, LMD were not expecting to offer face-to-face training sessions until 2021-2022. Following their experience in delivering online training sessions, it was felt that any training session should not last longer than 2.5 hours.

As a result LMD took the opportunity to split the content of the 1-day training session into a training series made up of 6 sessions each lasting 2.5 hours. In doing so, it enabled staff to cover not only all the previous content, but additional themes in more detail. As in previous years the sessions were interactive and allowed the participants time to develop their ideas and plans for their own museum. The sessions supported museums to reflect and create workable actions to develop practices to bring a greater level of diversity to all areas of their organisations, including: their programmes (exhibitions and events), collections and voices they represent; audience development work; volunteers, staff and trustees; and the buildings in which they operate.

The training looked at the key areas of diversity practice to support museums to become more inclusive organisation. Delegates used audience data to support and inform the work they wanted to plan. Throughout the training series, delegates heard from experienced and knowledgeable facilitators as well as museums who were undertaking this work in the form of case studies and presentations across a broad range of diversity practice. As a result, delegates were inspired and supported to develop and enhance their own organisation's thoughts and plans by creating 1-3 equality action points following each of the sessions to enable them to start their diversity journey and become more representative and relevant to their diverse communities.

Following the end of the training series, all delegates were offered individual 1:1 meetings with LMD's MDO Audiences. As part of the meeting, the action points created by the museums were discussed in more detail as well as ways LMD could support the museum's diversity journey and planned actions further. This support included: identifying and supporting with funding applications; other training options; resources; and signposting other organisations and community groups to inform their plans and activities.

### ***Diversity Matters Programme – Grants Programme***

With the grant launching to a backdrop of the on-going COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the advent of the Black Lives Matters movement, staff took the decision that the Year 3 Grants Programme would focus on enabling museums to work with BAME artists/groups. As such the grants applications encouraged to apply were targeted to support projects that enabled museums to:

- Work with artists and/or groups from BAME communities to co-curate, co-produce and co-create a public exhibition
- Provide a public platform (through an exhibition – online or on-site) that gave BAME artist(s)/group(s) space to review, reflect and respond to a museum collections either by:
  - Enhanced existing collections through a re-visiting collections project, whereby the artist(s)/group(s) responded and reflected on the museum's current themes and objects, or

- Enabled a contemporary collecting project, which gathered oral testimonies, objects etc. from the artist(s)/group(s) so the museum's collections were more up to date and relevant.

In doing so, the grant programme continued to prioritise grants that supported how museums could respond to the wider Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity agenda (public programmes/events/exhibitions and collections). As such, applications continued to contribute to CCD initiative in the following ways, by:

- Including in the planning process the voices of people from BAME backgrounds, particularly those identified within a museum's audience and local borough profiles that were under-represented in their work
- Identifying opportunities for the museum's exhibitions to feature new work and museum staff to engage with artist(s) from BAME groups
- Consulting with people from BAME group(s), for example by working with local BAME organisations or groups to enable museums to work with their local BAME residents and communities
- Recruiting a small number of people from the museum's BAME residents and communities to engage with the museum's collections as well as training and supporting them to be involved in co-curating, co-producing and co-creating the museum's upcoming exhibition(s) process
- Developing exhibitions that specifically respond to current diversity issues such as COVID-19, Black Lives Matters, social in-equality, racism, colonial and empire stories from BAME communities and slavery
- Collecting objects and oral testimonies that reflect the diversity of the BAME communities the museum works with (i.e. a contemporary collecting initiative/project)
- Presenting and interpreting existing collections in new ways through working with BAME artist(s)/group(s) to understand how different objects mean different things to different people and to capture and present those multiple perspectives (i.e. a re-visiting collections initiative/project).

LMD have provided full information about the different elements of programme below, along with commentary and feedback it has received from participating museums on the new aspects of the evaluation process. This information will be used to inform the planning and offer for the Year 4 Diversity Matters Programme.

## Diversity Matters Grants Overview

This aspect of the programme was managed by Rachael Crofts, Museum Development Officer Audiences. There were a total of 3 applications to the programme, of which following assessment LMD funded all 3 projects. All funded projects were given grants of between £1,000 and £3,000. A total of £5,000 was awarded through the Diversity Matters Programme Grants. All the projects were completed to schedule and all the museums provided additional funds towards the final project.

Notable successes this year included:


- Bruce Castle Museum were able to capture very timely oral testimonies and photographs of local BAME communities and young people at such an unprecedented period of time. Many were involved on the frontline in the pandemic response and the museum staff considered it an honour and privilege to hear and include these stories within the permanent collection
- Headstone Manor and Museum have gathered some rich stories, developed strong new relationships with community members as a result of their project and shown staff that significant engagement can be achieved with limited resources. The confidence and experience the staff has gained through this project, has inspired them to engage with Harrow's Black Community on its Windrush Day project in a similar way later in the year.
- The Museum of Croydon has previously tried to engage young BAME audiences with limited success. This project has created a methodology the museum feel confident is a meaningful tool for engagement because it was co-created. This new methodology and tools will be used as the service moves to a more outreach model whilst its galleries are closed as it has given the team the confidence in how to reach audiences and work in a co-created, co-produced and co-curated way.

The grants were used to fund the following:

Museums that worked with an artist/group to develop a new public programme and/or activities that reflect the museum's diverse communities:	3
Events that are shaped by its diverse communities:	2
Artistic talent development initiatives to emerging, midcareer and established artists from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups:	2
Exhibitions that showcased work/partner with artists and companies from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups:	3
Activities/Projects/Programmes that supported people from diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers of involvement and realise their artistic and creative talents:	3

Contemporary collecting practice projects (with small interpretation panel to make visitors aware of the work):	3
Co-produced exhibition with artist/groups from under-represented communities:	3
A targeted co-produced event with groups from under-represented communities:	2

Descriptions of each of the 2020 - 2021 projects are given below.

Diversity Matters Grants 2020 - 2021		
Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p><b>Bruce Castle Museum</b></p> <p>£3,000</p> <p><i>Weaving Tales of Resilience</i></p>	<p><b>Project Overview:</b></p> <p>The project commissioned a local young BAME, LGBTQ+ textile artist to co-create and co-curate an installation, film and small collection of testimonies at the museum. The artist looked at and researched the local black heritage from the collections and used these and contemporary stories from the local community to weave these stories into a newly-created textile work for the museum.</p> <p><b>What was achieved:</b></p> <p>The artist facilitated consultation sessions online to enable 20 members of the local BAME community to come forward and engage with the museum for the first time. As a result photographs and stories were shared and captured for the museum from: the Black Lives Matters protests staged in Haringey; workers in Foodbanks set up in response to COVID; young voices sharing their resilience to exclusion and coping methods during lockdown and home schooling; frontline pandemic response workers; and from well-known and respected community activists and leaders. The artist then used these to create a new art piece to be displayed in the museum. The artist's process was also filmed to create a new video telling audiences how the piece was created and has been viewed by 200 online visitors so far.</p> <p>Despite the challenges and uncertainties of local and national lockdowns, the project proved to be a great achievement and invaluable in documenting a snapshot of a community in lockdown, looking back at the impact of COVID and the effect of the Black Lives Movement on Haringey's local residents. In total 21 oral histories were recorded and so far 50 photographs documenting</p>	



the stories shared from BAME communities in the local area were collected as part of the project. All of these videos and photographs will be accessioned into the museum's permanent collection. The video is available to view on the museum's website [here](#) and will be shown at public online events over the coming months, whilst lockdown restrictions remain in place. The museum plans to exhibit the new installation and the corresponding 'community threads of resilience' through a community story exhibitions (via a QR code to a thread from the textile installation) in October 2021.

#### **Feedback from participants and the general public:**

Feedback from the participants included:

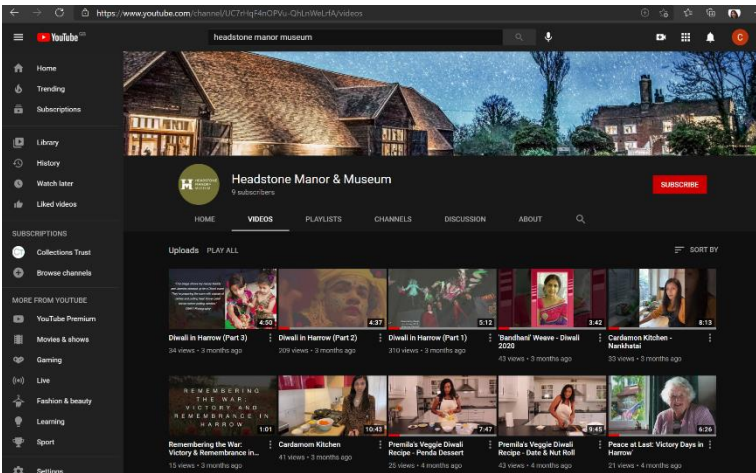

- *"The importance of this year needs to be recorded. Thank you."*
- *"It was so educational and positive [to be involved]. A real tribute to community endeavour – Black Lives Really Matter."*

Feedback from the online event in which the film has been shown, has also been overwhelming positive: *"Powerful... think about that, it is a powerful collection of voices."*

#### **Project Legacy & how it has supported the organisation to embrace and embed diversity practice:**

The nature and theme of the project has enabled the museum to make very timely recordings of local BAME communities and young people at such an unprecedented period of time. Being able to offer a young local creative this opportunity has also supported him in his career pathway. The project has allowed the museum to include a wide range of voices in the exhibition and final textile piece, in doing so the museum has been able to reach out and engage with those who have not been involved before.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p><b>Headstone Manor and Museum</b></p> <p><b>£1,000</b></p> <p><i>Celebrating Diwali and Food in Harrow</i></p>	<p><b>Project Overview:</b></p> <p>The Museum worked alongside the charity Mental Wealth. The charity delivers mental health services to South Asian communities living in Harrow. The charity and museum spoke with local South Asian communities to encourage them to share their stories of Diwali and food. These individuals donated objects to the museum's permanent collection and worked with the charity to write the text and design the labels for an exhibition at the museum. The museum also worked with local businesses to create cooking demonstration videos, a community recipe book and an online children's activity session to go alongside the exhibition.</p> <p><b>What was achieved:</b></p> <p>The museum were able to work with and capture 27 oral histories from the local community and accession 42 individual objects from 11 individuals into the museum's permanent collection. Alongside this the museum commissioned 2 vloggers to create 4 cooking films and 4 local restaurants donated recipes and objects for the project. 20 families took part in the online Rangoli children's activity and 15 recipes were shared in the community recipe book. The planned on-site exhibition was postponed due to the local lockdown in November and the museum worked quickly to create a 3-part online video series and online exhibition featuring the objects and stories collected. So far 649 visitors have viewed this content on the website <a href="#">here</a>. The museum plans to display the exhibition in November 2021 to coincide with Diwali.</p> <p><b>Feedback from participants and the general public:</b></p> <p>100% of participants who completed the evaluation survey said they had enjoyed participating in the project. When asked why they</p>	 



had decided to join the project, comments included:

- *"To help celebrate and share a special festival in an otherwise strange year."*
- *"Anything to help the community and share some happiness during this horrible time."*

Feedback from general visitors who have viewed the exhibition's content online has included:

- *"It's great to see everyone come together."*
- *"Everyone sharing their stories and recipe stories were really good to see."*

### **Project Legacy & how it has supported the organisation to embrace and embed diversity practice:**

As a result of the project, the museum feels it has become more aware and receptive to diversity practices across the team. Each new object tells visitors about how Diwali is celebrated in Harrow, and has opened the museum's eyes to re-think the way they collect contemporary objects as the community was so willing to share their stories and donate their objects to the museum. The project has also shown the museum that significant engagement can be achieved with limited resources. The key to the museums success was working with a strong partner, which has inspired the museum to form other strong partnerships and co-curate projects for most of their activities and exhibitions going forward. It has given staff the confidence to engage with the local Black Community on Windrush Day activities and exhibition later in the year. The project allowed the museum to reshape its priorities, recognise its gaps (both in their audiences and collection), and educate themselves on best practice. Moving forward, the museum intends to re-think its Equality Action Points to ensure this is something they embed into their organisational practices.

#### **Amreeta Sagoo**

Living in Harrow Weald, Amreeta is part of the Sikh Community in Harrow. She speaks both English and Punjabi.



Amreeta Sagoo in her creative office  
@curlynneedle

Celebrating Diwali for Amreeta is very significant within her community, she explains "as a Sikh, my family [and I] attend the Gurdwara on Diwali where we light candles, listen to kirtan and eat langar. For us Diwali/ Bandi Chor Divas is celebrated as it was the day our 6th guru, Guru Hargobind was released to freedom from Gwalior Fort along with 52 imprisoned kings. In the lead up to Diwali we make Indian sweet and savoury snacks such as Gulab Jamun and Matiya. A trip to the Indian [sweet] store to purchase barfi (sweets) and new candles is a must! We also put together a thali, which is a tray full of these snacks to gift these to friends, family and neighbours."



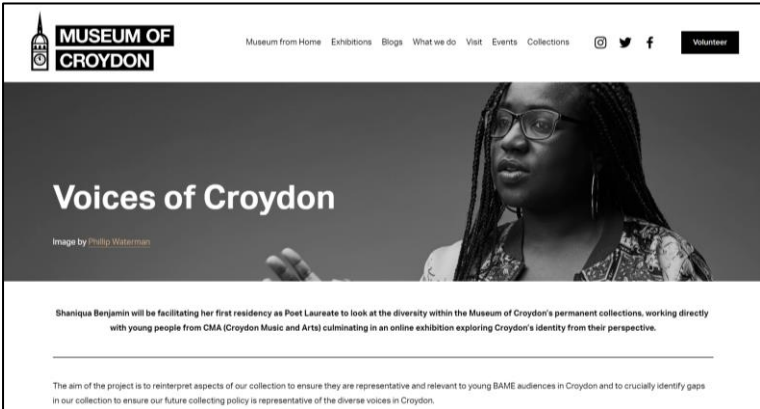
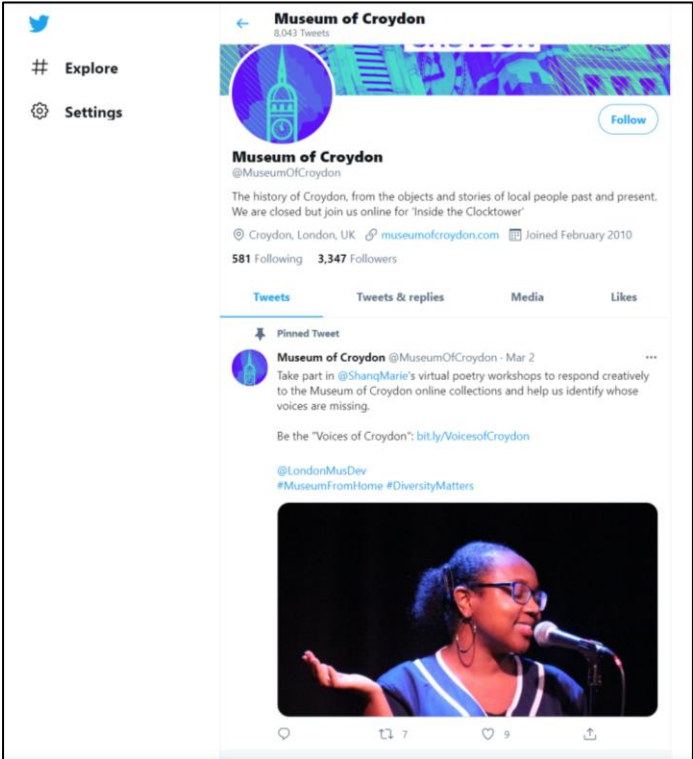
A selection of Diwali cards by Amreeta Sagoo

Amreeta recognises this Diwali will have a major impact on how her family normally celebrates the festival as she explains "with all the restrictions in place we will not be able to see our family members or visit the gurdwara, however we will still [make] all the delicious Indian sweets and snacks and of course light candles/divas around the house."

For the exhibition, Amreeta has donated some of her handmade Diwali Cards. She exclaims "this year is the first time that many of us will not be able to celebrate Diwali with our family so in order to send a bit of love to my nearest and dearest I created a selection of Diwali cards. Each card is designed and handmade by me using Indian materials and can also purchase for your loved ones via Instagram at CurlyNeedle".

This label was co-written by Amreeta Sagoo and the Curator.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p><b>Museum of Croydon</b></p> <p>£1,000</p> <p><i>Voices of Croydon</i></p>	<p><b>Project Overview:</b></p> <p>This project enabled the museum to better understand the BAME voices in their collection by working with young BAME adults to explore the diversity in the collection and crucially highlight where stories are missing. The museum worked with Croydon's Young BAME Poet Laureate to produce poetry and stories to be added to the museum's collection. The young people then worked with the museum and the Poet Laureate to co-curate an exhibition alongside new work from the local BAME community.</p> <p><b>What was achieved:</b></p> <p>8 young people aged 14-22 from the Croydon Youth Collective attended over 4 sessions and created pieces of poetry, music and digital media in response to the museum's archives. The work created was then used to create a co-curated online exhibition, website and branding. The online exhibition will open shortly. The young people will also co-devise the exhibition launch event and corresponding Instagram takeover. Alongside the young people's work, the online exhibition will also feature poetry and work from local BAME adults. As part of the project, the Poet Laureate was also commissioned to produce a series of online interactive workshops to enable local community members to view and participate during their own time and submit their poems online directly to the museum. The online self-led tutorials can be found <a href="#">here</a>. Additional poems were submitted from the community and have been added into the online exhibition. The project also featured in an article in the East London Lines <a href="#">here</a>, talking about how the project has given BAME young people in Croydon a chance to re-write Croydon's history. The project has also had 6,368 Twitter impressions and 796 Instagram impressions, which have mentioned the project. One of the most important</p>	 

achievements from the project, was the fact it established a meaningful partnership with Croydon's Music and Arts Youth Collective, which will lead onto their wider Voices of Croydon project, which looks at diversity in the curriculum.

### Feedback from participants and the general public:

Participants enjoyed the project. The fact that participants were able to see how their work would feature as part of the museum's collection, was a great motivator as it enabled them to see how their voices would be heard and the platform in which to share their thoughts. Participants really enjoyed working with the Poet Laureate, especially as she is a local practicing artist. Feedback from the project from general visitors has also been positive, with many looking forward to seeing the online exhibition. The museum has also been applauded for looking at its collection openly from this aspect of diversity with @Drew10years left saying on Twitter *"Great approach to improving diversity in public involvement."*

### Project Legacy & how it has supported the organisation to embrace and embed diversity practice:

This project allowed the museum to test and thereby reinforce its new mission statement "The Museum of Croydon seeks to recognise its **C**ommunities, **C**ultures and **C**itizens as experts in their own histories. We seek to provide a radical space to celebrate our diversity and to explore how Croydon unites us...'. Crucially it allowed the museum to question what role a local authority social history-led museum has in interpreting and displaying objects belonging to communities. The project also allowed the museum to really understand what was relevant to an audience, which has had very limited representation or engagement in the museum despite being one of the largest demographics in the Borough and who have a crucial voice in shaping the museum's future direction.

The screenshot shows the East London Lines website. The main article is titled "The poet giving BAME youth a chance to rewrite Croydon's history" by Rhona Holland, dated February 9, 2021. The article features a photo of Shaniqua Benjamin, a young woman speaking into a microphone. The text discusses the Museum of Croydon's efforts to make its collection more inclusive and the role of local artists in this process. A tweet from @ShangMarie is also visible, mentioning the museum's search for young BAME adults to help address the gaps in the collection. The website layout includes a navigation bar, a sidebar with popular posts, and a footer with social media links.

Each of the museums have written a longer case study of their project. This includes further information on their outputs and work with their chosen protected characteristic group, as well as tips for the sector about undertaking such a project and lessons learnt from working with the group. This is available on the London Museum Development's webpages [here](#).

## Conclusions on the 2020 - 2021 Diversity Matters Programme

### *Training Series*

In total London Museum Development supported 18 delegates across 13 museums to develop realistic equality action points as part of the training series. Feedback from the training was overwhelming positive, with 100% of responding delegates stating that their learning expectations had been completely met and 100% of responding delegates also stating that they had gained new and improved skills around diversity practice which they could implement back at their organisations.

Feedback from delegates included the following:

- “Thanks to the guidance of the course leaders, I feel confident that the Equality Action Plan will help us to address some of the areas that we need help with, namely getting in touch with communities that aren't currently represented in the Museum's displays.”
- “I attended these sessions whilst being tasked with setting up an EDI working group at my organisation. The 6 sessions helped with the planning and implementation of this group and also gave good advice and guidance on having a whole organisational approach to planning and delivering actions in this area. I have shared and will be actively using the resources and tasks that were provided.”
- “This training was brilliant, thought-provoking and one that has left me actively engaged in following up and developing what I have learnt. I now feel I have a clear pathway where to continue my learning and how to put the learning into action. It has given me more confidence in having conversations around the subject matter. I really enjoyed the external speakers talking about case studies which enables us to see how to put ideas into action. Having a fairly small group was helpful as it meant we could get to know each other over the six sessions and I felt more confident in discussing things with the others.”
- “It was incredibly helpful just being able to hear from the other participants as well as all the speakers who gave us so much to work with.”
- “The resources were/are really helpful and easily accessible after each course. The option of a 1-1 meeting after the course is really helpful.”
- “Thank-you so much for welcoming me on to this course. It has been a brilliant experience and I can't wait to get back onsite (hopefully this Spring) to conduct a proper accessibility audit! I know there is much that can be improved but it's exciting to now feel that I have some of the tools to identify issues and implement change.”

The learning from the training series will be used to inform the training programme for 2021-2022 with LMD currently planning to re-run the training series in Q3/Q4 2021-2022. The approach has also been shared with other MD regions as part of the newly created MDN EDI working group, on which the MDO Audiences sits. Interest in the programme approach has been high amongst the other regions and notes, contacts and content shared in help inform their own regional programmes going forward.

Following the training series, all delegates/museums were offered 1:1 meetings to further support them with their planning / delivery of the equality action points they devised following sessions. So far LMD have facilitated 5 further 1:1 museums to discuss their action points and supported them further with



advice, signposting and resources to help them deliver their planned actions over the coming months. A further 4 museums have expressed an interest in having a meeting about their action points once there is more certainty about when their museums can re-open and then feel more realistic about timescales.

### ***Grant Programme***

The 3 grants that the assessment panel selected were very strong applications and the assessors felt they had understood the importance of working with participants/groups to co-produce, co-create and co-curate exhibitions and activities, and not for or on behalf of these groups. All 3 projects funded through LMD's DMP programme have added to Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity agenda **through the work they've produced, presented and distributed**. All 3 projects worked with either a BAME artist or group to develop and co-produce, co-create and co-curate on-site and online exhibitions, through either a contemporary collecting or revisiting collections initiative.

Despite the criteria for the grants programme this year being narrower in previous years, the 3 museums have in fact worked with artists/groups from a much wider number of Arts Council England's protected characteristic group list. As a result, all the 3 museums have embedded the practices they have developed as part of the project in more meaningful and sustainable ways within their own organisation's diversity work going forward. All 3 grants have enabled the museum to raise the profile of their work within their local communities and plans for the next projects to be run in similar ways (whether with the same or new groups) have already begun in earnest. All 3 museums will have further exhibitions co-curated, co-created and co-produced by different groups by the end of 2021, which is a testament to their learning and diversity journey.

As with all previous grant years, through the programme, an additional 3 of London's non-national museums have started their journey to embrace and embed diversity practices within their public programmes. All have learnt key lessons from their project and have increased their own skills, which will further support them to embed their knowledge and practice into their audience development/learning plans and their wider organisation going forward. It is still too early to tell how much their project has impacted these museums' audience figures and whether these alongside their workforce and board of trustees are now more reflective of the diversity within their boroughs and London overall. However, despite all the difficulties of the global pandemic have brought to our museums, these museums are continuing to show how meaningful and significant engagement can be achieved on limited resources. Like in previous years, these projects have kick started each participating museum's emerging diversity practice this year and through the programmes they have run, their outcomes and outputs, are empowering their audiences, staff and content creators to feel more represented and want to further engage with their museums, collections and public programmes.

### ***Final thoughts***

From the positive feedback from current cohort of museums involved in both the training series and grants programme, staff hope LMD's DMP will continue to run in Year Four and continue to include both a training and grant element to support and encourage more museums to work with audiences/groups and visitors that reflect the diversity of society and local communities.