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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Diversity Matters Programme

Year Four 2021 - 2022

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Introduction

The Diversity Matters Programme (DMP) is now in its fourth year and is a new programme for Museum Development London's (MDL's) 2018 – 2023 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 5 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 [Let's Create Strategy](#), and specifically its [Inclusivity and Relevance Investment Principal](#), its [Creative Case for Diversity](#) agenda and its [Equality Objectives](#). The Investment Principle builds on the Creative Case for Diversity agenda to encompass programming, talent development, workforce, leadership and governance. It means identifying who is under-represented and which communities are under-served and taking action to address this. The aim is to collectively create a cultural sector that is relevant to more people and better placed to realise its creative ambitions, drawing on talent from all our communities.

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 MDL, will need to show how they contribute to the Creative Case for Diversity **through the work they produce, present and distribute**.

Since Creative Case for Diversity launched in 2011, it has helped focus attention on the decisions that cultural organisations make about the work that they produce, present and collect. It has deepened the quality of cultural provision and given voices to talented creative practitioners who have too often been overlooked. The updated principal and agenda build on this work and helps museum's address the persistent and widespread lack of diversity and inclusivity in their leadership, governance, workforce and audience.

As MDL is an organisation that receives regular investment from Arts Council England, through our DMP we will support our non-national, non-NPO museums to diversify their governance, leadership, employees, participants and audiences. We will also support them to make the work they produce more reflective of the communities in which they operate.

As part of this work, we will encourage museums to build closer connections with their communities, particularly those that they are currently underserving. As such, we want to enable the museums we support to mean more, to more people and to strengthen their relevance to their communities, partners and practitioners with whom they work.

Through the evaluation of our programme, we will ask our museums to demonstrate how they are listening to the voices within their communities (including children and young people, artists, and creative practitioners, as well as the partners work with). We will also ask museums to demonstrate how they using what they hear to inform the planning of their work.

Diversity Matters Programme – Training Series

Following on from the success of re-thinking the delivery of our EDI training in Year 3, MDL decided to re-run the training series in Q3/Q4 2021-2022. The training series added in one further session around *Developing Inclusive Collections*, based on feedback from Year 3 participants and colleagues in the MDUK EDI working group, to enable participants to delve further into decolonising their collections.

The training series was offered as a one-day on-site session (covering two previous online sessions), followed by a further six online sessions, which covered the following topics: Introduction to EDI; Planning for Inclusion; Developing Inclusive Programmes; Developing an Inclusive Organisation; Developing Inclusive Collections; Developing an Inclusive Building; and finally Embedding Inclusive Practice. Each session lasted 2.5 hours.

The initial two sessions enabled participants to meet one another in person; something the Year 3 participants had wished had been possible (but was not due to the on-going COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic). By delivering the remaining of the sessions online via Zoom, it meant that more delegates could sign up to the training series and participate either whilst at work or working from home, and therefore not worry about the time spent commuting to the sessions.

By developing the series into a seven sessions (rather than six), 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 aim of the training series in particular, was to support museums to deliver against Arts Council England's and other funder's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agendas and criteria and help them evolve and strengthen their own museums' EDI work. The series continued to provide time for participants to reflect on their own museums work and support them to create workable actions to develop practices to bring a greater level of diversity to all areas of their organisation, including their:

- Programmes (exhibitions, projects and events)
- Collections and voices they represent
- Audience development work
- Volunteers, staff and trustees
- And, finally 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 and compared specific London Borough demographical data (provided by MDL) alongside their own audience data to support and inform the work they wanted to plan. Throughout the training series, delegates were encouraged to continuously go back to the data when planning and creating action points. This ensured their plans were formed and developed with their specific key local communities in mind.

Throughout the training series, delegates heard from specialist, experienced and knowledgeable facilitators and consultants, as well as museums who were undertaking this work in the form of London-specific non-national non-NPO case studies and presentations across a board 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 MDL's MDO Audiences. As part of the meeting, the action points created by the museums were discussed in more detail as well as ways MDL 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

Following the success of our previous DMP grant launch in June 2020, the team once again decided to focus on supporting museums to work with ethnic minority artists and groups. MDL asked museums to submit applications that enabled museums to:

- Work with artists and/or groups from ethnic minority 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 ethnic minority artist(s)/group(s) space to review, reflect and respond to a museum collections either by:
 - Enhancing 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
 - Enabling 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.

The aim of the grant programme was to support emerging diversity practice to enable London's non-national, non-NPO 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.

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

- Including in the planning process the voices of people from ethnic minority 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 ethnic minority groups
- Consulting with people from ethnic minority group(s), for example by working with local ethnic minority organisations or groups to enable museums to work with their local ethnic minority residents and communities
- Recruiting a small number of people from the museum's ethnic minority 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 ethnic minority communities and slavery
- Collecting objects and oral testimonies that reflect the diversity of the ethnic minority communities the museum works with (i.e. a contemporary collecting initiative/project)

- Presenting and interpreting existing collections in new ways through working with ethnic minority 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).

MDL encouraged museums to think through how the funding could support a range of projects to enable them to consult, work with, and involve under-represented ethnic minority artist(s)/group(s) and be more representative of London's diverse population, such as:

- Working with ethnic minority artist(s)/group(s) to develop an exhibition, which addresses current events
- Working with ethnic minority artist(s)/group(s) to reflect on your current themes and objects to make their collections more relevant to all communities
- Artistic talent development initiatives that support emerging, midcareer and established artists from ethnic minority backgrounds
- A contemporary collecting practice project (with an associated exhibition to make visitors aware of the project/work)
- Co-curated/created/produced exhibition developed in consultation with ethnic minority artist(s)/group(s)

MDL have provided full information about the different elements of the grants programme below, alongside commentary and feedback from participants of the training series. This information will be used to inform the planning and offer for the Year 5 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 5 applications to the programme, of which following assessment MDL funded all 5 projects. All funded projects were given grants of £3,000 towards their identified project. A total of £15,000 was awarded through the Diversity Matters Programme Grants. All the projects were completed to schedule and all five of the museums provided additional funds towards the final project.

Notable successes this year included:

- Brent Museum and Archives were able to provide services and activities that suited its female BAME communities, which in turn enabled the museum to serve different cultures of Brent in its collections. Participants highlighted their belief that the project was a step forward in improving racial relations within the borough.
- Central Saint Martin's Museum & Study Collection feel this project will be seen within the museum university sector as a flag ship of best practice, proving to the wider institution the power of challenging Western-centric narratives and telling better stories.
- Gunnersbury Park Museum have been able to begin conversations with Illays (Hounslow-based Somali group) and Ealing Synagogue about borrowing and collecting other local cultural costume pieces to further enrich the gallery, as a result of the project, ensuring the museum is better engaged with community partners and is continuing to broaden its representation of local communities within museum's collection.
- Richmond Arts Service – Orleans House Gallery through their work with their artists pushed them as organisation to vocalise their connections with Britain's colonial history – as a result they have added a [page to their website](#) as part of this project which they will continue to update and develop.
- Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre opened the initial display in March 2022 and it has provided a promotional tool for the new Redbridge Museum, which will open in Autumn 2022. The display will subsequently form part of the new permanent exhibition when it opens, ensuring a long-term legacy for this project.


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:	4
Artistic talent development initiatives to emerging, midcareer and established artists from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups:	4
Exhibitions that showcased work/partner with artists and companies from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups:	5

Activities/Projects/Programmes that supported people from diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers of involvement and realise their artistic and creative talents:	5
Contemporary collecting practice projects (with small interpretation panel to make visitors aware of the work):	5
Revisiting collections practice projects:	5
Co-produced exhibition with artist/groups from under-represented communities:	5
A targeted co-produced event with groups from under-represented communities:	2

Descriptions of each of the 2021 - 2022 projects are given below. 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 Museum Development London's webpages [here](#).

Diversity Matters Grants 2021 – 2022

Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Brent Museum and Archives</p> <p><i>Conscious of the Female Perspective</i></p> <p>£3,000</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>Brent Museum collaborated with the Society for the Advancement of Black Arts (SAAFI) and the Brent Black Music Cooperative (BBMC) to work with women from ethnic minorities, including those who speak English as a second language, that make up the cultural diversity in Brent, not currently represented in the museum's collection. The museum wanted participants to document and reflect on the current ideas and perspectives on gender through interviews and workshops and to create a space where art and the museum's collection enabled women to share their experiences. As part of the project, Brent recruited 3 volunteers to co-produce an exhibition and co-create workshops to gather content for the exhibition from 45 participants.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>As part of the project, the volunteers met fortnightly over 14 sessions to plan the events, create films and co-curate the final exhibition. They received training in filmmaking, marketing, graphic design and exhibition curation. The museum alongside the volunteers delivered four workshops to create content for the final exhibition around the themes of Music Interpretation, Textiles, Traditional Dance and Art and Illustration attended by 60 visitors.</p> <p>8 women were interviewed by the volunteers and shared their ideas, experiences on issues faced by women in Brent. These two films were featured in the exhibition, shared at the launch event</p>	

and are available on the museum's YouTube channel [here](#) and [here](#) (together these films have been viewed over 200 times on YouTube). The exhibition was open for 90 days and was seen by over 1,000 visitors in the first month of opening. 17 new artworks were created during the workshops, alongside 30 photographs, which have subsequently been accessioned into the museum's permanent collection.

Feedback from participants and the general public:


100% of participating artists who contributed to the exhibition and films felt “*happy*” that their work was included. Participants highlighted their belief that the project was a step forward in improving racial relations within the borough, as well as strengthening multi-cultural relationships.

Feedback on the films included “*I have just watched it and it's fantastic! Loving the female energy and message of empowerment...*” Further comments on the YouTube channel show friends and family of participants celebrating their involvement.

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

The project has supported the museum to embrace and embed diversity practice and work by discussing female perspectives and demonstrated the importance of cultural diversity in the task of sharing stories of collective experience. The project helped the museum to provide services and activities that suited its community, which served the different cultures of Brent. It was also a welcome opportunity for the museum and partnering organisations to strengthen their experiences of working together, and sharing insights that enabled women to feel safe in describing their experiences to the public.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Central Saint Martin's Museum & Study Collection</p> <p><i>Roots and Shoots – Reimagining botanical illustration</i></p> <p>£3,000</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>The Central Saint Martin's Museum & Study Collection commissioned Raksha Patel, a South Asian visual botanist artist who explores colonialism through the botanical pieces she creates, to paint a new piece of work that responds to the museum's 18th and 19th Century botanical drawings. The museum wanted a new piece of work to some way address the colonial histories inherent within its collection and serve as a counterpoint to their Western-centric narrative during learning and teaching activities. The new piece was exhibited alongside items from the museum's botanical collection that inspired the piece and the artist's sketches and photographs for 78 days.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>Museum staff met fortnightly with the artist between September and February to discuss the artwork and the museum's collection. The artist began by visiting the museum's collection to familiarise themselves with the botanical drawings and to undertake research into the colonial contexts of botany and the large-scale exploitation of the natural world by the colonial powers. The artist reached out to the local community at Kings Cross, tracking down photographer Jane Swan who lived in the area in the 1990s and was involved in the rooftop garden of Culross House. As a result, the artist focused their research on botanical drawings depicting flora native to the British Isles; particularly plants culturally associated with femininity and traits such as fidelity, chastity and purity.</p> <p>The resulting painting <i>Tulsi the Goddess of Kings Cross</i> is a celebration of female identity and of women who have passed through Kings Cross. It is estimated that the piece will be seen by over 5,500 visitors. The piece has been used as a teaching aid in</p>	

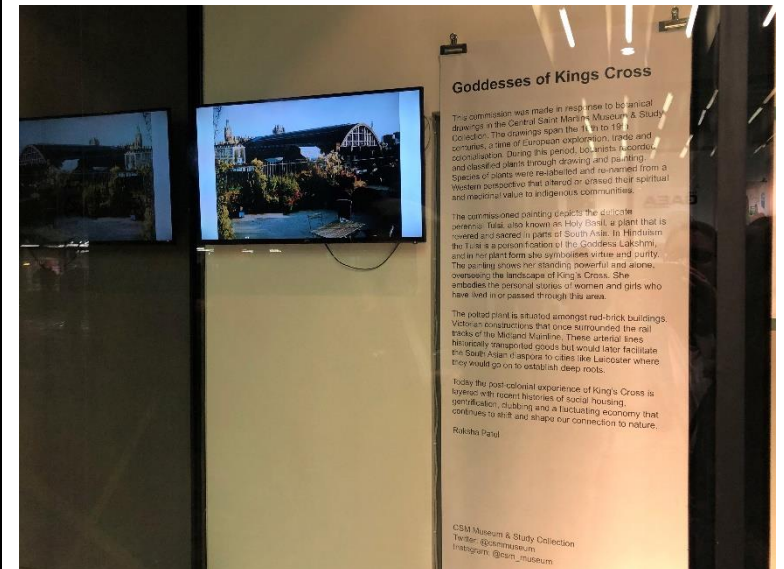
the university's MA in Culture, Criticism and Curation and will be used in future lectures to Camberwell College, the Decolonising Arts Institute and the British South Asian Visual Arts Network.



Feedback from participants and the general public:

An independent evaluator was commissioned to interview the artist and gather feedback from exhibition visitors. Overall, the artist was very happy with the project, but did feel like they would have had more time to prepare the work and more discussions with staff to talk through their ideas. A number of respondents said that seeing the exhibition had an impact on the way they see Kings Cross and on the way they view the cultural significance of plants. Comments included *"I learnt something about a different culture – both about the Kings Cross site and Indian culture,"* and *"bless the art's way to inspire."*

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

The commissioning of this work has provided the museum with huge potential to speak to new audiences both internally and externally. It is part of a more general pro-active collecting policy acquiring new material from artists and makers of colour, in the hope that wherever people encounter their collections (in the classroom or exhibitions) they see something of themselves reflected there. The positive impact of this commissioned artwork is already evident. After a gallery talk for MA Curation students, a student from Philippines said it had been *"inspiring to see what was possible' in terms of using art to address colonial legacies. It's so powerful to be able to tell more diverse stories in the classroom."* This commission provides the museum with an opportunity to have a new set of conversations and provides a new cultural touch point for our visitors.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Gunnersbury Park Museum</p> <p><i>Arrivals</i></p> <p>£3,000</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>The museum worked with the Afghanistan & Central Asian Association (Hounslow-based community group), Trinjan (Ealing-based community group), and Saffron Mic (Ealing-based cultural group) to re-imagine their Fashion Gallery. As part of the project the museum accessioned new South Asian costume pieces donated by individuals from each group. The groups looked at the topic of migration, but also enabled them to encapsulate significant life events such as births, coming of age ceremonies and marriages. Staff drew on their existing collection, and worked with local people to source traditional and significant items of clothing to enrich a co-curated exhibition. The museum also recruited a local BAME film-maker, Narvir Singh, to create a short film in which the oral histories of the participants are shared about clothing of cultural and personal significance. The museum then recruited 3 volunteers from the University of West London and Central St Martin's and 2 volunteers from Groundwork (a group of refugee and asylum seekers) to support the museum's mount-maker Gesa Werner and their curator in the mounting and display of the new costume pieces.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The project has enabled the museum to start the process of co-curating their permanent galleries with local community groups. The museum worked with 32 community members during the project, which resulted in 3 new costumes being accessioned into its collection. These costumes are now on permanent display in the museum's Fashion Gallery. Since opening, the exhibition has been seen by 3,352 visitors. The film-maker made 2 films – a film for the website, which can be found here, and a film showcasing the display, which can be found here. The film was split into three parts</p>	 

for social media channels and released one at a time to promote the exhibition. On YouTube the films have totalled 589 views and 5,778 impressions so far and have had a social media reach of 1,427 so far.



Feedback from participants and the general public:

Feedback from community members participating in the project has been overwhelming positive. The groups were glad to see that their suggestions had been acted on and that there were tangible outcomes to their participation. One participant who had donated her son's Wedding Outfit, to show a Sikh Groom's wedding attire, said of their experience *"My experience has been fantastic and I feel very proud that it has place in the Fashion Gallery in Gunnersbury Park Museum."* One of the volunteers recruited to co-create the exhibition, shared the impact of their experience at the museum in a [film](#) and [pictures](#) on Instagram. Feedback from general visitors has included *"I love how Asian clothes are shown in addition to Western,"* and *"Really fascinating to see all the original items."*

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

This project provided an opportunity to open up conversations with a wider range of groups representing their local communities and embed regular outreach sessions into their practice. It has also released the curatorial grip on interpretation, allowing people from a variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds to tell them what information to include on object labels and to interpret the objects in their own words. Following the projects' completion, the 5 new volunteers from diverse backgrounds, have decided to stay as volunteers and support other areas of the museum as well. Lastly, the project has supported the development of a successful model for future developments in our permanent galleries.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Richmond Art Service – Orleans House Gallery (OHG)</p> <p><i>Himali Singh Soin and the archive of Sir Richard Burton</i></p> <p>£3,000</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>2021 was the bicentenary of Sir Richard Burton's birth and this prompted OHG to explore with artists and audiences the significance of understanding Burton's life, what factors shaped it and how these factors have also shaped our lives. OHG invited a number of emerging artists from ethnic minority backgrounds to explore the collections, its links to colonialism, gender, culture and society by examining the past to challenge inequality in the present. The grant enabled OHG to work with South Asian artist and poet, Himali Singh Soin, who is based between London and New Delhi and Blaize Henry, an artist and composer born in South East London to Afro-Guyanese parents to co-create an exhibition of work to be displayed at OHG.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The Burton collection was used as a stimulus to explore the relationships that it has with colonial history and its impact on contemporary life. Artist Himali Singh Soin and curator Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf worked with Alexis Rider, historian of science, to co-create an exhibition. Himali created eight new photographs containing ghosts and shadows of the Burton Collection, which were accessioned into the collection. Nephertiti further recorded the exhibition text as a sound piece available to visitors on their website. The artists added interpretation to their Study Gallery, where part of the Burton collection is displayed. A family trail was co-created by Alexis and the gallery team inspired by field notebooks and the River Thames, used by 120 family participants and 155 school children. The exhibition was open for 114 days and was visited by 6,950 visitors. 6 co-curated events attracted 207 visitors. 10 new art pieces were commissioned into the collection</p>	 



Feedback from participants and the general public:

The artists fed back positively about their involvement in the project. In Himali's social media post to her followers at the end of the show, she wrote *"By realigning narratives of the past, we might shift the visions of the future.... Massive thanks to Chris Burton and the OHG crew for having the courage to disrupt their own collection!"* It was apparent that visitors who engaged deeply with the show (e.g. listening to the audio piece) gained the most from it, with one saying *"I enjoyed the interactive art and loved the layering and of course the messages."* It was also clear some visitors found the exhibition thought-provoking, with one commenting *"Marvellous made me THINK,"* and another saying *"A very interesting and innovative take on western world views and interpretations of the 'foreign' landscape – the postmodern multiplicity of perspectives is fascinating."*

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

Following the end of the project, the gallery held its first 'Collections Roundtable – Decolonisation and recontextualisation' with members of the RAS team and two artists, Sophie Greswell and Himali, a member of Richmond Council's Race Equality Network, and two academics. The meeting will be the first in a series that continue to involve artists in the development of their collecting policy. Early indications from Audience Finder surveys suggest a more diverse audience in terms of ethnicity and age and includes a change in the diversify of their volunteer pool. The project has underlined to OHG the power of handing over parts of the organisation (collection, programming, audience engagement) to artists to disrupt. In future, they want to ensure artist-led projects have participatory practice at their core, to enable local communities to join the 'disruption' process.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre</p> <p><i>South Asian Roots in Redbridge</i></p> <p>£3,000</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>Redbridge worked with some of their existing local South Asian contacts created over the past 20 years to review their collections and help shape a display about Redbridge's diverse South Asian communities, first as a project display and then as part of the major redevelopment of the permanent Redbridge Museum exhibition. This display reflected some of the experiences of the long-established and emerging South Asian communities that now make up 40% of the borough's population. As part of the project staff asked participants to enrich existing object records and collected a small number of new oral histories, objects, and photographs.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The museum worked with 11 South Asian residents to review the Museum's South Asian collections, identify omissions, and highlight new collecting opportunities. As part of the project, participants tested ideas for the new permanent exhibition which will explore the diversity of South Asian communities in Redbridge, and the experiences of multiple generations and backgrounds. The museum held 3 co-design workshops with 11 South Asian community contacts and recorded 3 new oral histories and took photographic portraits of the interviewees. They also collected a further 40 photographs from interviewees and other local residents that reflected personal experiences of migration and settlement in Redbridge, a sense of community, or cultural belonging, which were accessioned into the collection. Together they produced a project display, opened for 125 days, which acted as a pilot for a final display to be installed in the new permanent Museum exhibition, scheduled to open in autumn 2022.</p>	 

Feedback from participants and the general public:

Feedback from participants was overwhelming positive. One participant commented, *"I enjoyed having the opportunity to share my own experiences and listen to others. Thank you so much for including me as part of the exhibition. My family feel honoured."* Another participant said, *"I found the Workshop to be very productive in the memories and stories shared and... [hearing about] all the new displays and Exhibitions planned. I look forward, eagerly, to being part of this in any way I can... I am more than happy for you to include my photographs and any quotes, sections or all of my Manford Way Memories, in this display."* The exhibition opened in March 2022 and feedback will continued to be gathered and evaluated until the opening of the new museum in Autumn 2022. Early feedback includes comments such as: *"This exhibition is very important to Redbridge. A rich history must be explored,"* and *"It's really cool to learn about stuff from the past"*.

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

This process and the development of the South Asian Roots exhibition has greatly helped to clarify thinking for the forthcoming new Museum permanent exhibition and its timing could not have been better for staff. The project provided a structure and focus to tackle one of the most challenging aspects of the new Museum, namely how best to reflect the complex and diverse histories of half the borough's current population in such a restricted exhibition space. While the Asian Roots exhibition will not be perfect, staff felt the chance to try something out before fixing it into a permanent display is a fairly unique process. It has prompted new research into the history of South Asian communities in the 1970s (including the development of Ilford Lane's South Asian shops) and has highlighted gaps in the museum's knowledge and collections, which they will address in the next 6 months.



Conclusions on the 2021 - 2022 Diversity Matters Programme

Training Series

In total Museum Development London supported 12 delegates across 11 museums to develop realistic equality action points as part of the training series. Feedback from the training was very positive, with responding delegates stating that:

- 100% would do things differently as a result of the training series
- 100% felt had either completely or mostly gained knowledge and understanding on the topics covered
- 89% felt they had completely gained new and/or improved skills related to the topic, which they could implement within their organisations (100% of responding delegates felt they had almost and completely gained new skills and/or improved skills)
- 78% felt they were completely able to share these new and/or improved skills with colleagues
- 67% felt their learning expectations had been completely met (100% felt they had been almost and completely met)
- 89% felt inspired to find out more
- 89% felt the content was the right level for them.

Feedback from delegates included the following:

- “I found this course extremely useful, with an enormous amount of information to take in - I'm still processing it all! I thought the combination of expert speakers and real life case studies worked very well and it was particularly useful to hear the experience of other small museums and see what they had achieved.”
- “It was good to have a longer course with the same participants to allow sharing of experiences and get to know the other attendees.”
- “I shall be sharing the information and resources with colleagues and although our organisation has a long way to go to achieve greater inclusivity, I feel this course has been extremely helpful and inspiring in starting on that journey. Thank you to everyone involved!”
- “The content of the sessions and how it was delivered was good.”
- “I thought it was an excellent and really useful set of sessions, well planned and executed virtually, and provided a great opportunity to network with others.”
- “This course was really helpful. I appreciate the length of the course (7 weeks) as it meant we could get into the nitty gritty of the subject and foster good relationships with the other attendees. I thought this was fantastic.”

Delegates were also able to share the EDI work they hoped to achieve over the coming 12 months. EDI action points from museums included:

- “We will aim to make our collections more inclusive through targeted collecting. We are aware that there are gaps in the collections and that certain communities are under-represented, so we would like to strengthen our relationships with these communities and ensure that the collections reflect the diversity of the borough.”
- “We will work towards making our programming more inclusive in terms of activities, events and exhibitions and the formats these are delivered in. We also want to make our programming more accessible and will work towards implementing Access Impact Assessments for projects and activities.”
- “Revisiting the object catalogue's labelling, and working to contextualise some of the contentious parts of the collection. Working to create connections with people from communities that form a large part of the local population, but have not been engaged or included in previous work.”
- We want to ensure “access action planning is incorporated into our next 12 months [planning cycle], and we will be including a lot of accessible materials in our redevelopment.”
- “Review the organisation's recruiting practice for both staff and volunteers.”
- “Liaise with colleagues to review interpretation materials and future exhibition information.”
- “Recommend a review of the website with a focus on accessibility.”
- We want to “develop a clear action point for starting to create an inclusive museum, reviewing this with the MDO Audiences (starting with looking at how to include the public and wider borough in the museum's refurb).”
- “I will look at carrying out an Access Audit as part of the new museum refurbishment and development.”
- “Start an inclusion roadmap to see what has already been achieved and what can be done to make the organisation more inclusive, and share that with the team for their input, and for them to take ownership of sections of it.”
- We will “have come up with new ways to recruit volunteers and interns, using what I learnt in this course.”
- “We have plans to create new exhibitions at the museum making sure they are accessible for all.”

However, some points were raised, that MDL will review ahead of undertaking another training series. These included:

- Some delegates felt they would have liked more in-person training as part of the course. They felt this would encourage more conversation and interaction between the delegates and help them focus throughout all 7 sessions.
- Some delegates felt that not all of the sessions were as relevant to their role as others and would have liked to send another member of staff/colleague in their place/as well so they could also learn. Delegates were able to bring along colleagues to the sessions; however, delegates felt this could have been better articulated to the delegates.
- Lastly, two delegates felt that some of the sessions could be developed further and offered as an advanced session/course. They felt this advanced session/course would be beneficial for those individuals and museums who are further along on their diversity journeys and needed more targeted support.

The feedback, thoughts and learning from the training series will be used to inform MDL's EDI training programme for 2022-2023. MDL are currently planning to re-run the *Developing an Inclusive Museum* training series in Q3/Q4 2022-2023 with some changes, based on the feedback above. 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.

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, MDL have facilitated two further 1:1 with 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. All delegates have been contacted following the end of the training series, to highlight new funding opportunities as they open for applications, to further support them with their diversity journeys.

Grant Programme

The 5 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 5 projects funded through MDL's DMP programme have added to Arts Council England's wider Creative Case for Diversity agenda **through the work they've produced, presented and distributed**.

All 5 projects worked with an artist or group from an ethnicity minority within their specific boroughs (based on their detailed borough demographics provided within their applications) to develop and co-produce, co-create and co-curate on-site exhibitions, through either a contemporary collecting or revisiting collections initiative. As such, all grantees because of the project have either been able to begin or further develop partnerships with more key diverse audience groups from within their local London borough, in a more meaningful and sustainable way, which will further support their own organisation's diversity work going forward.

All 5 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 5 museums will have further exhibitions co-curated, co-created and co-produced by different groups by the end of March 2023, which is a testament to their learning and diversity journey.

As with all previous grant years, through the programme, an additional 5 of London's non-national museums have been able to further their diversity journey by embracing and embedding 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.

Similarly, to other years, it is still too early to tell how much their project has affected these museums' audience figures and whether these alongside their workforce and board of trustees will become more reflective of the diversity within their boroughs and London overall going forward. However, despite all the difficulties of the continued 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 either kick started or enabled them to continue with earnest 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 MDL's DMP will continue to run in Year Five. MDL hope to continue to include both a training and grant element to support and encourage more museums to work with their audiences, groups and visitors across all areas of their museums practice (audiences, collections, workforce and buildings) to better reflect the diversity of their society and local communities.



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