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Diversity Matters Programme Year One 2018 - 2019

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Introduction

The Diversity Matters Programme (DMP) 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**.

As part of the grant process, museums were required to attend the Diversity Matters Briefing Session on Friday 15 June 2018, run by Rachael Crofts, MDO Audiences. It covered all aspects of diversity practice, including giving time to the delegates to outline their diversity profile across their audiences, staff, volunteers and trustees and compare this to regional and local data. It also provided key information about the grant criteria as well as information on developing an overall Equality Action Plan.

In Year One, the grant programme prioritised grants that supported how museums could respond to the Creative Case for Diversity agenda (public programmes/events/exhibitions and collections). Programmes that contribute to CCD initiative include:

- Considering how museums can include in the planning process the voices of people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those that data and evidence tells museums are under-represented in their work
- Identifying opportunities for museums to commission new work and engage with artists from underrepresented groups
- Consulting with people who are underrepresented, for example by working with local organisations or groups who work with under-represented groups
- Recruiting a small number of people from communities that museums want to engage, train and support to develop new programmes
- Exploring new approaches to commissioning and curation to ensure greater diversity
- Promoting access and making reasonable adjustments
- Developing exhibitions that specifically respond to diversity issues such as age, disability and socio-economic status
- Collecting objects that reflect the diversity of the communities the museum works with
- Presenting and interpreting existing work in new ways through working with diverse individuals and roles – e.g. artists, curators, librarians – to make your collections more relevant to all communities. For example, this might include consulting with a group to understand how different objects mean different things to different people and to capture and present those multiple perspectives
- Considering how museums might develop a pathway that supports people from diverse backgrounds to move to higher levels of production

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 2 Diversity Matters Programme.

Diversity Matters Grants Overview

This aspect of the programme was managed by Rachael Crofts/Deanne Naula, Museum Development Officer Audiences. There were a total of 8 applications to the programme, of which following assessment LMD funded 4 projects. All funded projects were given grants of approximately £1,000. A total of £4,000 was awarded through the Diversity Matters Programme Grants. All the projects were completed to schedule and 2 of 4 museums provided additional funds towards the final project.


Notable successes this year included:

- Brent Museum and Archives building on the success of their Windrush 70 exhibition with the development of an associated object handling collection and schools' session
- Royal College of Music Museum successfully trialling relaxed concert formats and developing relationships with access user groups.

The grants were used to fund the following:

Museums that worked with a group to develop a new public programme and/or activities that reflect the museum's diverse communities:	4
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:	1
Exhibitions that showcased work/partner with artists and companies from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups:	1
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):	1
Co-produced exhibition with groups from under-represented communities:	1
A targeted co-produced event with groups from under-represented communities:	3

Descriptions of each of the 2018 - 2019 projects are given below.

Diversity Matters Grants 2018 - 2019		
Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Brent Museum and Archives</p> <p>£883.85</p> <p><i>Windrush 70 Pioneers: Making a Home</i></p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>The museum wanted to create a Windrush 70 handling collection and loan boxes that could be used by schools and at local dementia cafes. As part of the project the museum engaged with established local community groups, at the Bridge Park community centre, to reminisce on the topic of the West Indian Front Room with the aim of helping the museum reveal an under represented part of Brent's heritage and develop the handling collection and loan boxes.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The museum used items and photographs from the West Indian Front Room Installation to encourage conversations about participant's experiences of arriving in Britain and how essential the Front Room has been to the community in Brent and how they have built their homes and communities here. These sessions helped identify key items to include in the handling collection, they have used these items to help tell the story of the Caribbean diaspora.</p> <p>In addition to the creation of the workshop and loan boxes, some of the participants have also attended sessions in school to discuss their experiences. As a result of the project, the museum successfully created and delivered a handling collection and school workshop exploring the arrival of the Empire Windrush and the effect this had on Britain for all school-aged children in Brent.</p>	



Feedback from participants and the general public:

Participants were surprised to be asked about their experiences as they didn't feel that there was much they could offer. As the project progressed and the museum used objects and images to prompt conversations, participants enjoyed discussing common themes this covered talking about similarities and differences in the Caribbean and how these transferred to the UK. 7 attendees said they were very satisfied with the event and 3 said they were satisfied. School evaluation has also provided how important the loan boxes and subject matter has been at engaging school children.

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

As a result of the project the museum has been able to increase participation and engagement with local schools who are representative of the diversity of Brent. The museum successfully created a handling collection and developed a school workshop exploring the arrival of the Empire Windrush and the effect this had on Britain. This will become part of their public programme and the loan box and workshop has already been used. By developing the handling session and workshop, the museum have been able to reach a wide variety of visitors from different backgrounds and a variety of ages. Elements of the traditional West Indian Front Room have resonated with a wide variety of visitors and promoted conversations about recent history and people's childhoods. The project has given staff much more confidence to engage with people from different backgrounds.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>Kingston Museum</p> <p>£1000.00</p> <p><i>Original Project – Kingston Panorama followed by the revised project – Young People Board (YPB) project – Share it</i></p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p><i>Original project:</i> The original project was due to be a 7week programme of 2 hour workshops. The targeted participants were A-level students from a local secondary school. Taking inspiration from an important artefact from their collection, the students were to create their own responses that would result in a public exhibition. Unfortunately the previously confirmed partner school were unable to take part in the project and no other schools could be recruited. The museum used the opportunity to connect with Click Photography, an organisation that worked with young people and schools, to run the workshops. The first workshop with the young people would form the basis for the school groups to contribute work that would be displayed together in the museum. However due to factors outside the museum's control the foundation workshops were not delivered and therefore no output was possible. In discussion with LMD and Click, the museum decided to end the project and focus on supporting another Youth engagement project delivery already in existence.</p> <p><i>Alternate project:</i> Young People Board (YPB) project – <i>Share it</i></p> <p><i>Share it</i> was a film project that was co-curated by members of the Kingston Heritage Services' board. The project entailed a series of 8 sessions over 6 months including the public showing of the film. The first 3 sessions were funded by the Diversity Matters grant. This included, a session led by the museum curators exploring the types of collection the Heritage Service has and understanding what 'star objects and themes' the museum would like to promote; TOGADA - a local film organisation of ex Kingston University students, introducing the Young People Board to film and roles within the film industry through interactive games and introducing</p>	 

the Young People's Board to what goes into making documentaries as well as mapping what the themes would be.

What was achieved:

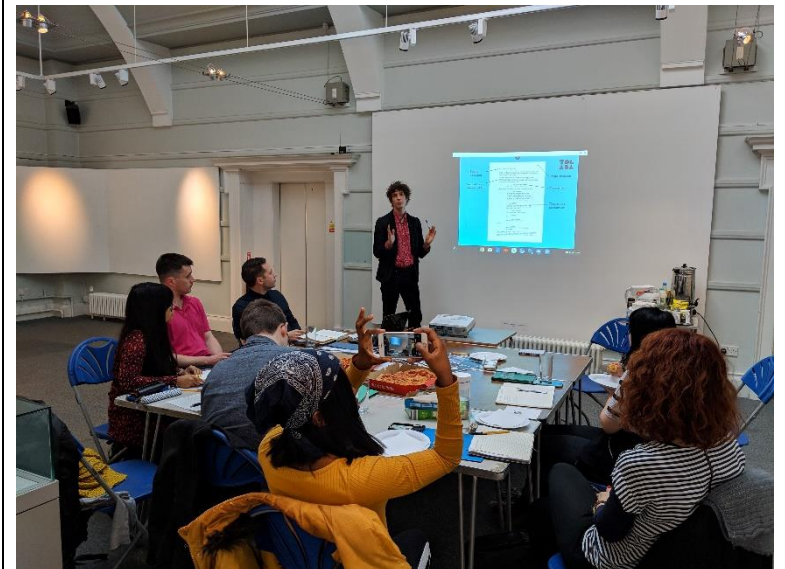
The YPB and museum co-produced a film that was screened part of the International Youth Arts Festival Kingston and made available online on YouTube and the relaunched Heritage Service website. The project built stronger relationships with the existing YPB and embedded the board into the core activity of the museum. The board membership grew to 15 regular participants, including 11 new members from Kingston's diverse population.



Feedback from participants and the general public:

Participants provided great feedback about their involvement in the project and look forward to showing the film to wider audiences in May and June 2019. The young people felt they had learnt skills and developed a better understanding of the museum's collection, which helped them create the film and engage other visitors.

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

The project has enabled the museum to reflect upon what their offer to young people looks like. The museum feels like it has taken the first small step to working with young people to co-produce content, but the project has increased staff confidence and desire to develop this programme further.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>The Royal College of Music Museum</p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>As part of the project the museum wanted to develop a relaxed concert session with and for groups with additional needs.</p>	
<p>£769.20</p> <p><i>Music in the Museum: Relaxed concerts</i></p>	<p>The museum conducted comparative research of relaxed classical concert offers in London, all of which were different in scope and style. This informed their thinking and staff chose to perform two mini performances during the consultation sessions to trial the 'simply listen and respond' approach as well as interactive opportunities, i.e. singing, playing percussion, touching objects.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The consultation phase took place with partner, Equal People Mencap service users, a resource centre for people with learning disabilities based in Kensington & Chelsea. They also researched creative ways to consult with audiences with additional needs in order for it to be effective and inclusive, and devised an appropriate set of activities and data gathering techniques. Several barriers were identified and participants input directly influenced the structure and content of the final concert.</p> <p>From the consultation they were able to select a theme for the pilot concert (animals), design a programme of music and source a set of objects/stories from the RCM collections that the audience could engage with during the performance. The RCM student performers were given disability awareness training and incorporated Makaton into the spoken parts of the concert. The pilot concert was delivered and fully subscribed.</p>	 

Feedback from participants and the general public:

The museum received positive feedback from participants about being able to experience live music. Museum staff spoke with Equal People staff after each session who told them they observed a high level of verbal and physical engagement from the participants.



RCM students also told staff how working with this audience had really changed their perspective *“On the day of the relaxed concert, my heart was so full after seeing how much the audience enjoyed our music.”* Another student commented that *“There was a much more positive atmosphere than I’ve seen in ‘formal’ classical concerts, and I’m excited to do more work like this in the future.”* Furthermore, the concert evaluation showed that participants enjoyed the music, felt welcomed and supported, and wanted to visit the RCM again.

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

The session and future programme will continue to be developed with users for the museum reopening. Staff involved received Disability Awareness training that will be rolled out to wider staff. Wider teams and students are keen to be involved with the programme. The wider RCM learning and participation department were keen for museum staff to share learning and ideas to inform their work and programming going forward.

As the museum moves to re-open in 2020, staff have agreed to work with Equal People Mencap to develop and test some of the museum’s general offer to audiences with additional needs (large print guides, audio described tours etc.) The museum also want to continue to co-curate future relaxed concerts.



Name of museum and grant awarded	Information on project	Photographs of project
<p>The View</p> <p>£1000.00</p> <p><i>Sensing the Forest</i></p>	<p>Project Overview:</p> <p>The project made contact with, received feedback from, and offered ways of making Epping Forest available, friendly and relevant to people with sight impairment, while extending their offer and making it more stimulating to groups with other special needs as well as general visitors of all ages.</p> <p>The museum liaised with local vision groups in Waltham Forest and Redbridge to attend meetings to promote their offer and invite informal feedback about ways to make The View and the Forest more accessible to them. The View developed a 'browse room' from the feedback and held a social morning session to trial activities and gather feedback.</p> <p>What was achieved:</p> <p>The museum and its participants delivered a range of multisensory accessible events to all visitors and promoted to vision groups in the local area. These included drawing and listening workshops, an art exhibition, half term events and winter opening weekends with related multi-sensory activities.</p> <p>Feedback from participants and the general public:</p> <p>Participants at the blind and partially sighted session gave the museum hugely encouraging and useful feedback about what the museum offered around language, guiding, publications and promotion and the museum's handling objects.</p>	 

There was also very positive feedback on the replica eggs bought for the project. The general public also provided very positive feedback on the events

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

The contact with participants and their willingness to 'test drive' a whole range of activities and provide feedback, encouraged staff and build their self-confidence to develop the activities further. Alongside this, four members of staff and volunteers were able to assist in the project's deliverables, which provided some 'bite-sized training' for staff working with blind and partially sighted visitors. The museum plans to continue running a museum handling object event and a guided walk for people with sight impairments. Staff will also continue to work with participants on future activities.



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 2018 - 2019 Diversity Matters Programme Grants

21 individuals attended the first Diversity Matters Programme (DMP) Briefing Session from across 19 non-national museums. Of these museums, 8 decided to apply to the grants programme. All attendees of the Briefing Session valued the opportunity to understand the diversity of their borough and London overall and take time to think about programmes that could meet an identified need in their borough and within their future plans. All participants welcomed the opportunity to understand how to develop an Equality Action Plan going forward. However, a number of museums identified that there could be problems getting their Boards of Trustees to sign off these plans within the timeframe to submit a DMP grant.

The four 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 for or on behalf of these groups. All four 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 four projects worked with a group of people from the list of Arts Council England's protected characteristics to develop and co-produce, co-create and co-curate new public programme outputs and activities that helped the museum reflect its wider diverse communities. Alongside this, all four projects ran events that were shaped by their identified groups.

Through the programme, four 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, these museums are showing encouraging signs by undertaking this work and it is hoped when the museum's complete their Impact Report in April 2020, these 4 museums will have seen a positive change in their engagement from visitors of all backgrounds with their collections, exhibitions and alongside an increase in participation in their public programmes and activities from more diverse communities. These projects have kick started each museum's emerging diversity practice 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.

From the positive feedback from current cohort of museums involved, LMD's DMP will continue to run in Year Two and support a further four museums to work with audiences/groups and visitors that reflect the diversity of society and local communities. From the feedback from museums undertaking the Year One programme, LMD will continue to plan and run the DMP using a similar format with a briefing session and the launch of an associated grants programme planned for Late Spring 2019. This will be planned earlier in the financial year than in 2018, as it was recognised from feedback that museum's would have appreciated more time to develop and run their programmes.