Papers & Notes

From the Margins to the Core?

Sackler Conference for Arts Education

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1.   The Margins define the Mainstream - Gary Younge, Journalist, Guardian

I want to start with a tale of two white girls. Sandra Laing from Mpumulanga in South Africa and Bliss Broyard who was raised in the blue-blood world of Connecticut's twee suburbs and private schools. Broyard's racial identity was ensconced in the comfort of insular whiteness that had always known there were "others" but never really considered them. "I'd never had a conversation about race," she confesses, in her book *One Drop*. "In the world I was raised in, it was considered an impolite subject. Although I grew up within an hour's drive of three of the poorest black communities in the United States, those neighbourhoods seemed as distant as a foreign country."

But in early adulthood Broyard would discover that on one level she had a greater connection to those neighbourhoods than she imagined. For on his deathbed her father, Anatole, confessed that he was in fact a black man who had been passing as white throughout most of his adult life. Initially she was thrilled at the news. It was, she wrote, "as though I'd been reading a fascinating history book and then discovered my own name in the index. I felt like I mattered in a way that I hadn't before."

But then came the heavy lifting. The family her father had left behind, many of whom lived in the South, and her relationship to those poor black communities that she had known **of** but never actually known, forced her to reassess everything she had once thought about herself. "I felt unsettled: I'd already experimented with describing myself as black on a few occasions and it hadn't gone over well."

The other white girl, Laing was born to two white Apartheid-supporting Afrikaaner parents in the small town of Piet Retief near the Swazi border. Her grandparents were also white. Blood tests proved she was her father's daughter. Yet Sandra emerged dark-skinned with afro hair - a black girl. And under the

strict segregationist laws of Apartheid the fact that she had two white parents could only mean so much. Sandra was removed from her whites-only school and reclassified as "coloured".

Sandra's parents fought the reclassification hard. "Sandra has been brought up as a White," her father explained to the *Rand Daily Mail*. "She is darker than we are, but in every way she has always been a White person. If her appearance is due to some "coloured blood' in either of us, then it must be very far back among our forebears, and neither of us is aware of it. If this is, in fact, so, does it make our family any different from so many others in South Africa?"

Eventually Sandra would be reclassified as white. But in a country where segregation was rigid and nobody accepted her as white, this legalistic change was more than a technicality but less than an objective reality. Eventually she decided that since black people were prepared to accept her literally on face value while whites were not that she would reclassify herself back to coloured.

Two white girls in two nations founded in no small part on racial classification and segregation, discover that they are both in different ways black. These we might broadly agree are two marginal tales. In all likelihood we know relatively few people who have these racial experiences.

But for the purposes of this contribution, and I would argue this conference, they are instructive because they shine considerable light on how the relationship between the margins and the core is understood, misunderstood, assumed, accepted and all too often unacknowledged. There are 4 specific ways in which this plays out in society in general that are illustrated here that I want to dwell on in the rest of this talk.

First, that the margins in no small part define the core. They establish the boundaries within which the core can be understood. Without the margins there can be no core, just as without borders there can be no nation. The two concepts are not only inextricably linked – they are logically symbiotic. A lot was riding on Sandra Laing's classification. Far from being a personal matter, her race becomes an affair of state. If she's white who isn't; if she's black whose family could be next? In a system founded on racial separation there has to be

some clear distinction about where one 'race' starts and another one ends. Without it the entire social fabric starts to fray. Those distinctions, by definition, take place at the margins.

Second, the categories that we are working with when we talk about what constitutes the marginal as opposed to the core are almost never definite or often even definable. Both of these girls are both white and black. In ordinary conversation we assume we know what these terms mean. But since race has no basis in biology, genealogy, science or performance, we really don't. As soon as we start to define most of the terms we commonly use in identity and culture things fall apart. South Africa's Population Registration Act in 1950 defines a white person as "any person who in appearance obviously is or who is generally accepted as a white person, other than a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person." Far from being water tight these terms are in fact incredibly porous. So while we have to work with the categories that exist we should never be under the illusion that those categories are not open to challenge.

Third, that what is categorised as marginal and what is understood to be core has, at its root, nothing to do with numbers and everything to do with power. There is a reason why Bliss Broyard's father decided to cross the colour line or why the Laings wanted Sandra to remain on their side of it. The lines in question divided society into a life with or without resources, privilege and power – decisions are made at the core, consequences are felt at the margins. So en route from the margins to the mainstream are many gatekeepers – some official, others self- appointed – keen to stamp their imprimatur of authenticity and exact a price for entry. Oftentimes the line is determined in court. And somebody has to draw it. All too often what we insist is marginal has in fact simply been marginalised.

Fourth, and finally, that the relationship between the margins and the core is never settled but in constant flux. The categories we work with are not only not watertight, they are positively fluid. Identities and cultures are in a state of constant evolution, both within themselves and in relation to the other things. They change, not just as a result of time and tide, but as a result of struggles either within the margins and the core, between the margins and the core or

usually both. In a post-Apartheid South Africa Sandra Laing could have harnessed her racial identity for affirmative action; while Anatole Broyard, who was raised in the segregated South, ran away from his blackness his daughter, in a post-civil rights America, could run towards it. What is marginal today could well be core tomorrow and vice versa.

The manner in which the core is defined by its margins is best illustrated by recent events in Israel where more than 40,000 people were told they were no longer Jewish with the stroke of a pen. The story starts on the margins. In 2008 a woman known as "Rachel", an immigrant, who had been converted by Drukman, went to file for divorce. The rabbinical judge asked her a few questions about her conversion and, evidently unimpressed, then probed her on her observance. Left with the impression that she did not observe the Sabbath or otherwise meet the standards he believed worthy of a Jewish convert, he ruled her conversion invalid. This also meant her marriage of the last 15 years had never been valid and that her children were no longer Jewish in the eyes of the Rabbinate either.

Rachel had been converted by Rabbit Chaim Drukman who became the head of the Israeli conversion court. When a three judge panel hear her appeal they decide not only to uphold it but to disqualify all the conversions performed by Drukman since 1999. In one fell sweep 40,000 people who were told they were Jewish were now no longer Jewish.

This is no small thing. Israel is a Jewish state. That is not just an incidental description but its deliberate intention. The express aim of its political class and popular culture is to keep it that way. So the question of who is deemed to be Jewish, by whom and on what basis is central to the nature of Israel's existence. Indeed it is an affair of state. And how that question is defined in turn defines the state and its relationship to international Jewry. That definition takes place at the margins – the point at which someone may be included or excluded. But it is of the utmost importance to the core. For what it means to be let inside is shaped to a large degree by what it takes to be left outside.

The truth is that relatively few Jews would have passed the tests for observance set down by the Rabbinate. In 2007, a poll by the Israeli Democracy Institute

found that only 27% of Israeli Jews kept the Sabbath, while 53% said they do not keep it at all.

But if the core makes little sense without the margins, the efforts to definitively establish where those margins lie, all too often produce nonsensical results.

The Rabbinate's, stiffer criteria for recognising conversions and acknowledging Jewish heritage would, according to one campaigner, exclude 80% of the American Jewish Federation, the pillars of US Jewry, who run the country's principal philanthropic and cultural organisations, would not qualify. "The problem I have is not proving that people are Jewish," explains Rabbi Shaul Farber, whose organisation helps Jews navigate the demands of the Rabbinate. "The problem is certifying that they are Jewish to a certain threshold. The trouble is the threshold keeps changing."

Which brings us to the second point: that the definition of what constitutes inclusion in the margins as opposed to the core is invariably highly subjective and problematic. The lines we draw to categorise human difference are never straight and always blurred. Trying to make sense of human difference is a valiant and important effort. But just because we find words for things doesn't necessarily mean we have found meaning for them.
"The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled," wrote John Berger in Ways of Seeing. "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe."

Just a few examples. The French government's efforts to combat Islamic extremism by banning headscarves in schools were not triggered by girls whose fundamentalist parents made them cover up but by converts to Islam whose father is a Sephardic Jew who did not want them to wear them but respected their right to do so. Even those categories with which we are most familiar and most comfortable can prove less certain than most thought. The 800m women's world champion, South African Caster Semenya, had to undergo gender verification tests in 2009 to prove she was actually a woman. "If it's a natural thing and the athlete has always thought she's a woman or been a woman, it's not exactly cheating," explained a spokesman for the International Association of Athletics Federations.

Take Barack Obama. The son of a black immigrant from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas, raised by his white grandparents in Hawaii, he is commonly acknowledged to be the first African American president. But is he? True, his father is from Africa. But he's Kenyan American. African American refers to the ethnicity of people who were taken from Africa as slaves. The reason they get a continent and everyone else gets a country – Italian-American, Japanese-American, Irish-American – is because African Americans cannot say with any certainty where their ancestors come from. During his 2004 Democratic convention speech that launched him to prominence he said his father came to America, "A magical place." Few African Americans thought America was magical in 1959.

But he's black right? Well, it depends who you ask. A poll in 2008 showed that, after being told his parent's race and nationality, more than 75% of whites and 61% of Hispanics classified Obama as biracial, while two-thirds (66%) of blacks regarded him as black. Most of us here, I would hope, understand that race has been constructed in a certain way that makes some descriptions more feasible than others. But just because a description is viable does not make it rational.

And these definitions matter. In the past we have referred to Asian when we meant Muslim, Muslim where we meant Pakistani, urban when we meant black, black where we meant youth, Western where we meant European, British where we meant European or alternative where we meant gay - to name but a few.

A few years ago there was an intense debate over the fact that two-thirds of the black students admitted to Harvard - some of whom were beneficiaries of affirmative action - were the descendants of Caribbean or African immigrants as opposed to African-American slaves.

"You need a philosophical discussion about what are the aims of affirmative action," said Harvard sociology professor, Mary Waters. "If it's about getting black faces at Harvard, then you're doing fine. If it's about making up for 200 to 500 years of slavery in this country and its aftermath, then you're not doing

well. And if it's about having diversity, that includes African-Americans from the South or from inner-city high schools, then you're not doing well, either."

We should also recognise that we have multiple identities. We are many things at once and at all times we are also the same thing - ourselves. A black man, a white woman, a straight Sikh, a gay millionaire – in all sorts of ways it is possible for us to simultaneously occupy the core and the margins simultaneously.

One of the problems with diversity, as it is currently understood, is that it can often take precious little account of economic difference – an omission that leaves the white working class stranded without a sponsor. In the world of multi-culturalism, as it is often portrayed, they are assumed to have no culture. They are told their whiteness is a mark of power they have never felt and maybe led to believe is a signifier for potential bigotry they may not harbour. Caught in a pincer between the battle for scarce resources and the battle for equality, he does not argue for more resources but against others getting the cut he has 'earned'. He experiences race and class not as identities but as a besieged grievance which the Right are only to happy to leverage for political gain.

The fact that we have a multitude of affiliations does not mean that certain identities might not come to the fore at certain moments but any attempt to diminish that multiplicity, or rank identities into some pre-ordained definitive hierarchy will inevitably end in distortion. "We are the sum of the things we pretend to be," wrote the late American novelist, Kurt Vonnegut. "So we must be careful what we pretend to be."

These complexities should neither paralyse nor petrify us, but simply make us aware that any attempt to categorise the diversity of human experience is inevitably flawed even when it is necessary.

Two of the many principles that might help us navigate this complexity. First, everyone has the right to call themselves whatever they want. But, second, with this right comes at least one responsibility - that if you want your identity to have any broader relevance beyond yourself it must at least make sense and to make sense, in the words of philosopher, Anthony Appiah, "it must be an

identity constructed in response to facts outside oneself, things that are beyond one's own choices."

Far from being neutral, these facts are rooted in material conditions that confer power and privilege in relation to one another. Which brings us to the third point. The means by which things are categorised as core or marginal is shaped by who has the resources and capacity to frame that discussion with all the limitations inherent and implied in that state of affairs. What masquerades as core is all too often simply "powerful". Any push for diversity that refuses to challenge that power structure is really not worthy of the name. We don't need institutions that look different and behave the same. To create them is to mistake equal opportunities for photo opportunities.

There are two main problems with this. First, like most marketing ploys, it leaves many cynical and paves the way for a backlash. It exposes the few beneficiaries to charges of tokenism and its lack of integrity lends succor to those opponents of equal opportunities. Second, it is of absolutely no use to those who are underrepresented to have the underlying reasons why some groups are not recruited, promoted or retained, left intact, while a few identifiable faces are moved to more prominent places. Such institutional cosmetics ill-disguise a social and pervasive mindset in which the margins are subject to relentless examination while the core coasts by with eternal presumption. Nobody ever asks: "when did you first realise you were straight?" or "how do you balance fatherhood and work?" "Only when the lions write history," goes the African proverb. "Will the hunters cease to be the heroes."

The hunters are still out there. Nowhere has this been more evident than in discussions about the position of Islam and Muslims both in Britain in particular and Europe in general. In Britain, the emergence of "home-grown bombers" from the Muslim community has been mentioned as though this is a new development, when in fact we have been growing OUR own bombers for years. Indeed we have a whole evening dedicated to burning one - it's called Guy Fawkes night. Meanwhile the government has frowned upon Pakistani arranged marriages to foreigners while somehow forgetting that arranged marriage forms the basis for many British literary classics and that, of the six

British monarchs of the last century, five married foreigners and most of those unions were arranged.

Following rioting by black and French-Arab youth in France in 2007, Jacques Myard, a nationalist deputy, explained the disturbances thus. "The problem is not economic. The reality is not economic. The reality is that an anti-French ethno-cultural bias from a foreign society has taken root on French soil."

The French may need to import many things - from trashy popular films to fast food - but the one thing they have long produced themselves is a culture of riotous assembly. There is nothing foreign about rioting in France - the country was built on a riot.

All of which is to say that, for better and for worse, Muslims in Europe are far more European than many of their fellow Europeans care to admit. Given the colonial links, the prevalence of Western culture in the global arena and the power of the Western economy this should really come as no surprise. For many it is the only place they know. And yet in Britain each time a terror cell is found the media gasp at the discovery that the bombers or potential bombers played cricket, worked in chip shops and supported Manchester United.

So those who exist at the margins have little option but to be aware of their marginality; those who occupy the centre have the luxury of assuming that if people are not aware of their experiences, at the very least they should be.

> *"When you're my size and not being tormented by elevator buttons, water fountains and ATMs you spend your life accommodating the sensibilities of 'normal people'," says Cady Roth, the protagonist of restricted growth, from Armistead Maupin's novel, Maybe the Moon. "You learn to bury your own feelings and honour theirs in the hope that they'll meet you halfway. It becomes your job, and yours alone, to explain, to ignore, to forgive - over and over again. There's no way you can get around this. You do it if you want to have a life and not spend it being corroded by your own anger. You do it if you want to belong to the human race."*

But all too often those at the core do not see the need to meet people halfway and thereby fail to recognise that everyone else is doing all the travelling. For them, being at the core is an objective position in itself. It lends them not a perspective but an orthodoxy in which every food with which they are unfamiliar is 'ethnic food' and every month is their history month.

> *"Every human being at every stage of history is born into a society and from his earliest years is moulded by that society,"* argued noted historian *E.H.Carr. "Both language and environment help to determine the character of his thought; his earliest ideas come to him from others. His first words come to him from others. The individual apart from society would be both speechless and mindless."*

Denial in this regard raises two crucial problems. First, that those at the core are likely to remain cripplingly unaware of their bias. Second, the inability to recognise and interrogate one's own perspective paves the way for their experiences to be evoked not as an identity but as a grievance. The only political force prepared to talk about whiteness in Britain is the BNP; similarly it is left to the fox hunters to defend the countryside; and the Daily Mail to talk about Middle England. Each, in their own way, will evoke the threat of marginalisation as a pretext to build a fortress around the core.

This sense of siege usually demands a bespoke reality. Every victim needs an aggressor; every aggressor has a tool of oppression. And in the event that these do not exist they must be invented. In this case the aggressor is usually the "liberal establishment" and their instrument of social control is "political correctness".

Given the rightward shift in politics and economics over the last 30 years it is difficult to work out quite where this establishment resides. Finding a working definition of political correctness is not easy, which gives it the added benefit of meaning anything you want it to mean so long as you don't like it.

In the space of one month in 2006 "political correctness" was used in the British press on average 10 times a day - twice as frequently as "Islamophobia", three times as often as "homophobia" and four times as often as "sexism". During

that period it referred to the ill-treatment of rabbits, the teaching of Gaelic, Mozart's opera La Clemenza di Tito, a flower show in Paris and the naming of the Mazda3 MPS.

But what they are generally actually complaining about are constraints on their rights to be offensive and insensitive without consequence. In the past racially offensive remarks, comments about your female colleague's breasts or "spastic" jokes were considered part and parcel of daily banter both in and outside the workplace. Now they are not. We have abandoned them for the same reason we no longer burn witches at the stake or stick orphaned children in the poor house. We have moved on. Values change, societies develop and their language and behaviour evolves with them. That's not political correctness but social and political progress. It was not imposed by liberal diktat, but established by civic consensus.

Which brings us to my final point. That the relationship between the margins and the core are in constant flux. And while specific changes have to be assessed on their merits, opposition to the very idea of change is untenable since it would be contingent on peoples' lives, capacities and aspirations standing still.

"Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories" argues Stuart Hall. "But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous "play of history, culture and power."

Precisely when and how these shifts in people and societies happen is often difficult to fathom. It could be a century, a generation or – if we think about how America changed after 9/11 – a day. But even those single events do not appear out of a clear blue sky. More often than not, when identities change, they are the product of organic processes that shift the plates of ingrained prejudice, institutional power, popular presumption, orthodoxy and common sense, over time and at such a glacial pace that we barely notice them until they have changed form entirely.

While time may facilitate change it cannot do it by itself. The principal reason why the relationship between the core and the margins changes is because people make it change. There will always be those who are resistant to these changes, not on their merits but in principle. But in order to enforce their worldview they must perform three solipsistic manoeuvres.

First they must distort history. For if something is essentially unchanging then it must be the same now as it ever was. Second, they must quash all speculation about their future – for if it is essentially unchanging then it can never be different.

Both of these stances come together in arguments against gay marriage. As Andrew Sullivan argued in *The New Republic*: "If marriage were the same today as it has been for 2,000 years, it would be possible to marry a 12-year-old old you had never met, to own a wife as property and dispose of her at will or to imprison a person who married someone of a difference race. And it would be impossible to get a divorce."

Third they must ignore all the other changes that happen around them. One of the reasons that opinions about gay lifestyles have changed is because views on straight lifestyles have undergone a radical shift also. Between the 1950's and today divorce rates more than doubled in the US and the age at which people got married climbed nearer 30 than 20. Meanwhile between the sixties and 2005 the percentage of births to unmarried women increased seven-fold. In a world where people do not stay married, feel the need to get married, to have children and or have children when they are married, the link between marriage and procreation and sanctity and fidelity are at least tenuated and, for the most part, completely broken. Such is the defence of "tradition". Not to make an argument but simply repeat a fact.

So to conclude, there is an inherent tension in the relationship between the margins and the core. How could there not be? It is a tension in part shaped by a battle for definition and in part by a struggle for resources. A strain between who we are and what we need. Power, resources and opportunity are in play in how we choose to understand (or misunderstand) the value of ourselves and others.

There is little to be gained by fetishising that tension. First of all, if managed in the right way, it can be extremely creative. Insensitivity never achieved much. Baiting, ridiculing and humiliating are poor substitutes for satire, irony and humour, although they often masquerade as such. When they are employed by the powerful against the powerless it is not clever but cowardly.

But oversensitivity never achieved much either. Not every nuance, challenge, wordplay and ignorance is a slight; not every slight is worthy of escalating into an incident; not every provocation need be indulged. Just because someone claims marginality does not mean they have to be believed or that they cannot also have power at the core. Identity is a crucial place to start, it is a terrible place to finish.

But there is little to be gained by ignoring it either. The relationship between the two is not only symbiotic but unresolved. While there is great opportunity for anxiety there is also the potential for creativity is no less great. Pretending that power relationships are not there does not make them go away; it simply means you refuse to see them. I have a three year old. When his friends' parents tell me that their child doesn't see skin colour I usually tell them to get their kid's eyes tested. In all sorts of ways our differences make a difference; and in any case it is not the difference that is a problem. It's what people choose to make of that difference.

The journey between the margins and the core is one that most of humanity makes every day – be it geographically, culturally, linguistically or politically. Whether it's a white middle class kid listening to hip hop or an immigrant worker coming into central London to clean offices. The best we can do is travel from A to B safely and intelligently, with due regard for our fellow passengers, in the knowledge that without A there would be no B and that neither A nor B will necessarily be in the same place when we come to make the return trip.

Break Out Session: Embedding Diversity

2.   Getting to the Heart of it

2.1   Amy de Joia, Executive Director of Development and Communications, National Museums Liverpool

Diversity – the fact or quality of difference – is generally defined as the concept of understanding, accepting and valuing differences between people.

As such it is implicit in the concept of equality and has become a seminal word among those wanting to drive forward equal rights and entitlements, regardless of background, gender, age or beliefs. Diversity sits at the heart of social justice and is a keystone of public value.

Therefore, museums, in their role as accessible and responsive educational organizations serving the public, have then a responsibility to make sure that diversity is at the heart of all that they do: from audience development to collections management, research and scholarship, building projects, education, community engagement, staffing and governance. You can't ignore any one aspect, because in doing that, the whole becomes weaker, the impact of activity is lessened and the potential compromised.

Nor can museums ignore any parts of the diverse society in which they operate. As well as promoting and working for equality of opportunity, we also need to fight against injustice, and those that perpetrate it, wherever and however we can.

So, how is National Museums Liverpool (NML) working to put diversity at the heart of all it does?

Some context first: NML has been playing a major role in the cultural, educational and economic life of Liverpool and the North West for almost 160 years, and is unique in being the only national museum service in England

based wholly outside London. This gives us a unique fourfold role across our nine venues: we are the main museum service for Liverpool and Merseyside, and the largest cultural organisation in the North West of England, and we have our national and international roles.

We operate from Liverpool and are part of the fabric of the city. Even with the regeneration that Liverpool has seen over the past 15-20 years, and the undoubted success of European Capital of Culture in 2008, the city is still the most socially deprived in the UK. Along with Belfast and Hull, Liverpool has been given 'red alert' status by the Centre for Cities in their 2009 report, and has been identified as the UK city most at risk of impact from the recession. This is a challenging environment. Locally, the risks of lack of social cohesion and economic instability, and the resulting pressures on individuals and families are huge. NML carries a responsibility in terms of delivering great museums that can help create 'social capital', enhancing well-being, offering opportunity and raising aspirations.

NML is working to try to meet that responsibility - to provide public value to the communities that we are a part of, and to engage with ever more diverse audiences.
Over the past 9-10 years, NML has seen a threefold increase in visitors (from c700,000 in 2001 to more than 2.2m in 2009). C2DE audiences have grown by 195% over the past six years, and BME audiences by more than 350% over the same period. Family audiences have risen by 125%. While we are making progress, we still have a long way to go. In this brief overview, I will touch on some of the ways we have worked so far, and what we are planning.

At NML, our commitment to diversity and equality is an integral part of who we are and what we do. Our mission and values are clear: '*We are a democratic museum service and we believe in the concept of social justice: we are funded by the whole of society and in return we strive to provide an excellent service to the whole of the public'.*

Whilst there are many museums that are similarly focused and explicit in their commitment to diversity and equality, it is surprising how many UK museums still hold onto mission statements that do not reflect their ambitions or their

activity. If diversity is really going to be at the heart of the organisation, the organisation at all levels must be consistent in the reinforcement of the message. Staff, audiences, funders, opinion-formers must see that the commitment to diversity is rooted in the museum's core values and is carried through to every part of the museum's operations.

At NML, to revive our efforts to make real and sustained change, we set up a Diversity Working Group in 2005, co-ordinating and monitoring NML's activity in relation to socio-demographics, age, gender, sexual orientation, racial diversity, religion and belief and disability. There are lots of arguments for and against this kind of group – but it's working for us. We have set out to make the group as broad as possible – with membership drawn from every area and at all levels of NML. Meetings are held bi-monthly and are chaired by me, a member of NML's Executive Team. All members of the group are charged with reporting back to their teams, and minutes are available to all staff via the Intranet and staff notice boards. Diversity is a standing agenda item on the Director's fortnightly Executive Team meetings. We have a NML-wide Diversity Action Plan, which supports our strategic plan, departmental plans and individual job plans, and helps us identify gaps, and to work towards effective core provision across the board.

We produce a quarterly NML Diversity newsletter for all staff to remind them of the context of our work, and to update them on current programmes and the latest news. The kinds of programmes and initiatives we have featured in recent editions include: developing a national gay seafaring archive; our longstanding work with refugee and asylum seekers; our international schools' twinning programme (working with more than 3000 young people in Liverpool and in 11 countries worldwide on human rights and climate change issues); our early years provision; our work with older people; and our community engagement work to help develop the content for the new Museum of Liverpool (opening next year) which so far has involved more than 10,000 people across the city.

Throughout all our diversity work so far, workforce development remains one of our greatest challenges. We are learning a huge amount through evaluation of our diversity awareness training (compulsory for all staff), through our annual

staff diversity audits, and our analysis and development of how we recruit staff and volunteers, through our Positive Action traineeships, Creative Apprentices, and our community engagement. It is not plain sailing but we are beginning to see results in terms of creating a more diverse workforce and a more diversity-aware workforce at NML. My colleague, Karen Young, will be giving a few case studies next.

Beyond all of this, if museums really want to put diversity at their heart, they cannot be 'neutral' spaces. The clearest examples of museums unequivocally rejecting 'neutrality' are Holocaust museums; Museums of Memory, such as the recently opened Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, Chile; District Six Museum in Cape Town, and NML's International Slavery Museum.

At the International Slavery Museum, we take a stance and an active role in campaigning against human rights abuses – locally, nationally and internationally. A few months ago the museum was awarded an Honourable Mention in the 2009 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. The Director-General of UNESCO said that the award '*distinguishes the efforts of the International Slavery Museum to commemorate the lives and deaths of millions of enslaved Africans, and for its work to fight against the legacies of slavery such as racism, discrimination, inequalities, injustice, exploitation, as well as against contemporary forms of slavery.*'

We have now set up the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM). We hope that FIHRM will enable museums who deal with human and civil rights issues to work together and to share thinking and initiatives. We believe that there will be greater campaigning power in collective action. Already involved with us is the new Canadian Museum of Human Rights, the Calicia Jewish Museum in Poland, the National Museum of the American Indian (part of the Smithsonian) in Washington, and Te Papa in New Zealand. We look forward to welcoming them and many other museums (large and small) to Liverpool later this year (15 +16 September 2010) for FIHRM's inaugural conference.

The Torreon Declaration, endorsed by 180 delegates from 20 countries in November 2009 at the annual conference of INTERCOM (the ICOM International Committee for Management) is another important step on the road to museums fulfilling their potential. The Declaration states, '*INTERCOM believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of museums, wherever possible, to be active in promoting diversity and human rights, respect and equality for people of all origins, beliefs and backgrounds'.*

We cannot stop working towards meeting this responsibility. We mustn't give up or be manipulated by changing government agendas, looming funding cuts, by apathy, or by the way things have been traditionally. As American Association of Museums' Centre for the Future of Museums says, museums need to '*transcend traditional boundaries to serve society in new ways'.* Museums should be cultural and educational champions in the fight for diversity, equality and social justice. We need to keep our eyes on the prize.

2.2 National Museums Liverpool Staff Groups, Dr Chrissy Partheni, Head of Museum Partnerships, World Museum, Liverpool

Case Study April 2010

Introduction

National Museums Liverpool (NML) is committed to valuing diversity by actively promoting and implementing equality of opportunity in all that we do. This includes audience development, education, outreach, visitor experience, collections management, research and scholarship, governance and staffing. We believe that managing diversity is about recognising and appreciating individual needs and differences and treating everyone with dignity and respect.

The theme of social justice runs throughout our strategic plan. We are a democratic museum service and we believe in the concept of social justice: we are funded by the whole of the public and in return we strive to provide an excellent service to the whole of the public. We also believe in the power of

museums to help promote good and active citizenship, and to act as agents of social change.

We have identified key areas for action across all recognised diversity strands; gender, age, sexual orientation, racial awareness, religion & belief and disability, and socio-demographics.

Staff groups

Staff groups allow organisations to engage and consult directly with their employees. They work to broaden our knowledge around equality and diversity, including giving advice and feedback on employment policies and services to ensure that we continue to respond to the needs of our diverse visitors.

They play a role in NML's mission to ensure that all aspects of our work are accessible and appropriate. They also offer a support network to their members and assist in the development of service delivery and employment policy.

NML's staff groups

Over the past two years our staff have formed a Black Minority Ethnic Group; Disability Action Group; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group.

The groups have their own area on the intranet and, in addition to monthly meetings, the members keep in touch through an email list.

The establishment of these groups help to make minority staff a visible element of our workforce. They provide a forum for unique networking opportunities and a means of peer support between staff. They also enable us, as an employer, to engage directly with the needs of minority staff and to recognise which policies may impact on employees, and what changes can be made to improve staff experiences.

Support

NML's Diversity Working Group has developed a support framework for groups of staff that are interested in establishing networks and groups. This includes:

- Facility time offered to staff to enable them to attend meetings.
- Use of computing facilities, equipment and other resources.
- Use of training and meeting rooms as required.
- Support for internal communication and events.

We appreciate that much of the planning and development is carried out by individuals in addition to their normal workload. In consideration of this we recognise, during the Performance and Development Review process, the work active members put into the groups and the positive impact on their development.

Benefits to the organisation include:

Support for staff groups demonstrates a positive commitment to equality and diversity. It highlights that the organisation values its staff and is a positive career choice, helping to attract and retain talented people.

They also help in building communication channels, as they are a point of contact for employers who want to find out about the concerns of staff and can be a useful resource for Human Resources (HR) and Diversity Working Groups.

Just one example of the scope of these groups is the potential to work with curators to look at the representation of diverse histories within our collections. They also present staff with the opportunity to advise HR on diversity policy and help promote the organisation as a leader in equality and diversity.

Benefits for employees include:

Staff groups can provide a forum for staff to talk about issues that specifically affect them, which in turn is fed back to HR or the Diversity Working Group. Providing a forum for discussion is an important way to build a workforce that feels valued. The group can also speak up for minority staff who are experiencing problems at work.

Groups can also help to create an environment in which staff feel safe to develop their skills and pursue career opportunities. Access to role models and mentors also inspire and build staff confidence.

Summary activities/outcomes:

- Assist with policy development.
- Review NML's marketing literature and appropriateness of language.
- Advise on diversity initiatives such as diversity monitoring and training.
- Advise on recruitment and retention strategy and practice.
- Encourage NML to sponsor and participate in diversity specific events.
- Promote NML as a leader in equality.
- Identify development needs and barriers to career development for minority staff.
- Explain and celebrate benefits of diversity and demonstrating our commitment to the diversity of the workforce.
- Provide a forum to discuss work experiences and feed into policy affecting staff.
- Opportunity for minority staff to be represented in policy that affects the way we work, but also how we engage with visitors (through the collection and content management within our venues).
- Potential visitors perceive NML positively as does anyone thinking of working here (one through the programme, the other through positive HR procedures and working conditions).

Establishing an effective staff group requires:

- Clear aims and objectives.
- Top-level buy-in and HR support.
- Membership guidelines.
- Resources to run the group effectively and professionally.
- A confidentiality policy.
- A way to feedback to the wider organisation – through the Diversity Working Group.

Membership of the groups can be:

- Exclusive – open only to LGBT/BME/Disabled colleagues.
- Inclusive – open to all staff with an interest in issues.

The future

We would eventually aim for these groups to extend into a wider Equality and Diversity network to keep staff informed and involved in equality and diversity developments and opportunities, including events, major projects and policy development. Staff have also formed a fledgling Gender Equality Staff Group, currently inputting into our new Gender Equality Scheme.

2.2.1 National Museums Liverpool BME Positive Action Training Scheme

Case Study April 2010

Introduction

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We have identified key areas for action across all recognised diversity strands; gender, age, sexual orientation, racial awareness, religion & belief and disability, and socio-demographics.

What do we mean by Positive Action?

Positive Action is a method used to encourage and support individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), and other minority groups, to develop careers, access employment and compete for jobs on an equal footing with others within the workforce. Legislation only allows us to take positive action to help individuals reach a position where they can compete on a level playing field by providing work experience and training. It does not allow for positive discrimination in employment.

What is a Positive Action Training Scheme?

The aim of Positive Action Training (PAT) schemes is to help individuals achieve a recognised qualification; develop skills; gain experience; and increase confidence to be better equipped to secure permanent employment with NML or the wider heritage sector. National Museum Liverpool's scheme has four clear objectives:

- To enhance the skills and develop opportunities for people from the BME community.
- To contribute to an increase in opportunities for the long term recruitment for BME communities, which assists us in having a workforce composition that reflects the diversity of our visitor base.
- To ensure that our workplace culture and organisational structure is one that encourages and values diversity.
- To respond positively to our obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in attracting and retaining a diverse audience.

Why is NML involved in this scheme?

NML is committed to equality of opportunity and diversifying its workforce. Whilst NML has made improvements in recruiting senior staff from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, there is still under representation of staff from BME groups at all workforce levels across the organisation.

We recognise that the workforce of NML and the wider museum sector does not yet reflect the cultural makeup of the society we live in. By providing training opportunities to people from these groups we hope to begin to address this.

We aim to employ a representative workforce that reflects the communities we serve. In order to provide a high level of service, we encourage applications from under-represented groups and we have championed a number of Positive Action Traineeships in an attempt to achieve this. We have successfully collaborated with partner organisations to plan and deliver successful programmes.

What has the training programme involved?

In 2006 we recruited trainees who were placed in Ethnography (Curatorial), Visitor Services, Administration and Marketing. We had originally launched a 'Diversify scheme' aimed at graduates, but the take up was poor and we had a minimal response. We went back to the drawing board and looked at the heart of the scheme itself, identifying barriers to the application process. We decided to take out the need for previous qualifications and formal entry requirements. The alternative NVQ route would give us the framework to draw up a specification that would call for commitment as the biggest reason for applying and also place importance on work based learning. HR put together a selection panel and interviewed representatives from across the organisation, who each put forward a case for a placement within their department.

In November 2008 we took on two more trainees on one year training placements, both based within Visitor Services. One of the trainees completed their qualification and left NML to work abroad, unfortunately the other was not able to complete the scheme as they had to leave the UK. We took on two more trainees in November 2009, again within Visitor Services.

What happens at the end of the placements?

There is no guarantee of a permanent job at the end of the traineeship. All trainees have to apply and go through a selection process in order to obtain permanent employment within NML.

We're delighted that of the 2006 placements two completed their training and secured jobs at NML, two gained jobs within NML before completing their NVQ, two are due to complete their NVQ within the next six months, and one completed their training and got a job elsewhere.

Review of our PAT scheme

The external agency Shipshape presented its findings from the evaluation of Positive Action Trainee Scheme at NML. The research looked at removal of barriers, level of qualifications by applicants and the support mechanisms provided. It also looked into further development of the scheme and the impact of the use of the term 'Positive Action Trainee', perceptions, legal issues and communication strategy.

An action plan was developed based on the recommendations of this report which shapes our future PAT schemes. The project evaluation identified key lessons that will be applied to future programmes. This includes:

- Each trainee should have an individually targeted training programme based around their NVQ with clear outcomes and milestones;
- Participants should have their own practical projects;
- There needs to be a budget for learning support, e.g. IT needs etc.

It was recognised that the low training allowance (of around £10,000) impacted on the trainees as they had to supplement their income. There was also a need for improved internal communication in order to challenge or combat widely held assumptions such as 'preferential treatment' under the banner of positive action.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion was that a PAT programme should not just be a stand alone initiative, but should be viewed as part of a bigger picture and not a single solution. Focussing on individual skill development rather than organisational change can result in little or no impact. There is an ongoing need for changes to organisational culture, challenging attitudes and breaking down barriers to employment.

What are our future plans?

We have recently submitted a partnership bid with North West Fed (NWFED) for a training programme that will address the skills shortages in North West heritage organisations by offering 12 trainees the opportunity to learn essential skills in heritage conservation and audience development. The skills learnt will be relevant to any heritage organisation that works with the public and therefore transferable across the heritage sector.

2.2.2 National Museums Liverpool Disability Advisory Group

Case Study April 2010

Introduction
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We have identified key areas for action across all recognised diversity strands; gender, age, sexual orientation, racial awareness, religion & belief and disability, and socio-demographics.

NML's Disability Equality Scheme

This scheme provides an essential framework for promoting and integrating disability equality into our core functions and identifies priority areas for action. The scheme was developed with NML's Disability Advisory Group, North West Disability Arts Forum and Access to Heritage. The action plan explains what we are doing to remove barriers to access for our disabled visitors. We also promote and work to the Social Model of Disabled people. This means that NML recognises that disabled people are excluded by poor access provision and negative attitudes, rather than by their impairment or long-term health condition.

NML's Disability Advisory Group

National Museums Liverpool's Disability Advisory Group was set up in 2004, members are recruited from the community to visit and comment on public access to NML's venues and galleries. Accessibility is seen directly from a disabled person's perspective, so in this respect, NML has been proactive in improving access, we have gone beyond what is simply our legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act, and have listened to our visitors and acted on their suggestions.

In addition to regular visits to exhibitions and galleries the group has also fed into policies, venue assessments and fire evacuation strategies. More recently, they have also helped us rethink and redesign our Disability Equality Scheme, the format of which has since been adopted for Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Schemes too.

The group was originally set up on the advice of Annie Dellon, Access Advisor and Researcher. In 2005 the group was formally established with a remit,

membership and clear aims. In this first year achievements included feedback into NML's strategic plan, standards of service and access standards.

Achievements

- **Improved access for physically impaired visitors** – stay open doors in cafés and shops; regular maintenance of lifts; special events for disabled visitors; dynamic staff training and awareness of disabled visitor needs; improved signage and improved gallery exhibition spaces.

- **Gallery improvements** – the group has made numerous visits to our galleries and exhibitions to promote disabled access to these spaces. In 2006 they visited the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at the Merseyside Maritime Museum and were critical in suggesting numerous improvements. We took these suggestions forward when developing the new International Slavery Museum (ISM). The group expressed criticism over just how inaccessible the old gallery was, and were pleased with the changes incorporated into new ISM gallery.

- **Changes in thinking** – e.g. Fire Evacuation Strategies.

- **Access Standards** - these guidelines set out standards that NML needs to reach to provide a good level of physical access, particularly relating to displays and publications, with some reference to more general building design. Standards have been introduced across NML when developing visitor services, gallery spaces, exhibitions, estate management and capital project plans in the following areas:

  - Circulation
  - Resting
  - Orientation and way finding
  - Signage
  - Lighting
  - Colour and contrast
  - Graphic design for exhibitions
  - Printed information

- The website
- Sound strategy
- Inclusive exhibits
- Display units.

We also follow advice from access consultants and various disability groups for major projects.

- **Improvements in facilities** – such as installing a 'Changing Places' toilets in the new Museum of Liverpool. These toilets are different to standard disabled toilets, with additional features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound impairments and their carers.

- **Improvements in communication** – through our website, staff training, marketing to disabled groups and specific events for disabled visitors. We produce large print versions of both of our quarterly what's on publications. Our Family Guide describes our free family exhibitions, events and activities, while our Exhibitions and Events Guide has more on our wide-ranging temporary exhibitions, talks and workshops. They can be requested through our website register with us page.

  The visitor information page for each of our venues on our website has a section on accessibility. It covers the facilities available in each venue, access to the building etc. Also, the Disabled Go website has visited and audited several of our venues, and hopes to do the rest shortly. There is a link to these audits from the access section of the visitor information pages.

- **More tactiles, interactives, subtitled videos and available audio guides** – are incorporated into new galleries in consultation with disabled groups. We also have hands on areas within our venues, such as Weston Discovery Centre and Clore Natural History Centre, with demonstrators to assist visitors in handling specimens. We often produce audio guides to assist visually impaired visitors to our exhibitions, which are available on gallery and online. All audio files, including our podcasts, and all video files with audio are accompanied by transcripts. The exceptions are videos which have subtitles embedded, and these often also have BSL support.

Future

The Chair of NML's Disability Group is retiring in May 2010 and a member of the group will be leaving shortly. One opportunity could be to merge the group, who all have physical disabilities, with Education's group who have mental health or learning difficulties, thereby getting perspectives from both physical and mental disabilities. We remain fully committed to consultation which enables access for all.

3.   Sustaining the Impact

3.1   Alison Taylor, Senior Inclusion Officer, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum- history and the visual arts. During the 1980s and 1990s it carried out some collecting and exhibition projects with under-represented groups. As in many places they were mainly led by committed individuals, and were successful in the short term but left no substantial legacy in the form of permanent displays or lasting community contacts. The Herbert's inclusion work over the last ten years has been more sustained, better documented and more embedded, and will be the focus of this study.

Coventry could be characterised as essentially a working class post-industrial city. Because of its economic problems, over the last few years it has received significant amounts of regeneration-related funding from Europe, and from government initiatives like the New Deal for Communities.

There are several areas of high deprivation within the city and three quarters of electoral wards have literacy levels below the national average. A quarter of local residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are some very established minority communities, especially South Asian, but also many newer migrants who include refugees and asylum seekers.

In 2003, as a result of Renaissance in the Regions, the Herbert became one of the five partners in the West Midlands museums hub. Organisational commitment from senior managers made inclusion central to the Herbert's hub programmes from the outset, and it became the lead partner for this strand of work within the West Midlands. Renaissance has created 18 posts at the Herbert, including new staff within the Learning and Exhibitions teams and an Inclusion team of four which was developed from scratch. These posts significantly diversified the workforce in terms of age, ethnicity and professional background.

The creation of a dedicated team has brought many benefits, the principal one being increased capacity. Specialist staff have had the time to build more lasting relationships with disadvantaged local communities, to develop and refine practice in response to project outcomes, and to become a repository of expertise within the organisation. Other colleagues could perhaps have seen this as absolving them from responsibility, or might have viewed an Inclusion team as an inessential add-on, but in practice these risks have not been realised. Staff across the organisation are positive about inclusion and expect to address diversity in their own work, though their levels of experience and confidence may vary. One of the reasons for inclusion work being well integrated at the Herbert is a strong general culture of cross-team working and flexible attitudes to job and team boundaries. The speed of growth of the Herbert workforce under Renaissance encouraged this fluidity, because many new posts were created at the same time and to some extent job roles developed organically.

The Herbert's inclusion work has targeted minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, disengaged young people and residents of deprived neighbourhoods. The work programme has consisted of several key strands. Community history has been an important element, particularly the recording and dissemination of the life experiences of people whose histories have traditionally been hidden. These projects have particularly focused on minority ethnic communities but have included other groups such as the Deaf community. Other targeted participation projects have enabled participants to learn new skills in art and craft, ICT or animation, and these have generally resulted in a public output such as an exhibition or film. Consultation work with groups at risk of exclusion has informed interpretive approaches in the Herbert's displays, the development of new resources and the acquisition of items for the collection. The Inclusion team has also devoted considerable energy to promoting the Herbert's general visitor offer to the groups least likely to access it.

A small selection of the Herbert's inclusion projects gives a flavour of the organisation's work over recent years. The Coventry Blitz of 1940, when the cathedral and city centre were destroyed, still plays a key part in the local sense of identity, but until recently there was a lack of recorded local material about

the minority ethnic experience of the Second World War. The Herbert's Empire at War project made a film about the wartime experiences of local people from Caribbean and Asian backgrounds, exploring their memories of the Coventry Blitz, active service in the forces and being child refugees. The Coming to Coventry project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, was delivered in partnership with Coventry's Asian Mental Health Access Project. It focused on the pioneers of the local South Asian community and over 60 oral history interviews and 600 photographs were collected. This material was used to produce an exhibition, book and website, and has now been archived for public access in the Herbert's History Centre. Another project featuring oral testimony was A Woman's Place, which created an exhibition based on interviews with women from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. Other inclusion projects have been inspired by existing museum collections. The Water project was a series of creative workshops with adults and children with learning and physical disabilities, sensory impairments or mental health issues, on the theme of the seaside. It involved collections handling, environmental sculpture and making sound recordings.

Apart from becoming a hub-funded museum, the Herbert has been through other major changes in recent years. The service moved from direct local authority control in 2008 and became an independent charitable trust. However, the greatest impact has come from the completion of a £20 million capital redevelopment. The delivery of this project began in 2005 when most of the venue closed to the public for three years. During that time there were no permanent galleries and the public service was delivered through a single temporary exhibition space and a programme of events, schools work and outreach. This situation gave particular prominence to community engagement work as there was a need to maintain audiences and meet hub performance targets despite the closure.

The timing of the redevelopment was favourable to the embedding of diversity. The Inclusion team was established just as serious planning for the redisplay of the permanent galleries began. Inclusion team staff were on the project teams for each of the seven new galleries and were able to influence the decisions made. During this time, many targeted inclusion projects were deliberately planned to generate content and inform interpretive approaches for the

permanent displays, in addition to having their own discrete outputs. This has proved a critical means of short-term projects bringing long-term benefits to the organisation and its users. The new Herbert was launched in late 2008, and the very positive visitor response has validated the decisions made about the approach to display, interpretation, and the integration of diverse stories.

The vision for the new History gallery was that it should be object rich but story led. There was initial community consultation with minority ethnic groups who made it clear that they wanted an integrated approach, not 'ghetto' areas treating different communities as separate entities. The gallery includes specific sections highlighting migration and women's history, but most of the material relating to traditionally underrepresented groups, which also includes people with disabilities, appears in general themed areas such as leisure, politics, work, and the Blitz. The gallery incorporates material from the community history projects already mentioned - Empire at War, Coming to Coventry and A Woman's Place – as well as several others. There has been appreciation from priority groups of the diverse voices and artefacts included in the displays, and the sense of being represented is clearly important. However, the objects with the most powerful appeal to people from these groups were not always anticipated. People from newer communities have responded strongly to a handloom used for weaving silk ribbons in Victorian Coventry, mainly because similar technology is still used in traditional communities across the world. Meanwhile, Asian and Caribbean elders have particularly enjoyed seeing a Victorian sewing machine and flat iron, and a 1950s industrial lathe.

There has been a similar embedding of diversity in the other new galleries. The Peace and Reconciliation gallery explores Coventry's role in peace work, arising from the experience of the Blitz. It integrates memories of wartime Coventry with testimony on Indian partition, the Rwandan genocide and other conflicts, all from people now settled in Coventry. A computer game with a conflict resolution scenario addresses refugee issues in an accessible way. The Discover Godiva gallery explores the story of Lady Godiva, famous for her naked ride through Coventry. There are obvious gender issues to be examined here, but as she was an Anglo-Saxon aristocrat the scope for addressing other aspects of diversity is perhaps less clear. However, she is seen by local people as a

champion against oppression, so the gallery includes the opinions of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and a disability rights campaigner, talking about Lady Godiva as a source of inspiration. There is also a storytelling corner which explores similar legends from around the world. The Elements natural history gallery is targeted principally at people with disabilities, and there is a high level of interactivity using touch and sound as well as visual appeal. This approach was instigated by the then Keeper of Natural History, supported by the Learning and Inclusion teams, and together these staff carried out extensive creative consultation work with the target audience. It strongly informed the interpretive approach, and the gallery incorporates a great deal of learning from the Water project mentioned before.

The Herbert's temporary exhibitions programme is now more inclusive than it was a few years ago. There have been regular exhibitions linked with the heritage of local minority ethnic communities and ethnic diversity has also been integrated into more general narratives. Once again, however, there is no simple link between audiences and subject matter. When two exhibitions were running concurrently in 2009, some Asian elders who had participated in an earlier project were seen revisiting the Herbert – but they had come to see the Victorian watercolours exhibition rather than the show about Indian art.

The events programme is also more diverse, and the Herbert's Bollywood film screenings are a good example. They were originally run to support a temporary exhibition about Asian cinema, but their popularity led to a standalone screenings programme organised and funded by the Inclusion team. They are now part of the mainstream events programme funded from the core events budget. The Herbert also runs disability performance events which are no longer confined to the International Day of Disabled People, and provides regular art workshops for people with visual impairments.

The Herbert places strong emphasis on family activities as a means of cutting across ethnic and socio-economic groups. There have also been targeted workshops for children with disabilities and their families. Marketing work over the last year has focused on family audiences and this has brought in a more diverse range of visitors. Sometimes a more personalised approach is needed and the taster programme delivered by the Inclusion team is an

attempt to engage priority groups with the new galleries and other aspects of the mainstream offer. Offsite activity sessions are paired with supported introductory visits to the Herbert, and the feedback forms show a high rate of intention to return.

Diversity is also increasingly embedded in the Herbert's strategic approach, and this is evident in the evolution of hub business planning since 2003. The original Diverse Voices business plan was confined to the work of the Inclusion team, whereas the current Herbert work package Expanding Audiences integrates the work of the Inclusion, Marketing, and Exhibitions and Events teams.

There have been many benefits from embedding diversity more firmly within the organisation. It has improved the visitor experience, not only for priority audiences but for others as well. Visitor surveys show a steady increase in non-traditional users since the creation of the Herbert's Inclusion team. The data also indicates that people from these groups, once engaged, tend to visit more frequently than traditional audiences. Our partner organisations working with vulnerable groups such as refugees, homeless people and adults with learning disabilities, tell us that their service users are visiting the Herbert independently after project work and facilitated visits, and recommending it to others from priority groups. There has been a huge expansion of general visitor numbers since the 2008 relaunch: the previous annual average was 80,000 but is now 320,000.

Since the redevelopment the Herbert has the facilities to take touring exhibitions from major lenders, and often creates a linked community response. A photography display by local adults with learning disabilities was shown alongside a V&A exhibition of contemporary photography, and an intergenerational project with the local Chinese community resulted in a film which was shown within a touring exhibition from the British Museum. The Herbert's diversity work makes it a more attractive partner to national institutions, and therefore benefits the wider audience.

Much of the potential funding for the museums sector is now on the strength of instrumental benefits, and the ability to deliver on wider governmental

objectives. Heritage and arts institutions which can show they have embedded diversity are in a stronger position when chasing funding. The Herbert's inclusion work is a strong strand in its recent and current applications to funding streams such as Effective Collections, Collecting Cultures and Setting the Pace. It was also a key element in the submission for the Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award which the Herbert won in April 2010. That success, and the Herbert's long listing for the Art Fund Prize in which its inclusion work was also highlighted, has brought additional benefits in terms of raising the organisation's profile.

The initial call for conference proposals suggested that diversifying audiences might be at the expense of diversifying the workforce, collections and displays. However, experience at the Herbert suggests that these strands are inter-related and mutually beneficial. The display of materials and testimony from traditionally under-represented groups has generally been prompted by the desire to broaden audiences, but it has also led to the offer of more diverse material for the permanent collections. Not only has there been an increase in visitors with disabilities and from minority ethnic communities, but the same is true of job applicants in recent years. It seems likely that there is a relationship between the two, and that people are more likely to want to work for an organisation which has shown a commitment to equality in terms of its users. Certainly the presence of staff from diverse backgrounds and with skills in community languages has made it easier to engage a broader range of audiences.

There are of course many challenges in sustaining the impact that has been made. There are steady reductions in the local authority grant which the Herbert receives, and anxieties over future levels of hub funding. Retaining experienced staff can be an issue when contracts are insecure. The Herbert is increasingly seeking income from elsewhere to continue its diversity work, but even if the current size of the Inclusion team cannot be maintained, the organisation is still in a stronger position to engage diverse audiences than it was a few years ago.

The redeveloped permanent galleries are a lasting legacy, and also the new audiences which are enjoying them. More staff are aware of inclusion issues,

and all managers within the service have undertaken diversity training. There has also been informal skills sharing between the Inclusion team and staff in core-funded teams. Joint projects with the curatorial team have involved work with mental health service users and the Deaf community. The Inclusion and Media teams have collaborated on projects with the Polish, South Asian and Chinese communities, and with disengaged young people. The Media team are now working independently to deliver the bulk of the Herbert's work with young people Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Recent inclusion work has also left a legacy of learning resources for independent use. Material collected through the Empire at War project is now being used to produce a CD-Rom for schools, and a current project to create resources for adult literacy tutors will benefit learners from migrant and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The Inclusion team is still doing intensive projects, but also moving towards a model of working more similar to that of the Herbert's Learning team. There are plans to develop sessions and modules which can be delivered repeatedly, and integrated into bigger programmes run by other providers and partners such as the Youth Offending Service, Coventry Refugee Centre, and mental health services within the NHS.

Despite all of this successful work there is no room for complacency, and much remains to be done to make the Herbert a fully inclusive organisation. However, there has been a great deal of progress over recent years and, to echo the title of the conference, diversity work at the Herbert really has made a significant move from the margins towards the core.

3.2   Main points from the National Trust - Dr Heather Smith, Head of Access for All, The National Trust

The National Trust is a charity and part of the voluntary sector, caring for properties in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We were founded in 1895 and now care for over 350 places, including historic houses, gardens, ancient monuments, and countryside areas. We care for these places 'for the benefit of the nation' and, in 1995, we adopted the phrase 'for ever, for everyone'.

We rely on a huge amount of support to achieve 'for ever, for everyone', from the financial support of donors and funding organisations, to the gifts of time from an estimated 57,000 volunteers. Our membership figures continue to rise and the total is around 3.8million at present.

Achieving 'for ever, for everyone' requires commitment and on-going activity, particularly to encourage support from people who may not immediately find a connection with us. We began to make that commitment many years ago, resourcing a full time post in our central team to focus on improving the accessibility of our places for disabled visitors. We also increased the support in our regional teams to build our relationship with local communities.   A programme of development of organisational policy and training was also introduced to support staff and volunteers to understand the commitment and the role that we all play in enabling us to become a more inclusive organisation.

In 2007, we launched a new Strategy with a focus on 'engaging supporters'. This really enabled a focus on the 'for everyone' part of our commitment and we began to develop partnerships with organisations, community groups and individuals to broaden our engagement and increase our support.   These partnerships challenged our current activity and particularly provided opportunities for innovative work in transforming our visitor experience. Some of these partnerships were supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled some longer term focused work and some were smaller in scale but still left a lasting legacy of change and new opportunities.   Examples include: 'London Voices', a three year creative learning project with four properties in

London, developing a more family friendly offer and connecting each more closely with its local community, 'Whose Story?', a four year project in the West Midlands developing our welcome for black and minority ethnic communities, and an earlier project called 'Untold Story', involving community artists across 18 properties to explore the connections our places have with different cultures and communities. We also built partnerships to support disabled people into volunteering opportunities with us, working particularly closely with Mencap.

These and other examples of working in partnership over the past three years are integral to the success of our Strategy into the future. Our focus now is on being relevant and 'going local', embedding ourselves in the lives of local communities and developing our audience and activity to meet these challenges. This provides a great opportunity for sustaining the impact of this initial work and truly embedding what we learn from it into our ongoing development.

For more information about our Strategy, please go to: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-strategy-feb2010.pdf

For more information about 'London Voices', please go to: http://www.londonvoicesproject.org.uk/

For more information about 'Whose Story?', please go to: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-localtoyou/w-west_midlands/w-west_midlands-whose_story.htm

3.3   Sustaining the Impact - Notes by Michael Murray, Development Manager, HLF

Question (Aretha George):Have any of the projects presented resulted in a change of audience demographics at the NT?
Answer (Heather Smith, NT): There is some evidence that the Whose Story project in the West Midlands has resulted in visitor demographics changing, with more repeat visitors from BAME communities. There has also been an increase in volunteers from BAME and low income families resulting from

Whose Story and London Voices, although change in volunteers from BAME and disabled communities is slow, with only 6% of NT volunteers from these groups. The NT is currently working on developing systems of measuring visitor backgrounds and determining the difference that projects make. The workforce is starting to change, even
at director level.

Question (Michael Murray): Following up from that last question, at an HLF hosted conference in December 2009, the issue of the absence of people from BAME communities as curators within the NT was identified and discussed. Could you feedback on what efforts are being made to bring more diversity into the NT's curators?
HS: The NT is looking at how to attract people into curator roles, including examining the option of affirmative/positive action recruitment. This is also being addressed in a proposed *Skills for the Future* project application to HLF. So we are beginning to think about what we are going to do, but we are seriously committed to improving diversity.

Question (David Souden): Are there mechanisms for ensuring that young people will stay engaged and make repeat visits?
Alison Taylor (Herbert Gallery): The Herbert is working more with families, Sure Starts and children's centres. We have developed expertise in creative play and new resources that can go off site through outreach to encourage youth engagement. For adult learners, some come back as parents with children.
HS: There are different ways of engaging communities and young people with properties, not just visits. Technology and social media help to boost diversity.

Gill Hart: The Fitzwilliam Museum has worked with a researcher looking at engaging young people with the museum. Through interviews with young parents, it was found that they had a memory of the museum experience linked with schools and the national curriculum. These tended to be negative experiences where the school learning experience as a whole for
the individual was negative. The young parents were thus reluctant to visit the museum with their children. The research questions whether schools programmes should be so closely linked with the national curriculum, or whether museums need to find alternative mechanisms to

attract school aged young people that will be more fun and engaging. A report on the research should be published in late 2010.

Question (speaker did not identify himself): How do you know something is popular with BAME communities, and how do you manage the pain associated with history?

AT: In relation to a loom at the Herbert, we knew through oral feedback from our taster visit programmes, and observation of visitor flow. We work with partners like the Refugee Centre who have considerable experience of dealing with difficult histories, and counselling experience.

The Herbert tries to be aware of sensitivities, but people who are engaged in these projects do so voluntarily.

Break Out Session: Connecting or Competing Equalities?

4.   Disability – national to institutional policy to good practice

4.1   The V&A Journey - Barry Ginley, Diversity Strategy Unit, V&A

I am entitling my talk as The V&A Journey, because this is what has had to happen to the organisation to achieve the changes we have made. On screen is a picture of the old V&A entrance, where we will begin our journey. You can see from the photo that the only way in through this entrance was by using steps.

The V&A ten years ago was a mix of buildings which many disabled people felt were not inviting or accessible. Making a listed building accessible was to the challenge. Management and practical assistance would also improve access.

I came into post at the V&A in November 2002, whilst still studying the MSc Inclusive Environments Design and Management at the University of Reading. Like most people starting a new job, I wanted to make my mark, but in an organisation as complex as the V&A where do you start? Having little museum experience, combined with no interest in art, this role was going to be a

challenge. I now have an interest in art, making it accessible to those who would like to access it and those who wish to work in the museum.

When I first started at the V&A, a lot of good work was happening at the museum on disability issues; however it was all isolated with no coherent approach, or often not known by others around the museum.

Coming into a sector to which I had little experience could be daunting. Marcus has outlined the national and international policies which impact upon museums and how they should cater for disabled people. However, how can you develop coherent strategies and policies to bring about the change with very little guidance from the legislators? I aim to show how the V&A, with my guidance, has attempted to achieve a more accessible and inclusive environment.

Balancing the access needs of disabled people with that of a premises manager can often cause conflict. The DDA states that employers, service providers and premises owners should make "Reasonable Adjustments" to our policies, practices and buildings. Just because a disabled person says something is not accessible to them, doesn't mean it is not accessible to millions of other disabled people. So, how do we get it right? How do we get from a politician's idea to implementation, or a practical outcome from a policy?

My starting point

With my access auditing hat on, I trawled the many V&A departments looking for projects or facilities which promoted equal access. You will see on screen a handling session taking place with visually impaired visitors which had been running at the museum for more than fifteen years. The next image shows one of our British Sign Language talks. After six months of searching, I put together the museum's first Disability Action Plan.

I am not a person who likes to write lots of policies and then let them gather dust on a shelf. However, it is sometimes essential to write strategies and guidance which will lead to an outcome. The action plan was referenced to the

Disability Discrimination Act, codes of practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission, MLA Portfolios and my own ideas as an experienced access auditor.

The DDA as most people know is the first legislation which gave disabled people rights under the law. Unfortunately, the legislation is poor and the enthusiasm for change is still on the disabled person to make a claim to enforce change. Having been through this process myself and being successful, it takes a lot of time and effort to achieve a positive outcome. Fortunately in my case I won, but it took over a year and several hundreds of pounds which I didn't have at the time.

There are Codes of Practice aimed to assist employers, service providers and premises owners on how to meet the DDA. If you have ever read the codes, you will see firstly how long they are, as well as how contradictory they can be. So, how can people with little disability experience implement such projects?

The Disability Action Plan pulled together all of the V&A initiatives on disability, allowing me to see where the gaps were and what needed attention.

The plan pulled together the positives and set out a plan of action for a three year period. After much consultation, it was time to send to Mark Jones, the V&A Director. Mark gave me the agreement to take it to Management Board.

On the whole, the plan was well accepted by Management Board, but how to progress from here? Ian Blatchford spoke this morning and some of the credit should go to him, as at the time, Ian was Director of Finance, a nice person to know. After a short meeting with Ian, I walked out of his office with the best part of £100,000 increase in budget for year 1 projects, a very nice person to know. The action plan was also seen as best practice by the Employers' Forum on Disability in the 2006 Disability Standard. What a great endorsement!

The budget given allowed me to implement many projects over and above what was already in place, including: the instillation of a Fire Pager System which alerts deaf people to the fire alarm; assistive technology on computers in the National Art Library and Prints and Drawings study room; and the design and printing of the V&A's first Access Guide to name but a few.

The plan not only looked at the services, facilities or premises, but challenged people's attitudes. If you can't get past the person on the door, it is pointless having an accessible environment.

The Museum has many positive people who wish to assist in improving accessibility for disabled people. However, as in all organisations, there are people who feel accessibility is just a whim, and as we haven't had many disabled people come to the Museum in the past, why should we make the building accessible. On one project, colleagues felt that if I spent the money on my proposal it would be criminal and I was beating the museum with a stick. Fortunately, the good people won out and the project implemented.

Often disabled people have difficulty gaining entrance into buildings due to the lack of awareness of staff. This was the difficulty I had when I took out the DDA case. In my case, the Operations Manager thought he knew what was best for me without asking. Surprising as we had never met before.

With all of this in mind, we have implemented a lot of training for our staff to breakdown some of the attitudinal barriers. Front of House and Learning and Interpretation staff have received basic disability awareness training as well as visual awareness, deaf awareness and mental health awareness training sessions. Some Front of House staff have learnt to use British Sign Language to welcome deaf visitors. One of our gallery assistants, who had been through the training, was pro-active enough to approach several visitors who were using sign language in one of our galleries. When he approached them and began to sign, they looked blankly at him. The visitors were Mexican and used Mexican Sign Language and not BSL, 10 out of 10 for effort.

When I came into post, work was already being undertaken to redevelop the V&A site, called Future Plan. The British Galleries were the first galleries at the V&A to have an Access Consultant work on them from the design stage through to completion. I am pleased this process happened, as it created my post.

Future Plan aims to re-display the collections and make the galleries and facilities more accessible. As you can see with this next image, wheelchair users

were now able to access our galleries. One of my first Future Plan projects was the design of the Sackler Centre, and ensuring it is accessible to all visitors. What do you think?

A practical change which the V&A Project team made was to include me into the design process. It is too late when you are half way through a project as it becomes difficult to change designs and becomes more costly. Since we have taken this approach, I feel access is more integrated and we often get it right more than we get it wrong.

We can legislate, build and develop positive practices, but unless the visitors or staff benefit from our work we haven't achieved anything.

The V&A journey to accessibility has been long and difficult and sometimes soul destroying. The challenges have been met and often overcome.

So, my final image is of the V&A entrance and how it is now. As you will see, it has both steps and ramps and is well designed. A great example of how planning for access can be integrated into good design, so not having to beat the museum with a stick as I was once accused of.

4.2 Disability discrimination in museums is systemic - the case for national strategic approaches in the UK and worldwide, Marcus Weisen, free-lance consultant

marcus.weisen@gmail.com

In memory of Nic Klecker (1928-2009), teacher, writer and founder member of Amnesty International Luxemburg, whose love of culture was equalled by his love of human rights.

Summary

The title of the paper refers to a statement made by the UK Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in his 2008 Report on Disability Equality, which

appears to doubt the existence of systemic barriers which hinder access for disabled people to museums.

The paper focuses on the alarmingly low levels of intellectual access to collections for people with a sensory impairment and with a learning disability in new museums, major extensions and refurbishments in the UK and worldwide. It investigates underlying causes of discrimination against disabled people in this area.

It examines legal duties of museums in the UK and presents international policies which establish the cultural rights of disabled people – of which awareness appears to be low among decision makers, given the extent of existing discriminatory practice.

The paper identifies the need for national strategies to pursue 'access on an equal basis' (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People) and to achieve 'lasting and significant progress' (Council of Europe Recommendation R(1992)6 in access to museums for disabled people. It identifies specific areas of need and makes some recommendations. It wishes to open up a much needed discussion the museum sector has never previously had.

Content

9   Discussion ensuing (p 23)

1.   Background

1.1   Purpose of paper

This paper is an extended version of the talk given at 'From the Margins to the Core?' and responds to the stated aims of the conference:

- "we welcome contributions which offer a serious critique of policy and practice; which help us to take stock and thereby re-envisage the future"

- "review equality and diversity policy and practice over the last ten years in order to inform and invigorate the future direction, importance and centrality of this work"

1.2   Focus

This short investigation looks at progress in disability equality in museums, with a specific focus on:
- the **alarmingly low levels of intellectual access** to collections for people with a sensory impairment and with a learning disability in new museums, major extensions and refurbishments
- the weakness or absence of national strategic approaches for disability equality in museums, taking the UK as an example (the UK being recognised as one of the best, some critical conclusions may be transferable)
- international policies which establish the cultural rights of disabled people and make the case for 'significant and lasting improvements' (as called for by Council of Europe Resolution R(92)6 of 1992)
- elements of a vision for pro-active strategic change at a national level

1.2   Context

1.2.1   Ethical investigation into the will to change

Whilst descriptive and analytic, this paper is also an ethical enquiry and underlying questions include:

- A fair deal of government statements about cultural equality of disabled people are being made the world over, at the odd conference about the subject. In the UK, a plethora of publicly available documents about Disability Equality Duties of government ministries and funded bodies at times suggests outstanding activity. But how convincing is the leadership coming from the top?

- There is much talk internationally about 'mainstreaming diversity' in public administration. In the UK this discourse has been unfolding whilst at the same time capacity and expert skills in these areas are being severely reduced in strategic cultural bodies. In most other countries, capacity is at any rate lower. Can successful 'mainstreaming' be achieved in the UK and internationally with such minute capacity, whilst the challenge is to step up gear and truly commit to disability equality?

The analysis of this paper highlights that a fair deal more, rather than less expertise and capacity are needed to ensure 'significant and lasting' progress.

1.3.2   The urgency to remove systemic barriers

In December 2008, the UK **the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport** made statements which appear to cast doubt at the extent and depth of barriers disabled people face in museums:

'Some caution needs to be exercised in concluding from this that there must be clear barriers to participation for when it comes to visiting museums...'

'We cannot conclude from this that a systemic problem necessarily exists with regard to whether or not museums and galleries are sufficiently welcoming of disabled visitors'[i]

The Secretary of State made these statements in his first Report about Disability Equality Duty, which he has a statutory duty to present to government every

three years. The context of the statements is a discussion about the findings of Taking Part[ii], a major survey into participation in culture (sample 30,000) and what they may tell about the participation gap between disabled and non-disabled people. In the survey, 42% of all adults said that they had made one or more visits to a museum in the previous twelve months. Among adults with a limiting disability or illness this proportion falls to 31%. .

Whilst it is possible to construe these statements as rightly cautious in trying to interpret an exceptional set of figures - but which comes with its own limitations; they appear to be presented as quasi general statements. They appear to signify a change of direction away from a progressive understanding that barriers prevent participation, which has underpinned so much of the progress made in the last decade. What seems to be offered here as a surrogate, is a useful and statistically valid, yet narrowly focused evidence base, which produces little useful evidence about the experience of barriers themselves and how they can be overcome.

Taking Part does not provide a systemic analysis of systemic barriers there may be within both the institutional functioning and service provision of individual museums, nor of barriers there may be within the national museum policy making and funding system. It can therefore not be used to make inferences on systemic issues. Other methods are needed for this, and good old reflection on reality as it is remains a perfectly valid method even in the age of evidence.

This paper aims to re-focus attention on the existence of systemic barriers, because their understanding is fundamental to any pro-active national strategy aimed at providing 'access on an equal basis' (UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People[iii]) to museums for disabled people.

It embraces former Minister for Culture, David Lammy's emphatic and eloquent statement:

"There are many challenges remaining and we must maintain a sense of urgency as we continue to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities through enabling their fundamental right to have access to cultural activity."

2. A shared museum experience is being denied disabled people across the globe: insights into the UK legal context and underlying causes

2.1. What is discrimination

Discrimination is a lived experience, an ethical concept and a legal concept. The legal definition is always narrower than what the ethical and experiential understanding we may have of what constitutes discrimination. In this paper, I use the term 'discrimination' in its ethical sense and make no claims to its legal validity whatsoever. Only a court can decide about this.

However, in the public sphere we need an ethical discussion about the widespread reality of discrimination against disabled people in museums, and I wish to foster this. It seems to me a vital way to begin to shift national goal posts, to develop real ambition and, in so doing, discover the full beauty of an endeavour that is humanly, socially and culturally creative.

2.2 Discrimination against disabled people in museums is an unspoken practice of global proportions

To make this point, let me analyse intellectual access for disabled people in all (relatively) new museums, major extensions and major refurbishments which I had the privilege to visit during the last twelve months. These tend to be high cost prestigious projects paid by tax payer's money and rightfully deserve scrutiny.

They were the Cité de l'Immigration (Paris), the Acropolis Museum (Athens), the National Art Museum of Estonia (Tallin), the Musée Calvin (Geneva), the Germanisches National Museum (Nürnberg), the Ashmolean (Oxford) and the National History Museum's Darwin Centre (London). Strikingly none of these museums makes any provision for intellectual access for casual visitors who are (totally) blind and none engages with deaf people using Sign Language. None has ventured to take on the creative challenge to design displays inclusive of people with a learning disability.

Let's dig a bit deeper. What happens in those new museums which have made some provision for intellectual access for disabled people? The Musée du Quai Branly (Paris) provides a trail of tactile images and an accompanying audio guide for visually impaired people. So far so good. But the images are all vertical and therefore strain the hands when being explored. They present a host of other issues impossible to explain in detail here, including their small size which makes many of them impossible to recognise by touch. The measure of intellectual access to the collections provided does not, at any rate, bear the slightest resemblance to the compelling richness and significance of the museum's collections.[1]

I do not single out these museums. I just happen to have experienced them for myself. Sadly, these examples keep being echoed across the globe[2]. They reflect a still deep seated culture of cultural segregation against disabled people in museums. Billions have been spent in recent years on new museums, major extensions and refurbishments across the globe, with little or no regard paid to providing a shared experience of the collections for disabled people. The cumulative effect is discrimination on a grand scale against disabled people.

The message given out to disabled people is clear: you don't belong!

How come that in the 21st Century, in an era of anti-discrimination and inclusion such a widespread culture of exclusion is still allowed? This is arguably a multi-factorial reality, that requires investigation and, above all, urgent change. The next section looks at some key factors, using the UK – which I know best; as an example.

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[1] There will of course always be limits to the quantity of objects from a collection a museum can make accessible, but no limits need to be set to quality as an ambition.

[2] Two of the museums I visited epitomise this widespread culture of segregation. The Musée du Quai Branly has a lift *only* for disabled people (ca*n't we design inclusive architecture for the 21*[st] *Century?).* The Acropolis Museum leaves intellectual access for blind people entirely to the small Pharos Typhlon Museum for blind people far from the city centre (*thus entrenching existing segregation*). I commented about inaccessible access information for disabled people at the Ashmolean Museum in the January 2010 issue of the UK's Museums Journal. *This is a very common barrier to participation.*

2.3 What we may learn from a failure to provide a shared experience for disabled people

The Darwin Centre at the National History Museum, London, opened in October 2009, at the cost of £78,000,000. The exhibitions budget was probably of several million pounds.

The Centre has stepped up good practice in a couple of areas:

- many displays are accessible to wheelchair users
- extensive use of large size text on panels is likely to enhance access for a number of partially sighted visitors, and short text also for deaf people

Like in so many other expensive museum projects in the UK and overseas, bad practice was generated:

- no intellectual access for blind people
- no British Sign Language (BSL)
- no interpretation for people with a learning disability

2.4 What are the legal duties of UK museums and why we need to go beyond them

Under UK legislation, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 2005) applies to the Darwin Centre, as it does to all museums which provide a service to the public. Additional Disability Equality Duties apply to Public Authorities, including national museums and DCMS.

Duties include the duty:

- to make reasonable adjustments and provide 'auxiliary aids' – which make a service more accessible to disabled people (duty since 1996). Comment: 'auxiliary aids' are provided to some, but not all key groups of disabled people.
- 'anticipatory duty', a pro-active and evolving duty which requires that service providers know what their requirements of disabled people are likely to be (duty since 1996). Comment: there have been tactile

exhibitions and exhibits in UK public museums since 1976 and examples of BSL provision in museums are close at hand.

- it is unlawful to discriminate between different groups of disabled people (since 1996). Comment: there are no 'auxiliary aids' for some key groups of disabled people.
- involve disabled people in a strategic and significant way (Specific Disability Equality Duty, since 2006). Comment: were e.g. blind people involved in a significant way?
- publish a 3 year Disability Equality Scheme and a subsequent report (Specific Disability Equality Duty, since 2006). Comment: the Disability Equality Scheme on the museum website published in 2006 calls itself a draft scheme, has not been the subject of subsequent report and has no action plan, which is a requirement. The document itself is a very promising and engaging statement of intent.
- Pro-active duty to promote disability equality (General Disability Equality Duty, since 2006). Comment: the best place to show this to visitors would be in the provision of intellectual access to exhibits.

Only a court can decide whether a museum meets its legal duties. But we do have an ethical duty to reflect on the possible match or mis-match between legal duties and practice in museums, if we are committed to the human rights of disabled people (see page 17).

If intellectual access provision for key groups of disabled people cannot be expected from national museums which have additional legal duties and are funded by a government which is subject to those very same duties, true disability equality will simply never flourish. Irrespective of legal issues, there is thus a real problem of leadership. This is a statement that I am happy to apply to countries the world over.

There is vagueness about what 'reasonable adjustments' may mean, although it is defined as dependent on factors such as the size and budget of the organisation or project. In the absence of case law, this vagueness unfortunately encourages lacklustre performance, imagination and ambition.

The best intellectual access is provided by museums which go beyond a minimalist interpretation of legal duties and commit to a developing a living culture of best practice. With regard to intellectual access to collections for disabled people, we can learn from new good practice in gallery refurbishment and re-display. The British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum are among the UK national museums, which now build a measure of intellectual access for blind people into every new gallery refurbishment project. The BM also does so for every temporary exhibition. Looking across the Channel, since 1986, every temporary exhibition at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (Paris) has to build a level of intellectual access for visually impaired people and for deaf people ever since it opened in 1986 (and this is high compared with UK practice and practice in comparable nationals elsewhere). If a measure of intellectual access can be achieved for temporary exhibitions and the re-design of single galleries, then surely this must be achievable, in a more ample and ambitious way in major museum projects. They truly are the prime opportunities for stretching the boundaries of intellectual access for disabled people, as well as the great intellectual and creative skills that exist in museums and society at large. They are sold to the public as new temples of civic pride and should reflect this in their inclusive ethos.

Designing intellectual access for disabled people and Sign Language for Deaf people in right from the outset, for a small percentage of the exhibition design cost is a pre-requisite for cultural equality to unfold. Where this opportunity is not taken, it is most unlikely ever to come back. Money is often available only once.

2.5   Why major museum projects, and government funded museums should provide visitor information in Sign Language

The use (or rejection) of Sign Language as a means of communicating with deaf people deserves discussion. Whilst legal implications of the absence of provision of British Sign Language (BSL) are unclear in the UK, there are museums that lead by best practice. For example the Waterfront Museum (Swansea) designed BSL information from the outset for a number of screens. The BM and Tate Modern provide pdas with BSL. The Royal Observatory (London) innovates by making interactive games between two players accessible to BSL

users. Looking across the Channel, the most popular exhibit at an exhibition for kids at the French Science Museum was a DVD in which a deaf actor explains human reproduction. Roles were reversed with success and inclusion celebrated![3] Only if major projects and national museums provide Sign Language as a matter of course to casual visitors, can real choice and opportunities for deaf people ever begin to develop.

BSL is recognised by the UK Parliament as an indigenous language, as it is by a few other countries. Significantly the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People[iv] (which came into force in 2008 and was ratified by the UK government in 2009) for the first time recognises deaf people as a linguistic minority. This is a serious reason for governments and government funded museums, as well as public bodies which finance museums to develop policies for the use of Sign Language. By adding the question of much needed leadership to the equation, and the argument for Sign Language is compelling.

The exclusion of Sign Language from public spaces is, in the first instance, grounded in the failure to recognise deaf people as a linguistic and cultural minority – something scientist Oliver Sacks came round to understand 20 years ago as described in his book 'Seeing Voices'.[v]

An argument is made by some that deaf people can read sub-titles. Yet, this is only partly true and many born deaf people have very poor alphabetical literacy skills. A number of young deaf people prefer Sign Language by far. In the UK, there are at least two companies run by deaf people which produce museum visitor information in BSL for Museums. Signes des Sens, in France does the same. Irrespective of what the law might say, we should welcome deaf people on their own terms, at the very least in major museum projects.

2.6   Systemic factors which contribute to widespread discrimination against disabled people in new museum projects

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[3] The Jodi Mattes Trust, of which I have the honour of being Director, gives the annual Jodi Awards for accessible digital culture. It promotes the power of new media to provide a shared experience for disabled people. Best practice case-studies of previous UK and international winners can be found on www.jodiawards.org.uk.

Systemic issues come into play of course. In the UK, the way the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and strategic and funding bodies respond to the human and cultural rights of disabled people of course has an impact on the cultural experiences of disabled people in museums. And they have some power to change things for the better. The same is true for equivalent bodies and museum infrastructures the world over.

A number of factors contribute to the lack of intellectual access for disabled people in museum and gallery design, including:

- weak institutional commitment to disability equality, low awareness of legal duties, no best practice intelligence gathering
- no or insufficient joined-up work between departments
- disabled people are involved too late, if at all, or tokenistically
- intellectual access for disabled people is not clearly spelled out in the design brief
- the UK Heritage Lottery Fund, which co-funded a host of new museum builds and extensions manifestly does not have the right funding criteria and mechanisms in place to guarantee real progress. It should not fund organisations that may be likely to breach the law and which do not demonstrate a pro-active approach to disability equality for disabled visitors poor
- the tradition of not providing 'earmarked funding' for specific group of users and non-users severely hampers the possibilities to generate the new knowledge, skills and best practice needed for a quantum leap forward
- lack of leadership for disability equality in museums from DCMS
- DCMS, which funds both HLF and national museums is too hands-off, if we take the Darwin Centre as an example. Arms length is right, but 'laisser-faire' is wrong. I would suggest that it is questionable even in terms of DCMS' duty to pro-actively promote disability equality. A national strategic vision for disability equality in museums has yet to be written
- in France, the half-God like status of the architect and exhibition designer is more often than not a real hindrance to access for disabled people, as is the authority of the archaeologist and conservator in Greece

- exhibition designers are generally not encouraged to think creatively about inclusive and accessible design
- everywhere where learning is not an intrinsic part of the budget of a major museum building project, intellectual access for disabled people suffers

In many countries a legal framework that creates a right of access to services for disabled people does not exist. It does not however prevent these countries from taking pro-active measures to end a culture of exclusion that exists against disabled people in museums, even if they have not signed the UN Convention.

Systemic barriers do always have something to do with 'attitudinal barriers' and 'institutional barriers' (which are classical descriptive categories for barriers to participation). Such barriers inevitably tend to result in 'institutional discrimination'.

Daring to dream for human rights

My dream is of a museum world in which decision makers and professionals use public money spent on new gallery and exhibition design to meet the creative challenge of devising new inclusive and accessible design solutions and network the learning from such experiences. Within such a culture, pioneering exhibition and interpretation design aimed at people with a learning difficulty goes without saying. **There is nothing outrageous within this dream – *yet talking about it to some people can feel like hitting a brick wall.*** If I admit that people with a learning difficulty have equal rights, I also need act out this fundamental belief.

With all human rights issues, there comes a historical tipping point where we begin to say: this is no longer acceptable! Our challenge in the museum sector is to reach this tipping point from which cultural equality for disabled people can truly unfold. **We are only at the beginning, this is not a time for disengagement,** of which the signs abound.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is unambiguous:

> "Everyone has the right freely to enjoy the arts and the cultural life of the community...."[vi]
>
> Why shouldn't this apply to exhibition design and interpretation? Why should people with a learning difficulty and people with a sensory impairment be denied the pleasure of impromptu visits? Why shouldn't human creativity constantly seek to stretch the boundaries of what is deemed feasible?

3. The UK: weakness of DCMS and NDPB Disability Equality Schemes

DCMS and NDPB Disability Equality Schemes

The Specific Duties under the Disability Equality Scheme include a set of requirements for Public Authorities which include a duty to:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006 (including a three year action plan)
- involve disabled people in all aspects of the Scheme. This is defined as more than just 'consulting' and has a strategic meaning in specific guidance given by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.[vii]

I wanted to find out how DCMS and its Non Departmental Public Bodies in the museum sector performed on both accounts. I looked up the websites of ten bodies (in March 2010):

- one had not published a Disability Equality Scheme
- another one had published a Scheme, but called it a draft Scheme and it did not include a three year plan
- only two stressed the involvement of disabled people as a fundamental principle **and** described the associated duties clearly
- none describes how the impact of the involvement of disabled people will be measured, although this is a requirement

On other accounts the Schemes varied. Some were excellent, practical working documents, others remained vague. Strategic direction is generally not emphasised.

The conclusion is quite prosaically that many Disability Equality Schemes do not meet one specific requirement set by the law, which is the strategic and significant involvement of disabled people, a fundamental tenant of the Disability Equality Duty. This has not prevented some of the museums and public bodies to produce excellent work – but this, again, was not the focus of our investigation. The finding again begs the question of leadership.

Honesty compels me to add, that public authorities in the DCMS sector are not alone in this position. Benchmarking against bad or lacklustre practice elsewhere should of course never be used as a planning recipe!

4.   DCMS and the Secretary of State's narrow evidence base

A narrow evidence base

I should provide more context to the Secretary of State's comments that appear to doubt the existence of 'clear barriers' and a 'systemic problem' for disabled people in museums (see 1.3.2, page 4).

In DCMS' major 'Taking Part' survey, over 5,000 people of 30,000 interviewed in their homes defined themselves as having a limiting disability or a limiting illness.

Of these nearly 30% gave not having time or their health condition as a reason for not visiting museums.

Only about 1% said that they did not visit because of barriers there are. At first sight, such a figure is certainly very surprising. The Secretary of State's report on the DCMS Disability Equality Scheme seems to recognise the findings as somewhat problematic, as plans for additional enquiry are mentioned. Nevertheless, it is probably this finding that prompted his statements.

I have argued in 1.3.2 that the findings are problematic. Additional reasons for this include:

- the survey does not identify interviewees according to their specific disability or health condition, so no knowledge is elicited about specific requirements and barriers they may encounter
- there are questions and contexts that solicit specific types of responses
- 24% of non-users in an RNIB survey about museums said they did not visit museums, because there would be little to enjoy for visually impaired people[4]
- only 41% of people who defined as disabled in the English Heritage Visitor Survey considered access to be good or very good[5]

The discrepancies between DCMS findings and those of RNIB and English Heritage are huge! The two latter surveys have the merit of being focused on museum and heritage experience – a context that is likely to solicit more focused and meaningful responses. To gain an in-depth understanding of the museum experience of disabled people, other methods than those used by Taking Part are required.

Committing to cultural sector disability research at last

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[4] Talking Images Research Report: Museums, galleries and heritage sites: improving access for blind and partially sighted people', RNIB/VocalEyes, 2003, www.rnib.org.uk, search 'talking images'. The sample was arguable small (55), but the survey had the merit of focusing on museums. The survey includes other findings which begin to build a picture of the complex barriers disabled people face. For example only 28% of all 133 respondents were aware of any access facilities at the venue they last visited. A key recommendation made in the report was that inclusive audio guides for all, with optional audio description be piloted and developed. Seven years on, barely anything has changed. A separate experience is offered visually impaired people, which is often the result of a separate and lesser good production process. Very tangible strategic issues such as these don't receive any mention in the Secretary of State's Report.

[5] English Heritage Disability Equality Scheme, p 13, 2006, www.englishheritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/DES_impair_changes.pdf. about 7% of a sample of 7,000 defined as disabled. A general finding of this kind suggests a methodology for identifying perceived and experienced barriers.

Since I started working in the disability sector in 1988, I have consistently felt a lack of interest in the disabled user's arts or museum experience on the part of bodies responsible for cultural sector research. The prevailing attitude has been that this is the domain of disability organisations and social work. It felt at times as if disabled people had noting to do with culture! The onus to undertake cultural sector disability research and act on the findings lay squarely with the disability sector.

I call this apartheid in cultural sector research. Change has certainly happened in recent years, but it is far too slow and woefully under-resourced. How come that a sector driven by an evidence based ideology barely invests in developing a more sophisticated evidence and knowledge base that would nurture future best practice development?

The Secretary of State's Report on the Disability Equality Duty makes no mention of the English Heritage Visitor Survey. Nor does it mention the recommendations of the MLA Disability Survey 2005[viii] and the findings of MLA 'Audit of Museum Library and Archive Web Accessibility'[ix].

The MLA audit of web accessibility was a serious piece of research, with a sample of 300, emphasised testing by disabled users and shared its methodology with the Disability Rights Commission Survey of 1,000 websites – a rare example of co-ordinating research beyond the cultural sector. The findings provide food for thought:

- 3% of websites met Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG1), which is an EU requirement for public sector websites
- the average museum, library and archive home page presented 60 WCAG checkpoint violations and 216 instances of potential stumbling blocks to disabled users
- only a tiny minority of museum websites present online collections and learning resources in ways that are accessible to specific groups of disabled people, e.g. people with sensory impairment and people with learning difficulties

Such findings strongly point to the existence of 'clear barriers'.

There is a great need indeed to invest in think tanks, surveys and research and to widen today's terribly narrow evidence base and range of methodologies. The Secretary of State's report suggests this as a possibility. It should be taken! It would be a way for DCMS to meet its duty under the Disability Equality Duties to co-ordinate the work between its funded bodies where there is need.

4. **Clear barriers do exist: a tale of personal experience and what it may tell us about barriers to international tourism by disabled people**

The day after 'In touch with Art', an international conference about equal access to museums for visually impaired people, held at the V&A in 2007, I took overseas guests to four museums which had audio guides with audio descriptions for visually impaired people. I wanted to show the UK's good practice and solicit constructive feedback.

The result was sobering:

- staff in the first museum did not know the museum had a guide (*in 2008, an Indian researcher tracked the guide, but the instructions were unreliable*).
- in the second museum the batteries had to be charged and we waited twenty minutes
- in third museum there was no guide anymore
- in the fourth museum we adults were given the guide for children

The UK and London are preparing for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. 'Winning: A tourism strategy for 2012 and beyond'[IX], developed by the DCMS, Visit Britain and Visit London 'will invite the world to visit London'. It acknowledges that '4,500 disabled athletes and a large number of disabled visitors will come to the Paralympic Games. Many will want to attend other events and attractions. It is important that they find them accessible.' has been sought in the entire history of the Games. It may well be the first time that such a commitment has been expressed in the entire history of the Games. The fact is however, that for people with sensory impairment and people with a learning disability, the museum and heritage offer will remain fragmented. Poignantly,

there is **no easy** and **attractive one-stop shop** way for disabled people to gain access to information about London's accessible cultural offer, which is the most extensive in the world, if we include cinema, theatre, opera and musicals. This of course hinders the development of national and international cultural tourism by disabled people - and also reduces the value for money of the accessible cultural offer. All major cities (which tend to concentrate the accessible cultural offer) are in the same boat. Easily accessible, reliable and up-to-date information on the accessible cultural offer is a key challenge in an open global world which affirms to the freedom to move as one its ethical and consumer values.

6.   Inspiration from international cultural rights policies for disabled people

Equal access to culture is a human right of disabled people

A range of international policies which establish the cultural rights of disabled people call for a more pro-active commitment with regards to museums and heritage:

The **UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities** came into force in 2008. It explicitly recognises the cultural rights of disabled people for the first time:

"States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

(a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats...[xi]

 (c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services ..."

A number of 'appropriate measures' embedded in a long term strategic vision still have to be taken!

The Convention explicitly recognises deaf people as a linguistic minority. This strengthens the case for cultural organisations to provide services in Sign Language, live and via digital media.

The **Council of Europe Action Plan (2006-2015) on 'full participation of people with disabilities in society'** emphasises equal opportunities in culture. It calls on member states to 'start with an evaluation of their existing disability policy programmes and identify in which areas progress has yet to be made .....and which specific actions will have to be carried out."[xii]

An in-depth analysis of 'areas where progress has as yet to be made' is, to my knowledge, missing in every member country of the Council of Europe.

The **Council of Europe Recommendation R(92)6 on 'a coherent policy for people with disabilities'**, passed in 1992, already calls for the implementation of the cultural rights of deaf and disabled people:

 "Government institutions, leisure and cultural organisations should develop comprehensive access policies and action programmes designed to significant and lasting improvements for all people with disabilities."[xiii]

This Recommendation recognises the necessity for systemic and systematic change. No government can claim to have implemented this recommendation, as none has developed a set of tools or made a credible analytic assessment as to whether '*significant and lasting improvements*' have taken place.

7.   **Disability Equality: towards a *human and cultural rights based* approach worthy of 21st Century**

There is a great wealth of barriers still to be removed. 'Access on an equal basis' (United Nations Convention) is a human and cultural right. Cultural sector decision makers the world over tend to have little awareness of these policies and often even of their national legal duties. As a cultural sector that espouses the human rights and dignity of disabled people, we can - and must; produce an attitude shift and reach that tipping point from which true cultural equality can unfold. On this path, we will:

- give pro-active recognition to the cultural rights of disabled people
- take inspiration from Council of Europe Recommendation R(92)6
- develop a local and national strategic vision committed to achieving 'lasting and significant improvements' in 'equal access' to museums, galleries and heritage sites for all groups of disabled people
- define 'equal access' for disabled people in the context of the significance of museum and heritage collections
- see disabled people as part of the design solution for galleries, exhibitions, visitor interpretation and other services - and not as the problem.

A strategic and catalyst role for DCMS and ministries of culture the world over

DCMS has a duty to report to the Secretary of State in what areas work on disability equality needs to be co-ordinated and to co-ordinate this work with its funded bodies. Co-ordination is undoubtedly needed to best meet the rights of disabled people, to share resources and foster a creative outlook that will produce the equality and accessibility worthy of 21st Century.

A few striking ideas for cost-effective co-ordination in exciting, yet all too neglected areas would include:

- market research about disabled people by museums
- evaluation of existing and planned services by disabled users
- development of accessible and inclusive exhibition design guidance and pioneering new standards (this one would arouse the interest and creativity of many staff in national museums)
- best practice development in intellectual access to exhibitions
- development of a common strategic direction
- reflection on what 'disability equality' means in the context of the significance of the collections of national museums to underpin strategic direction[6]

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[6] To give but one example: the minute number and quality of objects available for touching in national museums bears no comparison whatsoever with the extraordinary significance of the collections – it is just the crumbs. So what can be done to provide a real measure of 'equal access', through creative deployment of traditional means and new media?

- an innovation fund to grow the specialism the sector needs
- a long-term planned approach to achieving significant and lasting improvements
- joint promotion of the accessible cultural offer, locally and internationally

Disability legislation and cultural rights policies ask that DCMS co-ordinates and drives a national strategic vision and strategy for disability equality in museums and heritage. This conclusion is valid for all countries.

It is my wish that this paper helps foster a wider discussion globally on disability equality in museums. It is a discussion we cannot afford to ignore *not just on legal grounds, but on the fundamental ethical ground of human dignity.*

8.   Comparison with race equality, a tribute to Clara Arokiasamy

. The 2009 Museums Association Conference was the stage for one of the conference's most inspiring, stirring, balanced, analytical and intensely critical talks focused on social justice. In her talk Clara Arokiasamy, from KALAI and Diversity and Heritage Adviser of the Mayor London assessed a decade of museum engagement with black and minority ethnic communities.

Whilst issues are always specific – that is the great beauty of diversities and human life; I was stuck by the uncanny degree to which systemic issues she identified are echoed in the area of disability equality.

Clara Arokiasamy's vision, analysis and clarity of commitment struck a deep cord. They are an inspiration and encouragement for writing this paper.

Without going into much detail, here are just some of the issues Clara Arokiasamy identifies:

- long lists of good practice examples *(author's note:: those that we like to roll out and sometimes substitute to thinking)* belie strategic level barriers
- Cultural diversity remains in the margins
- Change has been limited
- Sustainability of initiatives suffers
- Single Equality Schemes are not being translated into practice
- Very rarely is the nature of funding criteria examined
- We need a comprehensive robust research programme

The parallels between our two analyses are no coincidence. Systemic barriers are a common underlying factor.
Policy makers, students, practitioners, strategy developers, everyone, read this talk at:

htwww.museumsassociation.org/about/37272

9. **Discussion ensuing**

Several delegates from the US and the UK emphasised the need to address disability equality as a human rights issue and raise the cultural rights of disabled people as a political issue.

There was a philosophical discussion as to whether 'non-action' (not Ghandi's passive resistance - which in fact is active resistance; but 'non-doing' as an expression of institutional inertia) is an act of violence. The speaker stated that yes, in ethical terms, it is an act of violence to human potential. We came to learn that preventing children, specifically girls, from attending school, is an act of violence that denies a human right. Similarly we should come to see new museum and exhibition design that fails to engage with the requirements of disabled people as a denial of human potential.

The speaker, however, agreed, that the word 'discrimination' is better understood and does not advocate the use of the word 'violence' in policy and political discussion, nor in practical planning..

There was discussion about the use of language when advocating equal access for disabled people and how not to put people off whom one wants to buy into this agenda. Context was found to be important. There is a need to frankly state the unsatisfactory state of affairs at a political level – public space needs debate, discussion, uncompromising analysis. Inside organisations, to really get somewhere, it is of real importance to work with the motivational potential of staff and their human and creative intelligence.

A delegate asked what examples of global best practice there are –the author gave examples which have been included subsequently in this paper. The French Science Museum is particularly noteworthy. It has a Disability Access Unit of eight full-time members of staff, of whom several are disabled. Since 1986, it is the museum's policy that a portion of each exhibition must be accessible to deaf people and to visually impaired people. Whilst tensions remain between accessibility, inclusion and other design factors, this museum holds lessons for all big national museums worldwide. It has held lessons for many years, but accessible exhibition design and intellectual access to interpretation has been so low on the agenda globally, that its best practice has been little studied outside France.

The speaker also highlighted how in several national museums - the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Imperial War Museum, the V&A and Tate; exhibition design policies include accessibility for disabled people and how, and that a growing number of staff respond to the creative challenge enthusiastically. Two essential ingredients for moving towards global best practice for the 21st Century are thus in place. Yet it's a fledgling situation. It really is a matter of letting this great opportunity take off with full institutional support.

Thursday 24 March 2010

5.   Tate Encounters: Britishness and Visual Culture

Professor Andrew Dewdney, Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences, London South Bank University

This presentation is the product of collective thought with my co-investigators, Dr. David Dibosa and Dr. Victoria Walsh who worked with me on the research project, Tate Encounters: Britishness and Visual Culture, which was funded by the AHRC as part of the Diasporas, Migration and Identities programme.

This was a major project, with a team of six researchers, which, over a two year period of fieldwork engaged over 34 members of the Tate Britain staff, over 600 undergraduate students from London South Bank University and produced 40 recordings of individuals and groups discussing issues which arose from the research. Much of this work can be seen on the website. www.tateeencoutners.org.

The burden of this presentation lies in the growing recognition that the cultural diversity policies of the past decade and their instrumentalised forms of implementation are a spent force.

If what I am saying is broadly correct, then publicly funded museums will be faced with new choices and I think this will be along the lines we are already familiar with. For some shedding the instrumentalised yoke of culture as social compensation will be welcomed and herald a return to an older position in which culture is decided by experts. Others, and I count myself as one, whilst sharing the critique of a narrow instrumentalism, will be more troubled by the dissolution of strong policies on cultural diversity, seeing in it not simply the failure to bring the missing audience into the fold, but a larger failure to have practically engaged the museum in new practices which flow from recognitions

of difference. It is my hope, to use proverbial phrase, that the baby will not be thrown out with the bathwater

As much as museums have experiencing growth in visitor numbers and greater volume of programme and activity over the past decade, they, along with the Arts Council and DCMS recognised that not all sections of society were turning up at the art museum. In fact statistic after statistic showed that regular art museum attendance was still predominantly the habit of the most educated and wealthier sections of society, whilst the same surveys showed that people classified as less educated together with people classified as black, minority ethnic, whilst valuing museums in general, actually stayed away.

Cultural Diversity policy framed this demographic picture as a problem in the terms we are now familiar with and TE was no exception to this rule. One of the original research questions of Tate encounters illustrates this clearly;
What factors inhibit migrant and diasporic audiences from forming meaningful and ongoing relationships with the Tate and, by inference, other national museums?

Our own surveys of over 600 students, broadly conform to that of others in showing that superficially, non-museum attenders found Tate Britain a place of regulation and control, which prohibited rather than gave permission to express identity.

Not surprisingly, they experienced Tate as an environment in which they felt uncomfortable and out of place. They saw little in the historic collection that reflected their history and culture and saw little skill or meaning in contemporary art. But this is a dangerous demographic caricature which masks a much more complex reality.

The TE experience has been one of largely attempting to undo the tyranny of the demographic register of society and along with it its highly problematic form of subject classification. Our project is also marked by a rejection of a deficit model of culture. The idea of the museum fulfilling a civilizing role for the unruly and uneducated massed is now well chronicled and is as old as public museums themselves. In following the demographics of the absent

audiences, who needed to be targeted by special programmes and marketing techniques, the museum inadvertently repeats the historical model of deficit cultures, which undermined its own efforts to sustain a relationship with new targeted groups, but also diverted it from looking at the other side of the deficit coin.

If working class and black and minority ethnic culture is conceived as a cultural lack, standing outside of the culture of the museum, the question is more than begged about what the culture of plentitude represented by the museum is, by which we mean, what cultural value does the museum produce or exchange?

All of our early engagements with voluntary student participants pointed to the fact that they resisted being addressed through, and constituted by, race and ethnicity categories. Everything about our engagement with participants on the project told us that the social categories and thinking that developed with the patterns of post war industrial growth and migration to Britain from the Caribbean and South Asia no longer fitted the present realities of our migrant, mobile student group living in a globalised capital city.

The resistance of all of the students in our study to being 'hailed' or 'interpollated' by the project on the basis of an identity fixed around race or ethnicity, was the starting point for the exploration of an alternative to an older cultural politics of identity. Identity was not a strong operative term in our project, but was experienced as more fluid, multiple and situational and this led us to turn towards the importance of thinking about our and our research 'subjects', subjectively inhabited worlds and within them the recognition of difference.

Demographic classification used for institutional monitoring is meaningful only insofar as it provides fixed measures, which can be correlated against other behavioural or performative goals. Racialised forms of classification that attempt to encapsulate the life experience of individuals, the social life of groups and the culture of communities yield little for the museum to build upon. TE found it more useful to recognize and reflect upon the speakers' own subjectively inhabited world, including our own, which in turn could be offered

out to others for confirmation, contestation or rejection. To think, speak and act in non racialised ways remains as we speak here today, individually difficult and socially awkward.

The policy of targeting individuals and groups according to BME categories was adopted in order to produce positive cultural change through monitoring, but structurally, it reproduces racialised thinking. Whilst the intentions that lie behind targeting strategies reflect a democratic impulse – equality in access and participation – the outcomes and effects are limiting precisely because the category reproduces the division between BME and everything that it is not. Thus constituting people according to a target is to reproduce their marginal status and can produce no lasting transformation of knowledge, imagination or creative practice within the social body.

The policy of targeting has another limiting consequence when coupled with commercial marketing, which has been imported into organisational thinking. What is wrong with the concept of a segmented market for culture is that it reduces the relationship of active creative communication, to that of product and consumer in which the market decides and divides according to the principle of exchange. The market relation to audience constitutes a refusal on the part of the museum of the offer of new knowledge and understanding of the very groups and individuals they are so keen to account for.

If you combine public policy minority targeting with the business models of segmented market targeting you might finally get something for everyone, but only and precisely as separated segments, reproduced according to the existing social divisions of means and values. There is no coming together here, no new mingling of cultures, nothing of the social and cultural body is transformed.

The rejection of racialised thinking requires the effort to speak/invent a new language of recognising, valuing and living with difference and celebrating the abundance of diversity. The effort to imagine and describe the world and our experience in terms of a new majority is not about dissolving difference, as if it were some liberal form of assimilationism in which society is imagined as a collection of individuals, who are really all the same underneath. Nor is it a new

majority to be imagined as the sum of its minority and separate parts. This has been the limit and frustration of multiculturalism.

The central effort in this new grasp on culture is to populate it with the narratives of individual experiences and relationships of difference, which arise out of the experience of late twentieth century mobility and of crossing all kinds of geographical and social borders. R. Williams talked critically of the emergence of 'mobile privatisation' in post war British society, which he saw centrally as the combination of the growth of the nuclear family, consumer affluence and centralised broadcast communication. Globalised mobility represents a challenge to all those terms and demands a reimagination of the relationship between individuals, families and the public space of culture. Such a process starts with the experience of migration, which includes a revaluation of tradition and heritage and has major implications for what we understand by Britishness. Migration narratives are central to any account of a post colonial and post nation society.

There is a very strong direction to the flow of cultural traffic in museum business, which travels from the core to the margins in fact. The source of the cultural flow is normally experienced as the artifact, the material object and the destination of the flow is understood to be the dispersal of culture in widespread appreciation. But whilst the immediate source of cultural value is apprehended as the consecrated material object, in a more complex grasp of the reality, the source of value is firstly that of the social relations of the production of the object, (most often historically opaque) and secondly, the subsequent processes by and through which the object is acquired by and remains a subject of attention of the museum. In the everyday flow of cultural traffic, the supply side is separated from the demand side, which in its public sense is appreciation of value. Because of the division of specialist knowledge of artifacts, the side of public appreciation is largely superfluous to the organisational processes of acquisition and collection, which also makes the visitor marginal to the reproduction of the values of museum, which remain in expert hands. However, the public is required to attend as silent witnesses to the process of cultural reproduction. Visitors have to take what is presented to them on trust, as a public function, but one that operates along private and closed lines.

This process, by which the audience is constructed as a kind of afterthought, conceals the narrow cultural base that connects the public programme to a recurrent audience, through a market segmentation that universalises and biologises the viewer - kids, families and youth and marginalises those subjects who are deemed to fit into the sub-categories of Black, minority or ethnicity. This process is so profoundly naturalised, given that the majority of people who perpetuate it share the same cultural myth of the one way direction of the cultural message.

This paper concludes by considering the need to reverse the direction of the flow of cultural traffic, in order to make the audience at all visible and to achieve a genuine mixing and mingling as the two currents might meet. In TE terms this means finding ways of recognizing and using transcultural mobility of experience and making the visitor present in museological narratives of cultural value. As TE has shown there is no lack of a practical means of achieving exceptional quality on new narratives, as we explore in other papers. But the prior question is how to create the necessary authority for this reversal of the direction of flow.

Tate Encounters carried out an organizational ethnographic study in which we interviewed 33 people across the institution who had been involved in the production of one exhibition in the summer of 2008. To our own surprise, two years later we concluded that thinking about Tate as a single corporate body, with an organizational structure, which translates its mission into operational strategies, did little to explain our research data and more specifically to explain how Tate thought about audiences.

In coming up with an alternative model of the institution of Tate and its organizational structures, we are happier thinking of it as a series of extended networks of differing reach and with variable connections between them. Of course some messages, often the clear commands, can travel very quickly and directly through all of the networks, whilst other messages remain the provenance of smaller closed off networks. This is not simply a revised way of talking about departmental organization, but of thinking about the public

museum in terms of extended networks of governance, diplomacy, markets and the media, to name but a few. It is to think about the museum, as others have, as extending beyond its walls to include the permanent civil service, art markets and dimensions of broadcast and publishing media. In these networks people and things, such as the objects of collection, ideas, policies are all active elements, with varying degrees of agency in determining what a particular network does and doesn't do.

At Tate cultural diversity was interpreted across the networks as a problem to be solved. It was understood to be the absence of the visual presence of diversity, which is most obviously found in the visible markers of difference. In marketing and education otherness was translated into the missing BME audience. In acquisitions cultural diversity was seen as the problem of the missing artworks from Black British artists in the collection. In staff development it was seen as the problem of the missing black and minority ethnic employees in the upper levels of expertise and management. Cultural diversity was therefore not seen in terms of there being anything wrong with or needing to change either the direction of cultural flow, nor with the networks which keep it going, but rather in the demographics of people and objects. The right statistical mix would, presumably produce cultural diversity, problem solved. It is another caricature but it is made to emphasis the limits of the specific discourse of a narrow representation cultural politics, based upon the principle of demonstrating equality of opportunity in action, which underlies much of the thinking about the implementation of cultural diversity policies. In this way of looking at things cultural diversity policy in practice at Tate became the management of risk to its central historical purposes. Far from the journey of the marginal majority towards the minority core, imagined by policies of inclusion and widening participation, we have seen the installation of newer forms of the management of culture, along highly segmented market lines, which whilst it has added outer layers of activity to the museum, has preserved and protected the core.

Migration narratives have led us to the importance of the trans and intra cultural, which speak more to the experience of global mobility, whether upward, outward or errant, than that of immigration and settlement. Transculturality changes the terms of cultural identities worked out within and

in relationship to post-war settled British migrant communities. For Tate transculturality represents a challenge to both of its dominant curatorial tropes; that of international modernism and; historical Britishness. Global mobility and the transcultural are the new starting points for working away from both established curatorial epistemes and existing social classifications. If you change these terms you also change the metaphor of margin and core.

Break Out Session: Connecting or Competing Equalities?

6.   Diversifying Audiences

6.1   John Orna-Ornstein, Head of National Programmes,

British Museum

Three stories.

A British Indian boy stands in front of the Gayer Anderson cat – an iconic ancient Egyptian object from the BM. He's motionless and stares at the cat with fixed attention, almost nose to nose. Then he stands back and adds a few lines to the drawing he's making before stepping back in, as close as he can get to this wonderful 3,000 year old object that has completely and utterly captivated him.

A group of young people debate the meaning and relevance of the Lover's Figurine, a 10,000 year old prehistoric sculpture, the first known representation of people making love. The group is wonderfully diverse, and each young person adds something to the conversation from their own unique perspective. As I sit and listen, I'm moved by their passion and how much they now care about an object that a few days ago seemed irrelevant to their lives.

A BritishTaiwanese woman stands in front of the terracotta warriors at a community preview to the British Museum exhibition First Emperor. Her shoulders are shaking, and I see that as the stands under the great dome of the museum's Reading Room she's in floods of tears. My colleague takes her for a coffee and her story emerges. She was brought up in Taiwan by her grandfather, a historian, who told her many times about the terracotta warriors and that one day she should see them for herself. She's doing that now, for the first time, not in China but in the centre of arguably the most diverse city in the world. She's coming face to face with a complicated personal, national and international history, and doing so moves her to tears.

I wanted to start with some small examples of museums at their best, as diverse collections and diverse audiences interact – and from an understanding that museums can't be the museums they should be without fully embracing diversity – diversity of audience, of collection, of workforce and of process and approach.

We're a couple of decades into a fundamental shift in the museum sector towards public engagement, and we're four years on from the publication of Delivering Shared Heritage, the Mayor's Commission report on African and Asian Heritage. And at this point I sense there's a growing frustration that the sector isn't changing more quickly or, perhaps, more fundamentally. A significant part of this conference is looking at issues like governance, embedding diversity and short-termism – the big issues that the whole sector needs to tackle in the coming decade. My plan, in the few minutes I've got, is to touch on some of these challenges. But I don't plan to talk primarily about cross-sector solutions – but rather about steps in the right direction for our institutions that cumulatively will make a difference in bringing the change we seek.

As I talk, you need to bear in mind that I'm speaking from the perspective of a career spent working in one of the world's largest museums – with the opportunities, but also the challenges, that brings – and Vandana will bring a different perspective. Some of what I say comes from my experience at the BM, and some of it from the fact that I'm responsible for the BM's partnerships with museums around the UK and spend a great deal of time in museums from Aberdeen to Exeter and from Wrexham to Norwich.

So, three challenges.

Firstly, governance. It's clear that many of our organisations, and indeed cross-sector bodies, are governed, led and managed in ways, and perhaps by people, that don't prioritise or even encourage diversity. Organisations that have had significant shifts in their audiences in the last two decades have been those who have had significant shifts in almost everything about how they do business, from the top of the organisation downwards. A good example is the Manchester Museum, where a fundamental change in how the museum was

led, how it related to its audiences and potential audiences and how it curated its collection – in fact, in how it saw itself – led to a real diversification of its audiences.

Second, short-termism. We hear a lot about the challenge of running sustained programmes in a field that's dominated by short-term funding. And I spend a significant proportion of my time applying for funding and juggling short-term contracts. External funding will always be short-term, and there's a clear need in this area to move many of our programmes to core funding, whatever that means in our own organisations. But even more important, I believe, is that our approach is often short-term. We still too readily move from one audience to another, from one topic to another, building short-term projects in a way that makes sustaining relationships difficult.

And thirdly, a lack of ability to tell the stories that are most relevant to the 21st century. I wonder how many of us struggle to tell the stories we'd like to tell, to the audiences we'd like to engage because we don't have the collections to do it? I believe that every museum, however small, has a global story to tell, but sometimes we're failing to tell those stories, often because of limits to our collections – and perhaps sometimes because of limits to our aspirations.

So, what are my three 'solutions'?

The first is to understand what our own organisation is here for – because it's only when we really understand this that we can genuinely think long-term. If we don't fully understand how our organisation fits in the 21st century, why it's of real importance, then how can our audience do so?

It's not surprising we sometimes have a lack of clarity about our roles. We're pulled in different directions by national government, by local government, and by other stakeholders and funders. National government has taken a fairly instrumentalist approach to culture in the past decade, but that has changed somewhat in the last two or three years in the context of the McMaster report, and looks set to change further if we have a Conservative government. The sector, under the leadership of MLA, has looked to prove it's value locally and regionally in place-building. But that doesn't seem to be enough, and as I travel

around the country I hear one story after another of deep cuts to cultural services by local governments that remain unconvinced by the story we're telling.

So where do we turn? Well of course I can't answer that on behalf of your institution, and part of the beauty and challenge of our museums is that they are so individual. But I believe the answer has to be, in part, about collections that respond fundamentally to the globalism of the 21st century, playing a unique role in connecting people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It seems to me that our museums should be less about a locality than they are about that locality's connections, less about a type of object than that object's use and relevance and less about a period of time than about what we can learn from that period. We should be a sector that challenges rather than reinforces identities. And as museums we should look to be able to respond to individuals rather than to responding to types. There's a unique role here that only museums as our collective, changing, memory can fulfil, and perhaps we need to make more of it.

The woman in First Emperor that I began by describing illustrates the impact of the global stories, the global connections, that all of our museums can make.

The second, rather oddly, is to become <u>less</u> focussed on audiences. It seems to me that our core business is organisational change. I'd suggest we make sure that every piece of work we do looks inward as well as outward, and is as much about changing our institution as it is about being accessible to a particular audience. If I had to put a figure on it, I'd say that, depending on how far your organisation needs to change in its fundamental approach to diversity, up to 80% of your energy should be going inwards.

I'd also suggest that we should never try to <u>be</u> the audience expert, and instead focus our energies on making sure we <u>know</u> the real experts. Our job is to be an expert at relationships and our focus should be on partnership and not on setting up programmes. Funding may dictate that we have to develop new and exciting projects but, if so, these need to be fully aligned with our core vision and purpose and must lead to sustaining relationships or developing new strategic relationships that we are confident we can continue. The BM's

Community Partnership team holds relationships with around 400 community organisations – 400 audience experts – and maintaining those is our number one priority alongside organisational change.

And I'd suggest that we continue to get better at developing an academic rigour to what we're doing. Given the enormous change in focus for museums in the last 20-30 years perhaps our practice in diversifying audiences is moving forward more slowly than we might expect. Give yourself, or those you work with, a challenge of publishing at least one paper a year – doing so will force you to work in ways that are thoughtful and reflective.

The young people with the Lovers' Figurine are part of a BM programme called Talking Objects, one of the few externally funded programmes we run specifically with audience development in mind. Its purpose is deliberately as much about changing hearts and minds within the BM – from director level downwards – as it is about making the museum's collections fully accessible to the widest possible audience.

The third solution is to hold less tightly to our collections. The BM has an extraordinary collection from across the world, but it still doesn't allow us to tell all of the stories we feel we should be telling in line with our overall purpose and vision – stories of tolerance - of the extraordinary cultural heritage of conflicted countries like Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, of the importance of diverse faiths, and so on. So some of our exhibitions are composed almost entirely of material from other places. Museums should see themselves as lending libraries; where objects move flexibly between the places where they speak most eloquently, or provocatively, or widely; and where impact is more important than ownership. You might say that it's easy for the BM to borrow objects to tell global stories, but all UK nationals have just agreed through the NMDC to make their lending more transparent and to take as seriously as possible their national role. At the BM we lend to between 150 and 200 UK museums a year, we lend for the long as well as the short-term and we're particularly excited by opportunities to connect local to global stories – so get in touch.

My other story, of the boy in front of the Egyptian cat, wasn't from the BM but from Brent museum, a partner museum that borrowed the Egyptian cat as part of a London Hub-led programme. The loan led to dramatic increase in visitor numbers. 42% of visitors came specifically to see the cat and, more importantly, 33% of visitors were first time visitors from diverse backgrounds. Go and get some more good stuff, and use it well.

And I'd like to finish with a practical suggestion that I'm going to sneak in outside my three solutions. The Equality Bill (Act) provides a unique opportunity for bringing diversity from the margins to the core of our organisations, whatever the strengths or otherwise of the Bill. Become an expert in the new legislation, and use your expertise widely to transform your institution.

6.2   Tracy-Ann Smith, Acting Co-chair, Diversity Heritage Group

This short paper sets the purpose, rationale and priorities of the Diversity in Heritage Group (DHG). A large part of the DHG's activity concerns diversifying audiences in the cultural heritage sectors.

DHG started life as the Diversifying Audiences sub-committee assembled by the Heritage Diversity Taskforce of the Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage. The group worked on the question of diversifying audiences in this context and identified some key, sector-wide barriers to progress in this area. Furthermore, the constituent members felt that they themselves were the most qualified to address some of these issues and hence the DHG was formed with a wider remit and increasing membership. The activities of the group focus on what practitioners can do collectively and in partnership to enhance progress in this area.

The group developed a draft mission statement at it inaugural symposium in October 2009.

'DHG will broaden engagement with heritage by professionalising practice, driving organisational change and enabling equitable dialogue with all communities.'

This statement emphasises that the group are focussed on professionalising diversity practice making it more accessible to heritage professionals more widely (than diversity specialists) and enable mainstreaming and embedding across organisations. It also illustrates that the activity of diversifying audiences is as much about organisational change as effective methodologies in community engagement. Finally the emphasis on all communities opens up the diversity and partnership remit for the group.

There are currently four priority areas for the DHG
- To be a professional network
- Setting the terms of and criteria for diversity practice
- Creating a one-stop shop for diversity related resources
- Facilitation of academic partnership.

The top priority for the group is to provide a regular and reliable **professional network**. This Benefits to member organisations include access to sector wide data and networking and CPD opportunities for staff.

The next priority deals with the often confusing array of methodologies that have grown up over decades of diversity practice in the cultural heritage sectors. Methodologies are often not well defined, agreed or collated and this can make it hard for non diversity-specialists to engage with. Nebulous language is a further barrier to advocacy and understanding the field. This is not just the linguistic treadmill of diversity language in general, which is being constantly redrawn as Gary Yonge states 'just because you find a word for things doesn't mean you find a meaning for them'. However, definitions on basic strategies, tools for audience engagement and organisational change can be agreed upon and when these is to address the lack of consistent sharing across the sector and also the sense of professional isolation many diversity practitioners face in their roles as change instigators within their organisations. One key function of this network addresses the problem of continuous professional development beyond officer level when training opportunities are scarce the skill set required shifts from community engagement or audience analysis skills to those required for organisational change. DHG already delivers on knowledge and skill sharing through regular discussion items. Other development needs

identified can be sourced as a consortium or facilitated in house. **terms of practice** are defined, it will be possible to set **criteria** and indicators of best practice.

Currently, many feel that an institution's diversity record can only be judged on the power of its PR machine and occasionally mediocre projects are advertised as best practice while some excellent work remains unseen, unshared and unsung. Once diversity criteria, that are suitable for the specific functions of the cultural heritage sectors, have been developed exciting progress in benchmarking, accreditation and accountability can follow. DHG are currently reviewing existing standards and seeking partnerships to progress in this area.

Our next priority of **access to relevant resources** addresses a practical problem for diversity practitioners, who often have limited time to develop an advocacy case that is robust enough to get organisational buy in. Depending on the situation, a case might consist of academic support, case studies of best practice and a network of experienced practitioners to call upon. Even the most experienced and well connected among us can find this an onerous and time consuming task, a baffling inefficiency in this digital age. There are several great portals of relevant information and much more in less obvious locations. If the cultural sectors are serious about embedding diversity practice throughout its many professions, quick access to information for non specialists is essential. DHG envisages 'resources at your fingertips' a one-stop-shop, which is well indexed with links to host web sites. However, solutions scoping has not yet begun so all ideas and contacts at this early stage are very welcome.

The final priority of facilitating academic partnerships both stands alone and underpins the other priority areas. Some practitioners have an academic background and vice versa and some strong relationships exist between certain institutions but this remains ad hoc and generally speaking the two groups are not sufficiently connected. Practitioner's viewpoints on research vary. Some view it as largely inaccessible and remote from the reality on the ground. Some would like increased access to research that is directly relevant to their work and the network is considering a reading group to facilitate this as the keeping up to date with the most pertinent research is challenging for busy practitioners.

Better links with the academic community would benefit the practitioners' advocacy function too. In some more traditional or academic organisations, methodologies which may be common in practice, are not considered 'rigorous' until supported by academia. Therefore, relevant research can act as a tool for buy in for change. For researchers and academic funders this enhanced relationship services the more recent emphasis on impact on industry and sharing knowledge.

DHG has started to develop partnerships with the academic community and considering how to collaborate and influence the upcoming research agenda, facilitate better dissemination and encourage more collaborative practices between researchers and practitioners. Policy makers are of course, key stakeholders and keen to be involved in the discussions between practice and research and HLF among others are involved in the group. A network bid for the 3 groups to recommend an upcoming research agenda in the field is underway.

Membership of the DHG can be 'active' which involves attending formal and informal meetings and participating in decision making and workshops or 'virtual' membership which is receipt of minutes, updates and reports and the opportunity to be consulted on key issues. Members can be individual or affiliated to organisations and a list of organisations currently involved is included in the appendix below.

Progress in the first 6 months has been encouraging and DHG welcomes all ideas, affiliates, members and partners to further its aims and influence sector wide change.

Appendix:

Active and virtual members are freelance, individual or affiliated to the following organisations:

Royal Collection
National Trust
National Museums Liverpool
Cultural Co operation
National Portrait Gallery
Museum of London
Royal Academy
Historic Royal Palaces
Audiences London
Birmingham Museums & Art Galleries
Manchester University V&A
English Heritage
Science Museum
Women's Library
British Museum
South Bank Centre
Royal Geographical Society
London Transport Museum
Bishopsgate Institute
Heritage Lottery Fund
Natural History Museum
London Metropolitan Archive.

DHG is co-chaired by Lucie Amos and Tracy-Ann Smith
diversityhg@googlemail.com

7. Making Space - Teresa Hare Duke, Community Development Officer of the V&A Museum of Childhood, Lisa Gee, Director, The Harley Foundation, Jeremy Theophilus, Art Consultant, A Fine Line, Barney Hare Duke Art Consultant, A Fine Line

The case study focuses on 'Making Space, Sensing Place' an international exchange programme for artists from the UK, Bangladesh and India, shared between the Museum of Childhood, V&A and the Harley Gallery, an art gallery in rural Nottinghamshire, and managed by A FINE LINE cultural practice (AFL), arts consultants.

Five residencies (two UK artists, two Bangladeshi artists, and one Indian artist) will be hosted jointly by the partners in the UK and overseas from which new work will be commissioned in response both to the collections of the UK hosts and their urban and rural contexts, developed through public engagement programmes that will culminate in an exhibition in 2010/11.

A FINE LINE, whose specialism is in developing international dialogue in contemporary crafts and visual arts, have been devising and delivering programmes of international residencies for makers, artisans, designers and artists since 2003, under the HAT: Here and There project (www.hat.mmu.ac.uk), initially with Australia and more recently with South Asia. The model is based on exchange rather than import or export, with each artist undertaking a three month residency and then joining a week-long conference at the end of the programme that brings all the artists and hosts together. Publications and an interactive website document the events.

Making Space forms part of a third stage of the HAT project, which is also contributing to the MLA Stories of the World programme as Material Response in the North West and Eastern England. AFL have worked with both host

institutions before and have developed this programme in collaboration with them to reflect the particularities of their locations and constituent audiences.

The Harley Gallery is funded by an independent charitable trust, The Harley Foundation. This was set up in 1977 to encourage audiences for visual arts and crafts and to help ensure continuation of hand skills in an age of mass-production. The Foundation funds a public art gallery and museum and three blocks of artists' studios.

Based in ex-coalfields of North Nottinghamshire the Gallery's immediate audience is rural, with an unemployment rate of twice the national average. Despite this, audience figures are now around 75,000 per annum. The immediate locality is largely mono-cultural, white working class. Audience development is at the heart of all programming and long term relationships with Arts Council England and the independent sector have given opportunities to explore, develop and extend the work and skills of the team.

The Harley Trustees made a commitment six years ago that the Gallery would aim to develop a strand of exhibition programming that looked beyond artists from the UK. A research trip to India in 2004 enabled meetings with artists, gallery owners and arts managers in North India and the subsequent development of a network of people and institutions to work with. Since then, three groups of Indian artists' residencies have been funded by the Foundation.

Whilst the artists are allowed personal time to develop their own work in response to the particular environment of Welbeck and Harley, each residency also develops links with a particular village infant and junior school, with pupils, staff and parents/carers engaging with the artists. For many of these children and families it is their first meeting with a person from outside of Nottinghamshire. The whole school works with the visiting artists and then visits the Harley to view the artists' work.

Developing this partnership with the Museum of Childhood V&A, offers the village school the opportunity to link to a school in Bethnal Green, which has a predominantly Bangladeshi intake.

The Museum of Childhood is a branch of the V&A in Bethnal Green, East London. The building was one of the original temporary South Kensington museum buildings dismantled and reconstructed in Bethnal Green in 1866. It was designed to introduce the disadvantaged Eastenders to the nation's cultural riches. It became a museum dedicated to the subject of childhood in 1974. and the V&A's children's' collections were gradually relocated. Today it houses one of the world's largest collections of toys and artefacts relating to childhood spanning the 1600's to the present day. This collection of toys and the material culture of childhood also includes nursery artefacts, clothing, furniture and paintings.

Over the last eight years the Museum has worked hard to push cultural diversity up the agenda which has been achieved through a conscious process of strategic development, very much supported from the top, putting education and audience development at the heart of the museum.

In 2001, in response to DCMS agendas and targets for diversifying museum audiences but also in the context of declining visitor figures, it was recognised that local and non-traditional audiences were a relatively untapped potential audience. Regular Museum visitors tended to be predictably white and middle class.

In 2001 the Museum commissioned a Community Strategy which was an extensive community consultation exercise with voluntary and statutory partners, exploring how to refocus museum activity, build key relationships and attract non visitors. Initially much of this work was done through outreach projects delivering a targeted programme with participants in schools, colleges and community organisations.

One of the major strands has been engagement through participation, with participatory, artist-led projects using the collection's objects and aspects of childhood as an inspirational starting point; after all, childhood is an extremely accessible and universal territory. As the need to include different stories of childhood was recognised and the community programme translated more into a 'social justice model' rather than peripheral external activity, so the project-

based work has shifted from the edges to becoming part of the core programme.

Engagement has happened through active participation in visual and performing arts projects. Programmes are not just about access but also about creativity – the collections acting as the stimulus and inspiration for new work by new audiences which in turn animates and enlivens the Museum's permanent displays. The artist acts as the agent and mediator who makes the collections accessible and opens up the possibility of reinterpretation. The role of the artist is of central importance.

The Museum made a brave and quite unusual commitment to audience development in the second phase of redevelopment in 2006, with the inclusion of a community workshop and a dedicated gallery space, The Front Room Gallery, to showcase work created by the community programme.
The exhibitions give it a mainstream, elevated status with participants' responses interwoven with the work of contemporary designers and artists. To date it has been a very successful formula.

The artist exchange residency model has been tailored to fit with the Museum's agenda, our audience development needs and the requirement to have a tangible outcome in the form of an exhibition. The residencies create a real opportunity for the five artists to develop new work, new interpretations and tell new stories whilst also contributing to the Museum's audience building. The public engagement programme with schoolchildren and ESOL students will give non-traditional audiences direct exposure to practising South Asian artists, role models they rarely have access to.

The triangular link with the Harley Gallery establishes a further line of dialogue between a rural economically deprived, mono-cultural community and an extremely different urban, culturally diverse community. An exploration of place and identity will be developed through a linked schools programme. The sense of 'otherness' of the rural and urban context might prove to be as pronounced as the international contrast .

This project is fully integrated into the Museum's main programme and takes it very much from the margins to the core.

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Break Out Session: Connecting or Competing Equalities? The Global Perspective

8. "Marib yatakallam": On translating new museological approaches into the local context of Yemen

8.1 Dr Susan Kamel, Research Associate, Museum Studies, Museums in the Arab World, Technische University Berlin

Some Museological Considerations

Thank you for the chance to present some thoughts about an ongoing project. We will introduce you to a new museum for Yemen in the province of Marib today. Marib is situated west of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen in the very south of the Arabian Peninsula.

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world and belongs to the Least Developed Countries:

> "Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world and belongs to the LDC. High population growth, slow economic development, declining oil resources, depleting water resources, poor standard of public health and education (high illiteracy, S.K.), widespread poverty, poor governance and internal insecurity remain the key challenges for the country. At present,

Yemen is unlikely to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The government has shown commitment to democratisation, to economic liberalisation and to political and economic reforms. However, this has not yet resulted in concrete progress. In the absence of reforms, the social and political situation is likely to deteriorate."

(Yemen - European Community Strategy Paper for the period 2007-2013)

Despite this negative perspective for the future, the Social Fund for Development in Yemen, has commissioned Iris Gerlach, Head of the German Archaeological Institute, Branch Sanaa, to develop a concept for a regional museum in Marib, the former capital of the Sabean Kingdom in cooperation with a museologist. The SFD's major function is to proactively contribute to implementing the government's economic and social plans through increasing access for individuals and communities to employment and social services. The Marib Museum Project is funded with support of US Aid and other development funds.

The province of Marib has a multitude of ancient sites, such as the capital of the Sabaean Kingdom, Marib itself, the cult centre of Sirwah, and renowned irrigation constructions, such as the Marib Old Dam, a wonder of the ancient world. To this day, however, there is still no museum in Marib to reflect this cultural importance.

The museum will show a cultural history of the region beginning from prehistoric times to present day Marib. The Museum exists of seven different curatorial departments, among them archaeology, epigraphy and ethnology. In 2007 I joined the team and in 2009 the architect was chosen by SFD after an invitation to tender had failed.

The Marib Museum wants to work towards an inclusive museum, through empowering marginalised social groups by a) including them in the canon of the collections and b) addressing them as visitors and making the museum more accessible and c) if possible, also including them in the Exhibition Development as experts in the interpretation of their own culture.

The initial plan was to have a text book like chronology with themes such as irrigation or trade. When I joined the museum team there was the idea of ending the timeline with a section on Islamic art and history and finally a section on ethnology showing contemporary life. We soon dropped what was for me an obsolete idea, a chronological master narrative and we are still discussing the story line with the curators of the different departments and representatives from Yemen. The different museum's department might all have a relationship with current questions and approaches: the ethnological perspective might be embedded into all fields and help to contextualize the archaeological finds. Recent relevant questions should serve as a hook to the old cultural history of Yemen. This is also an outcome of our discussions with different Yemenis and their understanding of their own history.

The museological planning phases are divided approximately into six steps:

Phase 1

1. Survey about other museums in the Arab World

2. Front-end Research

3. Ethnological Research

4. Build up networks (ICOM Arab, Nubia Museum)

Phase 2

5. Formative Research

6. Architectural and Design Phase

Following the 'front-end studies', formative studies will be conducted during the development of the architectural and design phase. Today we are at the end of phase one and at the beginning of phase two.

So we have already completed our brief survey on museums in the Arab World – which took place also during my research project "From Imperial Museum to Communication Center?" for which I mainly studied museums in Egypt.

Although the museums and countries that Iris Gerlach and I visited differ greatly in many aspects, positive as well as negative examples must be taken

into consideration. Unlike Saudi Arabia, for example, which is an Islamic absolute monarchy, Yemen is considered a democracy which allows us also to address some critical issues such as the position of women or water policy. And unlike most other Arab countries we cannot employ high tech devices as there is no reliable electricity supply.

Another museum we visited is the Nubia Museum in Assuan. It is a unique community museum in Egypt, which was founded specifically for the Nubians and their social empowerment. This museum's approach as a forum for communication renders it especially interesting for the Marib Museum Project. The director, Ossama Abdel Meguid, who is also vice president of ICOM Arab will cooperate with our project and help to train the museum professionals.

Secondly we conducted a visitor survey at the National Museum in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen and did some Personal Meaning Maps with target groups. This was done to help us diversify the audience, especially the Yemeni audience about which we know so little. Working in Yemen posed for us a lot of new research questions: In what respect does the visitor behavior in an exhibition differ? How do Yemenis approach a text? We assume that it is more than likely that the Yemeni audience is more willing to read longer texts. So we formulated a number of questions concerning visitor attitudes and with reference to the cultural context.

In the course of the first planning phase we contacted different target groups, such as the "society for the blind" and school students, whom we then questioned about their experience with museums. In the course of the project "voices" will be collected, in order to make the exhibition multi-perspective. I also looked for famous Yemenis outside of Yemen: The Yemeni-British film-maker Bader Ben Hirsi will contribute his knowledge on Yemeni and British aesthetics to the project. For some visitors – nationally and internationally – he might be another hook to the exhibition.

We don't want to cut off the history of Yemen with the ethnology section – as I have already mentioned. Yemen's cultural history continues. So we will involve contemporary art in the museum to show that so called high art is still

produced in this least developed country. Contacts with artists like Amna Nusairy, Fuad al-Futaih and Mazher Nizar were initiated, and all of these artists have affirmed their cooperation with the project.

The reason to build a museum in Marib, a place where since 2007 no foreigner is allowed entry, is a social attempt as an inclusive and community museum. Especially with regard to foreign visitors, it could lead to the creation of jobs in tourism. The anticipated increase in the number of tourists would help to develop both the hotel and the restaurant sectors. Further advantages can be expected. In particular, the production and sale of handicrafts would offer job opportunities for women, who play a subordinate role in other sectors of the employment market.

The museum can therefore be called an anti-terror project aiming at increasing a critical approach to the history of Yemen and at the same time serving as an important income factor in Marib. The Museum should also try to empower different minorities in respect of disability, gender, race, age and socio-economic status. Our diversity priority list, therefore, is strongly influenced by the circumstances in Yemen, which is a conservative Muslim society. So there are still some aspects of a diversity policy missing or neglected so far in respect to religion or belief and to sexual and gender identity for example. The Marib Museum project will not serve the latter nor help them to solve their problems by gaining wider acceptance. We would also like to support the historically very influential Jewish Communities in Yemen and the Akhdams, Yemenis ethnic minority of African origin, in gaining recognition and acceptance.

However, the Marib Museum might be the first museum in Yemen where other marginalised groups will gain a place of recognition - women, the illiterate, the blind. When we talk about trade for example– a very important subject for Yemen if we think of the Silk route and the importance and wealth of Yemen in ancient times – we also want to talk about illicit trafficking of children and women into Saudi Arabia today.

New museologies are democratic and inclusive endeavors, This is sometimes hard to realize in so called democracies, as we have already heard. However, in Yemen, where corruption influences our work and that of our Yemenite

Colleagues, to plan a museum as a social actor might remind us of "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen" – this is the title of a very cynical British parody about absurd and insane development projects. To prevent our project from being a neo-colonial enterprise, we have to continuously work in close cooperation with our Yemenite colleagues and the various population groups within Yemen. And we have to always critically reflect our own position in this project. I would like to end this paper by stressing the importance of security for an inclusive museum – and an inclusive planning process: Our visitor centered concept can only be achieved through the real participation of the actual population of Marib.

8. 1   Methodological issues and results of the front-end evaluation, & Christine Gerbich Research Associate, Visitor Studies, Technische University Berlin

As was already mentioned, I was responsible for the front-end-research in the first stage of the project and I would like to begin with some general notes before I turn to the problems that we were confronted with. When I read the Call for Papers to this conference, I immediately thought that the Marib Museum Project is an interesting example, because the core of society is "marginalized" out of a Western perspective. As Susan already said the Project is administrated by the Yemenite Social Fund for Development and therefore is a Yemenite project. However, to a considerable amount it is influenced by foreign specialists. Although we are very aware of the critique on this approach, there were also situations, e.g. when it came to the question of corruption – when our position as outsiders was helpful to our Yemenite colleagues.

One of the most important problems for us was of course the political situation: In July 2007 – two months before we were going to conduct our survey, six Spanish tourists were killed and seven were injured in a blast in Marib. I think it is needless to say that the majority of Yemenites wishes to live in peace and was shocked by the attacks. Yemenites are very proud of their nation and their cultural heritage and stressed that they deplored the attacks. This situation

shapes our working conditions in a very drastic way, e.g. for security reasons it has not yet been possible for me to travel to the excavation site where the new museum will be located and to get in contact with people from Marib.

There are only three national museums and around 20 smaller museums in Yemen and the interest in their visitors is restricted to the number of tickets sold. I think the idea of intensive research on the future museum audiences in Marib seemed at first a little odd to our colleagues, but as we went on with it and presented the results, the team was more and more convinced that it was more than necessary to include the visitors' perspective. However, I think that in the future more discussions on the impact of the museum on Yemen society are needed – for most archaeologists the idea of an inclusive museum is rather new. The future museum in Marib is going to be a museum that will be showing mainly archeological finds. We therefore decided to conduct a survey at a comparable museum as a first step. We then planned to interview representatives from the Yemenite organization for male and female blind people, as well as physically handicapped people to get an understanding about the specific situation of these groups. We also interviewed school-children and their teachers and did some Personal Meaning Maps on relevant concepts to see what Yemenites associate with them and to find some hooks that we could use within the exhibition.

The whole methodological concept was discussed with my Yemenite tandem partners. Concerning the approach to work in tandem that consisted of a Yemenite and a foreigner, I would like to mention the difficulties we had to find Yemenite partners: Those who have good skills in English language and professional skills often leave the country to live or work abroad, e.g. in Saudi Arabia, where they can earn more money. My colleagues - Musleh al Qubati and Ahmed Shamsan - were exceptional. Both of them had partly been trained in Europe, had good English skills and had been working with the German Archeological Institute for years. Because I was aware of the challenges that would be connected to our survey, I was very happy that they were willing to support my work not least by contributing intercultural knowledge. We first met in summer 2007 for two weeks in Berlin where they were given a first glimpse into the field of social research methods. At the time, we visited several museums in Berlin together with Susan and discussed the exhibitions with a

focus on accessibility and visitor involvement. One result of these discussions was that we expanded our original programme to visit the Museum for the Blind in Berlin: There, we discussed the different situations of disabled, especially of blind people in Germany and in Yemen, where the high proportion of blind people is due to insufficient health care and war injuries.

All in all, this first intensive encounter was very important, because we got to know each other in a more informal way. For me, it was both inspiring and interesting, because I gained an insight into Yemenite culture during our discussions. However, the training also brought up other issues e.g. that of gender, that is hard to grasp, but have to be talked through within teams.

After this short introduction to our working conditions I would now like to give you a short idea about the museum where we conducted the survey. The National Museum is located close to the ancient city center and to the Military Museum. It is certainly one of the major attractions for tourists from inside and outside of Yemen (2007:approx. 18.000 Yemenites; 7.500 tourists). It contains four floors in which objects from pre-Islamic times and the Islamic period are shown in chronological order. Moreover, it has a so-called folklore-gallery, where life-sized dioramas display rural life in Yemen.

As already mentioned I was curious about any methodological problems we would have to face from the beginning. This curiosity stemmed from my work with data from the International Social Survey Programme, which is a continuous program of cross-national collaboration of 45 member countries who run annual surveys on topics important for the social sciences. From the ISSP I knew that countries differ in respect to survey traditions and the standards of their conduction. However, since there are no Middle Eastern countries participating in the program I could not refer to expertise in these countries. To my knowledge, most of the data in Yemen is collected by government institutions and deal with the socioeconomic, demographic or healthcare segments. Therefore, we were expecting our visitor survey to be somewhat unusual for most Yemenite people so we decided to conduct a pretest in October 2007 which was followed up in December the same year.

The first challenge was to provide an instrument that was as functionally equivalent as possible, meaning that questions asked in the different countries stand in identical relationships to the intended theoretical dimensions. We did our best here by translating and retranslating the questionnaires. The major problem here was that - as some of you might know -Arabic has many dialects and even between regions within one country there are sometimes big differences. So it was no surprise that there were a number of serious discussions about the final version of the Arabic questionnaire and especially about expertise of translators. It was quite helpful at this moment to have colleagues, among them Susan, who were able to do a further proof reading. However, the language problem stayed with us and also the question how the tandem partner, which also did translations for us, might influence the choice of people and our social interactions during the more detailed interviews we conducted.

Of special interest for me was how people would react to our survey: Would the Yemenites be willing to participate? Would they be concerned with issues of anonymity? How could we manage to include those who are not fluent readers or are illiterate? It was a relief for me to see how excited people were to participate in the survey. While my German experience was that people usually want to get things done and are rather suspicious about the anonymity of a survey, our Yemenite respondents took their time and discussed the answers at length with their peer-group. Some of them even signed their questionnaire. The problem of illiteracy was tackled by instructing the interviewers to do the interviews face-to-face if there was any sign of hesitation on part of the respondents.

All of the interviewers belonged to the museum's staff. To minimize the probability of interviewer effects, I prepared a training session and a guideline for interviewers that included information on the purpose of the study, its format, the importance of a random sample, interviewer behavior during the survey and in case of refusal and so on. To collect the voices of women as well, we asked for a female interviewer. This discussion took a little time, but finally we managed to convince the director that this was very necessary. However, there still is a gender bias in the Yemenite sample, which is dominated by men. This is not only due to a lack of female interviewers but also some women

refused to participate, handing this task over to their husbands. This might not at least be due to the higher rate of illiteracy among women. In this context, I would like to mention that it was interesting for us to observe how Yemenite families or couples went through the exhibition. Mostly, it was the male members who led the group, made the decision which objects to look at and for how long, reading the labels to their partner or explaining something. Unfortunately, we lack the people who would be able to conduct more systematic observations.

To provide some very basic facts and figures about the survey: We carried out 491 interviews in total, of which 350 were Arabic speaking people. We found out that museum visitors were mostly tourists from outside Sana'a or from abroad; Yemenite adult respondents were younger on average and had less formal education than tourists but are over-average educated compared to the core of Yemen society. T hey were less experienced with museums and knew the museum mainly through family members or friends. They report more often an interest in manual or technical themes than foreigners. Significantly, more Yemenites than foreign tourists reported a great deal of interest in archaeology and the technical processes connected to it, like excavation and restoration. However, when their personal highlights were attached to the different floors of the museum, it turned out that the dioramas in the folklore-section were preferred over the classical presentation of archaeological objects. From my perspective, social desirability played a role in the answering patterns.

In a second step we conducted interviews and did Personal Meaning Maps with eight people form the target audiences to find out about their interests and about their understanding of Yemenite history. We also asked them about their activities besides their work. The goal of this was to find some of the hooks that could be used inside the exhibition to engage visitors. Among our interview partners were three women – one teacher and two representatives of organizations for women with special needs, - and five male respondents – one representative of blind people, a teacher, a tourist guide and two pupils (seventh graders). The outcome of this research was quite interesting. The personal meaning maps turned out to be rather impersonal, revealing that respondents would name very similar – text-book-like - things rather than personal memories. In our view, this might have to do with the interview

situation. All of them were representatives of a certain social group and even though we sat together for tea, to talk with us was a very serious, official situation in which personal statements would have been rather improper. Although we have an initial idea now where to find the engaging hooks, we think that we need to ask more people about the things they connect with in certain contexts, but within a situation that is more familiar to them.

Our research confirmed our assumption that Yemenites' perceptions and their everyday life are greatly influenced by their religious background. Religious activities play an important role in their leisure time and the most important reference group is their family. Historical events and people are strongly connected to their belief. I would like to mention two examples. Most of our interview partners connected the Queen of Sheba to a certain Sure in which she is described as a powerful queen who consulted a board for political discussions. This is interpreted by our Yemenite respondents as a proof that democracy was founded in Yemen. It might therefore be a challenge to communicate that there is no archaeological evidence that the Queen of Sheba was a historical figure. Second, we might face problems when talking about the interreligious co-existence, especially the role of Jews in the history of Yemen since there are major reservations towards this group which becomes obvious by the fact that most of them have left Yemen.

Marib yatakallam – is the name of a collection of poems by Muhammad Uthman which describes the struggle between traditions and modernity in Yemen. There is certainly much more to say about our research and I am very curious about your comments, but we hope that we were able to highlight some of the challenges we were facing and the achievements we made during the first phase of the Marib Museum Project. At the moment, we are waiting for the second phase to begin, but, as the Arabic proverb puts it, "patience is beautiful".

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9. Intercultural Spaces: A European Perspective - Simona Bodo, Independent Researcher

Intercultural dialogue as an end or as a process?

This presentation draws on some reflections I developed in the context of a recent European project in which I was directly involved, funded by the European Commission as part of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme: "MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue".

As the project title suggests, MAP for ID had the main goal of developing the potential of museums as places of intercultural dialogue, and promoting a more active engagement of the communities they serve by exploring and experimenting with more inclusive and multi-vocal approaches to the interpretation and mediation of collections.

To achieve these goals, the following activities were carried out:

- research on how museums approach intercultural dialogue and identification of model case studies;
- development of guidelines for good practice, which would inform the subsequent phase;
- support to thirty pilot projects in the partner countries (Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Spain);
- dissemination of outcomes through the web (www.mapforid.it), conferences, videos and published materials (the final publication may be downloaded from the project website, http://www.mapforid.it/Handbook_MAPforID_EN.pdf).

The first two phases of MAP for ID (i.e. research and development of guidelines for good practice) were informed by a previous research I had undertaken in the framework of a study on national approaches to intercultural dialogue in Europe, carried out by ERICarts Institute on behalf of the European Commission – DG Education and Culture ("Sharing Diversity. National approaches to intercultural dialogue in Europe", www.interculturaldialogue.eu). As a research team expert, my brief was to investigate the different understandings of intercultural dialogue and the resulting policy approaches to its promotion in museums across Europe, focusing on whether and how interaction has (or has not) been promoted between different audiences.

From this overview three main policy models clearly emerged:

- showcasing difference: a "knowledge-oriented" multiculturalism intended as an educational strategy to inform the autochthonous public about "other" cultures which have traditionally been misrepresented or made invisible in our museums;
- integrating "new citizens" within mainstream culture, by helping them to learn more about a country's history, language, values and traditions;
- promoting cultural self-awareness in migrant communities (especially refugees and asylum seekers) through "culturally specific" programming.[7]

As you can see, very different responses, which reflect not only an ambiguity about the very notion of "intercultural dialogue", but also the historical fact that most museums, far from being developed for the sake of cultural diversity or in order to enhance intercultural competence, were created to represent and validate national or local identities, and are now clearly at odds with this new agenda.

On the other hand, it is quite interesting to observe that, as different as they may be, these approaches often have some key features in common:

- they still tend to have a static, essentialist notion of "heritage", which is primarily seen as a "received patrimony" to safeguard and transmit; in the case of "minority" cultures, sometimes this ends up reinforcing stereotypes, rather than challenging them;
- they target communities exclusively in relation to their own cultures and collections, while cross-cultural interaction across all audiences is generally avoided;
- they are generally reluctant to identify tensions and conflicts which may be dealt with in order to change attitudes and behaviours; quite understandably, it is much more reassuring for museums to embrace the rhetoric of "diversity as a richness";

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[7] S. Bodo (2008), «From 'heritage education with intercultural goals' to 'intercultural heritage education': conceptual framework and policy approaches in museums across Europe» (http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/intercultural-dialogue-sector-challenges.php), in ERICarts, *Sharing Diversity. National approaches to intercultural dialogue in Europe*, final report of a study carried out for the European Commission, DG Education and Culture.

- more in general, they conceive intercultural dialogue as a *goal* rather than as an interactive *process*.[8]

This doesn't mean that the approaches I outlined in the ERICarts study are to be discredited and abandoned, as they all have an important role to play – not least, supporting a multicultural base and helping individuals and groups maintaining a vital link with tradition.

What I rather wish to argue is that alongside these prevailing cultural policy responses to the growing diversity of European societies – and ideally as their culmination –, there is also a strong need for strategies and programmes aimed at creating "third spaces", where individuals are finally allowed to cross the boundaries of "belonging", and are offered genuine opportunities for self-representation.

My subsequent involvement in MAP for ID allowed me to further challenge the museum community's understanding of "intercultural dialogue", and outline some possible guidelines for future work towards a more integrative model of diversity, in which objects and audiences are disengaged from the prevailing rationale of "cultural representation".

To make my case, I will start by quickly describing two MAP for ID pilot projects which in my view are particularly interesting.

Case study 1: "Tongue to tongue – a collaborative exhibition" (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the University of Turin; Centre for African Studies, Turin)

For a full description of the project, see http://www.ismu.org/patrimonioeintercultura/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=42

Case study 2: "City Telling" (Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin)

For a full description of the project, see http://www.ismu.org/patrimonioeintercultura/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=45

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[8] Ibid.

Example of the audiovisuals creations by "City Telling" project participants: photographic strip "Double wake up"

"Double wake up", one of the photographic strips produced by project participants under the guidance of Anna Largaiolli, is about the parallel awakening of two girls, Dina and Belen, in two different places of the city. The initial feeling of being *at home*, and then the dreaming gives way to reality. Walking around Turin, and seeing different kinds of spaces – spaces of desire, spaces full of memory, empty spaces... – Dina and Belen talk about their past, present and future.

The strip draws inspiration from an artwork in the Foundation's permanent collections: *"A-Z Living Unit"* by Californian artist Andrea Zittel. This piece of work is about travelling through different cultural contexts and finding out about what is essential for living; project participants spent a lot of time in the room where this work was exhibited, as they knew the idea of "being here and somewhere else at the same time" was crucial for their story and for themselves too. They used it as a set for some of the photographs (where you can see Dina and Belen wearing the same red dress), but first and foremost the artwork was a starting point for sharing thoughts and reflections.

For the photographic strip *"Double wake up"*, see

http://www.ismu.org/patrimonioeintercultura/index.php?page=video-show.php&id=12

Some guidelines for future work towards a more integrative model of "diversity"

Although these two projects are very different in terms of the institutional context from which they originated, their target groups, the typology of collections around which they were developed (historical vs. contemporary heritage), etc., they allow us to outline some possible guidelines for museums aiming to genuinely become "intercultural spaces".

The first one concerns what we could call the integration of a traditional, essentialist *notion of "heritage"* with a dialogical one, as shown particularly well by the "Tongue to Tongue" exhibition:

- the "essentialist paradigm" sees heritage as the "neutral remains of the past", something static, consolidated, 'of outstanding universal value' (as defined in the 1972 Unesco World Heritage Convention); most crucially,

this paradigm sees heritage as something that cannot be acquired by someone during a lifetime, but only inherited, fixed at birth;

- the "dialogical (or dynamic) paradigm" understands heritage as a set of cultural objects – both material and immaterial – that can and should not only be preserved and transmitted, but also re-negotiated, re-constructed in their meanings, made available for all to share in a common space of social interaction.

The second guideline concerns *the notion of "intercultural dialogue"*, no longer to be seen as a goal, but rather as an interactive process:

- actively engaging audiences (both "autochthonous" and with an immigrant background), which is transformative on both sides, and in which all are equal participants;
- fostering reciprocity between the museum and its diverse audiences, by bringing into dialogue their different perspectives, experiences and knowledge bases.

In fact, if we turn more in general to those MAP for ID pilot projects which focused on promoting interaction not so much between different groups, as between project participants and the museum itself, their goals include to 'conceive the museum not only as a cultural space for interaction, but also as an institution encouraging participatory and cooperative planning;' to facilitate new citizens 'to become chief protagonists in the reinterpretation of museum collections;' to 'develop new perspectives on the local cultural heritage and collections' (see pilot projects' self-evaluation forms).

Among the issues brought up by this group of case studies, project ownership emerges with particular strength: to what degree were participants actually consulted and engaged in the planning and implementation processes? Did the museum truly share its authority to explore new approaches to the interpretation and mediation of collections, and welcome multiple visions and perspectives? As the curator Cajsa Lagerkvist observes, 'empowerment for a disempowered community means demanding power in the arena where you are invited to act.'[9]

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[9] C. Lagerkvist (2006), «Empowerment and anger. Learning how to share ownership of the museum», in *Museum & Society*, July 2006, 4(2), pp. 52-68 (http://www.le.ac.uk/museumstudies/m&s/issue%2011/lagerkvist.pdf).

Which leads us to consider another crucial issue, regarding the *modalities of dialogue*.

Although "Tongue to Tongue" and "City Telling" tell a different story, many museums involved in MAP for ID still opted for a "top-down" approach, in which objectives and strategies were not corroborated by an in-depth reflection on the participants' perceptions, expectations or life experiences. This mirrors a persisting tendency in at least part of the museum and heritage community to underestimate the importance of building projects which are rooted in communities' needs, rather than driven by curatorial and institutional interests, or transitory political/social agendas.

When we ask ourselves which strategies can museums adopt in order to effectively engage participants, the point is not so much to draw up *a list* of possible methodologies and tools – which, as exemplified in MAP for ID's pilot projects, are extremely diverse, e.g. the use of generative themes, storytelling, the interaction with artists to develop new perspectives on the notions of heritage or identity, and to experiment with unconventional communication and relational methodologies, mediated through contemporary art languages, the use of theatre techniques to overcome linguistic barriers and facilitate or provoke interaction between participants.

What we are rather concerned with is to reflect on the *reasons* for these choices.

Three significant examples:

- Is the use of a thematic approach to collections intended as an alternative way of transmitting content or specialist knowledge, or is it aimed at 'helping participants develop a critical understanding of the reality surrounding them, and increase their ability to communicate their own experience of the world'?

- Is autobiographical storytelling encouraged as a one-off chance for self-expression, or is it intended as 'an opportunity to start a reflection on the role of the museum and to lay down foundations for continued dialogue and cooperation'?

- Is the evocative and emotional power of objects emphasised to strengthen group allegiances or to disengage objects and audiences from the prevailing rationale of "cultural representation"?

Underlying all the issues brought up so far, there is a fundamental question: by which policy models were MAP for ID pilot projects inspired? The relationship (or dialogue) a museum is willing to establish *with* and *between* its audiences is in fact not only a strategic and methodological choice, but first and foremost a political one.

In fact, one of the key results emerging from the overview of MAP for ID pilot projects is the difficulty still met by many museums to go beyond the traditional model of *access development*. Widely adopted throughout Europe since the post-war period, this model is rooted in the idea of the "democratisation of culture." Its goal is to improve access to a dominant culture which is held as universally valuable, by identifying barriers and underrepresented groups, and developing programmes and activities aimed at promoting their participation. In this model, the museum "opens its doors" to new audiences, so that they may also benefit from a given heritage which, until that moment, they were precluded from sharing or understanding.

This process, by and large a one-way, linear trajectory, clearly emerges from objectives set for the pilot projects such as: to 'hand over the baton of local history;' to 'help new citizens see themselves reflected in the evidence of the local past;' to 'rethink our model of knowledge transmission to an adult audience which is new to these issues.'

However, if we accept the definition of intercultural dialogue underlying MAP for ID – as we saw earlier on, a transformative process for both the museum's diverse audiences and the institution itself – it becomes clear that there is yet another, demanding political choice museums have to make: the choice of *cultural inclusion*. In this model, the emphasis is placed on the genuine engagement of individuals not only as audiences, but also as creators, producers and decision-makers taking an active part in the choices of the institution as well as in the negotiation and creation of meaning. As museum anthropologist Cristina Kreps observes, 'achieving interculturality is a step by step process that may help, with every project and every action, to not only

transform our societies, but also our museums and the nature of public culture."[10]

This can only be achieved if the museum is able to evolve into an institution which is less self-referential, more rooted in the life of the surrounding community, and more open to exploring collaborative modes of operation, to sharing strategies and objectives, to including new voices, skills and narratives. Projects like "Tongue to Tongue" and "City Telling" have taken important steps in that direction.

10. Ten years on - John Vincent, Founder of 'The Network' an organisation tackling social inclusion

Edited version of the presentation to the conference, "From the margins to the core", Thursday 25 March 2010

Introduction

The Network – tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries was formed in 1999; it currently has 136 organisational members and 19 individual members. Its three key areas of work are:

- Advocacy – particularly the role that museums, libraries, archives and the cultural & heritage sector play in social justice
- Information-sharing, via a monthly newsletter, ebulletins, and email lists
- Highlighting and promoting good practice, particularly via regular open and in-house training courses.

This is a screen-grab of our website[11], to show a sample of the wide range of resources available:

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[10] C. Kreps (2009), «Foreword», in S. Bodo, K. Gibbs, M. Sani (eds.), *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue: selected practices from Europe*, published by MAP for ID partners, http://www.mapforid.it/Handbook_MAPforID_EN.pdf

[11] www.seapn.org.uk.

In case you were not aware, 2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion[12] (see the logo).

This paper is going to look briefly at the situation in 1997; the range of initiatives that were developed in response; and then, using libraries as a mirror, examine how these initiatives have fared.

The situation in 1997

In the period around 1997, work on equality and diversity was very patchy – and this was clearly affected by the political mood of the time. Amongst the major issues were:

- 'The Market' – which affected how people perceived the role of cultural and heritage provision
- Managerialism – particularly the focus on process (such as obtaining

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[12] See: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/european-year-2010/.

cheque-books so that service managers could pay their own bills)

- 'Political Correctness' – the belittling of work to examine language, policies, and so on.

The incoming Labour Government introduced social exclusion as a policy concept, and set up the Social Exclusion Unit; this commissioned Policy Action Teams to review provision in England (and the UK), and they produced 18 reports, focusing on key social policy issues.

However, there was no real focus on museums, libraries, archives or the cultural and heritage sector, but the Government was still insistent that we established our role in tackling social exclusion.

A slew of reports

In order to focus on the main issues, a number of reports was produced, which went on to have a major impact on the sector. These included:

- *Policy Action Team 10: Arts and Sport*[13]
- *Libraries for all: social inclusion in public libraries – policy guidance for local authorities in England*[14]
- *Centres for social change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for all*[15]
- *Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for all: co-operating across the Sectors to tackle social exclusion*[16]
- *Museums and social inclusion, the GLLAM report*[17]

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[13] Policy Action Team 10. *Policy Action Team 10: a report to the Social Exclusion Unit.* London: DCMS, c1999.
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/pat_report_10.pdf.

[14] *Libraries for all: social inclusion in public libraries - policy guidance for local authorities in England.* London: DCMS, 1999.

[15] *Centres for social change: museums, galleries and archives for all – policy guidance on social inclusion for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England.* London: DCMS, 2000. http://www.culture.gov.uk/pdf/social_change_1-11.pdf.

[16] *Libraries, museums, galleries and archives for all: co-operating across the sectors to tackle social exclusion.* London: DCMS, 2001.
http://www.culture.gov.uk/PDF/libraries_archives_for_all.pdf.

- *A netful of jewels: new museums in the learning age …* [18]

What happened next?

So – the starting point was broadly the same for museums, libraries and archives: what happened next? I want to look at the trajectory that libraries followed – and then investigate this in relation to museums – what challenges are there for us?

The research in the reports mentioned above showed that work on tackling social exclusion was very patchy – there was some superb work, but almost none embedded into the fabric of the organisation.

From around 2000, libraries had:

- Leadership/support/encouragement, eg from DCMS and the devolved administrations, MLA
- Funding, especially external, eg Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Training, eg from MLA, Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, The Network
- There was policy development at national, regional and local levels, and this was also taken up by some senior managers
- Some mainstreaming of work to tackle social exclusion
- Large amounts of project work
- A very few library authorities looked at re-directing funding (to prioritise inclusion work)
- All that said, there were some exemplar services (such as Leeds, Southend, Manchester).

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[17] Group for Larger Local Authority Museums. *Museums and social inclusion, the GLLAM report.* Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000.
http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/research/Reports/GLLAM.pdf.
[18] *A netful of jewels: new museums in the learning age – a report from the National Museum Directors' conference.* London: NMDC, 1999.
http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/media/documents/publications/netful_of_jewels.pdf.

However, at the same time:

- Some managers saw this work as political and nothing to do with them
- Many libraries did not embed this work at all, seeing it as the responsibility of a keen member of staff or small group (with the inevitable consequences when s/he left)
- Despite promises to the contrary, many libraries used the external funding whilst it was there but never mainstreamed the work; as soon as the external funding stopped, so did the work (a sad example is the range of work with looked-after children, much of which ceased once external funding finished)
- Libraries generally have not made the case for social justice being part of their work – hence the DCMS Review findings[19] which do not have a huge social justice focus
- Libraries are generally not knitted into the work of other departments and agencies (you still here people saying: "that's not our job", "I'm a librarian!") – or library staff assume that the library is the centre of the universe and that other agencies will naturally come to them!!
- Many staff are highly committed and effective – but recent research[20] showed continuation of appalling attitudes, especially towards particular socially excluded groups eg refugees, Travellers, LGBTs.
- We have moved on but is it enough? I carry out LGBT awareness training, and things have moved on – from the person who sat defiant with crossed arms, saying "it's all your fault – if people like you kept quiet, there wouldn't be a problem" to the more current approach: "I don't need this training, my hairdresser's gay!"
- This is amusing, but it has a serious side. Museums do need to reconsider their social justice role (recently, I was herded into a corner in a regional museum, because I had arrived there to run a course, carrying a closed

[19] *The modernisation review of public libraries: a policy statement.* London: DCMS, 2010. http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultation_responses/modernisation_review_public_libraries.pdf.

[20] Kerry Wilson and Briony Birdi. *The right 'man' for the job? The role of empathy in community librarianship.* Sheffield: Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, 2008. http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/07/85/14/AHRC%202006-8%20final%20report%2004.08.pdf.

cup of hot chocolate – that is not an appropriate, welcoming response!)

- People now think social justice is "old hat" and are off looking for the next thing (in libraries, this is technological ...)

Does this sound at all familiar?

Challenges

What we need, therefore, are some challenges; these include:

- I'm thrilled to be at a Conference that talks about "core" – I think social justice should be at our core! If it is, then everything flows from that:

  o Leadership
  o Policies & Priorities
  o Funding
  o Staff recruitment & training.

- Staff need to be on board
- We need to embed this work & ensure that politicians and other key players see/understand our role
- We need to be part of and work with our communities, not be seen as a place apart

On a personal note, this is more than an academic exercise for me. I may have access to things because I am a white man, but I am also fed up with being marginalised as a gay man, and watching as I fade to the margins in people's perception once I tell them I'm gay. This work is part of my struggle!

I fear that, for libraries, we haven't moved from the margins yet – can we make it different in museums?

John Vincent - Networker, The Network – tackling social exclusion ... March 2010

11.   Contemporary Art and Human Rights - Victoria Hollows , Museum Manager, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow

"Shriek when the pain hits during interrogation. Reach into the dark ages to find a sound that is liquid horror, a sound of the brink where man stops and the beast and nameless cruel forces begin. Scream when your life is threatened. Form a noise so true that your tormentor recognizes it as a voice that lives in his own throat.
The true sound tells him that he cuts his flesh when he cuts yours, that he cannot thrive after he tortures you. Scream that he destroys all kindness in you and blackens every vision you could have shown him."

What you have just read, and heard, is a piece by the prominent American artist Jenny Holzer. For more than 30 years, Jenny Holzer has presented her astringent ideas, arguments and sorrows in public places and international exhibitions. Her medium, whether formulated as a t-shirt, a poster, or an LED sign, is always writing. *Shriek When the Pain Hits*, is from Holzer's Inflammatory Essays series, and featured in Sanctuary - the first Contemporary Art and Human Rights programme at the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow in 2003.

Since 2001 the Gallery of Modern Art (which we locally refer to as GoMA) has developed a distinctive, audience centred programme which expresses Glasgow's commitment to artistic quality, to public engagement and to social justice and equality. I've been asked today to talk about the practice of these combined exhibition, outreach and education programmes; which have all come under the umbrella title of Contemporary Art and Human Rights.

My goal is to give you a brief idea of what is involved and what the impact has been for the gallery, its staff, the public, and the artists we work with, by looking at five key points. But first, let me give you some context about this work to which I am going to refer. There have been four programmes to date. All share the strap line *Contemporary Art and Human Rights.*

And these are: *Sanctuary* in 2003, looking at issues of asylum seekers and refugees for which GoMA was short listed for the Gulbenkian Museum of the Year Award. The second programme was *Rule of Thumb* in 2005, exploring the issue of violence against women. The third was *Blind Faith* in 2007, which focused on sectarianism in Glasgow and Scotland. And the fourth was *sh(OUT)* in 2009, looking at the art and culture of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people.

So how are these programmes structured? The programme we evolved for Sanctuary encompassed a development year in 2002; a large-scale six-month show for the gallery's main summer exhibition in 2003; and an 18-month outreach and education programme spanning 2002-2004. This blueprint was quickly supported by the Council and soon after, the intention to tackle a different issue, on a biennial basis, was established. In essence, not only was this responding directly to key social priorities for the Council, but it also embraced priorities within the museums service to reinforce their role as an agent for social change, where on an individual level we looked to enhance self esteem, confidence and creativity, and on a wider level to promote tolerance, intercommunity respect and a challenging of stereotypes.

So what has our experience been? The first point to make is that

1) **Undertaking these programmes has provided us with our <u>best</u> opportunities:**
There's no doubt that when the issue of social inclusion is discussed, there can be a lot of discomfort and confusion; and in practice perhaps well meaning but oversimplified approaches, or worst of all, simply a tokenistic effort. At GoMA, we certainly had our own concerns about what we were asked to take on. In all honesty I'll admit that, initially, we had our doubts about working on such openly political and sensitive subjects. But what became apparent about the importance of using GoMA was the medium of contemporary art itself: artists <u>naturally</u> think out of the box, working in a creative way to bring something more powerfully to our attention.

The media face is what most people experience when it comes to human rights abuses. But artists and cultural institutions have the freedom to go beyond the sound-bite, digging deeper to focus on the human issues of today, 'earthing'

ideas and realities that can make us consider them afresh or, perhaps, crucially, even for the first time. And we have also discovered that we've been able to attract a broader audience who, being interested or intrigued by the subject, have found it refreshing to consider the issues creatively.

And despite our initial concerns, we've been able to attract high-profile, international artists, whose passion for these subjects is a strength of their work. Jenny Holzer, as we have seen. Other examples include artists such as Mark Wallinger, Hans Haacke, Louise Bourgeois, Felix Gonzales Torres, Barbara Kruger. But certainly without these contemporary art and human rights programmes we would not have had the pull, or the finances, to be able to show such high calibre work to the public.

Barbara Kruger was approached in acknowledgement of her international success as an artist who places social and political issues at the forefront of her work. The issue of Violence Against Women was what attracted Kruger to work with us, and as a result, she exhibited for the first time in Scotland utilising the walls, floor, columns and skylight windows of the gallery using trademark text and image work to 'speak' directly to perpetrators, victims and survivors of abuse.

A startling piece of work, the public feedback was moving. Below are a few examples of the comments we received from visitors to the exhibition:

"The power of art must be harnessed for change and there is so much power in this exhibition. If only all men got to see it and just as importantly women, as its power may at least be used by them to change their circumstances. Thank you – I am deeply moved."

"Something so powerful and strong about this exhibition, it has made me open up my eyes to what my ex-boyfriend has put me through."

"Speaking as a man I thought the exhibition was excellent in highlighting violence to women and zero tolerance. Also how many noticed the windows above, show how much is around us we choose not to see. Well done."

On a local level, these international associations also encouraged more Glasgow based artists to work with us, bringing yet another pool of creative talent to the programmes. For example Roddy Buchanan, who for the first time brought loyalist and republican flute bands to the same stage in his film *Here I Am* for Blind Faith – which he describes as an expanded self portrait and a subject on which he could really only present as being 'an expert in myself and being as honest as possible about my own experience' – certainly a strong theme throughout all our programmes. Another example being Anthony Schrag who, working on Blind Faith as artist in residence, wanted to push the boundaries of the gallery as institution, on one occasion hijacking several members of the curatorial team, senior management and our advisory board forcing them to have discussions about our work and decision making processes within the very communities we aimed to reach.

So one of the biggest discoveries for us, despite our own initial scepticism, has been to acknowledge that, rather than being controlled by these programmes, as we had initially feared, they have provided us with our best curatorial opportunities. But, there is also now an overarching support and recognition that these programmes do deliver, an ethos now absorbed into GoMA's core values. As one member of staff said: *"It sounds corny but you can see that it does raise awareness to the issues, seeing that we were helping people, the feedback from press, visitors' comments, the thanks from Advisory Board members, their feedback from the women involved – all that changed my mind...It's not just lip service, not just about being politically correct."* These are important changes in both professional and personal attitude, which affect the strength of programme delivery. And whilst there <u>is</u> an emotional impact from this work, as we have seen this hasn't meant that focus has come off the fine art aspect of the job.

And I'd like to demonstrate that these values have become embedded in our work away from such large scale programmes, a good example being collection development. GoMA has been fortunate to receive £1million from Art Fund International for the purchase of contemporary international art over a 5 year period. The criteria for these purchases explicitly include work that reflects socially engaged practice and work with cultural or political influences such as social justice. All our purchases to date have an undercurrent of social or

political tension, and the most recent is our acquisition of this Holzer LED – Purple Blue, Arno, Erlauf – due to arrive in just two weeks' time.

2) Community work doesn't mean mosaics

As previously mentioned, we've found, very clearly, that we now have the capacity to attract key international artists to exhibit in Scotland for the first time ever. There's no question of compromising on quality, which can often be the first thought in some quarters when considering anything that is linked to words like 'social', 'community', or 'access'. The work stands independently, regardless of the overall programme identity. And this is essential in achieving our aims.

There is sometimes a feeling in the art world, or the museum sector, that 'community' equals something like 'mosaics' – work that has been so diluted by a 'p.c.' issue that it can't be seen as a quality work in its own right. We believe we challenge this notion. And importantly, to those visitors who may be coming because of the subject and not for the artist's name, we are then able to show them what high calibre contemporary art looks like, what it can say, and what it can make you feel.

Imagine someone experiencing Barbara Kruger's work for the first time, perhaps being in an installation for the first time, physically involved with the work, with this message leaping off the walls.

As well as working with very well known artists, equally important to the quality of the programme is the engagement process between participants from our targeted groups and contemporary visual artists who work in collaboration to create new work to give participants a voice and a profile within a city centre venue, to raise greater awareness with the general public about the issues and to provide opportunities for the participants' personal self-development.

Within a safe support structure, and with no predetermined outcomes, participants collaborate with the artists and develop work through their growing relationships. Each group develops its own way of working - workshops, events, consultations and research being among the collaborative activities.

"I enjoyed the company. The feeling of sharing of life. I came to the workshop with health problems. It took my mind off them".
  – Participant

"I thought I was weird.....I thought I was the only one going through this...the films show that lots of people are in the same situation...they help you move forward and give other people confidence"
  – participant

"The artists worked extremely effectively with learners and users, many of whom are women in our priority groups and significant outcomes have been recorded formally and anecdotally of their impact"
  – Partner organization

"Inspirational, creative and highly fulfilling project which ground-breakingly gave a voice to the most excluded citizens in Glasgow (women involved in prostitution)"
  – Partner organization

Works from these projects are displayed at GoMA …. and for those that shudder at the thought of putting on a community exhibition, the strength and creativity of the work at the centre of the project have been recognised by artists, participants, visitors and press alike. As one commentator wrote of work displayed during Rule of Thumb: *"...while worth supporting, most community art projects are complex phenomena to interpret, their function being more therapeutic than aesthetic. But this show is an exception. It is unmissable."*

3) Signing up – teamwork is essential

Who delivers these programmes? Well, essentially there are layers of overlapping teams, but at the centre is GoMA's core staff where close, integrated teamwork is essential: in delivering this kind of programme there are no false boundaries or hierarchies, what is imperative is that everyone works collectively to ensure a balanced and strategic approach and that there is intellectual integration across all activities.

We are also reliant on, and are supported by, an Advisory Board made up of a number of partners from relevant organisations and colleagues. We have also developed a network of skilled artists with experience of collaborative work as well as a number of other key contacts enabling us to increase the capacity of our own, essentially small, team to deliver a programme of some considerable size across the city.

And it is important to make clear that at GoMA we are experienced in the field of delivering exhibitions and participatory arts programmes, but not in the issues that these subjects involve. Therefore the Advisory Board partnerships and those developed through the outreach programmes are critical to the success of exploring these issues with integrity and sensitivity.

And one of the key things to establish at the outset is your expertise. For us this was the display of contemporary art, the delivery of exhibitions, education and outreach projects, working with artists. This is crucial in two key ways: one in that it allays staff fears that they will not be expected to take on the role of a social worker, and two because it also recognises your limitations and helps to identify the organisations you would like to partner with to help fill the gaps in expertise regarding the subject area.

The scope of these programmes also means we are working with a huge range of good quality freelance artists – much more so than usual. The contact with these artists and the variety of art forms they use, have helped to develop and broaden the skills of our learning assistants, which can be banked for future projects. The outreach programme also aims to work in a capacity building manner with our partner organisations, to increase their skills and knowledge, as well as our own, and also to enable the sharing of resources.

This work, although challenging, has also been tremendously rewarding to everyone involved in it in terms of developing new skills and experience, working with new artists and helping to build teamwork through these joint processes. An example of some of my staff comments include:
"the social justice programmes – that is when we function best, doing what we want to do, working together as a team, there's a tremendous effort by everyone to make it happen."

"It's not just an educational programme about the issue – it's a massive programme that the whole building has built into and this is clear to visitors. Everything carries the same weight."

"The social conscience of the gallery is not just left to Learning and Access."

4) It is emotionally demanding

These programmes are built on complex social dynamics. It's not simple, it's not a case of simply 'do this, do that'. Anyone engaging with an agenda of social inclusion must be aware of the pitfalls and understand what and who you are engaging with. No one comes with the same agenda and these can be extremely challenging to manage, even with the support previously outlined. Nothing is foolproof and for every time you get it right, there will also be times when you don't.

Remember that this work is essentially dealing with people's lives. And, for example, when a programme is at risk, then you really realise what you've got into. A year away from the main Rule of Thumb programme, the funding for the central year's activities was in doubt. At this point we had already been working with the advisory board for a year, and the lead in project *elbowroom* was underway, relationships had been established, built on trust, engagement generated between individuals – some of whom were the most vulnerable and excluded we have ever worked with. My staff and I have never felt the responsibility of this work as much as we did then, and we've never forgotten it.

We have also recognised that staff and the artists we engage to work with us on the outreach aspects of these programmes are working and developing their practice in very emotionally demanding contexts, and we have had to put in place a high level of appropriate support. In no case was this need more evident than during our Rule of Thumb programme when artists engaged with women and young people who had been subjected to violence, rape and sexual abuse.

An important consideration in providing this level of supervision and support is the additional costs that this entails, and our budgets for outreach projects have increased significantly from our first programme, in recognition of the additional time we require artists to commit to research, meetings, supervision and the

communication process, over and above their actual contact time with participants.

As well as gallery visitors and the outreach project participants, we also target community groups so that those with particular experience of the related issues can access the exhibition and workshops in a way that is tailored specifically to their needs. By doing this we reach another layer of new and diverse groups and are able to introduce them to GoMA and its work. But there is a heavy responsibility here also - contact with any visiting group beforehand is essential to explain the content: that it may be upsetting, what would happen, what would be discussed, the kind of artwork involved, and critically that support workers must also attend.

Specific training and briefings are also provided for every member of staff within the building. Not only to ensure that everyone shares an understanding of why these issues are the focus of these large-scale programmes of work, but also to help equip them for the reactions of visitors. For example, during the Sanctuary exhibition which invoked very strong personal reflection and contemplation, whilst our Visitor Assistants had hardly anyone wanting to engage with them in the exhibition space itself, it was our retail staff who actually found themselves unexpectedly at the receiving end of many different kinds of emotions which had begun to process themselves by the time visitors had made their way to the shop at the end of their visit.

5) Understanding the preparation time required

The previous four points have touched on some of the complexities of running social justice programmes. And in considering and understanding what you take on when genuinely engaging with contemporary social issues, these complexities clearly suggest that a great deal of preparation time is required.

Understanding and empathising with participants on projects is not quick, and this process as I have indicated, has been developed as the programmes have progressed. Time is needed to be able to have a relationship of trust between the gallery, artist, participant and community organisations, to research the issues involved, research potential artists, develop lead-in projects. For the recruitment of artists, teacher placements. Meetings amongst staff, the advisory board and

colleagues across the wider networks, continuously building and supporting the relationships with all those involved. Training time for everyone. Not to mention the time consuming nature of funding applications. And, importantly, time built in to allow for genuine flexibility in terms of the possible and unknown outcomes of the outreach programmes, so that we can respond directly to the needs of participants rather than shoe-horn them in to any fixed agenda.

And before I finish, what about those other critical issues that we all have to be concerned with –

Evaluation and sustainability?

It can be difficult to evaluate every aspect of this kind of work in ways that we might normally expect in terms of individual feedback and tracking. Remember that these vulnerable participants and groups are often in crisis situations, transient groups that can make it difficult to track the impact of our work as expectations often demand. However, we document and evaluate everything that we can, usually encompassing:

- Focus groups and interviews with artists, participants and the wider art community.
- Focus groups and interviews with museums staff
- Interviews with members of the advisory board
- Visitor surveys during the central exhibitions
- Analysis of exhibition comments books and press coverage of all aspects of the programme.
- Independent evaluation reports
- Self-reflective displays

Some of the benefits of these programmes seem on the surface to be quite simple, but in fact can be incredibly affective and powerful – for instance during the Sanctuary programme, in encouraging people to attend drop-in centres for the arts activity, they began to access other services like health care and banking provided at the same centres. Men, who often remain very distant within the new communities, began to socialise and contribute as a group; young mothers who are typically amongst the most isolated began to meet regularly, and through making friends began to learn new languages.

As part of sh(OUT) one young gay person who made a short film described its subsequent exhibition as offering the last chance to communicate with his father. Having viewed it, his father had finally 'got to grips with it' and had told his son "I am proud of you". He then poignantly went on to ask "why am I not in your story?"

Some groups will visit GoMA or another Glasgow Museum venue and often highlight this as the best aspect of any project, and Glasgow Museums as a whole is working to sustain such access through its network of Learning & Access Teams as well as the wider network of the city's Community Action Teams. We also know that some of the organisations we worked with, have continued to develop art projects through this network of contacts and so we have been able to act as an agency initially providing a service which didn't exist, and then also as a catalyst for this work to continue.

And one final artwork to show you before I conclude: here we see a couple resting with toes entwined. A small gesture, another very powerful statement. Patricia Cronin's *Memorial to a Marriage* which was displayed at GoMA during sh(OUT) is a silent and enduring reminder of what we long for when all else is stripped away. In our happiest times, our darkest hours, or simply at the end of yet another busy day. To be held by someone who loves you, to feel safe, to feel at home, eyes closed, restful, comfortable. Expressed deeply by entwining toes, an almost subconscious gesture of connection. Yet this bronze portrait of Cronin and her partner Deborah Kass, has a darker side. It is the model used to create this beautiful white carrera marble grave marker, already identifying the site where Cronin and Kass will one day lie together for eternity. It is a protest piece. Living in New York State, Cronin and Kass as lesbians do not have the right to have their relationship publicly acknowledged through marriage. What they are denied in life, they will have in death.

Our work, as with all our contemporary art and human rights programmes, is an important, public step forward in promoting acceptance and understanding. Perhaps a small step amongst the work of many others, yet the potency of contemporary art to challenge attitudes and to encourage debate has been well

documented. A small step it might be, but sometimes the smallest gesture can be amongst the most powerful.

Break Out Session: Social Justice

12.   Röhsska Loves All!: Work with Roma communities, LGBTQ & religious diversity - Ted Hesselbom, Museum Director & Annette Prior, Head of Action Department, The Röhsska Museet, Sweden

Röhsska Museum

The Röhsska Museum is an "arts and crafts" museum. Today we call ourselves a fashion, design and "arts and crafts" museum. The name Röhss comes from two brothers who generously donated money towards funding the building of the museum. Early on the museum was given to the city of Göteborg and Röhsska and was funded and run by the city council. 1913- 1916 the Museum was opened in a spirit of educating the public in taste.

The rich bourgeoisie, many from England and Scotland, donated money to the museum. Some of it was used to finance trips overseas sending men to buy arts and crafts from across the world, from countries which today we call China, Japan, Iran, Iraq, Serbia, Croatia etc

The items which were bought were to represent good taste to the Swedish citizens. In fact many of our collections come from areas which are the same countries that most of the minorities living in Göteborg today come from.

This gives us fantastic possibilities of using our broad collections to work with diversity. For example for reaching Asian, Arabic and Balkan minorities.

During the turn of the last century museums, national dresses, national hymns were created to produce a national identity, which were not interested in diversity. The myth of the Swedish blonde was created at this time.

The clearest example of this being a myth is the national romantic painting "Carl XII´s mourning procession" which was redone so that all the soldiers were blond. On the original version all the men had dark hair.

We tell our young visitors, our young multicultural visitors, about the early need to find the most beautiful items and that many of these come from countries which some of us derive from. For example, what was created in Iran a long time ago, has now for the last 100 years, been a part of our Swedish heritage and used in research and studies during this time trying to describe good taste.

Today we don´t teach "good taste", but we use our museum´s history as a taste educational institution, to demonstrate diversity as an obvious part of our society today.

Gay, Roma and Religious Groups

Today we have a clear diversity and social inclusion mission and we are trying to live up to this by reaching different target groups. We have chosen a few groups and built up an annual event, exhibition or activity with; LGTB, Roma minority and religious groups.

LGBT
When I started working at the Museum 2007, Göteborg had Sweden´s highest statistics in hate crimes towards gay people. Today the statistics are a little better. Göteborg has an annual LGBT festival which was started by 5 different cultural institutions, one of them was The Röhsska Museum.

Roma
One of Sweden's most important silver smiths last century was Rosa Taikon. We have had jewellery made by her in our collections for a long time. We decided to honor her with a large exhibition two years ago, presenting these pieces together with new donations of her works. She is from The Roma community and has worked for their rights during her whole life.

We have become aware that Roma are discriminated in many parts of our well developed Europe today. In some countries even politicians make racist comments about the Roma community.

Thanks to a large and now increased collection of Rosa Taikon´s silver jewellery, the Museum now has the tradition to celebrate The International Roma Day at Röhsska Museum every year. The Roma language is one of the official minority languages in Sweden together with Finnish, Tornedals Finnish, Sami and a northern Swedish dialect.

Religious groups

The Borderland x 2

In collaboration with Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities in Göteborg we created an exhibition based on 13 stories shared by all three religions. The stories were illustrated by the communities working together. We at the museum supplemented the exhibition with items from our collections from all three religions.

Of course most of our collections are from Christian ceremonies, as Sweden has a long history with a Christian state Church. In spite of this we have a lot of Muslim items in our collection but we had only one Jewish item, a Torah crown. All three communities arranged a lot of guided tours at the exhibition and we welcomed a large number of first time visitors. We, therefore, had the opportunity to share with them our collection and tell them about their important part in it.

This year we celebrated Now Rooz, the Persian New Year for the first time with an exhibition and programmes. This may be the start of a new tradition at Röhsska.

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12. 1   Introduction

Wonderful to see you all and we are delighted so many of you chose to join us. We hope to give you a workshop and hour which will be interesting, fun and relevant to you. In this room there is so much experience, amazing work going on and we look forward to learning from each other.

Ted and I have discussed many times the red thread in our presentation, **how we want to create more understanding and insight into the value of diversity in both our collections and society.** We see this afternoon as a time to share experiences, listen to what you think and discuss together. It is very special for us to be here considering that the V & A is our mother museum, a role model for creating The Röhsska Museum.

The Röhsska Museum is the only one of its kind in Sweden. Göteborg has about 700 000 inhabitants and is the second largest city in Sweden. Its nick name is "Little London" and is often compared with London. The museum is a meeting place and ideally situated in the centre of town. It has a unique collection of over 50,000 objects and what we wish to share with you this afternoon is how we have tried in different ways to show our amazing collection in new ways.

Our mission has been to expand our public, initiate a wide range of collaborations for involving more people. The museum has the objects and the goals are set for us by the politicians so it is left for us to communicate with our audience.

The Museum has a unique collection of over 50 000 objects and what we wish to share with you this afternoon is how we have tried in different ways to show our amazing collection in new ways.

We have seen new possibilities and tried to make our collections touch, involve and engage new groups. We are reaching out to new target groups in society, in a diverse and contemporary Sweden today.

We wish to present 3 projects and the workshop part will involve you discussing in groups one of these projects. Then each group will present a summary of their discussion to the whole group.

The red thread of this afternoon is how we are trying to communicate our collections at the museum to new target groups, how we want to create more understanding and insight into the value of diversity in both our collections and society.

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12.2   Workshop Group 1 - Party place or museum?

LGBT festival- Göteborg

This is a festival initiated in 2007 by 5 cultural institutions in Göteborg.
The City Theatre, The Röhsska Museum, Pustervik Theatre, The Museum of World Culture
Blå Stället – Cultural Institution
It´s goal has been to establish the LGBT festival in the mind of all people in Göteborg, as an obvious part of Göteborgs festivals and events. The festival has created interest in LGBT issues and culture for all people in Göteborg and people interested especially in these issues.
It has grown and now has many groups and organizations participating in different ways.
The Röhsska Museum has had a wide range of activities during the 4 day festival:

2007   Rainbow Brunch
          Exhibition – lesbian contemplation from WW2
          Exhibition - My Favourite Gay
2008   No Drugs party (from 16 yrs)
          Exhibition

Rainbow Brunch

Guided tours – gender crossing through the collections

2009   Exhibition

Brunch

Fashion show

Guided tours – gender crossing through the collections

2010   Queen´s Tea Party

Rainbow Brunch

Workshops

Guided tours – gender crossing through the collections

Situation:

A lot of people have criticized the way the museum has been working with new target groups. The Director of Culture Affairs in Göteborg received a phone call with complaints about the rainbow flag hanging outside the Museum. The Museum received complaints about the sound, too loud music in our backyard. Many neighbors did not think this was appropriate for a museum. We were sponsored with gin and champagne and treated the visitors to dry martinis. The papers wrote articles questioning what the tax payer's money is being used for?

How would you deal with these questions?

12.3   Workshop Group 2 - Prejudice?

The International Roma Day – 8th April

One of Sweden's most important silversmiths this century is Rosa Taikon. We have had jewelry made by her in our collections for a long time. A large exhibition presenting Rosa's work was shown at The Museum. She is 83 years old and has actively worked for Romani people's rights throughout her life. During her exhibition in 2008 the Museum celebrated for the first time International Roma Day. We had guided tours of Rosa's exhibition in Romani, hung out Romani flags in front of the Museum, had performances of Romani music and dancing and even several traditional Romani cakes. There is now a

tradition at The Röhsska Museum to celebrate International Roma Day. In 2009 we hung out the Romani flags, showed installations concerning Roma issues and had traditional food and music.

We also arranged a seminar concerning Romani rights in Europe. Several EU politicians, representatives from OSCE High Commissioner on Minorities, Commissioner for Human Rights, Soraya Post, a teacher at Agnesberg - the Roma Folk High School and member of the Swedish Delegation for Roma issues participated. Agnesberg - The Roma Folk High School is the only Romani Folk High school in Sweden and possibly in Europe.
This was a collaboration between The Living History Forum, The Delegation for Roma Issues, Agnesbergs Folk High School and The Organisation Svarta Safirer.

Situation

We presented our collaboration with Roma groups in the city and our wish to invite as many Roma as possible to the Museum, to celebrate International Roma Day, to the staff at the Museum. Some of the staff wished us to enhance security during this time due to an idea of an extra risk of theft. Our boutique manager also wished for extra security during International Roma Day.
We have become aware that Romani are discriminated in many parts of Europe today. What prejudices have you come across within your organization? What were the circumstances?

How would you deal with these questions?

12.4   Workshop Group 3 - Good taste / Bad taste?

Borderline X 2

This exhibition was shown at The Röhsska Museum during 2008. It consisted of two parts. The first part Borderline X 1 shows shared stories which can be found in The Bible, The Torah scrolls and The Koran. Many stories have the same source and are identical. The exhibition shows different scenes portraying the 13

mutual stories, which was created by a parish educator who used dolls and sand in the scenes.

The second part Borderline X 2 showed pieces from the museum collections which can in some way be connected to the three world religions.

The idea behind the exhibition is to build bridges between people, showing the Christian, Muslim and Jewish shared history through presentation and beyond words and theology. Representatives from The Swedish Church, Synagogue and Mosque participated in the project.

The museum objects which were shown from the museum's collections; a crucifix, a Torah crown, a prayer piece with Persian scripts, Muslim and Christian hand written scripts, a wooden sculpture of St. Sebastian, have all been part of the museum's collections since 1913.

Though the collection at the Museum we want to create more understanding and insight into the value of diversity in both our collections and society.

What is democracy within a museum? Who decides what is to be shown and how? Good taste / Bad taste?

Situation

Many members of staff at the Museum did not think it was right to let the parish educator design and create an exhibition at the museum. They referred to the exhibition as something the church's play school could have created. They found it ugly. Did they feel threatened by a new exhibition designer at the Museum? Did they understand the relevance to integrating more people who do no usually visit the museum to feel able to participate?

Who is to judge the quality? Who decides taste – good or bad? What is democracy within a museum?

How would you deal with these questions?

12.5   Quiz Röhsska Loves All

1. Göteborg was built by the Dutch and the city plan based on one in:
   - Venice
   - Amsterdam

- Jakarta

2. Which minority has a flag with a wheel, blue sky and green grass?
- Sami
- Roma
- Tornedal Finnish

3. How many colours does the rainbow flag have?
- Five
- Eight
- Ten

4. In the Röhsska museum´s collections we have artefacts from many religious nominations but only one from:
- The Sikh community
- The Jewish community
- The Hindu community

5. Who said recently that criminality was a biological trait among the Roma people?
- The Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi
- The Director of the Bulgarian Border Police, Chief Commissar Krassimir Petrov
- The Italian Prime Minister – Silvio Berlusconi

6. The 13 stories shared by the Jewish, Muslim and Christian parishes shown at Röhsska museum were chosen:
- They are all based in Jerusalem
- They are the only ones there are
- They are the ones which all could agree upon

7. When is the International Roma day?
- 8 April
- 8 May
- 8 June

8. Now Rooz is a celebration of:

- Light
- New Year
- Fasting

13. Combating Prejudice - Clare Paul, ESOL and Arts Education Officer, V&A & Soloman Yohannes, Curator Of Oral History, Museum of London

Notes:

Importance of project longevity in building trust and sustainable relationships (the MoL's Refugee Communities' History Project ran for 5 years; the V&A has been running ESOL tours for more than a decade)

Need to combat (homogenising) negative perceptions of refugee communities engendered by the British press; to 'give refugees a(n individual) voice' and to emphasise the positive contribution made by refugee communities (the V&A runs tours highlighting objects made by refugee artists and craftspeople)

Need to identify supportive partner agencies and organisations (the MoL worked with the Evelyn Oldfield Unit and a number of refugee community organisations; the V&A has been running arts workshops in partnership with grassroots organisations)

Build in capacity and confidence building elements to projects (the MoL recruited and trained 15 community members as 'fieldworkers'; the V&A uses refugees to run gallery tours)

The four separate discussion groups were all asked to decide what they felt was the most important factor in combating prejudice.

Group 1: Attitudinal adjustment

Group 2: Recognise bad practice - need for reflexivity.

Group 3: Keep asking questions

Group 4: Confront stereotypes by bringing people together.

Friday 24 March 2010

Drivers for Change

14. Moving Forward on All Fronts, Eithne Nightingale, Head of Diversity Strategy at the V&A

Introduction

I work as Head of Diversity Strategy Unit at the V&A, a recently established unit with a cross Museum role and where I work with my colleague, Barry Ginley. This talk explores the challenge of moving forward on all fronts i.e. with respect to different equalities within a large and illustrious organisation such as the V&A .i.e. ethnicity, faith class, gender, disability, age, sexual identity; about the interrelation between the equality strands, but also about the challenge of moving forward across all areas of the Museum's activities - collections, public programming, galleries, exhibitions, staffing, learning and audience development. This seems an apt time to review where we are given the forthcoming Single Equality Bill and the consequent need to revise our various internal diversity and equality policies and plans i.e. Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and our Access, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and Implementation Plan.

 We have made little reference to the law at this conference and yet it seems fitting to remember that several of the equalities now enshrined in our core legislation – gender, disability, race, sexual identity have all been marginal at some stage in history and it is only through certain struggles, many of them fought within our lifetimes, that such equalities have become mainstreamed. As Gary Younge stated in his opening speech what is at the margins and at the core is forever shifting. I believe this is the first heritage conference, for example, where the issue of transgender has been discussed. And lastly this conversation is about analysing drivers for change drawn from ten years experience at the V&A. Having been urged by the Deputy Director of the V&A in

his opening speech to be honest, I will also attempt to identify barriers to change, where we have not got it right or where we have a way to go.

Age Breakdowns at V&A South Kensington, 2006/07-2009/10
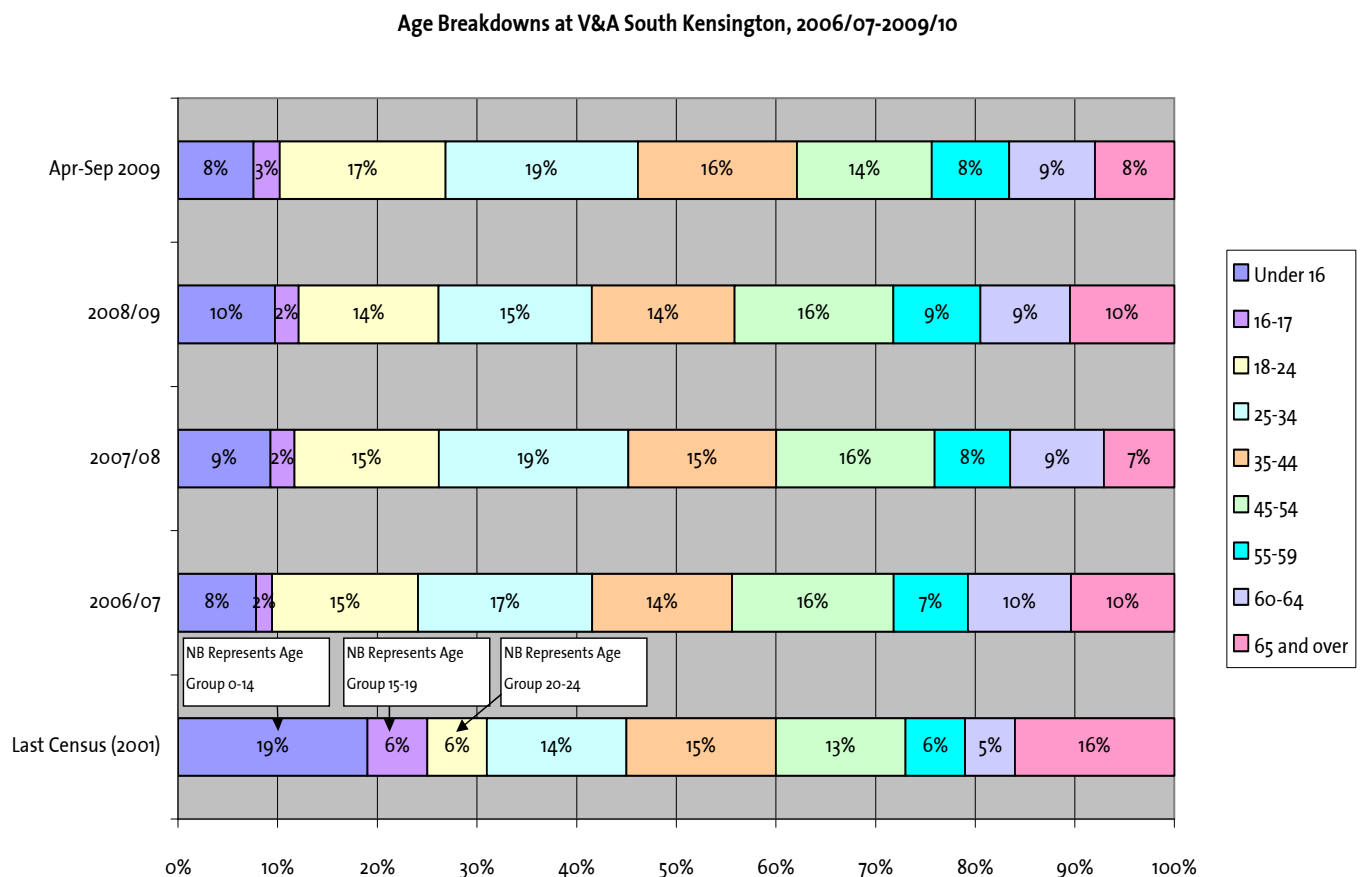
Age

I thought I would start with an area of equality of relevance to us all whether we are rich, poor, black, white, gay, straight, believer or non believer, disabled or not and that is of age. In fact the V&A has a greater problem attracting young people under the age of 17 than with older people where visitor figures show we attract over 17% of over 60 year olds rather than 21% in the general population. Yet closer examination shows we attract almost double % of 60 – 64 year olds than in the general population but 50% of the over 65s. Of course age intersects with disability and these figures seem to suggest the V&A attracts the active elderly.

Of course age also intersects with class and whilst not having access to that particular break down it is probably true to say that most of our older visitors are white, middle and even upper class. It is also true to say that age has not been high on the V&A's agenda. There have been a few initiatives at the margins – people over 80 regularly win prizes in our *Inspired By* competition for adult learners. We have held a project alongside the exhibition *Brand.New* with groups of black, white and Spanish elders, contributing reminiscences of brands from the 50s and 60s. But funds and staffing were time limited and we were not able to sustain the programme - a common enough scenario with one-off projects. The Spanish group also worked with the contemporary artist Ken Aptekar contributing their memories, including of the Spanish civil war, into a contemporary work of art. Such breaking down of the barriers is to be welcomed – I do not believe enjoyment of the Contemporary is the prerogative of the young and yet audience targets for the Contemporary Programme exclude the elderly.

The biggest driver for change with regards to age has not been in relation to audience development but to staffing, a change driven by legislation. I, myself, would not still be employed if it not been that the retirement age was increased two years ago.

Gender

With regards to gender the V&A attracts more women visitors than men and in fact increasingly over the last two years – a 70%/30% split rather than a 60%/40% split. Visitor breakdowns of exhibitions and galleries show fashion and jewellery attract a high % of women; photography, architecture and exhibitions with a political element such as Cold War Modern and Che Guevara bring in more men. The Digital Team reported recently the unusual experience of a room of only men during the weekend Decode digital event. With regards to staffing we employ far more women than men although there are more men at Management Board and in the Resources Group. There has only been one woman director and, by all accounts, that was a turbulent time. There have been some interesting initiatives mentioned at this exhibition such as *Men in Skirts* and gender has been explored in other temporary exhibitions. There is also a gender equality scheme but it does not feel 'live', there is no ground swell

of feminist debate or reinterpretation of collections in relation to a gender perspective.

LGBTQ

In fact, far more 'live in' the V&A is the issue of LGBTQ. A Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual Transsexual and Queer Working Group was set up in 2007 on the initiative of a member of staff with whom I drew up a brief for the group which covered all areas of the Museum from collections to public programming to staffing and on which we consulted through both the access, inclusion and diversity strategy group and implementation groups, the latter representing all departments of the Museum. The proposed brief for the group was then submitted to members of senior management, none of whom, at that time, were represented on either of these groups. We had learnt from prior experience of setting up a faith group without gaining official support from senior management that such approval was key to its success. In fact the faith group never regrouped after the adverse reaction from senior management on hearing about its initial meeting. The LGBTQ group, in contrast, has gone from strength to strength – developing a popular programme through London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, LGBT month and a recent *Making A Scene* Contemporary Friday Late with 3,000 people participating in an exciting and varied programme - an artist installation looking at notions of gender, a recreation of a lecture by Oscar Wilde and a performance by a lesbian theatre group. In addition the group has run a seminar, *Sexing the Collections* with both internal and external parties presenting papers interrogating the collections through the prism of sexuality. However, perceived success of the group by some individuals in the Museum was for another reason.

> "It was when we filled the lecture theatre for the film festival that people took notice," said the convenor of the LGBTQ group.

The pink pound rather than the brown pound was an influencer in bringing this issue centre stage.

Disability

As regards audiences we attract 6% of those who declare themselves as having a disability as opposed to 18% of population – we have only just recently started to collect this information within the last 18 months so we cannot gauge whether this is an improvement. With regards to staffing, however, we have

increased our % of staff with a disability from 2% to 7% over 8 years. We have made our galleries and web more physically and intellectually accessible with Braille, touch objects, tactile books videos with captions on line and browsealoud software. The Contemporary Team have mounted interesting exhibition such as *Hearwear,* an attempt by fifteen designers to change the way society views hearing aids, making them both desirable and acceptable accessories or the Mencap photography exhibition of photographs by people with learning difficulties. We have been placed in the top quarter in relation to the Disability Standard with the Employer's Forum on Disability and noted for the retention of disabled staff and customer services. This relates to two initiatives – involvement of our Staff Disability Forum on our return to work policy and to our training in BSL, deaf, visual impairment and mental health awareness for visitor services staff.

Change has happened in this area because of a dedicated post holder and the respect with which he is held across the Museum; a clear Disability Equality Scheme which was presented to Management Board and for which resources were sought; the pro-active Staff Disability Forum; our Access group of specialist advisors from RNIB, RNID etc and crucially because of support from leadership and on key practical issues – i.e. support when and where it has been needed.

This is not to deny the barriers that my colleague, Barry Ginley has had to face and indeed continues to surmount and the strategies he has had to employ including pointing out the risk of imprisonment in relation to DDA compliance. It is also not to deny how much more there is to achieve in the interconnections between issues of disability, race and age; in relation to inclusiveness and embedding good practice. I was interested in Andrew Dewdney's reference to Stuart Hall's 'ambivalent mainstreaming.' I think we have had a taste of that recently in trying to embed our disability programmes into the mainstream without the necessary planning and support and which risked damaging our reputation with some long standing visitors .

Race, ethnicity

The V&A has over 20 years of working with British Asian communities (South Asia and Chinese) generally but not exclusively based on the rich Asian

collections and through temporary exhibitions such as *The Peaceful Liberators,* **Jain Art** *from India* 1994, *the Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* 1999, or the more contemporary *The Art of Cinema India or China Design Now.* There have been other smaller scale, year-round learning and outreach programmes attracting a high % of British Asian audiences including festivals and workshops . Sometimes a small scale community project such as *Shamiana, the Mughal Tent,* textile panels made by women's groups from Asian and other backgrounds inspired by the Nehru Gallery of Indian Art, started on the margins but became mainstream – exhibited in the gardens of the Museum and subsequently around the world.

Ten years ago several staff questioned both this linear approach between collections and communities but also whether the fact we had no collections of relevance to the African diaspora was a sufficient reason to ignore the fact that less than % of our visitors, according to the Mori polls, were from a black British, African Caribbean background. We have no African gallery however and we laboured under the misconception that we had no African collections. It has been a fascinating journey not only to discover that we have over 4000 objects of relevance to the African diaspora but that through our public programme, from high profile exhibitions such as *Black British Style*, Africa 2005, *Uncomfortable Truths* (an exhibition and year round events to commemorate 200th anniversary of parliamentary abolition of slavery), Black Heritage Season and year round programmes, we have been able to engage significant numbers of Black British, mixed and other audiences new to the Museum. Many such events have brought in 25 – 90% black/mixed audiences and indeed overall figures of BAME visitors have increased from 6% in 2001/2 to 11% in 08/09 and surprisingly over the last half year to 19%. However whether this increase is because of specific events and exhibitions is not clear as we have not tracked people who have come back to the V&A after coming to the Museum for the first time through a culturally specific event.

	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Apr-Sep '09
Number of UK BAME Visits	60,968	126,700	97,000	142,400	117,300	172,400	145,000	150,500	90,800
% of UK BAME Visits	6%	9%	7%	11%	11%	11%	10%	11%	19%

Such figures indicate that we attract, on a national average, roughly the % of BAME audiences equivalent to the national population but such figures do need closer analysis in terms of geographic spread and accordingly we have plans to analyse these figures in relation to London/South East where proportion of BAME population is much higher . I am impressed by Horniman's increase of BAME audiences to 40 % BAME and also interested that they are unsure of the exact reasons for this - the presence of the Africa gallery or the work they had done with visitor services. They assume it is a mixture of both.

The data in the table above is not only from the monthly MORI market research reports but also includes data from the groups' surveys. Although the MORI independent adults account for the majority of the V&A's audience, the groups often are noticeably more diverse and can increase the proportion of hard to reach groups e.g. for Apr-Sep 2009 the MORI average for BAME visits was 14% but, once the profiles of the groups were factored in, this figure rose to 19%.

The more black audiences who come to the Museum the more frequent is the question as to where the objects are that relate to a black British identity. This lack of visibility is tied up with the history of the V&A, having been founded at the height of empire and after the enormously successful *Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations* of 1851. The larger part of the initial government grant for exhibition purchases was spent on non-British goods, most from India.

This was not only because of the important role of the East India Company but also because of imperialist attitudes to material culture from Africa.

As Helen Mears wrote in a paper in the first year of our HLF funded Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Paper

> "The idea that, simply, 'the V&A does not collect African art' is prevalent and is presented as fact by Museum visitors, front-of-house staff, even curators who have all been heard stating the 'fact' that the V&A does not hold African material in its permanent collections." [21]

However, Helen went onto identify over 4300 objects of relevance to the African diaspora and her research is accessible on the website under Hidden Histories. Although that research has come to an end an Africa Curators Group has been established to:

- agree a statement of collecting policy re art and design of African diaspora
- make the Museum's existing Africa-related work more visible
- develop and strengthen understanding of African art and design among V&A's curators

As several of our senior managers stated in relation to the HLF project

> " Recognising the African collections is the biggest legacy of the project."[22]

My assertion is not to quote this as an example of good practice but rather to recognise that this is a change at the core of what the Museum does –not in the work that it does with a few disaffected young men from Eastside, important thought that is, or the increase of new black and other audiences to the Museum but rather in what it collects and why, changing 150 years of history. I want now to reflect on how that has happened.

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[21] Locating Africa at the V&A: Reflecting on the Outcomes of the African Diaspora Research Project:Helen Mears, African Diaspora Research Fellow, May 2008 published in the V&A Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Evaluation Report. Prepared by Simon Roodhouse on behalf of Safe Hands Management Ltd. February 2009.

[22] Interview with senior manager quoted in the V&A Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Evaluation Report. Prepared by Simon Roodhouse on behalf of Safe Hands Management Ltd. February 2009.

First is the role of individuals and in particular a curator in the Prints and Drawings Department, now Word and Image, who focussed on acquiring work by African and African diaspora artists, and long before it was overall policy of the Museum, affecting policy at a departmental level. To quote a recent report to the Africa Curators Group,

> " I think it's important to credit the efforts of one individual – my colleague Rosie Miles, recently retired – who was very largely responsible for this new emphasis in the Department's collecting policy. It was Rosie's research, her knowledge, her contacts, her enthusiasm and expertise, and her driving commitment which won the support of colleagues and hence a good share of the acquisition funds available – and it was she who identified and pursued many of the key works acquired since then. It was thanks to her prescience that the V&A was able to acquire important prints by Chris Ofili and Faisal Abdu' Allah within months of their graduating from the RCA. [23]

Similarly Dinah Winch, a curator in British Galleries started to identify objects of relevance within the new British Galleries. The Contemporary Team launched a *Day of Record of Black Hair Style and Nail Art*, an initial partnership with Black Cultural Archives which eventually led to Carol Tulloch co-curating the temporary exhibition, *Black British Style* with Shaun Cole from the Contemporary Team. When I came to the V&A I had lived and worked in the Hackney for thirty years, one of the most culturally diverse London boroughs. I did not therefore accept the view that having no visible collections meant that we should not attempt to work with black audiences. There became a critical mass of staff, black and white from departments who came together to discuss issues on an informal basis, to develop programmes and to lobby to programme something in the Museum in relation to the 200th anniversary of the parliamentary abolition of slavery. In my role as Head of Access and Social Inclusion I had put in an initial bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund which looked both at developing audiences and researching collections followed by a far larger bid years later. This generous external funding helped us progress this issue significantly. But it was finally the quality of the research itself, located in

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[23] Excerpt from report to Africa Curator's Group by Gill Saunders, curator in Word and Image 2010.

the V&A's Research Department and working with curatorial colleagues across the Museum that contributed to change, leading to an endorsement by the Head of Collections towards the end of the project that it was no longer appropriate to say we no longer collect Africa. It is this joined up thinking within, through and beyond the organisations including partnership work that is so crucial. The partnership with BCA, for example, has been revived recently over the HLF funded project on the collection of black documentary photography 1950 – 2000 which is to be exhibited at the new premises of BCA in Brixton.

I have talked about impact on numbers and changes in policy but what of the often invisible impact on people's lives. Of the woman refugee from Sri Lanka, a victim of torture, who comments that,

> "Today at the Museum is the first time I've felt happy enough to take photos since I've been in London. Coming to these workshops has helped me to forget for a while, thank you."[24]

Or what about the potential for such a museum as this to bring together communities who would not normally meet. Some of you will have the chance later this afternoon to meet Marie Lyse Numuhoza who is one of our refugee guides leading a My V&A tour, a brilliant and accessible format for recounting life stories through the collections. Visitor response to these tours has been overwhelmingly positive.

> "This is an outstanding way to encounter refugees out of the usual context."[25]

> "A brilliant idea to promote knowledge of refugees lives by using the contents of the V&A. Well done V&A.." Lord Judd, House of Lords[26]

The tours also benefit the refugees themselves who see it as a valuable mechanism for combating prejudice.

> "I came from Rwanda 9 years ago as refugees from a war torn country. For years I took part in different activities aimed at supporting the integration of the refugees but nothing has matched the experience of the V&A, in particular the My V&A project. To me this project is one of

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[24] Participant in Refugee Programme as quoted in final report to Barings Foundation 2010.

[25] Refugee Week Evaluation, 2008

[26] Refugee Week Evaluation 2008

the best that fosters community cohesion and challenges prejudice that people may be having on people from other parts of the world." [27]

As Doudou Diene, Special Rapporteur from the United Nations states in the excellent DVD on diversity and leadership, *Making It Happen*, a legacy of the HLF project Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership project,

" the critical point is not only to fight against discrimination and promote equality, but to promote interactions because if you leave the society only achieving combating discrimination and promoting equality, you may reach and create a society where communities (ethnic or racial) will be living side by side, totally equal, but with prejudices kept alive on a deeper level. You have to promote interaction."[28]

I quote this not to say that we have got it right at the V&A but that there are glimpses of good practice from which we should learn and that should help us move this agenda from the margins to the mainstream. How often do we draw on expertise that could enrich our collections and integrate different narratives into our collections. This particular refugee project, one of our very hidden jewels is dependent on short term funding and may end within months – an all too repeated scenario within this area of work, staying at the margins because of lack of support at the core of the Museum.

Faith

I will next touch on issues of faith, often closely bound up with issues of ethnicity and which I believe is a challenge for the V&A. We are primarily a museum of art and design, a secular space and yet we hold objects of great religious significance to individuals and communities. This was very apparent through the advisory groups we held with diverse faith communities under the HLF funded project Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership. Take this response to a panel of the Sammeta Sikhara Pilgrimage showing the Jain pilgrimage site where most of the Tirthankaras attained nirvana.

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[27] [27] Participant in Refugee Programme as quoted in final report to Barings Foundation 2010.

[28] *Making It Happen* DVD on leadership and diversity, V&A March 2010

> "Most of the Jains wish to visit the place once in their lifetime. Some who are not able to make the visit would be happy with just seeing the panel at the V&A and visualising the visit." (Jain advisory group member)[29]

I believe we are only the poorer if we deny the significance and the context in which many of our objects are used. Indeed where is the dividing line between culture and faith.

> "The Buddhist group appeared to prioritise the religious interpretation and atmosphere of the gallery. However …. while attempting to take account of the groups' wishes the V&A's is a museum of art and design rather than of religion in itself and while the context of the images is very important their artistic interpretation is central. An approach integrating different issues was appropriate." (Asia Curator) [30]

It is how this integration is effectively achieved which needs closer analysis. It is clearly not advisable for consultation to be seen as a token exercise. At the other extreme there is the danger of too great an accommodation of religious, perhaps fundamental, insular or extreme viewpoints, which alienate liberal or secular audiences and/or undermine the art and design role of the museum.

I consider the V&A, and indeed the heritage sector as a whole, has some way to go in addressing these issues as was clear during the faith panel discussions earlier this week which provoked fascinating discussion. As Irna Qureshi so beautifully illustrated, audiences make their own religious, cultural and spiritual connections with the objects. They cannot leave this at the door of the Museum.

One issue I felt the panel did not explore adequately was how faith can be a vehicle for bringing people together and here I wish to reference the experience of one of our intercultural/interfaith guides.

> "My first tour was to show a group of ministers of various Christian churches and imams of mosques from a Lancashire town whose motivation was to build bridges to overcome religious and racial tensions in their community. In the Jameel Gallery I focused on those objects that were made by Muslim craftsmen for the use of Christian ministers in their faith practices. When we examined the Safavid church

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[29] Report on Faith Advisory groups held at the V&A by Marilyn Greene, Intercultural/Interfaith Officer, 20 October 2008

[30] Report on Faith Advisory groups held at the V&A by Marilyn Greene, Intercultural/Interfaith Officer, 20 October 2008

vestment woven for Armenian priests to conduct Mass, both the Christian and Muslim members of the group began to understand that there was greater mutual understanding and cultural appreciation." [31]

Class
Socio –economic breakdown of visitors to all sites of the V&A 2006 - 2008[32]

NUMBER OF UK VISITORS FROM LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORIES (NS-SEC groups 5-8) ATTENDING THE MUSEUM	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
South Kensington	178,600	152,600	109,000
	11%	11%	8%
Theatre Museum	14,200	-	-
	15%		
Museum of Childhood	32,100	114,900	87,400
	21%	37%	26%
All Sites	224,900	267,500	196,400
	12%	16%	12%

We have done some excellent work under out social inclusion programme with hard to reach audiences – prisoners contributing to the Quilts temporary exhibition, fashion shows in the Raphael Gallery and sometimes with real impacts but we have made little inroads into overall figures from social classes NS-SCE 5-8). There have been a few exceptions – *Kylie* exhibition and the event, *Underground Lost and Found* bringing together enthusiasts of reggae, ska and northern soul alongside our 60s fashion exhibition etc.

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[31] Report of Rashai Hunzai, Intercultural Guide, Feb 2020 fro publication on Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Project

[32] Table compiled by Head of Planning, V&A for presentation of the HLF Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Project to V&A Trustees, September 2009

It is not true that all BAME audiences are middle class. Through our networking with the Sikh community, outreach to gurdwaras followed by group visits etc during the exhibition, the *Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms*, we attracted a high % of Sikhs who had both never visited the V&A before but also never visited any museum previously. Our group data also shows a higher % of both BAME and NS-SEC visitors which points to the need to sustain this work. It is true to say, however, that the V&A has a long way to go in terms of socio-economic class and it is clearly one of our next priorities.

Drawing on the DVD *Making it Happen* I would like to quote some of the most relevant statements that echo my experience of working for 10 years at the V&A and with regards to what contributes to change.

Firstly it is not enough to stop at fulfilling what is legally required,
> "….if we think about diversity and equality as just a legal responsibility, then all it leads us to do is the minimum. "[33]
> Michael Day, Chief Executive, Historic Royal Palaces

An over reliance on policy and plans can impede rather than progress change.
> "Culture is more powerful than strategy, We will write a learned paper, we'll do a policy note, we'll do a white paper, we'll give a speech and life will be wonderful.' It's rubbish. It's not strategy that changes organisations, its culture. "[34]
> Rene Carayol, CEO, Carayol and Lecturer, Cass Business School

Leadership is important but leaders cannot operate in a vacuum.
> "A leader has got to give the message that this has got to be embedded, that it's the responsibility of all of us. Leaders have to grow a critical mass of support for this agenda because that in turn supports their leadership. They can't carry the burden and the responsibility and actually the pleasure of leading in this agenda (I don't want it to be seen in entirely deficit terms). Its got to be shared, you know: dispersed leadership, empowering people, embedding this so that it's sustained. "[35]

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[33] *Making It Happen* DVD on leadership and diversity, V&A March 2010

[34] *Making It Happen* DVD on leadership and diversity, V&A March 2010

[35] *Making It Happen* DVD on leadership and diversity, V&A March 2010

Jack Lohman, Director, Museum of London

 Evaluation of the V&A's Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Programme
– working with culturally diverse communities concluded that

> " a whole museum centrally driven networked system approach
> generating new knowledge may deliver the next stage of development for
> the Museum, building on a successful platform of achievement."[36]

Though Social Network Analysis, this project also identified certain
'gatekeepers,' that is the individuals to whom others within the Museum
talked to about diversity. These same people, however, were not necessarily in
positions of influence or on committees which could affect decisions.

It is clear that within the V&A we are on a journey where diversity becomes
central to all that we do. As Sir Mark Jones says,

> "I don't think though that this is an area where you can say job done. It's
> an area where you would probably need to go on thinking because things
> change all the time. [37]
> Sir Mark Jones, Director, V&A

However referring to the opening speech of Gary Younge, the core needs the
margins – they are in a symbiotic relationship to each other. What I urge is that
the core enters into a more productive and engaging relationship with the
margins whose identity is forever changing.

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[36] V&A Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Evaluation Report. Prepared by Professor
Simon Roodhouse on behalf of Safe Hands Management Ltd, February 2009.

[37] *Making It Happen* DVD on leadership and diversity, V&A March 2010

15.   Leadership and Diversity "Making it Happen" -
Veronika Harris, Head of Training and Development, V&A &
Margot Rodway-Brown, Consultant, Rodway Brown
Associates

Main points of discussion:

- What are the goals of leadership – passion, drive, will, sacrifice, compassion, critical awareness, courage, find your own responsibility, confidence, creative energy, leadership at every level, vision, integrity and judgment.
- Need to address skills for the future – it is not about 'doing things as we did them' but being flexible, taking risks and re-thinking how jobs can be done.
- Health and Safety is everybody's responsibility so why can't diversity be treated in the same way.
- Dialogue is key – we have the solutions and need to seize the opportunity to put them into practice.
- The locus of power is changing. We need to be ready for this and embrace it.

16. Collecting the Core at the Margins: Representing Africa at the British Museum - Chris Spring, Curator/Artist/Writer; Dept of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, The British Museum

In his article entitled Beauty and the Beast (Museums Journal, Sept. 2002, page 23) Mark O'Neill referred to the African galleries at the British Museum as 'the single greatest missed opportunity in English museums for at least a generation.' His observations, made shortly after the galleries opened, together with the article in which they were presented, were generally misguided (see my response in: Museums Journal, November 2002, page 17), but O'Neill's opening remarks to this conference here at the V&A struck a chord and reminded me that in one fundamental respect the galleries are missing an opportunity. The single greatest criticism of the African galleries at the BM has not been of the galleries themselves but of where they are situated. O'Neill's well made point the other day is that we as curators, rather than preserving a status quo which ultimately maintains the care of the collections beyond all other considerations, need to come down from our ivory towers and, without being condescending, provide a broad and welcoming appeal to our public. In the case of the BM's African galleries this means to invite people through the spiked railings, to entice them past the neoclassical columns, to persuade them that the weight of white marble need not be oppressive, and that the journey down into the tomb-like galleries might be something which will be both rewarding and empowering. At present Africa is not celebrated as much as it should be, but the continent most certainly is celebrated much more than once it was when I first started to work in the BM way back in the 1980s, and this paper will give a snapshot of how that has come about.

During the Africa '05 festival of African arts and cultures in the UK, Hassan Musa, an artist born in Sudan but now living and working in France, threw down a challenge to all curators of the arts of Africa, particularly curators like me who would like to acquire the work of artists like Hassan Musa: "To hell with African art. I have been forced – me, an artist from Africa! – to consider

African art as a hindrance to my artistic projects, rather than a favourable framework for their fulfilment." Yet I am also a curator charged with displaying objects from the British Museum's collections which most people still think of as 'African art' – the masks, wood sculpture, the textiles, ceramics, metalwork and basketry – which were once the staples of the 'ethnographical' display in museums the world over. Acquiring works by Hassan and other contemporary artists of African descent, while at the same time creating "a favourable framework for their fulfilment" - and a welcoming environment in which our public can enjoy both – has to be my prime consideration as a curator. One way in which we have approached this task is to work directly with contemporary artists, to collect their works and to encourage our public to engage with the artists and with the topics of their work in order to turn the African galleries into a forum for debate in which as many voices as possible are heard.

I am an artist and I have to admit that my passionate belief in this element of our work at the BM has to some extent been driven by my own love of and involvement with contemporary art practice. I begin with an image of a ceramic work by Magdalene Odundo that I commissioned for the first displays in the Sainsbury African galleries at the British Museum which opened to the public early in 2001 and until very recently was the first object that the public would see on entering the galleries – it has now been replaced by another work by her, I'm glad to say, but this piece can still be seen in another section of the galleries. In reviewing a recent survey of the wonderful collections from Africa at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, collections which had helped to foster the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s under the inspirational curatorship of Stewart Culin, I noted with interest that a work by Magdalene is the only piece by a contemporary artist of African descent to be shown in the African galleries, though the reason for its inclusion seems to be as much to do with 'its affinity to traditional black ware from Uganda' as its merits as a work of art (Siegmann, William C African Art: a Century at the Brooklyn Museum, Prestel, 2009, page 6). Brooklyn, of course, has a proud history of championing the arts, not least in the case of Chris Ofili in recent years, but this simply illustrates the curatorial choices still to be made in displaying work by contemporary artists of African descent, and the tortuous taxonomies we create in order to describe Africa, 'African' art and 'African' artists.

Almost fifteen years earlier, the BM's official contribution to the Africa '95 festival of arts was an exhibition entitled Play and Display, in which specially commissioned steel sculptures of Kalabari masqueraders by the artist Sokari Douglas Camp were juxtaposed with Kalabari water spirit masks from the collections of the Ethnography Department of the BM, as it was then, housed in the Museum of Mankind behind the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. At the same time a small display of Magdalene Odundo's ceramics, on loan from a private collector, were displayed in another part of the Museum, on their own without any surrounding 'cultural context'. There was an interesting (and unintentional) difference between the two displays - one was being interpreted with a strong social anthropological perspective, whereas the other invited a higher level of aesthetic appreciation of the objects as works of art in their own right. However, the really important thing about both displays was that for the first time the Ethnography Department of the BM was prepared to show works by contemporary artists of African descent in its galleries – and particularly two artists who, though born in Africa, had spent most of their professional working lives in the UK.

In 1997 the Museum Of Mankind closed to the public and plans for a new African Gallery to be purpose-built as part of the Millennium Development at Bloomsbury were unveiled. That same year I undertook a first year of fieldwork in Tunisia, though instead of contacting museum colleagues my first step was to write to three artists whose work I had seen and admired during Africa '95 – Nja Mahdaoui, Khaled Ben Slimane and Rachid Koraichi. From that point onwards, working with artists became an integral part of any fieldwork I have conducted in Africa. At the beginning of 1998 a second year of fieldwork in Tunisia resulted in fine collections of work by NJA Mahdaoui and Khaled Ben Slimane which I had identified the previous year and discussed in detail with the artists. By 1999 we had also acquired two works by the Egyptian/Armenian artist Chant Avedissian, and I had assumed control of writing the brief for how the galleries would be arranged. Despite various views to the contrary, it was now clear to me that we should introduce our public to the arts of Africa through contemporary works alone, though there was strong pressure, right up to the day the galleries opened to change - or at least to dilute - this initial engagement. I had commissioned a new work by Magdalene Odundo which, with works by Sokari, Chant, Nja, Khaled and John Muafangejo, were to make

up the opening display with which the public would engage in that first crucial room. Despite various stand-offs with sponsors, architects and the BM hierarchy, in the end the battle was won. Contemporary art not only filled the first space but appeared elsewhere in the galleries, though by far the most important advance was that Africa was now back at Bloomsbury where it could be seen in comparison with all the other great cultures of the world, past and present, rather than 'ghettoised' in a separate building in another part of London. In addition, the act of moving from a museum of Ethnography – a fatally flawed and outmoded concept – to a 'museum of the world for the world', the African collections were re-contextualised in a fundamental way.

The African galleries opened in 2001, and since then that first space has set the tone for the rest of the galleries and has been the catalyst to many of the ideas and concepts of the gallery, particularly as a forum for debate. The theme of engagement with political issues, which would not have been embraced at the Museum of Mankind, was introduced by works such as Kester's Throne of Weapons looking at the background to the Mozambique civil war and the global arms trade. At the same time this sculpture is very much about the victims – including child soldiers – of that war; it is about lives destroyed but also about the bravery of those who stood up to human destructiveness, often unarmed, and in the end defeated an addiction to the gun which had gripped the country for so long. There is much which the whole world can learn from the story of Mozambique told through this remarkable sculpture.

El Anatsui's Man's Cloth and Woman's Cloth, the first two of his series of cloth-like sculptures, were purchased and displayed by the BM only after long discussions with the artist as to how and where they might best work in the African galleries. At this point the National Arts Collection Fund, now the Art Fund, began to play a crucial role in allowing us to develop the contemporary collections in ways which would put them at the forefront of a new dimension of curatorial practice. The Art Fund bought for us outright these two works by El Anatsui; shortly afterwards, following detailed and passionate discussions with the artist, the Art Fund, with the enthusiastic support of its director David Barrie, helped the BM to acquire the multi-faceted Path of Roses by the Algerian Rachid Koraichi, a work which, as well as being a celebration of the 13th century mystic poet Rumi, is also a reflection on the ongoing struggle of the Palestinian people.

The Throne of Weapons embarked in 2005 on a remarkable tour of over sixty venues around the UK – and later the world – including schools, churches, shopping centres and even a prison, where the inmates created a moving film in reaction to the sculpture. The Throne had been the inspiration to my commissioning of the Tree Of Life, during which the artists again played a crucial role in the dynamics and development of the galleries. Armed with a film of the galleries and a sketchy knowledge of the long and bloody Civil War in Mozambique which tore the country apart so soon after independence in 1975, I embarked for Maputo to work with the artists and the other members of Bishop Sengulane's Arms into Tools project engaged in retrieving weapons from citizens brave enough to give them up in exchange for more useful hardware. By the time I went out for a second trip the BBC had become interested in filming the Tree of Life project from its roots in Mozambique to its (possibly) final destination in the British Museum. A short compilation of the film the BBC produced became a vital element in the artwork, where the interaction between Tree, film and the other objects in the gallery created a composite experience for our public. No other objects have caught the imagination in quite the same way as the Throne and the Tree, so much so that within a few short years they had claimed their own chapter in that Holy of Holies Treasures of the British Museum, a weighty tome which is a kind of Who's Who of the BM's most revered artefacts.

Africa '05, the brain child of Gus Casely-Hayford, gave an impetus to the acquisition of these pieces, so that contemporary art from Africa appeared in the BBC's Groundforce Garden for Africa on the forecourt of the BM, in the Great Court and of course in the African galleries. Whilst some artists like Hassan Musa were understandably rebelling against the 'African artist' label, others such as Taslim Martin and Nja Mahdaoui were openly embracing it, in Nja's case possibly because the other labels (Islamic artist) (Middle Eastern Artist) were even more problematic/offensive.

The appearance of Oxford Man by the South African artist Owen Ndou in 2005 as a replacement for the touring Throne of Weapons opened up another area of development for the African collections. It was loaned by Robert Loder whose Triangle Arts Trust had been supporting artists workshops all over the world

since he and Anthony Caro dreamed up the idea in early 1980s New York. Initially these artist-led workshops – structured around 30 artists, 15 from the host country, 15 from the international community – were located in places as remote as possible – they were about process not product, and artists including Chris Ofili acknowledged the importance of attending them in their work – in Ofili's case the Pachipamwe workshop in Zimbabwe. However, Loder began to see the potential importance of reaching and empowering artists by locating these workshops in or near large museums or cultural centres, and in 2008 and 2009 the BM supported two Triangle Arts workshops in Maputo, Mozambique and in Kumasi, Ghana as part of its wider programme of work in Africa which, since 2005, has included training courses, establishment of storage facilities and exhibitions in various parts of Africa.

Towards the end of 2005 the BM began to address the sensitive problem of how best to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade in 2007. In the end – and with approval of community groups such as Rendezvous of Victory - we decided to purchase La Bouche du Roi, a work by Romuald Hazoumé of the Republic of Benin which had been first conceived in 1997 and not completed until 2005. It was therefore a work which was not created with the Bicentenary in mind, but with its themes of Resistance and Remembrance, and its modern take on the famous Abolitionist image of the slave ship Brookes – substituting petrol drums for the images of enslaved Africans - it was obviously appropriate for display during that year and beyond. It toured the UK, and the BM's wider aim is to have it permanently touring the world – institutions as dynamic and diverse as the Weeksville Center in Brooklyn, the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, The National Museum of Art in Maputo, and the Fondation Zinsou in Benin have all shown a keen interest.

Of the very recent additions to the African galleries, Susan Hefuna's Knowledge is Sweeter than Honey is a lyrical work which draws inspiration from the mashrabiyya or carved window blinds which are a feature of many houses in North Africa and the Middle East. It also emphasises – as did the works of another Egyptian artist, Chant Avedissian – the fact that you can't talk about Africa without mentioning Egypt, but that you don't need a mummy to make the point!

Leo Asemota is an artist from Benin in Nigeria who was inspired by an exhibition at the old Museum of Mankind to embark on a remarkable multi-faceted work the ens Project, one element of which, with Leo's collaboration, we hope to display in the section of the African galleries in which the Benin sculptures are displayed. This element in the project is entitled Misfortune's Wealth and focuses on the infamous British punitive expedition to Benin in 1897, and in particular on the role played by apparently simple materials such as kaolin and coal in driving the empires of Britain and Benin on an inexorable collision course. I think Leo feels that his work will grow next to some of the works which are, in part at least, its subject, and I know the works themselves and the public understanding of the full repercussions – both positive and negative – of this infamous moment in the histories of the two empires will be better understood.

So I will end with Hassan Musa and with his Worship Objects, a work like Leo's which is not yet acquired but which I hope will become part of the BM's collections sooner rather than later. Approaching the acquisition of a work like Worship Objects demonstrates the strengths as well as the limitations of the BM's collecting policy regarding contemporary art from Africa. We cannot collect across the board, and my proposal for the acquisition of a work such as this would have to describe how it relates to and/or illuminates the BM's existing collections. In this case I might say something about the work's connections with the various charm gowns worn by people to the south of the Sahara and, indeed, in Sudan, particularly in a historical context. I would also mention that the inclusion of the image of Sarah Baartman, the so-called Hottentot Venus, in the work raises pressing and important questions of restitution and reparation. Baartman, a Khoisan woman, was shamefully displayed in early 19th century France and Britain as an exotic attraction and her remains – even more shamefully – were exhibited at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris until the early 1970s. They are now happily returned to a final resting place in her beloved fynbos in South Africa's eastern Cape. It would be wonderful to acquire and display this work right now, not least because the current project in the forecourt of the BM, a South Africa Landscape in collaboration with Kew Gardens, pays tribute to Sarah Baartman with the profoundly moving words of another Khoisan woman, the poet Diana Ferrus:

> I have made your bed at the foot of the hill

Your blankets are covered in buchu and mint

The proteas stand in yellow and white

And the water in the stream chuckle sing-songs

As it hobbles along over little stones.

From 'I have come to take you home': a poem for Sarah Baartman, 1998

In giving this talk I have been mindful throughout of Ian Blatchford's threat at the beginning of this conference for any know-it-all to do time in the vile Naughty Corner somewhere in the bowels of the V&A. I will therefore end with a little story of how I was told by a certain know-it-all at the BM that there are no textile traditions to speak of in eastern Africa. However, on my arrival for the first time in Tanzania I very quickly   realised that this was nonsense because almost every woman I passed seemed to be dressed in glorious printed cloth known as kanga, each bearing a slogan in KiSwahili. The very first kanga I bought bore the slogan hujui kitu 'YOU KNOW NOTHING' - and it's a very good rule to work by anywhere in the world, because if you admit that you know nothing you may begin to learn something, whereas if you think you know everything you'll never learn a thing.

16.1   Notes on Collecting the Core at the Margins: Representing Africa at the British Museum

Questioned the idea of "African" art - European construct.

Use of Contemporary Art to draw in audiences, to help understand art from the past, and to question the ethnographic topic (see BM gallery).

Importance of ensuring that Africa is at the centre of the museum and not 'ghettoised'. (Chris Spring talked about how important it was that the Africa collections had been brought back into the central museum and out of the Museum of Mankind, but noted that Africa "was always in the basement".

Helen Mears emphasised the importance of her research being available on the museums core catalogue and NOT a separate database.)

Dangers of ongoing institutional disinterest and neglect. Exacerbated by lack of time and expertise.

How does audience development work play into core work of collecting and curating.

It was interesting to note that, despite their differences, the V&A and the British Museum often experienced similar problems.

17.   The role of community heritage

Colin Prescod, Chair of Institute of Race Relations, Chair Harbinder Singh, Director, Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail, Cliff Pereira, Secretary, Black & Asian Studies Association, Rajiv Anand, IOJ Consultant, Institute of Jainology, Kimberly Keith, Black Cultural Archives

17.1   Cliff Pereira, Secretary, Black & Asian Studies Association

The subject of community heritage has been at the core of the Black and Asian Studies Association's (BASA) work for over ten years. However for much of this time BASA has concentrated on uncovering the hidden Black and Asian British History and lobbying for the inclusion of this narrative into all sorts of sectors and areas from postage stamps to the school curriculum.

In fact I would say that BASA grew out of the need to consider the narrative of "the other" at a time when the primary movers in the heritage field – museums, galleries, the media, etc. in the United Kingdom, were just beginning to consider "the other". At that time the heritage of a culturally diverse population was in the main regarded as something historically recent, urban and need I say un-British and alien.

It is so often the case that roots-led movements in culture are often eventually appropriated by local, regional and national governments and in a period of regional devolution, it is hardly surprising that community heritage quickly became entrenched in the policy of mainstream political parties and of such organisations as the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).
So where are we in 2010?

Speaking on behalf of BASA's membership and their reported experience especially post 2007. The primary appeal of community heritage to the museum sector was as a means to access contemporary museums and gain extra

funding. I would argue, based on my experience of community consultation in this sector that in many cases and particularly for some of our largest national heritage structures this remains the primary motive. The secondary appeal particularly outside of the inner city areas remains to demonstrate perceived social inclusiveness and procure funding in the face of local and central government directives. Notice that I have not mentioned education/knowledge, social responsibility or social capital.

In contrast the need to empower heritage ownership in the community - the core of BASA's ethos, has come further down the list of priorities and has been the initiative and preserve of community itself. That is very clear from the participants at this panel; the Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trails, Black Cultural Archives and the Institute of Jainology.

There are many questions to be asked with regards to community heritage;
- Who are/is the community ?(Definition)
- How does the community see its heritage? (Perception)
- How does the community demonstrate its heritage? (Medium)
- Who/where are the holders of community heritage? (Repository)

Where institutions have successfully and equitably engaged with community heritage in a "holistic" manner, there has been a better relationship between the local educational and heritage sectors, a vibrant and different perspective on their collections, an overall increase and greater diversity in visitors, more funding opportunities, even a reduction in local political extremist activity. In short, the cultural capital of the local public sector has increased.

As an organisation run by passionate volunteers who have social justice as their mantra BASA for its part has suggested;
- That community engagement in the heritage sector is vital to the sensitive and appropriate assemblage, interpretation and access to collections.

- That community leaders and consultants work on an equitable contractual basis with heritage organisations.

- That community groups involved be compensated for their time, travel and expertise.

- That BASA can, if required, take on a brokerage role between heritage sector organisations and their Black and Asian audiences providing a voice to those who feel silenced.

- And finally BASA suggests that all practitioners in the heritage sector consider the benefits gained by their organisations in employing Black and Asian expertise at the higher levels of their workforce. By which BASA means beyond the cloakrooms attendants, cafe and museum assistants.

17.2   Rajiv Anand MA, Museum Consultant

British Jain collections represent some of the most important in the world. These collections are important because they are rare or unique cultural objects, and many are sacred objects to members of the Jain community. The information they contain is also of cultural importance. Access to them is therefore clearly important to the Jain community.

The JAINpedia project will make accessible, for the first time, a range of manuscripts and artefacts relevant to the Jain religion and culture and will develop a strong sense of community heritage through a series of exhibitions in the holding collections and associated events.

Jain material in Britain consists of approximately 4,000 unique manuscripts in various UK collections such as the British Library, the Bodleian Library, the Wellcome Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Many of them have never been catalogued or put on public display and access to their host institutions is severely restricted.

Written in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi and Gujarati, these are vitally significant pieces of Jain heritage. The majority of the manuscripts are on paper, palm-leaf, and cloth (some dating back to 1200AD). Many of the documents are highly

fragile and susceptible to damage through handling and exposure to light. The Jain collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, relating to social and religious life will provide a valuable context to the manuscripts.

It is of utmost importance to get the Jain community involved in this work as it develops a sense of community heritage pride and an understanding of this ancient world religion to the wider audience.   This is done through outreach initiatives in local community centres, multi-faith institutes, local museums, libraries and archives. We are developing a travelling exhibition to complement the major exhibitions/collections where we will be hosting a selection of community heritage events till 2012

It is expected that the Jain community will be active in volunteering at locations across the UK and will be on hand to answer questions, lead on creative heritage activities and promote diversity, tolerance and equality for all.   Along with this, we will be working in schools and other locations nationally and hope to see the mutual benefits of collaborative working between the mainstream and the Jain community. We will be evaluating all outreach work in looking at how successfully the wider communities have worked with the specific Jain community and to set benchmarks and targets against this.

We hope to influence the mainstream by offering intercultural and interfaith learning opportunities to an artistic heritage they would not normally have exposure to and aim to collaborate with the widest sections of the mainstream public. With this in mind we are expecting to bring new audiences to Jain community heritage and to examine what impact this will have.

 We will also be questioning the issue whether we need to redefine heritage and whose story we are telling. We will also look at what community heritage means to the mainstream and how, as an organisation, we respond to differing views of heritage from the mainstream.

We are planning training for teachers on Jainism and will run a series of INSET afternoons at LEAs throughout the country. These will be focused on the educational material produced through the JAINpedia project and will be led by suitably trained staff.

We will also produce a DVD for public mainstream and voluntary sector workers providing an introduction to the Jain religion and community.

Research has been conducted and has concluded that the main beneficiaries of the project will be:

- The Jain community of Britain
- Mainstream schools and students who study a plethora of religions in the multi-faith community that is Britain today
- The general public of Britain who are interested in a wide range of cultures that make up Britishness in the 21st Cent.
- Further to this, we hope to attract wider families with pre-school children, older people, the unemployed, young people and the disabled along with mainsteam visitors to the holding repositories (BL, Bod Library, V&A and Wellcome Trust Library)

18.   Diversity, Decision Making and Democracy

18.1   Professor Simon Roodhouse, Safe Hands Management Ltd

Introduction

The presentation is based on the three year evaluation of the V&A Cultural Diversity project undertaken by Safe Hands Management Ltd funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. In particular the use of social network analysis as an evaluative tool to determine the social patterns of interaction and decision making.

Building on earlier funded work the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 2005 undertook a £978,000 three year Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project across the three museum sites, which sought to celebrate the diverse heritages represented in the Museum collections and within wider communities to embed diversity and inclusion as part of the Museum's core business. There was an expectation that the project would help to create a step change in the way in which the V&A operates.

The project was originated, located in and managed by the Museum Education and Interpretation Division with a designated manager, Eithne Nightingale, Head of Access, Social Inclusion and Community Development reporting to the Head of Department, David Anderson who also carried responsibility on behalf of the museum executive for cultural diversity. Consequently he reported the project to the museum senior management team. A dedicated project manager, Marcel Bogues was appointed for the duration of the project and reported to Eithne Nightingale.

This was an ambitious project involving a wide spectrum of programme activity including generating institutional and staff culture change in a major international museum. It was a complex project with three extensive strands of activities. It related to wider political agendas particularly the sponsoring

government department (Department for Culture Media and Sport) interest in access widening participation and diversity.

A senior colleague suggested it was expected *"to raise the profile, both internally and externally with regard to cultural diversity".* Another colleague closely connected to the project also confirmed the expectations saying that the key question to be answered was *"where does cultural diversity sit in the museum and how might it change."* Another colleague said that the project was expected to address relationships with particular communities and the relevance of the museum collections to those communities and this was critical. Others described the project expectations as:

"Taking the integration of collections to a higher level, deeper and more fundamental, particularly the work on African objects";
and as *"raising the profile of the diversity agenda internally and also focusing attention on the workforce diversity as well as having a much clearer view of what works and does not work, in particular, a clearer idea of the impact and sustainability on audiences, that diversity is understood by curators and departments and is not simply Learning and Interpretation Division issue but above all else that more staff are aware of diversity as a result of the project."*

In addition, the project was expected to *"deliver all its activity outputs that would encourage ethnic groups to the museum, new audiences".*

An approach to evaluating the project
The approach agreed with the project management was largely quantitive through surveys and social network analysis which focussed on relationships and an identification of key partnerships.

Networks of people are an integral part of organisational life, both within and between any business or institution. Within an organisation like a national museum, understanding the connectivity of personnel can accelerate task completion by improving effective flows of information. It can also enhance career and personal development by assessing each individual's role within an organisation. It is a measurable means of understanding the social networks in an organisation in this case focused on cultural diversity.

Social Network Analysis (SNA) looks at the patterns that exist within groups of people. It can be understood as:

"The social network perspective encompasses theories, models, and applications that are expressed in terms of relational concepts or processes... The unit of analysis in network analysis is not the individual, but an entity consisting of a collection of individuals and the linkages among them." (Wasserman and Faust, 1994)

Social network analysis helps to interpret group data such as communities of practice. It can identify cliques, trace how information flows through networks and holistically understand what is going on with a connected number of individuals. SNA can also be used to test hypothesis for groups or clusters of people. Such as the idea boys socialise more with other boys. Or people with strong ties are more likely to support others with strong ties. Or that people with weak ties are useful for learning about new ideas or jobs (Granovetter, 1973 and 1982). SNA can also be mapped visually using network diagrams and sociograms. This enables the visual identification of groups, clusters, cliques, isolates, go-betweens and bridges.

In comparison to other types of methodological approach, SNA looks at the relationships that exist between people, rather than at the attributes of the people themselves. It also looks at the structure and composition of connections that make a group rather than looking at the characteristics of an individual. For instance, looking at the identification of a group, and what that group has in common, in comparison to a case study of an individual (Yin, 2003). In any group, SNA can be used to describe causal mechanisms. A causal mechanism can be a theory or explanation of why one event causes another (Kosowski 1996). Such as high connectivity levels in a network having an effect on spill-over. Within the cultural industries it is proposed that one cultural trend may affect another. It is this flow of ideas that can be particularly well understood by SNA as it can identify the spread of ideas from one group to another (or trend from one sector to another). This is especially the case if quantitative network analysis is coupled with rich descriptions. The quantitative results can highlight, for example, where a connection exists. Similarly through the use of quantitative longitudinal network analysis, the

spread of ideas can be traced over time. Qualitative research can then be used to enquire why an event occurs and interviews with the network actors involved can reveal why they have chosen to connect to other people.

Understanding organisational social networks in terms of what connections exist and why those connections exist, therefore, can aid effective collaboration that can improve productivity and efficiency. Social network analysis can be used to highlight subtle relationships and flows of information, and where the identification and modification of network configurations can improve business, task and personal performance[38].

The first network analysis

Of the 647 members of staff identified as receiving the questionnaire, 171 responded (including those who replied that they communicated with no-one about cultural diversity)[39]. This low 26% response rate may indicate some degree of apathy or confusion amongst staff when considering issues of cultural diversity. Nevertheless it provided a helpful baseline: a secure yardstick against which progress over the coming years may be measured.

From the first network map, there would appear to be very few of the most senior people in the Museum to whom staff refer when considering issues of cultural diversity. However, the most senior people can now be clear as to whom others do refer at present – the "gatekeepers" within the Museum.

More in-depth interrogation of the network map reveals a slightly different picture. Although a senior manager may not be directly approached by a
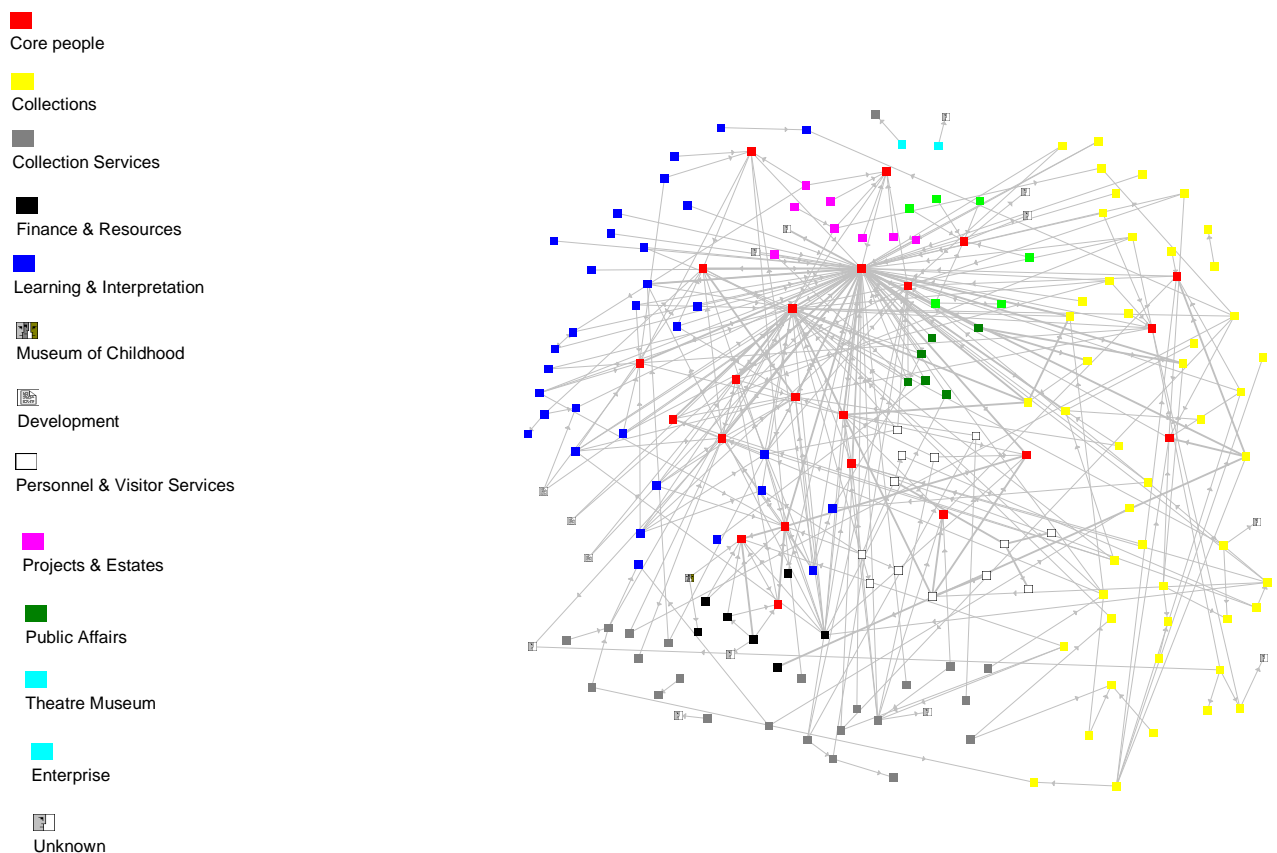
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[38] **References:** Doreian, (2001). Causality in Social Network Analysis. *Sociological Methods and Research* 30(1), pp 81-114;

Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 81, pp 1287-1303;

 Granovetter, M. (1982). The strength of weak ties: A network theory revisited;

 In Marsden, P.V and Lin, N (eds.), *Perspectives on Social Network Research*, pp 105-130. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage;

Wasserman, S. & Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: methods and applications*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods,* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

[39] Cultural diversity is a term that some respondents questioned.

member of staff, it is likely that senior staff can have considerable indirect influence. This emerges when mapping central "gatekeepers" themselves and how they communicate. This reveals a select group who appear to have considerably more power and influence than anyone else.

The other obvious conclusion is that seniority does not equate with influence in this area. Some comparatively junior members of staff seem to carry a lot more weight with staff than those in more senior positions.

Map 1: Anonymous Cultural Diversity Network, 2006 with Key

Key:
- Core people (red)
- Collections (yellow)
- Collection Services (grey)
- Finance & Resources (black)
- Learning & Interpretation (blue)
- Museum of Childhood
- Development
- Personnel & Visitor Services
- Projects & Estates (magenta)
- Public Affairs (green)
- Theatre Museum (cyan)
- Enterprise (cyan)
- Unknown

There were higher returns from two departments, Collections and Learning & Interpretation. An additional map just showing their responses is provided for the sake of clarity. This demonstrates the high degree of cross-over between departments and the likelihood that any future development work that focuses on a single department is likely to miss the critical part that staff in other departments play. Organisations with this degree of inter-departmental development are usually in the fortunate position of being able to launch

successful inter-disciplinary projects – and perhaps the evolution of the cultural diversity project is no exception.

## Map 2: Departmental Cultural Diversity Network, 2006
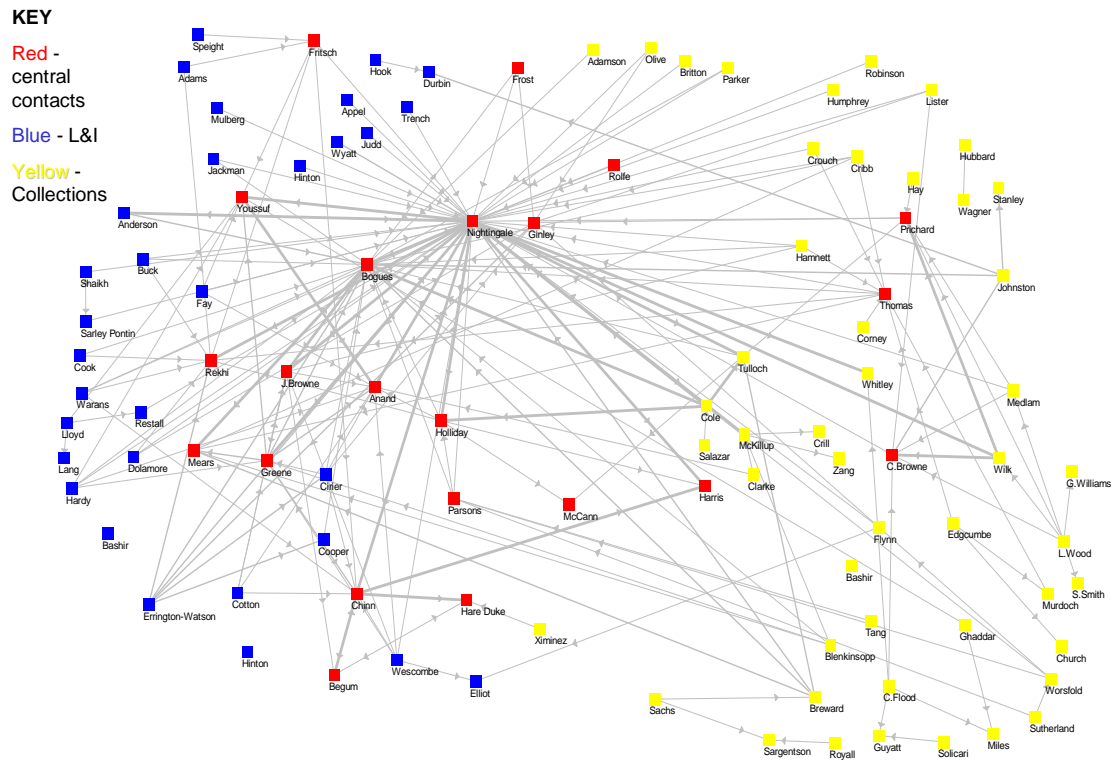
The Second Network analysis

In this second analysis, 743 staff members from the museum were sent the questionnaire. Of those 82 people responded (including those who replied that they communicated with no-one about cultural diversity). In comparison, the first cultural diversity analysis had 171 respondents from 647 staff members. This is a reduction in response from 26% in the first analysis to 9% in the second analysis. There is a suggestion that the poor response was because the network analysis questionnaire caused a problem.   It wasn't explained clearly enough in particular what cultural diversity covered for example curators working in the Asia Department are engaged in culture all the time. Nevertheless it suggests that the systematic cross division culture change ambition amongst museum staff was not achieved.

In the second network map, the highest ranked gatekeepers from the first analysis have been compared in the second analysis. The comparison shows that Eithne Nightingale and Machel Bogues are the highest ranked "gatekeepers" for both the first and second analysis (for all three questions). Furthermore most of the gatekeepers that appear in the first analysis are, in continue to be highly rated in the second analysis. This suggests that in terms of cultural diversity the key personnel have remained the same, even though there is demonstrable apathy in completing the questionnaire which has declined between the two studies. This illustrates the weakness of the indicative cultural diversity network described in map 3, and the need to build a much stronger social framework of people incorporating visible champions.

Map 3: Departmental Cultural Diversity Network, 2008
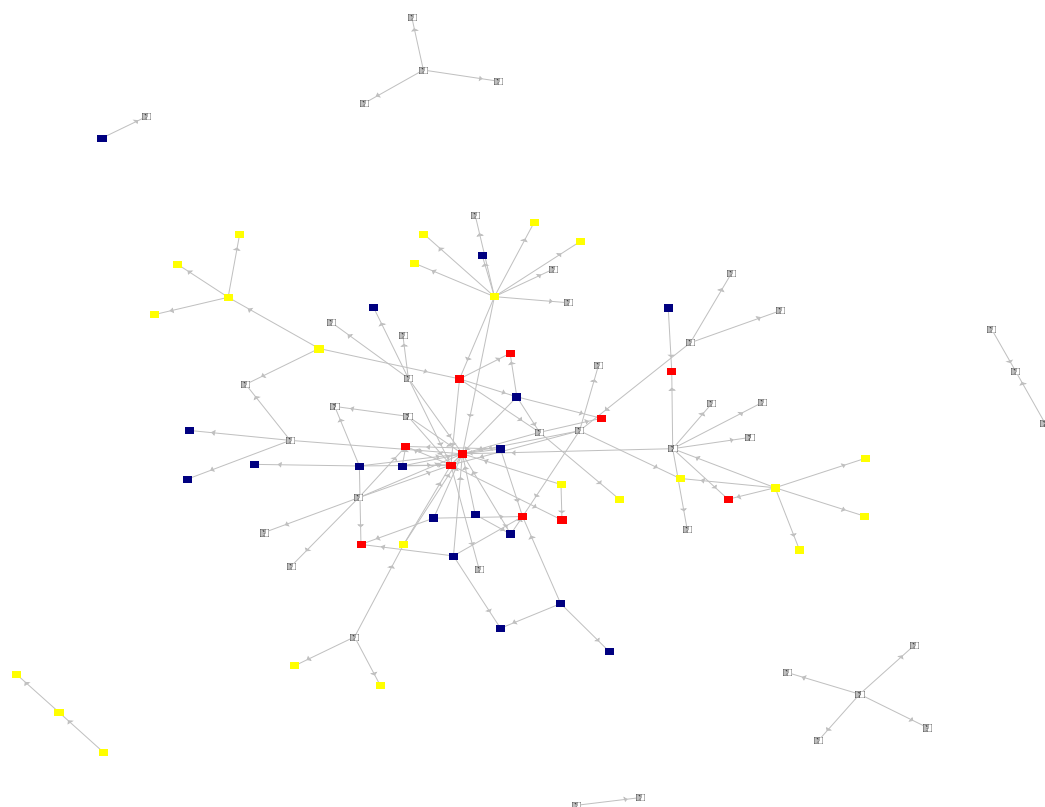
Key

Red - central contacts

Blue - L&I

Yellow - Collections

The results show that again Eithne Nightingale and Machel Bogues continue to be powerful and influential both within the first and second analysis. The results for the second analysis also show that there is no link between seniority level and level of influence. The networks are fragile and highly dependent on a small number of stakeholders.

Similarly to the previous study, the highest questionnaire returns came from Learning and Interpretation and Collections departments. The cross over occurs when a questionnaire respondent gives reference to individuals outside of their own department, although in most cases personnel referred to departmental colleagues.

Committees

As much of the decision making is carried out through committees it was decided to measure these to establish the networks. During the evaluation period there were several formal committees established as Management Board sub committees with an interest in cultural diversity such as training and staffing however the museum has established a subcommittee of the management board, the Access, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy Group(8 members) chaired by David Anderson to provide leadership. There is in addition an Access, Inclusion and Diversity implementation group (20 members) chaired by Eithne Nightingale. The implementation group had representatives from all museum departments. The strategy group was expected to advise and monitor policy whereas the implementation group was concerned with communication and sharing of good practice across the Museum. The following figure 1 provides an analysis of committee relationships, the thicker lines indicating stronger connections.

Figure 1: Museum Committee Relationships, 2008[40]
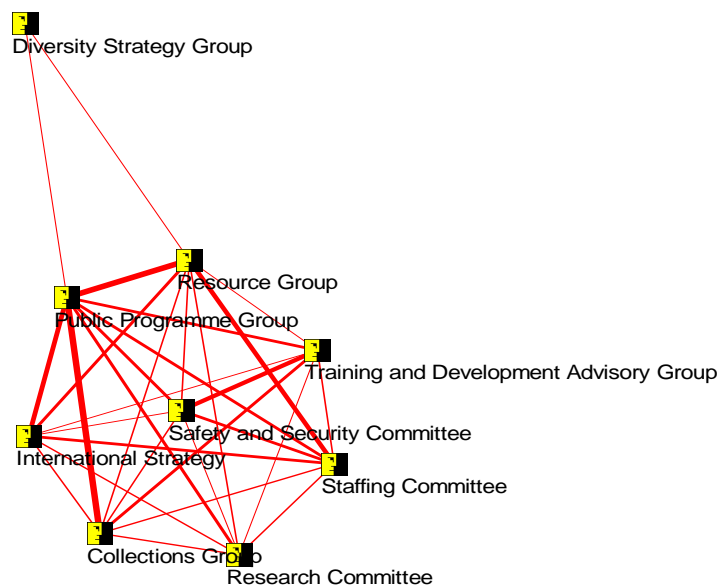
The following figure 2 describes the committee structure in 2008 and the individuals sitting on them. Although a snap shot in time it provides an insight into the key individuals (gatekeepers/influencers) central to the committee structure. This is particularly useful in understanding where the influence to change the museum culture may be located.

It does demonstrate that the diversity strategy group is not yet mainstreamed when considering committee membership

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[40] The committee structure and names have changed since this analysis was undertaken.

Figure 2: People to Museum Committee Network, 2008[41]
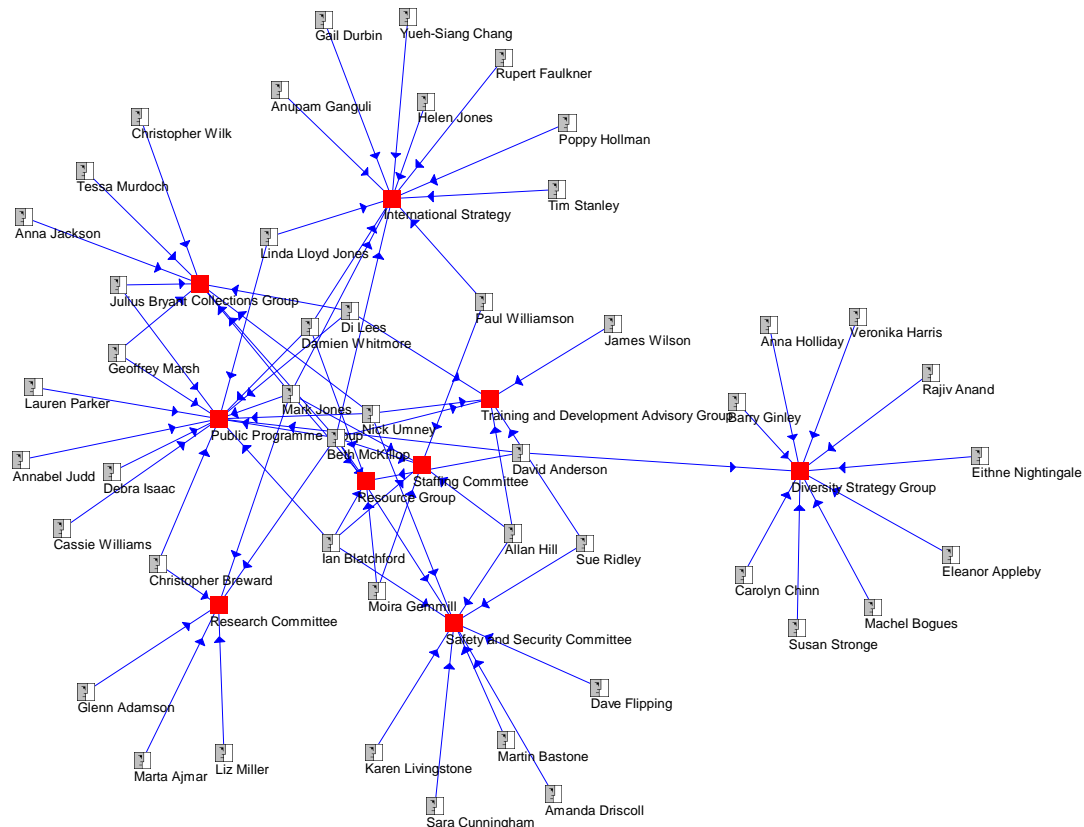
Other groups and committees have more members with multiple group membership thus demonstrating the level and strength of connectedness.

External contacts

The external contacts with regard to cultural diversity declared by the respondents show a huge variety of contacts – many of whom are not regular correspondents. The reason for this is that the project-based programmes launched by the Museum required short, intensive correspondence and work with specialists. External contacts are therefore regarded as an essential part of the often inter-disciplinary teams formed to ensure the success of a specific project. Many major commercial companies struggle to achieve this degree of

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[41] The names of individuals sitting on committees are in the museum public domain.

flexibility – a significant quality that appeared to have become a normal part of the Museum's work pattern.

The second round of analysis, like the first, showed a huge range of external contacts referenced. To aid the analysis, the answers given were grouped into specific institutions and then grouped again into type of institution (appendix 4 and 5 respectively). This further analysis showed that the British Museum was the most commonly referenced external contact, and Museums and Galleries in general were the most common group of contacts. This points to well networked peer groups and little penetration of other types of networks representing communities. In other words there is little evidence here of building cultural community partnerships, an ambition in this strand.

Map 4: External Stakeholders, 2008

Personal contacts

Museums or gallery related

Government related

Other

University or educational
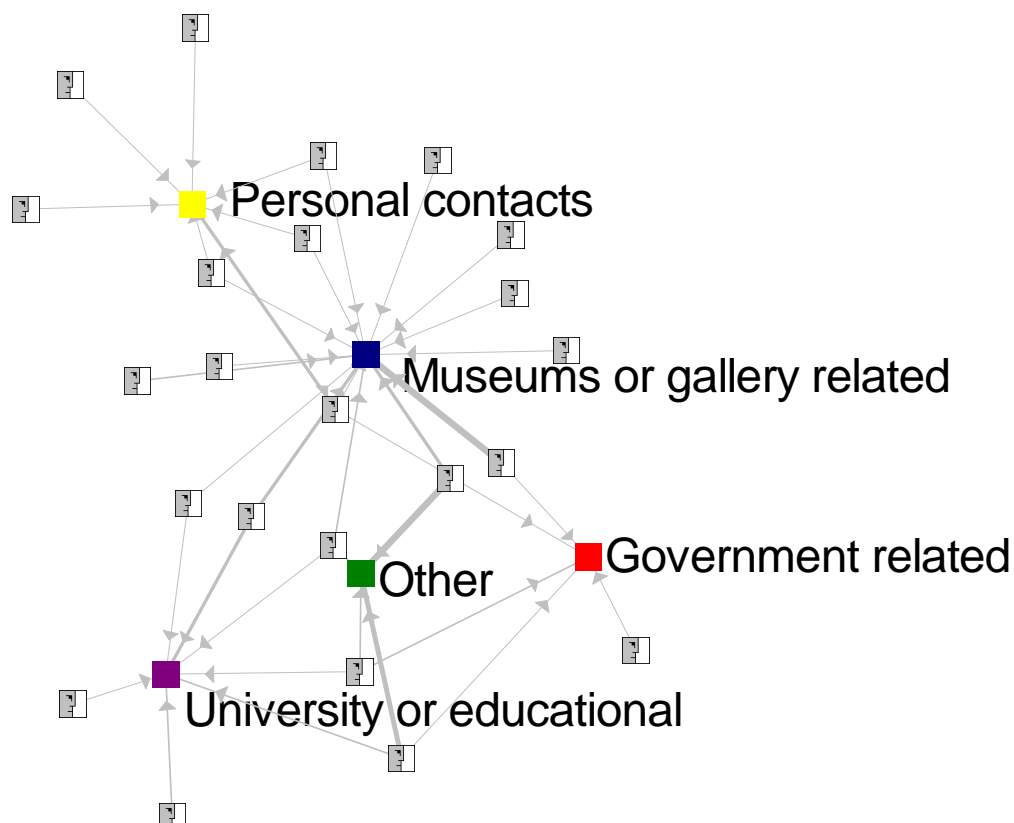
Conclusion

It has proved to be a useful tool when used with other forms of evaluation in understanding how a large organisation communicates and in particular, how

people network with each other and who the Influencers are. This is a helpful means of understanding the human dimension of an organisation, and the interventions necessary to achieve business objectives.

The methodology can also be applied to structures and in this case the committees of the Museum to measure the levels of integration and connectedness, thus effectiveness.

18.2. Carol Dixon (Heritage Education Consultant & Project Manager)

Introduction

The museum enterprise is increasingly understood as a reciprocal engagement with communities. Yet despite the democratic rhetoric, museums have not yet fully succeeded in creating ethical and equitable sustainable partnerships. Museums and other heritage service providers have failed to realise that **the 'contact zones' (the exhibition spaces, the event programmes, the publications, etc.) are 'political spaces', where issues of power and conflict come face to face.** However, many of these potential conflicts can be ameliorated if multiple convergence points are developed between museum practitioners and audiences before (and beyond) meeting in externally-facing exhibition and events spaces.

In my presentation I propose that museums, archives and other heritage venues need to establish links with community partners and audiences which see their roles (and respect their expertise) as **active agents** in the knowledge sharing process - re-casting the traditional role of participants, from 'users and choosers to makers and shapers.'

Slide 1 – Quote from David Fleming

The traditional structures of our museums, archives and other heritage venues – wittingly or unwittingly – support and underpin the established modalities of power.

The constructions of history and displays of the nation's collective memory - more often than not - still offer a distorted and limited set of representations of the British national identity, based on out-dated mythologies that 'normalise' the lived experiences of certain groups and establish these as **'core',** thus

rendering experiences of communities and peoples that fall outside that definition to the '**margins**'.

As David Fleming states:

> "*Traditionally, museums have not been positioned to contribute to social exclusion for four reasons:*
>
> 1. *Who has run them*
>
> 2. *What they contain*
>
> 3. *The way they have been run, and*
>
> 4. *What they have been perceived to be for – or, to put this another way, for whom they have been run.*"

David Fleming defines this argument as '*The Great Museum Conspiracy*', and states that contrary to at least some of the principles according to which museums were created, **museums have not been democratic, inclusive organisations, but agents of social exclusion, and not by accident, but by design.** In the publication *Museums, Prejudice and the Reframing of Difference*, Richard Sandell poses and seeks to answer the following question:

> "*To what extent can museums be understood to shape, not simply reflect, normative understandings of difference, acceptability and tolerance?*"

Sandell rightly see this as a moral and political challenge, as much as a social and cultural one – coming back to my point about the museum as a **political contact zone.**

How my opinions diverge from Sandell's views can be illustrated in the following two examples – the first featured in Chapter 2 of *Museums, Prejudice and the Reframing of Difference* and the second an example of good practice that I was fortunate to be part of when I commissioned an education project (funded by the MLA's Strategic Commissioning programme) back in 2005 which served as a template for equitable partnerships between four contrasting heritage institutions in London (including a black-led heritage organisation focusing on Black British history - the George Padmore Institute). All four heritage partners were challenged to research and then create an exhibition & publication that explored issues of identity and diversity through their archival collections – eventually published as the *Exploring Archive* series.

Slide 2 – Museum of Tolerance, LA (Calif.)

So, in Sandell's best practice case study he describes a visit to the **Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles (www.museumoftolerance.com)** where visitors to the museums are invited to enter the main exhibition space (known as the Tolerancenter) through one of two entrances: the first marked 'Prejudiced'; and the second, 'Unprejudiced'

Those attempting to enter through the second doorway find that it is locked, a device designed to frame the way in which visitors approach the interactive exhibits that they subsequently encounter. If they persist trying to enter the locked door the message, *"Think … Now use the other door"* is illuminated.

All visitors therefore progress through the 'Prejudiced' doorway into the Tolerancenter and experience a wide-ranging series of exhibits designed to highlight the causes and consequences of prejudice and discriminations, revealing the power of words and images to shape lives, promote respect for difference and to assert the significance of personal responsibility and individual choices.

BUT, whilst this is a useful technique (some might call it a 'gimmick') for encounters in the exhibition space – it is limited in its ability to address the power relations and issues of knowledge transfer & 'flow' that have been so eloquently discussed in the conference over the past few days by scholars such as Andrew Dewdney - and previously in print by Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, Sharon MacDonald and others. This technique still reflects the traditional transmission model whereby in a museum information and knowledge is transmitted from an exhibition to the visiting audience.

Slide 3 – Exploring Archives

A more constructivist model that enables the audience to bring something of themselves (and their lived experiences) to the encounter with the objects, archival documents and interpretation materials displayed in our heritage institutions is suggested in my second example – The *Exploring Archives* partnership project and its resulting series of published learning resources.

By planning the development of this resource using an ***equitable partnerships model*** we (collectively) created multiple points of contact and convergence – i.e. the board room, the planning meetings, the crafting of a partnership agreement, a shared approach to the collection research process & joint

decision-making over the structure and content of the final publications. Essentially, we created a model that transferred agency equally to the partners - irrespective of their relative size and 'status' as heritage organisations, the comparative scope, scale and content of their collections and the historical periods featured in the archives.

Slide 1	Slide 2	Slide 3
"Contrary to at least some of the principles according to which museums were created, museums have not been democratic, inclusive organisations, but agents of social exclusion, and not by accident, but by design." Source: *Positioning the museum for social inclusion*, by David Fleming (2002) - Chapter 16 in *Museums, society, inequality*, Richard Sandell (Ed.)	Description: This slide featured the home page images from the Museum of Tolerance website and URL: www.museumoftolerance.com The photograph of the entry doors for the museum's 'Tolerancenter' is shown in the centre of the image.	Description: This slide featured the front cover images and logos of the four, cross-curricular, multi-media *Exploring Archives* learning resource packs: • George Padmore Institute • Institute of Education (University of London); • Royal Geographical Society (with the IBG); • Royal Free Hospital Archive.

Slide 4: Who were the partners and how did the partnership model work?
4x archive partners:
- George Padmore Institute ; Institute of Education (University of London); Royal Geographical Society (with the IBG); Royal Free Hospital Archive

1x Research consultant and author:

- Dr Roshi Naidoo – an academic and cultural commentator, specialising in cultural politics for the heritage sector - & co-editor (with Jo Littler) of *The Politics of Heritage: the legacies of 'race'* (Abingdon Oxon and New York: Routledge 2005)

Focus groups and project consultees:

- Participants - teachers, freelance education consultants, archivists and other heritage practitioners, young people (drawn from a very broad and diverse population demographic)

MLA London:

- Funding (provided via a grant from the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills)
- Project management, partnership co-ordination, publication design, printing, marketing and distribution, evaluation, etc.

Slides 5-12: Images and narratives illustrating how the Exploring Archives partnership worked in practice

Slide 5: Aims and objectives	Slides 6-11: A selection of digitised items from the archives and narratives written by Roshi Naidoo (Copyright: George Padmore Institute.)	Slide 12: Further information
• To broker and sustain **equitable partnerships** between organisations • To build **capacity within the archives domain**	• Photograph of the **Black Students Movement** picket concerning local	Download copies of the Exploring Archives teaching learning resources via the MLA London website at **www.mlalondon.org.uk** & follow links to *‹Publications›, ‹Project Reports›* and *‹Exploring Archives›* Contact:

to engage children and young people in heritage education • To **raise awareness** of – and **widen access** to – unique archive collections • To develop innovative and creative, cross-curricular teaching and learning **materials for use in schools and in out-of-school contexts** that focus on diversity and equalities issues • To establish **best practice** methodologies for developing successful education projects	education issues in London (c.1975) • Photographs of founding members of the Caribbean Artists' Movement (CAM): John La Rose (c.1970), Andrew Salkey & Edward Kamau Brathwaite (1971) • **Caribbean Artists Movement** poster for Art Exhibition (21-26 May 1968). Poster art work by Karl 'Jerry' Craig. • Poster of the National Conference on the Rights of Black People in Britain - **'Towards Black Unity'** (London, 1971) • Poster publicising a **'Massive Anti-Fascist Demonstration'** in Southall (London, 1981)	Carol Dixon **Heritage Education Consultant** Carol.Dixon8@btinternet.com

Conclusion

What did we learn from the process that could be suggested as a replicable approach for other heritage practitioners?

- Establish a formal partnership agreement or 'protocol' (where the roles and responsibilities of all the partners are clearly defined and summarised – including issues about meeting frequency, remuneration, IPR and copyright, joint marketing, communications and information dissemination, etc.)
- Establish equitable decision-making procedures
- Agree a set of shared priorities
- Be open to alternative and innovative ways of working that emerge from the joint planning process
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity and equalities via your partnership practices.

A partnership approach of this kind encourages skill sharing to take place both within and between the heritage institutions involved and with community-based and HE partners, leading to capacity developments within all the partner organisations.

The partnership project helped to raise levels of awareness about diversity amongst staff and managers within and across all the institutions.

10-minute introductory presentation by:
Carol Dixon - Heritage Education Consultant
Carol.Dixon8@btinternet.com
26 March 2010

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The Politics of Heritage: the legacies of 'race', co-edited by Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (Routledge, 2005)

20.   Faith Tour

A group of approximately twenty-five delegates joined three V&A curators and Juliette Fritsch, Head of Gallery Interpretation, Evaluation and Resources and Marilyn Greene, Intercultural Officer, in a tour of the Buddhist Sculpture Galleries, the Jameel Gallery and the Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries.

John Clarke, Curator, Asian Department explained that in planning the Buddhist Sculpture Gallery the remit of the V&A as a museum of art and design was uppermost in my thinking and the space was seen from the start as a secular space. At the same time it was equally clear that Buddhist imagery could only be understood and appreciated if a framework of knowledge of religious doctrine and its development was also given.
This led to a system of dual panels in each room: one focussing on the geography and history of the region (with a map in each case) and the other on religion and its relationship to art history. The gallery was therefore conceived of in terms of two, often parallel, journeys: one the journey of Buddhism and its spread from India to the rest of Asia, the other as the journey of religious doctrines and its reflection in art. Other interpretation in the form of AV points in two of the rooms was felt to be essential in explaining the unfamiliar concepts involved. These consist of three films, two showing sculpture in its relationship to architecture, the other focussing on a living Buddhist tradition in Asia. There is also an interactive which deals with the language of posture and hand gesture in sculpture.

Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper, Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass Department explained the transformation of the old church plate galleries. The Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries accommodate collections of Judaica and display sacred silver from the V&A alongside silver loaned by parish churches and institutions from all over the UK. Examples from the leading museum collection of stained glass enhance the use of space. Screens designed by jeweller Wendy Ramshaw display stained glass lit by both natural and artificial means to create the ambiance of ecclesiastical space.

The significance of each of the objects displayed is explained in concise label texts which benefited from advice provided by leading practitioners including a

Catholic priest from Brompton Oratory and a Rabbi from the New West End Synagogue. The galleries display objects which represent living faiths for which works of art are still being produced. Recent commissions by the V&A including a kiddush cup by Tamar de Vries Winter and a silver lectern bible binding by Rod Kelly; the loans from Art and Christianity Enquiry Trust, a triptych by Graham Jones inspired by St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of Creation and a cast glass font by Colin Reid (currently on loan to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral as an award for the ACE Biennual Prize entry for best work of art in a sacred space) encourage our visitors to engage with these displays and to relate to historic collections as works of art and to understand their meaning as religious objects.

Unlike the Cultural Galleries devoted to Buddhist Sculpture and Islamic Art, the Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries are presented as an opportunity to explore the materials and techniques of the objects represented and to identify with the role of the artists and craftsmen whose work is displayed there.

Drivers for Change

21. Workforce diversity: positive action and other steps towards lasting cultural change

21.1 Lucy Shaw, Diversity Coordinator, Museums Association

This presentation is in part taken from a paper written in 2009 by Maurice Davies of the Museums Association and myself for Cultural Trends magazine which is due to be published later this year, entitled: 'Measuring the ethnic diversity of the museum workforce and the impact and cost of positive-action training, with particular reference to the Museums Association's Diversify scheme'.

For the purpose of this conference I will give you an overview of the workforce data we collected and explore the impact of Diversify, which is the longest running positive-action scheme in the museum sector and probably the longest running scheme in the cultural sector as a whole.

Diversify aims to ensure that people from previously excluded minority-ethnic groups are trained for mid-senior level jobs in the museum sector. Positive action is lawful under the RRA if the proportion of people from a 'particular racial group' employed in 'particular work' is less than the proportion of people from that racial group in the UK. The key is that the scheme offers training and not employment – individuals are trained so they can then compete on equal terms with other applicants.

Slide 2. The headline finding from our research is that the proportion of people from minority-ethnic backgrounds in the UK museum sector increased from 2.5% in 1993 to about 7% in 2006-08. This 7 % figure varies between 1.3% and 10.4% depending on the type of museum and the type of job and compares to an overall minority-ethnic working-age population of 12.6% in England in 2008.

Slide 3 is based on workforce data collected in the 1990's by the Museum Training Institute and the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation. It shows that in 1993, non-white staff in museums accounted for only 2.5% of the workforce. By 1998 this figure had risen to 4.2% for non-white employees. In spite of an increase from the 1993 figures, the overall figure of 4.2% still represented a significant underrepresentation of minority-ethnic individuals in the museum workforce because at the time the overall UK workforce was 7% non-white.

Now, in order to meet the requirements of the RRA it is necessary to annually monitor workforce ethnicity and collect data. Until relatively recently we were still using data collected in the 1990's that I'm showing on this slide. As well as being out of date – this data also doesn't provide the detail needed to meet the requirements of the law. In response to this the Museums Association undertook surveys of the sector workforce based on census categories for ethnicity in 2006 and then in 2007.

The aim was to establish the number of people from minority-ethnic backgrounds working with collections, in communications or in management positions and therefore to provide a justification for positive-action training.

Slide 4 shows the results from the 39 questionnaires that were returned in 2007. The survey represents over 7000 staff working in regional hub and national museums and galleries in England. So if we take the Collections category of work for example – we can see that white staff account for 93.8% of the workforce.

Museums Libraries and Archives Council profiling
Following on from this data collection exercise, and under pressure from David Lammy MP, MLA undertook a large-scale profiling exercise with the aim of establishing a standard template within the museum sector (in England) for the collection of workforce diversity data specifically in relation to ethnic background and disability in order to present museum-level, regional, and national pictures against which progress could be assessed and developed.
Slide 5 shows the results of the 2007 audit which encompassed regional hub and national museums in England. MLA has established an online research tool

to enable users to generate a variety of different statistical reports from the data collected by MLA covering workforce ethnicity in terms of, for example, age, job-level, gender and region, as well as in terms of job type, as in Slide 5. It can be found on MLA's Research Resources Web site.

Discussion of museum workforce ethnicity data

The research Maurice and I did for Cultural Trends also looked at workforce data collected from a range of other sources including the Mayors Commission on African and Asian Heritage, the National Museum Directors Conference, Cultural Leadership Programme and the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council.

I need to add a caveat here – we found the data analysis a challenge as it had been collected in different ways using different categories of job types and ethnicity. Our paper explores the data in greater depth that I can't afford time-wise to go into here.

However, Slide 6 summarises data from 2006-8, and compares it to that from the 1990s. In 1993 about 2.5% of museum staff were minority-ethnic UK-wide and by 2006-8 this had increased to around 7%. This means that the proportion of minority-ethnic staff in museums almost trebled in fifteen years 1993-2008. From an admittedly very low starting point, this is a greater rate of increase than in the UK population as a whole: over the seventeen years 1991 to 2008 the minority-ethnic proportion of the UK population increased from 5.5% to 12%.

This shows an encouraging increase in the minority-ethnic workforce over the past decade, but museums still significantly lag behind the UK population as a whole.

Recent working age data for 2007-08 from the Nomis website indicates that 12.0% of the population is minority-ethnic with a total working age population who are minority ethnic of 12.6%.

If the museum sector is working towards a representative workforce the percentage of museum staff from minority-ethnic backgrounds should be around 12%.

Taking positive action: Diversify

In 1999 the Museums Association and the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester launched two experimental positive-action training schemes in partnership with two museum services.

Then, in 2000 the Paul Hamlyn Foundation offered funding for four further positive-action bursaries.

However, significant expansion of Diversify didn't come until the implementation of the government's Renaissance in the Regions programme to invest in regional museums in England.

The Renaissance report stated: '...museum culture has been identified as one of the main barriers to change. If the product is to change, the culture must change too.' One of the necessary cultural changes identified by the report was to create a more diverse workforce.

From 2002 the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has provided funding to the Museums Association for Diversify through its Renaissance programme. There have been seven MLA phases of funding for the scheme to-date. Our paper for Cultural Trends looked at the first four phases which ran from 2002–2008. These supported two models of positive-action training within Diversify:

- A one-year bursary consisting of a masters in museum studies plus a paid work-experience placement in a museum of up to 5 months
- And a two-year traineeship consisting of a masters in museum studies taken alongside a paid work-experience placement in a museum

The MA also offered 'Affiliate' status of the scheme to positive action trainees being funded separately to Diversify.

Up to March 2008, the Museums Association had supported 84 people over a period of six years to undertake positive-action training. This figure includes

affiliate members of the scheme. 90% of diversify trainees and bursary recipients during this period completed their training.

Impact of Diversify

So how effective has the Diversify scheme been in working towards achieving a more ethnically diverse workforce?

100% of the diversify trainees in the sample were employed in the sector six months or more after completing their training. The success rate for diversify bursary recipients was less at 72%.

The speedier success of the Diversify traineeship model in preparing individuals to seek employment in the sector isn't surprising when we consider that in addition to a masters qualification, the traineeship model offers a longer and more sustained work-based experience in a museum.

In the longer term, through tracking Diversify participants' career progress, we know that bursary students do begin to catch up.

Impact on sector as a whole

We found that there is no simple way of assessing the impact of positive-action schemes such as Diversify, especially as they are usually seen as contributing to a long-term change in attitudes in individual organisations and the sector as a whole. 'Positive-action training aims to create long-term changes in the museum workforce. It is not a short-term quick-fix'.

The impact of positive-action schemes needs therefore to be seen as greater than the short-term employment success of the individuals involved. An evaluation of Diversify in 2007 reported:

> 'Diversify keeps the subject matter of social and cultural inclusion alive and on the agenda; and the gold plus factor is that the scheme delivers practical solutions with explicit impact on the professional lives of individuals. Moreover, Diversify has spearheaded change at policy level within the sector'.

Where Next?

In 2006 the Museums Association was able to realise a long held ambition to expand the scheme to offer training to deaf and disabled people. With funding from the former Museums and Galleries Disability Association, Colchester and Ipswich Museums, the University of Leicester's Department of Museum Studies and with advice and guidance from Shape, the MA developed a pilot training model named the 'The Bill Kirby Traineeship' after the late Bill Kirby. MLA is now funding 3 further BKTs which are currently being recruited for.

The MA is also offering a new strand of training opportunities to people from less affluent backgrounds that Helen Wilkinson will talk about after me.

Schemes like Diversify are a 'slow-burn' with potential to lead to gradual changes in organisational culture, however, in order to enable a more rapid shift new ways of looking at embedding workforce diversity need to be explored.

Last year, with funding from MLA through Renaissance, the MA began a new programme of organisational development designed to embed diversity, in its broadest sense, and create more inclusive working practices. A cohort of 10 museums was recruited in summer 2009 to the 'Smarter Museums' programme. These museums are being given the opportunity to develop and strengthen their vision and values to help create more sustainable, open and inclusive organisations for the benefit of the museum workforce and visitors alike. It is hoped that the Smarter Museums programme will provide an important demonstration project to the sector.

This new funding also offers support and development work with the regional hub museums. Each Hub museum is being offered the support of a workforce diversity advisor to encourage, challenge and progress their approach to workforce diversification.

Significantly, both strands of this new work are taking the term 'diversity' in its broadest sense, shifting the emphasis from focussing on ethnicity to addressing all forms of workforce diversity, in line with the current social policy thinking. It will be interesting to see if this shift in policy and practice has a greater and

more significant impact on embedding diversity and changing organisational culture than positive action training has had over the past couple of decades.

To conclude

It is good news that between 1993 and 2008 the proportion of minority-ethnic people working in UK museums has almost trebled, from 2.5% to 7%. In national museums the proportion in 2006 was almost 11%.

However, during the same period the proportion of minority-ethnic people in the UK population as a whole increased from 5.5% to 12%. In London, where most national museums are located, around 30% of the population is minority-ethnic. This means that there continues to be a significant under-representation of minority-ethnic staff in the museum workforce.

Government and its agencies have funded some areas of workforce diversification and have given strong rhetorical support. However they have failed to set a robust strategic framework or clear targets. An overall strategy, or action plan, with measurable goals for diversification of the workforce, is overdue.

Final slide

This paper has concentrated on ethnic diversity, which was the main policy priority of government and the Museums Association for most of the first decade of the 21st century. Now there is a growing interest in a wider definition of diversity that takes account of factors such as socio-economic background as well as ethnicity. It will be instructive to monitor the impact of that policy shift on efforts to increase the ethnic diversity of the workforce.

I'm therefore delighted to be able to introduce Helen Wilkinson, a consultant specialising in research, policy and project development. Helen's presentation will consider the new public policy context for workforce diversification and will introduce a new initiative from the MA, designed to include representation of people from low-income backgrounds in the museum sector.

21.2   Diversity and inequality: turning our attention to class - Helen Wilkinson, independent consultant

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This paper reflects on the relationship between diversity and equality, in the context of a new initiative by the Museums Association (MA) to run a programme of traineeships for people from less affluent backgrounds who wish to work in the museum sector.

What the MA is doing:
- The MA has for ten-years run a programme of positive action traineeships for BME and – more recently – for disabled people. Funding from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) through Renaissance has made the initiative possible.
- The MA hasn't stopped running positive action programmes for people from these groups, but last year it took the decision to ask MLA to fund a new programme of entry-level positive-action traineeships targeted at people from less affluent backgrounds. These traineeships replace the entry-level BME traineeships that the MA has run previously.
- I used to work for the MA and am now freelance but I still do quite a lot of work for the MA and I undertook the research that underpinned the decision to move to the new kind of traineeships, and I designed the application process and criteria.
- Designing appropriate eligibility criteria was complex. The MA did not just want to look at applicants' current income, though that is one factor. It also wanted to try to understand the backgrounds they came from. Obviously this is hard and complex – but we are looking at things like what school they went to (how many pupils get 5 good GCSEs), did they get free school meals, did either of their parents go to university, have they experienced long-term unemployment, etc.
- Six traineeships available – some of which are open to people who aren't graduates

- Very high response rate – 200 applications received

Why the MA decided to target people from less affluent backgrounds:
- To enter the museum profession in the UK, most people undertake unpaid internships or volunteer – sometimes for months or years. And most people undertake a post-graduate qualification at their own expense. So there are obvious economic barriers to entry to the profession. And once you get a museum job, the pay is lower than most comparable professions – so it's harder to pay back career development debt than in other professions.
- For some time, the MA has been concerned about the impact of this. Opportunities to enter the sector are limited for people who can't afford to volunteer extensively. Maurice Davies undertook research for his report, the Tomorrow People, which revealed that there are a lot of angry, disenchanted people who've tried really hard to get into the profession and given up.
- Some quotes from people who wrote to Maurice when he was researching The Tomorrow People:
  - "I am angry towards a profession that claims to value social inclusion and diversity, yet discriminates against people who cannot afford financially to spend years volunteering in unpaid posts."
  - "I come from a C2DE background... and was the first in my family to do A-levels. I studied with the Open University for eight years to acquire my BA...I did a cleaning job in a factory to pay my way...[The respondent then describes her anxiety at taking out loans to pay for her MA.]
  - I left full-time education at 19, but it wasn't until I was 28 that I finally managed to achieve my childhood dream [of a job in museums]."

And, by way of contrast:

- o "I had written to my tutors in Oxford and to people I had subsequently worked with asking if they knew of anyone who could point me in the right direction, as it seemed silly not to take advantage of potential networking opportunities... I was given a contact at [a major national] museum, and soon began volunteering, fitting it around [paid part-time work elsewhere.] I really enjoyed working in the department and when a museum assistant vacancy came up I was determined to submit a great application... To my great delight I got that job..."

- That is the museum-specific context – but a concern with socio-economic inequality also fits with broader policy developments
  - o Inequality is being taken more seriously again. Some of you may be familiar with the work undertaken by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett and published as The Spirit Level – this book has had a lot of publicity and has been taken seriously by politicians of all parties. The book demonstrates how health and social problems are linked to inequality.

A key point to note is that in unequal societies, these problems are worse for everyone, not just the poorest.

  - o At the same time, Alan Milburn was asked by the Cabinet Office to look at social mobility and entry to the professions. His report was published last year and the government has accepted most of its recommendations, though it's obviously not clear how many of its commitments will survive an election.
  - o Milburn's main finding was that people's life chances are very much shaped by their family background – by wealth, where they live, by their parent's occupations and aspirations for them, and so on.

- One of its more depressing conclusions was that social mobility has got worse in the last 30 years – there was a boom in social mobility for the post-war generation, but this has levelled off or been reversed.

- Equality Act – which was near the end of its progress through parliament at the time of the conference includes a new duty for public authorities to have regard for socio-economic inequalities when making strategic decisions.

- So conclusion – many people are disadvantaged when it comes to entering professions like the museum sector, including those from less affluent backgrounds. And there's a widespread recognition that something needs to be done.

In developing its programme, the MA was influenced especially by...

Guardian - range of diversification initiatives, including low-income post-grad training bursaries (Joseph said more about these during the panel discussion)

Organisations which have a commitment to advertising all volunteering and internship opportunities – including the BBC and Guardian

Also – the new DCMS/Jerwood creative bursaries –paid internship opportunities for people from low income backgrounds.

Some potential problems/pitfalls with trying to target people from low income backgrounds:

Class is such a slippery thing to define – how do we target the programme?

Will applicants be happy to be known as "the trainee from a less affluent background?"

Conclusion

I think the MA is absolutely right to be trying out this approach – and I think it's very commendable that MLA has supported them. But there is a limitation of this approach – it has the potential to help to improve the social mobility of a small number of people. But it won't necessarily do anything to address the underlying problem of a lack of social justice.

There's a paradox that, as a society, we are much more accepting of diversity than we were 40 years ago. It is much easier to be a woman, to be gay, to be disabled or to be black and to get a good job or to play a part in public life than it was in, say, the 1970s. But society is much more unequal – and the poorest people in society find it even harder to do all those things than they did 40 years ago. And we have become a more unequal society. (And of course this isn't just about the white, straight, able-bodied, male working class – it's true of all poorer people.)

Do initiatives like this really help to redress the balance, or do they just promote diversity, without really doing anything to overcome inequality?

If diversity really has moved from the Margins to the Core, then that absolutely is something to celebrate. But we all need to turn pretty quickly to thinking seriously about the persistent and worsening inequality in our society and work out what we're going to do about that.

21.2.1 Helen Wilkinson - Further notes for Q&A

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Inequality is increasing on a global scale, as well as within UK.

GDP PPP top ten counties versus bottom ten countries. In 1960 – ration was 21, now over 50. (that's using purchasing power parities – PPP. Much, much higher if you use market exchange rates.)

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