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Equity and Inclusion in Museums

Programme Pilot 2021–22

Evaluation report for participant learning

June 2022

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Introduction

Museum Development UK (MDUK) recognises our role, alongside that of museums, to develop an inclusive sector that challenges and opposes racism and inequality and we work to develop a shared approach to support museums to address institutional, sectoral and societal inequalities. In July 2020, MDUK released a statement in response to the international Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd in the USA, stating its commitment to learn, taking action and to listen to what was happening across the globe.

In response to the Black Lives Matter Movement, MDUK established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group. The purpose of this group is to share ideas, concerns, challenges and our aspirations for the museum sector with regards to diversity and inclusion and how MDUK can enable positive change.

In 2021–22 MDUK, with funding from Arts Council England and Association of Independent Museums (AIM), delivered a national EDI programme for museums from across England and Wales.

The key aims of the programme were to:

1 Support museums to develop a consistent level of understanding of EDI and what it means for their organisations and for their visitors.

2 Raise awareness of museum specific challenges and opportunities relating to EDI and support the development of workable solutions.

3 Highlight and enable inclusive good practice at the museums.

4 Empower museums to tackle systematic issues.

5 Explore a new model of working for MDUK.

MDUK commissioned NoBarriers, an independent consultancy specialising in EDI in the cultural sector, to devise and deliver the programme (Appendix 1). Titled Equity and Inclusion in Museums, the pilot programme ran from 2 November 2021 to 31 March 2022. 20 museums were recruited to participate in October 2021 and the evaluation of participant learning occurred between April – June 2022. Participant museums from England and Wales were based in the following areas: East of England, East Midlands, North East, North West, South West, West Midlands, Glamorgan and Cerdigion in Wales.

Two members of staff from each participating museum were enrolled on the programme to ensure that decisions and actions would be implemented effectively within their organisation. The 20 museums were divided into 2 cohorts based on their level of engagement with EDI issues at time of recruitment.

Cohort 1 was comprised generally of smaller museums who were completely fresh to the topic; while cohort 2 was made up of larger organisations who were more advanced in their thinking and approach to EDI.

This report is the evaluation of participant learning (covering aims 1-4 above). Working with the participants, the evaluation process tracked the development of their knowledge, understanding, skills and planning relating to EDI throughout the programme. Due to the sensitive nature of the programme, feedback and commentary from the participants has been anonymised.

Separate to this report is the internal evaluation of the pilot model (covering aim 5 above) to help inform future planning for MDUK. Evaluation of the pilot explores the model and practicalities of partnership, recruitment, capacity to engage, programme content and level of challenge.

Evaluation methodology and logic framework

A logic framework has been used to plan the evaluation. A logic framework, or theory of change model, seeks to identify the ultimate outcomes and impacts of programme, understand how the planned activities will lead to those outcomes and impacts, measure the changes that take place, assess whether the activities were effective in leading to the changes we anticipated and what external factors have had an influence. Although much of the thinking behind the pilot has been carried out with the EDI Programme Oversight Group and through consultation with NoBarriers, the consultants who devised and delivered the programme, it is useful to revisit the assumptions that have been made, and review and confirm the intended outcomes and impacts.

The logic model process helps to set out the link between the activities and the intended outcomes. It illustrates the theory of how an activity leads to a short-term outcome which in turn leads to medium- and longer-term impacts. The evaluation will assess:

- Whether the project "theory" is effective

- What outcomes and impacts were achieved

- Extent to which the activities led to the intended outcomes/impacts

- What external factors influenced the project outcomes and impacts.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of participant learning for the Equity and Inclusion in Museums programme pilot includes:

1 Project outputs
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs – collection of participant data for the pilot).

2 Project outcomes
Analysis of the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and planning relating to EDI.

The evidence pertaining to project outcomes was collected in two ways. Individual participants were sent a short survey **(Appendix 2a)** following sessions 3, 6 and 10 to reflect on the preceding batch of sessions. The results from these surveys is in the project outcome tables, below. At the end of the programme, the two members of staff from each museum were sent a questionnaire **(Appendix 2b)** to complete together. On the whole responses to the evaluation declined over the course of the programme **(see KPI table on the next page)**.

1. Project Outputs

Key Performance Indicators

Exclusions – The MDUK long-range questionnaire may be issued to participants after 12 months but will not be included in this evaluation report.

Key performance indicators	Target for pilot up to March 2022	Actual
Number of individual participants	40	39*
Number of museums represented by participants	20	20
Number of sessions / hours on course / in workshops (excludes mentoring and peer group participation)	10	10 sessions each comprising 2.5 hours
Number and hours of 1-2-1 sessions	40	43 sessions comprising approximately 73 hours
Number of EDI plans developed (1 per museum)	20**	13
Responses to evaluation survey 1	40	29
Responses to evaluation survey 2	40	24
Responses to evaluation survey 3	40	12
Responses to end of programme questionnaire (1 per organisation)	20	10

*39 at start (two museums sent only one person; one museum shared it between 3). 38 at end – one person moved job and wasn't replaced.

**Some plans are being development after the programme.

2. Project outcomes

The following five short-term outcomes were identified for the pilot. It was agreed that these were largely achievable in the short to medium term (eg. by programme end) and could be measured in the evaluation.

1 Participants demonstrate a consistent **understanding** of EDI and how it relates to their museum's audiences, workforce, governance and programmes.

2 Participants have increased **confidence** around current language for discussing EDI and talking about difficult issues / topics.

3 Participants develop the **skills** to identify internal issues, external opportunities and barriers related to EDI within their organisation.

4 Participants identify and **plan** ways to improve recruitment, access and participation at their museums.

5 Organisational **ownership** is achieved through participants' involving the wider workforce in developing EDI plans.

1

Participants demonstrate a consistent understanding of EDI and how it relates to their museum's audiences, workforce, governance and programmes.

An overwhelming majority of respondents of the 3 evaluation surveys indicated that they gained an understanding of EDI through participation in the programme as follows:

What did you take from the event?	Responses from sessions 1–3		Responses from sessions 4–6		Remaining sessions	
Answer choice	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
I gained knowledge and understanding of the session topic	29	0	24	0	11	1

At programme end, 10 museums completed the evaluation questionnaire, providing more in-depth responses to how their understanding of EDI has developed because of the programme. They also elaborated on how this new understanding relates to audiences, workforce, governance, and programmes. So soon after programme end, many participants are focused on one or two priority areas to embed their EDI learning. For example, some have prioritised the diversification of the board of trustees and / or their volunteer base; while others are looking at programming such as outreach programmes, revisiting gallery interpretation, decolonising collections development and research, membership programmes, and recruitment. Overall, when participants reference 'diversification' (of programmes, workforce, collections, governance), they are

primarily focused on representations of ethnicity – though a few also reference LGBTQ+ and disability access and inclusion.

Of the 10 responses there is just one where accepted (current) terminology when discussing EDI remains problematic as evidenced in the questionnaire. Additionally, they convey the view that if the museum attracts a racially [sic] diverse visitor base then it will solve underrepresentation of the board and workforce.

Though most responses to this question were brief, all museums did acknowledge that the programme has had a profound impact both on them personally and their organisation and that plans are being progressed at different levels and pace. Many reference the strategic plans that are in development, how they have established benchmarks and how data will be collected

to monitor progress. Many have established EDI champions or a working group and developed in-house EDI training for the workforce. One museum in particular, made reference to a workforce development plan to better support staff who identify as being from one or more protected characteristics.

2

Participants have increased confidence around current language for discussing EDI and talking about difficult topics.

A majority of respondents of the 3 evaluation surveys indicated that they have increased confidence discussing EDI through participation in the programme as follows:

What did you take from the event?	Responses from sessions 1—3		Responses from sessions 4—6		Remaining sessions	
Answer choice	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
My confidence in discussing issues relating to the topics of the sessions has increased.	28	1	23	1	12	0

At programme end, 10 respondents to the evaluation questionnaire, demonstrate use of consistent and correct terminology relating to EDI. There is also clear evidence across the contingent that increased confidence has led to pro-actively raising EDI issues with colleagues. Examples given include:

- flagging EDI barriers with senior managers

- reporting on the EDI programme to the board of trustees

- discussing with collections manager the reinterpretation of collections to show different community perspectives

- challenging not just how objects are interpreted but what objects are collected in the future (so that collections represent the communities served by the museum)

- bringing EDI to the attention of the Local Authority that runs the museum

Respondents also give examples of instances where they have actively challenged prejudice and inequality at the museum as a result of this increased confidence including:

- A discussion around the inadequacies of the current visitor experience for neurodivergent visitors.

- Challenging volunteers who oppose EDI training.

- Challenging inappropriate language and prejudicial views of a colleague towards a particular visitor group.

- Discussing the museum's shortfalls with a range of external groups.

Lastly, respondents have also been pro-active in initiating difficult conversations around EDI, such as:

- With other colleagues and members of the workforce (including trustees and volunteers).

- In volunteer training to raise awareness of microaggressions and challenging inappropriate use of language.

- With front of house volunteers around transatlantic slave trade and its relevance today in confronting prejudice.

- Discussions at board level to assess the organisation's shortcomings in relation to inadequate / inaccessible facilities and organisational structures.

- Inclusivity in relation to mental health; content and language that can trigger trauma and re-traumatising visitors who identify as being from protected characteristics.

3

Participants develop the skills to identify internal issues, external opportunities and barriers related to EDI within their organisation.
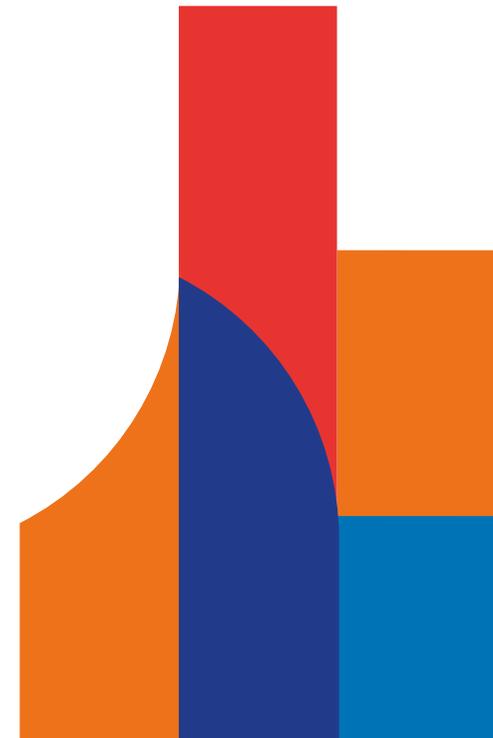
Most of the respondents to the 3 evaluation surveys indicated that they have developed the necessary skills related to EDI through participation in the programme as follows:

What did you take from the event?	Responses from sessions 1–3		Responses from sessions 4–6		Remaining sessions	
Answer choice	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
I gained new or improved existing skills which can be implemented back at my organisation	24	5	23	1	12	0
I feel able to share these skills with colleagues	26	3	23	1	12	0

At programme end, respondents to the evaluation questionnaire provided brief, often superficial replies to this question; or else they failed to provide clear examples. For example, many mention various protected characteristics but few (if any) discuss the intersectionality (eg. where someone identifies with two or more protected characteristics). Another referenced the language skills they have gained while another referenced 'soft skills' without describing what they mean by this. There is much repetition to knowledge and understanding gained (as opposed to skills). It is fair to assume that perhaps the distinction between skills and understanding could be more clearly defined in the survey question.

There are examples of how participants are using what they have learned on the programme to the benefit their organisation. Skills related to these actions can be extrapolated as follows:

- **Analytical skills** – used to review data, improve methodologies and develop policies.

- **Research & development skills** – to identify partners, new ways of working to diversify exhibitions, volunteers, board, displays and artists we commission.

- **Project management skills** – to identify priorities and plan, including identifying goals and measures of success for the museum.

- **Facilitation skills** – to lead disscisions with trustees and staff to share learning form the programme.

- **Advocacy skills** – to influence the board, Local Authority, funders and the workforce.

4

Participants identify and plan ways to improve recruitment, access and participation at their museums.

Developing an EDI plan was a key output for museums participating in the programme. At programme end, 13 of the 20 museums had developed a plan that was ready to be signed off by the governing body. The remaining 7 museums had begun planning but not completed the plans by 31 March 2022. Significantly, all 20 were committed to delivering a plan even if the deadline had slipped for a minority.

In addition to developing their plans, a majority confirmed that they have established a system for collecting and understanding data relating to EDI in order to monitor the plans' progress. A further 3 museums are in the process of sourcing data (identifying what data is useful, needed, meaningful and can be collected easily to build an evaluation framework) to finalise their planning.

One museum is in the process of recruiting a new role – an EDI Officer – to lead on this work on behalf of the organisation.

5

Organisational ownership is achieved through participants' involving the wider workforce in developing EDI plans.

On the whole, participants report that they have shared the learning from the programme with colleagues within their organisation. By and large, participants report that the learning is being used by the wider organisation to inform business plans, workforce / volunteer / board development, wider training provision, policies, plans and procedures, collection development and exhibition and programme planning.

It is worth noting that some participants did flag ongoing challenges and barriers within this section including:

- Individual and organisational capacity to engage with EDI.

- Embedding EDI into decision making.

- Involving the board with EDI.

- Balancing EDI with competing organisational priorities.

- Securing buy-in from wider organisation (eg. where museum sits within a Local Authority).

- Embedding EDI when it sits with one person within the organisation.

However, respondents also describe the ways in which they are overcoming some of the challenges, such as:

- Delivering further EDI training to members of the workforce who were not on the programme.

- Recognising that embedding EDI will help to grow the visitor base thus ensuring better sustainability of the museum.

- Sharing the experiences of other museums on the programme to demonstrate how the wider sector is approaching and prioritising EDI work.

Conclusions

It is clear from discussions with participants, the EDI working group and NoBarriers that the delivery of this programme led to an increased participant awareness and engagement with equity, diversity and inclusion, its relevance to individuals, the sector and wider society. The course structure, the quality and standard of the content and lived experience of the contributors meant that MDUK's original aims (listed above) were achieved. This was clearly articulated by participants across the different evaluation tools that were completed by participants.

A majority of the KPIs were met, while others were exceeded. The one shortfall in KPIs is the number of museums that completed their EDI plan by programme end. However, the fact that all museums started a plan and every participant is committed to delivering it in the near future is a good measure of success.

It was disappointing that engagement with the evaluation process tapered off as the programme progressed. However, it may be that survey fatigue set in and that fewer surveys would have garnered a higher response rate. It is also noted that the programme completed at financial year end which may also have impacted on response rates.

Analysis of the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and planning relating to EDI from across the evaluation tools demonstrates that programme outcomes were realised by the museums that completed the programme end questionnaire. Again, the programme structure, content, peer learning and 121 sessions delivered by NoBarriers led directly to the intended outcomes and impacts being realised. Although participants volunteered to participate on the programme, none opted out or disengaged with the subject – a clear success measure.

This programme, devised by MDUK will mean that there are now case studies of EDI work at small to medium sized museums, including volunteer-led museums which can be shared across the sector.

External factors that will have influenced the project outcomes and impacts will be wide ranging. The ongoing work and legacy of the Black Lives Matter Movement, including the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol and subsequent trial of the protesters, rise of right-wing press coverage around the so-called 'culture war', UK immigration legislation; and in America - gun control laws, the ongoing debate about Trans rights and changes to Abortion laws and Global reporting on inequality linked to poverty, Covid-19 and the climate crisis will all have informed thinking and considerations of participants in the development of plans and transformation of their organisation.

Equity and Inclusion in Museums Programme

The programme consists of four strands of activity as follows:

1 on-line workshops accompanied with background reading /support material

2 individual one-to-one support

3 group support

4 practical planning (to be undertaken independently).

Sessions:

1

What is Equity and Inclusion and assessing Equity and Inclusion in your organisation

In this first session we looked at the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics, Equity and Inclusion beyond the Equality Act, inclusive terminology and use of language, museum decolonisation, positive action and positive discrimination. The second half of the session focussed on supporting museums to reflect on where Equity and Inclusion currently featured in their organisation in terms of: Governance; Workforce and Volunteers; Collections; Programming; Monitoring.

2

One to One support

Individual sessions with each participating museum to work through the self-assessment and better understand their own context and needs.

3

Having difficult conversations

Conversations are the opening stage of embedding Equitable and Inclusive practice into organisations. The process of becoming a more equitable organisation will elicit discussions with teams, audiences and other stakeholders.

4

Decolonising the Museum

What does decolonising the museum mean? This session familiarised museums with the meaning and concepts of what is increasingly called museum decolonisation. It discussed how museums have changed the ways they interpret history and culture, from blogging to exhibitions; and of the current expectations on them to further take account of Equity and Inclusion in their organisation. This session also included inspirational examples of recent practice.

5

Current controversies in museums and heritage and how to respond

Improved EDI work in museums is being strongly called for by many people, but criticised by others. This session summarised the main arguments that museums may encounter and give basic advice on internal and external communication strategies.

6

Curating with communities

This session focussed on different models of working with communities such as: collaborative design, participatory research, human centred design, crowdfunding content.

7

Starting your Equity and Inclusion (E&I) Action Plan

This session focussed on E&I Action plans, explored potential template and how to develop them.

7a

One to one support for peer groups

Participants were placed into peer groups of 2–3 museums and each group participated in sessions to support the creation of their E&I action plans.

8

Session 8 looked at case studies and how EDI relates to successful deliver of volunteer programmes and the systems and Processes for EDI in terms of policy, planning, measurement and evaluation.
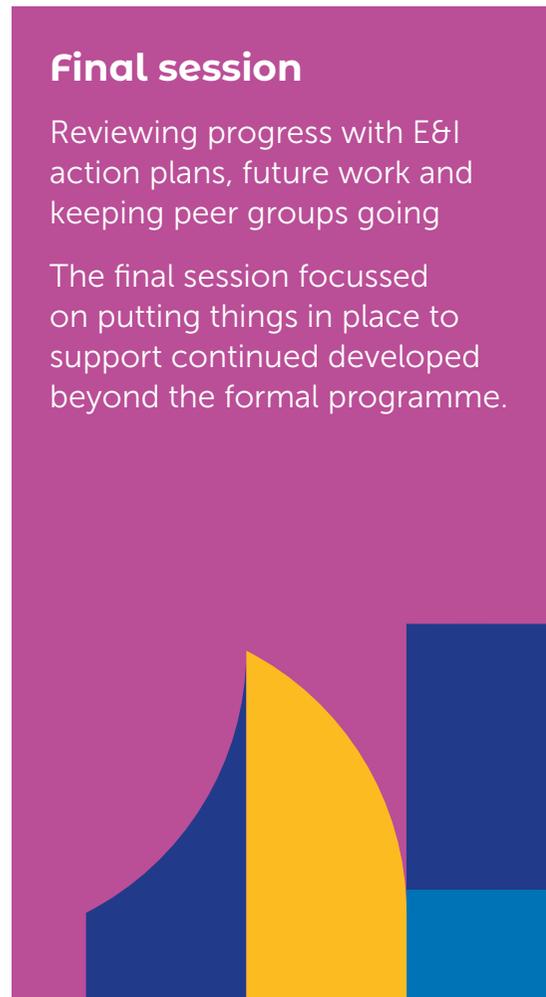
9

Session 9 looked at case studies and how museums should incorporate EDI when working with communities.

Final session

Reviewing progress with E&I action plans, future work and keeping peer groups going

The final session focussed on putting things in place to support continued developed beyond the formal programme.

Appendix 2a – evaluation tools

Evaluation survey (distributed after session 3, 6 and 10)

(NB answers to some of the questions were used in the internal evaluation of the pilot model. Answers under question 4 are reflected in this report.)

1

Please rate the standard of he facilitators/speakers

- Very poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

Please explain your rating

Any other comments?

2

To what extent were your learning expectations met?

- Not met
- Partly
- Completely

Please explain your rating

3

Was the event at the right level for you?

- It was too basic for me
- It was at the right level for me
- It was too specialised

Please explain your rating

4

What did you take from the event?

- I gained knowledge and understating of the session topic **Y / N**
- I gained new of improved existing skills which can be implemented back at my organisation **Y / N**
- I feel able to share these skills with colleagues **Y / N**
- My confidence in discussing issues relating to the topic of the session has increased **Y / N**

5

Looking forward – What actions relating to this training will you take in the next six months in order to benefit your organisation?

6

What further training would you like to see delivered by your Museum Development provider?

End of programme questionnaire

1

A key aim of the programme is that participants demonstrate an understanding of Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and how it relates to their museum's audiences, workforce, governance and programmes. Given all you have learned through the programme, describe how your increased understanding of EDI relates to multiple areas of work across your organisation. Please provide examples where you can.

2

Consider your level of confidence in using the language and terminology surrounding EDI and discussing difficult issues or topics with colleagues. Since participating on the programme, can you give an example of an instance when you did any of the following:

a) Raise EDI issues directly with colleagues

b) Actively challenge prejudice and inequality at your organisation

c) Initiated a difficult conversation around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

3

Another aim of the programme was for participants to develop the skills to identify internal issues, external opportunities and barriers related to EDI within their organisation. Can you give an example of how the new skills you have acquired through the programme are being deployed for the benefit of your museum and/or your career progression?

4

As part of the programme, you will have developed ideas and plans to improve recruitment, access and participation at your museums.

Please describe the kinds of EDI plans that are being developed at your museum. Please also describe if you have established a system of collecting and understanding data relating to EDI or how you will track your progress against EDI targets and ambitions over the coming months / years.

5

Lastly, you and a colleague from your museum participated on this programme, but in order for EDI plans to succeed, you will need buy-in from colleagues from across the organisation. Please describe how you have (or how you plan to) involve other colleagues, including trustees and volunteers, to contribute ideas, experience and energy into the plans. Please also reflect on how colleagues are engaging with the planning process.

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