Museums Association Applicant Information Pack

Anti-racism Museums Programme

March 2024
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**Welcome letter**

In Liverpool in November 2021 delegates from across the UK gathered in person and online for the first post-Covid Museums Association annual conference. The theme was Brave New World and there were many fascinating discussions and debates ranging from African perspectives on restitution to post-pandemic wellbeing.

One session that I particularly remember was ‘From words to action: Museums and anti-racism’. After the tragic death of George Floyd in May 2020 many museums had publicly declared their anti-racism, but there was a strong feeling that not enough was being done to turn those fine words into concrete actions. The panellists at that session, Nasir Adam, Miles Greenwood, Errol Francis and Sara Wajid, reflected on the lack of progress in addressing institutional racism in museums and on what more could be done, and a challenge was issued to the audience, and the MA, to seize the opportunity to address anti-racism and diversity in the workforce, collections and public programmes.

As a result of that discussion and many conversations with colleagues since, the MA has launched this pilot programme to create a cohort of museums that are actively working towards becoming anti-racist organisations.

Whilst we understand the everyday challenges that museums and museum workers face - from supporting workforce and community wellbeing to simply being able to afford to keep the doors open - by launching this programme we are signalling that dealing with racism in our organisations is a priority.

We know it won’t be easy and it won’t be resolved with just this one programme, but we hope to learn from each other and to create museums and museum workers that understand the complexities of everyday racism and the role we play in perpetuating systems of exclusion and discrimination.

I am delighted that we will be working with expert facilitators Cheryl Garvey, Julian Walker and Tara Munroe, who have developed an intensive participatory experience for you and your colleagues, and I very much look forward to growing and learning with you.

Sharon Heal

Director, Museums Association
About us

We are a dynamic membership organisation that campaigns for socially engaged museums and a representative workforce. We work ethically and sustainably and collaborate with partners where we have common aims and values. We advocate for and support museums and everyone who works in and with them so that the value and impact of museums and their collections is realised.

We are the only organisation for all museums in the four nations of the UK. We recognise the differences in context, culture, legislation, policy and practice between the nations and we strive for equitable treatment for all our members in the UK. We are independent and not-for-profit and advocate for museums without fear or favour from governments or funding influences.

Our mission
Inspiring museums to change lives.

Our vision
Inclusive, participatory and sustainable museums at the heart of their communities.

Our values

• We lead with courage and passion.
• We champion diversity and equity.
• We work collaboratively, inclusively and ethically.
• We campaign for social and climate justice.
• We lead change by example.
About the facilitators

We’re delighted to announce the appointment of three facilitators to lead our new anti-racism programme for museums.

Cheryl Garvey, Julian Walker and Tara Munroe will develop the intensive participatory experience for five museums, with a programme of bespoke online workshops for museum managers and leaders to support the development of a cohort of anti-racist museums.

This scheme is a pilot and will be part of a wider programme of activities that seek to tackle institutional racism in the sector. The programme will use techniques such as coaching, facilitation and peer learning to support organisations to embed the necessary changes for their institution to become anti-racist.

Cheryl Garvey

Cheryl Garvey is Birmingham born and based and has spent her career working in the charity and private sectors, holding executive and CEO roles for key local, regional and national charities.

Cheryl began her career in youth and community development practice and currently specialises in equalities, organisational and leadership development and facilitation. She works with a range of audiences, from large-scale public institutions to vibrant non-profit micro-businesses. Cheryl is trained in Deep Democracy and Process Work methodologies and is currently adding psychotherapy to her skills arsenal.

On her appointment, Cheryl said: “The work to realise an anti-racist culture future, the kind that is honest, disruptive, emergent and embodied, is difficult stuff but unbelievably rewarding when you see growth in self and system. I’m delighted to collaborate with the MA on this new and exciting programme. The sector’s role as custodians and architects of our collective histories has rarely been more acute.

“We make no promises regarding the protection of comfort or safety, for they are rarely deployed in service of the oppressed. We can promise a space full of compassion, commitment, and an unerring ambition for each of our participants to leave the programme with greater confidence, capacity and courage to make anti-racism real.”
Julian Walker began her career as a Home Office civil servant before the first Blair government. She served as a speechwriter to both Michael Howard and then Jack Straw, before leaving Whitehall in 2001 to become a self-employed consultant.

Over 15 years in public sector improvement – working in UK central government and in Afghanistan, Libya, Palestine, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Turkey, Tunisia, and Uganda – she learnt experientially of the global nature of white privilege; the long after-effects of colonialism; and the tendency for ‘help’ to come in a form that allows helpers to feel better about themselves more often than it helps the ‘helped’. She also learnt that the gap between political leaders’ ambitions and the systemic results they can achieve is a global phenomenon.

Since 2020 her work has focused on anti-racism learning and development for individuals, groups and organisations, working with brap and HR-rewired and as faculty on the NTL Global OD certificate programme.

Her critical examination of whiteness in service of anti-racism began 15 years ago when she was UK director of policy and research at Barnardo’s. As leader of the organisational race equality and diversity programme, she was given Peggy McIntosh’s ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’ by one of her team and challenged by the Black Staff Network to examine power and privilege, and never looked back.

Her work delivering anti-racism learning for the Museums Association feels like the culmination of all this experience, learning and passion for challenging injustice both globally and domestically.

About the programme, Julian said: “The work of dismantling systemic racism requires strong coalitions, between institutions and communities, across the sector and between individuals. It’s not easy for some to trust, or for others to become trustworthy. But we need to be able to develop authentic relationships between those who – historically and today – have received material and psychological benefits
from colonialism and white supremacy, and those who have been marginalised, belittled and harmed.

“I am excited to have the opportunity to model what coalition looks like, and to help participants explore their own inner and outer work to make such collaboration a reality.”

Tara Munroe

Tara Munroe is the creative director of Opal22 Arts and Edutainment. Having trained as a curator and then working for a short time at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, Tara moved on to form her own organisation within the cultural heritage sector to celebrate Black excellence in its entirety. Tara is also a diversity and anti-racism consultant for local authority and emergency services.

On the programme, Tara said: “I’m thrilled to be joining forces with the MA on this groundbreaking initiative. As curators and historians, we are quite simply breaking new ground across the museum sector as history and its narratives are being reviewed and reimagined.

“I have first-hand experience of the challenges and opportunities to progress anti-racism across our sector and never has there been more urgency in ensuring those holding power, responsibility and influence are supported and equipped to advance change. We aim for everyone to leave this programme with enhanced confidence, capabilities, and the courage to turn the ideals of anti-racism into reality.”

**Anti-racism Museums Programme**

**Purpose and context**
Museums are in a unique position to confront systemic racism because of our engagement with diverse audiences and communities, and due to the tangible and ideological links between collections and Britain’s imperial past. Anti-racism and decolonisation must be central to making museums sustainable and accessible for the future.

Since the tragic murder of George Floyd in May 2020, many museums have committed to dismantling institutional racism and becoming anti-racist organisations. However, imperialist hierarchies and whitewashed narratives continue to permeate museum collections and there has been little progress made in the creation of anti-racist museums across the sector. The MA has launched this pilot scheme to create and work with a cohort of museums which are actively participating in the process of becoming anti-racist. It is one element of the MA’s ongoing anti-racism action plan, which also includes support to sector anti-racism initiatives, creating an Anti-racism and Decolonisation Steering Group and supporting skills development through our online learning courses for MA members.

The MA defines anti-racism as the active process of identifying and dismantling policies, practices, behaviours and beliefs that perpetuate institutional and systemic racism against racialised people of colour. An anti-racist museum can be defined as:

- A museum that understands the complexities of racism in its everyday, institutional and systemic expressions, and publicly acknowledges its own role in perpetuating some of these systems of exclusion and differentiation for racialised people of colour, including its staff and audiences.
- A museum which is actively developing and implementing policies and practices to dismantle institutional racism within their organisation and is embedding this work across programmes and activities throughout the institution.
- A museum which is actively and sustainably decolonising its collections, programmes and practices to create a fairer, better and more equitable museum space.

This is a time-limited programme that presents an opportunity to create meaningful change in the UK museum sector through organisational and professional development. It is our hope that the Anti-racism Museums Programme will create a thriving network of museums and leaders that are committed to personal and
organisational change; collaboration and peer learning; and being at the forefront of anti-racist practice in UK museums.

The programme builds on a rich foundation of research and experience and will be delivered by TalkListenCreate (TLC) and is funded by core MA funding (https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/anti-racism/announcing-our-anti-racism-programme-facilitators/).

Made up of six half-day learning sessions, five half-day facilitated learning set sessions and two individual coaching calls, this programme will equip participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to explore issues relating to racism within the sector, as well as the tools and action plans for critically exploring how their own institutions could be perpetuating systemic racism. The Anti-racism Museums Programme will be an intensive, rewarding and supported experience with an emphasis on “self as an instrument of change”.

The learning sessions will develop the following:

- Increase participants’ knowledge and skills around structural, systemic and institutional racism endured by racialised people of colour, as well as examples of anti-racist practice within the heritage sector.
- The capability of museum leaders to address the systems, processes, policies, practices and governance frameworks which perpetuate racism within their organisations.
- Demonstrate how participants can embed and disseminate this change throughout their respective organisations.
- Prepare leaders to plan and take action to ensure that their organisations and their teams are working towards the development of becoming a fully-fledged anti-racist organisation.

The aims of the learning sessions are to:

- Increase participants’ knowledge and skills around structural, systemic and institutional racism endured by racialised people of colour, as well as examples of anti-racist practices within the heritage sector.
- Provide tools and techniques to critically engage with issues relating to issues of racism in all its expressions within society, the sector and the respective organisations.
• Share and develop skills and approaches relating to the issues identified from current research within the sector.
• Create agency, confidence and momentum to transfer the learning from this programme to their own respective institutions.
• Create a consortium of museums who have publicly committed to tackling racism within their organisations and are actively creating opportunities for the professional development and advancement of museum professionals of colour.

By the end of the learning sessions participants should:

• Be able to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of racism and its complexities within the heritage sector in line with the learning outcomes of the Museum Essentials Supporting Anti-racism online learning course.
• Feel more confident and competent to start actively dismantling institutional racism within their own respective organisations.
• Be conscious of their own actions and the actions of their institutions in creating an anti-racist organisation.

Who we are looking for

We are looking for applications from museums in all four nations of the UK, that can:

• Commit named senior leaders to all the learning sessions listed below.
• Demonstrate that they are ready for the opportunity of participating in this programme.
• Make a strong case for the change they can make at individual and organisational levels.
• Represent the potential for positive change in the UK museum sector towards anti-racism.

Participants must be MA institutional members, and, as a pilot programme, we will seek to create a balanced cohort (see selection criteria for details). Participation is free, and the programme is an outstanding opportunity to bring together individual professional development and organisational development on a topic that is vital for the future health, relevance and role of museums in the UK.
We are mindful that the programme will ask a lot of participants and we will work with you to support participants’ emotional health throughout the process. It is important that you consider carefully who from your museum will join the programme and that they have protected time and support to engage fully in the process. TLC, who will deliver the programme, say: “We intentionally work with emotion and embodied experience during this programme. Resisting racism is not a purely intellectual pursuit. It requires our hearts, stomachs, and spirit as well as our brains. So, it’s crucial that you think about how you will take care of yourself during this programme to support your learning and your ability to integrate what you learn. This is both an emotional and a practical necessity.”

### Dates to commit to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 11 March 2024</td>
<td>Drop-in session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 8 April 2024</td>
<td>Drop-in session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 14 April 2024</td>
<td>Applications close</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 7 May to Thursday 9 May 2024</td>
<td>Online interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 16 May 2024</td>
<td>Museum cohort announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>Introduction session (c.1 hour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 4 June 2024</td>
<td>Learning session (am)</td>
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<td>Action Learning Set (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2 July 2024</td>
<td>Learning session (am)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action Learning Set (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16 July 2024</td>
<td>Learning session (am)</td>
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<td>Action Learning Set (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10 September 2024</td>
<td>Learning session (am)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action Learning Set (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 1 October 2024</td>
<td>Learning session (am)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action Learning Set (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 5 November 2024</td>
<td>Learning Session (am)</td>
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Coaching calls will take place individually by appointment with TLC

### Selection criteria

**Mandatory criteria**
Applying organisations must meet the following criteria:

- The organisation commits 3-5* senior leaders who will attend all workshops and relevant action learning and/or coaching throughout the programme. Individual participants will be named in the application form.
- All participants have completed the MA's online learning course “Supporting Anti-racism”.
- The organisation is ready to make the most of the opportunity of participating in the Anti-racism Museums Programme, evidenced by a background of policy documents and/or minuted decisions that are referenced in the application form; and a ring-fenced budget commitment to implement change as a result of the participating in the programme.
- The organisation is of a size and scale to achieve and measure substantive change because of this programme, evidenced by a description in the application form. We anticipate that this will be museums of medium to large size (a minimum of 10FTE staff) but are looking for applicants to make a case for their own potential.
- Applicants must be institutional members of the Museums Association.

Differentiating criteria

We are looking for museums that excel in one or more of the following:

- A strong case for the change that the individuals nominated to join the programme can make at an organisational level.
- A strong case for the change that the organisation can make and the potential impact that will have, e.g. in the place where the organisation is based, stakeholder communities and/or partner organisations.
- Creating a strong case study for the UK museum sector to learn from, for example through leading practice, or modelling replicable change.

A balanced cohort

As a pilot programme, it is important for us to explore and evaluate impact in different contexts in the UK museum sector; and to select participants that can act as exemplars to others. This means we will balance the cohort that we select based on representing: all four UK nations; a range of governance types; and a range of sizes of museum. Note that we anticipate the nature of this programme to have the most potential for medium-large museums (10+FTE members of staff) but the application
form allows space for each applicant to make the case for their own operating context.

* Each applying organisation will choose who will attend programme events. We ask for this information in the application form so that a) we can be sure that the named individuals are committed to the programme and are well-positioned to make change at an organisational level; b) all participants understand their commitment and set aside relevant dates for events; and c) organisations can think in advance about who is best to attend and plan for the care of participants. We imagine that larger organisations will send more participants, but this is for the applicant to decide.

**How to apply**

The closing date for applications is 11.59pm on Monday 14 April 2024.

Please send your completed application form to Joshua Robertson via joshua@museumsassociation.org.

To discuss your application and ask any questions you may have, please contact Joshua Robertson via joshua@museumsassociation.org.