

Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums
Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday, 24 August 2021 at 10.00am on Zoom

Chair: Sir Geoff Palmer

Steering Group members

Silence Chihuri (Fair Justice System for Scotland Group)
Abeer Eladany (University of Aberdeen)
Jatin Haria (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)
Lewis Hou (Science Ceilidh and The Anti-Racist Educator)
Churnjeet Mahn (Strathclyde University)
Steph Scholten (The Hunterian, ICOM Ethics Committee,
MGS Board Member)
Elena Trimarchi (David Livingstone Centre)
Zandra Yeaman (The Hunterian)

MGS/Project Staff

Sheila Asante (Museums Galleries Scotland)
Lucy Casot (Museums Galleries Scotland)
Miles Greenwood (Glasgow Life)
Rosie King (Museums Galleries Scotland)
Devon McHugh (Museums Galleries Scotland)
Gillian Shaw (Museums Galleries Scotland)

Consultation Partners

Fiona Hutchison (Diffley Partnership)
Mhairi McFarlane (Diffley Partnership)

Apologies

Parveen Ishaq (Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equalities Council)

Duncan Dornan (Glasgow Life)

Lisa Williams (Edinburgh Caribbean Association)

1.	Introduction and apologies
	GP welcomed everyone to the meeting including Diffley Partnership. Apologies as above were noted.
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising
	<p>Under 4.1 on special interest museums and focus groups, DM explained that University museums were not mentioned because a meeting with UMIS was still to be confirmed at the time.</p> <p>In the final paragraph of 5.2 SA agreed to seek clarification from RF (who had led the survey) on whether there was a link between the 'no' and 'don't know' responses.</p> <p>In the last sentence of 7.2 SA confirmed that Steering Group approval would be sought on the themes and areas to be explored by IYS.</p> <p>With these clarifications the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.</p> <p>Matters arising There were no other matters arising.</p>
3.	Public Consultation: Presentation and Discussion
	FH from the Diffley Partnership thanked Steering Group members for their comments. She reminded the Steering Group that this public survey was one of several, that it would

consist of mainly closed questions, and would have a different approach to the participatory research. She reported that the survey would be distributed widely with a target response was around 5,000. She pointed out that the immediate need was to finalise the public survey ensuring that it was as short and as clear as possible whilst providing the necessary level of information.

FH pointed out that the survey had been designed to identify knowledge levels and views etc amongst the general public. She invited comments and questions.

Comments

Steering Group members were concerned that there was a risk of individual opinions of respondents clouding the aims of the survey. They noted that the aims of the draft survey were very wide and would benefit from being made more specific.

SA explained the aims of the survey in terms of establishing a baseline and Steering Group members noted that without a baseline it would be impossible to measure the progress and success of the ESSM project.

After much discussion it was agreed that quantitative data – as sought through the public consultation - was needed to back up anecdotal evidence which Steering Group members were aware of. DM cited her recent focus on the museums sector workforce and the gaps that existed in this data, with heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence.

It was recognised that there was a risk of a polarised response to the public survey and there was discussion as to how this might be addressed. A nuanced approach suggested more open questions however, FH emphasised that this might not provide the clarity required.

There was discussion as how a quantitative baseline – established through the public survey – would balance with the more qualitative data around the lived experience.

	<p>There was discussion as to the merits of framing the survey with a statement of fact regarding racism in Scotland.</p> <p>FH gave more detail on the survey design which included questions designed to back up responses which were self reported (eg around levels of knowledge etc). She explained how the work involved segmentation and an analysis across variables.</p> <p>FH reported that the human rights based approach would ensure careful handling of responses given there could be some racist views presented. Steering Group members recognised the need to avoid highlighting racism and pointed to recent UK commissioned research which had suggested insitutional racism no longer existed.</p> <p>It was agreed a contextualising statement could be helpful to explain that the work was being carried out in line with the Scottish Government statement on addressing racism in Scotland, and recognising that there is racism in Scotland. Whilst it was understood that a public survey, on its own, had limitations it was recognised that the baseline that it would deliver would be very useful.</p> <p>SA agreed to circulate a paper for comment by close of play on 25 August and GP asked that Steering Group members made comments to SA after the meeting.</p>
4.	Public Sector Consultation: Public Survey demographic content discussion
4.1	<p>The discussion above incorporated comments on demographic content.</p> <p>GP thanked FH for her contribution.</p>
5.	Glasgow Museums Consultation
	<p>MG shared his presentation which focused on how audiences wanted Glasgow Museums to address legacies. The work</p>

included an online survey circulated to community groups, charities and individuals involved in relevant work in Glasgow, along with some telephone interviews. MG agreed to share the final report with the Steering Group via SA once it was finalised.

MG summarised the methodology and explained that people of colour were targeted in the online survey but that it did not exclude white people. He reported that the survey was translated into languages spoken in Glasgow representative of former British colonies however he noted that there was not much demand for translations (2 Cantonese and 1 Punjabi).

He reported that 2 workshops took place to help give a perspective on findings and a total of 90 completed surveys were received, 40 of which were from people of colour and 30 of which were from under 35 year-olds. The responses between people of colour and white people did not differ significantly and no respondents defended transatlantic slavery. Generally people felt addressing the legacy of empire and slavery was an important piece of work for museums to do.

He reported that 14 in depth telephone interviews were conducted, and that participants were selected and paid. He reported that the participants were also asked to ask friends and family members about their views of transatlantic slavery and empire.

The survey asked for opinions on how Glasgow Museums should address the issues and questioned participants on their responses to museums, and how objects were displayed and spoken about.

The survey asked for views on a dedicated space for slavery, colonialism and migration which was designed to inform the ESSM project as well as Glasgow Museums. Most respondents interpreted this as being a new or dedicated museum in Glasgow.

	<p>Whilst responses from people of colour and white people did not differ radically, MG reported that people of colour were more negative towards the notion of empire and sought more radical approaches whilst white respondents were more interested in street names. There was a wider difference between older people's and younger people's responses but no responses tried to defend Empire as a whole.</p> <p>SA invited thoughts and advice on translation of the ESSM surveys.</p> <p>GP pointed out that UNESCO had Atlantic Slavery Day yesterday and commented that although the slave trade in the Caribbean was abolished in 1807, slavery in Britain's former colonies was not abolished until 1838 (and continued after this in areas including the Indian Ocean slave trade). It was agreed that this highlighted the need to be very careful around wording.</p> <p>GP thanked MG for his presentation on behalf of the Steering Group.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Empire Museum: Scottish museum of empire, slavery, colonialism and migration</p>
	<p><i>SC left the meeting</i></p> <p>JH delivered a presentation on behalf of CRER with contributions from ZY. He pointed out that black history is just one part of CRER's work. He summarised some of CRER's activities over the years, including running 15 Black History Month programmes since 2001, and the depth and range of knowledge accumulated by the organisation over the years. He explained that CRER had initially been a Glasgow initiative. He summarised work undertaken including walking tours introduced by CRER and extensive work into archiving, museum space and learning centres and their outputs in relation to Black history. He summarised work led by ZY with existing museums and shared the online Empire Museum with the Steering Group. He spoke about CRER's vision for a museum of empire, slavery, colonialism and migration within</p>

	<p>the next 10 years and that the Empire Museum was an attempt at a virtual museum (which was not funded as yet). JH outlined links between CRER's work (eg in pushing the Scottish Government for a scoping exercise) and the role of the ESSM project and emphasised the need for these to dovetail.</p> <p>Some Steering Group members questioned why the online museum was called the Museum of Empire as the notion of Empire could be very offputting to sections of the population.</p> <p>There was discussion around CRER's anti-racism work throughout Scotland given its Glasgow based origins.</p> <p>Steering Group members commended the work that CRER had delivered in museums in Glasgow on a shoestring budget and recognised CRER's role in getting the Steering Group to where it was now.</p> <p>GP thanked JH for his presentation.</p>
7.	Consultation Update: Priority Communities Museums Sector
	It was agreed that SA would include this in her next project update.
8	ESSM Comms
	<p>ENC gave an update on comms around the consultation process. She reported that a press release had been drafted with a view to launching on 1 September. She was pleased to note that MGS had had a supportive quote from the Culture Minister and confirmed that the release will be shared with the Steering Group in advance of its publication.</p> <p>ENC reported that text for Steering Group members to share about the consultation process was being drafted.</p>
9.	Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting
	SA agreed to share all the presentations with the Steering Group.

There was no other business and GP thanked everyone for their attendance and for the excellent presentations.

The proposed date of the next meeting is: 30 November 2021,
10:00-12:00

Another meeting can be scheduled if required to discuss the consultations.

The meeting closed at 12.02