

Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums
Steering Group Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 15 March 2022, 10am-12noon

Chair: Sir Geoff Palmer

Steering Group members

Abeer Eladany (University of Aberdeen)
 Jatin Haria (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)
 Lewis Hou (Science Ceilidh and The Anti-Racist Educator)
 Parveen Ishaq (Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equalities Council)
 Steph Scholten (The Hunterian, ICOM Ethics Committee, MGS Board Member)
 Elena Trimarchi (David Livingstone Centre)
 Lisa Williams (Edinburgh Caribbean Association)
 Zandra Yeaman (The Hunterian)
 Churnjeet Mahn (Strathclyde University)

MGS/Project Staff

Sheila Asante (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Devon McHugh (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Lucy Casot (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Eithne Ni Chonghaile (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Rosie King (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Gillian Shaw (Museums Galleries Scotland)
 Duncan Dornan (Glasgow Life)

Apologies

Miles Greenwood (Glasgow Life)
 Silence Chihuri (Fair Justice System for Scotland Group)

1.	Introduction and apologies	GP
1.1	GP welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies as above. <i>It was noted that JH had been appointed Vice Chair since the January meeting.</i>	

2.	Formal Agreement of Minutes of previous meeting	GP
2.1	<p>SA noted amendments made to the January minutes which had been circulated <i>and were subsequently amended.</i></p> <p>It was noted that there were no matters arising outstanding and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.</p>	
3.	First Draft ESSM Recommendations	SA
3.1	<p>SA gave the Steering Group access to a Jamboard to capture written comments on the draft recommendations and confirmed that comments could be added up until Monday 28 March 2022. The recommendations were discussed in detail and all comments were recorded by MGS staff to be taken into consideration in a further draft. Summarised discussions only are included in the minutes.</p>	
3.2	<p>Recommendation 1: Scotland is planning a dedicated space to address our role in empire, colonialism and historic slavery</p> <p>Steering Group members requested more detail on quantifiable timescales and budgets.</p> <p>A ballpark figure for an initial scoping exercise was discussed and it was agreed that the scoping exercise would be the focus of any initial budget considerations.</p> <p>It was agreed that any costs mentioned should be clearly labelled as indicative.</p> <p>It was suggested that a meeting before early May would be required given that making recommendations was so central to the role of the Steering Group.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Steering Group needed to be mindful of its remit in that it did not have the mandate (or time) to undertake any scoping exercise around Recommendation 1 itself.</p>	

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>Steering Group members asked that the recommendations were more explicit around MGS' role: ie, decisions would be made by the Scottish Government, museums would deliver on these, and MGS would support museums in delivery.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Museums should include an accurate account of Scotland's links to empire, colonialism and historic slavery</p> <p>Whilst mindful of recognising MGS' role was one of supporting delivery, it was noted that from a language point of view the recommendations should not dictate what museums should do given the sector is so diverse and that not all museums would be able to respond in the same way.</p> <p>The importance of wording was noted especially as people did not all have the same understanding of the scope of ESSM.</p> <p>There was discussion around the risk of being too narrow in the approach to the methodology and the recognition that ideas or evidence could be very Eurocentric in approach. Steering Group members commented on the importance of integrity in the methodology in order for any recommendations to be credible. There was discussion on the value of intangible heritage and oral testimony which could provide evidence in an inclusive way.</p> <p><i>CM left the meeting</i></p> <p>Recommendation 3: Museums and galleries must take part in anti-racist change</p> <p>The Steering Group asked that MGS' role in supporting museums to deliver be made clearer.</p> <p>Steering Group members commented that whilst anti-racist training was essential it was only one element in bringing about anti-racist change.</p> <p>The Steering Group noted that time was needed to enable enough reflection on the interconnectedness between the</p>	
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<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p>different recommendations (eg between the 3rd and 4th recommendations).</p> <p>Recommendation 4: More effective engagement work with priority communities is needed. Steering Group members asked if there was opportunity to recognise where museums have appropriate community advisor groups.</p> <p><i>LH left the meeting.</i></p> <p>Steering Group members stressed the importance of effective engagement with priority communities but cautioned against the danger working in silos. The Steering Group recognised the opportunity presented to move away from the status quo.</p> <p>There was discussion as to the use of the term <i>priority communities</i> in the final report which would not be universally understood. Steering Group members recommended that the final report needed to be explicit about anti-racist organisations playing a leading role, and that working with empowered priority communities was central to the recommendations. There was discussion around talking about <i>MGS working with relevant experts</i> and the need for these experts to be identified clearly.</p> <p>There was discussion around the ongoing role of the Steering Group – eg in terms of overseeing the scoping stage.</p> <p>SA and DM confirmed that there were modest funds carried forward to enable consideration of the next phase.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: Museums should collaborate with schools to promote learning about the legacies of empire, colonialism and historic slavery SA noted that content around this recommendation was on the light side.</p> <p>Steering Group members asked for clarity around how museums could support teachers to deliver long term anti-racist learning and</p>	
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<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p>the challenges this presented in terms of dovetailing with local authority provision.</p> <p>Recommendation 6: Restitution and Repatriation Steering Group members sought more clarity around the recommendations given a Scotland-wide approach was required.</p> <p>SS reported that the Hunterian has established an informal working group which could help make recommendations on what would work and what mechanisms were needed.</p> <p>Following discussion around the order in which the recommendations were presented it was agreed that restitution and repatriation should not be repositioned at the beginning of the document as this could detract from the other recommendations.</p> <p>Further Drafts The Steering Group recognised that the recommendations needed to be made more explicit and thanked SA and DM for an impressive piece of work. SA confirmed that the project was on budget. DM reported that she would be updating the MGS Board the following day and would share draft recommendations with the wider museum sector who had contributed to the discussions. She asked Steering Group members to let her know about anything they were not comfortable with sharing.</p> <p>SA requested further comments from the Steering Group by email by Monday 28 March. A further meeting would follow this.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Context Inserts What and Who</p>	<p>SA/DM</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>SA shared a proposed structure for the final report which would consist of Recommendations and Methodology in two reports. She summarised the proposed structure and headings.</p> <p>The Steering Group asked that the chapter on the implications of the recommendations for the Scottish Government, sector, and MGS should identify the lead stakeholders and actors involved.</p>	

	<p>There was discussion as to whether the Race Equality Framework should be included.</p> <p>It was agreed that the final report should only list Steering Group members who had participated in meetings.</p> <p>DM invited Steering Group members to let her and SA know if they were able to write inserts to specific chapters.</p> <p>SA reported that the evaluation exercise following the project would articulate the whole story and learning that had taken place and that interviews for consultants to deliver the evaluation would be taking place on 23 March.</p>	
5.	MGS NLHF <i>Delivering Change</i> Project	DM
5.1	<p>DM gave an update on the proposal and outlined the challenges in developing the application. She explained that the proposal would involve a programme manager who would work with the MGS team and an advisory group and that a response to the initial application was expected in June. She reported that the programme would be scalable in terms of budget but would be in the region of around £750K to £1.4m over three years.</p>	
6.	AOB and date of next meeting	
6.1	<p>GP asked Steering Group members to give feedback to SA as soon as possible after which a further draft of recommendations could be looked at. GP invited Steering Group members to volunteer to write sections on the report.</p> <p>He thanked everyone for their time and noted the scale of the work.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3 May, 10.00am to 12.00pm</p> <p>SA agreed to circulate a further draft, with options for consideration where appropriate and would then convene a lunchtime meeting if required to enable voting.</p>	
	End of meeting	

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