

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

Tuesday 25 January 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)

**MGS/Project Staff**

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

**Apologies**

Churnjeet Mahn (Strathclyde University)  
 Silence Chihuri (Fair Justice System for Scotland Group)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction and apologies</b>	GP
	Steering Group members were invited to appoint a Deputy Chair and the process for this was agreed. GP welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from CM and SC.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Formal Agreement of Minutes of previous meeting</b>	GP
	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Writing the Recommendations</b>	SA
	SA gave a presentation summarising the roles of the Steering Group and MGS staff, the parameters of the work and its audience (Scottish Government	

	<p>notwithstanding the fact that it involved and had an impact on the museums sector).</p> <p>She noted that the language used in the final report would be accessible and that the final report would include chapters written by experts to enhance understanding.</p> <p>SA summarised the next steps and the timescales leading to the publication of the report during the week in May. She reminded the Steering Committee of the six subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collections</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Museum Proposal</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul> <p>SA and DM explained that feedback on the analysis of the surveys would be sought from participants to mitigate any risk of misrepresentation. Whilst feedback would be taken into consideration they stressed that the Steering Group was responsible for the content of the report and recommendations.</p> <p>It was agreed that an executive summary/summaries would be published along with the full report. There was discussion around the dissemination of the findings beyond the Scottish Government, ie to the sector. DM pointed out that part of the project budget would need to be reallocated were there to be any additional summary reports and publications.</p> <p>Steering Group members stressed the need for clarity around what was meant by legacies of historic slavery, colonialism and empire - that this was essentially structural racism (the issues were not limited to buildings and statues). There was discussion around the need to define what was meant by structural racism as this was not universally understood.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Human Rights Based Approach to the Recommendations</b>	SA
	<p>SA delivered a presentation on the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and explained that this is an international framework drawn up by the UN. She noted that the Scottish Government has announced its intention to introduce a Human Rights Bill to the Scottish Parliament, directly incorporating four key human rights treaties into Scots law. It was noted that a HRBA supports the transfer of human rights policy into practice.</p> <p>SA explained that whilst organisations that were not public bodies did not have statutory duties to adhere to internationally agreed human right</p>	

	<p>standards, a HRBA helps inform decision making – and ensures human rights are taken into consideration appropriately.</p> <p>It was noted that 1/5 of responses disagreed with the premise that museums should work to address racial discrimination and that these responses needed to be addressed in the report.</p> <p>There was discussion about how to measure access to museums from different communities and how to measure the impact of the ESSM work in terms of people's understanding of racism.</p> <p>There was discussion around comparable surveys to follow on from the current and recent surveys to track changes in the understanding of the legacies of racism and racism itself. It was noted that this could be considered in the final ESSM recommendations. The Steering Group recognised the challenges of equalities monitoring forms which are not universally popular and it was suggested that a simplified set of questions might get round this. It was agreed that more diverse staff in museums would support increased audience diversity. The need for stated outcomes in order to measure progress was stressed.</p> <p>Different mechanisms to monitor equalities used by comparable organisations were discussed.</p> <p>The importance of using different channels to disseminate surveys to ensure inclusion was noted.</p> <p>The work of Curating Discomfort at the Hunterian was commended as an example of the HRBA in practice.</p> <p>In taking an HRBA, the Steering Group recognised the requirement for museums to remunerate any priority groups and individuals they work with.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Consultation Updates and Reports</b></p>	<p>SA/DM</p>
	<p>SA reported that both museum focus group and priority community focus group initial reports would be circulated to the Steering Group within the first half of February. SA reported that IYS was due to submit their outcomes to MGS by 10 February. SA and DM summarised the top level themes.</p> <p>Steering Group members noted that museums were built as colonial institutions and that recognising this depersonalised the issues and enabled more meaningful debate and discussion. The Steering Group recognised the need to remain focussed and not let the discussions become personal. GP emphasised the need for <b>evidence</b> to ensure that recommendations were robust.</p>	

	DM gave an update on the focus group for front of house staff which had been more ethnically diverse than some other sector focus groups. It had proved to be a lively session with diverse views. SA noted that around co-production, front of house staff found partnerships with other departments could be challenging.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>General Timeline Update</b>	SA
6.1	It was noted that this had been addressed under item 3 above.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>AOB and date of next meeting</b>	
7.1	It was noted that MGS was funding a project to develop an inventory of African and Caribbean objects in Scotland.	
7.2	SS reported that the Hunterian had received Esmée Fairbairn support to enable Curating Discomfort to be built upon further.	
7.3	It was agreed that the ESSM Report should be presented at the MA Conference in Edinburgh in November.  Date of next meeting: Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March, 10.00am to 12.00pm	
	<b>End of meeting</b>	