

# DELIVERING CHANGE

Year 1 Report | March 2025



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THE CHANGE



Museums  
Galleries  
Scotland

Supporting Scotland's Museums

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**Intro: About this Report**

**Budget Review**

**Part 1: Who has been part of this project & how?**

**Part 2: How are diverse communities feeling about the work so far?**

**Part 3: Calls to Action & Emerging Needs**

**Part 4: Evaluating the Year 1 Goals**

**Part 5: Conclusions & Recommendations**

## About this Report

This report shares insights from the first year of Delivering Change (DC) with MGS staff, funders, and the diverse communities engaged in the project. It reflects on lessons learned, challenges faced, achievements celebrated, and the transformative impact of this anti-racism, anti-oppression, and decolonial work. The voices of all DC participants—including the internal DC team at MGS leading this work, MGS executive directors, advisors, community catalysts, museum transformers, and museum activists.—are central to this reflection.

Written by **Ikake Rising**, a collective of anti-oppression educators, consultants and evaluators, this report applies Liberating Frameworks and Decolonial Evaluation methods. Instead of rigid, outcome-driven assessments, this approach values participant experiences, evolving needs, and the depth of relationships built. It recognises that meaningful change is a dynamic, ongoing process. Through this, DC is part of a global movement reimagining power, justice, and community care—centred on equity, reciprocity, and collective liberation. This is an edited version of the report designed to be shared publicly by MGS.

For more about Ikake Rising, contact [<ikakerising@gmail.com>](mailto:ikakerising@gmail.com).

*“We acknowledge that embodying decolonial ways of being and working together is a lifelong process that requires curiosity, accountability, honesty, transparency, solidarity and openness to reflect on our own personal stories and histories and how we position ourselves within the work of challenging systems of oppression. We are one seed within a larger movement of people across the world taking action and having the courage to imagine different ways of being and caring for one another rooted in love, reciprocity, respect, and honouring of all peoples and all life on this earth.” - **Ikake Rising***



## Budget Review

The following table shows a summarized version of how the the Delivering Change budget has been allocated and spent in Year 1 of the project.

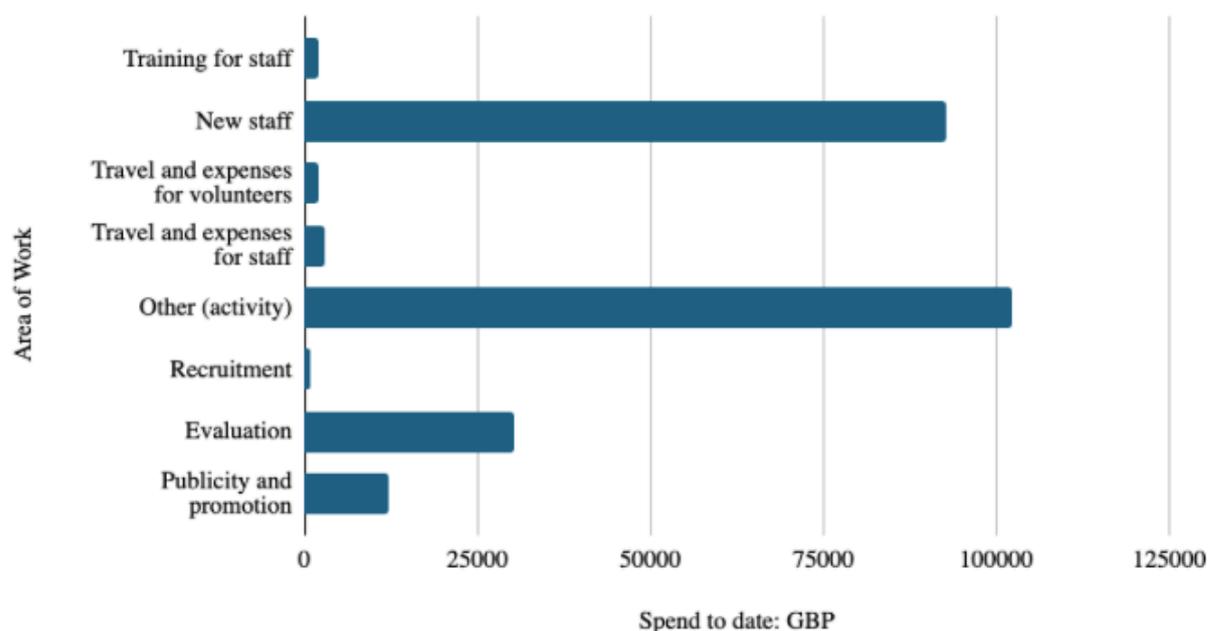
### KEY FIGURES

**Total Project Budget: £1,481,192**

**Total Spend to Date: £245,654**

**Remaining Balance: £1,235,538**

Spend to date: GBP vs Area of Work



# PART 1

## Who has been part of this project & how

A woman with dark curly hair pulled back, wearing glasses and a leopard print top, is speaking at a podium. The background is a blurred indoor setting with wooden paneling.

“We know this work is personal, it's deep, it can call on us to step out of our comfort zones and bring our lived experiences forward... Let us hold ourselves and each other accountable, but do so with care, with respect, with gentleness as we learn and unlearn together.”

Sheila Asante  
Delivering Change Programme Manager



## What has the recruitment process been like?

### Recruitment for Community Catalysts:

Focused on recruiting grassroots organisations to collaborate with museums in reshaping cultural spaces through anti-oppressive principles. Successful applicants were offered an initial £2,000 development grant to develop their ideas and capacity without requiring them to outline specific spending plans in advance. This approach emphasized experimentation and learning, recognising that both successes and challenges would inform future initiatives.

Assessment criteria for the Community Catalyst Development Grants prioritized an organisation's:

1. **Potential to empower systematically excluded communities**
2. **Well-defined reason for working with a museum, with clear objectives for collaboration**
3. **Capacity to engage in the two-year program**

By focusing on community leadership, grassroots impact, and long-term transformation, this recruitment strategy ensured that communities with lived experiences of oppression were centered and could effectively collaborate with museums to create long-term, transformative change in cultural spaces.

### Recruitment for Museum Transformers:

Focused on direct outreach to recruit museums who understood the program's goals and their potential role in bringing systemic change to their museum. Museums were individually invited to apply, with Expressions of Interest (EOI) followed by formal applications. Successful museums were offered a £2,000 bursary, mental health support, and partnership opportunities with Community Catalysts.

To ensure accessibility, the program incorporated flexible engagement options, including both in-person and online sessions for staff, trustees, and volunteers. Museums had multiple ways to learn more before applying, including informational webinars and one-on-one calls with the Delivering Change team.

The recruitment process prioritised institutions that were willing to commit to:

1. **Organisational-wide learning**
2. **Learning & implementing Human Rights-Based Approaches, and**
3. **Genuine community engagement**

This approach combined targeted outreach, clear communication of benefits, and multiple avenues for engagement to encourage museum participation.

## **Recruitment for Museum Activists:**

The Museum Activists recruitment process focused on inviting all staff, freelancers, and volunteers from the museum sector in Scotland to participate in a free anti-oppression training & support program. The process was well-structured and accessible, with clear communication about the program's purpose, structure, and benefits. The open-call approach to all experience levels allowed for broad participation, ensuring that people regardless of prior experience in anti-oppression work, could apply. The use of an introductory webinar provided a helpful way for potential participants to learn more before committing, making the process more transparent and inclusive.

The program's flexibility—offering both full (12 hours per month) and lighter (4 hours per month) training options—also allowed individuals to engage at a level that suited their capacity. Training covered decolonisation, human rights, participatory practice, disability equality, and anti-racist critical thinking, with self-directed learning and facilitated peer meetups. Additional benefits included a free Museums Association membership, mental health support, and access to a supportive Museum Activist network.

The application process was straightforward, allowing individuals to sign up online and watch an informational webinar to understand the program's goals and structure before committing. The recruitment process was accessible and engaging, with an emphasis on online participation, which likely reduced barriers related to location or travel.

## **Quantitative Programme Recruitment Data**

- Transformers:
  - Webinars = 1
  - EOIs = 22
  - Number of Applications = 19
  - Number Awarded = 19
- Activists
  - Webinars = 3
  - Number of enrolments = 53 for Cohort 1 and 70 for Cohort 2
- Community Catalysts
  - Webinars = 4
  - EOIs = 24
  - Number of Applications = 25
  - Number Awarded = 8

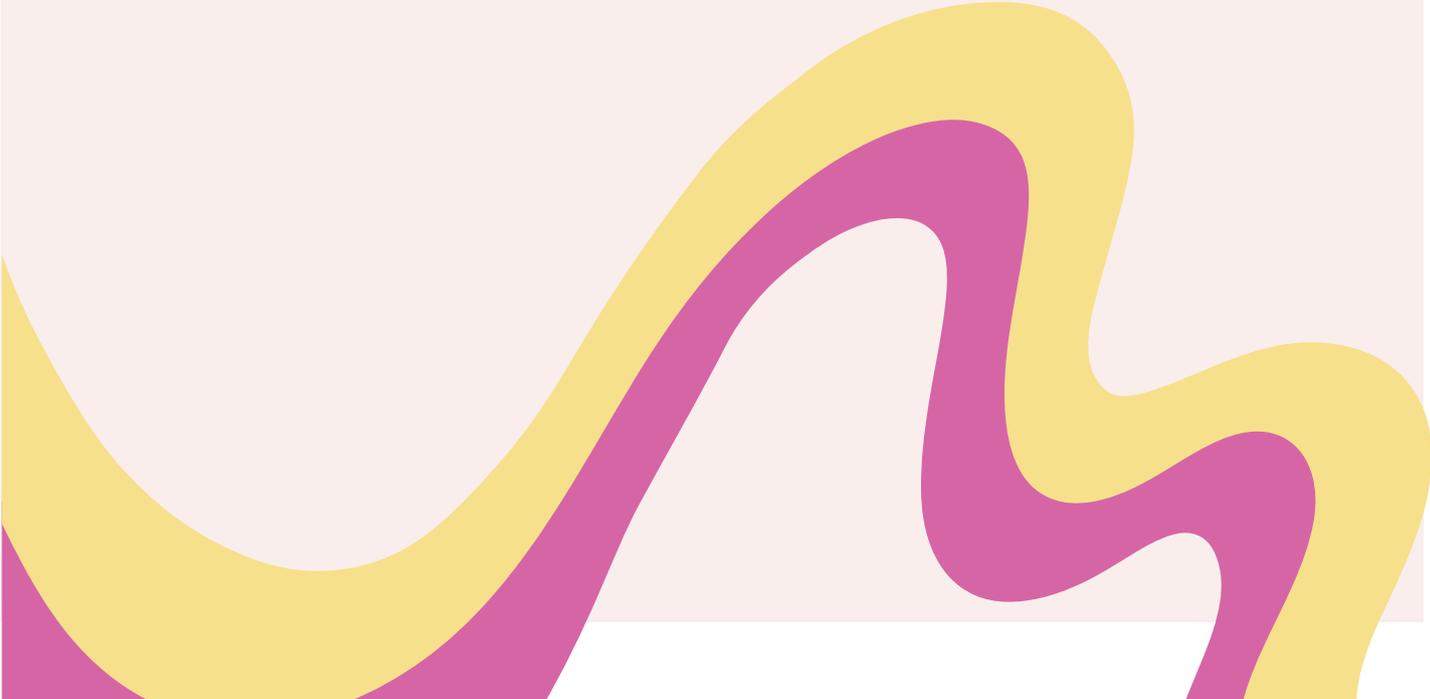
Presentations: at the Forums Meeting and the Recognised Collections Meeting



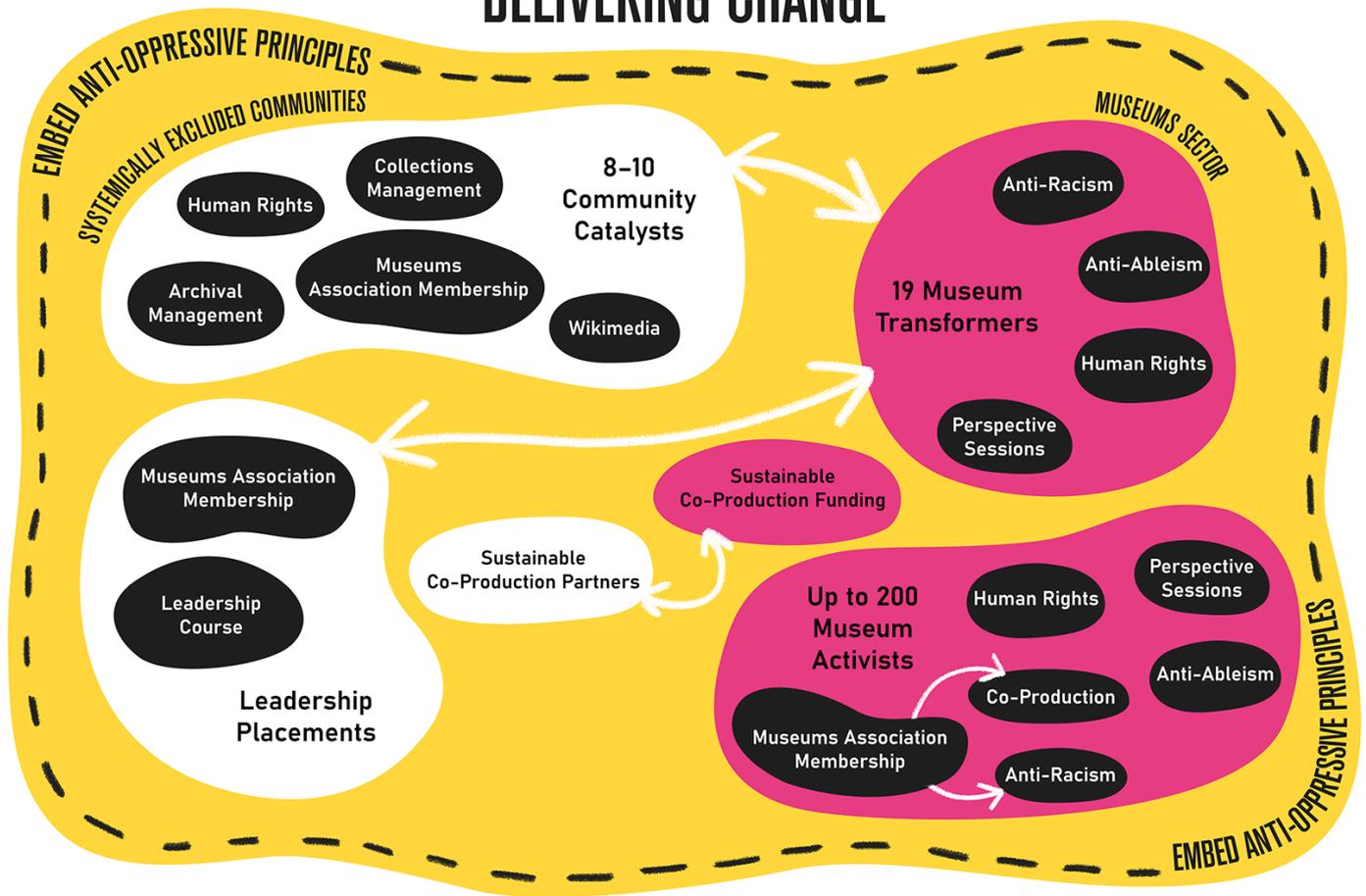
## Reflections on Challenges & Key Learnings

The webinars and outreach efforts generated strong interest and participation, but the overall recruitment process was complex and time-consuming, placing a heavy burden on both applicants and the DC team. The two-stage application process, including Expressions of Interest (EOIs), helped democratise access but also created unnecessary steps for small grants. Additionally, many participants were unfamiliar with the heritage sector, requiring extra effort to introduce them to the process. Accessibility options for different communication needs were highlighted as an area for improvement.

## Recommendations for Improving Recruitment

- Streamlining the process: using a simple EOI form earlier in the process to reduce effort and making the application more user-friendly.
  - Clearer criteria, better communication, and early intervention support for applicants who need capacity-building.
  - More guidance, reducing the amount of webinars would improve accessibility and effectiveness.
  - Launching anti-oppressive trainings early on for both museums and community groups could help balance power dynamics and improve collaboration.
  - While the open-call application process was clear, ensuring diverse representation across the sector may have required targeted engagement with underrepresented groups.
- 

# DELIVERING CHANGE



## Who is participating?

### Supporting Teams:

**MGS:** with cross-sector involvement, not only of the MGS in-house Delivering Change team, but also with involvement of Executive leadership, the Skills team, Grants team, HR, and many other roles within MGS becoming more involved as they integrate change internally across their organisation.

**Mental health supporters:** who offer free-of-cost support to DC participants.

**Facilitators & Trainers:** hired by the DC team to carry out anti-oppression & anti-racism trainings and to facilitate sessions within DC.

**Ikake Rising:** as evaluators, facilitators & trainers.



## Participants:

### Advisors

The Advisor team is made up of individuals who represent a rich diversity of backgrounds, identities and lived – as well as professional – experience in confronting and transforming systems of harm. Many of the Advisors have led systemic anti-oppressive change outside of the museum sector and thus are well positioned to guide DC in this work. They have been involved in developing and launching DC and continue to inform how the work is going, offering critical feedback and ongoing input via the DC team and the evaluation team.

### Museum Activists

The Museum Activists comprise more than 100 people coming from a broad range of prior exposure to topics like anti-ableism, gender diversity, LGBTQ+ identities, and anti-racism, though many at the time of joining DC had not received formal training, indicating significant gaps between personal understanding and structured learning opportunities.

In on-boarding baseline surveying, many expressed a desire for more comprehensive and interactive training around liberating frameworks that goes beyond brief, box-ticking exercises to facilitate deeper, practical engagement with anti-oppression principles. This early input from this first cohort of Museum Activists underscores a commitment to ongoing self-improvement and advocacy, as well as the challenges they face in translating personal understanding into actionable change within their institutions.



## **Museum Transformers**

The Museum Transformers represent a dynamic cohort of DC participants drawn from 19 key cultural institutions and local authorities across Scotland. Their membership spans a broad spectrum—from historic venues like Cromarty Courthouse, David Livingstone Birthplace, Paxton House, and The Scottish Crannog Centre, to nationally recognized institutions such as the National Galleries of Scotland, V&A Dundee, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. This diversity is further enriched by organisations focused on community and regional engagement, including Culture Perth and Kinross, Leisure & Culture Dundee, Inverclyde Council, North Lanarkshire Council, and Paisley Museum, as well as specialist collections from institutions like HMS Unicorn, Physicians Gallery (Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh), The Glasgow School of Art's Archives and Collections, The Whithorn Trust, and Timespan.

Collectively, these participants bring a wealth of expertise in historical preservation, art, public service, policy, governance, curation and creative programming, which positions them well to drive transformative change within the museum sector.

### **19 Museum Transformer Organisations**

- Cromarty Courthouse
- Culture Perth and Kinross
- David Livingstone Birthplace
- HMS Unicorn
- Inverclyde Council
- Leisure & Culture Dundee
- Museums & Galleries Edinburgh
- National Galleries of Scotland
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Paisley Museum
- Paxton House
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
- Physicians Gallery (Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh)
- The Scottish Crannog Centre
- Shetland Museum and Archives
- The Glasgow School of Art's Archives and Collections
- The Whithorn Trust
- Timespan
- V&A Dundee

### **Community Catalysts:**

The Community Catalysts are a diverse group of DC participants representing eight community-focused organisations dedicated to empowerment, inclusion, and social change. Their collective expertise spans a wide range of social justice efforts, including supporting marginalised ethnic communities (Africa Future), promoting women's empowerment and skills development (Dundee International Women's Centre), and advancing LGBTQ+ rights and youth support (LGBT Youth Scotland). Groups like Romano Lav advocate for Roma communities, while Sikh Sanjog works to amplify Sikh women's voices and foster cultural connections. The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities champions inclusion and equality for individuals with disabilities, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

This cohort is grounded in grassroots action, with organisations like Northern Corridor Community Volunteers and ZYA Community fostering local resilience, youth engagement, and environmental initiatives. Together, these Community Catalysts bring vital insights from lived experience and frontline advocacy, positioning them as key voices in driving meaningful change within cultural institutions. Their involvement highlights the importance of amplifying underrepresented voices and building stronger connections between museums and the diverse communities they serve.

### **8 Community Catalyst Organisations**

- [Africa Future](#)
- [Dundee International Women's Centre](#)
- [LGBT Youth Scotland](#)
- [Northern Corridor Community Volunteers](#)
- [Romano Lav](#)
- [Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Sikh Sanjog](#)
- [ZYA Community](#)

### **Sustainable Co-Production Fund Participants**

The Sustainable Co-production Fund supports five Scottish museums in partnering with systemically excluded communities to co-produce exhibitions, workshops, and community-led initiatives. Projects include exploring the transatlantic slave trade at Paxton House, developing co-production frameworks at Glasgow School of Art, fostering intercultural dialogue at GoMA, connecting African and Scottish histories at David Livingstone Birthplace, and supporting Ukrainian integration at HMS Unicorn.



## **The following organisations and partners are currently involved in this Sustainable Co-Production Fund:**

1/ Paxton House | Caribbean Connections Creative Partnership

Partnered with: Edinburgh Caribbean Association (Scotland); Descendants Children's Charity (England), and Exodus Collective with Bonaire Government School (Grenada).

2/ Glasgow School of Art | Community Co-Production: Reflect, Refine, Record

Partnered with: Maryhill Integration Network and The Garnethill Multicultural Centre

3/ David Livingstone Birthplace | Connecting Communities and Collections Partnered with: Empower Women for Change: Thistles and Dandelions

4/ Glasgow Museum's Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) | Glasgow Museum's Intercultural Youth Group

Partnered with: Mental Health Foundation's refugees and asylum seeker team.

5/ HMS Unicorn | Unicorn and Ukrainians Together

Partnered with: Ukrainians Together community group.

## **Summary of DC Participants**

These widely diverse community groups, museums, galleries and individuals represent a VERY broad range of voices across Scotland: from rural and urban areas, working class and middle class communities, racialised communities, immigrant, Roma, Highland, Lowland and Island communities, all focusing on different pathways to create more inclusive museums and galleries.

## **Is anyone missing?**

As the real work of Delivering Change is still just getting started, it is hard to say which voices are not yet involved – and more importantly, being heard.

That said, given DC's focus on driving meaningful change in museums through anti-oppression work, inclusivity, and social justice, there are some notable gaps in representation that could limit the breadth of impact.



## PART 2

# How are diverse communities feeling about the work?



“True transformation requires deep institutional change, embedding anti-oppression and collective liberation frameworks and practice into organisational culture to reshape both workforce diversity and community relationships.”

-Anonymous museum transformer participant

## Project Advisors

Now that many DC participants have begun their work, the Advisory group are providing regular feedback to the DC team to guide next steps of how to tangibly integrate the learnings: eg. how to adopt anti-racist policies, inclusive museum work cultures, and more.

### How do they feel the Delivering Change work is going so far?

The Advisory group views the Delivering Change programme as moving in a positive direction, acknowledging that change takes time and that mistakes are part of the learning process. They recognise the hard work of the team and are excited to see ideas transform into action. They encourage ongoing inclusivity and continuous learning as key strengths of DC, encouraging participants to remain open-minded, engage with new perspectives, and create mutually supportive environments where concerns can be voiced safely and feedback is actively addressed, reinforcing a sense of collaboration, accountability and responsiveness.

*A key point raised was the public's general lack of awareness about the UK's colonial past, how the British Empire invaded and occupied other nations without consent, and the ongoing legacies of that violence and displacement. Despite the UK being historically diverse, colonial thinking and racism persists, and there's a feeling of grief over what feels like backward steps across the UK in dismantling racist and colonial structures.*

### Barriers & Challenges

The advisors recognise that transforming museums is an ambitious and challenging process, with significant barriers to internal and systemic change. Anti-racism efforts within museums are just the starting point, requiring a deeper, collective unlearning of colonial ideologies.

A major concern is institutionalised racism, which impacts the safety and well-being of Black and racialised staff, often fostering fear and discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, museums continue to misrepresent Black communities and African history, highlighting the need for more accurate, inclusive narratives that acknowledge movements like Black Lives Matter and celebrate Black cultural icons.

### Calls to Action

The Advisors highlight the need for the DC programme to:

#### **1/ Address Classism and Colonisation in Scotland**

Greater focus is needed on classism's impact on rural and working-class communities. Also, the impact of Scotland's own colonisation has not been deeply explored in the programme and is an important avenue for engaging more people in discussions about systemic change.





## **2/ Strengthen Training and Tools for Museum Transformers from a Decolonial, Anti-Racist Lens**

*"Museum transformers need tools and training to stand their ground when facing outdated or problematic perspectives, especially from older generations with antiquated views. Training should address the history of pre-colonisation, colonisation, and ongoing experiences of colonisation, emphasizing anti-racism and addressing institutionalized racism."*

## **3/ Prioritise Workforce Diversity and Representation**

Museums must diversify their workforce to reflect the communities they serve. Increased representation ensures marginalised groups are seen and valued and have genuine agency in decision-making positions.

## **4/ Implement Liberatory (aka. Anti-oppressive) Approaches to Hiring**

Hiring processes should value lived experiences and precolonial, non-Western knowledge alongside formal education. Note: MGS has already adopted such approaches.

## **5/ Improve Accessibility and Inclusion for Neurodivergence & People with Disabilities**

Museums need to enhance accessibility for neurodivergent individuals and those with physical and mental disabilities and illnesses. Inclusive practices should ensure staff and visitors feel empowered and tangibly supported in museum spaces.

## **6/ Address Spiritual & Religious Identities as an Area of Exclusion**

Spiritual and/or religious identities can also be an area of systemic exclusion that some advisors voiced, and has not yet been addressed within DC. This is particularly important due to the current rise – some noted – in Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, stating that it is important to “acknowledge and understand that spirituality and religion are core aspects of identity for some communities, sometimes more than race or class.”

## **Wins & Celebrations**

Advisors celebrate that the DC team as well as wider participants in DC have demonstrated a strong commitment to creating meaningful change in their communities. They have witnessed the deep investment in fostering inclusivity and transformation within museums.

They also expressed pride in being part of an initiative that is actively reshaping research culture compared to other funders, moving beyond overly academic approaches and embracing innovative, community and action-driven methods. They expressed that DC is leading the way in rethinking how museums evaluate their work, ensuring that the process is more reflective of lived experiences and centering anti-oppression in meaningful ways.

## MGS Delivering Change (DC) team

Delivering Change is being led by a small, committed and still evolving group of MGS staff at the core of the programme. They have faced up to the huge complexity of this work and the various institutional, social and logistical barriers this work inevitably calls us to confront. And they have succeeded in not only launching the program after years of preparation ("The Development Phase"), but also in forming as a strong, diverse central team to drive this work forward. This deserves celebration, as does this team.

### **What are some things that you have learned and unlearned in this Delivering Change work so far?**

***"The challenge of balancing trust and hope with the vulnerability needed to create change, while trying to navigate and bridge disruptive, change-driven efforts and the realities of traditional elements in the work environment."***

The Delivering Change team have learned the importance of openness, vulnerability, relationship building and seeking support, recognising that the pressure to 'not make mistakes' in professional settings can be a barrier to growth. There is an ongoing process of unlearning the power-over structure in the work environment, as some team members adjust to a more collaborative approach that moves away from traditional power structures. Through this, the team is fostering a culture of honesty, mutual support, and shared learning.

### **Barriers & Challenges**

***"Transforming colonial and exclusionary museum practices is radical work, but it requires greater resources and institutional buy-in to be truly effective."***

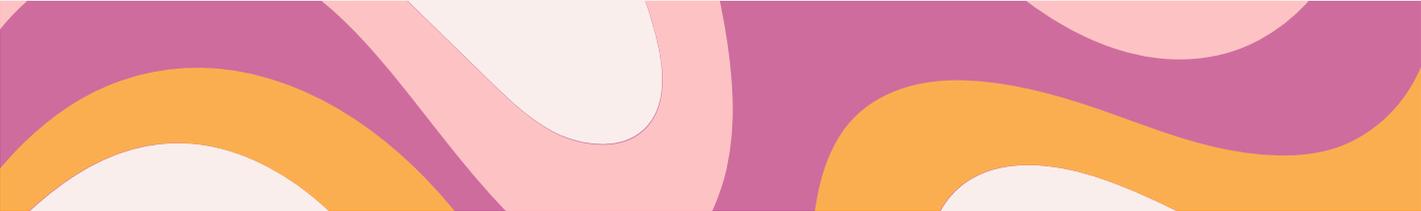
- The work's complex, large-scale, nonlinear and constantly evolving nature, combined with budget constraints makes it understandably overwhelming.
- Balancing external expectations with internal capacity is a continuous challenge.



## **Wins & Celebrations**

A significant celebration in this process is the growing authenticity and openness within the team. DC team members feel empowered to show up as themselves, without the pressure to have all the answers or conform to rigid expectations. This culture of honesty and experimentation has created space to try new things without fear of failure, which is essential for meaningful change.

Another key win is the strengthening of relationships across MGS. By openly sharing worries and tensions, MGS and the DC internal team are working towards fostering greater understanding and connection, acknowledging that people are engaging in this work at different speeds, but there is a shared vision and commitment. Holding space for listening to the perspectives of people involved at different levels and capacities is slowly helping build collective momentum, ensuring that the work is more widely embedded and supported across the organisation.



## **MGS Executive Leadership**

### **Balancing Involvement, Learning & Trust**

The leadership team of MGS is already engaged in the work of DC, and are voicing their desire to engage more fully in this work. They are keen to engage, to attend anti-oppression (and related) trainings, and to learn to embody skills in the areas of DC themselves. This in itself is a win: to have leadership who are open to support and join this transformative work. Paired with genuine commitment and personal involvement beyond the purely professional forms of engaging in this work, this will make for a powerful organisational engagement for the entire sector to draw inspiration from. MGS's leadership are learning how this work asks them to show up in ways that are unfamiliar to typical 'professional work culture', which is in itself a challenge. They are exploring different tools for building trust and deeper relationships with the rest of the DC team and learning along the way how to make this a priority in order for this work to be truly impactful and in alignment.

One of the challenges that the team is still learning to balance is engaging leadership, including the Board of Directors, in a meaningful way through trainings and other actions while also ensuring that staff and community partners feel comfortable showing up authentically in the same spaces. The presence of those in positions of power in shared learning spaces can create power dynamics that make open and honest participation more difficult. Finding the right balance remains an ongoing learning process.



## **Bridging Worlds: The Executive Challenge**

MGS Leadership have a unique role in facing the challenges of being the bridge between the transformations that this work brings, and reporting to other decision-maker and stakeholders such as the Board of Directors, funders and other parties who hold positions of power and yet are not engaged in this work. Here the MGS Executive team hold much of the strain of keeping these stakeholders informed and satisfied with traditional metrics of success, etc, while also adapting to the new approaches to change that the DC Team are introducing to MGS.

It is clear that both Executive Leadership and the DC Team share the goals of the project. It is now time to ensure that the Leadership have the right forms of support in place to help them engage in the work meaningfully, and thus enable the DC Team and stand in solidarity with them as they dive deeper into the work.

## **Calls to Action**

1/ **Embracing discomfort** as a process of self-reflection and curiosity, where individuals approach their emotional responses with wonder rather than judgment or defensiveness, allowing for growth and compassion.

2/ **Building deeper relationships, more trust, openness and vulnerability** with each other as leaders, and with the rest of the team, creating a space where difficult questions and moments of discomfort can be explored with compassion and mutual support.

3/ **Team building and collective energy:** The team needs to gather strength and energy to move forward together. Creating spaces to relax, share, celebrate, and ground themselves is essential for sustaining the work and staying connected.

4/ Maintaining hope and energy is challenging, as there are fluctuations between feeling hopeful and overwhelmed. **More spaces for open sharing, check-ins, and mutual support** are necessary to stay motivated and maintain momentum.

## DC Participants

### 1) Museum Transformers

Museum Transformers feel a combination of excitement to be involved and increasingly active in bringing this work to their museums, and seeing tangible change already, as well as others feeling that the program has not yet fully launched, with delays in key training sessions, such as anti-racism training being postponed. Some are unclear about the program's goals and structure, especially those who joined mid-process or work in remote areas. There is a sense of overwhelm due to an abundance of information without clear guidance on how to proceed, including how to engage with community partners and what the expectations are.

#### **Barriers & Challenges:**

Museum staff face challenges attending sessions due to limited availability and geographic remoteness, while concerns persist about the effectiveness of virtual training and its lack of interactive and in-person elements. Sourcing trainers for anti-oppression work and internal capacity-building has been difficult, adding to confusion around the training structure, including how to engage with modules and the recommended journaling exercises. Balancing program demands with daily responsibilities further limits full participation, and many struggle to translate training into concrete actions within their specific role or effectively implement and share their learning across their organisations.

#### **Wins & Celebrations:**

*What would a "win" look like for you in this work?*

***"True transformation requires deep institutional change, embedding anti-oppression and collective liberation frameworks and practice into organisational culture to reshape both workforce diversity and community relationships."***

Radical programming and exhibits should challenge oppressive narratives, highlight underrepresented histories, and connect museums to contemporary social justice movements. A long-term vision is needed to ensure museums can be welcoming and accessible while addressing historical and systemic inequities.

Transformers also seek a clearer vision from MGS on the impact of this work and a facilitated visioning session to guide their efforts. Additionally, cultural shifts within workplaces are essential, with dedicated time and space for this work, even if it means pausing less critical activities to prevent burnout and fully engage in meaningful change.



### ***What wins can we celebrate so far?***

Some organisations have already seen positive impacts, such as securing funding for community-focused roles and advocating for systemic changes with funders and boards. There has been success in engaging historically excluded communities, like working-class Scots, through oral history projects and film screenings. Participants valued the diverse collaboration with MGS, which sparked new perspectives and initiatives. The program has also opened doors to communities, fostering optimism about upcoming training and the potential for transformative changes within organisations alongside local communities.

### **Calls to Action**

***“The main thing I think I would like to learn through this, is how to safely de-escalate harmful conversations and talk about race and class issues within the museum as we have had staff in the past that have been forced into unpleasant situations.”***

#### **Museum Transformers request:**

- Trainings that address the intersectionality of issues like race and class, with more concrete examples on engaging with historical materials and communities from this lens.
- Those whose trainings were delayed requested rescheduled anti-racism, anti-ableism, and human rights training with clear timelines, preparatory materials and tangible steps for implementation/action.
- Accessible frameworks, prompts and toolkits to address systemic change, class issues and having sensitive conversations along with strategies for involving diverse groups within organisations to avoid over-relying on the same individuals.
- Translating the purpose of DC into simplified, accessible language would help reach wider audiences both within Transformer organisations and with the public.
- Support for local programming and funding for outreach to excluded communities and rural communities.
- Logistical support in figuring out transportation barriers for rural communities to attend training and other events in person.
- Clearer communication and a more structured flow of information from MGS, along with regular internal check-ins, would help clarify tasks, roles, and community partnership responsibilities.

## 2) Community Catalysts

Many communities, including Sikh, Roma, LGBTQ+ and former mining communities, remain underrepresented in museums and broader historical narratives of oppression, migration and displacement in Scotland. Catalysts from the Roma community spoke to the harmful stereotypes that their communities continue to face and seek to create counter narratives that challenge racist portrayals as part of the DC work.

*“Roma people came to Europe over 400 years ago and even our own children don’t know our own traditions. In Scotland, our children don’t grow up with Roma people surrounding them, so they don’t know their own histories. The hope is that our children as well as non-Roma children also learn about our culture, our history and our displacement from our original lands. Roma people don’t have a country and not everyone knows this. Roma life needs to be shown with art, music, stories, history, this project represents a really good opportunity for us to have a voice within museums.”*

Community Catalyst participants spoke to the failure of many museums to acknowledge significant historical events, such as the UK’s colonial history, miners’ strikes, and the intergenerational trauma tied to miners’ struggles in our communities. There is a pressing need for more inclusive representation of complex histories, including the impact of extractivism on working-class and the working-poor communities of Scotland, along with improved educational materials within museums that reflect these realities:

*“We want real representation of the struggles of former mining communities; what was it really like being a miner? Our museums don’t acknowledge that most miners didn’t even make it to the age of 50! The information about miners is super glorified as the industrial revolution - it’s very whitewashed. We want museums to speak to the miner’s stories as a lesson to the future about extractivism - extractivism is bad.”*

### Barriers & Challenges:

- Short-term project funding leads to a cycle of temporary work and a lack of long-term support for lasting change.
- Communities want more opportunities to engage with museums and create legacies for future generations.
- Transportation costs and limited funding hinder participation, particularly for young people and folks living in rural areas.
- Funding being allocated to short-term projects rather than towards long-term systemic change that truly supports communities.



## Wins & Celebrations

### *What would a win look like for you?*

For youth and the communities we are working with to feel seen, represented and for people to be able to share their stories in their own voices.

## Calls to Action

- Museums need to improve representation and understanding of marginalized histories.
- Additional funding and resources to support under-represented communities, such as LGBTQ+, mining, and immigrant groups, in sharing their histories in this land and empowering communities to feel seen and heard.
- Organisations in the sector must prioritise genuine inclusion and meaningful engagement with systemically oppressed groups, moving beyond tokenism to foster true representation and sharing power.

## 3) Museum Activists

***“Some local museum authorities remain resistant to change, particularly regarding the acknowledgment of enslavement and colonisation, often perceiving those advocating for reform as troublemakers.”***

However, participants in the program are gaining valuable tools and reflections for addressing racism, feeling inspired to take action within their institutions. MGS's role as a governing body has added credibility and support, strengthening advocacy efforts within the museum sector. Additionally, the DC program has successfully fostered a network of support and collaboration, creating a space for shared learning and collective growth.

The human rights training has been informative and impactful, enhancing awareness and providing essential knowledge for participants. Its credibility, especially when linked to MGS, lends legitimacy to the work, making it easier to apply and advocate for within institutions. The program's flexible scheduling has been particularly beneficial, allowing those with personal commitments, such as maternity leave, to engage more easily. Moreover, the ability to integrate sessions with personal life—such as attending with children—has helped normalise work-life balance and made participation more accessible.



### Barriers & Challenges:

- Despite receiving a lot of information through the DC project, some activists feel that they lack clear guidance on how to tangibly take action and implement the teachings from the trainings.
- The absence of stable funding often harms community relationships being built because the work cannot be sustained over time.
- There is a strong desire for a lasting legacy beyond a toolkit, with ongoing support and a dedicated role within MGS to sustain community connections and carry the work forward beyond this project.
- Community engagement remains a challenge for some activists, but ongoing efforts to make connections with diverse communities continue to make projects more impactful.

### Wins & Celebrations:

#### *What would a win look like for you?*

For museums to be places where anti-oppression work is embedded in every role: no longer places where objects are displayed, but community-rooted centres for ideas, stories, songs and traditions to be shared and celebrated by all.

### Calls to Action

- **More time to speak about tangible steps** to actually effect change within their organisations after the training sessions would allow for folks to strategise together.
- **More in-person gatherings and unstructured time** beyond the trainings, for connection, reflection, integration and discussion of ongoing work.
- Stronger **legislative and policy support** is needed to sustain and effectively implement these efforts.
- For meaningful change to happen within museums, **those in power must actively engage in challenging systemic oppression**, rather than relying on bottom-up efforts, with MGS facilitating systemic transformation by actively involving directors and executives in the dialogue.



#### 4) Sustainable Co-Production Fund

*The Sustainable Co-production fund supports museums to embed new ways of working. Each participant partners with at least one community group whose members have experienced systemic exclusion. Together, the museums and community groups are co-producing programming which will engage a wider audience and increase representation in the museum from groups who have been systematically excluded. The participants are working as a cohort to support each other and share the challenges and successes of the projects as they develop. As a result, museum staff, volunteers, and trustees will gain greater knowledge and understanding of the excluded groups their partners support. This initiative also aims to make collaborating with communities a core part of what museums do. - **MGS Website***

Ikake Rising held evaluation sessions with participants of the **Sustainable Co-Production** Fund and received the following feedback:

#### Positive Feedback Summary

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the Delivering Change initiative, highlighting its transformative potential and meaningful progress in addressing systemic issues within Scotland's museums and galleries. Many found the work deeply impactful, noting supportive relationships with colleagues, community partners, and resources like MGS materials that allowed them to engage at their own pace. Networking opportunities through sessions were valued, as they foster collaboration and mutual inspiration. The open and flexible nature of MGS's approach was commended, providing space to explore and develop the work without undue pressure.

#### Calls to Action

- **Increased support and resources** to address barriers and advance radical, sustainable outcomes.
- **Trainings in management** to dismantle fear-based limitations and promote trust, flexibility, and youth empowerment.
- **Simple feedback mechanisms**, like anonymous forms, to gather input from community partners and ensure it is documented effectively.
- **Sustainable funding and lobbying efforts** to secure government backing for long-term systemic changes.
- **Clear scheduling** for meetings, better responses to submitted reports, and increased capacity for staffing and managing growing groups.



# PART 3

## Evaluating The Year 1 Goals



# Where do things stand in regards to the original Year 1 Goals?



## Year 1 Goals: Review

Year 1 initial goals focused on team-building, recruitment, cross-sector engagement, programme launch, training, and internal capacity-building: both within MGS itself and DC participants as they get engaged in this first year of the work.

## Wins to Celebrate | Key goals accomplished in Year 1:

- **Team-Building:** Such a complex initiative needs a strong team to not only be created, but to then come together and build relationships as a team. In this kind of work that requires building a foundation of trust, shared vision and genuine connection. This process has begun in the programme's host MGS Delivering Change team and is growing within MGS's leadership and other involved roles.
- **Recruitment & Staffing:** Four new team members (Project Administrator, Communities Coordinator, Museums Coordinator and Grants Officer) joined the MGS DC project in January 2024, strengthening internal capacity and reflecting a more diverse core team with more experience in anti-oppression work, to steer Delivering Change forward.
- **Growing Cross Sector Engagement:** More people in roles across the sector are engaging in the DC work: within MGS and among participating museums, including:
  - Executive Leadership & Management
  - Front of House
  - Collections
  - Fundraising & Finance
  - HR, Communications & PR
- **Programme Launches:** The Museum Transformers, Museum Activists and Community Catalysts programmes;
  - with 100 Activists, 19 Transformer organisations and 8 Catalysts now engaged
- **Rolling Out Community Funding:** The Sustainable Co-Production Fund distributed £174,984 to five projects, and the Community Catalyst Fund received additional funding from Esmée Fairbairn to support grassroots initiatives.
- **New Skills in the Sector:** Training & Learning: The appointment of Dorcas Inclusive Education to develop anti-racism workshops marks a major step towards sector-wide education on anti-oppressive practices, starting with MGS and DC participants.
- **Ongoing Feedback & Community-Steering:** The Advisory Group and Project Oversight Team have been actively involved in shaping the direction of the DC programme, providing crucial feedback on recruitment, training, and funding.





### Evaluation of Year 1 Goals:

**A central overarching goal to the first year of DC was to build the system – of people, resources, communication and logistics – that would drive DC forward.**

This has required:

**1/ building the framework for this project**

**2/ establishing the network of relationships across the sector that is required;**

**3/ engaging communities outside the sector; and**

**4/ building the capacity of everyone involved, to prepare them for the work itself.**

### What new relationships have been created?

- Stronger collaboration with **funding bodies** (NLHF, PPL, SG, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation), securing additional funding to expand programmes.
- Increased connection between **MGS teams** through All Staff discussions, the Anti-Oppression group, and growing involvement of Exec. Leadership and Management in the work alongside the DC team.
- Across-the-board engagement with **Ikake Rising** as supporters, trainers, facilitators and evaluators for MGS and DC participants.
- New partnerships with **Dorcas Inclusive Education** for anti-racism workshops and external facilitators across Scotland.
- Strengthened involvement of the **Advisory Group**, providing input on Museum Transformers, Community Catalysts, and Anti-Racism training.
- Connections between **local community groups** (Community Catalysts) and museum sector participants of DC.
- Connection for DC participants with **mental health practitioners**, providing tailored support for participants facing systemic discrimination.





## What communities have been engaged?

- **Museum Transformers & Museum Activists:** 54 enrolled in Cohort 1 of Museum Activists; and 60 in Cohort 2; 19 organisations were accepted into Museum Transformers.
- **Community Catalyst Programme:** Engaging organisations across Scotland supporting systemically excluded groups. 25 applications received.
- **Wider MGS Staff & Sector Professionals:** More involvement in Delivering Change initiatives, including the Anti-Oppression group.

These voices represent: Disabled, Black, People of Colour, racialised, Roma, working class, immigrant communities as well **communities and individuals who face multiple (or intersecting) forms of oppression**, such as working class women who are racialised, and people with less/in-visible forms of social barriers (eg. anxiety, disability, neurodivergence), all engaging in this demanding work while navigating institutions that may not (currently be able to) attend to their needs.

## What new capacities and skills are in the sector?

- **Anti-Racism Training:** Development of workshop templates and facilitation by external trainers.
- **Human Rights-Based Approaches:** Embedded in Delivering Change initiatives.
- **Critical Thinking in Anti-Racism:** Workshops for Museum Activists, facilitated by the Delivering Change Team.
- **Gaelic Cultural Grounding & Awareness:** Land-based, anti-colonial experience for MGS DC team from Àdhamh Ó Broin, Gaelic tradition bearer, via Ikake Rising. Note: Only a one-off session. More needed.
- **Museum Sector Transformation Skills:** Training for Museum Transformers on institutional change.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Support:** Dedicated sessions to support individuals impacted by systemic oppression.
- **Further Funding & Support:** Additional funding has enabled an expansion of support mechanisms, including tailored mental health support for participants.
- **Institutional Support:** Growing MGS-wide involvement in DC work through staff meetings, the Anti-Oppression group, and internal learning and feedback mechanisms has brought more MGS voices and skills into the work.



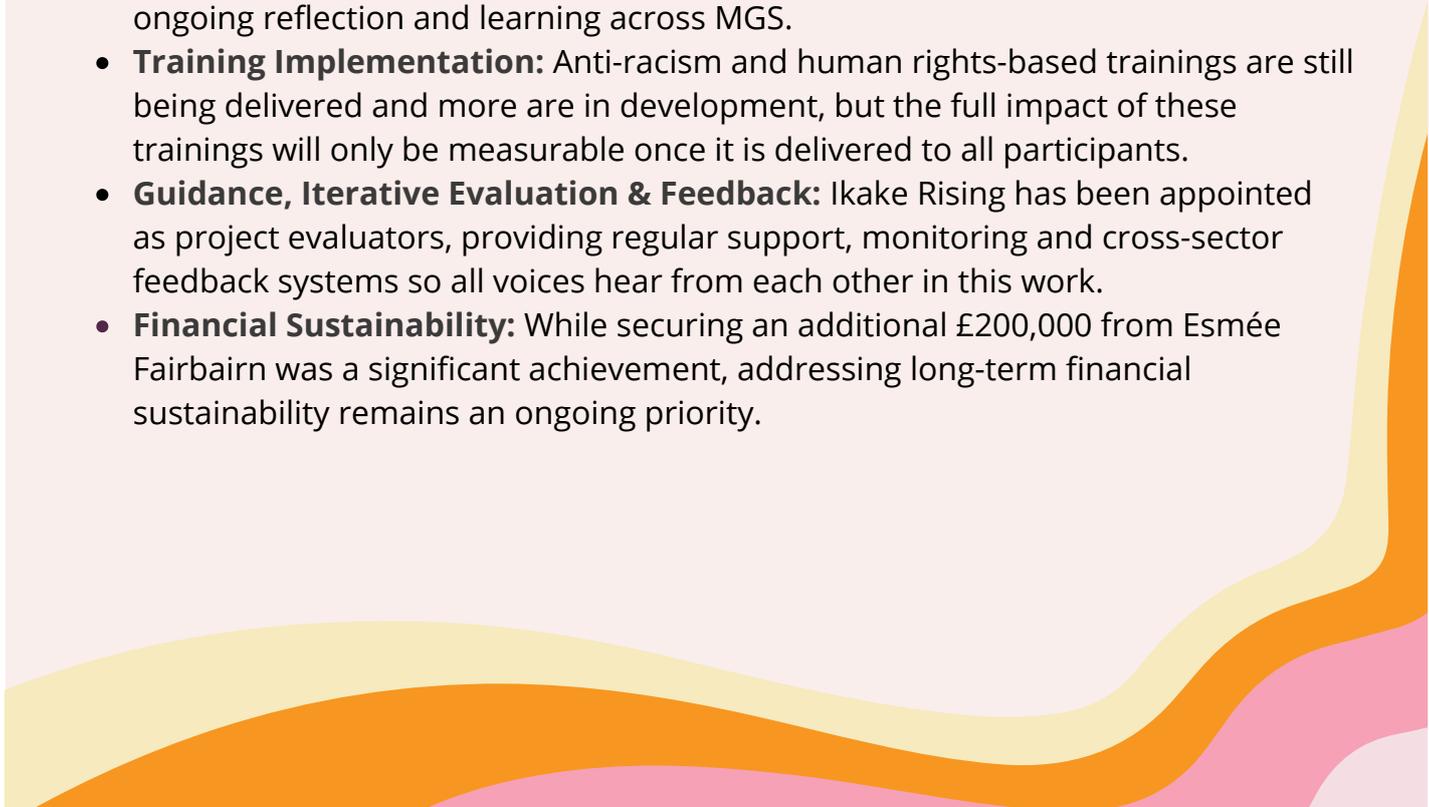


## Challenges & Barriers to the Year 1 Goals

- **Recruitment delays:** Some aspects of the project were delayed, requiring an extension of the work to March 2027: this in itself is also a benefit as it means there is more time for this DC work.
- **Structures that need to change:** Engaging museum professionals in this liberating work has highlighted structural barriers that require continued attention, and are beyond the power of any one individual to change.
- **Capacity constraints:** Managing the growing administrative workload of supporting 100 activists and 19 organisations has necessitated additional resources.
- **Complexity:** With the programme launched and hundreds of people involved the work is increasingly complex to steer, engage with, and monitor. This is inevitable and must be balanced by building capacity, trust and empowerment across the movement.

## New, Emerging and Ongoing Goals

- **Deeper Cross-Sector Engagement for Institutional Change:** While DC has made progress in diversifying MGS staffing and growing engagement across the organisation, Executive Leadership identified the need for MGS itself to become directly engaged in DC as a Transformer organisation), in order to build MGS's internal capacity for this work. This could lead to sustained efforts across MGS to integrate liberating practices into their institutional structures, policies and work culture, which in turn would impact the entire DC programme. The DC Team also aspire to build closer relationships with MGS Leadership colleagues, to work in solidarity with one another, build trust and collectively embed the work.
- **Building Internal Capacity & Organisational Reflection:** An MGS-wide Anti-Oppression group has been created and has begun meeting, contributing to ongoing reflection and learning across MGS.
- **Training Implementation:** Anti-racism and human rights-based trainings are still being delivered and more are in development, but the full impact of these trainings will only be measurable once it is delivered to all participants.
- **Guidance, Iterative Evaluation & Feedback:** Ikake Rising has been appointed as project evaluators, providing regular support, monitoring and cross-sector feedback systems so all voices hear from each other in this work.
- **Financial Sustainability:** While securing an additional £200,000 from Esmée Fairbairn was a significant achievement, addressing long-term financial sustainability remains an ongoing priority.



## Year 1 Goals: Conclusions Based on Summaries of Evaluations

Year 1 has been foundational in stepping into this work: building teams; systems; beginning to build relationships; securing funding; and launching key initiatives.

The barriers confronted are typical in this stage of such large-scale work, and should not discourage. Rather, they point to what is needed moving forward (outlined as Calls to Action throughout this report, and in Part 4: Recommendations).

Year 1 has been a year of growing pains and notable wins, as everyone involved – especially MGS – take in how big this work is: in complexity; in what it demands of everyone involved; and in terms of timeline. Transformative work like this takes years, decades and generations. And yet, MGS and DC participants have already begun to make positive impacts even as they begin their engagements.

**Celebrate the wins!**



# PART 4

## Conclusions & Recommendations

DREAM  
BIG

SET  
GOALS

TAKE  
ACTION



# Recommendations from MGS & DC Participants



The following recommendations come from the voices of MGS staff and DC participants. These recommendations are designed to help MGS in:

- responding to the emerging needs of DC participants and the MGS team;
- developing systems of feedback and accountability to guide Year 2;
- strategising to maximise engagement across the sector; and
- strategising how to build relationships and networks of support, trust and solidarity to sustain the work and empower all those involved.

## 1) Prioritise Relationship-building

Leadership both in MGS and all DC participating organisations and groups are encouraged to take more time to **build genuine relationships** as they dive into this work. Since this work of transforming harmful systems calls us to show up in our fullest selves, it can be very challenging. This work requires us to challenge the systems around us, at work, in the wider world and to critically engage with our own personal belief systems, insecurities and lived experiences of both harm and healing, and our own “positionality” in this work: how we all have “skin in the game”.

**Without building strong relationships based on trust, open sharing and accountability, the strains of this work can be too much for a team to take on and sustain. This includes embracing discomfort and honest, compassionate communication across teams.**

This is why taking the time to get to know each other, to do regular check-ins, to share visions for the work as well as worries, barriers to engaging in the work, and practices of self-care and how to restore ourselves throughout the work, is so critical.

**ACTION:** Plan for more in person gatherings and unstructured time together, outside of training to: share tools, resources, build relationships, support networks, witness and hear one another, share experiences and strategise together.

## 2) Broadening Engagement

MGS and other DC organisations are encouraged to bring their Boards into the DC work, to ensure buy-in and guidance from these “higher” levels of leadership. Also on-boarding new potential allies by sharing the stories of the work across participating organisations and the sector.



### 3) Tangibly prioritising the work

In doing so deprioritising other areas, so DC participants and connected organisations have time to implement calls to action without burning out. Many people involved in DC are overworked and experience overwhelm as they try to add DC work to their current workload, without having deprioritised other work to restore balance. This is unsustainable and highlights the need to integrate this work into their existing work. This includes **collective visioning as leaders** as to how to deprioritise and thus create new capacity across organisations.

### 4) Building Capacity, Awareness and Widened Imagination for Leaders

Training for leaders of engaged organisations (especially MGS) so they can build their own capacity to do this work and thus bring their holistic, skilled support to DC. Leaders of MGS and other involved organisations to learn about case studies of similar institutional change and thus broaden their understanding of how change can happen and their ability to imagine new ways of working: eg. non-hierarchical decision-making frameworks; conflict engagement processes; 4 day work week, etc.

**ACTION:** Launch MGS as a Transformer within DC.

### 5) Celebrating wins and building momentum

By capturing changes already made and taking time as DC teams to build a sense of accomplishment and positivity.

### 6) Ongoing, open communication and co-creation across the programme

Between all parts to ensure people are able to feedback to MGS and to one another to: share reflections; build momentum and to collectively co-create the path that DC takes as moving forward.

**ACTION:** Providing open, rolling feedback forms for all participants to use.



# Integration

One thing is to launch DC, calling for change across the sector. Another is to move towards integrating this change tangibly.

## MGS is encouraged to prepare for integration by:

- **Continuing to build diversity and representation** especially in positions of power and decision-making across MGS and the sector;
- **Sharing power:** decentralising power and adopting panel-led decision making processes wherever requested and/or possible, with panels of people with diverse lived experiences making decisions;
- **Getting stuck in with meaningful community engagement:** building relationships with and thus empowering communities to be seen, heard and taking into decision-making roles throughout the work.
- **Building systems for clearer communication** from MGS to DC participants;
- **Providing tangible guidance for how to implement this work** including:
  - Toolkits and other resources to DC participants for addressing systemic issues from an intersectional lens using accessible language;
  - Capacity-building trainings that go beyond theory: about integrating the theory with tangible actions
    - Looking at what action looks like in each role across any given museum/gallery
  - More trainings for museums in historical memory: to not replicate the harms of the past
- **Embedding (not just learning or talking about) liberating frameworks** and practices: across MGS and all DC participants – and associated organisations. I.e. Policy reform.
- **Encouraging DC participants to develop their own grassroots approaches to embedding change;** and sharing these back across the programme, to build a more bottom-up movement where MGS is no longer the only voice leading the work, but rather the entire movement becomes self-led in the sense that all participants share wins, successful tactics, resources and more, and thus build a body of proven methods, etc. to inform the wider movement. This will make the movement more sustainable and take pressure off of MGS alone.



## How to Measure Tangible Integration

1. **Build relationships with frontline communities** who will be best positioned to assess tangible change: ie. Amplifying the voices of Community Catalysts in their work with Museum Transformers & Activists, as the Catalysts represent on-the-ground community voices.
2. **Carry out mid-line surveys**, collective evaluations and iterative check-ins with DC participants to hear how they are perceiving tangible change: compare this with baseline surveys.
3. **Assess tangible changes in the sector** that reflect integration of DC work such as: changes to hiring processes; funding; grants; policies; staffing; people with lived experience in positions of decision-making and power; displays; etc.
4. **Carry out focus groups with community members** local to the areas in which participating Museum Transformers are based, to feedback on how they perceive of any changes in their local museum/gallery: especially seeking out and amplifying voices of those belonging to historically excluded, invisibilised and/or oppressed communities.

## How to Support Integration

1. **Build the capacity of those driving DC**: within MGS and across DC participants with:
  - a. **trainings** in anti-oppressive leadership; allyship; solidarity; movement building; activism; harm reduction and intersectionality;
  - b. **frameworks** for how to communicate the importance of this work across the sector to get more support and buy-in; and
  - c. **frameworks**: for how to integrate this work across the sector.
2. **Ongoing iterative evaluation** to assess where change is happening and where it is not; what barriers are preventing change; what lessons can we integrate, etc.
3. **Adaptive, flexible interventions to address barriers**, blockages, etc:
  - a. ie. Bespoke trainings for leaders of DC and participating museums and galleries designed to build capacity in the face of specific barriers;
  - b. additional relationship building to ensure the different players within this movement when conflict or challenges emerge.



**Relationship & Capacity Building!**



## Conclusion

Delivering Change is a huge initiative that seeks to confront and transform the very legacy and nature of the museum sector until now. And it seeks to do this change simultaneously from the inside out and from the outside in. This is incredibly complex and requires great strategy, execution and above all commitment and courage.

MGS's DC team has demonstrated it has all of these, and with the wider support of MGS's leadership and wider teams' involvement, it is proving capable of leading this work in a meaningful way, while being open to critique, reflection and changing tactics to respond to the evolving realities of the work and needs of those involved. This is worth celebrating and is truly inspiring.

The first year of Delivering Change has been both a bold experiment and a deep commitment to transforming the museum sector in Scotland. It has laid the foundation for what is to come—building trust, developing new ways of working, and pushing the sector towards more inclusive, anti-oppressive practices. This work is not easy, nor is it meant to be. Real change is complex, non-linear, and at times deeply uncomfortable. Yet, despite the challenges, there is clear evidence of momentum, of individuals and institutions stepping forward to reimagine what museums can be and whom they serve.

There have been significant wins: diverse teams forming, meaningful collaborations taking shape, and systemic issues being acknowledged and addressed. There have also been barriers—challenging new approaches, capacity constraints, and the ongoing challenge of balancing the radical and the practical. These are not signs of failure but of the depth and ambition of this work. They are the growing pains of transformation.

As we move forward into the next phase, we must continue to build on these foundations while being honest about what is required: deeper relationships, sustained commitment, and the courage to push for lasting change. Museums must not only be places that hold history but spaces where history is questioned, rewritten, and made more just. This is a long-term journey, and we stand at the beginning of something much larger than ourselves.

***Delivering Change is not just a programme—it is a movement. And like all movements, it will be shaped by those who show up, who listen, who challenge, and who remain committed to this new vision of museums as sites of justice, learning, and liberation. The work ahead will require resilience, but if Year 1 has shown us anything, it is that those involved are capable, are ready, and are already making an impact.***