

# DELIVERING CHANGE

Year 2 Report | February 2026  
Integration & Early Impact



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## **Intro:**

- **About this Report**
- **Summary of Year 2**
- **Year 2 Budget Overview**
- **How we're Measuring Success**

**Part 1: Who Is Currently Part of Delivering Change & How?**

**Part 2: How are Diverse Communities Feeling About the Work so far?**

**Part 3: Summary of Year 2 Feedback**

**Part 4: Evaluating the Year 2 Goals & Preparing for Year 3**

**Part 5: Conclusions & Recommendations**

**Part 6: Supporting Materials**



## About this Report

Delivering Change(DC) is a Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) programme that recognises that museums have played a part in excluding the experiences and histories of many of Scotland's people and communities. This three-and-a-half-year programme, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The People's Postcode Lottery, and the Scottish Government supports museums and galleries across Scotland to make changes to help all people to access culture.

### Year 2: Integration & Early Impact

In Year 2, DC has grown from a project into a young movement — communities leading, museums shifting, and the first signs of real transformation taking root: early, imperfect, but powerful change that is alive and already beginning to reshape the sector.

Year 2 is a "bridge year", from launching and building systems to beginning the work and starting towards embedding lasting change. This report is meant as a reflection of how this bridging is going: catching what is working well and what is proving to be challenging; as well as how best those involved in DC can prepare for Year 3.

As **Ikake Rising**, we've been walking alongside the DC team for three years now; listening, evaluating, and supporting critical reflection. Year 1 of DC was about building the foundations: recruiting participants, forming the team, and starting the journey. Year 2 has been about embedding the work: beginning to see how anti-oppression principles are moving from ideas into daily practice.

Many of the barriers identified in Year 1 remain present in Year 2. This does not mean the project isn't moving; rather, it reflects the deep, systemic nature of the impact Delivering Change is attempting to make that will take time as any systemic change does. Our role as evaluators is to track both continuity and emergence: what has shifted, what has not, and what new insights are surfacing as the work matures.

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

## Summary of Year 2

**Achievements & Impact** Year 2 saw significant consolidation of the DC programme's internal foundations within MGS, with clearer team roles, stronger communication, and increased trust and collaboration across the DC team. Confidence and skill in navigating conflict grew through the introduction of de-escalation practices and reflective spaces, while intersectional and anti-oppression training strengthened shared understanding and practice. Land-based integration days proved particularly impactful in building trust, relationships, and collective purpose. The establishment of implementation groups and action planning signalled early movement beyond tokenistic approaches, alongside growing leadership engagement in shared learning. Pilot peer support models were also tested, and awareness of potential harm to marginalised participants deepened, strengthening commitments to care, transparency, and safer engagement.

Across the sector, Delivering Change delivered meaningful impact through expanded anti-oppressive and human rights-based training, supporting museum staff, community partners, leadership participants, and stakeholders to develop confidence, shared language, and practical tools for embedding equity and anti-racist practice. Sustainable co-production partnerships strengthened relationships between museums and systemically excluded communities, enabling collaborative exhibitions, policy development, and community-led decision-making. The programme also deepened sector learning through mentoring, peer networks, and reflective practice spaces, while advocacy supported wider conversations around power-sharing, representation, and accountability in Scottish heritage. Together, these developments have strengthened community engagement, amplified lived experience, and supported long-term cultural and organisational transformation across the museum sector.

**Gaps and challenges faced** Progress was limited by capacity pressures, competing priorities, and the expanding demands of other major programmes, which diverted focus and resources from DC. Engagement across MGS remained uneven, with some leaders and staff disengaged from the work of DC, contributing to a sense of “parallel worlds” within MGS. Despite comprehensive training, there was insufficient capacity to fully integrate intersectional learning or establish clear post-training action pathways. Peer support and collective spaces were constrained by resource disparities, burnout, and a challenging regional political climate. The lack of organisation-wide structures for conflict resolution made it harder to address tensions as they came up.

## How We're Measuring Success

Evaluation of Delivering Change in Year 2 used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data (surveys, training evaluations, and mental health check-ins) with a strong emphasis on qualitative insight that reflects the programme's relational and cultural nature. Evidence was gathered through collective evaluation sessions (focus groups), rolling feedback of training, self-evaluations, and facilitated reflections with the DC team and MGS Senior Management Team.

### Together with the DC team, we're refining how progress is tracked:

- **Numbers:** how many people are involved, how many museums have changed policies, how funds are being used.
- **Stories:** from DC participants and communities, capturing how people genuinely feel about the DC process so far, the challenges and barriers they are experiencing and the changes they are working to bring about.
- **Relationships:** between DC participants including new partnerships and collaborations that build trust and seed systemic changes.
- **Honest reflection:** recording both the wins and the struggles, so learning doesn't get lost; measuring success according to DC participants themselves; and hearing the experiences of participants' internal work with their own beliefs, which is required to do anti-oppression work.

### From Evaluation to Responsive Facilitation & Strategising

Several of the collective evaluation sessions facilitated by Ikake Rising shifted intentionally from formal assessment toward shared sense-making and strategic alignment sessions with DC participants. Rather than focusing solely on measurement, Ikake Rising used these sessions to: deepen participants' understanding of DC; explore barriers and opportunities; and generate practical, scalable tactics for advancing anti-oppressive practice. These sessions strengthened relationships and solidarity across the programme, increasing clarity, motivation, and a sense of collective purpose. This adaptive, responsive approach reflects Ikake Rising's methodology of prioritising supportive, generative spaces, which participants described as community-building, inspiring, and helpful in making the programme's aims feel clearer and more actionable.

### **Challenges for Evaluation**

The low attendance at the collective evaluation sessions facilitated by Ikake Rising meant that these important qualitative gathering sessions only captured a small number of participants' experiences. This resulted in the feedback from these sessions being heavily focussed on the experiences of a small proportion of those participating from across DC. Their experiences do not always reflect the experiences of other participants.

In Year 3, evaluation will need to better capture areas that are harder to measure, including shifts in organisational culture, mindset, and relational power; the emotional labour and psychological safety of staff and Community Catalysts; the ripple effects of policy and practice changes; the integration of anti-oppression principles into everyday decision-making; and the long-term sustainability of behavioural and structural change beyond the DC programme.

# Year 2 Budget Overview

## Financial Summary

- **Total Project Budget: £1,427,890**
- **Total Spend to Date (Mid October 2025): £542,980**
- **Remaining Balance: £1,021,802**

### Shifts in Resource Allocation from Year 1

Several budget lines have shifted in Year 2 to **respond to emerging needs and patterns of engagement:**

#### 1) Areas under budget:

- **Mental Health Support:** Uptake has been lower than anticipated, despite the intensity of the work. This may reflect stigma, a lack of trust, or preference for support from trainers rather than therapists.
- **Advisory Group Expenses:** Many Advisors did not claim expenses, possibly due to professional role engagement or drop-off in participation over time.
- **Staff Travel & Expenses:** Part-time staff and logistical focus on project setup reduced the frequency of site visits; this is expected to increase Year 3.

#### 2) Areas over budget:

- **Museum Transformer Programme:** The decision to engage two facilitators to better work with the large group sizes and diversity of lived experience; and to ensure this programme reached rural participants greatly increased facilitator, travel, and subsistence costs.
- **Staff Development:** Additional resources were required for training MGS staff in areas critical to be able to lead DC, such as conflict navigation and anti-oppressive leadership. And resources were needed to provide restorative support for engaged MGS staff to help sustain the intense nature of the anti-oppression work at the heart of DC.
- **Community Catalyst Accessibility:** Higher-than-anticipated costs were incurred to ensure equitable participation, reflecting the needs of the participants selected as Catalysts.

## Financial Planning for Year 3

MGS enters Year 3 of DC in a strong financial position, with flexibility to respond to participant needs and programme developments. The remaining budget enables ongoing support, additional training, potential expansion of programme initiatives where most impactful, and the ability to respond to changing needs, as DC becomes more complex in its third and final year.

## Financial Recommendations from Ikake Rising

MGS should allocate a significant amount of the remaining Year 3 DC budget to sustain the work beyond the DC programme: by establishing ongoing networks, peer learning platforms, toolkits, communities of practice, and by creating mechanisms to maintain leadership engagement, track sector-wide progress, and support staff and museums in embedding anti-racism and anti-oppression practices. We also recommend budget be allocated specifically to tangible on-the-ground, community-led actions such as the creation of community spaces and programming in museums and galleries.



**Reshaping  
Scotland's  
Cultural Sector**

## PART 1

# Who is currently part of DC and how?



## Participation Numbers & Demographics

### Total number of each participant group including involved MGS staff

- 
- Museum Activists:94
- Community Catalyst organisations: 7
- Museum Transformer organisations: 17 (incl. MGS). 3 Transformers stepped back during Year 2
- Museum Transformer internal participants: ~300 (incl. MGS)
- Leadership Mentorship Partnerships: 11
- Sustainable Co-production pairs: 5

### Demographics of these individuals

In our surveys, we asked people if they identify as belonging to any systemically excluded group. This could include people who are Black, People of Colour, Immigrants, Refugees, Working Class, Traveller People, Roma, Disabled, LGBTQIA+, or otherwise discriminated against due to age, ethnicity, religion, gender identity and expression, nationality, race, etc. Based on the data we collected, these are the demographics of the communities involved so far:

- **Museum Activists:** 17 out of 56 answered 'yes' or 'further comment' to elaborate on their identity. **Community Catalyst organisations:** all Community Catalyst participants have lived experience of systemic oppression, sometimes intersecting (eg. racism, anti-gypsyism, classism, ableism, homophobia/queerphobia, gender identity, misogyny). **Museum Transformer participants:** 36 out of 113 respondents answered 'yes' or 'further comment' to elaborate on their identity. **Sustainable Co-production pairs:** all community partners have lived experience of systemic oppression.
- 

### Who are the DC team members & what are their roles?

- Alix, **Project Administrator**(28 hours)
- Anne, **Grants Officer** (29 hours) (Years 1 & 2)
- Ellie, **Senior Museum Development Manager** (17.5 hours)
- Gabi, **Leadership & Museum Development Coordinator** (28 hours)
- Israel, **Communities Coordinator** (21 hours)
- Sheila, **Project Manager** (35 hours)

## Changes in DC staffing & participation

### ■ Within the MGS & DC teams

- Anne, who was the Grants Officer working in the DC Team, completed their role at the end of Year 2. Although Anne will no longer be directly part of DC they are still part of the MGS Grants Team and continue to support the project.
- Alix, the Project Administrator, started their role in January 2025 after the previous Project Administrator, Kirsty, left at the end of 2024.
- Devon, who was previously the Senior Manager working as part of DC left their role and that role was filled by Diana, who has since left, currently that role is covered by both Ellie and Elena.

### ■ Within participants

- Withdrawals
  - Activists: 20
  - Catalysts: 1
  - Transformers: 3

## PART 2

# How are diverse communities feeling about the work so far?



“It hasn’t always been easy: coordination, expectations, and communication have all had their bumps, but we can feel things slowly coming together, and that gives us confidence moving forward.”

- Community Catalyst

## Community Catalysts

*“Our vision is to work with folks from our own cultures and communities, ensuring that we are represented accurately, based on our own voices and lived experiences, in museums. We want to shape how our stories are told and share cultural knowledge with wider audiences.”*

**-Community Catalyst**

### Community Catalyst & Museum Transformer Partnerships

- *Africa Future x Paisley Museum*
- *Dundee International Women’s Centre x Leisure & Culture Dundee*
- *LGBT Youth Scotland x The Whithorn Trust*
- *Northern Corridor Community Volunteers x North Lanarkshire Council*
- *Romano Lav x National Galleries of Scotland*
- *Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities x V&A Dundee*
- *Sikh Sanjog x Museums Galleries Edinburgh*
- *ZYA Community x Shetland Museum and Archives*

### Overview of Community Catalyst Participation in DC

In Year 1, 24 Community Catalysts applied to the first funding round. Eight progressed to the second round, and seven were ultimately awarded delivery funding. All eight received £2,000 to support relationship-building and co-production with their Museum Transformer partners while developing their second-round proposals.

Between December 2024 and May 2025, Catalysts worked closely with their museum partners to shape their project ideas. While applications were scheduled to be submitted between February and early May 2025, only three were completed by the original deadline. In several cases, the process took longer than expected due to the time needed to finalise partnerships and agree on project scope.

Two partnerships required additional support and flexibility. One museum partner withdrew in April 2025, leaving the Catalyst temporarily without a partner; they were later matched with a new Museum Transformer and received an extension and additional funding (£1,666) to account for lost time. In another case, both the Catalyst and museum agreed that the original proposal was not viable, and the Catalyst was re-paired with a different partner and granted an extension.

From the original £200,000 Esmée Fairbairn grant allocated to the Catalyst strand, the seven successful Catalysts each received £28,333 (instead of the originally anticipated £25,000), reflecting the reduced number of funded projects. Project delivery is now underway, running from May 2025 to December 2026.

The eighth Catalyst, Africa Futures, was advised not to submit a second-round application, as there was insufficient time to meaningfully develop a project in partnership with a museum. Overall, the process highlights the importance of relationship-building, realistic timelines, and responsive support in enabling community-led work to flourish within museum partnerships.

## **Overall Catalyst Feedback Summary**

Catalysts value their relationships with museums and the DC team. They describe partnerships as collaborative, exciting and supportive, with early signs of meaningful community impact. However, they also report challenges, especially with initial clarity, complex systems, and limited time, highlighting the need for streamlined processes and stronger early-stage guidance.

### **Key Strengths & Successes**

#### **Positive Partnerships**

- Strong, values-aligned relationships between Catalysts and museums once projects begin.
- DC team perceived as being flexible, friendly, responsive, and encouraging.

#### **Helpful Structures**

- The two-stage budgeting process supported early, community-led engagement.
- MGS demonstrated flexibility (e.g., shifting timelines, adjusting teams), helping projects move forward.

### **Emerging Project Impact**

**Projects are beginning to show clear purpose and community benefit, including:**

- Documenting racialised women's experiences in Dundee.
- Intergenerational storytelling around the miners' strike.
- Exhibition co-design with people with learning disabilities.
- Improving gallery staff's ability to represent and speak about minority women's experiences.
- Creating spaces for immigrant women's voices, fostering understanding and belonging.

### **Growing Confidence**

- Most catalysts expressed trust in the DC process and belief that they can deliver successful outcomes.
- Early communication issues are being worked on, resulting in strengthened collaboration.
- DC is improving community engagement and supporting a sense of belonging in museums.

## **Barriers & Challenges**

### **Process Complexity**

- Applications felt bureaucratic, rigid, and hard to use in a co-productive way.
- Online portals were experienced as un-intuitive and glitchy.
- Some Catalysts experienced delays in getting Round 2 approval

### **Lack of Early Clarity**

- Early miscommunications between DC and Catalysts created confusion around expectations.

### **Unrealistic Expectations of Expertise:**

- Catalysts expressed that they were expected to understand museum processes, collections, and project management without adequate guidance or a support person to bridge this gap.

### **Flexibility Not Communicated Early**

- Although MGS was flexible in practice, this wasn't clear at the start, causing unnecessary stress from participants.

### **Time Constraints**

- Support meetings were hard to schedule for part-time, youth, or community workers with limited availability.

## **Catalyst Training and Development**

Training and learning have been central to the Community Catalyst programme, supporting participants to build skills, confidence, and stronger partnerships with museums.

In early 2025, the Catalysts were introduced to partnership opportunities with Wikimedia UK and the National Library of Scotland (NLS) through four webinars delivered in January and February. All seven Catalyst organisations attended the introductory sessions, with three going on to register formal interest in working with Wikimedia or NLS. One partnership is already active, with Sikh Sanjog working with the National Library of Scotland, which will be acquiring Sikh Sanjog's murals into its collections.

Each Catalyst organisation was also provided with three Museums Association memberships, giving access to training and professional resources. Across the programme, 17 individuals have registered for Museums Association online courses, showing strong engagement with this offer.

In 2025, the Catalysts were invited to take part in Human Rights-Based Approaches training, with representatives from five of the seven organisations signing up and six individuals completing the training to date.

Learning was further supported through Knowledge Exchange Perspective Sessions, which explored systemic exclusion from a variety of lived experiences and have been on: The Sensational Museum (anti-ableism), Progress in Dialogue (Traveller communities), Museum of Homelessness.

In addition, peer-to-peer sessions, introduced in June 2025, were created with the hope of having regular opportunities for Catalysts to connect with one another and the DC team, supporting shared learning, collaboration and relationship-building.

**Catalyst Peer-to-Peer Sessions Feedback** Feedback from Community Catalysts on the peer-to-peer sessions shows that they were valued as supportive spaces for connection, shared learning, and partnership development. Participants highlighted the flexibility and responsiveness of Museums Galleries Scotland as a key strength, alongside opportunities to exchange experiences and reflect on capturing and amplifying minority community voices. The sessions also helped participants recognise that building strong partnerships takes time, particularly in establishing clear communication and shared ways of working.

However, attendance was sometimes limited due to organisational capacity constraints, which reduced engagement. Some participants also found elements of the training, such as the Human Rights session, challenging when content was heavily museum-focused, particularly for those with less experience working in the museum and heritage sector.

### **Museum Transformer Partners Training**

As part of the programme, Museum Transformer partners have been engaging in Anti-Racism (AR) training. The following organisations have now completed their training: Paisley Museum, Leisure & Culture Dundee, The Whithorn Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, National Galleries of Scotland, and Shetland Museum and Archives. V&A Dundee and Museums & Galleries Edinburgh are currently in the process of completing their Anti-Racism training.

### **Year 3 Training Opportunities 2026**

In Year 3, the programme will introduce a new set of training opportunities designed to deepen learning and practical skills. This includes Anti-Ableism training, new Perspective Sessions focused on museums and collections management and grant funding, Media Education to support confident storytelling and visibility, and a Knowledge Exchange session led by The Mixed Museum.

### **Learnings from the Challenges of Establishing Museum-Catalysts Partnerships**

The experience of establishing Museum Transformer partnerships highlighted several important learnings about what enables effective collaboration between community organisations and museums.

Partnerships were strongest and progressed most smoothly where Catalysts and Museum Transformers already had an existing relationship. Prior trust and familiarity made it easier to co-develop ideas, navigate decision-making, and submit applications within the available timeframe.

Larger, more established Catalyst organisations, particularly those with paid staff and organisational infrastructure, were generally more confident in engaging with museum systems, managing bureaucracy, and negotiating partnership arrangements. Smaller or volunteer-led groups often required more time and support to do this work.

While Museum Transformers had agreed in principle to work with a Catalyst, many did not yet have a clear sense of how this partnership would fit alongside their existing plans, budgets, and schedules. This meant museums often had to do additional internal work to adapt their systems. Some embraced this challenge and showed flexibility, while others found it more difficult, particularly where they were not the lead partner and needed to respond to a Catalyst's priorities rather than setting the agenda themselves.

Overall, the time available to develop partnerships was not sufficient for those starting from scratch, especially for smaller, volunteer-led Catalyst groups with limited infrastructure. This highlighted the need for longer lead-in periods and additional support to create more equitable and sustainable partnerships.

### **DC Team Response to Emerging Catalyst Needs**

As the programme developed, the DC team adapted its approach in response to the needs and feedback shared by the Catalysts. When Catalysts expressed a strong desire to connect with one another, the team introduced regular peer-to-peer sessions and has begun planning an in-person gathering for 2026 to strengthen relationships and shared learning.

Catalysts also highlighted that frequent meetings and administrative demands were becoming a barrier to their work. In response, the DC team streamlined communications by introducing a concise newsletter and shifted to a more flexible approach to catch-ups, allowing Catalysts to lead on how often they wanted to meet.

Where some Catalysts required additional support to build and sustain their Museum Transformer partnerships, the DC team stepped in more actively. This included facilitating meetings between Catalysts and their partners, providing closer monitoring, and offering more hands-on support to help partnerships develop.



## Calls to Action from Community Catalysts

### Onboarding & Early-Stage Support

- Joint intro meetings with MGS, museums, and Catalysts to define roles, responsibilities, contacts, budget rules, and timelines.
- A simple partnership agreement template.
- Clearer guidance on what the funding can and cannot cover, especially for museum costs.

### Process & Platform Improvements

- Streamline the application and reporting platforms, and improve technical reliability.
- Design the application process to be easier to write together (thus more co-production friendly), allowing for emergent and participatory design rather than rigid pre-definition.

### Capacity Building

Offer **basic training in working with museum partners**, including:

- How to design co-productive collaborations: ie. how to work together
- Conflict navigation and more clarity around roles
- Understanding museum systems and language
- Provide **ongoing mentoring / coaching** options for Catalysts as projects evolve.

### Communication

- Consider reducing the intensity of check-ins, or adapting them to suit different working patterns and levels of need.
- Make the DC programme's flexibility more explicit in all early-stage guidance to reduce anxiety and support adaptive planning.

### Conclusions

Overall, feedback from Community Catalysts highlights strong enthusiasm for the Delivering Change programme and clear alignment with its goals of strengthening community voice, partnership working, and sector change. Catalysts valued opportunities for peer support, training, and collaborative learning. At the same time, participants identified challenges relating to capacity, onboarding clarity, and navigating partnership and sector-specific processes, which at times limited engagement and confidence.

Catalysts are enthusiastic about Delivering Change and strongly aligned with its goals. With simpler systems, clearer onboarding, and more supportive infrastructure, the programme has the potential to become more equitable, empowering, and impactful for communities and museums alike.

## Feedback on Deepening Relationships Through Cross-Strand Collaboration

### 1) Romano Lav, Glasgow x National Galleries of Scotland (NGS):

The **“Out of the frame, around the table: our story will be told”** project aims to examine and challenge stereotyping and negative representations of Roma people in art collections. The Community Catalyst group feels the partnership with the National Gallery is going well so far—they feel supported, heard, and able to shape the direction of the work. Both sides have spent time in each other’s spaces: gallery staff visited the community centre, and the community visited the main galleries and the Portrait Gallery. Despite complications at the NGS’s Granton site, that sits outside the project, the Catalyst has been able to take the lead in a genuinely co-creative process. The gallery seems to be taking the community’s feedback seriously and is showing a willingness to adjust, take action, and keep the conversation open.

### 2) Sikh Sanjog x Museums Galleries Edinburgh:

**“Her Stories: a living history of Sikh women and families in Edinburgh”**. The Community Catalyst group has described their talks with the partner museum as open, honest, and thought-provoking, noting that the environment they create feels safe and supportive. Through ongoing support and communication, the catalyst sees the relationship as steady, constructive, and genuinely positive. In their most recent update, they highlighted that what’s working best is the strong connection with the museum and the new links growing out of that partnership.

### 3) Scottish Commission for People with Learning Difficulties x V&A Dundee:

The **“Discovery”** project focuses on the experiences of a systematically excluded community and highlights the themes of accessibility and interactivity in the museum. Another excellent collaboration! The Community Catalyst recognises that the relationship with their museum partner has exceeded expectations to this point, enabling genuine participation and coproduction from the community at the heart of it. The museum has also stepped in with additional funding to help the project move forward.



#### 4) Zya Community x Shetland Museum and Archives:

**“Centring the Heritage and experience of Creatives of Colour”** partnered with Shetland Museum. Before this, the Community Catalyst had been working with a different institution, Glasgow School of Art (GSA), but that partnership ended when the GSA stepped back from the DC programme. This caused some confusion and disappointment, as things had started off on good footing, and it meant beginning the collaborative process again with a new partner and a fresh application.

In their own words they help show the fuller picture of how they found working with the DC Team to establish a new partnership:

**“We’re especially pleased to have established a new partnership with Shetland Museum and Archives, which feels like a very positive step forward. Naturally, as with any new collaboration, there have been moments where the process has felt a little unclear, and at times we’ve found it a bit challenging to navigate. More broadly, the journey has occasionally felt slightly disjointed in terms of support and communication. We appreciate that this is part of developing new ways of working together, and we hope this feedback is useful in helping to strengthen the process for everyone involved.”**

It’s a reminder that not every path is smooth, but even so, the new partnership seems to be moving in a promising direction.



# Museum Transformers



## Museum Transformers in Year 2

At the start of 2025, the Museum Transformer cohort included 20 organisations. During the year, three organisations withdrew from the programme: Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in April, Inverclyde in July, and HMS Unicorn in September, leaving 17 active Museum Transformers.

Prior to withdrawing, GSA completed two of the six Anti-Racism training sessions, Inverclyde did not attend any training, and HMS Unicorn completed four of the six Anti-Racism sessions; attendance at other trainings is unclear. The remaining 17 Transformers are represented across 21 cohorts, with National Galleries of Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland, Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, and V&A Dundee each supporting two cohorts within the programme.

## Transformers with Catalyst Partners

- *Africa Future* x Paisley Museum
- *Dundee International Women's Centre* x Leisure & Culture Dundee
- *LGBT Youth Scotland* x The Whithorn Trust
- *Northern Corridor Community Volunteers* x North Lanarkshire Council
- *Romano Lav* x National Galleries of Scotland
- *Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities* x V&A Dundee
- *Sikh Sanjog* x Museums Galleries Edinburgh
- *ZYA Community* x Shetland Museum and Archives

## Museum Transformers Training 2025

In 2025, Museum Transformer organisations took part in a wide range of training and learning opportunities to support anti-oppressive practice. This included Anti-Racism training, with 15 cohorts (representing 13 museums) completing all six sessions, and one museum completing Anti-ableism training. Transformers also engaged in Human Rights-Based Approach training, sessions on Communications for Anti-oppression work, peer-to-peer reflection sessions introduced in June 2025, and a series of Knowledge Exchange Perspective Sessions led by The Sensational Museum, Museum of Homelessness, and Progress in Dialogue.

To ensure Anti-Racism training was relevant and responsive, facilitators were provided in advance with each cohort's participant baseline survey, organisational baseline survey, and participant role information. This enabled facilitators to tailor sessions to the specific contexts, structures, and challenges of each organisation. As a result of this work, several organisations, including the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Cromarty Courthouse, and Museums Galleries Scotland, submitted Anti-Racism Action Plans to the DC team, marking an important step towards embedding learning into organisational practice.

## DC Team Learnings from Year 2 Museum Transformer Training Engagement

Through delivering Anti-Racism training with Museum Transformers, the DC team learned that the experience was challenging for many organisations, shaped by factors such as organisational size, local authority contexts, limited accountability structures, and varying levels of racial diversity within teams. Some museums wanted to move quickly to action without sitting with discomfort, while others found the training too academic or not sufficiently grounded in practical examples, particularly around active bystander behaviour. Sessions were less effective when training was not well adapted to a museum's specific context, highlighting the importance of clearer communication, better use of organisational information, and closer monitoring by the DC team. The team also recognised facilitator fatigue due to delivering multiple intensive and emotionally demanding sessions in a short period, which impacted consistency across cohorts.

Although many Museum Transformers committed to developing Anti-Racism Action Plans, submission has been difficult due to time, capacity, and structural constraints rather than a lack of intent. Once facilitated training ended, many organisations struggled to recreate protected time to reconvene their cohorts and translate learning into formal plans, particularly within larger or local authority contexts where competing priorities and complex approval processes slowed momentum. While some organisations used their budgets to fund additional facilitated sessions to support action planning, others did not have this option, leading the DC team to step in and provide direct facilitation, highlighting the need for sustained, structured support beyond training to turn commitment into action.

In response, the DC team has taken steps to strengthen support and sustainability. This includes offering more hands-on help with developing Anti-Racism Action Plans, recognising that time and capacity remain key barriers; where organisations could not fund additional facilitated sessions, the DC team has stepped in to support action planning directly. To help embed learning more widely, a third Museum Activist cohort has been created, allowing Transformers to include more staff in the programme, alongside a dedicated MGS Activist cohort to ensure all new starters receive consistent Anti-Racism and Anti-Ableism training. These actions aim to deepen impact, reduce pressure on facilitators, and better support organisations to move from learning into meaningful, sustained change.

### **General Feedback from Museum Transformers about Anti-Racism Training 2025**

Feedback gathered by the DC team shows that Museum Transformers experienced the Anti-Racism training as deep, reflective, and often transformative. Participants strongly valued the Theory of Change sessions, practical planning elements, and opportunities to connect learning directly to their own roles, organisations, and collections. Historical grounding on racism, slavery, and white privilege, alongside tools such as role play, case studies, timelines, and identity-focused reflection, helped many better understand positionality, privilege, and microaggressions. Small-group discussions and skilled facilitation were repeatedly highlighted as creating supportive, trusting environments where staff could think critically, share openly, and begin shaping meaningful action.

At the same time, the training was described as challenging and emotionally demanding. Many participants found it difficult to sit with discomfort, confront whiteness and privilege, or speak honestly for fear of saying the wrong thing or destabilising workplace relationships. Some cohorts struggled with emotional safety, group dynamics, or uneven confidence levels, while others found it hard to translate reflection into collective action, particularly where staff lacked decision-making power, budgets, or wider organisational buy-in. Topics such as white privilege, allyship, and identity were frequently cited as both the most stretching and the most necessary parts of the programme.



Beyond the core training, participants identified further learning needs and areas for development. These included support with having difficult conversations, responding to discriminatory behaviour from colleagues or visitors, embedding anti-racism within everyday museum practice under time and budget constraints, and exploring intersectionality, including links between racism, disability, gender, climate justice, and human rights. Despite the challenges, many reflected that the training felt less like a course and more like a shared learning experience, helping them feel less isolated, more accountable, and better equipped to continue anti-racist work within complex institutional contexts.

### **Overall Feedback Summary**

Participants describe the programme, especially the peer sessions, as empowering and transformative, deepening understanding of anti-racism, human rights, accessibility, and community ownership while fostering solidarity and validation. The human-rights-based approach is valued for reframing museums as community-rooted rather than competitive, moving practice from tokenism to genuine co-production, and centring marginalised histories, with critical discussions of empire and colonial legacies becoming more normalised. Although the cross-sector mix is beneficial, collaboration across Activist, Catalyst, and Transformer groups remains limited. Overall, the programme is seen as energising and hopeful, reducing organisational isolation and building confidence to navigate discomfort and resistance when advancing anti-oppressive practice.

*“The [DC] course created space for open and honest discussions that wouldn’t otherwise have happened. It helped me recognise real issues of racism I hadn’t previously been aware of and made me more mindful, empathetic, and less judgemental. I now feel more confident raising anti-racism with colleagues, and with support from managers, HR, and peers, I hope this work will continue and lead to much-needed change.”*

**- Museum Transformer**

### **Wins & Celebrations**

Participants reported major wins, including launching council-wide anti-racism training, removing financial barriers through new concession programmes, and creating community steering groups that influence museum strategy and interpretation. Many gained confidence in openly addressing Scotland’s colonial legacies, alongside significant personal growth, stronger networks, and reduced feelings of isolation. Peer-to-peer solidarity emerged as one of the programme’s most valued and impactful achievements so far.

## Barriers & Challenges

Participants identified several persistent barriers, with the lack of senior leadership support emerging as the most significant, leaving anti-oppression work siloed, undervalued, and treated as optional. Many reported burnout from carrying this labour on top of existing workloads, alongside cultural resistance within their organisations, where colleagues may be resistant to decolonial work, relying instead on superficial multiculturalism, or avoidant of grassroots partnerships.



## Calls to Action from Museum Transformers

- **Leadership & Funding:** Mandate CEO/board participation in DC modules and tie funding criteria to demonstrable commitment to DC principles.
- **Employer Advocacy & Legitimacy:** MGS should actively communicate the strategic importance of this work to employers so participants are given time and legitimacy.
- **Mentorship, Peer Support & Tools:** Pair experienced practitioners with newer ones and provide practical frameworks, templates, and implementation support.
- **Regional Exchange & Case Studies:** Enable in-person regional gatherings and cross-museum visits, and showcase successful DC case studies to build confidence and reduce fear of “getting it wrong.”
- **Capability for Resistance & Systems Change:** Provide emotional support and media literacy training to handle public pushback, alongside guidance on ethical procurement, anti-oppressive models of HR and community governance.

## Conclusions

The Museum Transformers strand of the DC programme has enabled organisations to engage in meaningful, and often challenging, anti-oppressive learning. Anti-Racism training, supported by peer reflection and knowledge exchange, has deepened understanding of racism, privilege, and power across museum practice, while creating valued spaces for honest dialogue within organisations. Feedback shows that this work has been impactful but uneven, shaped by organisational size, governance structures, leadership accountability, and staff capacity. Where conditions allowed, learning translated into clearer commitments and emerging action; where they did not, momentum was harder to sustain.

The programme has also made clear that training alone is not enough to deliver lasting change. To embed learning, Museum Transformers need continued facilitation, protected time, and clear leadership responsibility to move from reflection into action, particularly in developing and implementing Anti-Racism Action Plans. The DC team's responsive approach, expanding cohorts, offering additional facilitation, and adapting delivery based on feedback, provides a strong foundation for the next phase. Sustained structural support, intersectional learning, and wider organisational engagement will be essential to ensure that anti-oppressive commitments become embedded practice rather than isolated interventions.

## Reflections from Transformer Senior Management

This feedback was gathered during 1kake focus groups. The feedback reflects the experiences of the following participants:

- Senior management representatives from two DC organisations
- Both actively engaged in anti-racism / anti-oppression work for several years
- One Senior Sponsor within a Transformer organisation; one Museum Manager and anti-racism lead

### General Feedback from Senior Management

Senior leaders are committed and motivated, but navigating systemic challenges and emotional complexity. They are asking:

***“How do we roll this out across the whole organisation?”***

They recognise the importance of turning personal learning into organisational change, but feel unsure how to mainstream DC principles into everyday culture, staff behaviours, and policy. They experience:

- A sense of guilt, frustration, and insufficiency when progress is slow or imperfect.
- Perfectionism and fear of getting it wrong, which stalls action.
- Lack of confidence: questioning if they are "the right person" to lead this work.
- A desire for spaces to show vulnerability, but uncertainty about whether it's "safe" to do so within their leadership roles.

They highlighted that **bravery, vulnerability, and relationship-building are needed to lead transformational change, not just technical skill.**

### Wins & Celebrations

Senior leaders describe the DC sessions as supportive and grounding, noting that undertaking sessions and trainings together reduces the burden of carrying this work alone. There is growing evidence of deeper internal reflection and greater willingness to discuss race, power, and equity at senior levels, alongside efforts to acknowledge and celebrate small wins as a way to counter work-cultures of burnout, perfectionism and hyper-productivity. Leaders need encouragement, not shame nor self-doubt, to engage deeply in this work as the movement requires them to do.

**Barriers & Challenges** Participants identify interconnected systemic, cultural, and workload barriers that limit progress. While there is commitment to DC work, many lack the agency to translate this into institutional action within complex organisational structures, and scaling training for frontline staff remains a significant challenge. Culturally, conflict avoidance and fear of public mistakes constrain open discussion, while pressure for rapid but “correct” action creates tension. These issues are compounded by workload pressures, as DC responsibilities are often added without sufficient time or resources amid shrinking teams, competing agendas and rising demands.

## Calls to Action | What Senior Management Need from MGS



- **Structured support for operational roll-out:** Frameworks and guidance on mainstreaming DC principles across entire organisations.
- **Protected leadership space for honest conversation:** Senior leaders value sessions where they can speak candidly without fear of judgement or repercussion.
- **Support to navigate conflict and imperfection:** Training on handling discomfort, conflict, and mistakes as part of the change process.
- **Normalise vulnerability in leadership:** Encouragement to communicate with humanity, not just as senior professionals nor via formal strategy updates.

### Conclusion

This feedback highlights that senior managers are strongly aligned with the vision of DC and are increasingly committed to leading its ambitions within their organisations. However, sustaining this commitment requires practical, relational and ongoing support from MGS to translate shared values into embedded, long-term organisational change. Leaders are seeking clearer operational pathways, structured peer support and practical tools that enable them to navigate complexity, manage internal tensions and maintain momentum during periods of uncertainty. Crucially, this work is recognised as both a strategic and deeply personal cultural shift, requiring leaders to move beyond perfectionism and risk-aversion towards reflective, courageous and collective approaches to change.

Moving forward, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen leadership confidence and impact by continuing to provide facilitated spaces for honest dialogue, supporting leaders to manage the emotional and cultural labour of transformation, and equipping organisations with approaches that balance ambition with sustainable pacing. Enabling leaders to foster productive conflict, human-centred communication and shared responsibility across teams will be key to embedding anti-oppressive practice at scale. By sustaining this relational and practical support, Delivering Change can continue to empower leaders to model vulnerability, celebrate incremental progress and build resilient organisational cultures capable of long-term, meaningful transformation.

# Facilitator Feedback on the Museum Transformer Anti-Racism Training

## General Feedback

In Year 2, The anti-racism training facilitators were contracted to deliver training developed by the DC Team and Dorcas Inclusive Education. They delivered this training in-person to the Museum Transformers as part of the Transformers' core training. The facilitators described their work with Transformer participants as meaningful, fulfilling, and impactful, particularly when supported through co-facilitation models and regular debriefing. The emotional, intellectual, and relational labour was significant, making two facilitators rather than one essential for tending to the groups' different needs and dynamics.

A major feature across cohorts was the wide disparity in racial literacy, often within the same group, with most participants more familiar with interpersonal racism than institutional, internalised, or systemic forms of racism. They found that it is critical for facilitators to localise trainings by adapting content to specific communities, museums, Scottish cultural and class context, to be relevant, engaging and to avoid harm and increase learning – alongside blended and experiential methods rather than academic delivery. Blended methods: such as discussion, humour, videos, role play, exhibition walk-throughs, and lived experience, were far more effective than text-heavy or overly academic approaches. Because the course requires a longer timespan of engagement this enabled trust-building and deeper reflection. However, the scale of facilitation labour was far greater than anticipated, involving extensive redesign, tailoring, logistics, and relationship-building, much of it unpaid.

***“There was a huge range in the room, some people had done a lot of work already, others were hearing this for the first time—and that shaped everything. Some participants really leaned into the discomfort, while others resisted it or tried to move away from it as quickly as possible.”***

**Participant Engagement** Participants were generally engaged, reflective, and willing to explore privilege, power, and identity when the work was framed with care and clearly linked to their roles. Emotional shifts were most evident when discussing the psychological impacts of racism, organisational structures, and museums' historical and contemporary responsibilities. Engagement increased when learning was directly connected to exhibitions, collections, public interactions, and institutional policies, and when facilitators explicitly named discomfort and encouraged a learner's mindset.

Leadership presence significantly strengthened engagement and confidence in the potential for organisational change. Where leadership was absent, participants often felt motivated but constrained in their ability to act. Engagement varied by role and experience, with education and frontline staff typically more engaged and management attendance remaining limited; space between sessions supported emotional processing and deeper commitment over time.

## Wins & Celebrations

Across cohorts, shared language and understanding were successfully developed around key concepts such as equity, intersectionality, and anti-oppression, with many participants experiencing clear “click moments” when racism was connected to their organisational structures, collections, exhibitions, and local or national histories. Emotional honesty, curiosity, and courage were consistently evident and seen as foundations for transformation, particularly when lived experience and human stories grounded abstract ideas.

Action planning with clear accountability helped sustain momentum, with participants demonstrating strong commitment by extending learning into departmental and peer contexts; practical tools such as active bystander training further supported movement from reflection to action, while longer-term engagement enabled trust, relationship-building, and open discussion of challenges.

**Barriers & Challenges** Leadership disengagement and inconsistent prioritisation significantly constrained implementation, resourcing, and organisational follow-through, with those most in need of the training often absent or deprioritised. White defensiveness, fragility, and fatigue frequently surfaced, alongside uneven tolerance for discomfort – and experiences of harm – sometimes leading to resistance or emotional shutdown; this was compounded by the emotional harm and isolation experienced by racialised participants, particularly when they were the only person of colour in a cohort.

Content-heavy design and limited preparation time required facilitators to substantially restructure sessions, while mental health and support systems were sometimes perceived as unclear or inaccessible during moments of distress. Additional challenges emerged in cohorts with limited racial diversity, in rural contexts with fewer resources and lower perceived relevance, and through external pressures such as funding cuts, internal tensions, and governance issues that repeatedly disrupted focus and capacity.

## Calls to Action from Anti-Racism Training Facilitators

- **Strengthen leadership accountability and participation:** Require visible senior leadership involvement, create safer and non-judgmental spaces for leadership engagement, and explicitly align post-training anti-racism integration work with organisational strategy, decision-making, and resourcing.
- **Improve preparation and framing for participants:** Introduce pre-work on brave spaces, discomfort, and racial resilience, and clearly communicate the emotional and relational impacts of the training in advance.

- **Streamline and clarify training content and delivery:** Reduce slide density, improve flow and coherence, and prioritise visual, experiential, and video-based learning over text-heavy or academic formats and classroom-like delivery: eliminate any quiz-like elements and singling out participants with questions.
- **Embed practical tools earlier in the programme:** Integrate active bystander intervention, allyship practices, and strategies for addressing microaggressions and public-facing interactions at earlier stages of the training.
- **Consistently localise the learning to each institution/group:** Use museum-specific objects, exhibitions, histories, and policies, and critically engage with each institution's own anti-racism statements and practices.
- **Strengthen organisational follow-through and accountability:** Create structures for cross-cohort communication and support the consolidation of multiple cohort action plans into a coherent organisational strategy.
- **Resource, care for, and embed the work long-term:** Budget realistically for facilitator preparation, redesign, and emotional labour; establish clear codes of conduct and trusted support channels; and extend training so anti-racism becomes a core, ongoing, and resourced organisational practice rather than a one-off intervention.

## Conclusion

Overall, the anti-racism facilitators' feedback highlights the depth, impact and complexity of delivering this work across DC. Facilitators described the training as meaningful and transformative, particularly when supported through co-facilitation, reflective debriefing and longer-term engagement that enabled trust-building and deeper learning. Participants demonstrated strong willingness to engage with challenging conversations about power, identity and institutional responsibility, with many developing shared language, clearer understanding of structural racism and confidence to begin translating learning into organisational practice. Leadership presence was identified as a key enabler of impact, strengthening participants' confidence that meaningful change could be embedded within their institutions.

At the same time, the feedback emphasises that sustained impact requires continued investment from MGS in engaging museum leadership, supporting facilitator capacity and locally responsive delivery approaches. Significant disparities in racial literacy, alongside emotional labour, resistance, and organisational pressures, mean that effective anti-racism training must remain adaptive, relational and adequately resourced. Moving forward, strengthening leadership participation, supporting facilitator wellbeing, and maintaining blended, experiential and context-specific learning approaches will be critical to sustaining momentum and embedding anti-oppressive practice across the sector.

## Museum Activists

### Museum Activists Enrolment, Roles & Demographics

At the beginning of Year 2, 100 Museum Activists were enrolled in the programme, with 94 remaining by the end of the year. These Activists represent 17 of Scotland's 35 local authority areas and work across a wide range of roles and seniority levels, from volunteers and entry-level staff to senior management, and across departments including learning and engagement, curatorial, visitor services, collections, marketing, and archives. They are based in a diverse mix of museum types, most commonly ALEOs (32), alongside independent (11), national (8), university (8), local authority (7), military (7), HES (3), and other museum settings (15).

In terms of identity, when asked if they identify as belonging to any systemically excluded group (including people who are Black, People of Colour, Immigrants, Refugees, Working Class, Scottish/ Irish Traveller People, Roma, Disabled, LGBTQIA+, or otherwise discriminated against due to your age, ethnicity, religion, gender identity and expression, nationality, race, etc), 17 of the 56 Activists who responded to the question identified as belonging to a systemically excluded group or provided further comment, reflecting a breadth of lived experience within the cohort.

### Activist Training Engagement in Year 2

In Year 2, Museum Activists engaged widely in training and peer learning, with clear take-up across multi-part sessions. The Museums Association Supporting Anti-Racism training was delivered in two parts, with 38 participants attending Part 1 and 29 attending Part 2, while the Learning & Engagement Manifesto peer-to-peer reflection session was attended by 19 participants. Alongside this, 51 Activists completed Human Rights-Based Approach training and 20 attended the Anti-Racism Critical Thinking workshop. Knowledge Exchange Perspective Sessions also attracted strong participation, ranging from 25 to 53 attendees per session, and were complemented by peer-to-peer reflection sessions introduced by the DC Team in June 2025 to support shared learning, reflection, and connection.

### DC Team Learnings from Year 2 Activist Training Engagement

Year 2 training participation showed strong engagement at the start of 2025, with high attendance levels that began to decline after May. In response, the DC team explored different ways to re-engage Activists, including introducing peer-to-peer sessions and streamlining communications through newsletters.

The second cohort of Activists included a high number of participants from Glasgow Life, many at senior management level, which shifted group dynamics compared to Cohort 1. To address this, a dedicated senior leaders training session was introduced, responding to requests from Activists who wanted space to reflect openly without being in breakout rooms with their own SMT.

## General Feedback from Museum Activists about Year 2 Trainings

Feedback from Museum Activists shows that the training sessions were experienced as practical, reflective, and confidence-building. Participants valued clear reflection prompts, smaller breakout spaces, and the opportunity to identify manageable actions, which helped make complex anti-oppressive work feel more achievable while also creating a sense of accountability.

Activists particularly appreciated hearing a range of perspectives and learning that others face similar institutional challenges, which reduced feelings of isolation and strengthened peer support. Feedback also highlighted a desire for more intentional breakout grouping, either by region to support potential in-person connection, or through rotating groups, to deepen relationships and broaden peer learning across sessions.

## Upcoming Trainings for Year 3 for Museum Activists

- Anti-Ableism Training
- Human Rights Based Approach Training
- Peer-to-Peer Reflection MA: Learning & Engagement Manifesto
- Peer-to-Peer Reflection MA: Supporting Anti-Racism
- Peer-to-Peer Reflection MA: Introducing Decolonisation in Museums
- Peer-to-Peer Reflection: Building the Decolonised Museum
- Knowledge Exchange: Perspective Session from The Mixed Museum & Elma Glasgow
- MGS Symposium Workshop led by Activists: Inclusion work in polarised times

## Overall Feedback Summary from Museum Activists

### Empowerment & Learning

Participants continue to find the programme empowering and transformative. The blend of structured training and peer-reflection sessions – especially small breakouts, reflective exercises, and action-planning – helps deepen understanding of anti-racism, decolonisation, human rights, and accessibility. The DC community provides belonging, validation, and emotional support, helping counter feelings of isolation and institutional pressure.

**Co-Production & Human Rights** The human-rights approach and emphasis on co-production remain key strengths. Activists value museums as community spaces that share power rather than simply deliver content. HRBA/PANEL tools are being applied in planning and management, and DC sessions helped participants define authentic activism and identify practical, non-performative actions they can embed in their institutions.

### **Accessibility & Inclusion**

Participants stressed the need for genuine inclusion, noting that many museums still treat accessibility and decolonisation as superficial add-ons. Effective practices included small breakouts, consistent pairings, and advance materials. Activists emphasised accurate and safe representation of marginalised communities; particularly African and diaspora voices, and the importance of challenging colonial or harmful narratives.

### **Internal Resistance & Organisational Culture**

Systemic resistance remains common, especially when addressing racist or colonial content. Peer sessions offered a safe space to discuss pushback, scrutiny, and institutional inertia. The emotional strain of doing transformative work within unchanging systems was acknowledged, and participants used DC sessions as spaces to share coping strategies, mentorship ideas, and advocacy approaches.

### **Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Cross-institutional conversations continue to add value, though collaboration among Activists, Catalysts, and Transformers is still limited. Breakout groups were particularly appreciated for exchanging practical experiences and strengthening peer networks.

### **Overall Programme Experience**

DC sessions were described as energising and inspiring but also emotionally taxing. Despite the strain of pushing for change within rigid systems, peer support and reflective practice helped maintain motivation and sustain participants' commitment.

### **Wins & Celebrations**

Participants reported strong progress in developing practical tools and deepening community engagement. Museums implemented LGBT language guides, anti-racist training and community steering groups, while also supporting genuinely community-led projects such as Gaelic revitalisation and queer Islander histories. Concession programmes helped reduce financial barriers for marginalised groups. Many participants experienced professional growth, gaining confidence in addressing colonial legacies and embedding anti-racist approaches. Peer-learning structures, especially breakout groups and reflective exercises, remained highly effective for strengthening skills and building mutual support.

*"DC has given me the permission and the confidence to bring human-rights and anti-oppressive approaches into my museum work. The fact that MGS, a big, powerful, well researched and respected organisation is leading this DC work, gives me the weight I need to bring it into my organisation."*

**-Museum Activist**

**Barriers & Challenges** Key obstacles persisted, particularly around limited leadership buy-in, which left participants motivated but without the authority to drive structural change. Resistance to anti-racist and decolonial work remained common, making peer sessions an important space for sharing coping strategies. Capacity constraints: small teams, volunteer reliance, and heavy workloads, restricted implementation. Although participants knew what change should look like, they often lacked the frameworks and institutional mandates to act on it. Representation gaps also continued, with marginalised communities still underrepresented and museums struggling to create fully safe and welcoming environments.



## Calls to Action from Activists

- **Leadership & Accountability:** Require active CEO, board, and senior leadership participation, with funding tied to demonstrable equity, co-production, and decolonial outcomes.
- **Structural & Practice Change:** Provide practical guidance on decolonising labels, addressing racist displays, embedding anti-racist procurement and policies, and applying HRBA/PANEL principles with follow-up and accountability.
- **Mentorship, Peer Learning & Advocacy:** Build peer networks, mentorship, and advocacy pathways to support participants in navigating and challenging institutional resistance.
- **Exchange, Visibility & Inspiration:** Enable in-person exchanges (site visits, regional gatherings) and share case studies of successful change to strengthen networks and inspire practice.

**Conclusions** Year 2 feedback shows that the Museum Activists programme is empowering participants, strengthening reflective practice, and building supportive peer networks, with training in anti-racism, human rights-based approaches, and knowledge exchange, alongside structured peer-to-peer sessions, playing a key role in this impact. The DC team's adaptive approach, including streamlined communications and the introduction of peer and senior leader-specific spaces, helped respond to changing needs and cohort dynamics. However, feedback also highlights that personal growth and training alone cannot overcome institutional barriers, leadership inaction, or limited resources; lasting anti-oppressive change requires clearer accountability, stronger structural support, and practical mechanisms to embed learning into organisational practice, an area where MGS is well positioned to lead.

## Leadership Strand

**Reciprocal Mentoring and Training Programme** The Leadership Strand of the Delivering Change programme was developed as a reciprocal mentoring initiative, shaped and approved by the Advisory Group, to strengthen anti-oppressive leadership across the museum sector. The programme pairs senior leaders from Museum Transformer organisations with mentors who have lived experience of systemic exclusion and an interest in leadership within heritage. Together, these partnerships are designed to foster mutual learning, critical reflection, and sector change. Following a recruitment process, which intentionally welcomed accessible application formats including audio and video submissions, 11 mentor-mentee partnerships were confirmed in December 2025 from a strong pool of applicants.

A core element of the programme is the development of an Anti-Oppressive Leadership course to support the mentoring relationships and provide structured learning. After an initial open tender process, Laurie Brown was appointed to develop the course, although delivery timelines were extended due to illness, with final materials expected in February 2026. The training will be facilitated by the Leadership Coordinator (Gabi) and Senior Museum Development Manager (Ellie) and delivered across four half-day sessions between April and September 2026. In parallel, dedicated peer-learning spaces are being established for both mentors and mentees; the facilitator for the senior-level mentees is Gillian Neish, an experienced counsellor and facilitator, with a specialism in leadership. The facilitator for the mentors is Lucy Mason, an experienced facilitator, trainer and conflict mediator, and one of the anti-racism facilitators for the Museum Transformers.

The programme will address potential extractive dynamics by ensuring mentors are fairly compensated in line with MGS remuneration policy and offered access to the accredited “Developing My Leadership” programme delivered by Social Enterprise Academy Scotland. To further enrich learning, the strand includes a series of perspective sessions featuring senior leaders from across the UK heritage sector who are recognised for their anti-oppressive leadership practice. Confirmed contributors include Jess Turtle, Sharon Heal, and Adele Patrick, who will share insights, case studies, and practical tools to support participants’ leadership journeys.

### **Leadership Strand Recruitment Process**

The application process for the Leadership Strand was designed to ensure clarity of purpose, shared accountability, and meaningful alignment between mentors and mentees. Senior leader mentees from Museum Transformer organisations were invited to submit an application outlining their leadership development goals, areas of anti-oppression practice they wished to strengthen, and the organisational change they hoped to support through the programme.

Alongside mentee applications, mentors with lived experience of systemic exclusion and experience working in heritage also applied, providing information about their professional background, lived experience, and leadership aspirations. These applications were used to create carefully considered mentor–mentee pairings based on shared interests, complementary experience, and development goals.

Applications were open from August to September 2025, with interviews for both mentors and mentees taking place in October 2025. Successful applicants were invited to participate in a mandatory in-person launch event in January 2026, where partnerships were introduced, expectations and codes of conduct were established, and participants began shaping shared mentoring objectives.

Following the launch, mentoring pairs committed to meeting at least six times throughout the programme, supported by facilitated peer-learning sessions and ongoing guidance from the Leadership Coordinator. The programme runs from January to October 2026 and includes structured learning, reflective practice, and evaluation to support both individual leadership development and longer-term organisational change.



## Sustainable Co-Production Fund

*Sustainable co-production = Working together in a way that lasts.*

In DC this means: the different people and roles involved truly working together, from the vision to how to get the work done – and in a way that will carry on beyond the short timeline of the DC programme itself. It's about creating lasting change, together.

The Sustainable Co-production Fund was the first strand to launch as part of the DC Programme. In March 2024, with the support of players of the People's Postcode Lottery, £175,000 was awarded to five museums to enable collaborative projects with systemically excluded communities, embedding co-production as a core approach to programme delivery.

The funded museums reflect a range of engagement with the wider DC Programme and its Anti-Racism (AR) training. **Paxton House** is an active Museum Transformer and has completed its AR training. **HMS Unicorn and The Glasgow School of Art** were both Museum Transformers but withdrew from the programme in September 2025 and April 2025 respectively; prior to withdrawing, HMS Unicorn completed four of six AR training sessions, while The Glasgow School of Art completed two of six. **David Livingstone Birthplace** remains a Museum Transformer and is scheduled to begin its AR training in January 2026. **Glasgow Life**, while not a Museum Transformer, has engaged strongly with the Activist Programme, with significant participation from its senior management team and encouragement for wider staff involvement. Glasgow Life is also in the process of procuring the DC Anti-Racism training to roll out across its workforce of over 300 staff. On the request of the cohort, there was a Symposium session at MGS's annual Strategy Symposium in February 2025 to highlight this strand. The workshop focused on the work of two of the projects, Glasgow Life and Paxton House.

**Sustainable Co-Production Gathering March 2025 Feedback** In March 2025, museums funded through the Sustainable Co-production Fund came together online as a learning cohort to reflect on progress, challenges, and wider sector needs. The session brought together representatives from the projects, alongside the MGS team. Discussions focused on what had worked well within projects, how successfully co-production was being embedded, and what further support is needed at organisational and sector levels.

Across projects, participants highlighted the value of time, relationship-building, and depth of engagement as key enablers of meaningful co-production. Glasgow Life spoke positively about building trust with a committed group of young people and the importance of having two years of funding to allow relationships to develop. Paxton House reflected on strong international and local partnerships and the positive reception of co-produced films, while HMS Unicorn shared successes in shared learning visits and community events.

Glasgow School of Art emphasised the benefits of working with smaller groups to enable deeper reflection, leading to tangible changes in practice such as more accessible language, extended exhibition opening times, and improved documentation of learnings.

At the same time, common challenges emerged, including bureaucratic barriers, capacity pressures within both museums and community partners, staff turnover, and language or access needs. Embedding co-production often required navigating organisational systems not designed for this way of working, and participants noted the emotional and practical labour involved. Looking ahead, organisations identified the need for clearer documentation of learning, such as case studies and reflective summaries, as well as broader staff involvement to embed co-production more sustainably. Despite challenges, there was a shared expectation that partnerships and ways of working developed through the fund would continue beyond the life of the grant, pointing to the long-term value of this approach.

### **Feedback from the Year 3 Closing Event | January 2026**

The Sustainable Co-production closing event in January 2026 brought together participating museums, community partners, and MGS to celebrate achievements, reflect on learning, and identify how the work can continue beyond the programme. Each project group shared reflections on their collaborative journey, highlighting relationship-building, creative outputs, and changes to institutional thinking. Discussions created space for both small-group and collective reflection, enabling participants to honestly assess what had shifted in museum practice and what challenges remain. The session centred on identifying practical next steps, encouraging each organisation and partner to identify one clear commitment to sustain co-production while closing the programme in a celebratory and reflective way that honoured the relationships and trust built throughout the funding period.

Participants identified several interconnected structural and cultural barriers that limited sustainability, including capacity constraints across staff and partners, insecure or short-term funding, and time pressures that restricted meaningful relationship-building. Many projects relied heavily on voluntary or underpaid labour from community partners, while some faced limited institutional prioritisation, cultural resistance from colleagues, and gaps in knowledge around delivering co-produced exhibitions within museum systems. Trust-building and communication were highlighted as ongoing challenges requiring greater transparency and longer lead-in times.

Despite these barriers, organisations expressed strong commitment to continuing the work, with The Glasgow School of Art committing to develop a co-production website and toolkit, Glasgow Life exploring the development of an advisory group model, Empower Women for Change advocating for co-design and co-direction approaches, Ukrainians Together planning continued gatherings and resource development, and Paxton House implementing changes to collections policy informed by community partnership work.

Key take-aways for future sustainable co-production highlighted the need for longer funding timeframes, realistic pacing, and resources that match the ambition of partnership-led work, particularly around staff continuity and fair payment for community collaborators. Participants emphasised the importance of senior leadership support, shared sector learning infrastructure, and peer networks to help organisations navigate museum systems more effectively. The session also reinforced that sustainable co-production depends on organisational culture change as much as project delivery, with a strong collective call to move beyond participation models towards genuine power-sharing with systemically excluded communities.



**Sustainable Co-Production Closing Gathering January 2026**  
**Photo credit: Ben Reid-Howells**

## Overall Feedback Summary

The Transformer participants (Paxton House and David Livingstone Birthplace) found the anti-racism training to be highly valued, building confidence and supporting staff to engage in challenging conversations. Several museums have recruited new staff, helping to ease individual workload pressures, while trust with young people is gradually improving and new youth groups are being formed. However, sustainable co-production relies on connecting with the right communities beyond familiar museum networks, and DC participants need support to raise awareness and meaningfully involve the communities their projects are intended to serve.

## Wins & Celebrations

Sustainable Co-production has led to stronger, more trusting relationships between museums and community partners, with many collaborations continuing beyond funded project timelines. Projects have created safe and empowering spaces for systemically excluded communities, particularly racialised communities, refugees, and diaspora groups, to share experiences, influence interpretation, and see their stories reflected in museum spaces. Several initiatives resulted in tangible outputs and institutional change, including co-produced exhibitions, films, youth engagement programmes, revised exhibition language and accessibility, updated collections policies, and new creative resources such as toolkits, websites, and visual documentation methods. Participants also highlighted the emotional and social impact of the work, with community members reporting increased confidence, belonging, and opportunities to connect with others who share similar lived experiences.

There have also been important sector and organisational development wins. Cross-museum collaboration and peer learning opportunities have strengthened professional networks and supported shared problem-solving. The flexible and supportive delivery approach from Museums Galleries Scotland has enabled organisations to test new approaches, reflect honestly on practice, and adapt projects to meet community needs. In several cases, projects helped increase internal visibility of co-production, encouraging senior leadership conversations, creating momentum for advisory groups and long-term partnership models, and highlighting the importance of resourcing community-led work. New staff roles and expanded training opportunities have also helped build internal capacity, allowing organisations to engage more deeply and sustainably in co-production practice moving forward.

## Barriers & Challenges

Many participants described significant capacity constraints, with staff managing co-production work alongside existing responsibilities and, in some cases, inheriting Delivering Change commitments without prior engagement or buy-in. This occasionally resulted in the work being approached as a compliance or “tick-box” exercise, particularly where extensive training requirements added to existing workload pressures.

Capacity challenges were also compounded by reliance on a small number of committed individuals, increasing the risk of burnout and limiting the sustainability of partnership relationships. While organisations continued to submit detailed programme reports, feedback loops were often inconsistent, pointing to a need for more reciprocal and ongoing communication between participants and Museums Galleries Scotland to strengthen learning and support.

Participants also identified wider organisational and sectoral barriers affecting the delivery of meaningful co-production. Levels of senior management support varied, with some organisations experiencing hesitant or risk-averse leadership that limited flexibility and slowed decision-making processes. Practical challenges around access and engagement persisted, including unanswered requests for support with community partner participation, session access, and broader inclusion of young people and racialised communities. Trust-building with partners was recognised as requiring significantly more time, care, and organisational commitment than existing project structures allowed, while short-term or insecure funding models continued to place pressure on both museums and community collaborators.



**Sustainable Co-Production Closing Gathering January 2026**  
**Photo credit: Sheila Asante**

- **Strengthen Reciprocal Communication:** Establish clear, detailed, and ongoing two-way feedback between MGS and DC participants, including timely responses to reports, clearer scheduling, and improved communication.
- **Be Transparent About Support & Capacity:** Clearly articulate what support MGS can realistically provide, recognise differing levels of institutional readiness, and offer practical tools and guidance to help participants navigate challenges and build trust with communities.
- **Enable Community-Led Feedback:** Provide simple, anonymous templates for community feedback to support accountability and reflective practice.
- **Support with Institutional Barriers:** Actively support participants where access is blocked or institutional barriers limit co-production or community participation.
- **Increase Visibility & Reach Beyond Museums:** Create shared visibility tools, such as an online directory of Sustainable Co-production projects and support outreach beyond museum peers to youth and wider community partners.

### Conclusion

The Sustainable Co-production strand has shown that meaningful, community-led collaboration is both achievable and impactful when supported by sufficient time, resources, and organisational commitment. Museums and community partners developed strong, trust-based relationships, produced powerful co-created outputs, and created new opportunities for systemically excluded voices to influence museum practice and storytelling. Participants particularly valued reflective learning spaces, flexible delivery approaches, and peer support facilitated by Museums Galleries Scotland, which enabled organisations to test new approaches and build confidence in co-production work while strengthening relationships across the sector.

The learning from this strand shows that sustainable co-production requires long-term investment, leadership support, and clear communication. When museums are supported to build trust, engage new communities, and navigate institutional and capacity challenges, co-production can become a lasting and transformative part of museum practice.

# Human Rights Based Approach Training Feedback

## General Overview

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) training was developed and delivered by Art27 and offered across all programme strands, including **Museum Activists, Museum Transformers, Community Catalysts, MGS staff, Project Advisors and Leadership**. In Year 2, 11 sessions were delivered, with a further 8 sessions scheduled for 2026, ensuring wide engagement across roles and levels of seniority. The training was designed to strengthen understanding of human rights frameworks and to support participants in embedding rights-based thinking into organisational decision-making, project design and community engagement. It combined legislative context with practical exercises to build confidence in applying human rights principles within museum and heritage settings.

**Most Interesting and Useful Aspects for Participants** Participants frequently highlighted the PANEL principles and associated self- assessment tools as particularly valuable, as they offered a clear and practical framework for translating human rights theory into day-to-day practice. Many found the opportunity to apply PANEL to real or hypothetical projects especially impactful, enabling deeper reflection on participation, accountability and inclusion within their work. The breakout discussions were also widely valued, allowing participants to share experiences across organisations and roles, and to learn from varied approaches to community engagement and cultural programming. Additionally, participants noted that gaining a clearer understanding of cultural rights, the relationship between human rights and EDI, and the evolving policy landscape in Scotland and the UK broadened their professional knowledge and strategic thinking.

**Most Challenging or Stretching Aspects for Participants** Participants commonly described the legislative and policy context surrounding human rights as complex and information-heavy, particularly when engaging with UN conventions, legal obligations and accountability frameworks. For some, the volume of material delivered within relatively short sessions felt overwhelming and required significant concentration to fully process. Applying the theoretical and legal concepts to practical museum contexts also presented challenges, particularly when time for discussion or reflection felt limited. Some participants found breakout activities difficult when instructions or expected outcomes were not fully clarified in advance, while others noted that being asked to draw on lived experience without structured facilitation could feel uncomfortable or emotionally demanding.

**Learnings and Opportunities for Improvement for MGS** Feedback indicates several opportunities to strengthen future delivery. Participants suggested providing clearer preparatory materials in advance of sessions, including key documents and activity outlines, to support confidence and engagement. There was also interest in incorporating additional museum-specific case studies and examples to support practical application. Structuring breakout discussions with clearer guidance and ensuring stronger facilitator presence during group work could enhance learning and reflection.

Participants also expressed a preference for more varied delivery approaches, including shorter or more modular sessions, additional breaks within longer online sessions and, where possible, opportunities for in-person learning. Overall, the training was widely recognised as insightful, challenging and professionally valuable, with participants strongly appreciating the facilitators' expertise, passion and commitment to supporting meaningful sector-wide learning.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the Human Rights Based Approach training has provided a strong foundation for building knowledge, confidence and practical skills in embedding human rights within the museum and heritage sector. The sessions delivered in partnership with Art27 were widely valued for their depth, relevance and commitment to meaningful learning, supporting participants to reflect critically on their work and organisational practice. While feedback highlights areas where structure, pacing and practical application could be further strengthened, the training has clearly contributed to increased awareness, professional development and momentum towards rights-based, anti-oppressive practice across the programme.

## Mental Health Sessions

### Learning & Responding to Community Needs

The Mental support was introduced by DC in Year 2. The support is offered across all programme strands, including **Museum Activists, Museum Transformers, Community Catalysts, MGS staff, Project Advisors** and **Leadership**. The dedicated mental health support sessions were introduced to recognise the emotional impact of anti-oppressive learning and practice across Delivering Change. Initially, group mental health drop-in sessions were offered following anti-racism training between January and February 2025, scheduled either immediately after or the morning following sessions. However, no participants attended these sessions, creating significant administrative and financial pressures. Reflections suggested that timing, reliance on museum leads to share information, and the sensitivity of engaging in group wellbeing spaces may have limited uptake. Additional quarterly sessions designed specifically for Black & People of Colour communities / Global Majority participants also experienced very low attendance, with only one participant attending each session, and were discontinued in April 2025.

In response, the programme prioritised confidential 1:1 counselling support, which continues to be offered to all participants through specialist anti-racism counsellors. In December 2025, this support was expanded to include anti-ableism counselling rooted in the social model of disability and offering access to multiple therapists to better meet participant needs. A key learning from Year 2 was that wellbeing support must feel accessible, clearly communicated and relationally safe. **As a result, Year 3 will introduce short introductory videos from counsellors to build familiarity, reduce stigma, and increase participant confidence in accessing support.**

### Year 2 Feedback from Mental Health Practitioners

Mental health practitioners observed that Year 2 mental health support spaces played an important role in helping DC participants process the emotional impact of the work, particularly where questions of identity, power and belonging were activated. While training opportunities in Year 2 were experienced as motivating and generative, some participants struggled when organisational follow-through felt limited, leading to feelings of isolation or discouragement. One-to-one counselling and facilitated spaces were valued for providing containment, perspective, and emotional steadiness, enabling participants to regain focus and confidence. Although uptake was lower than anticipated, the support offered played a significant role in helping participants integrate learning, sustain wellbeing, and remain engaged with the wider aims of Delivering Change.

### **The Value of Safe, Confidential Support**

Counselling and facilitated mental health spaces provided DC participants with a vital, confidential environment to process emotional responses to the work. Individuals reported feeling more regulated, focused, and able to reframe challenges after engaging with support, and expressed gratitude for having access to a space that prioritised psychological safety. All counselling engagements concluded positively and by mutual agreement.

### **Experiences of Power, Identity, and Belonging**

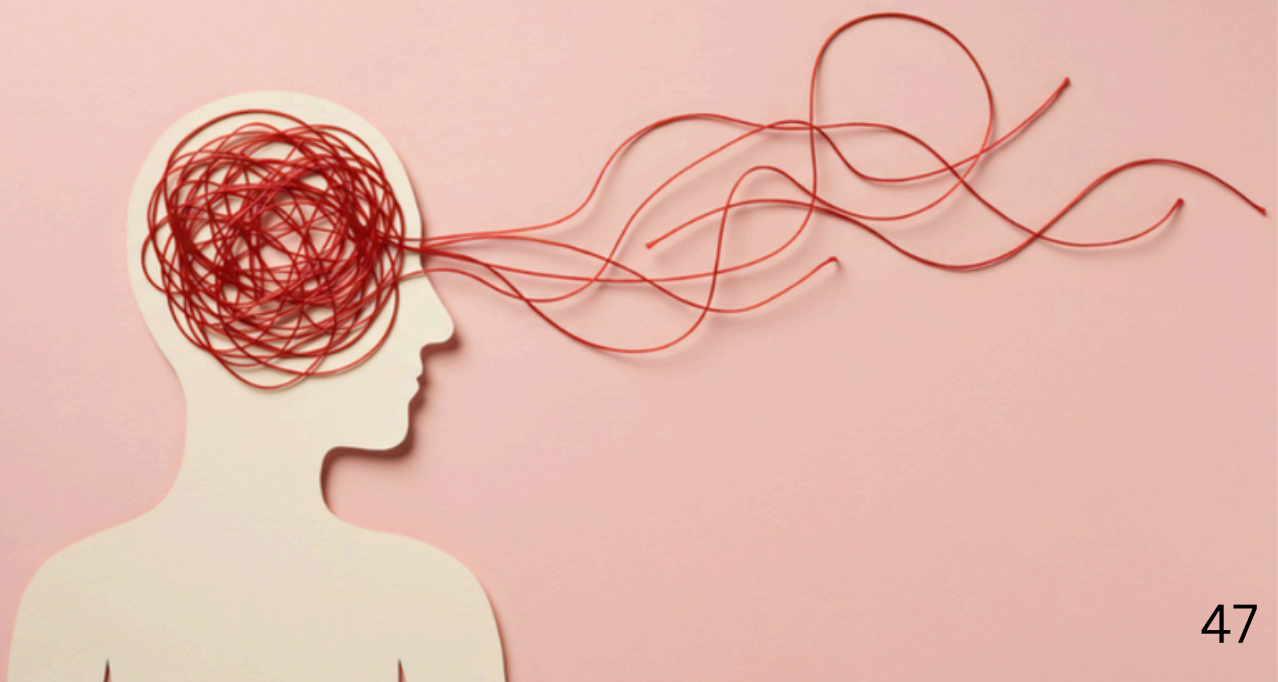
Group mental health sessions, particularly those designed for racially minoritised participants, explored themes including power and privilege, being in the minority, intersectionality, inclusion, psychological safety, and managing diverse teams. While attendance was lower than anticipated, those who participated valued the depth of discussion and the opportunity to reflect on lived experiences of inequity within their professional contexts.

### **Skills, Resilience, and Self-Care**

Across both individual and group support, practitioners noted engagement with tools and frameworks such as assertiveness, self-awareness, transactional analysis, pro-activity, and self-care. These were experienced as helpful in strengthening personal resilience and navigating complex workplace dynamics.

### **Emotional Impacts of Delivering Change**

Practitioners observed that DC training was experienced as inspiring, challenging, and deeply thought-provoking. For some participants, this led to increased motivation and a desire to pursue more ambitious or values-aligned work. However, when organisational follow-through felt limited, this gap contributed to feelings of frustration, loss of hope, loneliness, or questioning of belonging.



# Delivering Change and MGS

## Delivering Change Core Team Feedback

### General Feedback

Year 2 was experienced by the Delivering Change team as a period of consolidation and deepening, marked by increased clarity, coherence, and trust in internal ways of working. Team members described more defined roles, stronger communication, and a growing ability to work across difference, ask questions openly, and engage with conflict with greater skill, empathy, and accountability. There was a strong, shared commitment to embedding anti-oppressive and decolonial principles across MGS, with land-based days and peer learning sessions offering grounding, restoration and deeper connections as a team. The formation of the MGS wide implementation groups and action plans are seen as a meaningful shifts in action, responsiveness and accountability to this work across MGS.

At the same time, Year 2 brought notable challenges, including capacity constraints, competing priorities, and the expansion of Museum Futures, which many felt diverted attention from longer-term anti-oppression work. Disengagement by some staff contributed to a sense of “parallel worlds” within MGS, while the wider political climate increased risk aversion and burnout. Despite this, the overall tone remained hopeful, with the DC team describing their work as “planting seeds” whose impact is still unfolding, and valuing the connection, learning, and increased capacity – particularly around engaging with conflict – that Year 2 has brought about.

### Wins & Celebrations

The DC team experienced stronger cohesion marked by increased trust, collaboration, and relational depth, supported by meaningful reflective spaces, bonding out-of-office, and facilitated approaches to conflict. There was clear learning and growth in understanding systemic oppression, power, and the political context of museum work. Emerging support structures, including new roles and MGS wide groups, contributed to greater stability and organisational listening, while the team’s willingness to sit with discomfort, remain curious, and experiment with new approaches stood out as a key strength for transformative change.

### Land-based day

In Year 2 the DC continued to value their Land-based days, sessions took place at Callendar House, Scottish Maritime Museum, and Lauriston Castle. Each day combined creative, political and reflective learning activities, rooted in seasonal awareness and collective care. This work will continue through Year 3, with the next gathering at Woodlands Community. Planned activities include community-led learning on class, migration, colonialism and Glasgow’s housing history, alongside creative and wellbeing-based practices such as a zine workshop, heritage walking and restorative land-based experiences.



## Barriers & Challenges

Year 2 highlighted a number of ongoing challenges connected to capacity, resourcing, and the complexity of embedding systemic change within a large organisation. The growth and prioritisation of Museum Futures placed additional pressure on time, energy, and leadership attention, at times creating parallel ways of working alongside Delivering Change's more relational and anti-oppressive approach. Differences in readiness for change, alongside burnout, competing commitments, and a challenging external political climate, made sustained engagement and risk-taking harder at times.

Organisation-wide structures for conflict engagement and feedback remain limited, which can make real-time navigation of challenges more difficult; however, these experiences have also sharpened collective learning about what is needed to strengthen alignment, communication, and care as the work continues to evolve.

## Calls to Action from DC team



- **Strengthen Relational & In-Person Spaces:** Expand relational, reflective, and land-based spaces that support wellbeing and deepen trust.
- **Invest in Skills & Facilitation Capacity:** Sustain investment in anti-oppressive facilitation, conflict engagement, and decolonial practice, embedding expectations into sector standards and grant requirements.
- **Increase Shared Decision-Making:** Include diverse voices, including people with lived experience, in planning, strategy, and operations.
- **Improve Transparency & Communication:** Enhance clarity around funding, organisational priorities, and decision rationales.
- **Support Sustainable Work Practices:** Protect time for creativity, reflection, peer learning, and experimentation.
- **Strengthen Inclusive Recruitment & Participation:** Expand leadership and professional development opportunities, particularly for people with lived experience of oppression.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, Year 2 reflected a period of consolidation, growth and honest reflection for the DC team. The team experienced strengthened relationships, clearer ways of working, and deeper confidence in navigating conflict, experimentation and anti-oppressive practice, supported by reflective spaces and emerging organisational structures. Alongside these successes, persistent structural pressures, including capacity limitations, decision-making hierarchies, and inconsistent communication, continue to challenge the sustainability of long-term transformational work. Despite these barriers, the team remains strongly aligned with Delivering Change's purpose, demonstrating resilience, hope and commitment to embedding decolonial and anti-oppressive values across the organisation. Moving forward, sustained relational support, increased transparency, shared leadership, and investment in wellbeing and facilitation capacity will be critical to maintaining momentum and ensuring that transformation is both meaningful and enduring.

# MGS Senior Management Team Feedback

## General Feedback

Since the start of Year 2, the Senior Management Team (SMT) of MGS have voiced strong commitment to DC and at once were navigating a mix of pressure, uncertainty, and capacity challenges. They were aligned with the programme's vision and proud of early achievements, recognising the transformative potential of DC for both MGS and the wider museum sector.

## Commitment and Engagement

SMT members value DC for opening new learning, shifting ways of working, and deepening understanding of anti-oppression practice. SMT expressed desires to be more directly involved from the outset, noting that being out of the loop in Year 1 caused organisational ripples and left them feeling uninvolved and their efforts unseen. They sought access to DC trainings to model their work, understand community stories, and engage personally rather than only in a supervisory capacity. They highlighted differences in pace between the DC team (immersed in the work daily) and SMT managing broader responsibilities, emphasising the need for a long-term strategy to prioritise DC and create meaningful engagement at the SMT level. They expressed appreciation for the ongoing support from members of the DC team.

## Capacity and Organisational Pressure

The pace and intensity of Year 1 had been demanding. SMT members described feeling stretched, managing both operational responsibilities and the emotional load of critical feedback. Supporting external partners while embedding internal change added further pressure, creating tension around workload, organisational stretch, and the speed at which transformation could be realistically implemented.

## Communication and Connection

A clear theme was the need for more structured communication and relationship building. SMT members wanted stronger connections within their own team, with the DC team, and with wider staff, but struggled to find time for trust-building and collaborative reflection.

## Integrating Change Internally

SMT members were committed to embedding DC learning into leadership and organisational practice, but faced uncertainty about the "how." Balancing operational priorities with cultural change work, navigating resistance, and unlearning established leadership habits were acknowledged as ongoing challenges. SMT emphasised the importance of celebrating wins, modelling reflective, listening-based leadership, and supporting the Board to engage meaningfully in the work.

**Conclusion** Overall, Year 2 highlighted both the strength of commitment to Delivering Change and the realities of embedding systemic change within a complex organisation. While capacity pressures and competing priorities shaped the pace and depth of engagement, there remains a shared belief in the importance of this work for MGS's credibility, relevance, and long-term impact. Year 2 reinforced the need for sustained, intentional leadership involvement, clearer structures for communication and reflection, and a long-term approach that balances operational demands with cultural transformation, positioning DC not as a parallel initiative, but as core to how MGS learns, evolves and leads the sector.

# MGS's Leadership & Project Integration Group

## (PIG) Feedback

The PIG group is comprised of MGS staff from across different levels of management and leadership, with members of the DC team as well as other areas of MGS who together share the goal of integrating the DC work across the organisation. In January 2026 Ikake Rising met with the PIG group and wider MGS Leadership to reflect on Year 2 of DC, to surface key challenges and learning, and identify what is needed to support an impactful and sustainable Year Three.

### **Overall Experience of Year Two from MGS PIG & Senior Leaders**

Year Two was widely experienced as complex, demanding, and deeply developmental. Participants described a mix of relief, excitement, overwhelm, exhaustion, and pride. While the year required significant emotional, relational, and organisational labour, it also marked a shift from planning into real delivery, with tangible outcomes across training, grants, governance, and relationships.

There was strong recognition that Delivering Change is not a discrete project, but work that touches every part of MGS, stretching systems, roles, capacity, and culture.

*"We're building the confidence to be transparent with the sector, to share what we're doing with others... it's great to see us being able to build this vulnerability as an organisation."*

**- Lucy Casot, MGS CEO**

## **Key Learnings from Year Two**

### **1. Delivering Change requires time, capacity, and emotional labour**

- Anti-racism and anti-oppression work was described as "knackering" but necessary, requiring time to process individually and collectively.
- Staff needed space to absorb learning, not just deliver outputs.
- Capacity constraints were consistently named as the single biggest challenge, particularly given the pace of grant-making and the parallel delivery of the Museum Futures programme.

### **2. Process matters as much as outcomes**

- Challenging moments (e.g. mentor issues, partner organisations stepping away) were navigated well because of strong collective processes: slowing down, seeking support, sharing responsibility, and holding accountability.
- There is a strong desire to embed these ways of working more broadly across MGS, beyond Delivering Change.

### **3. Relationships and vulnerability are core strengths**

- Anti-racism training and facilitated spaces significantly deepened trust, vulnerability, and human connection across MGS teams, including with the Board, who are more involved than they've ever been.
- This relational depth was seen as inherently valuable for MGS, beyond the DC programme itself.
- Transparency with the sector, and willingness to share learning (including uncertainty), was named as an important cultural shift.

### **4. Direct engagement with communities works**

- Directly targeting community groups through grants (rather than relying on general open calls) led to stronger participation and better alignment.
- Working with communities first, alongside museums, was seen as a key success.
- It was noted that good partnerships take longer than six months and require careful facilitation to avoid "forced" relationships.

### **5. Delivering Change is reshaping other programmes**

- Museum Futures was repeatedly cited as being strongly influenced by DC learning, particularly in its relational, flexible, and non-one-size-fits-all approach.
- However, it was noted that anti-oppression principles are not yet fully integrated into Museum Futures metrics, frameworks, or definitions of success.

## **Key Challenges Identified**

### **Organisational & Structural**

- Time and capacity pressures, especially across grants and parallel programmes.
- Limited opportunity to fully integrate learning before moving on to new delivery.
- Unclear expectations for staff not directly involved in DC, who are nonetheless being asked to act on its principles.

### **Cultural & Emotional**

- Ongoing tension between "being brave" and risk-averse responsibilities, particularly in a challenging political environment.
- Fear of failure and overwhelm when faced with the scale of change required.
- Feelings of disconnection for some staff from DC participants and lived-experience partners.

### **Communication & Integration**

- Inconsistent communication and unclear chains of decision-making.
- Tasks sometimes landing without sufficient notice or support.
- Difficulty articulating, internally and externally, what Delivering Change is and what it asks of different roles.

## Implications for MGS Leadership

- MGS leadership is required to protect space, prioritise capacity, and legitimise the emotional and relational labour of this DC work.
- DC challenges traditional risk management, requiring conscious support for learning, failure, experimentation, and shared accountability.
- This work represents a long-term organisational shift, not a time-bound programme, and needs to be held as such.

## What MGS Would Do Differently

- Plan more realistically for known pressure points (e.g. Jan–April workload spikes). Improve handovers during staff transitions.
- Refine training delivery: clearer roles between facilitators and MGS, more facilitators, stronger processes.
- Bring in external expertise earlier to review policies and organisational systems through an anti-oppression lens.
- Build in more time for integration, reflection, and embedding learning.

## Closing Reflection

Despite significant stretch, Year 2 delivered meaningful cultural change, stronger relationships, clearer frameworks, and growing confidence in MGS's ability to do anti-oppression work with integrity. This end-of-year-two reflection session highlighted both pride in what has been achieved and a shared recognition that how MGS chooses to carry this work forward matters as much as what has already been done.

## Commitments & Takeaways for Year 3

### What Needs to Be True for Year 3

- A shared, organisation-wide understanding of Delivering Change and its relevance to MGS as an organisation.
- Clear prioritisation of DC principles across workloads, including grants beyond Year 3.
- Explicit resourcing and capacity allocation to sustain the work beyond Year 3.
- Clear decision-making structures, communication pathways, and leadership mandate.
- A credible plan for post-Year 3 legacy and sustainability (Year 4 and beyond).



### Commitments for PIG and MGS Leadership

- PIG to take a more active role in strategising, integrating, and future-proofing DC.
- Stronger communication between the DC team and the wider organisation.
- Bringing in additional voices (internally and externally), including DC participants, to inform legacy planning.
- Using Year 2 evaluation evidence to engage funders (e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund) around continuation and scale.
- Accepting that not everything can be embedded within Year 3, and planning realistically for continuation beyond the funded period.

# **PART 3**

## **Summary of Year 2 Feedback**



## Summary of Feedback

DC continues to be experienced as transformative, grounding, and very differently among different participants. In Year 2, many describe shifting from project planning to building relationships and trust, and beginning co-production with communities, while others have yet to start working with their DC partners. Some participants require more structure while others are thriving in the flexibility of the DC programme. Some experienced the trainings as empowering and useful, while others experienced them as uncomfortable or culturally insensitive. Collective “evaluation” sessions with Ikake Rising (IK) throughout the year evolved into forums for clarification, shared understanding, strategising, and solidarity – reflecting IK’s adaptive methodology responding to what is needed in the room, rather than holding rigidly to evaluation structures. Participants of IK sessions valued seeing each other’s faces, hearing personal stories, and gaining clarity and inspiration for the work ahead. The DC team is strengthening both internally and with growing relationship-building and allyship from other MGS staff and leadership.

Across Activists, Catalysts, and Transformers, confidence in applying human-rights and co-production approaches is increasing. However, participants repeatedly highlight a gap between training and internal implementation. Smaller organisations can act informally and quickly (“a chat over lunch”), while larger institutions require multiple layers of approval (“32 emails”), slowing or preventing innovation. Remote work continues to limit the informal relationship building essential for momentum and DC participants request more in-person time together. For communities, supportive museum partners and the responsiveness of the DC team are seen as crucial. Emotional labour and workload strain remain common, and participants emphasise the need for more clarity, cohesion and structure in the DC programme, and highlight the importance of trust, kindness, and cultural fit to prevent harm from DC trainers.

## Wins & Celebrations

*“Despite the challenges, we’re proud of how far we’ve come. The energy, the creativity, the community pride, those are worth celebrating. We’re building confidence, storytelling skills, heritage knowledge, all the things that help people reclaim their own history.”*

**- Community Catalyst, August 2025**

## Forms of Change

### Personal Transformation

- Increased confidence and clarity in applying anti-oppressive and human rights-based approaches.
- Reduced feelings of isolation through cross-sector solidarity.
- Experiences of discomfort in engaging in challenging areas of anti-oppression work; learning and unlearning have become easier to integrate.

### Organisational shifts

- Cromarty Courthouse Museum: permanent Black history interpretation now in development.
- National Galleries Scotland: anti-racism training embedded internally.
- Paxton House x Caribbean Connections Creative Partnership: deepened co-production through collaborative cross-cultural educational project from Grenada to Scotland.
- LGBTQ+ youth-led creative project.
- Coastal archaeology digs offering hands-on heritage learning.
- Mining history oral storytelling with intergenerational groups.
- Reviving Black and racialised histories in exhibitions.

## Community-led project highlights

*“What we’re doing is helping young LGBTQ folks feel safe enough to show up, participate, and imagine themselves in museum spaces: that alone feels like a win.”*

**- Community Catalyst, August 2025**

### System-level impact

- Some Museum Transformers are influencing whole-organisation priorities.
- Growing anti-oppression awareness across the sector especially around: anti-racism, equity, representation, and the importance of community agency.



## Visions for Change

### DC participants imagine a museum sector where:

- Working-class, rural, intergenerational, and racialised communities tell their own stories on their own terms.
- Co-production with community groups and community organisations is core practice, not an add-on.
- Institutions in the sector operate with care, accountability, transparency, and power-sharing.
- Evaluation focuses on social impact, relational quality, and equity — not outputs.
- Cross-museum collaboration drives intersectional change; no one institution can do this alone.
- Museums function as safer spaces and community infrastructure, not just museum buildings.

## Barriers & Challenges

### Training → implementation gap (key Year 2 theme)

Participants understand DC principles but struggle to embed them internally without structural support and longer-term capacity building.

### Institutional barriers and resistance

Some museum sector participants remain hesitant or fearful of conversations about anti-colonialism, anti-racism, non-hierarchical power structures and wider anti-oppressive change, and prefer championing less transformative concepts such as “institutional multiculturalism” that leave underlying power imbalances and injustices unchanged.

### Leadership not yet fully engaged across the sector

Museum Activists feel isolated when senior leadership or boards do not actively participate in nor endorse change. Museum Transformers emphasise that institutional, not only individual, relationships need strengthening, and leadership need to be brought into this work meaningfully and with accountability.



## Structural and logistical barriers

- Overloaded workloads and email-heavy communication.
- Bureaucratic onboarding, especially for volunteer-led and working-class groups.
- Limited funding for relationship-building time.
- Remote work reducing informal collaboration and creativity.

*“Some of the processes feel overly bureaucratic for the size of our community. [DC] hasn’t always felt accessible, especially for groups run mostly by volunteers. Our communities want to be involved, but the forms, applications, and systems weren’t designed with us in mind.”*

**- Community catalyst, August 2025**

## Fragmented collaboration

Participants value mixed Activist–Catalyst–Transformer spaces and want more opportunities for sharing, and visioning and strategising together.

## Calls to Action | Tangible Requests & Feedback for MGS



### Bridge training → implementation

- Provide practical tools: templates, slides, briefing packs to go along with training materials.
- Provide structured follow-through & integration after trainings.

### Strategise for deeper leadership participation

- Senior leaders and boards must meaningfully engage in DC learning.
- Reduce reliance on frontline activists working “after hours” out of passion.

### Use funding leverage

- Assess whether funded organisations are demonstrating actual change.
- Some participants noted: “People only listen to the money.”

### Simplify DC processes

- Clearer communications, expectations, and resource maps.
- Easier onboarding for small, volunteer-led groups with fewer resources.

### Strengthen cross-role collaboration

- Increase mixed DC spaces for collective sharing and strategising.

### Improve care and support

- Trauma-informed, culturally informed facilitation, debriefs, mentorship.

## Conclusions:

Delivering Change remains profoundly energising, impactful, and is beginning to shape the sector. Participants and communities are gaining confidence, agency, and meaningful relationships. Others are experiencing great challenge, lack of progress and insufficient clarity around the programme.

To sustain positive sector transformation, MGS must move from short-term project funding to long-term structural support; strengthen leadership consciousness and accountability; and provide practical implementation tools and continuity beyond individual DC participants. The greatest asset of DC is the people, the Activists, Catalysts, Transformers and MGS staff involved, who are modelling what a just, community-led museum sector can become.



# PART 4

## Evaluating the Year 2 Goals & Preparing for Year 3



Photo credit: Ryan McGoverne

## Integration of Year 2 Goals

**How we evaluate Integration** Beginning to integrate DC across the sector has been a central goal of Year 2, across all DC areas of work: both among DC participants and within MGS and the DC team. We're looking for measurable integration that has tangibly begun. Eg. Policies adopted; Shifts in workforce diversity & practice; Power-sharing structures piloted; Community partnerships deepening; Embedding anti-oppression practices.

### Reviewing the Year 2 Goals

These goals reflected a dual focus: building internal DC team capacity while embedding anti-oppression learning and action structurally across MGS and DC organisations:

- 1) De-escalation & team-building across power hierarchies** – improving communication, collaboration, and comfort with conflict across institutional levels.
- 2) Intersectional training and integration** – delivering anti-oppression and intersectionality sessions and embedding learning in practice.
- 3) Clear communication, defined roles & accessible language** – ensuring clarity within the DC team and between the DC team, MGS, and DC participants.
- 4) Beyond tokenism: power-sharing & inclusion** – moving towards shared decision-making and genuine inclusion within MGS and across participating organisations.
- 5) Peer-to-peer support for Community Catalysts** – piloting models of collaboration and support across communities.
- 6) Reducing harm & increasing transparency around risks** – improving awareness of potential harms and creating safer engagement pathways for DC participants.

## Progress toward integration of Year 2 goals among DC participants

Across participating organisations, there is clear evidence that Year 2 learning has begun to translate into concrete policy, practice, and cultural shifts.

Museums introduced formal processes to address oppressive incidents, developed anti-racism action plans aligned with long-term business strategies, and revised frontline, curatorial, and collections practices to improve equity and representation. DC learning has been embedded through mechanisms such as Action Learning Sets and supporting staff to take ownership of anti-racism initiatives within their teams.

Early signs of power-sharing are visible, with leadership and boards beginning to involve staff and communities more meaningfully in decision-making, alongside the formation of implementation groups and action plans. Partnerships with local councils and community organisations have formed, enabling more inclusive interpretation and training, while staff report growing awareness of systemic inequities and the lived experiences of racialised communities. Together, these shifts point to meaningful progress from reflection toward embedded, structural change.

## Tangible Examples of Policies and Practices Adopted

- Shetland museum established formal processes for addressing oppressive incidents.
- RCPE (Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh) developed an Anti-Racism Action Plan, including museum-specific anti-racism mission statements, integration into the 5-year business plan, curatorial reviews for diverse storytelling, and collection research guides.
- Paxton House FOH staff revised visitor interaction practices (e.g., stopping “Where are you from?” questions), demonstrating direct, actionable impact on visitor experience.
- CPK (Culture Perth and Kinross) library staff updated book ordering to ensure diverse representation.
- NGS (National Galleries of Scotland) implemented formal complaints processes in response to community feedback, embedding community-informed accountability.
- Additional funding was allocated to Community Catalysts to improve accessibility and equity, enabling more inclusive participation.

- DC training has been positively integrated into organisational processes through Action Learning Sets, helping embed anti-racism in everyday practice.
- Evidence shows staff are taking ownership of anti-racism initiatives within their teams and museums, signalling early cultural change.

### **Internal Integration within MGS**

Year 2 saw substantial, early internal embedding of DC principles. Anti-racism, anti-oppression, and co-production are moving from experimentation to structured organisational change.

#### **1) Policies, Processes, and Culture**

- Revised competency framework, "*How We Work*", integrates anti-oppression into performance and daily expectations.
- HR reviewed policies, improved parental provisions, and analysed recruitment to address equity.
- Anti-racism training completed by all staff; Museums Association Supporting Anti-Racism course now mandatory for new employees.
- Anti-Racism Action Plan implemented with quarterly reviews and progress tracking.

#### **2) Board Involvement and Leadership Visibility**

- The Board participated in facilitated anti-racism sessions.
- Board support extended to resource allocation, strategy alignment, and public sector engagement.
- Executive leadership increased transparency, explaining decisions openly, adopting peer-to-peer and reverse mentoring models, and modelling behaviours aligned with DC goals.

#### **3) Intersectionality, Inclusion, and Sector Standards**

- Progress toward LGBT Youth Scotland Silver Charter Mark: Champion Group established, baseline survey conducted, sector-wide consultation undertaken.
- Recognition as a top inclusive employer for differently abled / disabled people.
- Initiatives such as DuoDay and public storytelling about neurodiversity strengthened internal inclusion.

#### **4) Integration Across Teams Through Learning and Mentoring**

- Action Learning Sets, reflection sessions, executive mentoring, and reciprocal mentoring introduced.
- Quarterly DC-Executive Team dialogues ensured DC learning informs strategic planning.
- Cohort-specific trainings addressed microaggressions, conflict engagement, public communication, and advocacy.

**Wins in integration:** Year 2 saw tangible progress in embedding anti-oppression across participating museums, with clear policy and practice changes around visitor engagement, complaints processes, and anti-racism commitments. Board and leadership involvement helped strengthen accountability and visibility, while Action Learning Sets, mentoring, and reflective spaces supported staff development and cross-team collaboration. Community partnerships deepened through co-designed projects, additional support for Community Catalysts, and a growing organisational mindset shift, with staff increasingly recognising systemic inequities and taking proactive steps toward cultural change.

**Challenges in integration:** At the same time, integration remains uneven. Leadership engagement varied, with some senior actors less engaged or resistant, and capacity disparities across museums limited consistent participation and follow-through. The emotional and operational demands on DC staff and Community Catalysts were significant, underscoring the need for more support, stronger harm-reduction and risk-management frameworks. Ongoing tension between DC's aspirations and wider organisational systems highlighted that embedding anti-oppression requires both robust structures, policies, training, and frameworks, and sustained relational work grounded in trust, visibility, and shared responsibility.

### **Summary of Year 2 Internal Integration**

Year 2 has been a year of consolidation, capacity-building, and cultural groundwork. MGS has taken meaningful steps to embed anti-oppressive practice internally through revised policies, strengthened governance, leadership modelling, staff development, and sector-leading inclusion initiatives. The organisation has begun to align its systems: induction, training, competencies, decision-making, and performance development, with its anti-oppression commitments. At the same time, new structures for learning, reflection, and cross-team collaboration are helping staff integrate DC principles into everyday work.



## Progress & Integration

Progress in Year 2 demonstrates meaningful movement across all six central Delivering Change goals, with the strongest gains seen in internal team clarity, cross-team collaboration, delivery of intersectional training, and shifts in mindset. Museums and participants translated learning into practice through localised policy and behaviour changes, while confidence in addressing power, conflict, and accountability increased. Progress was more uneven in areas such as power-sharing, cross-participant cohesion, and organisation-wide embedding, where capacity constraints, inconsistent leadership engagement, and the absence of structured harm-reduction tools limited momentum. Even so, the programme made tangible advances across all priority areas.

The integration trajectory in Year 2 suggests the sector is beginning a genuine, if uneven, shift. Museums adopted new policies and practices, developed anti-racism action plans, deepened community partnerships, and piloted power-sharing approaches, alongside growing recognition of structural racism and the limits of tokenistic inclusion. Within MGS, integration looks like: anti-oppression principles increasingly reflected in policies, competencies, induction processes, HR systems, leadership practices, and cross-team learning structures. These foundations signal early cultural change and provide a critical base for sustaining Delivering Change beyond its current phase.

This evaluation shows that **Year 3 is a pivotal moment where the groundwork laid in Year 2 must be consolidated into lasting structures, practices, and commitments that extend beyond the DC programme's lifetime.** It highlights the need to reinforce clarity, communication, and leadership alignment; properly resource the people doing the work; establish sustainable approaches to conflict transformation, holistic safety, and peer support; and ensure that the integration achieved becomes embedded in organisational culture rather than reliant on individuals. Above all, this evaluation points to Year 3 as a moment to intentionally shape DC's legacy, positioning it as an enduring movement and organisational orientation, not a time-limited project.

# Emerging Needs & Priorities for Year 3

## Top priorities for Year 3

### Strengthening Community Catalyst solidarity

- Deliver the in-person Catalyst gathering early in Year 3.
- Build long-term cross-community relationships that can persist beyond the life of the DC programme and associated funding for participants.

### Delivering core anti-oppression training

- Focus on anti-classism, anti-racism, anti-ableism, and decolonial practice.
- Ensure integration sessions for museums and their wider organisation are adequately resourced and protected.

### Institutional risk and harm reduction

- Develop frameworks for supporting marginalised participants.
- Create tools, protocols, and resources for responding to harm & conflict.

### Embedding long-term practices

- Preserve land-based days, grounding sessions, and DC team cultural sharing.
- Create working culture that supports wellbeing and relationship building.

### Building comprehensive institutional alignment

- Integrate DC learning across MGS to prevent parallel systems or “silos.”
- Further engage the MGS Senior Management Team (SMT) with consistent support, clear expectations and accountability.

## Key Indicators of Success

Key indicators of success include a cohesive and well-resourced DC team with protected time and energy to deliver the work; visible and aligned commitment from senior leadership; clear action pathways following training or conflict; Community Catalysts operating with a shared sense of purpose; support structures that prevent the DC team from becoming overstretched; and further tangible action in participating organisations and community groups as a result of DC.

## Supports and Structures Needed

Key supports and structures needed include deeper engagement and shared accountability from Senior Management, increased administrative and facilitation capacity (and reduced workload), clearer boundaries between DC and other programmes, stronger internal and external communication, and protected time, mental health supports and ongoing restorative practices to sustain the work.

### **Emerging Training and Skills Needs**

Emerging training and skills needs include priorities around class analysis, trans inclusion and anti-transphobia, anti-ableism, conflict management, active bystander and trauma-informed practice, EDI assessment and challenging Western epistemic universality, integrating anti-oppression with climate action and sustainability, further human rights training, effective rollout for staff who have not yet engaged, and navigating regional societal polarisation and rising fascism, particularly in regards to how communicate the DC work externally.

Skills in developing an organisational work culture that challenges white supremacy norms, and gaining stronger leadership backing to secure buy-in and deepening skills to hold difficult conversations.

For internal processes, priorities for MGS, DC Team and contractors include baseline anti-racism pre-screening and entry-level courses, guidance for managing external facilitators and supporting museums, clearer pathways to mental health support for participants experiencing discomfort, and strengthened project management tools for future MGS work.

### **Reflections on work still remaining and visions for Year 3**

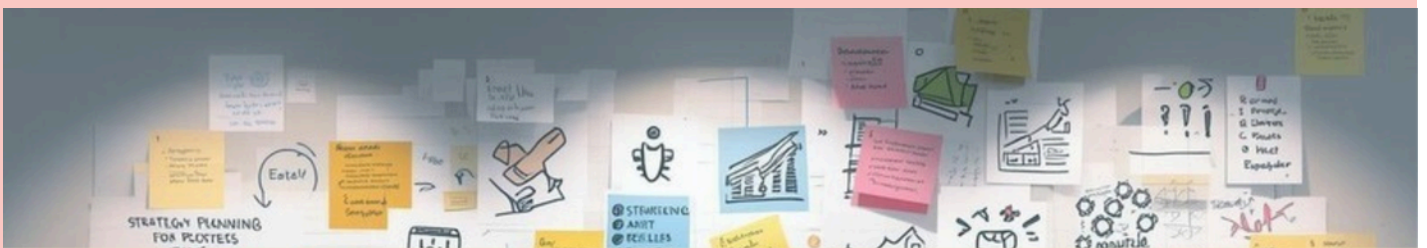
Looking ahead, the focus for Year 3 is on building from strong foundations toward greater consistency, integration, and shared ownership across DC participants. There is a shared intention to embed anti-oppression work & learning more fully across organisations, ensuring it shapes everyday practice. Participants are hopeful about further developing power-sharing and participatory decision-making, and about seeing leadership practices increasingly reflect DC values in visible, everyday ways.

There is also energy around building clearer, well-supported structures for conflict engagement, feedback, harm reduction, and care, particularly for marginalised participants, so challenges can be met with confidence and compassion. Strengthening peer learning and collective spaces, alongside expanding and integrating intersectional training into daily practice, is seen as an exciting opportunity for growth. Underpinning this vision is a shared commitment to clearer organisational accountability, so anti-oppression remains prioritised even amid competing pressures. Overall, Year 3 is seen as an opportunity to move more courageously and cohesively, embedding DC as a long-term, resourced, and values-led transformation across the sector rather than a time-limited (ie. DC) initiative.

### Strategic Direction for MGS Year 3

Year 3 of Delivering Change will focus on deepening sustainable, anti-oppressive transformation across MGS by strengthening both structural change and relational care. Priorities include proactively responding to political and social risks, embedding belonging through long-term organisational commitment and resourcing, and protecting time for reflection, creativity, and learning.

The programme will also focus on strengthening conflict transformation, decision-making processes, and cross-team collaboration, while improving communication and co-design with Community Catalysts and continuing progress on the Anti-Racism Action Plan, particularly around accessibility, representation, and sector capacity. Together, this direction reflects a commitment to consolidation, courage, and integration, recognising that lasting progress depends on realistic capacity, strong relationships, and systems that meaningfully support the people delivering the work.



**PART 5**  
**Conclusions &**  
**Recommendations**



**VISIONING**  
**AHEAD**  
**AND**  
**TAKING**  
**ACTION**

## Conclusions

### What's Going Well

This evaluation shows clear gains:

**1) Participation across Scotland:** Over 19 museums, 100+ activists, and 8 community organisations have actively engaged in the DC work. We've seen stronger partnerships forming between museums and communities, with exhibitions, policies, and projects co-designed in ways that weren't happening before.

**2) Change inside museums:** Some museums are adopting new anti-oppression policies, changing hiring practices, and involving community members in decisions. These are early but real signs of integrating tangible change.

**3) Communities taking the lead:** Community Catalysts — from Roma to LGBTQ+ groups — are more actively shaping museum narratives. They're challenging stereotypes, sharing underrepresented histories, and making sure their voices are heard.

**4) Mindset shifts:** We're noticing changes in how museum staff and leaders talk about inclusion, power-sharing, and human rights. Attitudes are beginning to shift, even if unevenly.

**5) Integrating Land-Based Days for the DC Team:** Throughout 2025, the Delivering Change team at Museums Galleries Scotland continued to embed decolonial and wellbeing practices through a series of intentional land-based days. Following an initial land-based gathering in May 2024, led by Ben from Ikake Rising, the DC team committed to quarterly land-based days from October 2024 onwards, creating protected time and space to learn, reflect, build deeper relationships and solidarity outside traditional workplace environments.

## What's Been Hard

At the same time, Year 2 surfaced persistent challenges that shaped both the pace and depth of integration:

**1)** Capacity constraints, competing organisational priorities, and uneven leadership engagement limited consistency across power hierarchies and programmes, at times creating parallel experiences of the work.

**2)** While training and peer support models were delivered, resource disparities, burnout, and the absence of fully developed harm-reduction and conflict-transformation structures occasionally constrained their reach.

**3)** Staff and community members often feel stretched for time and resources. Accessibility and representation still need more work.

**4)** Relationships between participants are still just forming and have had their challenges, and it is taking time to get to the action that many community members are hoping for.

**5)** External political pressures further tested institutional confidence and readiness. Despite these barriers, the work did not stall; rather, it clarified what is needed next.

**Looking Forward** Delivering Change is no longer just a project. It is becoming a movement that could reshape Scotland's cultural sector if tangible change is achieved and sustained. Year 2 shows the beginnings of that transformation: not complete, not perfect, but very real. Importantly, it has shown us that naming what doesn't work is as valuable as celebrating what does, because it helps the whole sector learn and grow. **Year 3** will be about consolidation and legacy, making sure the changes stick and can continue beyond the life of this programme. This will be achieved by embedding of anti-oppression practices inside MGS and DC participants, securing resources, and helping museums carry this work forward on their own.

## Recommendations for the Work Ahead

Lasting integration of Delivering Change depends on aligning leadership, systems, and culture to support deep, long-term transformation rather than short-term activity. Anti-oppression work requires consistent leadership commitment, shared accountability, and protected capacity so staff and participants have the time, energy, care, trust and resilience needed to do the work in a good way. Sustainable change is strengthened through peer ecosystems and relationships that carry momentum beyond DC, supported by clear structures, skills development, and holistic wellbeing.

Embedding new practices takes repetition, clarity, and relational strength, alongside robust approaches to conflict and harm reduction. Ultimately, DC's legacy relies on intentionally designing both the structural foundations and relational conditions, belonging, capability, and shared purpose needed for this work to endure as a movement, not just a programme. Year 2 laid the essential groundwork. Year 3 must consolidate, embed, and build pathways for the long-term future of anti-oppressive practice across Scotland's museums.

**Here are our recommendations for the work ahead:**

### **1. Strengthen MGS Organisational Alignment & Leadership Commitment**

- Embed DC aims organisation-wide through strategy, HR, workforce development, and communications.
- Ensure visible, shared SMT ownership and accountability to prevent siloing.

### **2. Resource the DC Team & Protect Delivery Time**

- Align staffing, admin, and facilitation capacity with programme scale.
- Protect time for planning, reflection, mentoring, and recovery by setting clear programme boundaries.

### **3. Deepen Peer Networks & Reduce Dependency on MGS**

- Invest in peer-led spaces, regional gatherings, and Catalyst-to-Catalyst learning.
- Sustain shared platforms for mentoring, dialogue, and sector connection beyond MGS and the DC programme.

### **4. Embed Anti-Oppression Learning Through Structured Practice**

- Move from training to application with action plans, coaching, and follow-up support.
- Ensure sequenced, foundational training for staff and museum partners before community engagement.

## **5. Strengthen Harm Reduction & Conflict Transformation**

- Establish clear organisation-wide frameworks for conflict response, mediation, and risk mitigation.
- Create trusted pods and trauma-informed supports, prioritising safety for marginalised and participants at greater risk of societal push-back.

## **6. Strengthen Community Catalyst Infrastructure**

- Build collective capacity through intentional relationship-building and cross-community collaboration.
- Provide clear communication, skills training, and sustainable resourcing for Community Catalyst work.

## **7. Ensure Realistic Workload, Planning & Timing**

- Co-create timelines with participants to support feasibility and inclusion.
- Build reflection and integration time into all training, roles, and grant structures.

## **8. Enhance Communication, Feedback & Transparency**

- Create regular two-way communication loops across staff, participants, and partners.
- Treat feedback as dialogic and collaborative, with openness about missteps and learning, and embracing “failure” as a critical part of this transformative work.

## **9. Support Belonging, Creativity & Relational Culture**

- Embed protected time for reflection, grounding, and relationship-building.
- Prioritise emotional safety, recognition, and visible leadership responsiveness.

## **10. Build the Skills and Training Pathway for Year 3**

- Establish a shared baseline across anti-oppression, inclusion, conflict engagement, and cultural change.
- Expand skills in facilitation, bystander action, climate justice, and navigating polarisation.

## **11. Prepare for Legacy: DC as a Movement, Not a Project**

- Embed DC principles into policy, HR, leadership expectations, and monitoring systems.
- Document and share learning, and sustain partnerships to support long-term sector-wide impact.



# PART 6

## Supporting Information

# SUPPORTING INFORMATION



# DELIVERING CHANGE

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO RESTRUCTURE AS ORGANISATIONS BASED ON ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRINCIPLES

**97**  
 Museum Activists engaging in heritage across Scotland

**7**  
 Community Catalysts

- Romano Lav
- Sikh Sanjog
- Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities
- Dundee International Women's Centre
- Northern Corridor Community Volunteers
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Zya Community

**5**  
 Museum partnerships undertaking Sustainable Co-production working with community partners

**17**  
 Museum Transformers



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

## THE JOURNEY SO FAR

**300**  
 people participated in anti-racism training

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh is the first museum to create an anti-racism action plan

Participants undertook a total **72** hours of Human Rights Based Approach training

"I believe it will now be easier to me to bring up discussions about the subject of (anti-)racism among colleagues as and when appropriate, which is something I have already become brave enough to do."

MUSEUM TRANSFORMERS ANTI-RACISM TRAINING PARTICIPANT

Accessibility needs for online sessions were identified through participant surveys

Feedback about role play in Museum Transformers anti-racism training highlighted as challenging and not supportive to thinking about taking anti-racist action

Anti-racism training is being updated to adapt role play and ensure that there are more practical examples of anti-racist actions

Changes made to online facilitation to support accessibility

4

Community Catalysts engaged with Wikimedia UK or National Library of Scotland to learn about support available for their archives

Participants and staff found number of emails about the programme overwhelming

Monthly newsletters created to help communicate activities in the programme

1

Knowledge Exchange with The Sensational Museum, looking at anti-ableism and their work facilitating multi-sensory experiences in museums

“I’ve definitely been learning and sharing, not just though the content of live sessions but through the manner in which they’ve been delivered, the way pre-session information has been shared etc. It’s improving my own facilitation practice.”

A MUSEUM ACTIVIST

50

Delivering Change participants attended a morning network event at the Strategy Symposium

Connection with peers highlighted by participants as important

Regular peer to peer sessions created

Sustainable Co-production Fund awarded £175,000 to 5 museums, each working with at least one community partner

The Community Catalysts have received a total of £200,000 to work with their museum partner to prioritise lived experiences and amplify the voices of communities that have historically been excluded or underrepresented in museum spaces

“So far, the programme has enabled us to bring local groups together to look at the current heritage offerings and think about the changes we want to see. This development phase has enabled a much needed banners project, giving the Retired Miners a banner they can be proud of and working towards a replacement banner for Cardowan Colliery as theirs was sadly destroyed in a fire.”

CLAIRE WILLIAMS, FUNDING OFFICER AT NORTHERN CORRIDOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

“Visual representations of Roma in Scotland’s museums and galleries are, as elsewhere, steeped in antigypsyism. We are delighted to begin the work of undoing and transforming these representations, co-creating empowering reparative projects that enable real inclusion, while supporting partners to achieve their objective of becoming anti-racist institutions.”

ASHLI MULLEN, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT ROMANO LAV

## THANK YOU TO:

All the Delivering Change participants who have joined us on this journey, the Delivering Change team, and our friends and family who support us.

**Our partners and supporters:** Art 27, Delivering Change Expert Advisory Group, Delivering Change freelance anti-racism and anti-ableist facilitators, Dorcas Inclusive Education Ltd, Ikake Rising, Mental Health Practitioners, Museums Association, National Library of Scotland, The Sensational Museum, Visible Inclusive Accessibility, White Thinking project, Wikimedia UK

## DELIVERING CHANGE IS FUNDED BY:



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Delivering Change has been developed by Museums  
Galleries Scotland and an Expert Advisory Group



Museums  
Galleries  
Scotland

Supporting Scotland's Museums

## **Ikake Rising Trainings: Building Internal Capacity at MGS to lead DC**

The March 6, 2025 “Embedding the Work” session, facilitated by Ben Reid-Howells of Ikake Rising for the MGS Project Oversight Group, focused on moving the Delivering Change (DC) programme from theory into practice across the organisation. Through reflection, honest dialogue, and collaborative planning, participants explored why this work matters, identified personal and structural barriers, and committed to specific, actionable steps for embedding DC principles into HR, communications, grants, leadership, and wellbeing.

The session re-emphasised that inaction is also a decision, that embedding equity and anti-oppression is integral to MGS’s credibility and leadership, and that each team member has a distinct role to play. By the end, the group had developed a clearer shared understanding of success, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and made concrete individual commitments to advance Delivering Change as a core part of MGS’s organisational culture and strategy.

### **Session Goals:**

- Increase engagement with Delivering Change across MGS
- Address barriers to action
- Outline and commit to practical next steps for each member

### **Key takeaways from “Embedding the Work” session with Ikake Rising**

The key takeaways from this session reflect a shared recognition that embedding Delivering Change across Museums Galleries Scotland requires both courage and clarity, with participants acknowledging that systemic organisational change is challenging but essential to maintaining credibility, leadership and sector influence.

There was strong agreement that inaction is itself a decision, carrying reputational, ethical and strategic risks, and that this work must be embedded across leadership, funding priorities and organisational culture rather than positioned as a standalone initiative.

Participants recognised that perceived barriers can become opportunities for shifts in mindset and practice, and emphasised that accountability, reflection and iteration will be critical, as embedding Delivering Change is an ongoing and adaptive process. The session ultimately strengthened shared language, cross-departmental alignment and collective commitment to progressing the next phase of integration.

## Ongoing Training Across MGS

MGS has continued working with Ikake Rising in multiple trainings, facilitated sessions, in-person workshops and one-on-one sessions, in which Ikake Rising has helped to build the toolkit of MGS's staff who are most central to the DC work: specifically the DC Team, SMT (Senior Management) and the Project Oversight Group.

### These trainings have included:

- Conflict transformation as a framework of Transformative Justice
- Collective liberation basic principles and practice
- Creating Integrated, Embedded Conflict Transformation Strategies
- Anti-oppression in leadership
- The importance of the sense of belonging in liberating work like DC
- Building practices and frameworks for safety and support in the MGS staff team

**NOTE:** While IK have provided follow up Take-home resources, integration sessions, etc., these trainings have been mostly one-off sessions to introduce MGS to these concepts. **More training in these areas is required.**

### Areas of ongoing internal work

Areas of ongoing work include re-framing why diversity and inclusion matter by linking them to organisational legacy, moral responsibility, and strategic opportunity; creating reflective dialogue on personal and departmental engagement that surfaces both commitment and barriers; and mapping obstacles to action by distinguishing structural constraints from mindset-based challenges. Continued focus is also needed on role-specific action planning across functions such as HR, communications, governance, funding, and wellbeing, alongside the development of accountability mechanisms for follow-up, peer support, conflict resolution, and shared ownership. This work requires sustained strategic alignment, with the Project Oversight Group taking a facilitative, learning-oriented, and equity-centred role in embedding long-term integration across policies, practices, and organisational culture.