

Holding up the Mirror

Addressing cultural diversity
 in London's museums



A report by Helen Denniston Associates
 for London Museums Agency
 October 2003

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LONDON MUSEUMS AGENCY

London Museums Agency, the strategic development body for London's museum sector, is core funded by Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. A new strategic agency covering museums, archives and libraries in London will be in place by March 2004.

re:source

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The concurrent *Reflections* report, summarised in Appendix 3, was produced for London Museums Agency by Val Bott MA FMA.

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LONDON MUSEUMS AGENCY

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Holding up the Mirror

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Foreword

What do we expect from London's museums and galleries in the 21st century? What role are they undertaking in our culturally and socially diverse city? Do museums need to redefine themselves so that they can engage new audiences, stimulate creativity and play a central part in the life of our city and its myriad communities? These are fundamental questions that we hope this report will begin to address.

Museums 'enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning, and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society'.¹ Traditionally they have played the roles of collectors of material culture and preservers of our heritage. All too often this approach has been mono-cultural and defined by the white establishment.

But London, and indeed Britain, is now home to a genuinely diverse society. Are we seeing that diversity reflected in our museums and in the collections that tell all our stories? At London Museums Agency we are concerned that many museums are not doing this and we are committed to bringing about the change that will ensure they do so.

London Museums Agency commissioned this report because we believe it is time for museums to engage anew with their current and potential audiences. Over a quarter of London's population are black and minority ethnic. Indeed in Brent and Newham the term minority ethnic is meaningless – the minority is now the majority.

We passionately believe that museums have to refocus their activities to address the diverse city that is London. Much of this report highlights areas where museums are getting it right, but it also shows where change is needed. If museums do not address this new agenda they will cease to have relevance to a large number of Londoners. We do not wish to see that happen and will support and enable museums to make the necessary changes. *Holding up the Mirror* marks the beginning of this cultural shift. It is a fantastic opportunity for museums to take their place at the heart of their communities.

Fiona Talbott
Director
London Museums Agency

1. As defined by the Museums Association, the sector's professional body.

Executive summary



HOLDING UP THE MIRROR

London Museums Agency is committed to working with the sector to ensure that the capital's museums and galleries embrace cultural diversity and place it at the heart of their core values and services

In April 2003, London Museums Agency commissioned Helen Denniston Associates to investigate how London's museum sector is responding to the needs of their diverse communities, looking particularly at issues of ethnicity and racism.

The consultancy sent questionnaires to the Agency's 174 member museums. Despite extensive chasing, the response rate was a disappointing 30%, which may in itself signify that many museums do not consider cultural diversity to be important. The consultancy also held a focus group involving practitioners from ten museums, and nine one-to-one interviews with representatives of museums across the capital. This report's recommendations were also informed by the views of the project's Steering Group.

This work has highlighted key issues that must be addressed if the sector is to meet the needs of the world's most diverse city.

Whilst some of London's museums have pioneered excellent work on cultural diversity, London's diverse communities are still getting a raw deal from the sector as a whole. London's museums should work together to address the issues and take on the best practice already in development in some of the capital's museums.

The recommendations in this report should be taken up by museums across the region and by London Museum Agency's successor regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, which will be in place by March 2004.

KEY ISSUES FOR LONDON'S MUSEUM SECTOR

Moving diversity up the agenda

The first step is for individual museums to recognise that cultural diversity is a key strategic issue. It is essential that museums not only meet their obligations under the law, but also move quickly to address the needs of London's diverse communities. In moving diversity up the agenda we must consider the following points:

- There is an uneven level of awareness of the relevance and significance of diversity. This is coupled with an uncertainty about how to take diversity issues forward in service development.
- Even where familiarity with the notions, language and importance of cultural diversity exists, many of London's museums are still failing to translate this knowledge into good practice, despite there being some glowing exceptions that prove the rule.
- Some museums do not see cultural diversity work as relevant to them. Others do not recognise that there are barriers they need to address.
- Almost half of respondents to the survey said that they had not involved themselves in community initiatives.
- On the plus side, a fair proportion of London's museums have recognised the need to engage with communities and are now responding to their interests and aspirations.

Engaging with communities

Community engagement is an important tool in the development of an effective diversity strategy.

- Many of the successful cultural diversity initiatives have involved consulting with local communities, challenging traditional views of the museum and developing projects that have actively engaged new and diverse audiences.
- Many museums have developed successful partnerships and have found that working together with other cultural and community organisations has given their museums access to a wider pool of resources and expertise.
- Many museums value the establishment of ‘peer’ forums (e.g. Cultural Diversity Network) for sharing, discussing and disseminating good practice. However, there is a widespread demand for more advice, training and funding opportunities to help museums develop their community work.

Changing internal cultures

The research indicates that staffing and governance across the sector falls far short of reflecting the diverse communities that London’s museums serve. Action points that tackle this include:

- Improving black and minority ethnic communities representation at all levels in museums and galleries – from governing bodies through to employed staff and volunteers. Although 27% of Londoners are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, this is not reflected in the staffing and governance of museums in the region. In the museums and galleries that responded to our survey, 97% of all staff were white European; 2% were from black and minority ethnic communities; and 1% of trustees were drawn from black and minority ethnic communities. Furthermore, most of the black and minority ethnic staff in our sample were employed in front of house or administrative positions and only 2% of the volunteers in museums that responded to our survey were black or Asian.
- Engagement should be extended to include black and minority ethnic people in governing bodies and senior management.
- Diversity projects are generally led by staff in junior positions in an organisation. This work needs to be managed from the ‘top’ to ensure a sustainable and committed response.

Mainstreaming diversity

Engaging with culturally diverse audiences underpins everything that museums do. Diversity should be mainstreamed and enshrined in the core values and activities of all museums, and integrated into policy making, planning and budgeting.

- Cultural diversity work in London’s museums has primarily involved education events, exhibitions and outreach projects. These initiatives, often supported by trusts, foundations and local government, have helped attract and engage diverse communities.
- Equalities practice must influence all activities within the museum, ranging from front of house procedures to collecting policies and interpretation.
- More should be done to improve acquisition, interpretation and permanent exhibitions that are relevant and attractive to London’s communities.

- Sustaining cultural diversity work requires both imagination and a commitment to progress from celebratory, project-based work to managing diversity as a core activity.

Reflecting diversity in collections and interpretation

The *Mirror* report has benefited from the findings of a parallel piece of work, *Reflections: Mapping cultural diversity in London's local authority museum collections*, undertaken by consultant Val Bott for London Museums Agency during March and April 2003. (See Appendix 3 for a summary of the *Reflections* report). The *Reflections* project looked at collecting practice and the use of collections in 28 publicly funded museum services serving culturally diverse communities. It highlighted the following issues:

- Collections' documentation and variable and incomplete records and catalogues/finding aids are a significant problem in many of London's museums. A lack of knowledge by curators of their own collections is a major barrier to taking forward diversity work.
- Collections, exhibitions and activities often fail to reflect the diverse backgrounds and cultures of the communities London's museums now serve.
- Virtually all of the museums responding to the *Reflections* survey assumed that only those collections that specifically reflect the minority ethnic communities themselves would be relevant to them. However, there is also great potential for the use of established local history collections, for example, to address continuity and change within localities and explore issues around sense of place and community identity. Over a third of all the local authority museums failed to record contextual information about collections, for example the ethnicity of an object's donor, which might be used to make connections between them and minority ethnic communities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the strategic development agency for the capital's museum sector, London Museums Agency has a key role to play in working to ensure that cultural diversity is taken seriously across the capital's museum sector and mainstreamed into regional and individual museum strategies.

Moving diversity up the agenda

London Museums Agency, and/or its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Have cultural diversity as part of both its corporate vision and its memorandum of association.
- Consider the creation of a new diversity post to offer information and support to museums seeking to improve their practice. The post would generate new professional development programmes, seminar days and training. The training should include specific courses addressing equalities policies, access to collections and interpretation. There is also a need for strategic and managerial courses related to ethnic monitoring and data capture, and diversification of the museum workforce. The new post could also help to maintain information on available project funding for museums in London.

- Hold an annual conference on diversity issues to stimulate the sharing of ideas and good practice. Areas for debate and exploration could cover such themes as community consultation; collecting with communities; practice and sustainability; diversifying the workforce and revealing hidden histories.
- Collaborate with Resource and London's Museums, Archives and Libraries' Cultural Diversity Network, the London Hub and the Greater London Authority to provide a joint publication promoting models of good practice, including those in this report.

Engaging with communities

London Museums Agency, and/or its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Establish a group of community representatives/individuals who can advise the agency on cultural diversity issues.
- Consider commissioning further research into users and non-users of museums and galleries in black and minority ethnic groups to ascertain what they want from museums in the capital.
- Explore options for a peer support system either through mentoring or learning groups to enable practitioners to learn from each other's experience and broker new partnerships. The agency could also broker and support partnerships between museum workers and people outside the sector who know about black and minority ethnic history and culture.
- Consider working with the Museums Association to jointly fund a number of traineeships or bursaries under their Diversify project.
- Work with the Museums Association and the Greater London Authority to explore the possibilities of a Museums Careers Fair, targeting a wide range of school and college students from black, and minority ethnic communities, to promote volunteering, work placements and new career choices. Early discussions should take place with the Cultural Diversity Network, the Black and Asian History Association and a media partner, such as Channel 4 or BBC London.
- Provide a database of good practice case studies, consultants and training organisations to help museums with ethnic and other access monitoring and evaluation strategies.
- Work with Resource to ensure effective implementation of the Diversity Toolkit among London museums

Changing internal cultures

London Museums Agency, and its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Have an explicit target for black and minority ethnic representation on its board and senior management. A target could be 30% for the board and 20% for senior management.
- Develop a modular training course in all aspects of equal opportunities for the full range of constituencies in London's museums. The programme should focus on senior managers and museum trustees.

- Provide Equality Standards modelled on those currently used by the Sports Council, to enable museums to develop a vision for improvement and institutional change.

Mainstreaming diversity

London Museums Agency, and its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Work with Resource to integrate equality standards within the proposed new Registration Standard. These should appear in sections on governance, audience, collection management, education and outreach.
- Set up a grants programme specifically for activities that will mainstream cultural diversity initiatives and stimulate new approaches within museums. It is recommended that criteria for any funding be harmonised with those funding guidelines of the Arts Council and the Association of London Government, as a way of reinforcing high standards in equalities monitoring and delivery.
- Lobby for sustained funding programmes (2–3 year duration) that would encourage museums to undertake longer-term projects and partnerships.

Reflecting diversity in collections and interpretation

London Museums Agency, and its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Work with London's museum sector to develop new collecting strategies to ensure that museum collections develop in a way that reflects the capital's diverse communities, and their historic and contemporary contribution to London's cultural life.
- Support a co-ordinated approach to collecting, where museums work closely together to identify possible acquisitions and share such acquisitions.
- Develop creative ways of using existing collections to explore issues around local change, sense of place and community identity.

Holding up the Mirror



SETTING THE SCENE

What we mean by cultural diversity

The term 'cultural diversity' has been used as shorthand for difference – in terms of race, gender, economic status, sexuality or physical abilities. The main focus of *Holding up the Mirror* is on ethnicity.

THE BRIEF FOR THIS PROJECT

Helen Denniston Associates were engaged in April 2003 to conduct research and consultations to show how London museums were addressing diversity across governance, collections policies, outreach, education, marketing and staff development.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 extended the Race Relations Act 1976 by prohibiting discrimination in all functions of public authorities. London Museums Agency and many of its members are also aware of the conclusions and recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report by Sir William McPherson¹, quoted below:

“Racism” in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form. (6.4)

“Institutional Racism” consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (6.34)

The research was intended to:

- Identify and summarise examples of good practice in tackling racism and diversity issues amongst London's museums.
- Identify barriers – policies, practices, staff attitudes, prejudice, and ignorance.
- Recommend where improvements and/or new approaches are needed.
- Examine the role of London Museums Agency and point to ways in which it can support museums in addressing diversity, appraising the roles of:
 - grant aid,
 - training programmes,
 - London Museums Agency programmes.

The Steering Group

A Steering Group, chaired by Professor Lola Young, Head of Culture at the Greater London Authority, was established to support the consultancy. Members were selected for their expertise and positions within professional museum and academic organisations, and their personal experience of curatorship, museum management and commitment to equalities development.

The Steering Group, which met four times during the consultancy period, comprised:

- Chair: Professor Lola Young OBE, Head of Culture, Greater London Authority
- Hakim Adi, Senior Lecturer, Middlesex University and Chair of Black & Asian Studies Association
- Maurice Davies, Deputy Director, Museums Association
- Naseem Khan OBE, formerly Head of Diversity at the Arts Council, writer, researcher and policy adviser
- Caroline Lang, Senior Adviser, Access and Audience Development, Resource
- Professor Jack Lohman, Director, Museum of London
- Sally MacDonald, Manager, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology
- Laura Williams, Hackney Museum Service

Three members of London Museums Agency staff also sat on the Steering Group: Fiona Talbott, Director, and Nick Lane and Caroline Reed, Development Managers. Maggie Warburton, London Museums Agency's Information and Research Manager, provided editorial advice during the production of the final report.

THE LONDON CONTEXT

The contextual information provided in this section has been compiled from a wide range of sources.²

Our city

London is the largest city in Western Europe and one of the world's most culturally diverse cities. Nearly half of Britain's black, Asian and minority ethnic communities live in London. The capital is also home to large numbers of people who originate from other countries including Irish, Turkish, Greek and Cypriot communities, as well as Jewish people from Eastern Europe. Recently refugees and asylum seekers have come from countries like Somalia, Rwanda, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

The 2001 Census indicated that:

- 27% of Londoners are black or minority ethnic and this is expected to rise to 31% by 2011.
- The Indian community is the largest minority group in the Greater London area, representing 6.1% of the population.
- The Black African community is next largest, at 5.3%, followed by the Black Caribbean community, which makes up 4.8% of London's population.
- In the Inner London area, 65.7% of the population is white and the largest minority groups are Black African (8.3%), Black Caribbean (6.9%) and Bangladeshi (4.6%).
- 74.6% of the population in the Outer London boroughs is white and the largest minority groups are Indian (8%), Black Caribbean (3.5%) and Black African (3.4%).
- The city's diversity is complex and ever changing. In two London boroughs the minority ethnic community is now the majority. In Newham the black and minority ethnic population makes up 60.6% and in Brent the figure is 54.7%.
- Over 300 languages are spoken in London and 20% of all pupils in secondary schools speak English as a second language.

Our museum sector

London has over 250 museums and galleries, including world famous national museums and galleries, local authority services, museums owned by university, military and other specialist interest organisations, and a wide range of independent museums, many with charitable status.

- The **national museums** are funded directly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in recognition of their national remit. They have an international profile and dominate the sector in terms of size of collections, resources and visitor numbers. London has 24 DCMS funded museums and galleries, many of which are major tourist attractions to domestic and overseas visitors.
- But it is not just the national museums that hold exceptional collections. Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries runs a **Designation** scheme to recognise outstanding collections in non-national Registered museums. Over 20% of the country's designated collections are in London. This includes, for example, the Horniman Museum's fascinating range of musical instruments and ethnographic material, and the Jewish Museum's collections of Jewish ceremonial art and artefacts.
- **Local authority museum services** are also provided by 26 London boroughs, covering 46 venues, and are generally small to medium scale. They provide local museum provision, tending to concentrate on the interpretation of local and social history collections. London's local authority museums often have excellent links with, and services for, local community groups and schools. Services like Croydon, Hackney and Brent have pioneered work in audience diversification.
- **The independent sector** is a broad mix of small, medium sized and larger museums. The majority are small and many hold nationally significant collections. Central London has a concentration of specialist collections partly reflecting the presence of professional organisations such as the Royal Colleges, historic houses and museums relating to famous individuals. Examples include the Museums of the Royal College of Surgeons and Dr Johnson's House. There are also a number of Ministry of Defence, regimental and company museums. Some of the larger independents compete in visitor numbers and profile with the nationals – for example, London's Transport Museum. At the other end of the scale, many of the smaller organisations were set up to preserve some specific aspect of London's heritage and are often run by or heavily dependent on volunteers – for example, Kew Bridge Steam Museum.
- Many of the capital's **university museums** house specialist collections with an academic slant. Important examples include the Brooking Architectural collection at the University of Greenwich, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art and University College London's Petrie Museum of Egyptology.
- London also has a number of **historic houses and properties** including those owned by English Heritage and the National Trust, for example, English Heritage's Kenwood House and its art collections. Sutton House, a National Trust property, reflects the changing condition of Hackney from the 16th century to the present day.

Local and community museums have a particular role to play in reflecting the history of their area and the diversity of the communities they serve. This research exercise confirmed the fact that

despite financial and resource constraints, these small institutions have been at the vanguard of responding to agendas of diversity and social responsibility.

THE CASES FOR CHANGE

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Resource, and the Museums Association recognise the urgency for museums to develop access policies and to embrace the changing cultural landscape of their communities. If museums are to truly represent the best cultural developments, and to maintain relevance to the widest possible range of Londoners, it is worth emphasising four reasons why the responsibility for promoting cultural diversity inclusion should be taken seriously.

The business case

We know that the potential audience for London museums is changing. In terms of ethnic demographics, there are few London boroughs that will not soon be enriched by a new balance of diverse communities. The business world is already responding to these changes.

A recent report, *The Business of Diversity*, surveyed 140 leading organisations in the private and public sector. More than 80% said that there was a direct link between diversity performance and business performance.

‘Attracting the brightest and best of people from all backgrounds, bringing a richness of experience and knowledge to the workplace, and improving our understanding of our increasingly diverse customer base simply makes good business sense.’

Matt Barret, Barclays Group Chief Executive, is echoing the views of hundreds of organisations. (The Business of Diversity – Schneider Ross 2002).

Considering the ‘customer base’ of London’s museums might represent a new approach to curatorship. Today’s curator is not simply custodian of precious objects, but must also take responsibility for interpreting their meaning to a changing range of audiences who, in turn, may influence new interpretation.

The audience for the museum can no longer be assumed to be mono-cultural and unchanging. In the commercial world, it is recognised that unless manufacturers, entrepreneurs and commerce reflect this changing demography, they risk losing customers, and ‘product loyalty’. Multinational corporations, government, civil service and local authorities now recognise the business case in promoting diversity.

The legal case

There is a statutory duty for public authorities to promote race equality. This is the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which extends the Race Relations Act of 1976 by prohibiting discrimination in all functions of public authorities. It came into force on Monday 2 April 2001. Museums whose management structures are within local authorities or universities, will already be aware of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Where museums receive funds from public authorities, they are obliged to comply with this Act.

The law is a response to the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report by Sir William McPherson, prepared after the tragic death of Stephen Lawrence. The statement on

Institutional Racism (provided at the start of this section) is a reminder of the invisible barriers sustained within organisations that contribute to long-term social and cultural exclusion.

The ethical case

Professional curatorship is based on high ethical standards in relation to the custodianship and care of collections, diligence and truthful interpretation. The museum profession is familiar with codes of ethics determining behaviour and professional standards of work. Equality of opportunity is a goal and a process, founded on a precept of good moral and ethical standards. Equal Opportunities affirms equality and fairness to all individuals, regardless of their skin colour or their cultural, economic, social or gender background. The curatorial professional ethic must embrace equality of opportunity and this should be apparent in governance, employment, service delivery, interaction with users, outreach, interpretation and all of the services that distinguish a museum as a valued cultural resource.

The intellectual case

Allied to the ethical case for high standards of curatorship is the case for intellectual rigour. Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. Telling the story of the object is one way of achieving this. As curators, we need to develop an intellectually rigorous approach to the selection of objects for collections, the recording of all contextual information and the interpretation of that information to provide the interface between object and visitor.

Too often museums are seen as culturally neutral, as providing the 'true', objective version of history. We need to be aware that we bring our own prejudices and judgments to the ways in which we interpret and present objects and the stories they tell. Cultural heritage is not static, but dynamic; history informs the contemporary as new cultural forms, expressions and artefacts are created. Contemporary and retrospective collecting and the recording of associated information needs to be as representative of our diverse communities to provide future generations with the materials they will need to interpret the past.

The collecting and recording of objects needs to be as intellectually rigorous as possible. People interpret things in different ways in different times depending on their cultural roots, ideologies and historic perspectives. The historic, cultural reality of London has been created by economic and political forces of empire and imperial 'achievement', often laden with racist overtones. However difficult and unpalatable this reality might be, the duty of heritage professionals is to sustain intellectual rigour in presenting cultural heritage in its correct context, and to help visitors of all generations, to learn from the past and to go forward positively with a shared future.

HOLDING UP THE MIRROR

The *Holding up the Mirror* project aims to reflect internal and external practice around equal opportunities in the London museum sector. The term 'reflection' is derived from the Latin term 'reflectere', meaning 'to bend back'. A mirror does this – bending back the light, making visible what is apparent to others but a mystery to the subject, showing what their faces or exteriors look like.

The process

The consultancy followed a conventional pattern of consultation, using questionnaires, facilitated focus group discussion, individual interviews, desk research and consultation with the project Steering Group, which met on four occasions during the consultancy.

A total of 174 questionnaires were mailed to London Museums Agency members. Despite extensive chasing, the response rate was a disappointing 30%, which may in itself signify that many museums do not consider cultural diversity to be important. The eight-page questionnaire sought information on every aspect of the museum operation, from policy development, staffing, marketing, education, and outreach to policies on collection, conservation and interpretation. Museums were also asked to submit their equal opportunity policies, development plans and marketing survey reports, demonstrating how they are attempting to respond to local demographics.

Questionnaire 'fatigue' is a fact of life in today's cultural sector. The ultimate responses were invaluable, but the exercise demonstrated many of the challenges for the smaller museums, (remembering that 43% of museums in London have just 1 or 2 paid members of staff). In larger institutions, the person responsible for the questionnaire sometimes had to consult with several departments to acquire answers on policies, audiences, staff profile and programmes.

The research team also assembled case studies and publications relating to cultural diversity and social inclusion in museums and galleries in London, the UK and overseas. These demonstrate that diversifying museum institutions and exploring new concepts of curatorial practice is an ongoing process, particularly in Australia and Canada. There are excellent examples of good practice in the UK and some of our individual interviews have revealed successful models, as well as heartfelt descriptions of the challenges of pursuing new outreach and diversity strategies.

Through focus group discussion, and individual museum interviews, the consultancy team gained a sense of activity on the ground, and the specific challenges facing museums, some of which rely heavily on volunteers. Some specialist museums – for example, medical, company or 'personality' museums – may not have had traditional associations with cultural diversity strategies, and community and outreach partnership projects.

An added benefit of the consultation process was that it enabled museum staff to network with each other and hear about successful strategies in community inclusion, marketing and partnerships.

The findings

How do museums reflect the diversity of the communities they serve? Analysis of the questionnaires, focus group work and one-to-one interviews highlighted a number of issues that museums hold in common or need to address as part of their approach to diversity work. (A summary of the consultancy research responses has been provided in Appendix 1. The museums that participated in this survey are listed in Appendix 2.)

Organisational change

- There is a need for internal cultural change with better embedding of equalities values higher up the organisation.

- The majority of the respondents (60%) did not include references to black and minority ethnic communities in their organisational vision. Does this mean that these communities are not visible or seen as irrelevant to the institutions?
- There was a clear consensus amongst respondents that they are not attracting black and minority ethnic communities and that this is an issue that needs rectifying.
- More sustainable diversity based work is needed.
- Although 49% of audiences are local, minority ethnic people in the local community often appear not to have been reflected in these audience figures. Although frequently unthinking and unintentional, this exclusion of black and minority ethnic people is prejudicial to the very audiences museums should be serving.

Partnership support

- There is an urgent need for information, advice, and peer networks to support museums with putting aspirations into practice.
- One area of success with black and minority ethnic audiences is around subject specific exhibitions.
- 84% of the respondents said that they have the capacity to run temporary exhibition programmes. Working with community groups within special projects can help to develop new approaches to diversity in museums.
- There is a lot of scope for more intellectually challenging work, led by museums that have already pioneered good work in engaging with diverse communities.

Curatorial rigour

- Curators need more space and opportunity to consider how to mainstream cultural diversity into the core values and activities of museums. This may mean more guidance at an academic level and better dialogue with historians specialising in black history.
- Experimental interpretative work is vulnerable because it is often seen as marginal to core activity. Yet this is the very work that can build creative relationships with black and minority ethnic audiences.
- Black History Month provides a useful focus for diversity projects but in itself does not encourage or provide enough creative opportunities for museum curators and educators to extend this work into the rest of the year. Practitioners have demonstrated a willingness to participate in high profile events but the lead-time for such initiatives is often too short for their museums to respond as they would like to.

1. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Report of an Inquiry by Sir William McPherson of Cluny, February 1999.

2. Sources: *London: Cultural Capital*, The Mayor's Draft Cultural Strategy 2003, GLA; *Equalities Framework*, GLA, 2002; *2001 Census*, Office for National Statistics, February 2002; *Culture & the City – Ten Ways to make a difference*, Cultural Strategy Partnership for London; *Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000*, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions; British Tourist Authority; Greater London Authority; Learning and Skills Development Agency; London Museums Agency.

Challenges and opportunities for the 21st century museum



INTRODUCTION

[Museums should] recognise the diversity and complexity of society and uphold the principle of equal opportunities for all.

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

London's 21st century museums need to develop a common language and 'modus operandi' that is relevant to the pluralistic demands of a global, multi-cultural city.

Diversity is a value, or ethic, and a vision of effective performance and management. Earlier in this report, we described the four imperatives of diversity and equalities: the business case, the legal case, the ethical case and the intellectual case. Cultural diversity practice should be seamlessly integrated into the core values, management, staffing, activities and resource plans of all museums.

This chapter presents a range of ideas, creative management solutions and comments from professionals who are working hard to fulfil a vision of the 21st century museum.

We recognise that museums will be familiar with many of the suggested strategies in this chapter; however, the *Holding up the Mirror* consultations revealed a gap between intention and reality in equalities approaches amongst museums. This collection of case studies is intended to assist professionals who are lacking in confidence or unaware of practical options.

CHANGING THE MUSEUM CULTURE

'... a serious, sustainable response by museums to the challenges of social exclusion must be a cultural one arising from the heart of their values and purpose, rather than an additional, project-based approach which can only address symptoms. It seems illogical that a response to social marginalisation which is itself marginal to the service promoting it can have a serious or sustainable impact on the problems it has identified.'¹

The policy commitment

The mission statement of the museum should address the commitment and responsibility of reflecting cultural heritages and shared futures of the community. It should underpin strategies and work plans against which progress can be measured.

Trustees, managers, curators and all museum staff should take responsibility for driving equal opportunity policies and practice through their institution. In common with much of the public sector, museum staff need a sound knowledge of equalities and access legislation relating to gender, race, and disability. Cultural Awareness training, (recommended by Resource) is an essential starting point to begin the reflective learning process, which can lead to change.

MISSION STATEMENTS

Enfield Museum Service, London

Enfield Museum Service aims to reflect the history and cultural diversity of Enfield through advancing an understanding of our collective past and shared future and by providing a forum for local people to participate in the development of the service.

Ragged School Museum, London

Key aims of the museum:

- ▶ **Combating social exclusion**
- ▶ **Providing equality of opportunity for all**
- ▶ **Promoting education as a life-long leisure experience**
- ▶ **Empowering individual development of self-esteem, skills and knowledge**
- ▶ **Encouraging a sense of community whilst celebrating diversity**
- ▶ **Providing accessibility for arts and cultural activities**
- ▶ **Encouraging active participation**

Wandsworth Museum and Local History Service

The Wandsworth Museum and Local History Service aims to:

- ▶ **Provide a Museum and Local History Service which preserves and presents the history and cultural diversity of the borough for the benefit and enjoyment of local people to foster a sense of belonging and to improve their quality of life.**
- ▶ **Collect, conserve, record and interpret material evidence and other records of all communities in the borough.**
- ▶ **Create projects which encourage the use of the museum by groups who may be at risk of social exclusion, such as people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities and encourage people of all ages to explore the history of their own local area and their family backgrounds.**

The museum workforce

One of the ways a museum (or other institution) can signal its appreciation of diverse cultural backgrounds is to actively promote staff and volunteer involvement from black and minority ethnic communities. 27% of Londoners are black or minority ethnic². However, less than 4% of the workforce in London's museums is from black and minority ethnic communities, with an even lower percentage represented within the staff of London's major cultural institutions.

Direct engagement with under-represented communities will open up contacts. Education, outreach and piloting targeted volunteer programmes should also attract new personnel.

Complementary exhibition projects will reinforce a message of cultural inclusion and welcome.

Museums have a great tradition of involving volunteers. A recent report³ by the Institute for Volunteering Research concluded that there is plenty of scope for increasing volunteer numbers in the cultural sector. Volunteers bring in expertise and different experiences, which can connect the museum to the wider community. As such a valuable resource volunteers need to be found, utilised and nurtured, through good marketing, training and management.

Under-represented volunteer groups in museums include people under 55, men and minority ethnic communities. Attracting volunteers from these groups requires proactive marketing, imagination, and perseverance.

- 2% of volunteers in London museums that responded to our survey are black or Asian.
- In Greater London 3% of volunteers in museums, libraries and archives are black or Asian⁴.

The problem of volunteers coming from a narrow band of society is common across the charitable and voluntary sector, as well as museums and heritage. It is important to remember the factor of motivation in volunteering, and to ask oneself – would this institution attract me, if I were under 30 and from a minority ethnic community? What sort of reward would I expect for my time and commitment?

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM NORTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

This nationally recognised and well-funded volunteer programme aimed to recruit a diverse, non-traditional range of volunteers. It offers volunteers skills training, work experience and an NVQ accreditation in cultural heritage. The museum produced an accessible information pack and made links with local voluntary and community groups, including many traditionally under-represented groups.

However, progress was initially disappointing and there were many barriers to overcome. For example, many minority ethnic agencies were initially put off by the words ‘imperial’ and ‘war’. It also proved difficult to involve some groups (e.g. an Asian girls groups) as they could only attend the museum on certain days, needed to visit the museum as a group, and needed permission from their parents to volunteer.

The museum is continuing to mail out to minority ethnic communities and is experimenting with new initiatives such as inviting minority ethnic communities to organisational taster days. They also encourage existing volunteers from minority ethnic communities to spread the word and distribute specifically developed publicity materials in their own communities.

www.iwmnorth.org.uk

RACE RELATIONS ACT AND POSITIVE ACTION

The Race Relations Act 1976 permits employers, training bodies, employers’ associations and trade unions to set up positive action training schemes to help people from minority ethnic communities develop the skills needed to apply for posts where they are under-represented. Employers are also permitted to encourage applications from under-represented racial or ethnic groups.

The Museums Association Diversify Project aims to increase the accessibility of careers to people from minority ethnic communities. This is being realised by positive action training programmes that help people from minority ethnic backgrounds compete on an equal basis for jobs. The Museums Association works directly with heritage institutions, universities and schools developing traineeships, bursaries and work experience programmes. A long-term target of the Diversify project is that by 2006 the proportion of minority ethnic employees in entry level to museum work should equal the proportion in the UK population as a whole.

For further information see www.museumsassociation.org

THE CURATOR OF THE FUTURE

[Museums] hold collections in trust on behalf of society.

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

Museum collections preserve our diverse cultural heritages. This has been an essential goal since museums were first established in this country. What has changed is the ‘visibility’ of diverse heritages, and the communities from which they sprang. The achievements of many communities in London of Asian, African, Mediterranean descent, are physically represented, or ‘showcased’, but objects may be disconnected from the context of contemporary communities and heritages.

Museums safeguard tangible and intangible evidence for future generations. Managing collections that reflect the needs of a diverse community requires a shift in the traditional role of the curator.

Active Leadership

Alongside the curator, other museum staff – such as educators and outreach workers – have a valuable contribution to make to the processes and practices of collecting and documenting our heritage.

The curator can also be a social anthropologist. As anthropologist, the curator has a keen understanding of culture and cultural change and intentionally collects representative samples of material. He or she will consult with communities and individuals whilst making professional judgements about what to collect. In this capacity curators might work with other anthropologists or specialists to develop collections (e.g. musicologists or folklore specialists).

The curator is a facilitator between people and objects. An object’s story has meaning and relevance to a wide range of users. Museums should work with a range of partners including community groups, artists and school children to help document and record stories about their objects.

PEPPERPOT CLUB PROJECT – COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE

This initiative involved the Commonwealth Institute, The Pepperpot Club (a gathering place for Caribbean elders) and Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group in a pilot project for Engage’s *Get It Together* programme (www.engage.org). The Commonwealth Institute’s collection was used as a springboard for discussion and reminiscence. Pepperpot Club members engaged with Caribbean and West African artefacts, talked about things they recognised and told personal stories about their childhood and emigration. Project outcomes were:

- ▶ empowering participants by giving them a voice to be valued
 - ▶ helping the Commonwealth Institute to document elements of their collection through participants’ contributions
 - ▶ recording responses to supplement traditional curatorial information about the collection
 - ▶ opening up the Institute’s resources to a broader audience
 - ▶ adding to Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group’s oral archives
-

THE MUSEUM AND COMMUNITIES

[Museums should] recognise the interests of people who made, used, owned, collected or gave items in the collections

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

Museums should strive to research and connect with the communities they serve. By developing a culture of listening and consultation, and involving people in decisions they will become more inclusive and relevant. The relationships between the museum and community partners must be managed and sustained for the long term.

Communities also benefit from a museum's active interest in their story. According to Museums Australia, cultural diversity can:

- increase pride in a community's culture and heritage through access to artefacts and documents
- increase access to training and skills to research and document family and community history
- develop a sense that the museum is for them and that they have access to all of its activities
- maintain children's knowledge and appreciation of their own cultural identity
- maintain knowledge of traditions brought from immigrant cultures
- attract tourists and increase regional economic opportunities by creating experiences and products that uniquely reflect the diversity of the region
- increase the available funding sources for which communities are eligible⁵

Consultation with community and cross-sectoral partners can test the viability of the museum vision, and help to promote the museum as a cultural and education resource and catalyst.

Museums should manage policies that investigate the provenance of all items in their collections, engage with relevant communities, recommend restitution where appropriate and advise all museum staff on the sacred nature of any artefacts. In exhibitions, the provenance of items from abroad should be clearly stated.

Museums can greatly benefit by developing long-term relationships and collaborations with communities, community groups and other museums and cultural organisations in Britain and abroad.

London Museums Agency, Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, and other strategic bodies have a role to play in disseminating good practice, assisting museums in developing creative partnerships and brokering relationships between organisations.

GRANGE MUSEUM

'For the Grange Museum the question is no longer, how can we work with black and minority ethnic groups and individuals? It is more, how can we ensure that the work we do with these groups is mutually beneficial and of strategic importance? In other words, the emphasis is on building long term partnerships which can provide long term benefit and make the Grange Museum and its collections continue to become more relevant to the wide variety of communities which it serves.'

Alex Sydney, Head of Museum, Archive and Arts, London Borough of Brent.

‘PLATFORM’ – HACKNEY MUSEUM

Hackney Museum has developed a space called Platform to showcase different points of view from its community. Visitors are asked to fill in postcards (or respond by email to a request on the museum’s website) to make suggestions about subjects, groups or individuals they would like to see featured in the museum.

The Platform area is designed to take small, modular displays consisting of graphics, objects and sound recordings, which the museum can produce relatively quickly and cheaply. The displays stay up for a maximum of eight weeks so that they feel fresh and new suggestions can be responded to quickly.

Platform displays have included the experiences of black foster carers, the gay and lesbian Mardi Gras festival on Hackney Marshes, the thoughts of 14–19 year olds on regeneration in Clapton and the history of the German Hospital in Dalston. All these displays were developed in partnership with members of the local community.

‘These displays are very labour intensive to produce but they are invaluable for the community links they establish and cement and for the atmosphere that they generate within the gallery.’ Fiona Davison, former Head of Hackney Museums Service.

www.hackney.gov.uk/hackneymuseum

‘LEAVING THE CROCODILE’ – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Leaving the Crocodile was a project developed to empower East Timorese people living in Liverpool (a western suburb of Sydney) to tell their own stories and talk about their role in the struggle for East Timor’s freedom.

Sydney’s Liverpool Regional Museum worked with the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney, the Migration Heritage Centre and the East Timorese community in Sydney. The project included weekly art workshops for East Timorese youth and a community history project. Leaving the Crocodile culminated in an exhibition at the museum, which documented the project and had an associated public programme including:

- ▶ a community festival with music, food and dance
- ▶ a symposium where Australian soldiers and East Timorese families shared experiences from East Timor
- ▶ low fee art workshops where participants painted stories about their ancestors on long wooden poles – in keeping with the East Timorese ‘Lulik’ tradition

www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/museum/

THE POWER OF INTERPRETATION

In presenting collections and messages to the public, museums need to consider:

- **The power of the curator in interpreting objects and messages.** Museums manage how the public views objects. The text on object labels and photographs and commentary on

graphic panels are powerful devices. They can exclude or engage people. The curator decides whose stories to tell and to whom.

- **A multi versus a mono-cultural viewpoint.** Our cultural heritage belongs to everyone. Museums need to recognise their privileged position in managing culture. Along with this power come responsibilities – listening, consulting and acting with the wider community, working with partners, telling stories from different viewpoints alongside telling stories that have not been traditionally presented.

Museums should work with individuals and communities, such as artists, storytellers and school groups, to interpret collections and messages. From this process, new ideas, interpreters, animators and communicators and audiences will emerge. The new ideas will include fresh ways to look at and understand objects and messages as well as challenging preconceptions about what a museum is and stands for.

‘MINING THE MUSEUM’ – AN INSTALLATION BY FRED WILSON

In 1991 New York artist Fred Wilson was given unlimited access to the Maryland Historical Society’s collection. He used what he found (or didn’t find) to create an installation/exhibition called *Mining the Museum*. The word mining works on a number of levels – (i) digging up something (ii) exploding myths (iii) engendering ownership – ‘making something mine’.

In the collection Wilson found three busts of people who had a great impact on Maryland – Napoleon, Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson. None of these people were from Maryland. He exhibited these next to three empty pedestals labelled Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass – three important 19th century African Americans from Maryland. There was almost nothing in the collection about them.

Wilson also exhibited paintings and renamed them. The museum had entitled the painting of a wealthy plantation picnic, *Country Life*. Wilson added his own label to the other side of this painting – *Frederick serving fruit*.

In *Metalwork 1793-1880*, Wilson exhibited silver pitchers and goblets alongside some slave shackles he found deep within an acquisition book of the Historical Society. The shackles were a poignant reminder of the workers who helped create the wealth that paid for the silver.

‘SUITCASES AND SANCTUARY’ – 19 PRINCELET STREET

The *Suitcases and Sanctuary* exhibition explores the history of the waves of immigration that shaped Spitalfields, and wider British society, through the eyes of today’s children. The museum used artists and actors to help local school children create a number of exhibits telling people’s stories of immigration.

This work included a video of Christ Church School, a predominantly Bengali school in Brick Lane, working with Jewish actress Natasha Picard to act out a story of Jewish life and anti-Semitism in 19th century Russia. The choice of school was deliberate, so that the students’ work would not come from a point of personal experience but from one of imagination and cross-cultural empathy.

These workshops enabled the children to reflect on issues of exile and immigration, gave them space to utilise their empathy, imagination and acting talents, and taught them acting skills alongside the traditions of another culture. The exhibit is a powerful medium displaying the issues behind Jewish immigration and immigration in general, as well as involving the local community. The project worked on a number of levels, by:

- ▶ showing how children from different cultural backgrounds can tell stories from other times and other cultures,
- ▶ offering a parable showing how to deal with racism and conflict,
- ▶ and showcasing the young people from the local community who helped create the exhibition.

www.19princeletstreet.co.uk

EXTENDING AUDIENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

*'Audience development is not an optional activity.'*⁶

However specialised their subjects or remote their locations, [museums] develop new audiences and deepen relationships with existing users. Museums recognise that individuals have varied backgrounds and varying physical, intellectual and cultural needs and expectations.

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to access heritage. Research must be focused on who is, who is not and who should be using museums. Museums need to understand the aspirations of under-represented groups and demonstrate a commitment to making the museum relevant to these needs.

PETRIE MUSEUM OF EGYPTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Petrie is a Designated university museum actively seeking to diversify its audiences. Following in-depth qualitative research, the museum was able to obtain support from the Heritage Lottery Fund to employ two outreach officers specifically to reach and engage new audiences.

One officer works primarily with London African and African Caribbean supplementary schools in Education Action Zones, the other with London-based Egyptian and Sudanese communities. Their role is to build links with and develop resources for these audiences, to enable them to better access the collections and services, and to change the museum through audience advocacy. Their work includes:

- ▶ consulting with communities in London to explore ways of representing Sudanese and Egyptian culture in museum displays
- ▶ ensuring that African and Egyptian centred perspectives inform the development of the museum's mainstream provision, for schools, academic and general audiences
- ▶ developing resources, both physical and on-line, to enable African, African-Caribbean and Egyptian schools and general audiences to better access the museum collections and services

- ▶ building a sustainable network of Egyptian, African and African-Caribbean volunteers
- ▶ developing closer institutional relationships with museums and heritage sites in Egypt and Sudan

www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk

DIVERSITY AND LEARNING

[Museums should] respond to the diverse requirements of different cultural groups.

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

‘Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more⁷.’

Museums have a key role to play in contributing to the cultural education of young people. They should encourage young people to participate in developing the cultural fabric of the museum alongside stimulating their interest. The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education recommended four central roles for education in the cultural development of young people:

- To enable young people to recognise, explore and understand their own cultural assumptions and values.
- To enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with the attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures.
- To encourage an historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that have shaped them.
- To enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change.

Our museums can and must deliver many of these objectives through innovative programming and inclusive ways of working. Resource’s *Inspiring Learning For All Framework* for museums, archives and libraries details a series of indicators that cultural institutions should aspire to, to develop an inclusive and accessible service that stimulates and supports learning. Further details of the *Inspiring Learning For All Framework* can be found at www.resource.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00insplearn.asp.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S FOCUS GROUP – BETHNAL GREEN MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD

When Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood re-displayed their social history collection they worked with a young people’s focus group to help inform the design process.

The museum worked with eleven local children, aged 9–11, from Bangabandhu Primary School. The six-month project began with the group visiting and evaluating the museum, visiting other local cultural institutions (e.g. Hackney Museum) and meeting and talking to museum staff and contractors. The group then commented on designs and interpretive elements of the new displays and their ideas influenced the graphic design. They also created their own labels for selected objects, which were incorporated into the final design.

www.museumofchildhood.org.uk

'INVISIBLE WOMEN' – BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Invisible women is a partnership project between Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, West Midlands Regional Museums Council and South Birmingham College.

A consultation exercise had revealed a demand amongst local women for learning related to museum collections. The museum and college developed an accredited tailor-made course, which was run for 3 days a week from September 2002 to June 2003. The women worked with educators and curators at the museum exploring and researching the way black and Asian women are represented in the museum's collections.

Participant Sue Brown commented, 'It was the first time I was able to explore the museum without just being the general public. As part of this project, we get to look at black history, at things relating to our culture. That's when things become more interesting for me.'

www.invisiblewomen.org.uk

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND PARTICIPATION

'Museums, galleries and archives have a role to play in helping to exploit the new technologies to generate social cohesion, community involvement and participation, and to aid lifelong learning. They can do this by providing content and access to ICT and encouraging their buildings to be used as neutral meeting places.'⁹

New media technologies are having a huge effect on our lives. 45% cent of London's households had access to the Internet in 2001 – higher than in any other UK region¹⁰. Government has committed, through UK Online, to ensure everyone who wants it, has access to the Internet by 2005. New technology has paved the way for new art forms to emerge ranging from digital art to 'text' poems penned on mobile phones. Museums should strive to embrace many of these new forms within their collections and interpretive media.

Developments in technology have allowed diverse audiences to interact and participate in cultural activities. The Planes, Tools and Automobiles website (www.virtualgallery.co.uk) empowers users to curate virtual exhibitions using the collections of Coventry's 20th century industrial heritage. Visitors to the site can also look at virtual galleries created by community groups in Coventry. However, it is important to realise that new media also has the power to exclude and distance people and groups.

Museums need to utilise new technologies to make their collections increasingly accessible and themselves increasingly relevant in today's media age. Developments in new technology allow users to explore collections in new and innovative ways and include viewing objects that have only been seen by a select few before.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON – ‘MOVING HERE’: AN ONLINE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Moving Here is an on-line community history initiative that provides access on the Internet to original materials from thirty museums, archives and libraries. Through a range of media including photographs, government records, sound bite interviews, videos, maps and newspapers, the site records and illustrates the migration of Irish, Jewish, South Asian and Caribbean people to England.

The project offers people the opportunity to post their own stories and experiences on the website to increase the understanding of migration to England and the impact it had on their own and other's lives. It also provides the opportunity for the community to create an online exhibition of their own records, thoughts or information about migration along with the ability to trace their roots.

Partners involved in the project include: Jewish Museum London, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Maritime Museum and Black Cultural Archives.

www.movinghere.org.uk

1. *Opening up the china cabinet: Museums, inclusion and contemporary society*, Francois Matarasso, COMEDIA, for Museums Association conference, Jersey 16 October 2000
2. *2001 Census*, Office for National Statistics, February 2002
3. *Volunteers in the Cultural Sector*, Institute for Volunteering Research, March 2002
4. Institute for Volunteering Research, 2002
5. *Museum Methods: A practical manual for managing small museums and galleries*, Museums Australia Inc, 2001
6. *Building Bridges*, J Dodd & R Sandell, 1998
7. *Inspiring Learning For All, A Framework for Museums, Archives and Libraries*, Resource, 2002 (adapted from Campaign for Learning through museums and galleries definition – www.clmg.org.uk)
8. *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*, National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, DfEE 2001
9. *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All*, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, May 2000
10. *A Digital Divide in a World City*, prepared by IECRC and Citizens Online for the GLA, London Connects and the LDA, 2002

Conclusions and recommendations



CONCLUSIONS

Senior leadership

It was common to find diversity projects being led by staff in relatively junior positions within the museum, without sufficient authority and power to ensure continuing development. There is a need for strategic, senior management training to ensure that equalities and social inclusion strategies are led from 'the top' to ensure whole institutional involvement and commitment.

Awareness

The research has identified an uneven awareness amongst museums, of how to promote cultural diversity at a strategic, recruitment and programme delivery level. Some institutions do not feel that social inclusion or cultural diversity strategies are relevant to them if they are located in an apparently non-diverse area of London. A proportion of museums cannot conceive of barriers for any communities because they assume that their museum is 'for everyone'.

Institutional awareness is therefore closely linked to an organisation's commitment to social inclusion, awareness of audience, and new audience development expressed in their Mission Statements and Development Plans.

Sustainability

The research has identified various examples of attempts to develop relationships with culturally diverse audiences, but sustainability remains a problem. The reasons include: inconsistent funding, failure of senior staff to take responsibility for diversity initiatives, staff turnover and spatial constraints within the museum, and inexperience in community consultation and partnership.

Whilst many museums undertake small temporary projects attached to Black History Month or cultural festivals, a far smaller number work on longer-term strategic projects through which new community or cross-sector partnerships could be developed.

Museums could capitalise on major festivals or London-wide cultural and tourism opportunities if there were longer lead planning times and more advance notice of special funding opportunities. There is a case for development of cultural diversity projects that span several boroughs to ensure more effective use of resources and expertise

Training needs

Museum staff are keen to access more information which helps them to realise cultural diversity and equalities policies in their practice, and to increase their own confidence in this work. Many expressed a need for more information and access to professional level expertise concerning outreach, marketing, community partnerships and fundraising.

Responses to the Questionnaire, and other consultations concerning ethnic staff and audience monitoring, suggest that museum staff are not unfamiliar with the notions of ethnic monitoring but do not possess the skills to translate the data into new strategies for action.

Peer support

During the research, museum professionals expressed concern about the lack of opportunities to share ideas and discuss successful models of practice with peers.

In the context of major re-structuring of the regional strategic agencies that support the sector, it is essential to maintain opportunities for professionals to reflect on their practice and keep informed on relevant policy or legislation, which could impact on their institution.

There is a need to broker relationships between museum staff and independent curatorial or research experts who would bring different perspectives to interpretation of collections, with a view to enhancing social inclusion and diverse audience development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

London Museums Agency, and/or its successor body, the new strategic regional agency for museums, archives and libraries, should:

- Have cultural diversity as part of its corporate vision, and as part of its memorandum of association.
- Consider the creation of a new diversity post to offer information and support to museums seeking to improve their practice. The post would generate new professional development programmes, seminar days and training. The training should include specific courses addressing equalities policies, access to collections and interpretation, as well as strategic and managerial courses related to ethnic monitoring and data capture, and in helping to diversify the museum workforce. The new post could also help to maintain information on available project funding for museums in London.
- Hold an annual conference on diversity issues to stimulate the sharing of ideas and good practice. Areas for debate and exploration could cover such themes as community consultation; collecting with communities; practice and sustainability; diversifying the workforce and revealing hidden histories.
- Collaborate with Resource and London's Museums, Archives and Libraries' Cultural Diversity Network, the London Hub and the Greater London Authority to provide a joint publication promoting models of good practice, including those in this report.
- Establish a group of community representatives/individuals who can advise the agency on cultural diversity issues.
- Consider commissioning further research into users and non-users of museums and galleries in black and minority ethnic groups to ascertain what they want from museums in the capital.
- Explore options for a peer support system either through mentoring or learning groups to enable practitioners to learn from each other's experience and broker new partnerships. The agency could also broker and support partnerships between museum workers and people outside the sector who know about black and minority ethnic history and culture.
- Consider working with the Museums Association to jointly fund a number of traineeships or bursaries under their Diversify project.

- Work with the Museums Association, the Arts Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Greater London Authority to explore the possibilities of a Cultural Sector Careers Fair, targeting a wide range of school and college students from black, and minority ethnic communities, to promote volunteering, work placements and new career choices. Early discussions should take place with the Cultural Diversity Network, the Black and Asian History Association, and a media partner, such as Channel 4 or BBC London.
- Provide a database of good practice case studies, consultants and training organisations to help museums with ethnic and other access monitoring and evaluation strategies.
- Work with Resource to ensure effective implementation of the Diversity Toolkit among London museums
- Have an explicit target for black and minority ethnic representation on its board and senior management. A target could be 30% for the board and 20% for senior management.
- Develop a modular training course in all aspects of equal opportunities for the full range of constituencies in London's museums. The programme should focus on senior managers and museum trustees.
- Provide Equality Standards modelled on those currently used by the Sports Council, to enable museums to develop a vision for improvement and institutional change.
- Work with Resource to integrate equality standards within the proposed new Registration Standard. These should appear in sections on governance, audience, collection management, education and outreach.
- Set up a grants programme specifically for activities that will mainstream cultural diversity initiatives and stimulate new approaches within museums. It is recommended that criteria for any funding be harmonised with those funding guidelines of the Arts Council and the Association of London Government, as a way of reinforcing high standards in equalities monitoring and delivery.
- Lobby for sustained funding programmes (2–3 year duration) that would encourage museums to undertake longer-term projects and partnerships.
- Work with London's museum sector to develop new collecting strategies to ensure that museum collections develop in a way that reflects the capital's diverse communities, and their historic and contemporary contribution to London's cultural life.
- Support a co-ordinated approach to collecting, where museums work closely together to identify possible acquisitions and share such acquisitions.
- Develop creative ways of using existing collections to explore issues around local change, sense of place and community identity.

Appendices



Why have people used all over the world for 1000 years?

Why have people used all over the world for 1000 years?

Why have people used all over the world for 1000 years?

- Free Speech
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APPENDIX I

Summary of consultancy research responses

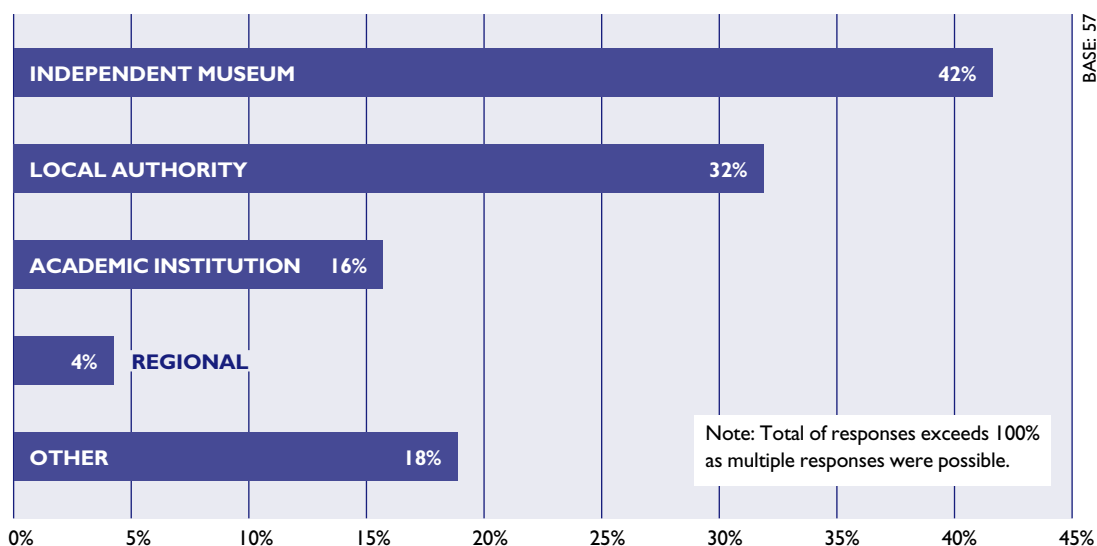
In April 2003 a detailed questionnaire was sent to all of London Museums Agency's 174 member organisations, eliciting a 30% response rate. The exercise revealed that many of the museums are under acute time and resource pressures. Some showed genuine interest in the exercise, but took many days to complete the questionnaire. The sluggish response rate may also have been due to 'survey overload'. The findings below were based on the answers received in those questionnaires that were returned.

The governance/structure of your organisation

The majority of the museums who participated in the survey described themselves as independent: 42%; 32% came under local authority governance; and 16% are affiliated to an academic institution.

In addition, 18% of the museums described their governance as being educational and/or charitable trust; as part of the National Trust or English Heritage; national; or attached to an NHS Hospital.

THE GOVERNANCE/STRUCTURE OF YOUR ORGANISATION

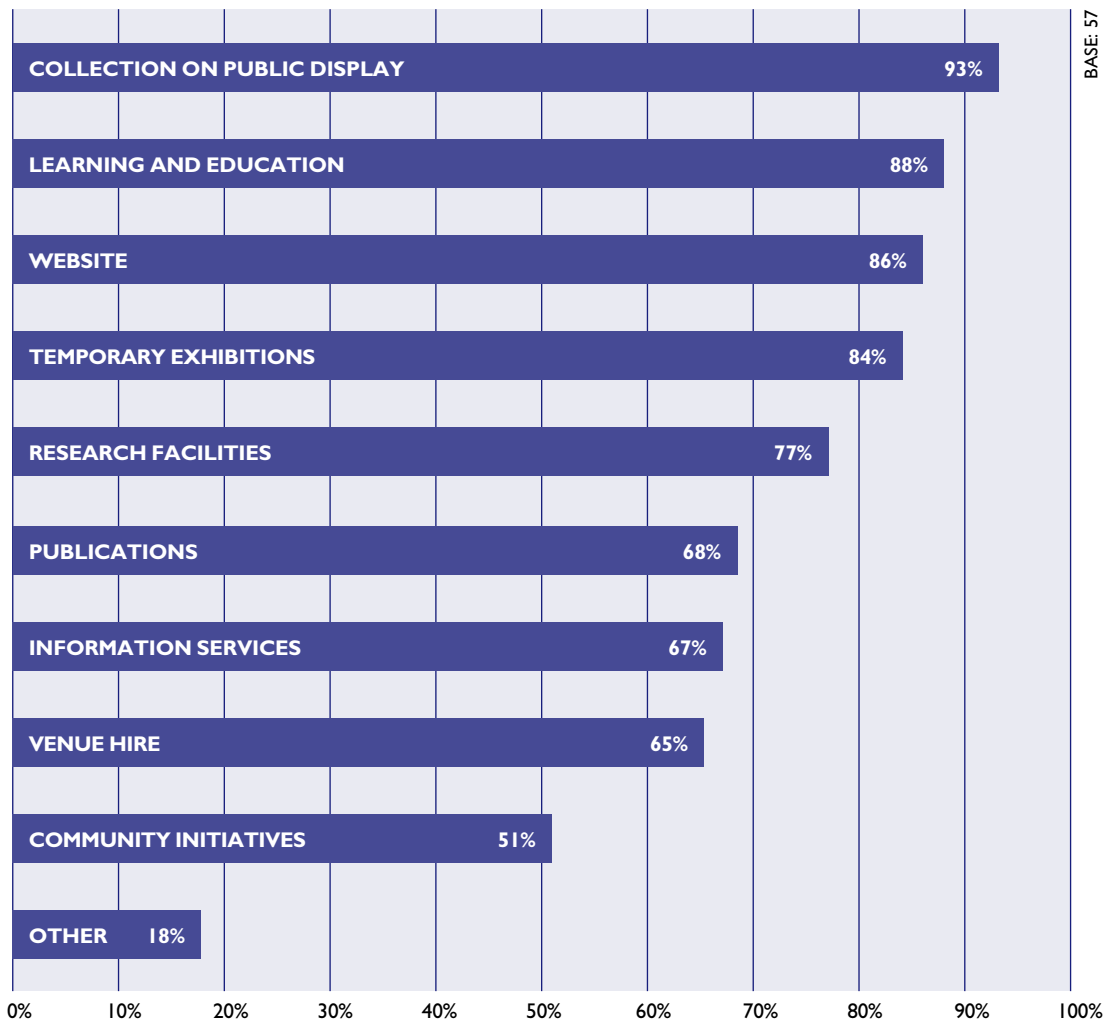


What services do you offer to the public?

93% of the museums offer some form of collection on public display, with 84% also programming temporary exhibitions; 88% have ongoing learning and education initiatives with 77% also offering research facilities; 86% have a website and 67% provide an information service; 68% also produce publications.

In addition, community initiatives are offered by 51% of the museums. 18% of those participating chose to describe their other facilities, programming and amenities as: events programmes for families, children and adults; volunteering opportunities; a shop; butterfly; concerts; historic building and gardens.

WHAT SERVICES DO YOU OFFER TO THE PUBLIC?

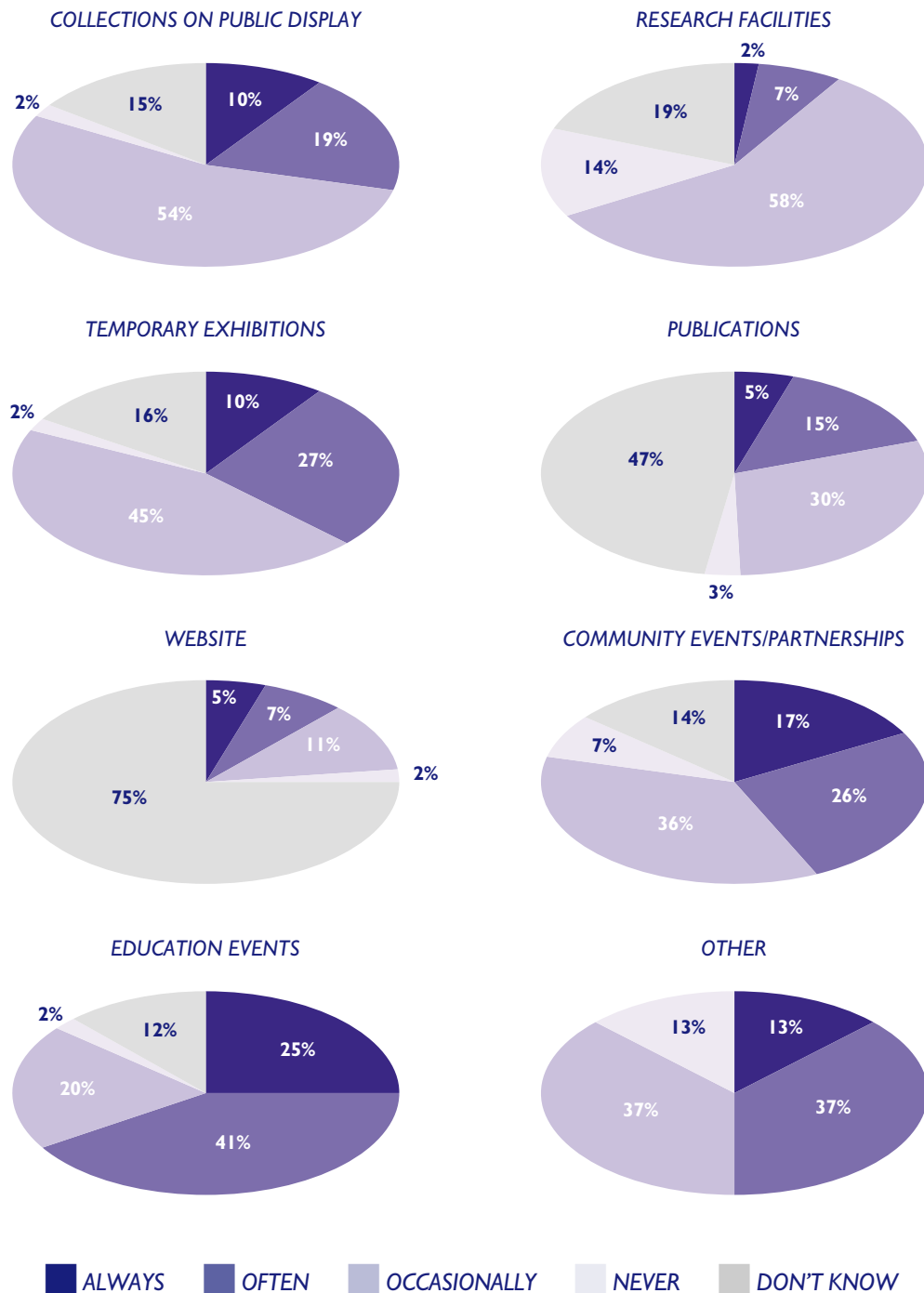


How does your organisation engage with black and minority ethnic communities?

The participating museums were asked which services had attracted black or minority groups. 41% cited educational events as the element of their programme that would often generate a black or minority audience and 25% said such events would always do so.

'Occasionally' was the dominant response in relation to the other amenities or products: community events, publications, temporary exhibitions, research facilities and collections on public display. 75% could not quantify the demographic of the audience using their websites. However, a number were able to say they never attracted a black or minority audience to any of their events or programmes: educational events 2%, community events 7%, website 2%, publications 3%, research facilities 14% and collections on public display 2%.

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANISATION ENGAGE WITH BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS



Key factors in successfully reaching black and minority ethnic communities

Asked to detail the key factors that have encouraged such audiences, a number of the museums attributed it to subject appeal or relevant projects and themes, as well as Black History Month. Location was also mentioned as a contributing factor.

Visits from school groups and consultation with local community groups have aided the development of many of the museums' programmes and audiences:

'Education events and holiday activities feed off the success of school visits to the museum and attract the most mixed audiences of any of our events. Subject appeal, temporary exhibitions on subjects such as West Africa and Windrush have been very successful. Community contacts and joint projects. We worked with Wandsworth Black Elderly project on the Windrush exhibition and are working via the multicultural librarian on a project in Tooting, marketing via wider black history month publicity is very helpful.'

'Targeted programming of events and activities, good marketing, strong links with community groups, successful education programme encouraging children on school visits to return with their families, welcoming and informal atmosphere, friendly and professional attendants.'

Marketing was mentioned as an active part of the museums' strategies for audience development, using such methods as mail-outs to schools and local community venues.

One museum has recently appointed two outreach officers who have a specific brief to work with Asian, African and Caribbean supplementary schools and groups, and Egyptian and Sudanese community groups. To date, the events that have been organised since their appointment 'have been very successful'.

Challenges – reasons for low involvement

The majority of the museums felt the lack of resources both human and financial are the reasons they are unable to develop black or minority audiences. Staffing is often limited, with little or no time for direct contact with the community. Some museums feel they need specific expertise to address this audience development issue.

In addition to this, in some cases, their promotion and audience monitoring is poor, and black and minority ethnic audience development is not a priority in relation to other building/collection issues. The museums' themes were also cited as a possible factor:

'Generally so far we have not specifically targeted this audience – the subject matter i.e. the Baroque Composer is challenging. Our Education programme uses Hendrix as a hook to engage audiences more familiar with his musical style by explaining common themes within Baroque and twentieth century music i.e. improvisation.'

'Exhibitions – possibly lack of interest/relevance if displays principally featured the white community, limited resources, notably time and funding – this can be a problem affecting audience participation by all customers, not just black minority groups.'

'Cultural differences – military brass music does not appeal to many cultures.'

‘Some programmes and displays inevitably appeal mainly to a largely white, middle-class market because of the nature of the collections and the focus of the museum. Our events and education programmes are the key to attracting wider audiences, especially from black and ethnic minority communities.’

What do you know about the main users of your museum/gallery?

White Europeans constitute 76% of the audiences of all the participating museums; 7% are British Asian, 9% British Black, 3% Chinese, 6% Irish and 7% other. Overall, 24% of the audiences are under 16 and 25% are over 60. At 12%, the 17–25 age group appear to visit these museums the least, 46% are male and 56% female. (NB The total exceeds 100% due to the accumulated errors in respondents’ calculations).

The majority of the audiences are described as local: 49% travelling for up to 40 minutes to get to a museum; 25% travel from other London boroughs; 19% from a national location, and 14% are international.

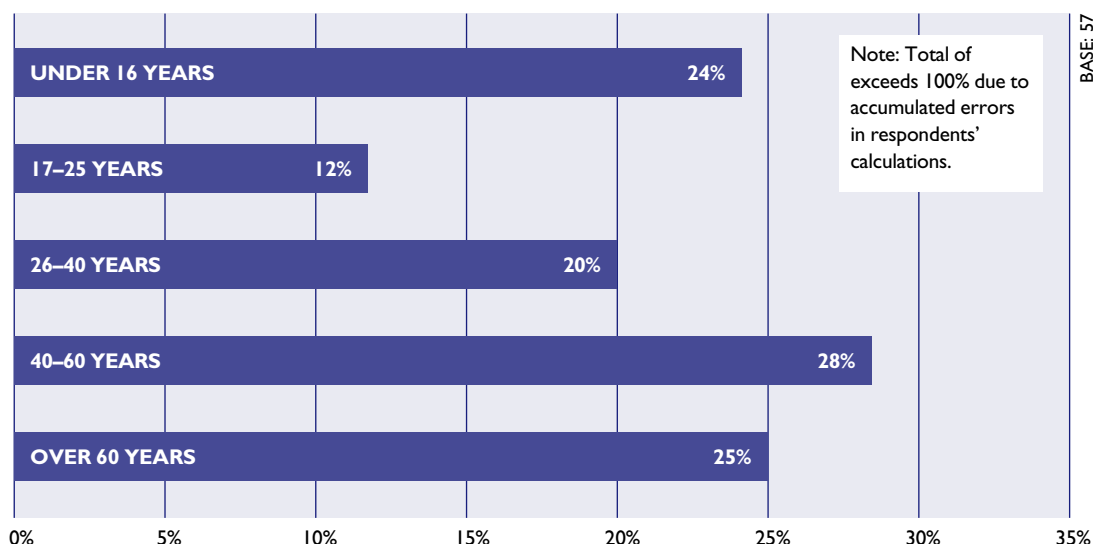
The museums use various methods to assess their audience numbers which include: annual visitors’ survey forms; questionnaires completed by every tenth visitor; Mori research three times a year; visitors books; ticket sales; ongoing market research in the venue; and monitoring through local school statistics. Some organisations’ figures are based on observations and estimates. A number do not currently have a monitoring strategy in place but have access to other data, for example:

‘Not yet staged formal user survey to determine ethnicity, however we have access to census material. London focus statistics and diversity information contained within ward/community profiles produced by local libraries and the Equal Access team. We can also access information gathered by the council’s statistics, business partnership and external funding teams.’

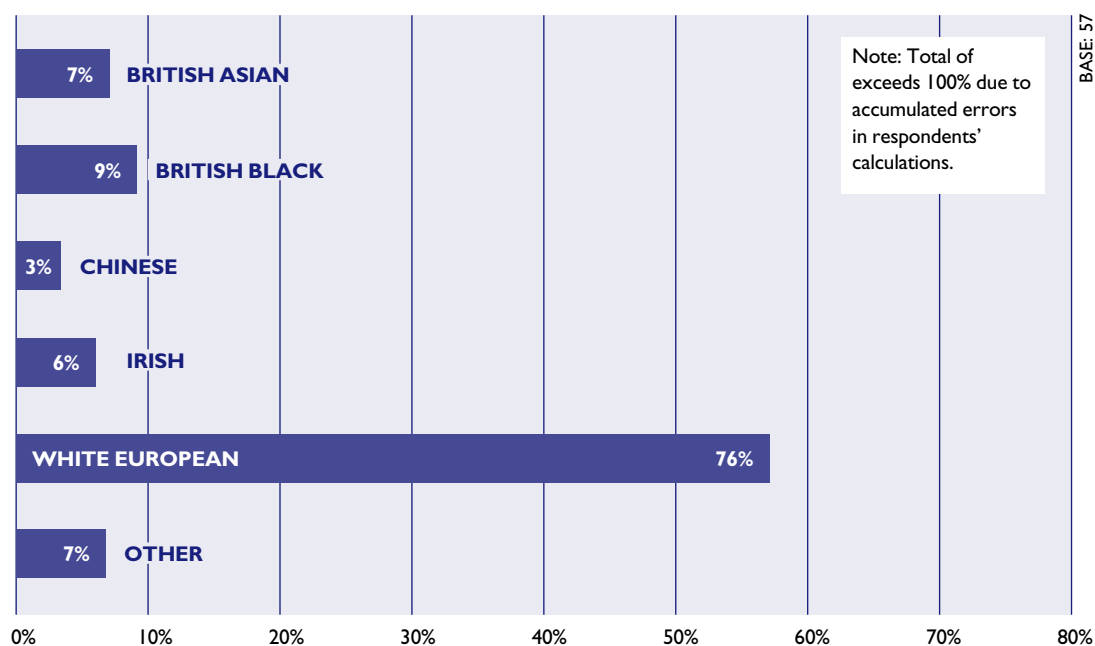
One organisation didn’t see the need for such monitoring:

‘We have no information on ethnic background and can see no need for it. All visitors are human beings.’

MUSEUM USERS BY AGE



MUSEUM USERS BY ETHNICITY



Marketing and audience development plans

Many (56%) of the institutions have actively conducted audience research and evaluation in the last 18 months, and 35% have included a marketing section in their development plans. 51% of the museums have reviewed their marketing strategy in the last 6 months.

There are a number of tried and tested methods that the museums use to promote their venues:

- Word of mouth and personal contact with visitor groups
- Leaflets, flyers to local libraries, schools and relevant venues
- Press releases
- Direct mailing
- Advertising and listings in local, national and international press and on other websites
- Outreach initiatives
- Newsletters and friends membership publicity
- Tourist Board, magazines and guidebooks
- Articles in local press and specialist periodicals
- Distribution via London Calling, London Museums Agency, Museums Association
- Publicity via commercial radio and television
- Occasional PR campaigns
- Website

All the museums used at least three of the above methods and have adopted additional strategies for various aspects of their programmes:

'We have built up a multi-layered marketing approach which promotes the museum and its programmes in a targeted way through press, news media, listings, advertising, direct

mailing lists, children’s newsletter, Friends membership and newsletter etc. Information about the museum is publicised in regular leaflets, posters on the underground, and through the website.’

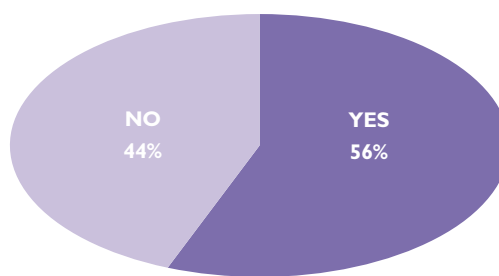
Education, outreach, partnership with other organisations and special projects have been cited as the main vehicles used in an attempt to reach ‘new’ or ‘hard-to-reach’ audiences such as “special events like multicultural week” and “trust open day”, as well as Black History Month. Two more innovative (and paradoxically more obvious) approaches have been listed – specific invitation to local community groups and encouraging local shops to display posters. One museum also undertook a ‘cold calling’ campaign for a specific project.

A few organisations have been developing new mailing lists via the social services and socially excluded community groups, which suggests a rather worrying attitude towards black and minority ethnic audiences. Lack of resources makes it virtually impossible for some museums to undertake audience development initiatives:

‘For some years we have been seeking to carry out a ‘non visitor’ survey by asking people if they have heard of the museum and why they have not visited it, but we have been unable to find any volunteers willing to carry out this survey.’

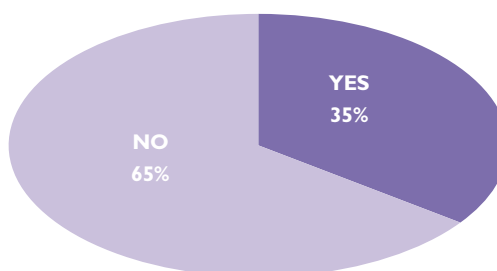
Encouragingly, one museum responded with: ‘would welcome advice.’

HAS YOUR INSTITUTION CONDUCTED AUDIENCE RESEARCH/EVALUATIONS IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS?



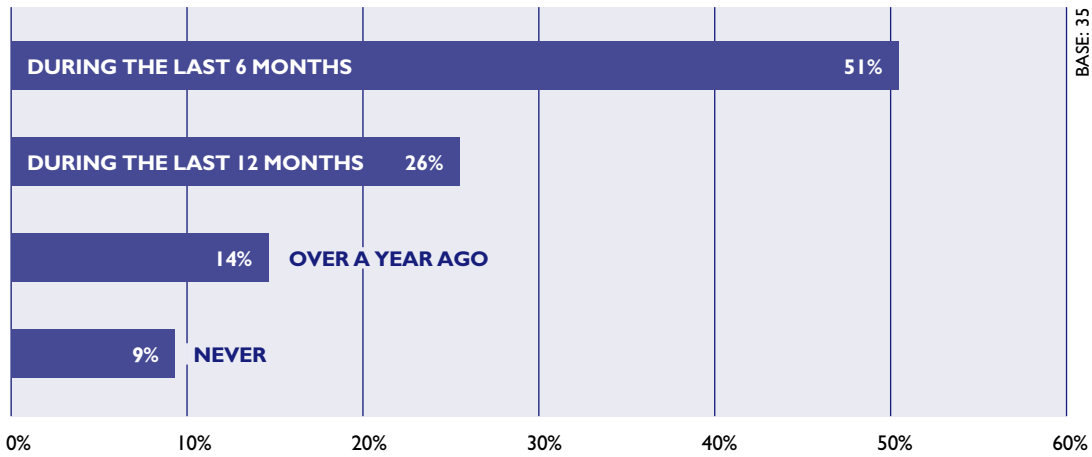
BASE: 55

DO YOU HAVE A MARKETING SECTION IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT PLAN?



BASE: 55

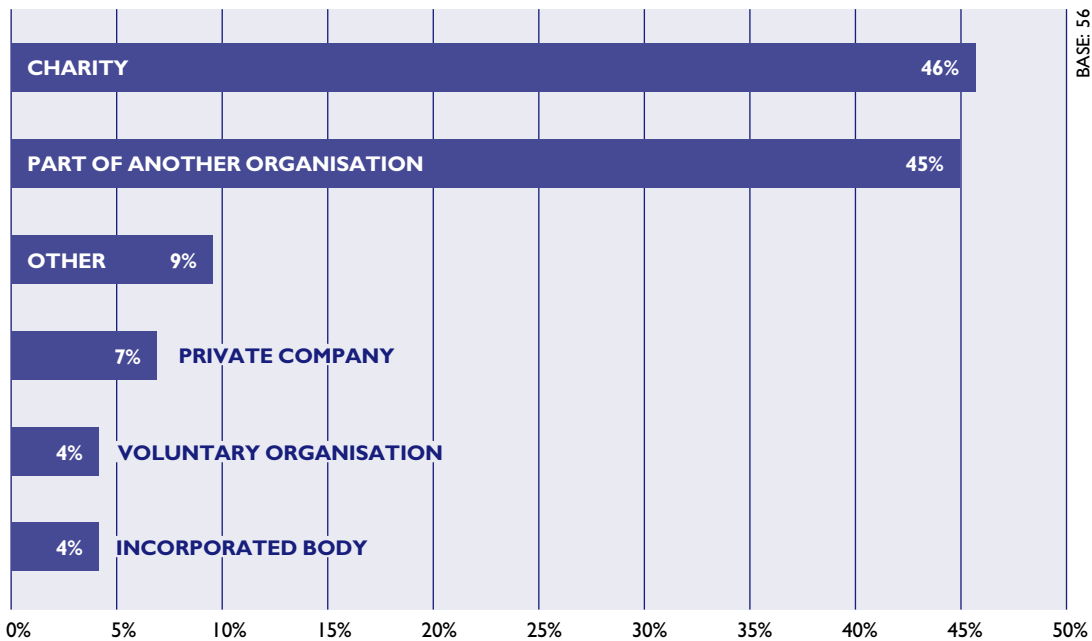
WHEN WAS YOUR MARKETING POLICY LAST REVIEWED?



What is the legal/management structure for your organisation?

The responses were as follows: 46% of the museums are charities, 45% are part of another organisation, 9% other, 7% private company, 4% voluntary and 4% incorporated body.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL/MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?



Organisational vision

Asked if their forward plan included references to providing services to black and minority ethnic communities, 39% of the museums answered yes and 61% no. In the museums and galleries that responded to our survey, 97% of all museum staff were white European; 2% were from black and minority ethnic communities; and 1% of trustees were drawn from black and minority ethnic communities.

When recruiting new trustees a number of the organisations have a constitutional approach by which a new member is recommended and subsequently elected by current board members or by the governing organisation. One museum is reviewing its process. Another one, as well as relying on word of mouth and recommendation, has adopted a strategy which is part of the college's equality and diversity policy and plans for compliance with race relations legislation, although it did not define how this works.

More than half of the museums facilitate cultural or equal opportunities training. The extent of the training varies e.g. as an integral part of a new employee's induction programme, and/or through external courses and workshops. Some organisations are in a position to induct all staff members whilst others do not have the facilities to send volunteers on courses etc.

The majority of participating museums attached a summary of their mission statement many of which, essentially, aim to promote their particular collections to a wide audience:

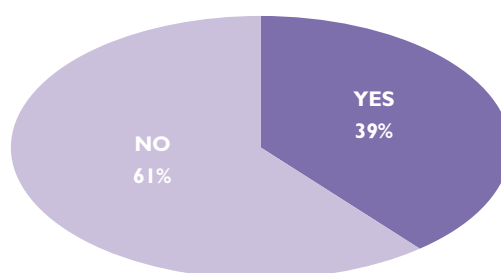
'Church Farmhouse Museum aims to collect and present material relating to the history and culture of The London Borough of Barnet, and to interpret the material for the benefit of all sections of the local community and beyond.' From key aims – 'To present a programme of exhibitions of interest to the diverse communities in the Borough and promote them to the widest possible audience.'

'The Horniman aims to use its worldwide collections and the Gardens to encourage a wider appreciation of the World, its peoples and their cultures, and its environments.'

'Southwark's ... aims are to collect, preserve, organise and make accessible objects, documents and information about the history and culture of the borough for the inspiration and enjoyment of people who live, work study and visit Southwark. To celebrate cultural diversity and sense of place in the past, present, and future, and to foster the individual's appreciation of his or her own particular roots, to actively involve and engage the community in Southwark in our work.'

'Enfield Museum Service aims to reflect the history and cultural diversity of Enfield through advancing an understanding our collective past and shared future and by providing a forum for local people to participate in the development of the service.'

DOES YOUR FORWARD PLAN INCLUDE SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO PROVIDING SERVICES TO BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES?



BASE: 36

What is the ethnic diversity make-up across your organisation?

This table shows the numbers of museums employing people of different ethnic groups in various job roles.

	Board of Trustees	Director/ senior management	Specialist staff	Admin. staff	Front of house staff	Volunteers
Asian or British Asian	1	0	–	–	–	1
Indian	1	3	3	1	3	4
Pakistani	1	–	–	–	2	1
Bangladeshi	–	–	1	–	1	1
Other Asian descent	1	2	1	4	5	2
Black or British Black	1	–	–	–	7	1
Caribbean	4	1	3	3	7	2
African	1	1	2	1	4	1
Other black descent	1	–	1	1	1	3
Chinese	1	1	1	–	2	3
Irish	3	2	4	1	1	4
White European	24	31	37	30	29	31
Other	2	2	6	2	6	2

Policy and practice in your organisation

All the museums were asked who, within the organisation is responsible for the development of various policies and practices, which included: acquisition and disposal, access and interpretation, repatriation of objects, staff recruitment and training, marketing and PR, pricing, fundraising, equal opportunities training, learning and education, and volunteer/friends coordination. Interestingly, specialist staff took the lead in development in most of the museums: 77% in fact – whilst up to 53% of them gave the responsibility to departmental managers.

Cultural diversity initiatives

The majority of the museums have undertaken a least one project that would come under the umbrella of ‘cultural diversity initiatives’. Some museums have taken the obvious root and framed their project/s around Black History Month, and others have programmed projects with broader objectives. A few of the museums have never produced cultural diversity initiatives. A comprehensive list is attached to the main document.

‘Devising and touring an exhibition: Ancient Egypt for Dreams that acknowledged multiple ways of looking at Egypt including black heritage. The exhibition attracted 94,000+ visitors and won museum and heritage touring exhibitions Award 2003.’

‘Recently developed links with a science club which is aimed at Asian women. We have developed two outreach events and plan to develop stronger links with them and other ethnic minorities in the area e.g. storytelling in Bengali.’

'None. The museum is open and everyone is welcome. We do our best to make sure that as many people as possible know about it but it is then up to them to take advantage of it.'

'This is not an area the museum has tackled with any great success. It is an issue for us to consider for future planning. Once we have a better product to offer all visitors we will be in a stronger position to undertake specific initiatives around cultural diversity.'

With regards to improving on what they have achieved to date, a number of the museums felt the need for stronger marketing initiatives and time to develop better relationships with their constituencies. Additional funding was also cited as necessary to kick start longer, more sustainable programming. Some organisations are also aware of the benefits of staff equal opportunities training, in terms of providing a welcoming venue for all sectors of the community:

'I would say we need to ensure the work is funded as core, not an add-on project funded initiative.'

'None. As a voluntary organisation we put a great effort into making the museum and its displays attractive to as wide a range of people as possible. However, it deals with a subject of limited appeal and we would not want to put pressure on anyone of any culture to visit it.'

'By not tying BME [black and minority ethnic] initiatives to an exhibition. Effective partnerships take time and the more worthwhile objectives of projects can often get diluted or even pushed aside in the pressure to complete a project within an exhibition timescale and with the aim of attracting visitors to the resulting exhibition.'

'The difficulty is establishing the groups that would be interested to work with us.'

'Little by little. We now find that there is an expectation and demand that we provide activities to celebrate Black History Month due to the success of past initiatives, but we need to improve what we do during the rest of the year too. Community contacts take time to develop and need to be carefully nurtured. You cannot expect quick results.'

'Attendances need to be improved but this is a general problem (we are hampered by poor marketing).'

Putting practice to the test

Only 15% of the museums that completed the questionnaire were happy for the consultants, Helen Denniston Associates, to visit in order to assess their practices, while 87% welcomed a follow up interview.

Additional comments

There follows a selection of additional comments made by questionnaire respondents. Many of the museums have a commitment to developing their audiences with a particular emphasis on cultural diversity.

Each has its own agenda and/or constraints; but the perception of all the museums appears to be that black and minority ethnic cultural interests are unreservedly linked to their respective

cultures. In other words, it appears that such audiences will only be attracted to a venue if the topic of discussion (depiction) has a direct correlation to an aspect of their cultural heritage or identity.

This raises all sorts of concerns around individual attitudes, class and societal structures, which are without doubt, issues far greater than museum development and policy. However, in the strategy to develop diverse audiences, it is important – in fact essential – to consider the fact that all kinds of subjects are relevant to all kinds of people and perhaps this very fact should determine new audience initiatives.

‘To address cultural diversity. It should be part of mainstream decision-making process. More outreach work is required to build on new audiences.’

‘Lack of staff can be a disadvantage.’

‘I am the only full-time member of staff with one admin assistant one day a week. As a result I am stretched in every way, though I very much want to increase access for all, especially amongst audiences with disabilities and from minority backgrounds. It is difficult.’

‘Hampstead also has a very white European population. There are only two famous black people that have lived in Hampstead and we only have two artworks in the collection depicting black sitters (of which nothing is known). It is difficult to know how we can further attract black and Asian people here. In the past five years we have had one black steward (front of house).’

‘Gosh, it makes me realise how much work we have to do!’

‘We do not mention the ethnic origin of visitors at the moment. It is likely that black and ethnic minority people visit the museum and access its services at least occasionally as we have many formal education visits from London Colleges and Universities with diverse student bodies. We will monitor ethnic origin in the future.’

‘Obviously we are constrained by the life and literature of Charles Dickens which was exclusive of minorities.’

‘We are aware that you need to focus on audience development, particularly in regard to black and ethnic minorities. As a very young museum we are keen to gain advice and assistance in achieving this. Resources are being utilised within the Museum to actively promote the museum and its programme in this area. The goal of increasing participation from black and ethnic minorities is informing our programmes in particular learning and access, exhibitions interpretation.’

‘I am unable to complete any of the project information as we are a small museum with one part-time member of staff. We have no specific budget for these initiatives and rely on local contacts for community involvement. Our limited finances mean we cannot plan or initiate the events we would like to, especially as our organisation itself and visitors are mainly white Europeans. Unfortunately, we have very few minority visitors and altering this cannot be a priority due to lack of resources.’

APPENDIX 2

Museums that contributed to the survey

As part of the *Holding up the Mirror* research, 174 survey questionnaires were sent to London Museums Agency members. Of these, 56 museums completed the questionnaire within the deadline. In addition to the questionnaire, other methods of evaluation included a focus group and one-to-one interviews. A total of 63 museums contributed to the research through questionnaire responses and/or the focus group and one-to-one interviews. We would like to thank the following museums for their valuable contribution:

Black Cultural Archives
British Red Cross Museum & Archives
Bromley Museum
Bruce Castle Museum
Cartoon Art Trust
Chelsea Physic Garden
Church Farmhouse Museum
Corporation of London
Courtauld Institute Art
Croydon Museum & Heritage Services
Cuming Museum
Cutty Sark Trust
Dickens House Museum
Dr Johnson's House
Dulwich Picture Gallery
Enfield Museum Service
Fenton House, NT
Firepower – The Royal Artillery Museum
Florence Nightingale Museum
Geffrye Museum
Grange Museum of Community History, London Borough of Brent
Grant Museum of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy, UCL

Gunnersbury Park Museum
Hackney Museum
Hampstead Museum
Handel House Museum
Hillingdon Local Studies & Archives
Hogarth's House
Horniman Museum & Gardens
Kew Bridge Steam Museum (Engines Trust)
Kingston Museum & Heritage Service
London Canal Museum
London Fire Brigade Museum
London's Transport Museum
Marble Hill House, EH
MCC Museum
Merton Heritage Centre
Metropolitan Police Historical Museum
Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MODA)
Museum of London
Museum of Richmond
Museum of Rugby
Newham Heritage Service
Old Operating Theatre, Museum & Herb Garret
Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology
Pitshanger Manor & Gallery
Pollock's Toy Museum
Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge
Ragged School Museum
Redbridge Museum Service
RIBA British Architectural Library
Royal College of Surgeons of England
Royal London Hospital Archives & Museum
Royal Military School of Music
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of GB
Sutton House, NT
Theatre Museum
University College London
Vestry House Museum
Wandsworth Museum
Wimbledon Windmill Museum
Women's Library
Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London

APPENDIX 3

Summary of *Reflections* report

The *Mirror* study has benefited from the findings of a parallel piece of work, *Reflections: Mapping cultural diversity in London's local authority museum collections*, commissioned by London Museums Agency and supported by a steering group of museum practitioners in the capital. The consultant, Val Bott, brought a wealth of experience and knowledge of the sector in London to the project. In this appendix she summarises its findings.

Reflections: Mapping cultural diversity in London's local authority museum collections

Val Bott MA FMA, May 2003

Conducted during March and April 2003, *Reflections* looked at collecting practice and the use of collections in the context of culturally diverse communities within 28 museum services. All but three are local authority services, two are owned and run by charitable trusts and one is a hybrid, jointly owned by two boroughs and managed on their behalf by a leisure trust.

Focussing on publicly funded museum services with a clear remit to serve everyone in their local communities, the study draws very directly on the current experience of museum staff building or working with collections, the successes they have enjoyed and the barriers that they have encountered.

Methodology and response

A mapping questionnaire was circulated to all local authority funded museums services in London and followed up by telephone interviews. Museums were invited to provide information about their artefact and 'other' collections, collection based project work and community partnerships.

Some respondents found the tables relating to their collections difficult to complete, either because they did not have good collections data available or because they felt that their collections related only to a long-standing white population. Few offered holdings which they thought were of particular significance and about half offered case studies. The museum curators most likely to provide complete responses were those who had already been involved in cultural diversity work and were able to speak from experience.

Most museums in the survey could describe effectively the make-up of their local populations and many related their work to these audiences; a few were rather new to this way of working, however. Collecting, exhibition and education projects have enabled museums to engage with minority ethnic communities and acquire relevant material for future use; some have had more

success with projects and partnerships than with collecting. A few commented upon the difficulty of sustaining partnerships beyond the life of a project. Some felt keenly the lack of support from their political masters in cultural diversity work. Virtually all respondents assumed that only those collections which specifically reflect the minority ethnic communities themselves would be relevant to them. None mentioned the use of old, established local history collections, for example, to increase understanding of continuity and change in their localities or to provide a sense of place and community identity.

Areas of weakness related to lack of experience, limited access to collections data and a lack of awareness of the activities of other London museums. In addition, we know from other sources that most of these museums are run by small teams on limited resources and working under some pressure. This makes sustaining long-term developmental work (which can be very time-consuming) difficult for them.

Collections

The mapping questionnaire provided two charts for completion. These divided museum objects from 'other collections', the latter being defined as groups of material which are collected by both museums and libraries/archives. Information about separate local studies or archive collections was not sought.

Table 1 summarises the responses on collections of **museum objects**. It reveals the range and date of objects held but cannot give an indication of quantities. The majority of the collections surveyed comprise local social history material. Twenty-three respondents described collections dominated by local objects from the last 150 to 200 years. The most common categories relating to minority ethnic groups, as might have been expected given the dominant demographic groups in London and the likely pattern of recent collecting, cover social history after 1900 and especially after 1945, and relate to Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean and African communities. Most records in the Other Ethnic Group category were not identified but they do include North American and Australasian material.

The museum objects chart was completed by all but four of the respondents. These four provided the following information. Pitsanger Manor's collection comprises pottery made in Southall by the Martin brothers – other Ealing material relating specifically to minority ethnic groups is held by Gunnersbury Park Museum and was reported by them. Hillingdon has a small object collection but no museum and has not yet developed collecting programmes to represent local communities through objects. Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge holds material specifically about the natural and local history of Epping Forest and the relatively new curator aims to get to know these collections before adding to them. The Richmond Museum's collections relate to the town of Richmond; it has only recently begun work with minority groups in a predominantly white area.

One of the limitations of the format of Table 1 is the fact that one museum may account for all the entries in certain categories. Thus Brent ticked all Social History after 1945 except White Other and Other Ethnic Group, Croydon ticked all Social History 1900–45 and all after 1945 except Other Ethnic Group and Southwark ticked all except White for 19th century Fine Art and for pre 1800 and 19th century Ethnography. Five respondents provided additional information on ethnographic or

TABLE I. COLLECTIONS OF MUSEUM OBJECTS: DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPING

	WHITE		ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH				BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH				
	Irish	Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other black	Chinese	Other ethnic group
SOCIAL HISTORY											
Pre 1800	12	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
C19th	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	1
1900–45	4	7	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	–
After 1945	4	9	10	9	4	7	11	12	2	5	4
ARCHAEOLOGY											
Pre 1800	–	3	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	1	1
C19th	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
SCIENCE/INDUSTRY											
Pre 1800	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
C19th	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1900–45	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
After 1945	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
FINE & APPLIED ART											
Pre 1800	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–
C19th	1	1	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	1	1
1900–45	–	3	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
After 1945	–	4	1	1	–	–	3	1	–	–	1
ETHNOGRAPHY											
Pre 1800	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
C19th	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3
1900–45	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	1	2
After 1945	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	3	–	–	1
MILITARY											
Pre 1800	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
C 19th	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1900–45	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
After 1945	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

foreign archaeological collections – the Cuming Museum (Southwark) holds material from Captain Cook and other explorers, Orleans House (Richmond) has the collection of the explorer Sir Richard Burton, Bromley Museum houses the Lubbock collection, including some North American and Australasian material, and Greenwich has some ethnography and some ancient Egyptian artefacts.

The responses in connection with **other collections** are set out in Table 2. More boxes were ticked by more respondents, though seven – Barnet, Bromley, Ealing, the Epping Forest Museum, Hillingdon, Richmond Museum and the William Morris Gallery – reported that they do not collect any material of this kind. Other holdings are limited: Barking & Dagenham only ticked photos and film, while Greenwich and Orleans House ticked only 19th century photos and Brent ticked only oral history. Croydon, however, ticked all boxes 1900–45 and after 1945 except those for Other Ethnic Group. In this table references under Other Ethnic Group included Cypriot, Jewish, Egyptian and Vietnamese.

TABLE 2. OTHER COLLECTIONS: DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPINGS

	WHITE		ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH				BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH			OTHER ETHNIC GROUP	
	Irish	Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other black	Chinese	Other ethnic group
PHOTOS											
C19th	2	3	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
1900–45	3	5	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	–
After 1945	3	5	10	4	4	3	10	7	2	3	1
SOUND RECORDINGS											
C19th	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1900–45	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
After 1945	4	3	4	4	1	3	5	5	1	2	1
PAPERS & DOCUMENTS											
Pre 1800	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
C19th	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
1900–45	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	–
After 1945	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	–
ORAL HISTORY											
1900–45	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	–
After 1945	6	9	6	7	4	5	11	7	3	5	1
EPHEMERA											
Pre 1800	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
C19th	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
1900–45	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
After 1945	2	3	5	6	2	4	5	5	2	3	–
FILM/VIDEO											
1900–45	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
After 1945	3	3	2	5	2	1	8	3	1	1	–

Eight respondents answered the question seeking information about significant holdings of material relevant to minority ethnic communities. Croydon stated that the process of consultation with and involvement by local groups from the foundation of the museum meant that it had a diverse collection for its diverse communities, rather than one collection that was significant. Similarly, the Ragged School Museum stated that its collections cover a number of categories but may comprise only 3 or 4 objects per group. Merton pointed to its small collections relating to minority ethnic communities, used in resource boxes which they lend to schools and community groups and which they are expanding. Southwark and Orleans House referred to their material from explorers, and Bromley to the Lubbock collection whose ethnographic material represents other cultures, though not necessarily those of the groups in London. Enfield's recent oral history work was believed to be very important and Barking & Dagenham was about to begin oral history projects to cover cultural diversity during 2003–4.

Eighteen of the museums in the survey have acquired material specifically reflecting the diversity of their communities. Respondents with holdings covering a variety of groups are Brent, Croydon, Enfield, Gunnersbury Park Museum, Hackney, Haringey, Kingston, Merton, Southwark and Redbridge. However in Enfield this is only oral history material and in Southwark only ethnography and art.

Further research to relate collections to patterns of collecting and the active development of relationships with minority ethnic groups would be valuable, as it might reveal how much of these had been acquired passively, by chance or from occasional projects, rather than through planned activity.

Using collections

The mapping exercise sought basic information about finding aids in relation to collections information. All respondents provided information on this subject which has been summarised in Table 3. Only one respondent, the curator of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, reported that none of these finding aids were available, though they are planned. For the 25 years prior to her appointment a year ago there had been no tradition of opening collections for any other use except display.

The majority of collections information on offer required potential users to visit the museum to gain access to it. This is an area of weakness for museums seeking to reach new audiences. Though 14 museums referred to websites, most of these offer information about services rather than collections. Only Orleans House has genuinely increased access by putting the catalogue of its picture collection on its website as part of a project funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund and it aims to digitise the images in the future.

Respondents were also asked whether they recorded contextual information about collections which would enable users to make connections between them and minority ethnic groups in the area. Fifteen respondents stated that they do and nine that they do not, though three of these are planning to do so. Recording such information is an important element in demonstrating connections and community links which may not be explicit from the objects themselves. It should become widespread good practice.

TABLE 3. COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

Card index in study area	8
Website	14
Handlists	5
Museum guide	4
Computer database in study area	8
Information in display galleries	20
Computer database in galleries	4
Published information sheets	9
Published catalogue	3
Other media	4

Community engagement

The *Reflections* study sought information about the ways in which museums involve and engage community groups in their work; Table 4 summarises the responses to this question. The largest numbers of projects reported comprise 104 exhibitions, 79 events and activities programmes and 66 examples of educational work, though it is not clear whether any of these were linked as parts of single projects. The responses reveal that the majority of these cultural diversity projects have involved Indian (50 projects), Black Caribbean (59) and Black African (52) communities, followed by Pakistani (34) and White Other (29). The first three of these are the dominant minority ethnic groups in Greater London.

Four respondents – Ealing, Queen Elizabeth’s Hunting Lodge, Hillingdon and Sutton – did not contribute information on this subject. Orleans House Gallery reported that some of its exhibitions and associated events had attracted diverse audiences because of the style or origin of individual artists rather than because it targeted minority ethnic groups. The Other Ethnic Groups recorded in the table are Palestinian and other Middle Eastern in Newham, Japanese in Greenwich and Polish at Gunnersbury.

Though the numbers for involvement in collections development (47) and marketing/audience development (39) are smaller, these are areas of work which may have a more significant longer-term impact on effective museum relationships with local communities. Further support for such work should be offered and evaluation carried out across a group of projects to assess their value. Additional case studies should be identified from amongst these projects to enable others to learn from them.

Working in partnership

Museums were asked to list those partnerships they had made which relate to or impact upon the way they reflect and represent cultural diversity. Table 5 summarises the information provided, using information from 19 respondents.

Barnet, Enfield and Sutton have worked or are working with local Race Equality Councils. The Ragged School Museum has made contacts with community groups but felt that these had not developed into partnerships yet (these have nevertheless been included in the table). The new

TABLE 4. CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROJECTS: DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPING

	WHITE		ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH				BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH			Chinese	Other ethnic group	TOTALS
	Irish	Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other black			
Exhibitions and displays	9	11	15	9	8	7	16	12	5	6	6	104
Events and activities	5	6	10	7	6	6	15	12	3	6	3	79
Collections development	2	2	8	7	3	3	7	8	3	2	2	47
Educational projects	3	5	9	7	5	4	12	10	4	3	4	66
Marketing/audience development	2	3	4	2	4	4	6	5	3	2	4	39
Commissioning works/performances	1	2	4	2	–	2	3	5	1	3	3	26
TOTALS	22	29	50	34	26	26	59	52	19	22	22	361

curator at Richmond Museum is developing new links with a local school and an adult education college. Gunnersbury Park Museum and Pitshanger Manor have both worked with members of Ealing's Japanese community. Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge has no partners yet.

A few museums, embarking on this kind of work, quoted London Museums Agency, London's Museums, Archives and Libraries and the London Metropolitan Archive as their partners, suggesting that regional initiatives have provided important opportunities.

TABLE 5. PARTNERS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY WORK

	WHITE		ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH				BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH			Chinese	Other ethnic group	TOTALS
	Irish	Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other black			
Another museum or gallery	1	1	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	2	2	37
Local authority department	4	2	10	8	4	4	11	8	4	2	1	58
Local heritage group	-	1	2	2	1	-	3	3	1	-	-	13
Local community group	3	3	9	9	7	8	10	9	1	3	5	67
Regional/national body	-	-	2	4	2	2	3	3	1	-	1	18
School/college/university	2	4	5	6	2	-	6	7	-	3	2	37
Other	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	6
TOTALS	12	12	34	34	21	18	38	36	10	10	11	236

The figures in the table indicate that work with other local authority departments and with community groups is quite frequent, while working with other museums or a regional/national body is not. Numbers of educational partnerships are relatively low, but this may reflect the role of educational bodies as users of services rather than partners in their development. The tiny number of partnerships with local heritage groups needs further investigation. Does this mean that such groups are (or are perceived to be) predominantly white and therefore not seen as appropriate partners for cultural diversity work? Or is involvement in heritage activities a new experience for many minority ethnic groups, with those who have enjoyed such activities seeking out local heritage groups afterwards to continue their involvement?

The dominant communities with whom museums have been working are similar to those for the projects described above, with 34 instances of work with both Indian and Pakistani communities, 38 with Black Caribbean, 36 with Black African and 25 with Bangladeshi groups. This is another area where further research would be of value. Using the information we have from the questionnaires it is not possible to draw conclusions about the form or effectiveness of the partnerships, nor to relate them to any of the projects in Table 4. A small number of respondents commented upon the difficulty of sustaining partnerships which had been effective for specific exhibitions or events but which may not result in continuing use of the museum by those involved on that occasion.

APPENDIX 4

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