

Multi-Cultural Heritage Workshop 1- Summary

DATE: Wednesday, 28th Feb 2018

TIME: 10: AM- 4PM

LOCATION: Kommunity, Newcastle <https://www.kommunity.space/>

PRESENT: Susan Ashley, Hengameh Ashraf Emami, Nikolas Barrera, Kathleen Boodhai, Wessie Ling, Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, Don O'Meara, Padma Rao, Rebecca Romeo, Degna Stone, Marianna TSIONKI.

APOLOGIES: Rosie Lewis, Rosie Sherrington, Sadyia Ahmed, Sinead Burke, Gareth Redston, Kitty Porteous, Ysanne Holt

1. Introductions

The first of four workshops started with an introduction by PI Susan Ashley, who welcomed participants and explained the project, the agenda, and the aims and outline of this and the following workshops. Nik Barrera and Kommunity were introduced and thanked for hosting.

2. "Tell and Show"

Each participant was asked to discuss their organisation using an object that represented the organisation. This activity was used as an icebreaker as well as a tool for building a positive interaction with each other.

Padma Rao from Sangini brought a scarf to express importance of warmth, friendship and a sense of welcome through the organisation. She explained the importance of diversity and equality in Sangini, offering a history of the organisation as BMA women majority-led, focusing on education and empowering women through arts and social activities.

Nikolas Barrera from ¡VAMOS! introduced his venue Kommunity as his object, as a space for cross-cultural activities that explore culture, community and heritage, and as a hub for his annual Latin-American focused festival ¡VAMOS!.

Marianna TSIONKI brought the CfCCA publication that celebrates the 30th anniversary of the organisation. Originally founded by diasporic British Chinese community artists in Manchester, it has evolved as a gallery space for broader contemporary art. She discussed the place of 'Chinese' art in the changing organisation, and how the CfCCA is relevant to current generations.

Degna Stone of Eclipse Theatre and an enabler with Slate, used a small plastic wolf as an analogy for the impact of a single agent of change within a landscape. The leadership role of Black-led Eclipse Theatre in changing the chain of creation in the cultural sector landscape was stressed. Degna explored importance of understanding some of misconceptions about the people that can make change in community and society. To see how wolves helped change the ecology of Yellowstone National Park in the USA see: <https://buff.ly/2owyX2f>

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein from NEACA explained how the organisation began as a music/festival/social club evolved into a more political orientation. Beverley brought two songs to demonstrate and encapsulate African heritage and Caribbean heritage going side by side, similarities and differences, but together.

Don O'Meara brought an old park signage to represent Historic England, and in his talk highlighted some the issues within the agency of 'us and them'. He discussed the importance of acknowledging the past, and how it flows in our life, diversity and complexity of heritage and culture England.

There were two video clips that we did not get a chance to show, about the Manchester Jewish Museum and Everyday Muslim who could not attend the workshop.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRN2jCzB43s>

<http://www.everydaymuslim.org/symposium-online-2015>

3. Lunch

Participants had a great opportunity for networking and one to one discussion while they were enjoying their Mexican-themed food and dessert. Wildflower's fabulous vegan menu was a highlight of the event: www.wildflowernewcastle.com

4. Discussion groups

The participants gathered in two groups and discussions were held around two major topics: Motivations and Issues & Needs.

Under Motivations, participants were asked, **why do you do what you do? This entailed:**

- Why are minority-oriented organisations important?
- What motivates users/audiences/stakeholders to get involved?
- On a personal level – why are YOU motivated to work in a multicultural organisation and furthering their goals?

In the second discussion, the groups were asked **What issues do multicultural organisations face?**

Unfortunately, time ran out on us with this, however the possibilities for discussion were:

- Funding, but other types of organisational issues as well?
- Think about these issues related to what 'needs' these organisations might have
- What are the 'blockages' within agencies/funders about issues of equality?

Motivations:

- Need to challenge received narratives to affect change
- Importance of raising awareness of difference in face of a dominant culture - representation and recognition
- Independence
- Create sense of belonging and bring visibility to minorities
- Bringing something different to the sector, representing groups and sharing voices with dominant culture
- Provide a platform for women
- Importance of what to 'leave behind'

- Positive Engagement and involved the younger generation with heritage & culture
- Help society and grow
- To offer audiences a diversity of programming choices, but there are funding issues
- But just 'surviving' as an organisation can change these motivations
- To be a big player, cost and benefit as a "big player" while keeping the values
- In case of CfCCA, 'playing the game' in order to be taken seriously by funders – have to be huge to attract ACE and that changes the 'ecology'. As size, motivations changed, "ethnic" community departed.
- Interesting ways that people relate to their cultures when they move away (in diaspora) – celebrating and commemorating. Different ideas on culture that those who remain in old country.

Issues:

- It is not direct racism but lack of capacity for some groups to articulate in funding applications
- What does 'multicultural' mean? How can an organisation referring to one specific culture can be multicultural? Does it include other elements such as disability? Suggest the term 'minority ethnic' organisation and how does society perceive the ethnic minority organisation.
- The question of 'minority-led' versus 'minority-oriented'
- Hard to get funding of ethnic minority activities in 2000 then social cohesion became a policy interest
- Internal issues versus external and the communication between two.
- Outward-facing external environment versus Internally-facing internal environment issues
- Audience issues: the challenge for audience when programmes specifically reflect a culture. Constant mode of thinking differently to be relevant.
- Organisation might not be relevant to second generations and younger audience.
- Internal issues - Continual need to change their constitution, how the board members are chosen, activities to be relevant, esp with generational issues, but how to stick to original ethos?
- Identifying different funding sources
- The need to do 'everything' as a practitioner
- Cultural identity issue from various aspects, connection to history
- Issue of quality and measurement of quality, deciding what is success
- survival

5. Next workshop

The second workshop, planning to be held at the CfCCA in Manchester sometime in May [24th May proposed], and will discuss questions of heritage and its meanings. Hengameh will send a doodle invitation to all members and the participants will confirm their availability and attendance then.