

POLICY MANAGER REFLECTIONS

On the (Multi)Cultural Heritage Policy Workshop 9 April 2019, Northumbria University

[Each policy speaker from different public bodies was asked to submit a one-page reflection on the workshop; pass on their experience and ideas to a higher-up in the organisation; and agree to returning to a follow-up workshop in one year's time. The following are their reflections, from all but Habib Rahman of Newcastle Council.]

Participants:

- Georgina Holmes Skelton, Head of Government Affairs, National Trust
- Liz Ellis, Policy Adviser Communities and Diversity, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Don O'Meara, Science Advisor North East and Hadrian's Wall, Historic England
- Habib Rahman, Councillor, Newcastle Council
- Bill Griffiths, Head of Programmes, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
- David Gaffney, Senior Relationship Manager for Diversity, Arts Council England

1. Georgie Holmes-Skelton, Head of Government Affairs, National Trust

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It was a really interesting session, and I really valued hearing first-hand from the participants about their experiences in the sector. There were a number of points that stuck with me particularly: for example, those from Padma Rao about the challenges of intersectionality when it comes to obtaining funding and ensuring visibility for organisations such as Sangini, which reflects also wider challenges beyond funding in areas such as interpretation and access. Beverley Prevatt Goldstein made important comments about the challenges of partnership working from their perspectives, and the need for longer term consistency and commitment from larger bodies, and for partnership not to be only about a "tick box" exercise, which I will feed to others in my organisation. Rosie Lewis' comments about governance structures and the need to improve diversity within the senior management of key public and sector organisations also caused me to reflect on need to widen the equality of representation in how the "heritage sector" is presented to Government. Key forums that currently exist that present the face of the heritage sector to Government (such as the Heritage Council, and Historic Environment Forum) probably do not offer a sufficiently diverse range of perspectives and voices, and I will give this further consideration, and raise with others in the sector.

From the discussion I also took away a specific question over whether the National Trust could have a role advocating for more inclusive teaching of history in schools, particularly around issues such as slavery and colonialism. I will reflect more on this – education specifically is not part of our core purposes as a charity, which could limit our ability to lobby on this point, but we do some work locally with schools at the moment (others may be interested in the Colonial Countryside project that we're supporting with the University of Leicester - <https://colonialcountryside.wordpress.com/>). There may be more we could do here.

Some thoughts that I didn't get around to sharing on the day about engaging with Government and Parliament to influence policy specifically that might be of interest to the group (I realise these are likely familiar already, and appreciate that getting involved with these takes time and resource, but adding more voices to those engaging through these vehicles for influencing central government policy would be welcome):

- The tools that we commonly use at NT for engaging with public policy include formal avenues, such as responding to Government consultations (like the Tailored Review of Historic England currently underway), or relevant select committee inquiries (the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee in particular, but also the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee and others). We also use informal approaches such as inviting individual MPs to visit our places and briefing friendly MPs and Peers proactively to pursue PQs or contribute to debates on subjects of interest.
- Select committees are always keen to try to expand the range of groups they're engaging with and hearing from. However, they're not always that good at achieving this, and tend to default to a small range of "usual suspects". Having been a committee clerk in my past career it's worth mentioning that in addition to formal written responses there can be other options for engaging that are less commonly advertised. Obviously the Chair and MPs on the Committee are one avenue, but you can also contact the Committee staff directly (details usually on the Parliament website) and have a chat. Offers of visits for the Committee to see things in action sometimes go down well, or you can even proactively offer to give oral evidence to a particular inquiry. If you don't have the resource to respond formally a phone conversation or short meeting to offer thoughts might still be of interest. Obviously the level of interest/response may vary, and works best where their existing work has clear relevance, but there may be angles on an inquiry that they haven't considered and which may not be directly reflected in terms of reference, but which are valuable for the Committee.
- A [new All-Party Parliamentary Group on creative diversity](https://twitter.com/DiversityAPPG) has recently been formed - <https://twitter.com/DiversityAPPG>, being led by a former Minister, Ed Vaizey. This might be a useful vehicle to raise some issues – contacting him directly to offer input at this early stage may be well received (his contact details will be on the Parliament website).
- Working together to share resource and submit evidence or engage with civil servants and politicians collectively can be effective – and the NT has had some success pursuing this approach in the natural environment sector as part of coalitions of NGOs. There was talk on the day about forming a "think tank" - such a body could have potential to facilitate a shared voice in terms of political advocacy. The NT may be able to offer advice or support to this approach if helpful.

Following this session, I will be sharing these reflections with others in the NT, and putting some thought into what the NT can do to help support greater diversity of voices both in terms of our own, and the wider heritage sector's work on public policy and advocacy. Both myself and our Head of Inclusion would be more than willing to engage or participate in future work if useful and possible.

2. Liz Ellis, Policy Adviser Communities and Diversity, National Lottery Heritage Fund

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In this reflection, I'm focussing on points made by the research partners in their rich, honest and inspirational presentations and my follow up actions ahead.

Padma Rao, Sangini and Arts Connect: I was struck by Padma describing how the introduction of the Equality Act legislation in 2010 has contributed to a 'jostling' within BAME focussed organisations for funding and other resources, in part due to the specificity of concerns having been subsumed in overall equality legislation. Research demonstrates that since 2008 within the broader context of austerity and resultant huge cuts to local authority and public spending, a disproportionate impact has been experienced by individuals and communities with protected characteristics, including many BAME communities.

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein of NEEACA - Beverley referred to her long standing cultural, academic and social work expertise, including her contribution to the 2007 Freedom Think Tank marking the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the significant challenge to public bodies and Lottery funders in marking the complexity of this anniversary. Within my Policy role at the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the work of Beverley and many senior black British cultural and academic leaders in emphasising the contemporary UK legacy of colonialism including structural racism and injustice, has been crucial in holding public bodies and Lottery distributors to account in representing the diversity of contemporary UK experience. I was struck by Beverley describing the experience of UK BAME leaders and organisations 'being picked up and dropped' and I will represent this experience in my internal Policy role.

Sadiya Ahmed, Everyday Muslim - Sadiya spoke honestly of the challenge in keeping the inspirational work of Everyday Muslim sustainable, and in attracting a wider range of non-Muslim volunteers and staff to support ongoing work. Sadiya and I are meeting on 3 May to discuss in more detail her specific concerns and Everyday Muslim plans ahead.

Rosie Lewis, The Angelou Centre - Rosie shared her concerns over the lack of structural change following the success of BAM! Sistahood led by the Angelou Centre with HLF funding. She emphasised the role of human rights in cultural and other sectors, including use of Public Sector Equality Duty obligations and international role and use of CEDAW : Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>. Rosie pointed out that the UK has ratified CEDAW but has not incorporated this framework into public frameworks. I too value the role of human rights legislation in our sector and will continue to champion using the lens of rights based practice.

Degna Stone Eclipse Theatre - I was struck by the work by Degna and colleagues in keeping BAME cultural talent in the North East region, her work in leading, sustaining and extending professional development and career opportunities in achieving more equitable representation of BAME communities.

Follow up actions at the National Lottery Heritage Fund:

I have shared information on the upcoming 24 May symposium in our internal Inclusion Practice group, also sharing Stuart Hall's 1999 paper *Whose heritage : Un-settling 'the heritage', Re-Imagining the post-nation*. I have suggested to colleagues we have an informal lunch time reading

group to discuss this paper over the next few months, many UK-wide Heritage fund colleagues have already expressed interest in reading and discussing the paper and I'll fix a date for June/early July. I have shared the concerns raised over the mono-cultural bias of the Heritage Council with senior colleagues here in Business Innovation and Insight and with Hannah Jones, Policy Advisor at DCMS, our point of contact. I have asked that the National Lottery Heritage Fund use our influence to urge the involvement of BAME heritage leaders in the Heritage Council. I will pursue progress on this with senior colleagues in the next few weeks (May 2019).

Antonia Canal of the heritage lottery <Antonia.Canal@heritagefund.org.uk>:

I've included a summary of some of the key things Liz and I discussed below, for info:

- We're feeling positive about the Fund's **new mandatory outcome** for all heritage projects – that 'a wider range of people will be involved in heritage'. This feels like a key tool for creating change.
- Liz and I are in the process of **arranging a reading group to discuss Hall's 'Whose Heritage?' paper** and have a good level of interest from colleagues in taking part.
- Liz has **followed up with Georgina, from the National Trust**, as Liz can connect Georgina with Heather Smith, the Equalities Manager at the Trust. Liz is also planning to follow up with Heather directly.
- Liz also recently **met Sadiya, from Everyday Muslim**, to discuss next steps and ideas.

Our Engagement Team in the North offer pre-application advice to groups and we run a [project enquiry service](#), which is completely separate to the assessment process. I'd be happy to share more information on that.

3. Don O'Meara, Science Advisor North East and Hadrian's Wall, Historic England <Don.O'Meara@HistoricEngland.org.uk>

(Note; I use the term Official Organisation to refer to arm's length bodies or statutory bodies, often with a central or local government remit, while I use Community Organisation to refer to the grass roots groups represented at this event. This is merely for clarity)

The one day workshop was a very well run, and interesting experience both to participate in, and to observe the interaction between all of the participants. The 'cabaret' style set up was a much better format than the lecture hall style set-up and allowed for a more egalitarian engagement between participants.

A key take-away message for me was the lack of clarity which can exist between the public and Official Organisations. This is a common issue for many sectors of the public (e.g. Historic England/England Heritage Trust/National Trust be interchangeably confused in terms of their scopes and remits). What I am not clear about, and which might warrant further investigation, is how the negative experience of BAME groups/individuals with any one Official Organisations might taint their view of Official Organisations generally. An element of this was articulated by Beverley Previtt Goldstein who criticised the feeling that Official Organisations picked up BAME groups/individuals to address a project or tick a box, and then dropped them when this need had been met. From my own

view of the day it seemed there was frustration at Official Organisations encouraging engagement but then letting people down. This might stem from an over eagerness to be seen to engage with BAME groups/individuals initially and then being unable to offer support when it came to actions. A strong take away message for me was that early on Official Organisations must be clear about their remit, and what they can and cannot support. Failure to do this will lead to frustration, disappointment, and possibly a feeling of exclusion. A connected issue here was presented by Beverley – When Official Organisations does decide to engage with a BAME ground they need to be mindful of appearing to pick up and drop BAME groups/organisations when they have ‘ticked a box’ or completed a project. A possible problem here is employees can often be changed within large organisation; therefore the human face and the contacts that had been made can be lost. Once an individual has left their organisation may not fully appreciate the range of ‘soft’ contacts they have made, or how important these contacts could be to external groups/individuals. Another issue is funding in Official Organisations can be heavily project based’ a single pot of money is allocated to a project which has a set beginning and end date; again this comes down to Official Organisations properly communicating their structure and managing expectations.

Another key theme was the nature of open opportunity. This might be summed up as the difference between opening a door on one hand, or actively inviting someone inside on the other. Padma Rao from Sangini and Rosie Lewis from the Angelou Centre I felt made this point when discussing representation on official boards. Padma pointed out to Bill Griffiths from Tyne and Wear Museums that a recent call for a new board member was very off putting to her as it asked for extensive business experience. She felt she could offer them a lot of insight into engaging with people, but her experience was not what they were looking for even though the role description asked for people from a diverse background. Rosie made good points about how ‘equal’ equal-opportunities are when a range of other barriers also need to be considered.

I found the second part of the day very interesting, though I think some of the official organisations represented did not expect such a robust line of questioning. The two issues I sensed were:

1. A need to communicate the structure of an Official Organisation
2. A need to communicate the remit of the Official Organisation
3. A need for post-engagement dialogue; how do people feel after they have engage with an Official Organisation

This was articulated in the questioning of David Gaffney from the Arts Council (AC). He gave very good responses to all of the questions he was asked but it was clear that some of the frustrations people had directed towards the AC were actually issues with organisations the AC had funded. In this case the AC might need to be more mindful of complaints direct at bodies it funds. It was clear that the AC was suffering reputational damage from how some of its funded organisations had acted in the past. Some of these issues seemed to relate to sharp practice by these organisations (such as rates of pay/remuneration), but some of these issues may related to how separate funding streams are allocated (a single project might have multiple funders with money coming from different pots leading to lack of clarity as to who was responsible for what). I think Official Organisations need to listen to these individual experiences as the experience of an individual can be seen, or interpreted as, representative of the treatment of their self-identified social group. This comes back to Official Organisations being clear early on what their remit is and how decisions are arrived at.

The line of questioning was robust (which was refreshing) and it was clear some of the participants from Official Organisations had expected a fairly passive audience. I think no matter what the experiences of these representatives on the day (I think I got off lightly compared to some most of the other representatives) it certainly gave them a lot to consider as to how they perceive their levels of BAME engagement. Equally, I think it was good for participants to meet individuals from what can often be fairly faceless Official Organisations.

As an overall experience the format was excellent in bringing the range of people together. The Official Organisations involved should strongly consider supporting events like this on a regular basis.

4. Habib Rahman, Councillor, Newcastle Council

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No response.

5. Bill Griffiths, Head of Programmes, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

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In haste and to take your points in turn:

Points learned about what needs to change – for me its communications, we at TWAM want to do this work, but I don't think we are always very clear about what that means for people, and what our capacity actually is and opportunities actually are.

New perspectives – yes from the communities – I did not get to hear from all the policy makers due to time constraints. I actually felt more positive – that there is a lot of common ground – we need to improve mutual understanding of each others situations. I think this was possibly more relevant to TWAM than some of the others given we are a locally based delivery organisation.

Cheekily I would make the observation that on occasions the conversation seemed to be as much/more about gender than ethnicity.

Decision making processes for me is more about getting involved, eg via the TWAM valuing voices programme, and as stated above, improving understanding of situations

I was sorry I was not able to stay to contribute to any final discussion as I think that would have enabled me to present you with a more coherent note here – feel like I missed some key points that might/should have been developed then.

Again cheekily there is only 1 higher up at TWAM and I have indeed discussed it with him – but in fact the need is to discuss it across the teams as part of a wider exploration of community engagement which we are undertaking. At this end the issue is how we meaningfully engage with every community. One general point about larger organisations is that the senior staff all agree something should be done - but capacity at delivery level can sometimes be the sticking point, so actually embedding the work there is the real trick/challenge.

6. David Gaffney, Senior Relationship Manager for Diversity, Arts Council England

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What points you learned from the workshop about what needs to change in your organisation to promote equality in the culture and heritage sectors

We know that Arts Council can do more to promote diversity amongst its funded organisations and this was reinforced by the feedback from the group who attended the session. There was in particular a view that arts council should develop a system where third-party user comments and feedback can be taken into account formally. Possibly technology may allow us to develop a system such as this in the future. At the moment monitoring of the experience of users, delivery partners, artists, curators, and other stakeholders is managed and carried out by the organisations themselves (or commissioned by them) and reported to arts council.

In general, Arts council England wishes to ensure that the work we invest in is reflective of the diversity of contemporary England.

Our Equality Analysis of the previous portfolio (2015-18) highlighted a low number of new applications from BME and disability led organisations, as well as the low success rate for those new applicants. It also highlighted the lack of diverse leadership across our arts organisations and museums.

In response to this, we launched the Elevate programme in January 2016. This invested in 40 diverse organisations that (at the time) didn't receive regular Arts Council funding, to help them better meet their artistic ambitions. This programme has had a significant positive impact in shaping our 2018-22 portfolio – 30 Elevate recipients applied for the new portfolio and 20 were recommended for funding. In response to the lack of diverse leadership, we invested £2.6 million in our new Change Makers programme, which supported the development of 20 BME and disabled leaders.

We remain committed to diversifying the leadership of the arts and cultural sector, particularly across the larger organisations

We continue to develop our understanding of diversity in the arts and cultural workforce, capturing data across five protected characteristics: age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

We also collect specific data on the diversity of key leadership roles (CEO, Artistic Director, Chair) through our annual survey. We have so far published two editions of our annual Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case report and will continue to do so.

We are also working with Manchester University on issues around social mobility in the creative industries and the arts and cultural sector. See the Panic report for a bit more background on this.

<http://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf>

We prioritise support for diverse artists to access our open access funding schemes and we also prioritise applications from these groups and individuals in our decision making processes.

I would also appreciate some personal words as to whether the workshop changed your ideas or gave you any new information or perspective.

Personally I was interested in the contributions from National Trust and English Heritage and to hear the challenges they face, and to Newcastle city council views around culture were also useful to hear. It was also interesting to hear about the challenges faced by big institutions such as Tyne and Wear Museums when trying to diversify its board and governance systems.

The contributions from other group members were interesting and challenging and sometimes exposed a gap between policy makers and grassroots activism in some areas.

Finally, any points on how the minority-led cultural organisations could actually enter into the decision-making process in your area: contact people, policy fora, council or parliamentary committees etc.

We would encourage cultural activists to get involved in their local cultural organisations and institutions at every level but essentially at a leadership influencing level in order that real changes may be made over the longer term.