

Longform Evaluation Report

Museums Association
Anti-Racist Museums Programme

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The programme evaluated in this report was ideated by Joshua Robertson, and designed by Cheryl Garvey, Julian Walker and Jamie Spurway from Talk Listen Create.

Context & Introduction

In 2020, the shocking murder of George Floyd catalysed a re-examination of systemic racism across the globe – particularly in the US, UK and Europe. This, and the 2018 Empowering Collections report, was the context within which the Museums Association formed their first anti-racism and decolonisation steering group, and a decolonising museums online learning programme.

Further impetus to design and deliver an ambitious anti-racist museums programme came out of conversations in a panel discussion at the MA Conference in 2020, which highlighted the role of racism and whiteness in preventing real sector change and effective decolonisation. Core funds from MA reserves were committed to a pilot which ran between April and November 2024, a programme designed by Joshua Robertson and Talk Listen Create (TLC). This full-length evaluation report seeks to explore the experience of the cohort, facilitators and MA staff, outline key indicators of impact and to comment on access and organisation, providing recommendations for refinement in year 2, planned for 2025/26.

It is important here to acknowledge that racism is at the core of this work. Racism is a social construct which operates globally, but particularly in Western society, on an internalised, interpersonal, institutional and systemic level. Racism positions whiteness as the default standard for human, and falsely as of greater value than darker skin colours. As Richard Dyer says in his seminal book 'White', "there is no more powerful position than being 'just' human."¹ Racism has historical roots in slavery, colonialism and Empire, with a definition of race as defined by physical characteristics recorded from the 1700s onwards. As the MA write in their introduction to the 'Decolonising Museums' campaign, "throughout history museums have helped to make the case for colonialism by collecting and cataloguing empire, and by advancing racist and prejudiced views of the world."² Museums therefore have an innate connection with racism and its byproducts and legacies – colonialism, slavery and Empire - and thus a huge responsibility to actively dismantle it.

Anti-Racist Principles & Meta Skills

To ensure the evaluation report and its contents are read within the context of anti-racism theory and practice, two key learning frameworks will be referenced throughout: BRAP's Anti-Racist Principles and Meta Skills. The design of the programme by Cheryl Garvey and Julian Walker from Talk Listen Create (TLC) was guided by these concepts and therefore provide a useful context within which to situate these findings.

BRAP's Anti-Racist Principles

- Dismantle racialised thinking
- Examine the unexamined norm
- Adopt a complexity mindset
- Challenge systemic oppression
- Build a coalition for change
- Disrupt and use power differently

BRAP's Anti-Racist Meta Skills

- **Curiosity:** about self and system
- **Compassion:** for self and others. See how responses are conditioned
- **Critical Lens:** noting power dynamics. Alert to how racism reasserts itself
- **Reflexivity:** Everything I learn applies to me
- **Emotional self-awareness:** feel emotions and not get 'caught'. Take data
- **Complexity:** Both/and mindset. Hold paradox, and not knowing

The Meta Skills seek to support practitioners to keep anti-racism work alive in themselves, and in their systems. They have been a foundational reference point for the cohort to return to, often referenced in the interview conversations and in action planning. They are therefore a useful framework with which to understand the impact of the programme on the cohort.

Both frameworks originate in innovative cross-sector work, and are not specific to museums, however offer a universal approach to anti-racism.

Anti-Racist Evaluation

It is worth acknowledging at the outset my own positionality. I have undertaken this evaluation while recognising that my lack of lived experience of racism and existence as a white person in a racialised world will influence the findings in a fundamental way.

However, one core tenet of the programme which has guided my approach to this work is that anti-racism work is everyone's to do – including, and perhaps especially, evaluators. Evaluation as a discipline has the capacity to actively or passively perpetuate the characteristics of white supremacy culture as detailed by Tema Okun.

- **Objectivity** – historically a founding principle of evaluation, but one that enables passivity and retreat to safe, rather than brave, spaces
- **Worship of the Written Word** – using the written word to categorise, annotate, and codify information
- **Right to Comfort** – evaluation reports can focus on the positive impact and shy away from critical analysis
- **Either/Or** - typically, particularly quantitative data is used to provide a yes/no answer to a complex question
- **One Right Way** – evaluators begin by creating a framework that becomes the 'right' way to assess impact
- **Progress is More & Quantity over Quality** – objective measurement of progress and quantitative datasets centre quantity over quality
- **Urgency** – deadlines around evaluation and the need for immediate summative evaluation create false urgency behind impact

Because of this, it is necessary for evaluators to use a racialised lens. As Veronica Thomas, Faun Rockcliffe, Kendra DeLaine, Anna Madison and Stacey McDonald Lowe argue in their 2018 article 'Racism, Social Programming, and Evaluation: Where do we go from here?':

“A racialized lens means paying attention, even when uncomfortable, to the ways in which race shapes problem definition and solution as well as particular group's access to opportunity. Using a racialized lens should compel evaluators to reflect on their own thinking about race and to consider how this informs the manner in which they conceptualize, implement, and disseminate their evaluations.”

Various resources have been used, particularly WestEd's Anti-Racist Evaluation Strategies resource, TSIC's OCEAN Racial Justice Evaluation Principles, and Lauren Beriont's 'Decolonising Evaluation' blog post for Emergence Collective. Several anti-racism principles have been applied to this evaluation – more information and resources can be found in the appendix and bibliography.

Early on, qualitative data was found to be the most useful for understanding programme impact, and so at the core of this report is narrative data from interviews with participants, MA staff and facilitators, alongside observation of programme sessions and a MA Conference panel discussion in October 2024. (see Appendix for more) Where there is quantitative data used, it comes from reflective Mentimeter session evaluation conducted by the TLC team, and a midpoint / baseline reflection survey from September 2024. There is follow-up reflection planned for April 2025 to capture what has happened personally and professionally for the cohort in the 6 months following the end of the programme.

It is important to highlight that in their engagement with the evaluation process, contributors have been open, honest and vulnerable in their reflections. There is discord, complexity, discomfort and nuance in their experience, reflecting the personal nature of this programme and that anti-racism is embodied and uncomfortable work, even in a professional context. For me, evaluating this programme for the Museums Association (MA) has been a privilege, enabling critical reflection on both personal circumstances and professional practice. I hope that reading this report goes some way to enabling this for others too.

About the Programme

The pilot cohort for the Anti-Racist Museums Programme was comprised of 23 senior leaders from six organisations from across three nations in the United Kingdom. Within this group were four multi-site local authority museum services - Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, Bristol Culture – (Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives), Amgueddfa Cymru Museum Wales and Birmingham Museums Trust - and two smaller organisations – Migration Museum, and Fulham Palace, both based in London.

Senior leadership comprised of professionals at a Trustee, CEO, Director, Head of Department and Programme Lead level, depending on the organisation. Across the organisations participating, there were varied definitions of 'senior leadership' which contributed to cohort diversity.

The programme was ideated by Joshua Robertson, Policy & Campaigns Officer at the Museum Association and designed through collaborative process by Cheryl Garvey, Julian Walker and Jamie Surpway from Talk Listen Create (TLC), an anti-racist training organisation run by Cheryl. TLC are deeply connected to the work of BRAP Equality, Birmingham, and used several of their anti-racism resources to develop the programme.

The programme was delivered largely virtually, other than one final in-person session hosted in Birmingham. There were 6 group all-day sessions, and each cohort member was offered two individual coaching sessions with a facilitator. The structure of the first five sessions was:

- **Morning** – All-group training, with taught content and active discussion and reflection, followed by a break over lunch
- **Afternoon** – Smaller group Action Learning Sets, each run by a different facilitator
- **Closing** – Action Learning Set time without the facilitators

The final session, conducted in person in Birmingham, comprised a morning of reflection, building coalition and plans to take anti-racism work back into organisations, and an afternoon feedback session by the Museums Association to collect thoughts about what's next.

Programme Outcomes

The key outcomes from the programme were defined by the MA as:

1. Participating individuals demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of racism and its complexities within the heritage sector in line with the learning outcomes of the Museum Essentials Supporting Anti-Racism online learning course.
2. Participants show evidence of actively dismantling institutional racism within their own respective organisations, thanks to feeling more confident and competent.
3. There is a cohort of museums that are making progress towards becoming anti-racist and which act as advocates to share learning across the UK museum sector, including the challenges and vulnerabilities faced. This is facilitated by the MA.

For Talk Listen Create, the key outcomes focussed on Outcomes 1 and 2:

- **Knowing** - Understanding the complexities of racism in its everyday, institutional, and systemic expressions, and acknowledges their role in perpetuating some of these systems of exclusion and differentiation for racialised people of colour.
- **Doing** - Developing skills and confidence to take action. Includes the ability to act from a place of imperfection and shifting understanding, in the face of resistance from self and system.
- **Being** - Living anti-racism as an embodied practice and using the 'self' as an instrument of change.

Sector Mapping

Museum, Heritage, Education & Cultural Sector

The below is a sector map of existing anti-racism initiatives at the time of writing:

Organisation & Initiative	Online resources offered?	Training offered?	Middle management or senior leadership involved?	Notes
Museums Association	Yes, online training course with individual membership	MA Anti-Racist Museums Programme	Senior Leadership focus for training	6 all day sessions Anti-racism trainers from outside the sector
Group for Education in Museums	No	Yes, Developing Anti-Racist Practice in Museums	Any GEM Member	2 3-hour sessions Museum sector anti-racism & decolonisation trainers
Museums Galleries Scotland	Yes, articles, research findings and resources	Yes, anti-oppression training	Selected cohort, similar to MA – but open to all in Scotland	12 or 4 hours per month
University of Arts London	Yes, online seminars, articles and reports	No	N/A	N/A
Kids in Museums	Youth Panel online event recording	No	N/A	N/A
Association for Independent Museums	Yes, AIM Tackling Inequality Hallmark	No	N/A	N/A

Beyond this, other Museums have made commitments on their website such as [National Museum Liverpool](#), and [the V&A](#) - but have not published or publicised further initiatives.

Outside the Sector

The below is a sector map of existing anti-racism initiatives outside of the Museum, Heritage, Education & Cultural Sectors:

Organisation & Initiative	Online resources offered?	Training offered?	Middle management or senior leadership involved?	Notes
brap	Yes	Yes, on an individual basis	N/A	Brap Website
The Kings Fund	Yes	Yes, Anti-racist leadership development for healthcare	Yes	Kings Fund Website
NSPCC	Yes	Yes, anti-racist and anti-discrimination in safeguarding	Anyone can book	NSPCC Website
Pact Pioneers	Yes, an Arts Handbook for Anti-Racism	No, one-off project in 2021	N/A	Link to PACT Pioneers Arts Handbook
Teaching While White	Yes	Yes, teacher training workshops	Yes (see Ed Leadership)	Link to Teaching While White Website
NHS England - Anti-Racist Framework	Yes	Yes	N/A	Link to NHS Framework brap 'Too Hot to Handle' report about NHS, 2024
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Example of anti-racist funding and social investment			JRF Pathway Fund Website

1) Impact

“I knew it would stretch me – but it has been life changing – sort of about work but not about work at all”

- Cohort Interviewee

The immediate impact of the programme has been explored in this section, highlighting three main areas: embodied change, feeling equipped to act, and community and coalition. Necessarily, this varies across cohort members. To represent the diversity of experience, key themes will be highlighted alongside complexities, outliers and opposing perspectives.

1.1) Embodied Change

“I am so much more aware (watching the news, in a meeting at work) of where the power exists and who holds it, who doesn’t”

- Cohort Interviewee

Embodied change was a key intended outcome of the programme, as it is at the core of anti-racism work – to change the way that the cohort thinks and feels about racism, anti-racism, and their own racialised identities, and actions. There is evidence that the cohort experienced varied degrees of embodied change, particularly around confidence and boldness, comfort or acceptance of the complexity of identity, awareness, and growth in meta-skills. There are also some more complex or singular experiences covered at the end of the section.

Confidence and Boldness

“I feel lighter about this work, more able and confident to take it forward without feeling such a heavy responsibility for just me [to do it]”

- Cohort Interviewee

Improved confidence was a near-universal theme, though it was experienced by cohort members in different ways. Global majority colleagues, who necessarily did not experience the same level of ‘realisation’ as others detailed later in this section shared ways in which the programme had made them more confident, and less cautious, about speaking up in new spaces. Part of this was the realisation that there was community and coalition within the cohort, and therefore within the museum sector more widely – “a coalition of the willing” - that their experiences & voices were helpful for others.

“A big moment was being able to go to a British Museum exhibition preview and talk to Hew Locke about the programme – [I was] able to express it in a way I wouldn’t have done before. I asked a question - ‘What impact is this having on the people working with you on the exhibition? How is it helping them to think differently about the collection?’. This flipped the whole thing they were trying to do...[making] it also about the BM staff...how is this changing the fabric of [the] museum?”

- Cohort Interviewee

“Something that was useful to see was how I have learned a language and internalised certain cautious and sometimes too cautious accommodating manners and behaviours around conflict or raising issues to do with racism. [I am] very practiced at trying to gently progress conversations – sometimes that gentleness is unhelpful, needs to be unlearned”

- Cohort Interviewee

More broadly, the cohort reported being more confident and comfortable with including up to date anti-racism theory and practice in their professional lives, or that this programme had contributed to their confidence at work and in senior leadership roles more broadly. Others highlighted confidence around naming racism or actively starting conversations about it with others in their lives.

Across the interviews and in session discussions, the growth in confidence about anti-racism work included the confidence to get things wrong. Removing some of the anxiety around this was a key part of the change that people felt had been elicited by the programme.

“I was initially nervous about being in the online workshops, nervous about saying something wrong – but I am significantly less worried about that now – acceptance that this is complex, not straightforward, not everyone is going to be seeing it in the same way and not everyone will agree”

- Cohort Interviewee

Reflection on Identity

For some cohort members, the change they identified was the opportunity to reflect on personal background or circumstances, including those with global majority or mixed heritage backgrounds. A few cohort members highlighted the dissonance in being treated as though they were white, when in fact they had mixed heritage or another marginalised racialised identity. This appeared to become easier as the programme progressed, offering an opportunity to come to terms with the complexity of identity, or reflect on their own positionality.

“Holding space for the fact we’re all part of the systems, and not to blame for that – actively making choices about where to hold systems up or challenge and dismantle them.”

- Cohort Interviewee

For the white cohort members, this manifested in an acceptance that upbringing defined many of their beliefs and behaviours. More fundamentally, also, that whiteness is a culture with meaning attached to it, rather than being a default – or not a culture in its own right.

“Acceptance of way you were brought up was rooted in that [challenge around whiteness] – [if you] dig deep exploring it, [it] shows the depth and scale”

- Cohort Interviewee

This reflection extended into other parts of their identity – for one cohort member, it was important to understand how gender identity also intersects and manifests within this context.

“Constant reminders of white masculinity - “I’m the problem” - or rather, what I represent is the problem. [Working to] navigate and deconstruct how to challenge ingrained habits around behaviour with and as a white man”

- Cohort Interviewee

Building from greater understanding and acceptance of identity, many cohort members, particularly those who are white, shared that the programme had enabled them to think more critically about their own positionality and responsibility in dismantling racism. This was evident in Session 4, which focussed on decolonisation practice. Cohort reflections on this content topic centred on how it was everybody’s role to decolonise, but those who had benefitted the most had a greater responsibility to lead decolonisation work.

Awareness

Greater awareness was universally reported, though the emphasis was different across the cohort. For global majority cohort members, this awareness was about refreshing existing understanding and hearing about cross-sector anti-racist theory and practice, and about the different initiatives and context of cohort organisations, particularly in Wales and Scotland. Rather than being more aware of racism, this was more about sector connection and knowledge, and the opportunity to hear from anti-racist trainers and educators firsthand, in an in-depth manner.

“Some experiences I was able to share in the room seemed helpful”

- Cohort Interviewee

In addition, the programme enabled global majority cohort members to share their own experiences in a brave space, offering these to the cohort as examples of current sector experiences, barriers and limitations. The examples, perhaps due to their personal nature, were referenced by white cohort members as moments that made them most aware of how racism can assert itself within the museum sector today.

“Why wouldn’t you want equality? Somehow you don’t even notice when you’re not. The systems are there to keep power in place.”

- Cohort Interviewee

More broadly, most of the white cohort members shared that they felt they were more aware of racism after participation. They reported seeing the world differently, having more nuanced views, and being able to identify racism in interactions and structures more easily. An element of the programme that delivered this most effectively was the interpersonal dialogue between Cheryl and Julian, which was highlighted as illuminating and instructive – demonstrating the pervasive nature of racism, and how it re-asserts itself even for trainers who are trusting and collaborative.

“I can notice it more in society, that’s the change in me”

- Cohort Interviewee

This was not just in the workplace; one participant relayed an instance of seeing racist microaggression on public transport – something they weren’t sure they would have noticed before. This increase in awareness – or ‘lifting the lid’ resulted in increased empathy for others’ experiences. Some talked about ‘epiphany’ or ‘lightbulb’ moments during the programme, back at work, or watching the news.

“When I listen to the news and politics, I see it through a very different lens – like I’ve lifted the lid on a box and the real truth has come out now – I see the world very differently, I see myself very differently”

- Cohort Interviewee

Broader social contexts added to this outcome, highlighting how the cohort were relating the programme to their lives and the wider world while it was underway. The racially motivated violence that erupted across the UK in the Summer of 2024 brought their learning to the fore and was widely discussed in the fourth session. For some, this felt like a test of their learning and challenged them to behave differently – or confront why they may not have behaved differently or backed away from confrontation or conversation with colleagues or friends and family on this topic.

“What’s been going on in the wider world has been an interesting backdrop to this. It makes me think about things in a different way because it resonates with what we are doing here”

- Cohort Contribution, Session 4

Growth in meta-skills

“[I’m] still working on the embodiment of skills, like compassion and complexity – not a fault of the programme, more that its ongoing work”

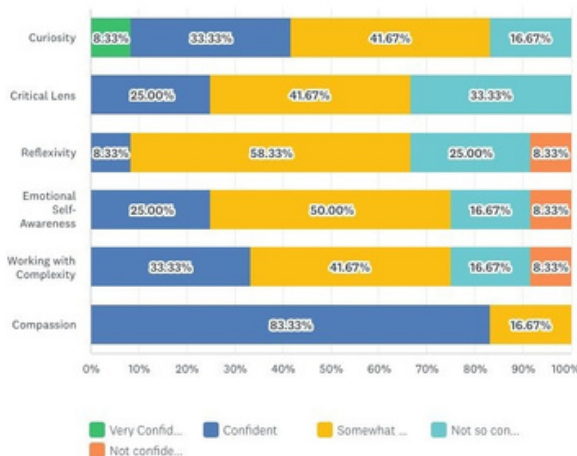
- Cohort Interviewee

Most of the cohort mentioned awareness about, and growth in the meta-skills in their interviews. Demonstrated their utility and holistic nature, different meta-skills appeared at varied points in the programme – in session 4, which focussed on decolonisation, curiosity, critical lens, compassion and emotional self-awareness were referenced by the facilitators and the cohort. This contrasts with the final session, where the cohort were required to present plans for further anti-racist work in their organisations. In this context, the meta-skills referenced the least were emotional self-awareness, curiosity, and compassion. The skills mentioned the most were critical lens, reflexivity and complexity – referencing the difficulties involved in taking anti-racist work forwards, and that reflection and criticality is required to work out how to make change.

Between a reflection on baseline and midpoint confidence in meta skills, the cohort saw an average 0.63-point increase in confidence.

Thinking back to before the programme started, how would you rate your confidence in the 6 meta-skills for anti-racism on a scale of Very Confident to Not Confident At All?

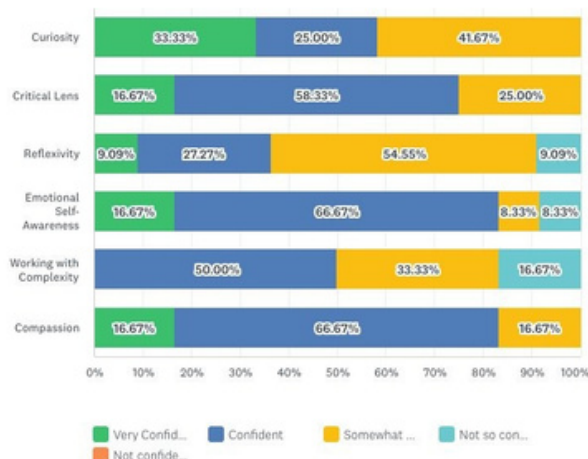
Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



More broadly, when asked about change in themselves, the cohort highlighted complexity as a skill that had noticeably developed. This connected to their reflections on their own positionality and the vast challenge of anti-racism work. This is encouraging: in the Anti-Racist Museums MA Conference Panel in 2024, one TLC facilitator reflected that complexity, disruption and discomfort are key to anti-racist work.

At the mid-point of this programme, how would you rate your confidence in the 6 meta-skills for anti-racism on a scale of Very Confident to Not Confident At All?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



“The meta-skills [enable] curiosity over judgement, [so you can] recognise where worries and concerns came from. Without placing guilt ... [they mean you can] work your way out – calmer with it, understanding where feelings of shame, guilt and defensiveness come in”

- Cohort Contribution, Session 4

Complexities: Embodied Change

While some themes were relatively universal across the cohort, some were less consistent.

- Emotional connection was very varied. For some, the reflective learning method didn't suit them, or they felt numb due to other pressures or their professional identity, struggling to connect with bodily signs of discomfort, and emotional self-awareness. It was particularly white women that experienced this.
- Reflection on identity was complex and individual. One cohort member experienced more discomfort around their background, heritage and identity, highlighting that for those whose heritage has been overwritten by colonialism and slavery, reflections were more challenging.
- Determination and motivation to act was another indicator of change. Two cohort members expressed that the change in them was the impetus to act in various ways – and that they had new determination and motivation thanks to the programme.

1.2) Equipped to Act

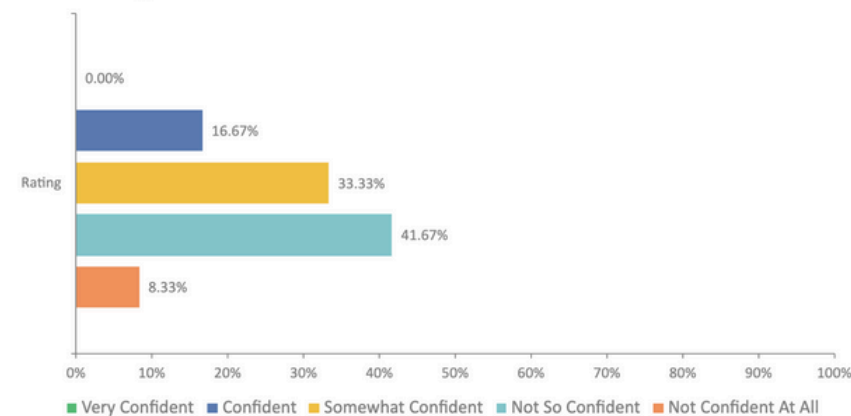
In general, there was consensus that the cohort felt equipped to act, though there was some disagreement around the practical support offered. Highlighted by some, though not consistently, was the coaching sessions – which offered more in-depth criticality and individualised learning.

“Emotionally I feel better equipped – shielded up – happy to acknowledge where I am on this, and acknowledge my learning and things I need to do”

- Cohort Interviewee

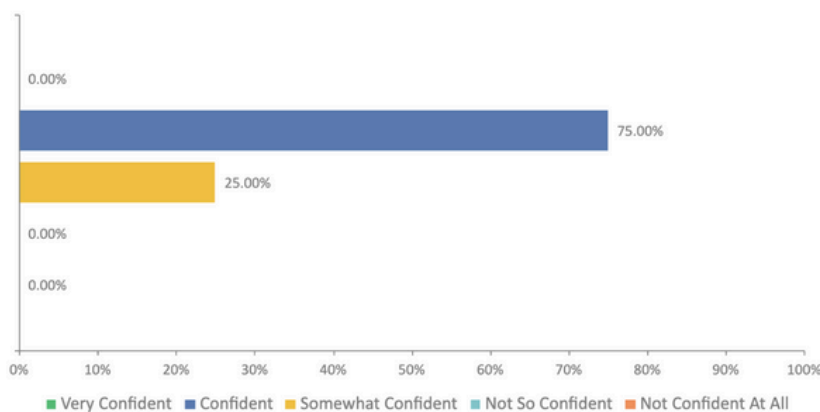
Thinking back to the beginning of the programme, how would you rate your confidence in taking action to tackle racism as an individual?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Having taken part in half of the programme, how would you rate your confidence in taking action to tackle racism as an individual?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Knowledge

Across the cohort, there was less consensus about the knowledge gained as part of the programme. As per the TLC definition, knowing comprises the cohort understanding the complexities of racism in its everyday, institutional, and systemic expressions, and acknowledging an individual's role in perpetuating some of these systems of exclusion and differentiation for racialised people of colour. It is important to highlight here that cohort members from global majority backgrounds potentially did less of this topic-specific learning – instead taking away other things.

“Some of [the learning] was knowledge but a lot of it was connecting myself into the broader themes and systems we were exploring”

- Cohort Interviewee

Key areas of learning that applied across the whole cohort were twofold:

- Technical knowledge – particularly terminology that is used as best practice, and conceptual frameworks (e.g. coalition and not allyship)
- Sector knowledge - what others are doing within and beyond the museum sector

Understanding the Complexities of Racism

“Other stuff I picked up on was [that I] learned the subtleties of racism – I was looking back on my notes”

- Cohort Interviewee

The white members of the cohort found learning about racism useful. The online course, for those that did complete it, was found to be particularly thorough. One area commented on more frequently was the concept of whiteness and the othering of global majority people. This topic was challenging, but for some was an entirely new concept, leading to more noticeable growth in knowledge in this area.

“It has given me more confidence in terms of – noticed that since doing the course, before while I may have challenged people and behaviour – I now had knowledge to back up my challenges”

- Cohort Interviewee

Language

“Not being afraid to use language, less afraid to get it wrong – importantly understanding that language is used differently by everyone and there’s no one accepted set of terms...language is complex”

- Cohort Interviewee

A more universal area of learning was around increased confidence in using anti-racist terminology and language. This growth in literacy around the topic was a key driver of increases in confidence to have conversations or voice their opinions in professional or personal situations. Not being afraid to ‘get it wrong’ enabled the cohort to feel more equipped to act.

Awareness and Acknowledgement

Covered in more detail in ‘Embodied Change’, the white members of the cohort spoke widely about greater awareness about their role in perpetuating racism inadvertently, or by going along with the status quo. A growth in critical thinking was crucial here.

“I am more conscious of my own power and scope of influence and aware of how historically I’ve been using that power to unintentionally uphold white supremacist systems”

- Cohort Interviewee

This was also an area of challenge for the white members of the cohort, who cited examples of past behaviour that they were reflecting on with discomfort as the programme progressed. This largely centred around specific situations in which cohort members reflected as they learned more on whether they could have acted differently – questioning the unexamined norm or disrupted and used their power or privilege differently. This was reflected in the panel at the MA Conference in which two cohort members reflected on the past and how they might act differently.

“For me it’s about where I stopped pushing for conversations... an act of disruption can be small - [like just asking] ‘is it?’”

- Cohort Panel Member contribution, MA Conference 2024

Museum Practice

“[I wish we had] explored how did that project enable or not enable change for the institution – not about how you do it, but what happens when you do do it right”

- Cohort Interviewee

The cohort were varied in feeling equipped by the museum practice content included in the programme. Some felt the programme could better connect to sector best practice and current or past examples of work. Highlighting this, feedback on the guest speaker sessions was mixed, depending on the level of experience of the organisation in decolonisation work. Some members of the cohort felt the examples brought were not particularly innovative or current and the style of delivery was more dictatorial and less discursive.

Overall, sector-related guest speakers brought into the sessions to offer provocation rather than education would have been appreciated. With this, members of the cohort would have liked opportunities to discuss examples of work and practice applying the meta skills to them directly.

Tools

“[My coach] said – ‘you are the toolkit now’. This stuck with me, [and I] found this useful.”

- Cohort Interviewee

While there were some cohort members who may have preferred a more tools-focused approach, the programme was not designed to deliver this. As one facilitator reflected in the panel discussion at the MA Conference 2024:

“There are no checklists, no plan, no measurable skills attached to anti-racism. This work asks you to embody three concepts: disrupting power, being aware of your positionality, and using your skills and feelings to be trustworthy in coalition with others.”

Despite the facilitators highlighting that wanting a toolkit or the answers is a common reaction to anti-racist training which focusses on embodied change, it is important to note that the interviews were conducted during a transition period – between theory and action planning – which may explain this to some extent.

“[It is more about] how we can embody anti-racism – thought course might be more toolkit focused, but more about trying to change how we think and feel about things”

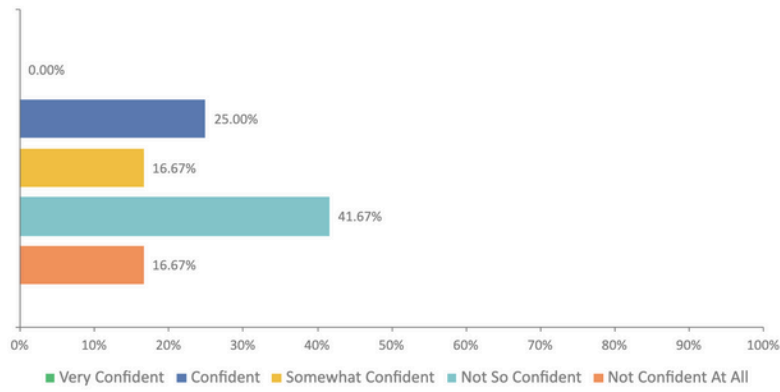
- Cohort Interviewee

Barriers

Across cohort, facilitator and staff interviews, barriers to change surfaced in discussions about feeling equipped to act. Largely structural, these were both internal and external, reflecting the overstretched Arts sector more broadly. Barriers identified included resource and funding, time to reflect, come together and undertake actions, and competing priorities. More broadly, anti-racism work in a lot of cohort organisations requires additional funding, which is by no means assured. In some organisations, this required specific roles rather than embedded work.

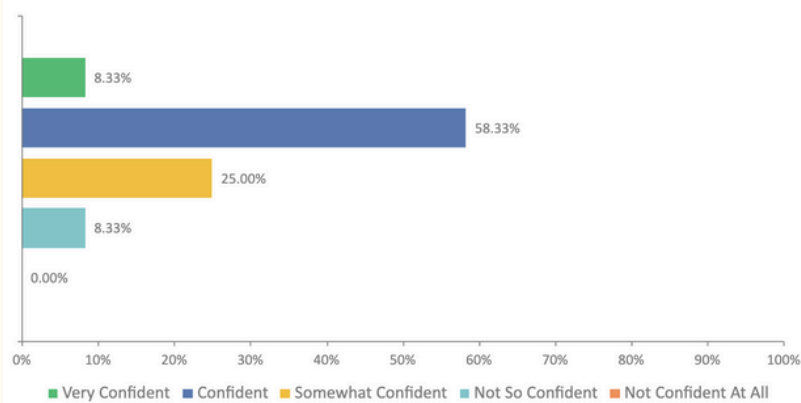
Q18: Thinking back to the beginning of the programme, how would you rate your confidence in taking action to tackle racism in your organisation?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Having taken part in half of the programme, how would you rate your confidence in taking action to tackle racism in your organisation?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



“Having anti-racism as a practice requires every stakeholder between you and changing a policy or introducing something new or implementing decolonization work to be on board with the concept, the process”

- Cohort Interviewee



1.3) Community and Coalition

The Anti-Racist Museums Programme focussed purposefully on coalition. As Emma Dabiri argues in *What White People Can Do Next*, this is necessary distinction as “allyship offers charity whereas coalition is more about solidarity”, moving away from saviourism and towards the idea that anti-racist or anti-oppression work is everybody's. As a member of the panel discussion at the MA Conference 2024 highlighted, whiteness is inherent in the idea of allyship, whereas coalition is for everyone.

Intention to Build Coalition and Community

There was a strong emphasis amongst the cohort about the need for dialogue and collaboration with colleagues and partners to move forwards. Working out what comes next together was perceived as a critical next step, indicating the need for further exploration before action

“The theoretical knowledge is there; it's just with a network we'd bounce ideas off people and share best/worst practices and know what has or hasn't worked”

- Cohort Interviewee

Particularly for global majority colleagues, as detailed in ‘Embodied Change’, the programme offered an opportunity to build coalition and find community within the sector with people of different racialised identities. Through the programme, the cohort relayed that they had found coalition and community in each other, but also in other parts of their lives. Some referenced actively seeking to build this in their personal lives.

“[I've been] reaching out to friends that have drifted off who had a real interest in this area – [and thinking about] what is my coalition. Similarly, I've been going to events and talking about it with a couple of people working around anti-racism and exploring privilege. [These are] new friends and new professional colleagues outside of the museum”

- Cohort Interviewee

Cohort Connections

Several cohort members referenced staying in touch with organisations from the programme, referencing elements of practice that they'd like to stay connected about. Without a formal structure, fear around losing momentum and connection was also expressed by some.

Several expressed a desire for the Museums Association to take on a convening role – and indeed internal Museums Association stakeholders also view this as a critical role the organisation can play. Without this facilitation and coordination, it is perhaps unlikely that a consistent network of the cohort will emerge beyond organisation-to-organisation collaboration.

“[It would be good] to have some kind of follow up – [we've been] talking about quite personal emotional things with a group of people and it would be nice to have them as a network – could do this by ourselves but I wondered if 3 months after and then 6 months after – we could come back together again”

- Cohort Interviewee



2) Experience

“I connected with it personally and emotionally in a way I wasn’t expecting, [which is my] overriding feeling”

- Cohort Interviewee

2.1) Cohort

Value

Overwhelmingly, the cohort reported a positive experience, and that the programme was worthwhile and transformative. The quality of facilitation, content and opportunity for professional development offered was highlighted as incredibly meaningful and innovative. In addition, as highlighted by one cohort member, the value of the programme was also that it was **“a clear statement of intent by the organisations and their senior leadership – in committing time to this” and by the MA, was “a good move away from inaction... leading the sector and showing it where to go.”**

Across the interviews, when asked what being part of the programme meant to them, the cohort focussed on what a privilege and opportunity it was, how thought provoking and life changing the programme was, and how proud and satisfied they feel having completed it. In addition, most highlighted the critical importance of the subject matter – and that the programme came at the right time – both contextually in the world and for their own local or organisational contexts. Finally, the cohort reflected that it was nice to have something positive to do, and being part of the programme felt like they were ‘doing’ something.

“Really valuable on a personal level as well as a professional level”

- Cohort Interviewee

Care

When asked about challenge, vulnerability was mentioned by many cohort members. This was vulnerability of self and recognising it in others when they shared experiences or their emotions. This indicates how important care is in a programme of this type.

Feedback from the group, and observations of the programme sessions indicate that significant care was taken in setting the context for the brave and disruptive space the sessions created. The mixed heritage of the participants meant that the facilitators were careful to centre global majority experiences and voices without needing them to share into the space, and extra attention was given to this as it was a mixed cohort. Despite this, one cohort member suggested a separate space for global majority participants to support people who have lived experience of racism while white colleagues go through layers of realisation and reckoning with themselves & their own positionality, maybe for the first time. Reflections from across the spectrum of those interviewed indicate that this work, while not as ‘new’ or revelatory for global majority colleagues, is possibly more emotionally draining when conducted alongside white colleagues.

“Silence is exhausting and stressful, this [programme] is the opposite... Facilitators very effective setting up the context and space, particularly affirming of, sensitive to my position in the group.”

- Cohort Interviewee

“Would be interested in separate space – how do we as black or brown people navigate ourselves in that space? Where we are the minority, but all eyes are on us. Always a tricky place to be. People look to you for the answers. Make some space to think about that a little bit differently.”

- Cohort Interviewee

Facilitation

Universally, the facilitation of the programme was highlighted as a standout aspect, and critical to its quality, depth and impact. Their knowledge, experience and delivery methods – particularly how the facilitators brought their own racialised identities to the group, and used them to spark discussion, were all complimented.

One to one coaching was highlighted by some cohort members to be very valuable, offering the chance for individualisation and more personalised critical analysis. Personality matches or clashes also appear to have partly determined how useful the coaching sessions were – depending on the level of challenge offered, whether the coachee felt connected to their coach & able to explore concepts critically.

Similarly, the action learning sets were important for learning and absorption/processing of the concepts and knowledge shared in the morning sessions. A few cohort members mentioned the time without facilitators at the end of each day, and suggested these could have been longer, as they fostered trust and connection within the cohort.

The reflective practice involved in the programme suited some more than others. One cohort member felt that the mandatory exercise of sharing ‘one thing’ at the end of each session was uncomfortable but also felt almost reductive or performative for some cohort members – as though they said what they thought the facilitators wanted to hear.

“I’m glad I’ve been part of it...[but] it’s what happens next that is important. The work needs to continue.”

- Cohort Interviewee

2.2) Talk Listen Create

The TLC facilitators offered various reflections on their experience:

- The selection process resulted in a strong cohort:

“I think there were a bunch of people who were ready for this work. Some of them knew a lot more than others at the start, but all of them, I felt, were really willing to engage”. - Facilitator Interviewee

There was a need for balance by the facilitators in balancing the needs of a mixed identity cohort, as well as the challenge levels for individuals who were more experienced in anti-racism work, and those who weren’t.

TLC were given an appropriate level of freedom to design the curriculum and bring their own experience and frameworks to the work, and while the budget was somewhat limiting, the redistribution of resources enabled them to bring on a fourth Action Learning Set facilitator.

The involvement and oversight of senior Museums Association colleagues was ad-hoc, and often unexpected – programming this in from the beginning would be appreciated next time. Indeed, internal work by the MA on anti-racism could be beneficial to support the further rollout of the programme and progression of practice across the sector and within the organisation.

“I’m glad I’ve been part of it...[but] it’s what happens next that is important. The work needs to continue.”

- Cohort Interviewee

2.3) Museums Association

For the Museums Association, this programme represented an organisational step change.

This was because the Anti-Racist Museums Programme was an opportunity to deliver sector leading content on a crucial topic to senior leadership, leading European museum practice. It also opened the opportunity to offer anti-racism as a supported practice and created the potential for unlocking systemic change through leadership level professional development. In addition, the programme encouraged organisational self-reflection on the MA's own outdated Anti-Racism action plan.

Finally, the diversity of museums involved, and the cross-nation approach meant that the programme was representative.

The Anti-Racist Museums Programme has caused some disconnection and anxiety.

There has been anxiety around reputational risk and the management of programme. This has manifested as a sense of disconnection with external facilitators, the content, and the impact of programme, and difficult internal management and support.

There are broader concerns around funding and the continuity of the work, as while the second year is likely to be internally funded, further years depend on external support. Parallel work to embed anti-racism in working practice and leadership across the sector, such as in the Code of Ethics, is an opportunity (and a risk) to this work continuing.

There has been a lack of support for some people connected to the programme.

There is a contradiction between the strategic level of this innovative programme and the scrutiny experienced by staff delivering it. For one member of staff, there was a lack of emotional or wellbeing support, particularly around undertaking anti-racism work as a racialised person. To enable growth, the large administrative burden of programme and planned alumni network needs more resource. More broadly, a brave space within the MA is needed to continue this work.

3) Access and Organisation

3.1) Access

- Ensure accessibility for those with disabilities – for one cohort member with visual impairment some sessions were less accessible
- Barriers to accessing the online course were highlighted as an issue with engagement
 - *Providing access to the course with organisational membership would enable more colleagues to do it – requiring individual membership felt like a barrier, particularly for local authorities who don't have the budget to support this*
 - *For part-time staff, the course felt like a big ask on time & membership a big financial ask*
 - *The academic nature of the course made one cohort member wonder if it is accessible for those without a degree, and the utility of it for museum professionals without higher education – diversity which is a sector ambition across many organisations*
 - *The course's length and depth make it less useful for front of house or operational colleagues, who don't get much desk time*
- Consider how middle management can be involved in this journey

3.2) Scheduling

Feedback about scheduling was varied, with a few common threads:

- More time between acceptance and kick-off would be appreciated, particularly because online course is required preparation, and it was not universally completed.
- Most cohort members thought that an earlier in-person session as well as the final one would be helpful to build trust within the cohort, enabling more and better conversation and vulnerability later in the programme
- Some members of the cohort suggested a review of when in the year the course is in the year– ie. not around year-end or other high-pressured moments for the organisations who have been successful.
- Mandatory attendance and no opportunity to feed into dates was difficult for some, particularly part-time members of staff (typically women and those with caring responsibilities)
- Attendance was much harder for Scottish colleagues as the programme ran during the Scottish summer holidays and English term-time which felt somewhat discriminatory

Areas which were much more varied in the feedback about scheduling were:

- The whole-day approach suited some, but not others – this depended on the organisation, but as all sessions were on the same day if there was a mandatory meeting, they'd have to miss multiple sessions
- For some, the frequency felt uneven and at points the sessions felt too close together

3.3) Organisation

More broadly, there were several areas of feedback around potential refinements to the organisation of the programme.

- Requiring 3 SLT members from every organisation, even in smaller ones where this is most of the leadership team, was highlighted as difficult and resource heavy – requiring a bigger commitment for smaller organisations
- There was only one trustee in the cohort, and so questions were posed around how the MA was helping organisations decide who counts as senior leadership, and whether a trustee from each organisation should be encouraged, or required, to attend
- Action Learning Set experiences were quite varied – some seemed to be less well attended than others, some felt more time without facilitator would be useful – as that's when trust was built within cohort
- Follow up opportunities, ideally pre-scheduled in, would have been beneficial – along with some clear plans for how the alumni can stay connected to each other

3.4) Technology

Technical issues with Teams had an impact on the delivery of the programme for everyone, including the facilitators – using a platform that they are more comfortable with in the next iteration of the programme would be beneficial and enable a more cohesive delivery experience.



4) Opportunities for Broader Impact

Overall, the evidence detailed in the report so far focusses on evidence towards Outcome 1 of the logic model (see appendix). Outcomes 2 and 3 require institutional and sector buy-in, making them more longitudinal, and focussed on **action** and **advocacy**. The limited evidence that has been collected within the evaluative timeframe is explored below.

- **Outcome 2:** *Participants show evidence of actively dismantling institutional racism within their own respective organisations*
- **Outcome 3:** *There is a cohort of museums, facilitated by the MA, that are making progress towards becoming anti-racist and which act as advocates to share learning across the UK museum sector.*

4.1) Museums are anti-racist organisations

“For me, was much more important almost symbolically as a confidence building and statement of intent – doing this programme is a significant way to say we are beginning something we’ve spoken about”

- Cohort Interviewee

Intentions to Act

Part of the final session was a presentation about planned or intended actions within cohort organisations, which fell into the below areas:

- **Strategy and working groups** – including Theory of Change, Policies, Organisational Strategy, Core Values etc.
- **Public commitments and programmes or events** – including those already planned or completed, and upcoming opportunities
- **Internal consultation, staff training and professional development** – to bring others along on the journey, part of probation, etc.

It is worth noting again that funding and resource limitations were a strong theme to this answer, indicating that for most organisations, this work will need more resourcing to continue or grow.

“[In the] final session, we identified that power comes with money and that is something that dictates work we do in museums – unless those funding the work are behind anti-racism”

- Cohort Interviewee

“The barrier to change in 6 months [is] interdependencies – [we can] talk all day and all night with partners of like mind but without the resource and the capacity, we’re going to be limited in what we’re going to do”

- Cohort Interviewee

Areas where there was less crossover were:

- Fewer cohort members talked out personal actions in this section of the interview – they were more focussed on work – but a couple mentioned being more proactive in speaking out about things or questioning things and being confident about being explicit
- There was a split between embedding this work in existing programmes, policies, structures, and creating new roles or programmes through which to deliver and embed the work
- Hopes for the 6 months period were varied and most highlighted that this is not very long – and that this work will take more time

Much of the evidence to date is about intentions, reliant on funding and resource and dialogue with fellow cohort members. As Emma Dabiri highlights: **“we seem to have replaced doing anything with saying something, in a space where the word ‘conversation’ has achieved an obscenely inflated importance as a substitute for action.”** Follow up evaluation will evidence action more clearly.

Advocacy

The panel discussion at the MA Conference with representatives from Amgueddfa Cymru Museum Wales and Birmingham Museums Trust began this process. As one panellist commented, **“it felt important to come, and show up”**. Further advocacy from cohort museums could support recruitment for the second iteration of the programme.

4.2) The MA is a leader in the development of an anti-racist UK museum sector

Convening and Continuity

The overwhelming feeling from cohort is that MA needs to create the space, forum, or a working group for alumni to maintain momentum:

- Continuity in running current programme again
- The MA has convening power – power to unite sector, lead sector

“[The MA should] continue in this vein – [as a] convening body that equips but doesn’t absolve individuals or organisations from doing the work”

- Cohort Interviewee

Sector Standards & Leadership

The cohort reflected the below in their consideration of how the MA can play a significant role in the sector moving towards anti-racist practice:

- The MA can set the gold standard, introduce accreditation
- The MA can identify organisations or parts of the sector that are slipping behind and call them out, or engage with them
- Support other organisations like AIM to deliver sub-modules specific to certain institutions
- Ensure the Code of Ethics is reflective of this ideal – push back against conservative or politicised opinions about anti-racism
- Engage with whiteness of the sector – space for people to come together and do the work without people from global majority backgrounds needing to lead it, or be there

“The problem is that it’s a closed room with senior leaders working in 200-year-old structures set up by white men. We still follow some of their process. I worry this will feed into the code of ethics.”

- Cohort Interviewee

Political & Funding Advocacy

The cohort highlighted that anti-racism becoming sector-wide change requires high-level advocacy:

- Much of this work depends on funding from Arts Council, NHLF and Art Fund – the MA is an important body in advocating for the sector
- Relationship with government, particularly in England, is important
- Bodies like the NHS – social prescribing and other community-based interventions
- Highlight issue with project funding and anti-racism and EDI work – permanent representation will never be possible if this continues

“Carry on with this work – it has been groundbreaking – has been leading in the sector. The way that museums survive is by changing, they cannot stay the same...The fact the MA is leading change is really important.”

- Cohort Interviewee

5) Conclusion

“I would hope in 6 months this is all still very live with us, and that we have found ways to support other members of staff to learn and to develop those skills. Really from the programme – massive overarching thing – it is that personal change that is going to make the difference.”

- Cohort Interviewee

This summary report has sought to highlight the key findings from the MA's Anti-Racist Museums Programme evaluation. It highlights embodied change and a transformational shift in perspective within the cohort which speaks to the profound and valuable experience of the group whilst taking part. This change has the potential to catalyse significant movement across the sector, led by the cohort, and those that follow them. While their experiences were undeniably individual, the cohort was universal in their vulnerable and meaningful reflections about the change they have experienced, and the excellent delivery and design of the programme.

The caveats to this, and the evaluation recommendations highlight the fundamental connection between internal embodied change & practice and advocacy, funding & commitment. To dismantle systemic racism in a sector so fundamentally connected to Empire, slavery and racism requires a growing brave space within which our colleagues, particularly those who are white, can form an active coalition.

As the evaluation identifies, there is now a coalition of the willing who have been fundamentally changed by their participation in this programme, and who now plan to act. For the sector and for the MA, therefore, by harnessing and building on the cohort's newfound understanding and clarity around anti-racism and coalition, there is significant potential for systemic transformation on a larger scale.

“There's never been a better time to create miracles in chaos”

- Anti Racism in Museums Panellist, MA Conference 2024

6) Appendix

6.1 Methodology

The following methodologies have been adopted while designing the evaluation framework, undertaking data collection and analysis, and writing up this report. These were identified through research, and are directly in response to Tema Okun's essay on the characteristics of white supremacy and the author's reflections on evaluation as a practice within this.

Evaluation Anti-Racist Principles:

- **Complexity** – moving beyond only themes and trends, this report seeks to also represent the complexities, contradictions and tensions in the data collected
- **Anti-perfectionism** – early in the process, surveys were found to be less useful for data collection – and so the focus shifted to qualitative evaluation methods, which are by nature less 'perfect'
- **Journey not Progress** – anti-racism work is not linear, and the evaluation aims to highlight areas of growth and areas of discomfort, acknowledging, as one cohort member reflected, *"it is two steps forward, one step back"*
- **Objectivity** – this evaluation report is not objective, in the sense that it takes a strong anti-racist stance – highlighting difficult contradictions and findings, and exploring them without discomfort
- **Elongated Timelines** – the evaluation timeline has shifted with the project, and the follow up planned for April 2025 is a critical part of resisting urgency around demonstrating impact
- **Voices** – the voices of global majority colleagues are at the centre of the findings in this report, and are therefore purposely over-represented
- **Care** – care has been taken to ensure everyone is able to contribute, and everyone had the opportunity to change their contribution and have their voice represented honestly, but anonymously
- **Collaboration** – the structure of this report, its contents and key findings have been shared with TLC and with the primary member of the MA responsible for the programme before a wider audience. The findings will also be reshaped following consultation with the Anti-Racism and Decolonisation Steering group in January



6.2 Datasets

This evaluation has used the following datasets:

Data Type	Quantity	Collection Timeline	Notes
Observations	Final 3 morning learning sessions, one in-person MA Conference 2024 Anti-Racist Museums Panel	July – November 2024	Inductive coding was used to ensure nothing was missed
Survey – Reflective Baseline & Midpoint	One survey was conducted 12 responses were received	July 2024	In particular, quantitative findings were used in the compilation of the report
Interviews	16 interviews were conducted across the cohort, with an additional person contributing via survey submission A focus group with TLC staff was conducted Individual interviews with MA staff were conducted	Between October 2024 – January 2025	Each call was about 30 minutes per person, and 11 questions were asked across the cohort, with equivalent lines of enquiry for MA and TLC staff
Feedback at the Final Session	Written and observed feedback was collected at the final session	November 2024	There were 3 discussion groups, which were each observed for one third of the time Two groups offered written feedback which was collected by the MA staff
Session Evaluation	The Mentimeter session evaluation was conducted six times	April – November 2024	Responses varied from 3 to 23 people Questions were around topic knowledge, preparedness, and challenge



6.3 Project Logic Model

This evaluation was based off the Logic Model below, designed by the MA:

Inputs	Activities	Outputs		Outcomes			3. Wider Sector			Change / Impact
		Outputs	Evaluation Methodologies	Indicator(s)	Indicator(s)	Outcome	Indicator(s)	Outcome	Indicator(s)	
<p>£20k: £16K – Cheryl, Julian, Tara £3K – evaluation (tbc) £1k - comms and marketing Staff time AR and Decol working group CRM and Zoom</p>	<p>Agree theory of change to define the programme. Selection criteria Expectations of MA, TLC, participants Application pack including form. Selection process Six workshops; action learning; coaching (TLC) Cohort meetings Comms/learning dissemination</p>	<p>23 Senior leaders 6 Diverse Museums from across the UK 6 Workshops, 6 ALS (12 days of time) A journal or log 5 examples each of organisations applying learning 5 examples of cohort-led anti-racist museum sector advocacy Ten examples of anti-racist museum learning led dissemination by the MA Programme Evaluation Report A body of evidence to aid understanding of the link and crossover between AR and decolonisation and understanding of organisational change towards values-led practice.</p>	<p>Monitoring via conversation with MA and TLC Observations Interviews Follow-up reflection Baseline and midpoint survey</p>	<p>1. Participating individuals demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of racism and its complexities within the heritage sector in line with the learning outcomes of the Museum Essentials Supporting Anti-Racism online learning course.</p>	<p>There is evidence of individual growth in skills, competence and confidence. For TLC: Anti-Racism Meta Skills Knowledge, Being For MA: Museum Essential Outcomes</p>	<p>Session Evaluation Midpoint Survey Endpoint Survey Interviews Observations by Evaluator Observations from TLC</p>	<p>2. Participants show evidence of actively demonstrating a disarming institution that would have been their own respect for the organisation, thanks to feeling more confident and competent.</p>	<p>2. Participating museums have made changes that institutions that would have been unlikely without the intervention of this programme. For TLC: Skills Doing and competent.</p>	<p>3. There is a cohort of museums that are making progress towards becoming anti-racist and which act as advocates to share learning across the UK museum sector, including the challenges and vulnerabilities faced. This is facilitated by the MA.</p>	<p>Museums are anti-racist organisations: A museum which understands the complexities of racism in its everyday, institutional, and systemic expressions, and publicly acknowledges its own role in perpetuating some of these systems of exclusion and differentiation for racialised people of colour, including its staff and audiences. A museum which is actively developing and implementing policies and practices to dismantle institutional racism within their organisation and is embedding this work across programmes and activities throughout the institution. A museum which is actively and sustainably decolonising its collections, programmes, and practice to create a fairer, better, and more equitable museum space. The MA is a leader in the development of an anti-racist UK museum sector.</p>

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