

DIVERSITY IN HERITAGE GROUP (DHG) SYMPOSIUM (IPUP, YORK) 1ST AND 2ND OCTOBER 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Mission statement

The Diversity in Heritage group will broaden engagement with heritage by professionalising practice, driving organisational change and enabling equitable dialogue with all communities.

The York Symposium successfully brought together several months of work and discussions, distilling these into a mission statement and a set of clear aims and priorities for the group. This provided a framework for the group to further explore future development and organisational status..

The main priorities of the DHG were agreed at the York symposium, these had been identified through prior consultation with founding members, and were endorsed the York symposium. They are as follows:

1. To create a professional network.
2. To define terms of reference and set criteria for best practice.
3. To create a single portal database for all resources.
4. To facilitate stronger collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

It was agreed as a key principle, that the work of DHG will not duplicate efforts in the heritage sectors but bring together disparate activity to affect positive change.

It was also agreed that the definition of heritage used by the DHG will broadly match the definition used by the Heritage Lottery Fund definition and includes art galleries.

The DHG members were joined by professionals from funding bodies, universities and cultural organisations to discuss creative collaborations and find synergies of interest.

We refer to diversity practice and practitioners, using this term broadly to include community engagement, audience development, workforce and other diversity initiatives.

A Professional Network

Rationale:

- Improve networking and professional development opportunities.
- To address a gap in provision of CPD and knowledge sharing for more experienced practitioners.
- To address the feeling of isolation many practitioners experience.
- To enable organisations to embed diversity practice by bringing in heritage professionals without a specific diversity remit.
- The solutions are low cost.

Initial Approach:

The type of professional network requires further and ongoing consultation with members. The following activities address needs identified by the Diversifying Audiences sub committee and centre around continuous professional development (CPD) and the need for professional support in the sector.

To facilitate discussion and post questions for officer and experienced level diversity practitioners we will utilise the **Our Place web based forum**, and we will encourage members to join and participate. This will provide one method of professional development. DHG will also support Our Place by sending relevant information, listings and signposting to other sources of information and by contributing information about our events and activities. It has been recognised however that DHG should remain independent from English Heritage who host the site and DHG will therefore also hold our own contact database and communicate directly with members as appropriate.

In addition to using Our Place the DHG will create opportunities for skills and knowledge development in two ways;

- **Action Learning Sets:** reaching a small number of practitioners in a high impact way. The opportunities for sharing learning more widely are limited due to the confidential nature of the groups. There is a modest cost implication.
- **Discussion groups:** Reaching a wider number of practitioners and cover a breadth of formats and topics. These could possibly be replicated in several regions simultaneously and a national dialogue created on Our Place. There is little or no cost implication if the events are hosted and supported.

It was also agreed that membership will be increased with attention to attracting a broad base of members from different types of heritage organisation, **increased membership** from non London regions and from a range of ethnic backgrounds. To do this it is critical to increase **administrative capacity**. This is currently a barrier to progress.

Issues for further discussion:

- Administration of growing membership
- A communication strategy for CEO's (champions of outputs & supporting staff to join).
- A strategy for mentoring next generation of practitioners.

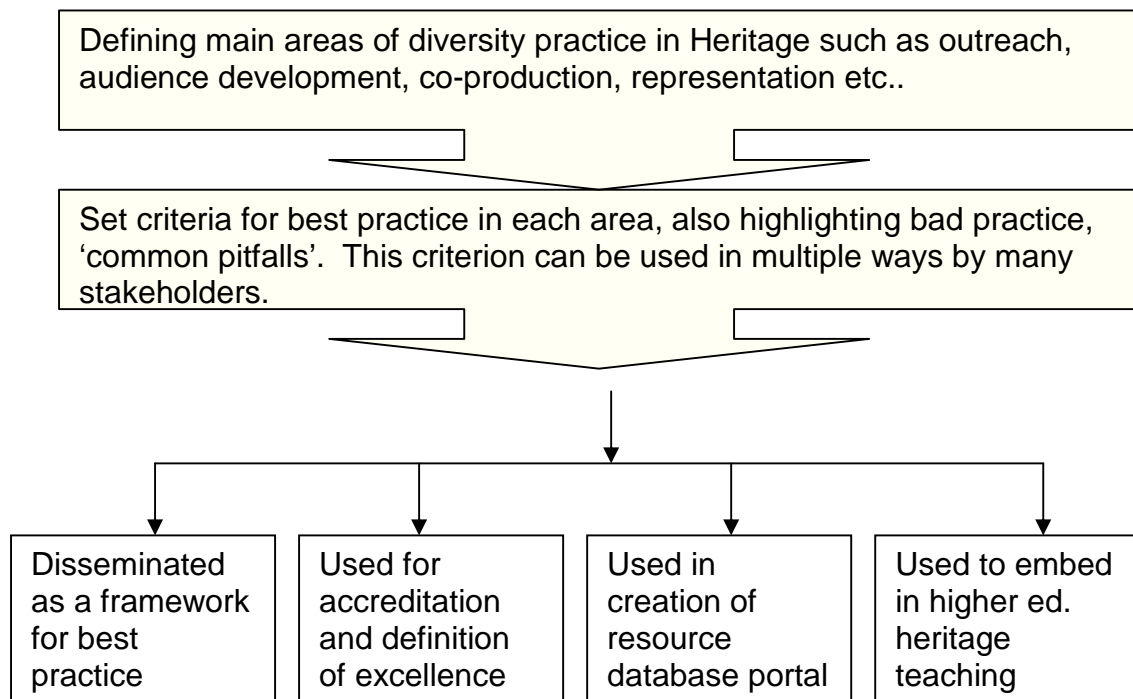
Terms of Reference and Criteria

Rationale:

- To professionalise the field by collating a body of knowledge based on a shared understanding of the terms of reference.
- To enable the embedding of diversity practice by making the technical knowledge and methodology more accessible to non-diversity practitioners.
- To enable the measurement of success and benchmarking which will in turn both support and become drivers for change which improve accountability.

Initial Approach:

Due to the challenging nature of the task, the initial approach requires further focussed discussion and planning. The project requires researcher collaboration to feed in the terminology and definitions used in academia. Various views need to be drawn to consensus and follow a process similar to peer review, so the process requires some facilitation. The diagram provides a basic overview.



Potential stakeholders:

- Organisations concerned with standards in Heritage (MLA, MA)
- Funding bodies HLF, BLF, trusts and local authorities
- Government bodies concerned with benchmarking and excellence.
- Universities and training bodies, developing professionals of the future.

Single resource database (portal)

Rationale:

- To support advocacy and professionalism by enabling practitioners to access and reference academic papers, case studies and evaluations.
- To speed up and simplify access to vital resources
- To enable embedding diversity practice by making resource available to non diversity experts.
- To draw together the disparate resource banks.

Initial Approach:

The inability to access resources swiftly and efficiently impedes the advocacy abilities of practitioners. The hosting of resources on disparate sites and libraries is a good start on which to build.

The database will probably link to these sites rather than attempt to hold all documents itself. The agreed terms of reference will enable the search function to work as well as excellent key word tagging. The reading and uploading of so many papers and reports will be a huge task and ideas of how to encourage users to do this in return for benefits were tabled. International material and global access would be advantageous for this project. This project dovetails with the next priority of facilitating research partnerships.

Facilitating Research Collaboration

Rationale:

Improving collaboration between heritage sectors and their academic communities will

- Support advocacy by using rigorous academic work to validate good practice.
- Create more opportunities for research to have a practical output
- Create more opportunities for practitioners influence the direction of future research
- Provide professional development for practitioners and researchers.
- Create relationships based on trust leading to more opportunities for researchers to evaluate work in progress.

Initial Approach:

The most important first step is to identify all academics and practitioners working in heritage based diversity and map the academic areas of interest. Following on from this practitioners and academics will be brought together to explore the needs of the sector; disseminate existing research and critique it together and collaborate on future projects.

This process was initiated at the York Symposium with a collaborative workshop.. The workshop analysed a wish list of ideas defined by practitioners to identify areas of mutual interest.

This priority runs is vital to robust professionalisation of diversity in Heritage work.

Research Collaboration Workshop

DHG members were joined by IPUP and a number of academics and professionals to discuss possible partnerships and knowledge exchange. A presentation outlining the priorities of DHG and a wish list of research was discussed. It was thought that several areas of research on the list had been studied but were not well known to practitioners.

The question of longitudinal research and of the longer impact of audience engagement is an area of strong academic interest, especially concerning ideas of belonging, identity, and citizenship, and notions of power, knowledge and prejudice.

The following points give a flavour of the conversations highlighting some areas of work in progress and other ideas;

- The importance of doing a large, ambitious longitudinal study looking at how all of the many elements are related.
- Focusing on organisations on the brink of change to look at strategies they are employing and links to the theme of knowledge, power and prejudice.
- Include the mapping and gapping DHG is calling for, as part of collaborative bids.
- Parallels between South Africa transition period and UK 2007 dialogues linking to knowledge and identity.
- Interest in emphasising qualitative data from non-audiences using heritage space.
- Looking at diversity and the process of co-production.
- Exploring different ways of knowing and also institutional ways of knowing – allowing a critique of the organisations' construct of diversity, participation and co-production
- Looking at migrant groups' engagement with the Natural environment using tools mapping social community values linked to the landscape – intangible values
- Looking at heritage and the state; how the state uses heritage to control identity and citizenship and how people also use heritage in a counter practice way
- The vital importance of being collaborative and of joining up different organisations was emphasized
- The value of DHG for informing funding decisions, and the power of funders to help bring about effective change.
- Other comments highlighted the issue of identifying drivers for change, not forgetting to look for drivers from outside the heritage sector
- Snapshots of where organisations are currently, is important; looking at change drivers outside the sector and why heritage changed to put diversity on its agenda.
- Importance of research that considers the 4 perspectives of audiences, funders, academic and practitioner.

Newcastle and Open University may be able to support the CPD aims of DHG. Manchester is interested in future collaborations and HLF will look into partnering to assess its evaluation resource. Focused bid conversations to follow.

Lessons from Cultural Co-Operation

Prakash Daswani delivered a keynote paper on his experience of developing his organisation Cultural Co-operation. Recounting his early experiences, challenges and successes, Prakash mapped the trajectory of Cultural Co-Operation and posed some questions for DHG to consider as it develops such as clarity in the early phases and the importance of integrity of purpose. He advised the early stages of building credibility of the group and highlighting the professional background and experience of the membership. The following issues were discussed;

- The inherent challenges of operation DHG alongside demanding jobs. The importance of dividing tasks amongst the members according to the time they can commit.
- HLF offered to provide office space and help organise and administer events. It would also provide networks from which to build further partnerships.
- It was decided that membership could be individual as well as associated with a members organisation.

Organisational Form and Status

Anna Salaman presented and led a discussion on the options relating to DHG's future organisational form and status.

The key to adopting a legal form successfully is to have a clear vision, mission, aims, objectives, activities and strategic context and growth. The benefits and drawbacks of each option were assessed. No final decision was taken as to the status of DHG and will be followed up when appropriate

Considerations before adopting a legal form included fully establishing aims and objectives, consistency of commitment, internal capacity to formulate a detailed governing document; willing individuals to take on voluntary positions and for some options funds available to fulfil various legislative requirements.



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