A Toolkit for **Co-Created Community** Engagement Projects

MIGRATION MUSEUM

Contents

Why Co-Creation?

The Migration Museum is committed to an ongoing process of engaging local people and communities in our life, our exhibitions and our work.

In 2022, the **People's Panel and People's Network** were established to co-produce the Migration Museum's core community engagement values.

By building a community engagement strategy from the ground up, our members have shaped the museum's values, objectives and influenced the activities that will shape our programme moving forward.

Our ultimate goal is to mainstream community engagement and consultation into every aspect of the museum.

We now want to share our learnings far and wide, and encourage others to undertake processes of co-production in community engagement work.

When we were developing this toolkit, one group member was inspired to write a poem during one of our sessions.

We leave it here as a signal to the power, value and impact of keeping the community at the heart of everything we do, including this toolkit:

I saw me better.

I was picked
I came
I saw
I spoke
I was heard
I heard
I gave
I received
I left a mark
I received a mark
I saw me in others
I saw others in me
I saw me better
I was changed
I am thankful

Priscilla Okoye, 2023

Our Co-Created Commu

Our community engagement values emerged through a process of workshops and surveys with the People's Panel and Network. We also included reflection and discussion with the wider museum staff team as part of this process, to ensure our collective embodiment of these values would be fully visible through our work.

The Migration Museum is...

A space to celebrate legacies and forge networks – where everyone is valued, welcome, counted and present.
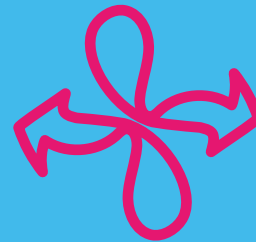
Promoting learning and curiosity by sharing all our stories – inspiring us to be more unified with the people around us.

Providing space for marginalised voices to be heard – inviting discussions around the intersectionality and complexities of migrant experiences.

nity Engagement Values

Accessible, transparent, and open to change – we ensure that our values are in line with key priorities of the diverse communities that we serve.
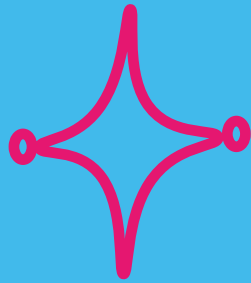
Generating meaningful connections through cultural exchange – allowing us to respect and elevate one another.

Making room for self-reflection and acceptance – we invite everyone to join us on this journey.

Our Project

The People's Panel and Network was developed as part of the Migration Museum's strategic priorities around 'engagement and communication' and an aspiration to create a grassroots community engagement strategy centring the lived experiences of local people in shaping the community engagement practices of the museum. This was with a view to fully embedding community engagement and consultation processes across a broad range of outputs and approaches – including in the co-production of the Migration Museum's values.

The People's Panel was to be a group of 15 people who could commit to attending 3, in-person, 2hr workshops at the Migration Museum between November 2022 and May 2023 and to completing 3 follow-up surveys (either online, over the phone, or in person). Consideration was given to accessibility in relation to methods of survey completion as well as acknowledging the time and energy of participants' contributions to taking part in workshops through a £75 payment per session.

The People's Network was intended to be a larger, virtual network of participants committed to completing 3 surveys and participants received a £10 voucher per completed survey. This two-tiered approach was taken to enable a broad and inclusive membership and to encourage a diverse group of people to get involved in developing the values and in influencing the overall approach of the Migration Museum in relation to co-produced community engagement.

During the summer of 2022, a comprehensive mapping exercise was undertaken, identifying 116 local groups and organisations, based in Lewisham, and representing a broad range of community initiatives across the Borough. This mapping exercise revealed an extensive network of relevant, local organisations for the Migration Museum to engage with in developing the People's Panel and Network. A flyer and registration form was created and distributed amongst this network. Along with information about the project, duration, commitment, main purpose and payment information on the flyer, the registration form collected more detailed information about participants in relation to availability and reasons for joining as well as demographic data. All respondents were invited to an introductory workshop in October 2022 to meet the team, learn more about the aims of the People's Panel and Network and consider some thematic areas for exploration during the life of the project - 35 people attended.

The process for selecting People's Panel members involved considerations around diversity of experience of their community; lived experience as a 1st, 2nd or 3rd generation migrant; and other demographic factors. Group dynamics were also considered, with the final selection for the People's Panel including some participants who had been involved with the museum before, along with others who were totally new to the space. At the start of the project in November 2022, there were 16 people on the People's Panel and 19 in the People's Network. The project itself was designed to maximise the benefit of having both a face-to-face panel and a virtual network, and structured so that phases would incrementally influence and feed into each other.

Through discussions in workshops and analysing data together, it was agreed that inviting members of the People's Panel and Network to co-create this toolkit would be the most authentic way to move forward. By organically following the interim learnings from the project, we embedded co-creation throughout.

The Migration Museum continued in its commitment to recognising contributors' time and a small budget was made available. It was agreed that each participant would receive £15 per hour for their involvement in co-creating the toolkit. An expression of interest was shared amongst the People's Panel and Network and 3 respondents were invited. The toolkit evolved over a period of 5 months, with 2 face to face workshops and 2 online workshops as well as shared documents for group input and collaboration.

The resulting toolkit has been fully co-produced and offers a selection of 'top tips' and learning from the People's Panel and Network, as well as templates to inspire and support others in their community engagement work. The toolkit is available as an open-access resource to support co-created community engagement projects.

I would say my skin is salty like chorizo but I am a vegan!

For me this project is about being a Londoner. My friends here are from everywhere with a capital E.

My whole life has been about not being from either here or there

i'm lucky to not have to constantly think about skin colour

Skin colour has a lot to do with identity, but not much to do with who I really am

PANTONE 71-6 C   PANTONE 75-8 C   PANTONE 89-8 C   PANTONE 51-5 C   PANTONE 318-1 C   PANTONE 51-6 C   PANTONE 66-5 C   PANTONE 89-9 C   PANTONE 58-8 C   PANTONE 59-3 C   PANTONE 51-6 C

PANTONE 319-7 C   PANTONE 97-6 C   PANTONE 62-5 C   PANTONE 52-5 C   PANTONE 58-5 C   PANTONE 4665 C   PANTONE 80-7 C   PANTONE 59-8 C   PANTONE 93-6 C

PANTONE 53-7 C   PANTONE 85-6 C   PANTONE 97-7 C   PANTONE 317-5 C   PANTONE 317-2 C

PANTONE 64-5 C   PANTONE 62-6 C   PANTONE 92-6 C   PANTONE 59-7 C   PANTONE 68-5 C

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PANTONE 52-5 C   PANTONE 80-6 C   PANTONE 320-2 C   PANTONE 66-5 C   PANTONE 70-5 C   PANTONE 92-9 C

Pathways to Engagement

In this section we focus on developing pathways to continued and reflexive community engagement and inclusion, and what this meant for our project.

As our project developed, relationships blossomed and trust was built – not only between the Migration Museum and the People's Panel and Network participants, but also between participants themselves.

Members of the People's Panel and Network were kept updated with the Migration Museum's wider activities, allowing further engagement and participation:

- Events: involvement in speaking and creative engagements, as well as consistent attendance of public events.
- Exhibition design: specialist consultation with the curatorial team on upcoming projects.
- Volunteering: supporting the museum's day-to-day activities, including facilitation of education workshops.
- Networking: advocating for the Migration Museum and connecting the team with potential partners and supporters, as well as the Migration Museum team doing the same for the People's Panel and Network members.

A co-created project can be the starting point for longer term engagement with community members, and allow for a pathway for future participation to be established. This would ensure that community engagement efforts are maintained and mainstreamed within an organisation, whilst also creating opportunities that are mutually beneficial for both parties.

What motivates you?

Have you considered the values that you embody in your own practice?

Are you trying to meet a community need or issue ?

And if so, what is it?

Do you fully understand the needs of your community?

Your Community Engagement P

Be clear about who your project is for

Recognising people's time

Planning and evaluation

At the very beginning of your project, it is important to give some deep thought to this so that you can best meet the needs of the community or communities you want to work with. Who are they? Are they local? How will you reach them or how will they get to you? Do you want to work with a specific age-range or specific group of people in the community?

Have you considered how you will acknowledge the contribution of those who get involved in the project? Even an online survey takes time, so consider how you will recognise time?

- A meal, travel, snacks, cash, vouchers or some other form of payment or recognition? Be creative, flexible and speak to your group!
- What other forms of recognition of people's time might you use?

- Think about making this as accessible as possible and how you will meet the different needs of the community, some of whom may not have bank accounts.

Community engagement projects can take time, so don't underestimate this. Allow enough time for planning before and after any community engagement activity.

- How will you include your community in the planning process?
- Will evaluation be part of the planning process and if so how?

Project - Top Tips

In this section we share the practical tips we found useful or felt we needed to develop more during our project. We hope you find it useful!

Clear communication

Our project involved two different groups, the People's Panel, a group who met face to face during workshops at the museum and completed surveys online and the People's Network, an online group who completed surveys. So it was important for us to keep in touch with everyone about what was happening and expectations, before, during and after workshops and surveys. We did this using email, phone, text and WhatsApp (with permission) as suited members best.

Some points to consider:

- What will work for your group?
- Does everyone have access to email or a phone?
- How might your project work for those who don't use email or phone or have limited accessibility or restrictions around data?

Be flexible

Think about how flexible and responsive you can be, especially if community members become more involved.

- Can the project accommodate this?
- If there are fixed elements such as budget or timescales, make sure you are clear about this from the beginning with your community group.

Safety

We didn't need a specific risk assessment for our project as it was covered by our internal risk assessment, but you will need to think about what potential harms there may be during your project.

- Consider the physical space you are working in and do a risk assessment
- Do you need DBS?
- Are you working with young and / or vulnerable people or groups?

Allowing responsiveness

Participants' availability can change, so is your project adaptable and able to collect information and/or engage people on different levels? You might consider building in tiers of engagement from the beginning so that people are able to commit to your project in a variety of ways. For example, there could be options for light, medium, or full involvement.

- What might a tiered approach to community engagement look like for your project?
- Is your project able to support this? If not, be honest and clear about commitment expectations from the beginning.

Troubleshooting and managing expectations

We planned our sessions in a flexible way, allowing as many people to attend as possible, for example by repeating workshops across two days, including a weekday and a weekend day and by sharing surveys in good time and allowing a good window for completion as well as sending reminders.

- How will you approach this?
- We tried to make it clear that participation in the project was entirely voluntary through recognising people's time and contribution and not pressurising participants.

Group work processes and practices

Food

If you are delivering workshops, it is important to think about how you will 'hold' the group space(s), whether that is in-person or online. You may be working with community members who have never met each other – or you! Be honest with yourself (and your group) about your experience of group work.

- How will you manage conflict or disagreement?
- How will you ensure the group feels it is their group too?

You might want to establish some mutually agreed ground rules.

- How will you manage expectations and any changes to the group if new people arrive or others leave?
- Will you be aware of changes in the group or individual dynamics? Not all upset is visible, so be mindful to check in on the group - ask if everyone is feeling ok and create a culture of open and safe dialogue.

Food was a really important part of our project and we offered refreshments during workshops and tried to respond when participants asked us to consider things like having hot food or a culturally representative variety of food.

- How will you show sensitivity around food, preferences, needs and dislikes?
- How can you build agency into food sharing, even with limited choices or budget?

Making it safe and dealing with difficult emotions

Our project explored some deeply moving topics such as migration, belonging, loss of home, identity and much more - be prepared for dealing with a broad range of complex, sometimes challenging or difficult emotions.

- Is there a quiet space for someone who needs it?
- If not, how will you manage this?
- Safety means different things to different people and remember that silence does not always mean disengagement.
- Different people will think and behave in different ways, so it can be helpful to acknowledge that at the start of a project or even each workshop and allow people to interact with the project in ways that are right for them.
- Again it is important to be clear about any restrictions the project may have around time or outputs in relation to managing expectations around this.

Embedding evaluative processes

Across our project we embedded evaluative processes by including qualitative questions in surveys and reflecting with the groups during sessions as to how things were going, what could be done differently or what was working really well.

- How will you go about this?
- Will your evaluative processes be living, flexible and responsive?
- How will people who are taking part know you have listened to them?
- What methods will you use to collect evaluative information? Participants may have different language skills, or not read or write. Consider non text-based methods of evaluation and involve your participants in thinking about this.

Workshop Activity Idea :

About the Game

The name game is a universal icebreaker activity that is used at the Migration Museum with a wide range of different people — from school visits to corporate groups. It is loved by all.

People Required

3-30 (ideal is around 10-15)

Time Required

5-20 mins (depending on group size)

Materials Required

None if everyone is able to speak/hear, although it helps to be sat in a circle in a quiet space. You may also need to think about the differing needs, abilities, and language barriers... and be prepared to be creative!

Introducing the Activity

"My name is X and I am so excited to meet you all. Now you know my name, I would like to find out more about you. Through the name game, we will all find out something we may have not known about one another."

Instructions

"Please tell me your name and one thing about it. It could be something about your first name, a nickname, and alias, your middle name(s) or last name - it's completely up to you. You could think about why you have been given these names, who gave them to you, and what they mean to you."

End: "Thank you all for sharing your stories with me!"

Name Game

*Example
(to ease people in...)*

"My surname is Kowalski and it comes from the Polish word kowal meaning "blacksmith". This is the second most common surname in Poland.

Going round the circle... Hopefully will uncover interesting family stories and dialogue on migration, identity, culture, and history."

Workshop Activity Idea :

About the Activity

We used this activity to refine our set of community engagement values, but this is also applicable to event or exhibition planning...

The ideas funnel activity is a great way to bring together a wide range of different voices and condense down ideas into something tangible. This is useful in co-production activities where a group's ideas are exciting, but not streamlined.

People Required

3-20 (ideal is around 10-15)

Time Required

30 mins-4 hours (depending on group size and content)

Materials Required

Post-it notes
Paper
Pens
Printer (optional)

Before the Activity

- Ask group members to write 3 core ideas that they connect with on post-it notes.
- Bring the post-it notes to an area and begin to group them based on themes.
- Transcribe these down and stick with the overarching theme which multiple post-it notes may encompass.
- Print off main title themes.

For the Activity

- Have the main title themes printed off in large text (we did one per A4 page).
- Have the group review the set of ideas and pick out one that they most connect with.
- Ask them why they chose each idea.

Ideas Funnel

- Ask them to review the ideas again and pick out any that link with the one they have in their hand.
- Ask them to pick out any remaining ideas that link.
- Work on this until everyone is satisfied with what they have - this could mean that they leave some on the table or take them all... or that people begin to pair up! Let them lead the way and be flexible.
- Then ask them for quiet thinking/ writing time to expand and contextualise each idea
- If time permits, ask them to visually illustrate the idea too.
- Have them return to the group and present their ideas for further discussion.

Your Space.
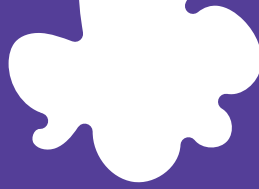
During our workshops developing this toolkit, we were inspired by the work of Lola Olufemi, Experiments in Imagining Otherwise (2021). We wanted to include an aspect of this work in our toolkit and invite you to take some SPACE:

Use this space to write your thoughts, feelings, or ideas.

Acknowledgements

Made possible with

Heritage Fund

About the Migration Museum

The Migration Museum explores how the movement of people to and from Britain across the ages has shaped who we are – as individuals, as communities, and as nations.

We stage engaging exhibitions and dynamic events, alongside a far-reaching education programme for primary, secondary, university and adult learners. We have a growing digital presence and convene a knowledge-sharing Migration Network of museums and galleries across the UK.