



# ANTI-RACISM ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

*August 2022*

## INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of the report, we will use the term 'people/individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds' to draw a distinction between White British, the ethnic majority in the UK, and ethnic minorities. We acknowledge that although the phrase applies to a broad variety of people, it can also mask significant differences between various ethnic groups. We will use census terms to differentiate different ethnic backgrounds but recognise that identity is extremely personal and that every person has a unique preference for how they would like to be perceived and described. Language is constantly evolving so we will make sure that we will keep refreshing our use of different terms as appropriately and respectfully as we can.

Magic Me has spent over 30 years bringing together culturally diverse groups to exchange experiences through arts activities. Yet it remains a majority White British organisation working in the charity and arts sectors, which are also institutionally white. We are indebted to our artists, staff and trustees who have shared with us their insights and experiences of Magic Me and challenged us on where we need to do better.

During 2021/2022, we recruited and worked with an experienced anti-racism consultant, Dr Nadena Doharty, on completing an audit of Magic Me's to review our practices and create an anti-racist action plan with recommendations. The report was published in October 2021 on the Magic Me website and shared with a variety of parties including those who contributed to the audit. We promised to publish an activity update in March 2022 to update interested parties on the progress we have (or have not made).

The purpose of this activity report is to provide background on what has happened, what prompted Magic Me to take this move towards anti-racism and an update on where we are currently with the action plan and what the plans are for the future. We have structured this report under the same headings as the consultant's report for ease of reading:

- Recruitment
- Policies
- Supporting staff in their racial literacy
- Anti-Racist commitments
- Language use & safe spaces

## BACKGROUND

The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities: in housing, health, poverty, digital access. It has already proven to have a disproportionate impact on individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds. We also sadly know that the impact of Covid will be longest lasting for those communities. For example, hate crimes against Chinese and Southeast Asian people increased threefold in the UK in the first year of covid.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the conversations it generates have rightly challenged us. Structural racism has never been more clearly laid bare by so many people. And so much has an intergenerational lens. We recognise how wealth and power generated by the slave trade and colonial gain remained in the hands of families or organisations after abolition, and continues to underpin inequalities today. The ongoing Windrush scandal has shown clearly how structural and institutional racism against one generation is still having lasting impacts on following generations.

As an intergenerational organisation working with culturally diverse communities we can't just be aware of racism and its intergenerational impacts, we must be actively working to dismantle it and questioning ourselves in the process. We need to make sure that we have the right thinking, training and people to do this well.

During 2021/22 we recruited and worked with an experienced anti-racism consultant, to create and implement an Action Plan for this and future years. The Plan was published in October 2021, and we committed to publishing a six-month progress review in March 2022. Unfortunately, due to staffing issues we were unable to deliver this report on time and it was delayed until August 2022. The original audit report can be read via our website by clicking [here](#).

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

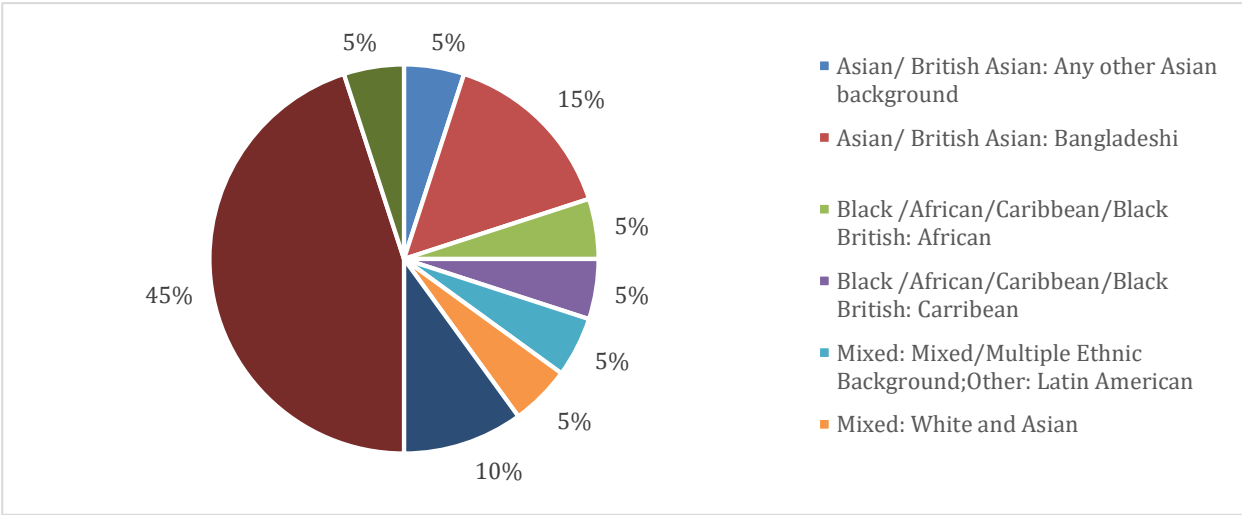
### Recruitment

Our staff and Board prior to the report were predominantly White British. This was of concern as we are not reflecting the community we work in and are not providing opportunities or role models to people from ethnic minority backgrounds, which would enable them to build careers in the charity or arts sector. We needed to improve our recruitment process to support people from ethnic backgrounds to the Board and staff team.

Since October we have taken on additional staff including a Head of Operations and three Community Arts Trainees, along with several Board members, taking our staff and Board numbers to 20. This has impacted our staff and board ethnic makeup positively.



Ethnicity	Pre-October 2021	Post-October 2021
Asian/ British Asian: Any other Asian background		1
Asian/ British Asian: Bangladeshi	1	3
Black /African/Caribbean/Black British: African	1	1
Black /African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean		1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background, Other: Latin American		1
White and Asian		1
White: Any other background	2	2
White: British	6	9
White: Irish	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>



1.2 Staff and Board Ethnic Breakdown post-October 2022

To support the continued recruitment and retention of people from ethnic minority backgrounds we have changed our recruitment processes, drafted a recruitment policy and implemented specific practices. As standard each recruitment process will include the following actions:

- Removal of names and identifying features from applications prior to shortlisting
- Advertising roles in mediums that reach out to ethnic communities including publications and social groups
- Having people from ethnic minority backgrounds in shortlisting and interview panels
- Providing questions in advance for certain positions, therefore reducing interviewee stress and enabling candidates to prepare in advance to give those with experience more of an opportunity to shine.

This still has its challenges particularly around artist portfolio submission as identifying features such as names and photos are included in this work.

We first tried this new recruitment process with our Artworks project. Recruitment was successful and we now have 2 Bangladeshi and 1 White (not British) trainees. Artworks is a

Tower Hamlets Local Authority funded traineeship for 3 of its residents. The scheme is a skills development programme providing the trainees with practical skills, experience and training by them developing and running a community arts projects. As part of the programme they receive mentoring, workshops and support for CV development and job applications. This scheme is unlike others because it is targeted at the diverse residents of Tower Hamlets and trainees are paid and are therefore not reliant on family to support them.

The long-term plan for this programme is for development of a “feeder” model where trainees, following completion of the scheme, can then apply for jobs within Magic Me or other arts/charity organisations.

## Policies

Policies play a vital part by outlining the responsibilities of both the employer and employee to build a culture that is inclusive and fair. All our policies are being reviewed to ensure they provide clear, practical advice for staff and managers regarding their responsibilities and rights on how to ensure Magic Me is a diverse, equal and anti-racist organisation.

We have engaged support from a diversity consultancy to work with us on key policies where an anti-racist stance needed to be clear to ensure racist incidents are handled appropriately:

- Safeguarding for Children
- Safeguarding for Vulnerable Adults
- Complaints from Freelancers
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

## Budget

A new expenditure budget line for work on the Anti-Racism Action Plan was included in the Magic Me Annual Budget from April 2022 onwards. In 2022/23 with £5,000 is committed

## Supporting staff in their racial literacy

To develop and embed an anti-racist culture into the fabric of Magic Me staff are expected to take action as individuals. To this end, they are now required to set at least one of their five annual appraisal targets to further implement the Magic Me Anti-Racist Action Plan.

Staff are now using their pronouns and name phonetics in all digital communications including emails and websites to enable inclusivity across all cultures and ethnicities.

## Anti-racist commitments

Magic Me has announced its commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation by publishing the following commitments on our website:

- ensuring that Magic Me nurtures the wellbeing of all those who participate or work with us and for us, creating safe environments where all individuals can thrive and be themselves.

- cultivating a culture where racism is called out by everybody, and that people are supported to do this, through clear processes, safe spaces for people from ethnic minority backgrounds and ongoing learning.
- putting in place and implementing clear frameworks for the reporting of race or bias related grievances, and for following up and addressing them.
- increasing the racial diversity of our Board, by recruiting trustees who are people from ethnic minority backgrounds, to ensure power of decision-making sits with people whose experiences better reflect those of the communities of east London, our home.
- ensuring the experiences and thinking of older and younger people from different ethnic minority backgrounds are present at governance level, directly or, for example, through advisory groups.
- growing the role of artists in developing and creating new projects and programmes, ensuring that Black and Asian artists and artists from other ethnic minority backgrounds, their voices, artforms and experiences are at the heart of our creative practice and programming
- committing and securing budgets for this work
- securing external expertise as we appraise our systems, processes and policies
- reporting publicly on our plans and progress with this work.

These commitments have also been interwoven into the 5 objectives, within our new Strategy 2022-26, outlined below.

### 1. Leadership

We want to be leaders in our field but we have to do this by example. We need to show that we are not only saying we are committed to anti-racism, but doing the doing.

### 2. Increased Reach

We want to reach out to as many participants as possible, within our diverse local communities. Through increased understanding of different lived experience and ensuring Magic Me represents our communities we hope our reach will be extended.

### 3. Well being

We want all our participants, freelancers, staff and volunteers to feel they are in a safe space. To do this we need to change our practice. Policies need to ensure organisational change. Spaces need to be built to provide somewhere anti-racism and racism can be discussed and acted upon and we need to ensure staff are coming on this journey with us by providing training and education.

### 4. Depth & Inclusion

We want people from ethnic minority backgrounds to be included and part of the fabric of Magic Me. Through changing our recruitment and arts practices we hope that we are working towards this. This work needs to be backed up with evidence so we will be looking at the data to ensure the changes we make are bearing fruit.

## 5. Activism

We are currently re-working our organisational values to ensure these also reflect the importance of being anti-racist. We hope by making our anti-racist journey public that we will be motivating other organisations to make the change and help them learn from our successes and failures.

The Anti-Racist consultant's report showed Magic Me needed to improve data collection on our ethnic makeup to identify patterns and show where the actions we are taking result in real change. We want our commitment to result in action and improvement which can only be done by consistently examining what we are doing and how effective it has been. We are already collecting data from the staff and the board however the format it was in made it hard to analyse. This has been changed so we can interrogate the data to understand the ethnicity at all levels of staff and board. The next step for this will be to record data for freelancers, artists and volunteers.

## Language use & safe spaces

A staff group focused on increasing diversity and support people from ethnic minority backgrounds is being developed and due to the implementation of an anti-racist budget can access money for training, obtaining expertise on diversity and anti-racist action.

We recognise that being anti-racist is not something that will ever be “done” or “completed”. At Magic Me we need to embed these practices at all levels and areas of the organisation. This will make being anti-racist part of all the work we do both inside and outside the charity. To start this work we added the Anti-Racist Action Plan as a permanent item on our HR Subcommittee Agenda – however this has not worked as well as we hoped. We are now, therefore, creating a Working Group, of Trustees and staff, whose objective it will be to create and implement the Action Plan but also plan for how we move forward once the initial action plan is complete, to ensure change is ongoing and positive.

## WHAT HAVE WE PLANNED?

### Recruitment

We will continue with the development of our recruitment procedures and implement the new recruitment policy. We will ensure all recruitment is in-line with the new policy by supporting hiring managers to understand its importance so they buy-in to the new approach.

### Policies

As explained below, work is underway to update our policies and procedures, being done by the Magic Me Senior Management team supported by an expert consultancy. Once Policies and Procedures are reviewed and approved by the Board, they will be introduced to the staff and artists, and put into operation.

We are also exploring the options around training for staff, freelancers and artists to support them in developing their anti-racist practices and knowledge.

## Supporting staff in their racial literacy

We are looking to widen the work we are doing with our permanent team to include our artists and freelancers. Areas we are particularly keen to look at are:

- Ensuring our artists and freelancers are working in line with our anti-racist culture. Ideas have included providing training and a thorough induction which needs to be regularly reviewed.
- Creating anti-racist action as standard in the projects we deliver.
- Creating a more ethnically diverse artist and freelancer work pool.

## Anti-racist commitments

Our Board will be responsible for overseeing the review of data we are collecting on staff ethnicity. Tracking this data will tell us if action is leading to results meaning. If it is not then a new direction and actions need to be found.

## Language and safe spaces

The focus of this area will be the Anti-Racist Working Group and the Staff Network. In the next 6 months we will be setting up our Anti-Racist Working Group and they will be carrying out their role of:

- Agree the actions in the plan
- Prioritise the order in which these actions should happen
- Clarify and approve timescales for the action plan to be delivered
- Update the Board directly on progress made or not made
- Input to reports to stakeholders on progress made or not made

This group will be crucial in exploring and ensuring Magic Me's implementation and ongoing commitment to Anti-Racist action.

The vision for the Staff Network is to create a safe space for minority ethnic individuals to support each other to grow, flourish and thrive in Magic Me and the wider arts and charity sector.

People from minority ethnic backgrounds in the UK have been historically marginalised, underrepresented and underinvested. This in turn has a negative impact on mental health outcomes and growth opportunities for such individuals within this sector.

In September, we will be inviting individual staff, trustees and artists to join in for an initial brainstorming session. We will discuss what the Network could potentially be, decide how it will work and how we utilise our skills to support each other. From there we will collate all our ideas together to establish a more formal network.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Implementing an anti-racist culture is an organisation-wide lifelong commitment and involves redefining and building all parts of the organisation. This cannot be done and managed by one person. Initially we thought this would be managed by our Head of Operations, however this has failed to progress the work enough. All levels and all areas of the organisation need to be involved; they need to be able to decide what is possible, practical and important. For successful implementation and development of new anti-racist practices buy in from all parties is required. This is what we are hoping to achieve with the implementation of our new working group – we will be able to update on this in our next report.