

Artsadmin

**Evaluating
anti-racism
milestones &
process
2021-22**

Artsadmin

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Introduction

This report was created in 2023 to account for the anti-racism actions taken by Artsadmin from 2019-2022, and to reflect on a period of evaluation that looked at both its successes and challenges prior to embarking on the next phase of our anti-racism journey. We hope that sharing our process will be of interest and relevance to our team, our board and the artists that we currently and may work or connect with in the future as well as partner organisations and the wider arts sector.

This work has and will frame our ongoing development of the organisation and our commitment to anti-racism and social justice in all aspects of our work. It is about conditions. We learned that the process of developing inclusive cultures and conditions means everyone must always be co-designing, learning together, taking action together, and to sustain this quality, the strategy will always continue.

Artsadmin recognises that tackling systemic oppressions is a long-term process which requires active ongoing focus across the organisation - from all the team and the board. We continue to work towards ensuring we embed an inclusive working culture internally and in all the work that Artsadmin does in the world. Through creating a strong, resilient and diverse team within an organisation which has equitable, fair and transparent practices we hope to build a more supportive context for artists who may feel marginalised and under-represented. We want artists to feel supported, inspired and proud to be connected with us and to be able to create their work in the best possible conditions.

From 2019-22, all staff members were involved with a programme of organisational training which included unconscious bias, non-violent communication and anti-racism. Out of this, three Race Resolution working groups were set up to focus on particular aspects of the organisation's activity and involved different combinations of staff from across the entire organisation:

- Leadership and Governance
- Programming and Marketing
- Recruitment, Retention & Training

Each group surveyed activity and practices through the lens of our [Anti-Racist Strategy](#) that was drawn up in 2020 and set priorities and incremental milestones for January 2021 – June 22.

These milestones reached their culmination in June 2022. Since then, we have been evaluating the successes and challenges as a whole staff team. The resulting report articulates this in detail, setting out where we are up to at the end of this first phase and identifying some of the setbacks we faced in their achievement.

In brief, highlights of significant achievements include:

- Successful Board recruitments meaning 50% of the current Board identifying as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority
- The establishment of a new, anti-racist and decolonised Equal Opportunities form based on peer research and in consultation with artists
- A clear increase in events led by / majority attended by those who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority
- A brand re-launch including an overhaul of staff profiles and new signage throughout the building (a process assisted through consultation with participants, artists, and partners who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority)
- A revision of the recruitment process leading to more applications from candidates who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority (on average 45% of every campaign and 40% overall), with positive feedback on the process for the 11 people of colour appointed.
- At the beginning of the implementation of the strategy and action plan, in July 2021, we were a majority white organisation (78%) with 17% identifying as ethnic identities including Black British, British Indian, and East Asian. By November 2022, we were an organisation with 50% white workforce including two white leaders and 50% staff who identify as people of the Global Majority with ethnicities such as Black British, Chinese, and South East Asian. This slightly surpasses the GLA's data assessment, indicating 44% of the London population are people of colour.

There has also been much to learn and limitations to our progress - staff turnover, the distractions of writing an NPO-bid, the COVID pandemic - have each presented significant, and interlinked, challenges to staff capacity for this work. There have also been issues related to systems of data collection/analysis and a lack of key expertise in certain areas.

Starting in Autumn 2023, we will be taking learnings from the work so far and will be collaborating with anti-racism facilitator Anu Priya on the next phase, developing an intersectional anti-racism action plan for 2023-24 and beyond.

Background

A cornerstone of Artsadmin's anti-racism strategy has been the creation of the 3 all-staff Race Resolutions groups outlined above. These groups were formed as working groups in the creation of Artsadmin's [Anti-Racism Strategy](#) laid out in November 2020 (supported by Mel Larsen & Ishreen Bradley). Each group was made up of a mix of staff from different teams and specialisms. These groups identified big-picture stretch goals

and [incremental milestones which were set in early 2021](#). These milestones took the organisation forwards with its anti-racism work up to June 2022.

Leadership & Governance

Milestones in this group primarily related to the recruitment and relationship with the Board of Directors, the functionality of the Senior Management Team, and the creation of an Accountability Committee.

Over the last two years, Artsadmin's board has radically changed, with significant turnover, the establishment of new terms for trustees, and a successful open recruitment for new board members; establishing a new board with a much greater diversity of age, Disability/non disability, and diversity of cultural heritage and ethnicity. This has resulted in 50% of the current Board identifying as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority. The Board are soon to have an away day with an external facilitator focused on intersectional collaboration. However, there have been some challenges in terms of the induction process for new Board members, particularly with a changeover of the Chair and Executive Director roles during this period. Whilst there has been a rigorous review of all elements required for inductions and how best to support Board participation, there has been limited implementation of this. The Race Resolutions group recommends the creation of a 'buddy' system to support these inductions and participation, arguing that this would help with capacity issues, as well as building relationships between the Board and the staff (currently relationships sit primarily with the Directors and the Chair). This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Two trustee induction 'Champions' have been appointed from within the board to drive the design and implementation of this process with the Directors.

The Accountability Committee, whose remit is to offer a safe, carefully facilitated space to uphold policies and ensure any discrimination that arises at Artsadmin is managed with sensitivity and integrity, has not yet been established. It has a chair and its terms of reference have been written and approved. [Its creation has been announced](#). However, with recent staff and trustee turnovers from those involved in its design there has been a delay in its actualisation. It is ready to go but requires staff representation and leadership to move it forwards.

A milestone for this group was that by June 2022 the staff and Board would have 'a clear understanding of leadership & senior management activity & function'.

- Our Directors have had a review of their job descriptions during this time.
- A restructure of the programme team has been completed, to clarify progression routes and instil a clearer, supportive line management structure through the creation of Senior Producers roles who are also part of SMT.
- In detailed consultation with all of its members in an open process, the restructure of the marketing & development team led to the creation of both Head of Development & External Relations and Communications Manager roles, to increase both capacity and clarity of leadership at the job description level before recruitment.
- Our induction framework was reviewed to ensure new staff members meet all levels of senior management to develop relationships while learning of the functions of the organisation.
- These formal yet open processes involving the staff and board have developed our internal structures and awareness of leadership roles and its function. Amidst other changes in the organisation, the Directors have used change management practices of open, ongoing communication and developing a shared understanding of the need and vision for it before decisions are finalised. However, there is much more work to do in this area to consider this milestone finalised.

This has enabled work on the role of SMT itself to start, which is discussed more in Recruitment, Retention and Training below as that group held an overlapping milestone.

Overall, there have been successes and challenges for this group in relation to their 2021/22 milestones. Staff capacity has been a key challenge in reaching milestones. This has been exacerbated by staff changes, the COVID pandemic and a lengthy Arts Council NPO application, which has taken a lot of attention within the SMT and the Directors. In setting future milestones (and in the re-design of the Race Resolution groups delivery process) staff capacity must be a key consideration.

Marketing & Programming

This group was primarily comprised of staff from the communications, development, and producing teams. Their milestones related to the welcome into Toynbee studios

and the café (now Canteen) for visitors, customers, hirers, and artists; the artistic programme; as well as communications and language.

Much work was done in relation to the welcome at Toynbee Studios during this period. A milestone in this area was to track the ethnicity of the artists we work with and the audiences we reach to better understand the impact of our anti-racism actions. This has been partially reached. Through our new Equal Opportunities form and from data over the past year, we know that 44% of the artists we support through creative support sessions and RADAR identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority (240+ responses meaning a strong data set). The key to this has been the creation of this new Equal Opportunities form (which has a much broader selection of identities related to race, heritage, nationality and ethnicity). This form was created after extensive peer research and consultation with artists and arts workers in the sector. The implementation of this new form has seen a higher take-up than previous versions and is an example of best practice in this area. There have been challenges in data collection for other audiences of Artsadmin and Toynbee Studios (outlined below).

Other milestones related to the welcome included paid consultation with local community members to re-design Artsadmin's visual identity, signage and refreshing images of projects around the building. The new signage has been developed with input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including paid consultation from artists, partners, both local and international, and community members with intersecting identities. Refreshed images of recent projects have been put up in the stairwell to give building users a more up-to-date sense of what Artsadmin does. The main sign for Toynbee Studios, which is an artwork itself, remains an issue – it is a fluorescent and is difficult to see in the daytime. Conversations related to how to make this signage more accessible continue.

A key milestone for this group was to ensure that our artistic programme in terms of the artists we support reflected the racial and cultural diversity of London. In 2020, 41% of the population of London identify as 'Black, Asian, or mixed', which is language used by the Office of National Statistics where this figure has been sourced. We have used the same terminology here for accuracy. For Arts Council England's Annual Survey, we track all activity and report events led by / have a majority of participants who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority. In 21/22, 56% of our events/activities were led by / had majority participation of Black people and/or people of the Global Majority. This is an increase on previous years 42% (20/21), 33% (19/20), 27% (18/19). However, this data doesn't indicate the scale and reach of an event or activity or the fees the artists received.

In terms of artist support we committed to ensuring that the artists LAB residencies were offered to were representative of the diversity of London with at least half of the opportunities offered to artists who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority. It is likely this milestone was reached and potentially exceeded. However, this is speculative. Formal, self-determining data on the ethnicity, heritage and/or race of the artists each residency was not collected.

In terms of communication and language, milestones included reviewing language used in Equal Opportunities forms used by Artsadmin, embedding anti-racism within the re-branding process, updating the language around Creative Support sessions, and updating the website to be more transparent about who works at Artsadmin.

- We have already mentioned the renewed Equal Opportunities form. Whilst this has broadly been a success, a key challenge within this has been that our funders and much of our reporting still requires highly simplified definitions of race and ethnicity. Therefore, whilst our data collection methods are more nuanced and committed to anti-racism, this nuance is often lost in the data analysis phase of this work.
- Advisory sessions have been successfully rebranded as Creative Support sessions.
- As part of Artsadmin's visual identity refresh following a deep organisational strategic review, the website has been re-launched with bios and photos for all staff, as well as a group photo with most of the current staff.
- Paid consultation with key artists, participants, designers, and freelancers who identify as Black people and people of the global majority was setup during the visual identity refresh to ensure wide perspectives on the organisation was represented both inherently as well as explicitly how we communicate, present and talk about ourselves.

It is important to note that this group has recommended all staff training in relation to the language used around race within Artsadmin. For example. In 2021, the term people/person of colour was used broadly to describe people who have been racialized and experience racism. In smaller team discussions, we have acknowledged that all terms that describe ethnic heritage and racialization are problematic in their own ways and continue to centre whiteness as normative within conversations about race. Inc Arts' BAME OVER statement provoked a lot of discussion and reflection within the team. While some felt that training around language and preferred terms would be useful, there was also a view that this would uphold and continue the use of coded

language that perpetuates structural racism. As such this training/discussion session has not been booked in. We need to create frames that both listen to and respond to cues from artists, team members and community partners around preferred terms used to self-describe everyone we work with. In this document, when talking about people who have experienced racism or been racialized, we have used the phrase: Black People or people of the Global Majority. We understand this isn't perfect.

A key challenge for many of the milestones in the group was a lack of clear data. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, in terms of canteen customers and general audiences at large, free, outdoor events it is implausible to accurately gather data related to race, ethnicity and heritage. These types of users make up a significant audience for Artsadmin. Secondly, most of the public facing work Artsadmin produces occurs at other venues and often internationally. In these cases, we mostly do not have access to the audience data, indeed, it is often not even collected by our partners. This group had a milestone related to this challenge – to add audience data sharing to contracts with partner venues – this milestone has not yet been achieved. And thirdly, how to analyse widely categorised data from our new Equal Opportunities form 'in-house' requires software and training Artsadmin does not yet have. Questions of how Artsadmin manages data collection and analysis is now being addressed by a cross-departmental Data Sharing Working Group, who are influencing the shaping of the refit of our CRM and a new recruitment portal. These challenges have been acknowledged and solutions are being worked towards.

Another key challenge has been the breadth of the activity covered by this Race Resolutions group.

Recruitment, Retention & Training

This group has been primarily focused on Human Resources (HR) aspects of the organisation as it relates to the Anti-Racism Strategy – exploring how we better recruit more staff who identify as Black people and people of the global majority and how we can support staff after recruitment. The milestones worked towards by this group have some overlap with the groups above. We shall begin with briefly revisiting these areas.

Firstly, it was a milestone that individual staff profiles with biographies and professional portraits be on the website by June 2022. This has been mostly achieved:

at the time of writing 20 out of 25 (approx.) staff have photos, most also have bios, although some are incomplete. Since this milestone was set it has been decided that the staff photos needn't be professional portraits and more informal photos are welcome – a consistent, informal tone is now the goal to create a welcoming and approachable atmosphere. The aim is to be transparent around who works at Artsadmin and in what roles, so that people thinking of applying for roles with us can get a sense of what our team is like.

This group sought to review the functionality of the Senior Management Team meetings. This is closely linked to the milestone of reviewing the transparency of the SMT set by the Leadership and Governance Race Resolutions group. The review of SMT meetings and engagement of the wider staff team in decision-making is underway but not yet completed amidst the formal restructures of roles and teams described above that finished as in July 2022. The members of SMT are developing a charter for the group that will be finished by April 2023, with a remit to consider organisational risks, support its culture, look to the future, and oversee support needs in the organisation—rather than being a body for closed door review or ultimate decision making.

It is a goal of this group to consider how to sustain open mechanisms such as a Staff Council. Proposals will be considered with the team through our next set of milestones. As such, progress has been made but this is not complete.

A distinct milestone for this group was the revision of the recruitment processes at Artsadmin. This was done in partnership with the Board, the Directors and the RR group. This was approached through:

- Ensuring there is at least one panel member who identifies as Black or ads a person of Global Majority on every interview panel
- Committing to interviewing every applicant who identifies as a Black person or as a person of the global majority should they meet the minimum essential criteria for the role
- Providing opportunities for a tour of Toynbee Studios and meeting with existing staff to applicants.
- Offering a coaching scheme to all existing and newly recruited staff who identify as Black people and people of the Global Majority (more on this below).
- Clearly define what we mean by Global Majority on our website and within all job packs by detailing [the definition developed by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE](#) who coined the term, while also continuing to use a range of terms as language evolves.
- Reaffirm our alignment to the [BAME-over statement and campaign](#) as a direct influence of our recruitment approach with links and crediting provided.

The response to these changes has been positive. Emergent data reveals significantly more diverse candidate pools and in larger volumes. Of the 19 campaigns, we continued to see excellent applications across the board for candidate pools on average between 20-95 people; however, of this, the average ratio of applications from

Black people and people of the Global Majority has been 45% per campaign and of the total candidate pool across that period 40% identified as Black people and people of the global majority. Careful assessment of meeting the minimum essential criteria of the person spec was made, and often additional time was required and set aside for more first interviews. Of the 11 staff recruited after these changes were made, many commented that the experience was confidence-building and felt like a trustworthy system.

A key challenge in reaching this milestone was the confidence of the group in making these changes without HR expertise. It was felt that these changes needed expert advice brought into the room in order to make use of or take forward the live experience from non-HR staff members. In other areas where staff turnover complicated progress, new joiners and voices at times brought this HR expertise. From the group's experience of revising this policy, funding was sought from Bloomberg to obtain a DEI/HR Consultant to advise the group, facilitate their comments, and support the design of a new recruitment portal. This funding bid has been secured and this work is now beginning.

Other milestones for this group included a revision of the annual appraisals process; the creation of a clear salary band system; and a review of the staff handbook / contracts with regards to the working culture / language around key issues. These milestones have been partially reached and work in these areas has mostly happened separately yet informed by the Race Resolutions group – rather than being led by it. Salary bands have recently been proposed to the board. Transparency in this area is crucial to an anti-racist culture and this area is currently very unclear to many staff. The Directors have made a commitment to develop a Remuneration Policy with the board as a standard charity best practice. This considers not only salary bands but also decision-making protocols and the criteria behind it as a charity with limited funding structures.

Finally, it was a key milestone for this group to explore training and development needs for all staff as a part of business planning. They aimed for there to be a training budget for 2022/23 enhanced in line with training needs by June 2022, which has been met. A baseline cycle of anti-racism, access, and inclusion training for all staff has been agreed on a rolling 18-24 month cycle with a budget to meet it. This includes intersectional anti-racist language & practices, unconscious bias, trans inclusion, disability confidence & mental health & wellbeing. Additionally, a budget has been set and a coaching scheme established for any Global Majority staff to take up immediately upon joining or at any point for a year, as support for working in a majority white organisation. The Embedding Reflection project offers ad hoc training in qualitative and arts-based data collection / analysis techniques for all staff. There is a Training & Development Plan as an appendix to Business Plan 2023-26 (a key part of the Arts Council England NPO application). Senior leaders have provided general training on budget management, finance procedures, line management and HR. However, there remains unclear access to investment in general individual training

needs amongst staff e.g. external courses. It is an ambition to develop greater clarity on all the training opportunities staff can access through Artsadmin.

Conclusion on Milestones

Overall, there have been significant achievements in relation to the milestones set by the Race Resolutions group for 2021/22. To re-state a few:

- Successful Board recruitments meaning 50% of the current Board identifying as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority
- The establishment of a new, anti-racist Equal Opportunities form
- A clear increase in events led by / majority attended by Black people and/or people of the Global Majority
- A brand re-launch including an overhaul of staff profiles and new signage throughout the building (a process assisted through consultation with participants, artists, and partners who identify as Black people and Global Majority)
- A revision of the recruitment process leading to sustained heightened levels of applicants who identify as Black people and/or people of the Global Majority, good feedback on the process, and the representation of 50% Black people and people of the global majority across the current staff team.

There has also been much to learn and limitations to our progress - staff turnover, the distractions of writing an NPO-bid and as well as the COVID pandemic have each presented significant, and interlinked, challenges to staff capacity for this work. There have also been issues related to systems of data collection/analysis and a lack of key expertise in certain areas.

Starting in Autumn 2023, we will be taking learnings from the work so far and will be collaborating with trainer/facilitator Anu Priya on the next phase, developing an intersectional anti-racism action plan for 2023-24 and beyond.

Reflecting on the Process

Alongside examining the progress on our milestones, we reflected on how our strategy delivery works: what has been effective? What needs to change? What might our next steps be?

Outlined above, our last phase of anti-racism strategy work began in 2019, at which time Ishreen Bradley and Mel Larsen led us through 15 months of unconscious bias and anti-racism learning. Season Butler also provided invaluable insight and provocation to help us embed a more inclusive approach to our strategic planning during this time. During this consultancy we established 3 'Race Resolutions Groups', each focused on different areas of activity within the organisation: Leadership and Governance, Programming and Communications, and Recruitment, Retention and Training. These groups were initially set up as break-out group, tasked with setting key milestones for the anti-racism strategy, each made up of a mix of staff from different teams within Artsadmin. During the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic this format of monthly online meetings suited the organisation well as a means of moving forward the anti-racism strategy. They remained the primary process of work for the anti-racism strategy from 2020 to 2022. These groups went through significant staff changes since their initial formation but have remained interdepartmental.

Over the course of two all-staff sessions in late 2022 and early 2023, we gathered insights on 'what worked', 'what didn't' and 'what we might do differently' with regards to our anti-racism working process. This document gathers these reflections. It is intended as an evaluation of the Race Resolutions Groups as a working process for the implementation and development of our anti-racism strategy. With this reflection, we hope to improve upon this process and articulate our next steps in this work.

What worked?

It was generally felt that the groups being made up of staff from across the organisation was incredibly valuable. It provided an opportunity for new lines of communication, joined-up thinking, and improved a sense of solidarity across Artsadmin. The regularity of the meetings was also useful – there was a sense of rhythm to the work. This coupled with Slack was very useful in keeping on top of who was doing what and when. Combined, this created a structure for an anti-racist culture to be developed which all staff contributed to and kept alive through ongoing dialogue and action.

When training and facilitation did occur, staff felt they got a lot out of it – as will be explored later on, they were keen for more.

The milestones framework was generally seen as a positive thing: it allowed for a clear structure, a timeline, and clear aims within the group. These milestones were initially set-up by staff: they were collectively articulated, which was positive.

What didn't?

Despite the positivity around the initial milestone setting process, once the groups began their work, it was felt that momentum was quickly lost. Despite the milestones being collectively set, it was not felt that they were collectively owned. This seems to be in part due to a lack of clarity on who had the responsibility, expertise, or authority to make the changes needed. This resulted in many actions being deferred to a stretched leadership/executive.

There were also significant staff changes between setting the milestones and their completion, meaning it was not necessarily clear to newer staff who had set the milestones or what the rationale behind them was. Inductions for the anti-racism strategy and the Race Resolutions Groups process were insufficient, and although detailed minutes were kept in some groups, there was little handover of the work itself. This led to further sense of disempowerment and deferment within the working groups. It was also felt that there was occasionally a lack of expertise within the organisation and further training was needed, which stalled actions. Similarly, there was sometimes a mismatch of those in the organisation who have the (for example) legal or data expertise to support the groups in moving key targets forwards. Action would often fall to one person.

Another recurring theme amongst staff was that these working groups felt quite siloed, despite often working on overlapping milestones. Each group worked independently from each other and there was no process for exchange between them. This meant that, at times, work was replicated, or things which were stalled in one group could have been moved forward within another. Cross fertilisation of skill, ideas or capacity was then missed.

How might we do things differently?

It was generally felt that a version of the milestone and working group system could work, but that it needed revision. Some suggestions included:

- For milestones to be more adaptable as work progresses or contexts change.
- Specific staff taking responsibility for a specific milestone as it's 'champion' drawing in support from outside of the group
- For clear induction protocols to be developed around new starters for the anti-racism strategy, as well as better handovers when staff leave.
- A better system of communication between working groups.
- Decompression time needed after working sessions.
- Allocated working time to move actions forwards needed alongside the meetings themselves.

It was felt that a new system would need to be more collectively owned by the staff, with greater empowerment across the organisation to ensure a clearer distribution of responsibility. It is important that the Accountability Committee is a key part of our anti-racism strategy and this needs to be more clearly integrated within the working processes including the board. A key part of this would also be another round of anti-racism training amongst staff to bring everyone to the same level of awareness, shared understanding and commitment, to ensure there is a baseline of knowledge to progress this work. Our milestone evaluation speaks to how this was delivered within a clear 24-month cycle structure and the budget has been allocated for the next phase of training.

With this in mind, we have appointed a new anti-racism facilitator Anu Priya and are keen to work with them to build upon the above, embrace incremental learning, and co-design a new collaborative process for our 2023-2025 anti-racism strategy that seeks to be intersectional across all of our access, inclusion and anti-racism work at staff and trustee levels.