Agent for change

Embedding anti-racism in the city's cultural heritage

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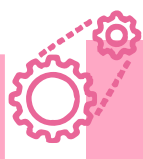
(UK)

GLASGOW

635,640

Governance

Challenge

"White supremacy is not the shark, it is the water."
- Kyle "Guante" Tran Myhre.
Racism is a centuries-old systematic way of thinking deeply embedded in Western society, which is extremely difficult to change. Addressing this through cultural heritage required new practices and ways of working.

Solution

Glasgow Life regards diversity and racial equality with increasing importance, which is reflected in its cultural policy for the city. Agent for change raises awareness on anti-racism and encourages the decolonization of mindset. It properly interrogates Glasgow's role in perpetuating structural racism and white supremacy, acknowledges the history of the neighbourhood related to British colonialism, while prioritising artists of colour in their daily practices.

How ?

1 In 2017, the Glasgow Life created a new role to tackle racism and inequality. The Agent for Change, also known as Senior Arts, Music manager in charge of diversity, aims at improving racial diversity across the city's cultural scene.

2 The Agent for Change:
- initiates interactions between Glasgow Life (a charity that delivers cultural, sporting and learning activities on behalf of Glasgow City Council) and Creative Scotland (the cultural branches of the Scottish government), as well as between artists, practitioners, audiences and stakeholders. Together they set goals to meet anti-racism objectives and to rethink the city's colonial heritage.
- leads all aspects of embedding ethnic diversity in creative and artistic practices and activities;
- engages minorities to ascertain needs and enable key messages to be communicated more widely;
- develops and influences programming that represents and raises awareness of diverse work across arts forms;
- raises the visibility and confidence of minorities through the new and existing platforms;
- facilitates inclusive audience development and communication;
- facilitates the organisation of cultural events and festivals to ensure racial equality in recruitment and casting processes.

Budget/Financing

€ 229,499

- Total budget of the initiative is £200,000 (€229,499) which is allocated through payrolls to the position over 4 years.
- 50% of the funding came from the municipality and 50% came from national administration.

Management

- The Agent for Change is a joint position funded by both Glasgow Life and Creative Scotland.
- Cultural organisations collaborating in projects, programmes and festivals with the support of Glasgow Life are also encouraged to embed the promotion of anti-racism in their daily practice.

Transferability

- The Agent for Change role raises awareness among policy makers, public officials and private employers on racial equality to create an encouraging and welcoming environment for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) to participate in different sectors.
- Give more casting opportunities and long-term employment opportunities to BIPOC.
- Set long term plans, goals, grants and commissions to prioritise people who are underrepresented in the sector.
- Make anti-racism a standing agenda item in daily meetings.
- Train, teach and raise awareness within the staff from the city administration and from local cultural organisations.

Impact

- The project has increased the number of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) artists in the delivery cohort as part of Glasgow Life's wider anti-racism initiatives.
- It embedded anti-racism in the daily practices of many local festivals and activities.
- It encouraged the creativity and support of artists, practitioners and stakeholders of colour.
- 'The Agent for Change Model has received positive results and feedback in Scotland and has subsequently been established in the city council of Edinburgh.

Links

- https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/
- https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDNDXDNZ3UTDX

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