



Learning Team statement and principles

The Learning team connects people with the Horniman's collections, displays and gardens, designing inclusive activities where enjoyment, inspiration, respect and understanding can flourish.

Our highly-regarded formal, family, adult, youth and community engagement programmes address a broad range of learners' interests and needs with the aim of enhancing wellbeing, inspiring a lifetime of curiosity, and creating access to culture.

Learning has always been at the heart of the Horniman Museum and Gardens. In 1901, Fredrick Horniman dedicated the Museum and surrounding land as a gift to the people for their recreation, instruction and enjoyment. Today, enrichment through learning is central to the Horniman's **vision**,

To use our worldwide collections and the Gardens to encourage a wider appreciation of the World, its peoples and their cultures, and its environments.

The Horniman adopts the following broad **definition of learning**, created by Inspiring Learning for the MLA:

Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.

(Campaign for Learning and MLA)

Further, we actively support the notion that the Horniman can **create positive social change**:

Museums change people's lives. They enrich the lives of individuals, contribute to strong and resilient communities, and help create a fair and just society. Museums in turn are immensely enriched by the skills and creativity of their public.

(Museums Change Lives, Museums Association)

Five things you can expect us to do:

- 1. Create inspiring programmes that encourage a wide range of people to enjoy, learn about and get involved in the Horniman collections and Gardens.**
- 2. Explore collaborative ways of using the Horniman collections and Gardens to create positive changes in the lives of people and communities.**
- 3. Promote and share access to tactile learning with museum objects at the Horniman.**
- 4. Involve participants in shaping the museum service to ensure it meets the needs of new and existing audiences.**
- 5. Ensure the Horniman's learning programmes are high quality, well-managed and sustainable.**

The following principles guide the ongoing development of the Learning service. As a team, we recognize that:

- People must feel safe, respected and welcome when they learn at the Horniman.
- People learn in different ways and have different strengths and interests. Our diverse collections of anthropology, natural sciences, music and living collections provide us with unique opportunities for new interpretations and participatory experiences.
- We are well-placed to actively facilitate visitors' self-representation and ensure personal experience is built upon and celebrated within the Horniman. To this end we find ways to include more voices in the museum's interpretation of collections and wherever possible enable people to choose the way they engage with the Horniman.
- Programmes must aspire to reflect the diversity of cultures locally and globally. We believe activities can increase inter-cultural respect and may also challenge discrimination and racism.
- Working in appropriate, sustainable and mutually advantageous partnerships will support the participation of marginalized or disadvantaged people.
- Ongoing, thoughtful evaluation involving informal and formal dialogue with participants and partners enables us to focus on continual improvement.
- Programmes should inspire and motivate the continuation of learning, engagement and volunteering beyond the visit, to create enthusiastic lifelong learners who feel confident accessing culture.
- Our handling collection and approach to tactile learning with objects should be celebrated and continually strengthened. The high quality of the handling collection is unique to us nationally, even internationally.
- We should effectively share the knowledge and expertise gained through engagement and partnership working to benefit all learning programmes, staff, participants and the wider sector.

This document is intended as a values-based companion to the section's work plan, which translates the principles contained here into a programme of work. It informs relevant departmental objectives and individual work plans across the Museum and Gardens.

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