

# Develop Equitable partnerships with People of Colour in the Exhibition Sector

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# Examining the Motivations

- **It doesn't matter who your audience/community is:** Educating white audiences is vital regardless of whether or not the community is diverse, otherwise upholding racist status quo.
- **Diversity and Inclusion work and Anti-racist work are not the same thing:** And you should be aiming for the latter for a number of reasons
- **In the long term not doing this work will catch up with you in terms of being a viable business:** Black and poc audiences visit cinema more often. Younger population generally more diverse and the trend is continuing in that direction.
- **What is prioritised when things are hard are really telling:** Inclusivity is not a luxury that you do when there is extra money is around, it should be a core principle that informs how you function as an organisation.

*LET'S REFLECT ON WHY YOU HAVEN'T GONE FURTHER/ACHIEVED MORE WITH THIS ALREADY? IS IT LINKED TO YOUR MOTIVATIONS.*

# How partnerships are set up (too much of the time)

**Care is never  
discussed**

What is this symptomatic of?

**The ask is a  
specific one**

The idea has already been settled  
on and isn't up for discussion.

**The parameters  
of the  
collaboration is  
based on Race**

Why is this the only time you  
reach out?

**Larger/White-led  
Organisation  
approaches**

How is this perceived?

**Funding for  
shared project is  
not evenly  
distributed**

Who does this help and what  
does this hinder?

**POC are  
expected to fit  
into existing  
ways of working**

Who does this help and what  
does this hinder?

**Smaller/POC-led  
Organisation  
approaches**

How is this perceived?

**The 'Burden' of  
Outreach is  
unequally shared**

Where does that fall?

**The  
collaboration  
ends when then  
funding stops.**

What taste does this leave in  
peoples mouths?

# What's wrong with that?

**What happens when care isn't discussed?** The wellbeing of POC isn't valued and as a result on top of the work of the partnership POC have to undergo additional unpaid labour either setting up parameters to try and avoid experienced racialized trauma as a result of this partnership, or when that fails trying to take time to process that trauma. You feed into a unhealthy/violent work environment for poc which can lead to people of colour leaving the sector for good (see Jemma Desai's 'This Work Isn't For Us').

**How 'who approaches who' is perceived and received by you is a result of a power imbalance?** One is actually (more often than not) extractive but seen as a generous offering, while another is one that come often from necessity as POC-led orgs due to systemic racism are more likely to be in financially (and otherwise) precarious situations, but this wider context is next to never is acknowledged and instead white organisation focus on them being needed and uses this to further benefit from the power imbalance.

**Well if the POC-led organisation already has the links to those communities it makes sense for them to just lead on the outreach right?** Wrong, well at least not 100% right when you consider this is often married with a sense that the white-led org should oversee the programming and any of the creative decision making, completely ignoring that the POC-led org is also more than capable of valuable input in this as well. Also in the short term you get the audiences in but in the long term you do not develop relationships with these audiences so they don't come back to you.

**Well of course we reach out to POC when we want to put together a programme that highlights POC, it would be wrong to not do that?** Yes it would but it's also not okay to only see POC as being good for one thing, it's also reflective of you/society dehumanising POC, and this also goes for ways of working, and the stop and start nature of this work.

**These kinds of partnerships are in no way developmental for POC-led orgs, but why should they be?** The answer to that becomes clear when you understand what happens when they aren't and what that leads to.

# Some principles we should unpack: Professionalism and Customer Service

## **Professionalism:**

How are people judged for the work that they do, and in what way?

What is viewed as professional is not neutral it is informed by one's cultural background and therefore judging people from other cultural backgrounds by your standards of professionalism they will always come up short.

## **Customer Service:**

Do you need to always focus on the comfortability of your core 'white' audiences? Is the customer always right?

How is a sense of safety, and welcoming environment communicated to poc audiences and Why does it need to be?

**Are you  
convinced?**

**Let's reflect on your previous  
Partnerships with all of this in  
mind?**

**Are you able to see them  
differently now?**

# Here's how you should be working instead!

## Care is discussed from the offset

This experience of doing this work is prioritised as you do not want to perpetuated harm.

## The ask isn't a specific one

The approach is one consisting of commitment, and openness. The details are decided on together.

## The parameters of the collaboration isn't based on Race

But this naturally informs and enriches the partnership.

## Whichever Organisation approaches

The power imbalance is acknowledged and redressed.

## Funding for shared project is not evenly distributed

White-led more established orgs leverage their ability to provide operational support.

## Ways of working are developed together

Taking nothing for granted and finding a way to meet people where they are.

## The 'Burden' of Outreach is equally shared

As is the the more creative aspects of the work you do.

## The collaboration doesn't ends when then funding stops.

The partnership is a staitained one that enriches not only communities of colour but supports the long term goals of the POC you work with.

# You need to have/be doing the following:

- Accountability/Microaggressions process.
- An organisational culture of unlearning and open acknowledgment of privilege.
- Outreach in terms of paid opportunity and actively work against gatekeeping.
- Consider if you should be applying for funding to do this work, over helping people from these communities apply for funding to do this work.

# Taking an Intersectional Approach

Another way that 'tokenistic' ways of working show themselves is in the way that projects/collaborations are developed when it comes to people of colour specifically, is when an organisation is looking at how can we how can we better accomadate, disabled, working class, LGBTQIA+ communities there is so rarely time and resources given to the needs of someone who is both POC and disabled, working class, queer, etc.

Beyond this ways of working being exclusionary, it isn't the most efficient when resources are limited also. So often what end up happening? Some marginalised groups are prioritised over others because those that intersects aren't considered/accommodated, and when you are discussing this in terms of forgetting POC you are reaffirming whiteness as neutral.

*That being said in striving to do better do not flatten in the name of seeking similarities.*

Also,  
Expected to  
be distrusted  
at first.

# What you will come up against when you start working in this way and how to address it

- Being accused of 'over-politising' your film programme
- Racism within your 'core' audience
- Racism within staff/volunteers
- Equality feeling like oppression when you are used to being privileged.
- Not wanting to own up/rectify mistakes as its easier to ignore or deny.
- When you are willing to own up to mistakes you are overly apologetic and focus on seeking forgiveness rather than atonement

**Discussion/  
Any  
Questions?**