

## Supporting Anti-racism

### **A case study from David Livingstone's Birthplace, Elena Trimarchi, Learning and Engagement Manager**

Museum team: 11 Full-time-equivalent staff

[David Livingstone Birthplace \(DLB\)](#) is an independent museum in Blantyre Scotland. The museum reopened in July 2021 after a four-year refurbishment. During the refurbishment, the museum worked with a wide range of partners to bring the story of [David Livingstone](#), famous missionary doctor, explorer and abolitionist into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, analysing the controversies and contradictions within this multi-layered story.

Challenging racism is a core part of our work at DLB. This has included:

- Working with an Expert Advisory Group to support the museum in anti-racism and decolonisation.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work in partnership with the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC), who have supported our efforts to embed EDI in practice.
- Training with colleagues from the Hunterian Museum and the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights on white supremacy, including thinking critically about what it means to interpret a museum dedicated to a figure of Empire.

Our partnership approach has allowed us to bring the whole museum team along on this journey. In 2019 we hosted two placements with [Next Step Initiative](#), supporting trainees from underrepresented backgrounds to achieve SVQs in Museums and Galleries Practice; in 2022 we have been working on a partnership project with National Museums Scotland and National Maritime Museum, London. Through this project we recruited six participants of South Asian, African and Caribbean heritage to explore experiences of empire, migration and life in Britain through collection research and creative work.

We have set up a fortnightly museum-wide discussion group, with readings on anti-racist and decolonisation practice.

Next steps include working with young people on our 'Power Play' project (funded by the MA's [Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund](#)), developing an anti-racist learning resource for schools and developing a partnership framework.

Some first steps to get started in this work are to reach out to people who have also undertaken this work, build a network of partners and plan with colleagues to instigate internal change. Small steps can lead to bigger ones.



Caption: Walnut Wasps and staged photographs of Susi and Chuma in David Livingstone Birthplace exhibition.