

Client Brief #7

Company



Summary

National Museums Liverpool runs the Transatlantic Slavery and Legacies in Museums Forum, a professional network with over 500 members across the UK. Currently funded by a three-year grant, the Forum faces a long-term sustainability challenge. You are tasked with identifying and proposing ethical, sustainable funding models that can support the Forum's coordination and activities. The solution should consider models used in the cultural and wider sectors, assess ethical risks, and recommend approaches that maintain accessibility and inclusivity while ensuring financial resilience.

Industry

Museums, Heritage, Culture, Nonprofit, Education

Focus

This brief relates to sustainability in the cultural and heritage sector, with a focus on income generation, funding models, ethics, and inclusivity in professional networks.

Key Words

Museums, Heritage, Cultural Funding, Ethical Sponsorship, Sustainability, Income Generation, Professional Networks, Accessibility, Inclusivity, Social Impact, Transatlantic Slavery, Equity

Brief

Hi – I'm Françoise McClafferty, Head of Partnerships and Research at National Museums Liverpool. I'd like to share our challenge with you.

At National Museums Liverpool, we're a group of seven world-leading museums and galleries, with collections spanning over four million objects. From Pre-Raphaelite masterpieces to Ancient Egypt, right through to the UK's only modern slavery collection, we have some fascinating pieces. Our mission goes beyond preserving collections, however. We use our venues and stories to inspire, to educate, and to drive social change.

One of the networks we manage is the Transatlantic Slavery and Legacies in Museums Forum. This is a professional community of over 500 members across the UK, including museum professionals, heritage organisations, and creative practitioners – all working together to share practice and lead dialogue on the history and legacies of transatlantic slavery. The Forum delivers events, newsletters, and training, and provides vital space for collaboration on issues that remain urgent and deeply relevant today.

Right now, the Forum is funded through a three-year grant. But to secure its future, we need to find ethical and sustainable funding models that can support its ongoing coordination and programme of activity. A traditional paid membership model isn't viable – it risks excluding voices and reducing accessibility. Instead, we want to explore other approaches: sponsorship, partnerships, trusts and foundations, or even innovative models from outside the cultural sector.

That's where you come in.

Your challenge, using AI, is to investigate potential income models that could sustain the Forum into the long term. We need a proposal that outlines options for generating revenue ethically, while ensuring inclusivity and accessibility remain at the heart of the Forum.

When exploring this challenge, you should think about:

- Examples of how other cultural or professional networks sustain themselves.
- How ethical considerations shape funding choices, especially given the subject matter.
- Innovative or hybrid approaches that could provide resilience.
- And ways to balance financial sustainability with accessibility and inclusivity.

If you can help us develop clear, practical recommendations, you'll be directly contributing to the resilience of a network that drives awareness, challenges inequalities, and supports a more equitable society.

We're excited to see your ideas!

