



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2024

## Movema 'Terms and Language' for discussing ethnic and cultural diversity

Since 2020, Movema has hosted regular EDI Conversations and EDI Training with our team of staff, freelance practitioners, board, volunteers and partner organisations, facilitated internally or delivered through expert providers. We have done this to support and encourage honest communication around what this means for our vision and our work, and how our personal journeys and experiences can impact our assumptions, unconscious bias and different viewpoints of the world.

From these conversations we have strengthened our understanding and exploration of language and how important it is to have a shared terms of reference for our work. This promotes our goal of creating safe(r) spaces, operating as an anti-racist organisation, and putting humanity at the centre. This approach is also a priority for our teams' wellbeing, safety and continuous professional development.

We've used Inc Arts' #BAMEOver statement as a starting point for these conversations. From there, we have included some direct quotes from the statement, and through our own reflections, have created our tailored guidance for language and engagement.

### Inc Arts BAME-Over Statement Overview

Throughout August 2020 more than 1,000 people took Inc Arts' #BAMEOver survey, and on 4th September over 250 people came together to reset the terms of reference for people with lived experience of racism. We set out to answer the question, 'What do we want to be called?' Through our discussion we've come up with a guide to terminology, for use by everyone who wants to be an effective ally and wants to avoid causing further harm through the use of casual and inaccurate language. We do not want to be grouped into a meaningless, collective term, or reduced to acronyms.

Here are our preferred terms of reference for people in the UK:

We are African Diaspora people,

We are South, East, and South East Asian diaspora people,

We are Middle East and North African people.

We are ethnically diverse.

We are people who experience racism.

Use these terms in any order you choose. Just don't call us BAME.

## 1. Why are we using these terms at all?

We don't use these terms for an easy grouping of people, we use them to clearly explain specific issues we are tackling in a way that maintains a balance of power and honours the humanity of the people we are engaging with.

Where funders use language that does not align with the terms in this document we will not use their language. We try to explain at the beginning of the funding application what terms we are using and why.

## 2. Why is language important?

Language reflects our underlying beliefs and can be a powerful tool to maintain oppressive status quos. Language is not just words, but all of the historic associations of those words and how they have been used and by whom. The words are not 'wrong' in and of themselves, but the way they have been used may be.

**Language evolves.** The terms we've agreed today will probably change in the future. Let's recognise this and go on the journey together.

## 3. Self - Identification

Above all we believe that self-identification is preferable, allowing everyone to feel recognised and valued. That a person is best to state how they would like to be referred to. Some terms we've used within our Movema team include; **'A person with multiple ethnic backgrounds', 'Malaysian Chinese, South East Asian heritage', 'Birmingham Irish', 'Northern, British English, Scottish and Welsh heritage', 'Ozzie with European heritage, adopted scouser', 'British Indian' 'Afro-Caribbean heritage', 'Black woman' 'British', etc**

In 2024 we would like to recognise our team has changed over the past two years and the way some of us identify has changed. Some terms we now use to describe ourselves are:

Chinese-Malaysian

Greek, Italian-American

A person of multiple ethnic backgrounds, woman/ artist of the global majority.

Affinity to the Chinese Malaysian culture & background of adoptive mother.

Birmingham Irish.

And in our wider team of freelance practitioners, board members, volunteers and partners, some of the self-identified terms include:

Mixed North-European Asian and Jewish.

Canadian born, Bristol based, French speaking, woman in late 40s brown skinned.

White British – never explored my heritage

We would also like to acknowledge that how we identify ourselves can be different depending on who we are with e.g. if in the company of people who share a similar background, you may use a different term e.g. 'Black woman' versus 'woman from the African diaspora'.

Therefore it may be appropriate to consider each context, and allow someone to choose how they might describe their identity within such context.

*From #BAMEOver Statement:*

*Instead of... 'Black'*

*Many black people don't object to being called black: for others it is not accurate enough.*

*Black is a political term, best used by those who meet the conditions of its description.*

*It speaks of collective action against racially motivated oppression. It includes those of African and Caribbean heritage.*

*If you mean African people born in Africa, say so. If you mean third generation Caribbeans, say so.*

*If you mean both, try and be as clear as possible for example 'People of African or Caribbean heritage'*

#### 4. If you don't know and NEED to know, ASK.

We discussed that it is important for Movema to ask how people identify in order to value the individual, and also to monitor our equality commitments and ensure our projects are working to reach the people they aim to.

Socially, we are now more comfortable with asking people, 'What is your preferred pronoun?'. We can, sensitively, do the same with a question such as "How would you self-identify", "How would you describe your Cultural background", or 'How would you describe your ethnic background'.

As a team we are aware that these enquiries, no matter how carefully worded, timed or judged, are received differently by individuals, and sometimes differently when posed by people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Although asking can perpetrate the otherness, it is important for us to take the time to get to know people when they come into our programmes. We are interested and we care, we don't want to avoid learning about individuals' backgrounds, we acknowledge they may want to share this to feel seen and heard.

5. The terms, uses and interpretations of the words 'Ethnicity' and 'Race' are complex. Movema uses the term '**Ethnicity**' to describe people with a shared history, heritage or ancestry, who may have some distinctive cultural, belief, language allegiance or association, which may include shared physical characteristics, from a common, however distant, geographic origin. 'Ethnicity' is our preferential term to describe the difference between humans rather than 'race'. We do not use 'Race', as it is a discredited term, seen as a social construct to historically claim genetic differences between groups of people, and fuelling the belief that some racial 'types' were superior to others. This was used by white Europeans to justify slave trade and colonialism.

We recognise the term 'Race' is used regularly used and sometimes interchangeable with ethnicity, and Movema recognises people may experience '**racism**' on many levels. Although we reject race as a social construct, we still use the word racism to work together with other activists in this area.

To discuss - within Movema we also use the term '**Diaspora**', '**Background**' or '**Heritage**' when we know it to be accurate.

6. Within Movema we agree to use the term **‘ethnically diverse’** to communicate with about our team, priority groups and focuses. We also accept that whilst the language is evolving in this area, one person on their own may describe themselves as ‘ethnically diverse’ even though it may not feel grammatically correct. At times a group of people identifying as the same ethnicity, may be described as ‘ethnically diverse’, the term applied in such ways is still problematic, as it implies ‘any other than white European’ and denies the individuals ‘completeness’ or ‘uniqueness’. Our aim is to be specific and reject systemic terms.

7. We believe collective terminology is necessary, but acronyms (such as BAME, BME, BIPOC, GEM) are not. We think reducing people to acronyms is problematic as it removes their humanity and individuality and makes them an ‘other’.

8. We don’t use the term ‘Minority’ when the people referred to as such are actually in the **‘Global Majority’** (\*see point 9 below) 'Global majority' may refer to people who identify as Black, Asian, Brown, Latinx, dual-heritage, of multiple ethnic heritage, indigenous to the global south, and /or have experienced discrimination based on the colour of their skin, or ethnicity. On a global scale, representing approx. 80% of the world’s population.

However, the term ‘global majority’ can be misunderstood, resulting in people maybe presuming that 80% of global power, wealth, resources and opportunities are distributed/ available to people of the global majority, which is not the case.

9. We may use the term **‘underserved’, ‘marginalised’ or ‘underrepresented’** when it is accurate to do so.

10. ‘People-First’ language. We value the person first and foremost, so we will use the words person/people before any descriptive characteristic for example ‘a person of heritage’ However, there are some examples when people prefer to use a defining characteristic first e.g ‘Indian Person’, so we are open to correction.

11. We will be specific and invest time to understanding the terms we use and why we are using them i.e. **African Diaspora people, South, East, and South East Asian Diaspora people, people who experience racism.**

12. Movema will use the term **‘people with lived experience of racism’** which may be used to refer to people of the ‘Global Majority’ as well as other ethnic groups that may experience social and political marginalisation, discrimination and oppression, such as people of Irish heritage or Jewish heritage for example. These are not all interchangeable terms, they should be used specifically and carefully.

*From #BAMEOver Statement:*

**“People who experience racism”.** This term provides acknowledgement of the harm caused, and gives context in many instances where a collective term is sought.

It will also require you to then articulate who you are referring to, and may, depending on context, refer to Western Asian people, Irish people, Jewish people and others whose oppression is not captured by current terminology. Please use with awareness.

13. We do not use the term 'People of Colour'. This term arguably centres around whiteness, and can also be confused with the offensive term 'coloured' in the UK.

*From #BAMEOver Statement:*

*People of Colour is a US term, as is 'Black, Indigenous and People of Colour'. In the UK for many people over 35 this has uncomfortable resonance with the racist terminology 'coloureds'. The 'colour' of one's skin is not what we have in common, it is our lived experience of racism directed against us.*

## 11. Multiple heritage

From Movema's conversations and reflections, we currently feel that '**multiple heritage**' is the more appropriate term for people that identify as having more than one ethnicity or ethnic background, although '**multiple ethnic backgrounds**' is acceptable and the less problematic than 'Mixed heritage' and 'Dual heritage' to be used, if needed.

Referring to the above statement, we reject the term 'mixed race' or 'multiple race'.

We will not use any of these terms to describe how someone looks. It is essential to be aware of the sensitivities this can pose, as any of these terms can be used in a derogatory and offensive way.

Thanks to our team for regular and open conversations. These discussions will continue with our team, freelancers, board, partner organisations and participants.

Thanks to Inc Arts for creating and sharing the #BAMEOver Statement.