

# Evaluation of Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War Centenary Activity: Year 2 report Executive Summary

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# **Evaluation of Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War Centenary Activity: *Year 2 Executive Summary***

**A report to the Heritage Lottery Fund**

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# Introduction

The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR), Sheffield Hallam University was appointed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to conduct an evaluation of its First World War Centenary activity across the span of the commemoration period, from 2014 to 2019.

As part of the commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War (FWW), HLF are undertaking a range of activities through both grant-making and working with Government on the UK-wide Centenary programme.

Grants of £3,000 upwards are being provided for FWW Centenary projects through a number of programmes covering a range of project sizes. The majority of projects so far have been funded through the FWW: Then and Now programme, which was launched in May 2013 and provides grants of up to £10,000.

The two broad aims of HLF's FWW Centenary-related activity are:

## **1. To fund projects which focus on the heritage of the First World War and collectively:**

- create a greater understanding of the First World War and its impact on the range of communities in the UK;
- encourage a broad range of perspectives and interpretations of the First World War and its impacts;
- enable young people to take an active part in the First World War Centenary commemorations;
- leave a UK-wide legacy of First World War community heritage to mark the Centenary;
- increase the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage, and to raise the profile of community heritage.

## **2. To use the Centenary projects that HLF funds to communicate the value of heritage, the impact of our funding and the role of HLF.**

### **About the evaluation**

**The evaluation focuses on HLF's grant-making activity, covering the first set of aims outlined above.**

In assessing success against the aims of the activities as a whole, the evaluation also works to HLF's broader outcomes framework, which focuses on three outcome areas:

- **Outcomes for heritage:** following HLF investment, heritage will be better managed; in better condition; better interpreted and explained; and identified and recorded.

- **Outcomes for people:** following HLF investment, people will have learnt about heritage; developed skills; changed their attitudes and/or behaviour; had an enjoyable experience; and volunteered time.
- **Outcomes for communities:** following HLF investment, environmental impacts will be reduced; more people, and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage; organisations will be more resilient; local economies will be boosted; and local areas and communities will be better places to live, work or visit.

In year 2, the evaluation included the following sets of activities:

- review of grant data and project material (for instance HLF application forms, HLF case material and projects' internal evaluations);
- surveys of grant recipients and project participants;
- in-depth qualitative case studies of selected projects.

This report is based on the second year of evaluation activity but pulls together survey data from Years 1 and 2 to provide a more robust dataset.

### What has HLF funded?

Since April 2010, up to 31 March 2016, HLF has awarded over £77million to more than 1,450 projects. This includes over 1,000 projects funded through the FWW: Then and Now programme. Key findings were as follows:

- Funding for projects was spread broadly evenly across the UK.
- Project size varied significantly, although the great majority of grants were small: 76 per cent were for £10,000 or less and 11 per cent were for between £10,000 and £50,000. Although only a few very large grants of £1 million or more were awarded, these accounted for around half (52 per cent) of the value of grants awarded. The wide range of grant size awarded - from £3,000 to £12.2million - highlights the breadth and complexity of FWW Centenary projects funded by HLF.
- Collecting, cataloguing and conserving heritage source material was central to a large majority of projects. For example, over 80 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that their project involved collecting documents, photographs, oral histories and artefacts.
- Projects were producing a wide range of outputs, including display boards (60 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents), temporary exhibitions in community venues (58 per cent) or museums and libraries (56 per cent), and written outputs such as including leaflets and books (57 per cent) or a website (53 per cent).

Projects were also involved in a wide range of different activities, with an emphasis on community events. 86 per cent of projects said they held community events and participants in community events accounted for almost half of all participants based on Grant Recipient Survey responses about participation in specific activities.

# Who was involved in Centenary activities?

**It is estimated that a total of 5.1 million people participated in HLF-funded FWW projects that ended before February 2016 (based on survey data collected to date).**

The demographic data supplied by Grant Recipient Survey respondents suggests that in many respects overall participation in HLF funded FWW Centenary projects was broadly representative of the UK population. There are some variances in this, however. Participants aged 26-59 were underrepresented relative to the overall population (32 per cent of participants compared to 46 per cent of the UK population), while those aged 60 and over were overrepresented (32 per cent of participants compared to 22 per cent of the population). Projects had successfully engaged with large numbers of people of school or college age (6-18) and this group accounted for 27 per cent of participants compared with only 15 per cent of the population. In terms of ethnicity, 79 per cent were White British, slightly lower than the overall UK figure, and nine per cent were Asian (compared with six per cent nationally).<sup>1</sup> However, proportionately fewer people from BAME backgrounds were involved in volunteering or training through projects than those with a White background.

## Volunteering

Volunteers were very important to the delivery of projects. 93 per cent of respondents to the Grant Recipient Survey reported having used volunteers in their FWW Centenary project. This amounted to over 13,500 people providing more than 65,000 days of their time.

The importance of volunteers was emphasised by the variety of role they fulfilled, most frequently being involved in activities directly related to project delivery, such as research and archival work, gathering, recording, analysing and cataloguing material. Volunteers frequently coordinated and led activities, with 64 per cent of projects using volunteers in this way.

The survey responses also highlight the important roles volunteers played in supporting the wider operation of funded projects: 62 per cent were involved in marketing and publicity, 58 per cent provided administrative or IT support and 49 per cent provided other types of support such as cleaning or catering.

## Why did projects and participants get involved with Centenary activities?

Projects were prompted by different motivations, but a common theme among Grant Recipient Survey responses was the importance of doing something to mark the Centenary

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that respondents were not always consistent in the way that they reported on demographics, especially in terms of ethnicity: e.g. some respondents gave a rounded estimate of proportions, while others appeared to give more precise figures. Any discrepancies caused by these differences will be ironed out as the dataset grows over the course of the evaluation.

as an act of remembrance. This was often set within the context of a perceived gap in knowledge either of local history or of a particular theme in relation to the FWW.

Participant Survey Respondents were also asked about their motivations for taking part, choosing from a list of options. Seventy-three per cent of participants took part to learn more about the FWW in the local area, and 46 per cent to learn about the war more generally. Fifty-two per cent felt the specific topic explored by the project was not well known and took part because they felt it should be better understood by more people.

# What outcomes were achieved?

The evaluation explored the extent and ways in which FWW Centenary activities have achieved different types of outcome, and specifically those identified within the HLF outcomes framework. Projects have tended to exhibit strong people outcomes but fewer heritage outcomes.

## Outcomes for heritage

The strength of evidence was mixed across the set of heritage outcomes, with some outcomes better evidenced than others. A majority of projects (71 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents) said that *heritage will be identified* as a result of their activities which matches the emphasis on recording heritage outlined above. There was also strong evidence that FWW funding was being used to *better interpret and explain heritage*, with projects using a wide range of devices to do so. Other heritage outcomes were less well evidenced. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents reported that their project had improved the physical state of FWW heritage, with *heritage will be better managed* the least met outcome. However, small community groups should not necessarily be expected to meet HLF's formal criteria for this outcome. The case study and survey data did provide strong evidence of soft outcomes that suggest that heritage will be better managed, for instance improved management skills for project staff and volunteers.

## Outcomes for people

As in Year 1, outcomes for people were the most evidenced, in particularly *learning about heritage* which was an outcome for 99 per cent of projects (based on Grant Recipient Survey data) and was the most important outcome for 74 per cent. Respondents enjoyed taking part in activities, with 97 per cent of participant survey respondents scoring their level of enjoyment of 7 or more on a scale of 1-10. 88 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents also felt that their project had led to a change in the way that people thought about the FWW, although longer-lasting changes in attitudes/behaviour was not measured.

The evaluation also found evidence of achievement against two important additional people outcomes that are not captured in HLF's outcomes framework: mental wellbeing, and development of participants' self-identity.

## Outcomes for communities

Evidence of outcomes for communities was found across four of the six outcome areas. Environmental impacts and economic impacts were not covered in any depth by the evaluation. For this reason these outcomes are not discussed in this report.

Key findings include:



- In terms of engaging *more people and a wider range of people*, 90 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that this was an outcome of their project, and 36 per cent saw it as one of the most important outcomes. Engaging a wider range of people was less well evidenced and less than half (45 per cent) of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that they had achieved this outcome and only eight per cent of respondents felt that this was one of the main or most important outcomes of their project. However, the demographic data from the Grant Recipient Survey suggests that projects are engaging with a broad range of population groups, largely proportionate to the overall UK population profile.
- Thinking about *making your local area a better place to live, work or visit*, 79 per cent gave a score of 7 or more and nearly all participants (94 per cent) gave a response of at least 5.

As with people outcomes, the evaluation identified outcomes additional to the HLF outcome framework, including improving community cohesion, which emerged as an important theme in both Years 1 and 2.

# Progress against Centenary activity aims

The evaluation also made an assessment of progress against HLF's FWW Centenary aims as set out above. These can be summarised as follows:

- Looking at the aim, *create a greater understanding of the First World War and its impact on the range of communities in the UK*, there is very strong evidence of projects leading to a greater understanding of the FWW and its impact in the communities that they are situated. HLF's funding reached every part of the UK, although the evaluation team have not analysed whether projects are situated in places with a range of different characteristics. There is evidence of projects focusing on a range of different non-geographic communities, including different ethnicities
- There is good evidence that FWW Centenary activities are allowing individuals to develop understanding of many different elements of the FWW. Although the Grant Recipient Survey suggests the main focus of projects tends towards a focus on local history, the Participant Survey suggested that people were learning about a wide range of issues.
- A large number of young people were taking part in HLF-funded projects. Grant Recipient data suggested that around 20 per cent of participants were young people aged 11-25, compared with 18 per cent of the UK population within this age group. Whether or not young people took an *active* part is less easily evidenced, but qualitative material provides some evidence about active engagement with young people.
- the legacy of First World War community heritage to mark the Centenary cannot properly be considered until the Centenary has passed. However, we can consider the extent to which the conditions are being put in place to ensure this aim is met. 33 per cent of all projects responding to the Grant Recipient survey had created project pages on a website; and HLF and the British Library have also developed a partnership to create a First World War Centenary Special Collection in the UK Web Archive. The collection will include snapshots of the First World War Centenary websites funded by HLF and will be preserved and made publicly accessible online by the UK Web Archive. 40 per cent of projects were also using Historypin to record their activities in some way.
- The evidence clearly showed that the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage was being increased, and the profile of community heritage was being raised. 98 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents felt that HLF funding had positively impacted on the capacity of their organisation in some way with many respondents saying that it would help them to deliver similar scale (76 per cent) or larger (43 per cent) projects in future. The evaluation data also suggests that projects were working to improve the profile of community heritage through their work to engage with different groups and to communicate their activities through a wide range of methods. When considered across the sheer number of projects being undertaken, and the numbers of people engaging with these projects, these figures alone suggests that the profile of community heritage is being raised by FWW Centenary activity.