

Evaluation of Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War Centenary Activity: *Year 1 report*

Executive Summary

July 2015



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A report to the Heritage Lottery Fund

Authors:

Nadia Bashir

Ellen Bennett

Chris Dayson

Will Eadson

Elizabeth Sanderson

***Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)
Sheffield Hallam University***

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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 the extent to which its aims for the First World War Centenary have been met 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 1, the evaluation included the following sets of activities:

- interviews with six internal and external stakeholders;
- 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 first year of evaluation activity and data is being collected evenly over a number of years rather than an intensive period of collection at any one point. As a result response numbers are often quite low at this stage, especially for the participant survey. **It is important to make clear that, as a result, any presented findings are only indicative.**

What has happened in Centenary activities?

Between April 2010 and May 2015, HLF awarded over £70 million to more than 1,200 FWW Centenary projects.

Funding for projects was spread broadly evenly across the UK, with some small outliers: London and Northern Ireland received slightly more funding per capita than other regions, largely owing to large grants for the Imperial War Museum and HMS Caroline respectively; and the North East received funding for a slightly greater number of projects per capita than other regions.

Project size varied significantly, although the great majority of grants were small: 75 per cent were for £10,000 or less and 12 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 more than half (57 per cent) of the value of grants awarded. The wide range of grant size awarded - from £3,000 to £12.4 million - highlights the breadth and complexity of FWW Centenary projects funded by HLF.

The Grant Recipient Survey asked respondents about the conservation and other heritage-related activities undertaken by projects. Answers highlighted the central role of collecting historical source material such as documents, photographs, oral histories and artefacts in a large majority of funded projects (more than nine in ten). Similarly, activities that involve cataloguing (including digitisation) archive material and conserving archives and artefacts have been an important focus of projects so far.

Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of projects produced a website, and over half produced a display or temporary exhibition. Film and performance were also an important output of many projects, with 50 per cent producing a film and 40 per cent putting on a performance of some kind. Fewer projects had produced permanent exhibitions, with fewer than one in ten creating a permanent exhibition in a community venue or a permanent exhibition in a museum, heritage centre, gallery or library.

Grant Recipients were also asked about the activities being carried out as part of their projects. Similar to responses regarding First World War themes, responses highlighted the local focus of the majority of projects. More than nine in ten projects said they held community events and participants in community events (40,079) accounted for more than half of all participants in specific types of activity. Other prominent activities included talks by experts (more than half of projects), visits and outreach with schools and colleges (around half of projects) and outreach sessions in community venues (around two-fifths of projects).

Who was involved in Centenary activities?

Overall, the 64 funded projects that responded to the Grant Recipient Survey reported having 768,578 participants.¹ This figure includes a number of projects that were already complete (43) and a number of longer term projects that had been up and running for at least 12 months (21).

It should be noted that projects lasting more than one year contributed many more participants (93 per cent; 34,343 per project) than completed projects (7 per cent; 1,346 per project). This is because longer term projects tend to be larger, and based in visitor attractions whereas completed projects tended to be short in duration and have more of a community focus. A banded breakdown of the number of participants is provided in Table 3.5 to illustrate this point in more detail. This shows how projects ranged widely in their 'reach', with a relatively even split across different bands of participant numbers between 'less than 100' and up to 5,000 participants. This should be expected in line with the variation in project funding, scope, focus and outputs.

Looking at the demographics of participants, participation was evenly distributed by gender but there were some significant variations according to age and ethnicity. More than three-quarters of participants were adults aged over 26 and there was a significant number - more than a third - aged 65 or over. By contrast 18 per cent of participants were of school or college age. Young people aged 17-25 were particularly underrepresented relative to the UK population. In terms of ethnicity, almost nine in 10 were White British with far fewer from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Volunteering

Overall, 95 per cent of respondents to the Grant Recipient Survey reported having used volunteers in their FWW Centenary project. This amounted to almost 2,600 people providing more than 16,000 hours of their time willingly and free-of-charge. Volunteers undertook a variety of roles and in many cases were central to the running of projects. The most frequently identified roles were directly related to the provision of activities: three-quarters of respondents said volunteers coordinated and led activities or were involved in research and archival work while almost two-thirds devised and delivered work with the public; more than half did this for schools and almost a third did so for young people outside school.

Why did projects and participants get involved with Centenary activities?

Respondents to both the Grant Recipient and Participant surveys were asked about their motivations for taking part. Looking first at the Grant Recipients, almost all of the projects referred to the importance of doing something to mark the Centenary in and of itself. Another significant theme was the use of the Centenary as a theme for existing or planned activities. Other prominent themes included:

- following-up from a previous community, heritage or FWW project
- a desire to engage young people with FWW heritage
- a desire to engage the local community with FWW heritage
- wanting to conduct repairs to war memorials
- personal interest in a subject related to the FWW Centenary

Respondents to the Participant survey were also asked why they decided to take part in FWW Centenary activities, and were asked to choose from a list of options. Over half (20 out

¹ Note that this figure and subsequent analyses excludes the Imperial War Museum First World War Galleries, which had over one million visitors in 2014/15.

of 34 respondents) of participants took part to learn more about the FWW in the local area, and also out of a desire to personally commemorate the Centenary (18 out of 34). The latter chimes with the motivations given by Grant Recipients about the importance of marking the Centenary in itself.

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. Some outcome areas are better evidenced than others at this stage. In particular, there is stronger evidence of people outcomes than other areas. This is partly due to the developing dataset, but is also owing to the nature of projects, which 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, but key points include:

- on the outcome, *heritage will be in better condition*, 32 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents reported that their project had improved the physical state of FWW heritage, with 10 per cent regarding it as their most important outcome.
- the outcome *heritage will be identified* was viewed as an important outcome for most projects, with 77 per cent of projects stating that they had achieved this outcome and 39 per cent marking it out as their most important outcome
- FWW Centenary funding is being used to *better interpret and explain heritage* through a wide range of methods, with the possibility for projects of all sizes to engage in different activities to meet this outcome.

Outcomes for people

Outcomes for people were the most well-evidenced in the first year of the evaluation. Key findings include:

- 48 per cent of projects aimed to *improve people's skills*, so that they are better able to look after and manage heritage, although only five per cent included this as a main or most important aim of their project.
- In meeting the outcome area *people will have changed their attitudes/behaviour*, 81 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents felt that their project had led to a change in the way the people thought about the FWW. The majority of participants said that their engagement with the FWW Centenary activities had 'challenged' them and had been thought-provoking.
- The outcome *people will have learned about heritage* was well evidenced. This was a project outcome for 98 per cent of respondents to the Grant Recipient Survey, 84 per cent of whom said it was one of the most important outcomes. Participants reported gains in their knowledge about the FWW across a range of themes.
- Respondents *enjoyed* taking part in HLF funded activities. When asked to rate the level of enjoyment derived from taking part on a scale of 1-10, all participant respondents gave a response of 5 or above with 42 out of 48 respondents giving a score of 9 or 10.
- Looking at the outcome, *people will have volunteered time*, as noted above, 95 per cent of respondents to the Grant Recipient Survey said that their projects involved volunteers. This amounted to almost 2,600 people providing more than 16,000 hours of their time willingly and free-of-charge.

- 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 emotional development/enrichment of participants.

Outcomes for communities

Grant recipients were able to provide some evidence across each of the outcomes areas, with the exception of reduced environmental impacts, which was not covered in evaluation questions. Key findings include:

- In terms of engaging *more people and a wider range of people*, 84 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said engaging more people was an outcome of their project. Engaging a wider range of people was less well evidenced, although around two-fifths (39 per cent) of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that they had achieved this outcome. Only five per cent of respondents felt that this was one of the main or most important outcomes of their project.
- Thinking about *making your local area a better place to live, work or visit*, 19 out of 30 Participant Survey respondents gave a response of eight or more when asked to rate the impact projects had on their local community on a scale of 1-10. This was borne out in case studies, with the Brierfield Our First World War One project being particularly successful in helping to improve community cohesion in their local area.

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:

- *create a greater understanding of the First World War and its impact on the range of communities in the UK*: there was good evidence of improved understanding of the FWW and its impact in broad terms, although there is more work required to understand the extent to which 'the range of communities in the UK' are covered by funded activities.
- *encourage a broad range of perspectives and interpretations of the First World War and its impacts*: there was evidence that FWW Centenary activities are allowing individuals to develop understanding of many different elements of the FWW, although there is potentially a challenge for HLF to encourage projects to explore a wider range of stories across the suite of projects.
- *enable young people to take an active part in the First World War Centenary commemorations*: Grant Recipient Survey responses suggest that young people aged 11-25 were slightly underrepresented relative to the UK population. There was, however, good evidence of projects seeking to engage with young people through schools.
- *leave a UK-wide legacy of First World War community heritage to mark the Centenary*: An important way in which HLF are seeking to do this is by including project websites in the British Library UK Web Archive. The use of Historypin to document a project might also be seen as a means of creating a legacy of projects, and 42 per cent of projects that responded to the Grant Recipient Survey had done this.
- *increase the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage, and to raise the profile of community heritage*: there is clear evidence that HLF funding has increased capacity across a number of domains and 100 per cent of Grant Recipient Survey respondents felt that HLF funding had positively impacted on the capacity of their organisation in some way

Overall there was evidence of progress against each aim, with some scope for further work on understanding the extent to which the range of communities across the UK were being reached and the range of perspectives being covered by projects.

Conclusions

The first year of the evaluation of HLF's FWW Centenary activity has highlighted a number of key successes. Demand for funding has been extremely strong, leading to significant funded activity at the local level, and large numbers of people have engaged with projects. HLF funding is having a clear impact on the capacity of organisations to deliver projects and there is also some evidence of impact on longer-term capacity. As a suite of activity, there is evidence of outcomes across almost all outcome areas, and people outcomes are particularly well evidenced, particularly learning about heritage.

A number of challenges for projects and HLF also emerged, including engaging a wider audience with FWW Centenary activities, particularly the 18-25 age group, and for HLF to encourage more projects to go beyond local history to incorporate a broader range of perspectives on the FWW.

The evaluation will seek to build the evidence base over the next year in order to provide a more robust analysis of the achievements of HLF Centenary activity.