Catalyst Endowments evaluation

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Catalyst: Endowments was a £36million match-funding initiative offering UK heritage organisations the opportunity to create an endowment and bring additional private money into the heritage sector.

Part of a broader partnership between the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE), the initiative was designed to encourage more private giving to culture and heritage and to build the capacity and skills of these organisations to fundraise from private donors, corporate sources and trusts and foundations. It also aimed to achieve the outcomes that heritage be better managed and organisations become more resilient.

Commissioned in early 2013, the programme evaluation followed the progress of the 31 organisations who have received Catalyst: Endowment awards through to their completion in late 2017.

Whilst the fundraising environment was challenging and not all grantees achieved their targets, the matching offer was well received with the vast majority of grantee organisations reporting that it was instrumental for approaching and encouraging donors to give to the endowment appeal.

‘The Catalyst: Endowment scheme is aptly named as it has literally had a catalytic effect on grantees, who describe the programme as having had a ‘galvanising’ and ‘transformational’ effect on their organisations, including ‘cultural shifts’ in terms of attitudes to fundraising.’

The final report brings together learning from the grantees experiences and the wider fundraising landscape to explore the impact of the programme and how other organisations might use this when planning an endowment campaign.