

Evaluation of Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War Centenary Activity: *Year 3 report - Summary*

July 2017



Evaluation of Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War Centenary Activity: Year 3 report - Summary

Author(s):

Will Eadson

Ben Pattison

Mark Stevens

Alison Twells

Nicola Verdon

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) and Department of Humanities

Sheffield Hallam University

July 2017

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to all who contributed to the study by taking part in interviews and completing the surveys; to Lucy Footer, Karen Brookfield, and Stephen Grey at HLF; and to Emma Smith, Lou South and Sarah Ward for invaluable administrative support at CRESR.

Summary

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 3, the evaluation included the following sets of activities:

- review of grant data;
- surveys of grant recipients and project participants;
- in-depth qualitative case studies of selected projects.

This report is based on the third year of evaluation activity but also draws on survey data and cumulative HLF monitoring data from Years 1 and 2.

What has HLF funded?

From 1 April 2010 to 1 March 2017, HLF awarded over £84 million to more than 1,680 projects. This includes over 1,200 projects funded through the FWW: Then and Now programme. Key findings were as follows:

- Funding for projects was spread broadly evenly across the UK. HLF has funded FWW Centenary projects in 92% of local authority areas. Projects were located in areas with a range of different socio-economic profiles with a relatively even distribution from the most to least deprived communities.
- Project size varied significantly, although the great majority of grants were small: 80% were for £10,000 or less and a further 9% 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 half (50%) of the value of grants awarded. The wide range of grant size awarded - from £3,000 to £12.2 million - highlights the breadth 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 90% 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 written outputs such as leaflets and books (52%), websites (51%), display boards (50%) and educational packs for schools (36%).
- Projects were also involved in a wide range of different activities, with an emphasis on community events. Collectively projects surveyed in Year 3 held 750 community events.

Who was involved in Centenary activities?

It is estimated that a total of 7.1 million people participated in HLF-funded FWW projects that ended before February 2017 (based on survey data collected to date). 2.5 million people participated in projects ending between March 2016 and February 2017.

85% of projects worked with volunteers, with over 20,000 volunteers engaged in projects completing over the course of the evaluation to date. These volunteers provided an estimated 99,000 days' on projects (based on grant recipient survey data).

Volunteering

Volunteers were very important to the delivery of projects. 85% of respondents to the Grant Recipient Survey reported having used volunteers in their FWW Centenary project. This amounted to over 20,000 people providing more than 99,000 days of their time for projects completed by February 2017. 7,000 volunteers were engaged in projects in Year 3, compared to an average of 6,500 for Years 1 and 2.

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.

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 in Year 3 was the importance of educating young people, uncovering untold stories.

Participant Survey Respondents were also asked about their motivations for taking part, choosing from a list of options. 69% of participants took part to learn more about the FWW in the local area, and 47% to learn about the war more generally. 52% 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.

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', it is abundantly clear that HLF-funded activities have led to an increase in knowledge about the FWW and its impacts right across the UK. Individual projects also show very good examples of engaging with impacts on marginalised communities such as different ethnic groups or disadvantaged communities.
- It is highly evident that a broad range of perspectives are being covered by projects, and participants are being encouraged to consider these. There is good evidence that many projects that start off as being interested in – for example – a local war memorial or the experiences of local people in the war (which make up the majority of projects funded under First World War: then and now) do expand their focus through the course of their projects, or in a subsequent project.
- Large numbers of young people are being reached by FWW Centenary activities both in and outside schools, and many projects are successfully engaging young people in a way that involves an active contribution to projects and to FWW heritage more broadly. The sheer number of young people involved in projects is a big success – around 600,000 to date. Some projects have shown an exemplary approach to engaging and working with young people in a way that enriches the lives of young people and the local community as a whole.
- There is good evidence that legacy for heritage is being created through collection of physical heritage materials and digital archiving. There is emerging evidence from the longitudinal surveys that projects are having an impact beyond the end of funded activities, including on people's knowledge and skills. The sheer numbers of projects working to recover, archive and create new heritage artefacts suggests a wide-ranging physical legacy of the FWW Centenary across the UK.
- The distribution of funding to such a large number of projects, and the amount of funding received by each organisation has had clear impacts on capacity for individual organisations as well as awareness of community heritage across the UK. The fact that grant recipients still feel the positive effects to a similar degree, a year on from the end of their project, suggests that HLF funding is impacting on capacity in the longer-term as well as during the period of project delivery – a very positive finding.

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. As the majority of projects focus on activities rather than capital work, they 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 (70% of Grant Recipient Survey respondents) said that 'heritage will be identified' as a result of their activities. 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. Fewer projects were achieving other heritage outcomes. 22% 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 projects are not expected to achieve this outcome. As in previous years, 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 previous years, outcomes for people were the most evidenced, in particularly 'learning about heritage' which was an outcome for 99% of projects (based on Grant Recipient Survey data) and was the most important outcome for 80%. Respondents enjoyed taking part in activities, with 96% of participant survey respondents scoring their level of enjoyment of 7 or more on a scale of 1-10. 89% of Grant Recipient Survey respondents also felt that their project had led to a change in the way that people thought about the FWW.

The evaluation also found evidence of achievement against mental wellbeing, which is not captured by the HLF outcomes framework. Some change in life satisfaction and social interaction was recorded among Participant Survey participants.

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% of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that more people were engaging with FWW heritage as a result of their project. Engaging a wider range of people was less well evidenced and only 39% of Grant Recipient Survey respondents said that they had achieved this outcome. 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', respondents were asked to give a response to this question on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is 'helped the community a great deal' and 1 is 'not helped at all'. 81% gave a score of 7 or more and nearly all participants (94%) gave a response of at least 5.