

# HLF Collecting Cultures Programme Evaluation Year Two 2010

---

## Review for the Heritage Lottery Fund

02 June 2010



CULTURAL CONSULTING NETWORK  
Sophia Mirchandani  
Katie Norgrove

## CONTENTS

### Headline Findings

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	p.6
<b>2.</b>	<b>Findings: Collections quality and range</b>	p.6
	2.1 Improvement in quality and range	
	2.2 Difference to success rate	
	2.3 Acquisitions not through purchase	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Findings: Collections significance and relationship</b>	p.9
	3.1 Understanding of significance of collection	
	3.2 Future plans	
	3.3 Impact on wider collections	
	3.4 Relationships with other collections	
	3.5 Input from external specialists	
	3.6 Impact on collections significance	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Findings: Development of professional knowledge and skill</b>	p.12
	4.1 Subject specialist areas	
	4.2 Skills in acquisition	
	4.3 Impact of funding	
	4.4 Involvement in purchase process	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Findings: Greater Public Participation and Learning</b>	p.19
	5.1 Involvement of Volunteers	
	5.2 Public Programmes and Activities	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Findings: Benefits for the Wider Museum Sector</b>	p.24
	6.1 Development of Partnerships	
	6.2 Sharing Expertise and Learning	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	p.28
	7.1 General conclusions from findings	
	7.2 Policy Considerations for HLF	
	7.3 Recommendations for Future Evaluation	
	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Appendix One: Notes on research aims and methodology</b>	p.33
	<b>Appendix Two: Summary of projects funded</b>	p.35
	<b>Appendix Three: Abbreviations for museums</b>	p.36

## Collecting Cultures Evaluation 2010 Headline Findings

### Introduction

In March 2009, HLF commissioned a review to assess progress with, and the impact to date, of the Collecting Cultures Grants Programme. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess how far it had met its published aims to:

- make a step change in the ability of the funded museums to develop their collections for future public use;
- support the development of collections and their use through strategic acquisition programmes, related research and public programmes;
- enhance the professional knowledge and skills of staff working in museums.

This report represents an evaluation of progress in Year Two of the 21 (out of 22) projects funded by the Programme that reported back for the period covering April 2009 until the end of March 2010. The results are summarised below based on the 5 published outcomes of the Collecting Cultures Programme:

#### ***Outcome 1a. Collections: Improvement in quality and range***

20 projects reported good progress in acquiring objects, compared to 15 in Year One. New acquisitions continue to have a significant impact on the collections specialist area and the collection as a whole.

The majority (18 out of 20 respondents) agreed that the HLF project had had a positive effect on the museums success rate in acquiring target acquisitions compared to the position prior to the project.

#### ***Outcome 1b. Collections: Improved significance and strengthened relationships***

20 of the projects stated they had undertaken new research into the collection's significance, with 17 stating that the research had had a significant or moderate impact on their understanding of other parts of the collection, and 14 reporting an improvement in understanding of the collection's significance in relation to other collections held outside their institution.

19 projects stated that their museum's understanding of the collection's significance had been enhanced by experts from outside their organisation (such as academics, specialist societies and volunteers) reflecting the importance of specialist knowledge from outside the museum.

The acquisitions are also changing the overall significance of collections, with 3 noting the change to national significance (with 2 anticipating it), and 4 noting that their acquisitions were of international importance.

#### ***Outcome 2. Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to specialist subject area and acquisitions***

The Programme is steadily building professional knowledge. A high number of respondents, 18 and 19 out of 20, reported that their project had already resulted in a *deeper* and *better* understanding of the collections, as well as better contacts and relationships with other subject specialist areas (18).

14 organisations, up from 11 respondents in year one, reported that the project had enabled them to develop new initiatives and ways of working with their collections. This is a real strength of the Collecting Cultures programme, impacting on long term partnerships, interpretation and ways of working which will benefit the organisations in the future.

The Programme is having a cumulative positive effect on attitudes of professional staff to their specialist subject area. 17 museums strongly or slightly agreed that the project had made them more interested in the collections subject area, and 18 that involvement had made them more confident. 21 museums could already see where and how their enhanced experience and knowledge would be used in future planning.

***Outcome 3. Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the practical aspects of acquisition through purchase***

18 out of 20 projects responding stated that involvement had increased their understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition (compared to 5 out of 8 in Year One). 16 out of 19 respondents (compared to 13 out of 16 in Year One) stated that the project had made a difference to the way the museum approaches acquisitions.

18 organisations reported being more confident about the acquisition process, up from 4 in year one. The organisations are also acquiring new skills in acquisition in particular object identification, authentication and valuation.

One of the most significant changes reported is that security of funding enables the organisations to engage with collector networks and auction houses in a way they could not before, and this opens up new possibilities not available for one off purchases.

Compared with results from 2009, there is more acquisition activity across all areas for more projects which gives an indication of the kind of lead times required to set up and start strategic, longer term acquisition projects.

***Outcome 4. Greater Public Participation and Learning based on the Collection***

17 museums provided information on the public programming activities that form the core part of how their projects are enabling people to learn from and enjoy the results of acquisition, research, documentation, interpretation and consultation.

Compared to Year One, there has been a marked acceleration in the delivery of public programmes and it is becoming clearer where the balance of activities lie, with the majority of projects concentrating on changes to their permanent and temporary displays and others in working with schools and students – this mirrors results emerging in earlier sections on ‘new initiatives and ways of working’

Since Year One, there has not been a significant change in the number of projects actively using new volunteers (a total of 19 additional new volunteers across 9 projects). 13 respondents stated that their projects involve existing volunteers (72 people in total), and 9 stated that their projects involve new volunteers. The total number of volunteer hours for the Collecting Cultures projects to date is 4,834 – a significant contribution. It remains the case that all projects intend to deploy volunteers at some point in the project.

***Outcome 5. Benefits for the Wider Museum Sector***

20 museums (as opposed to 15 in Year One) reported that their project is resulting in the development of new partnerships or the strengthening of existing ones.

The most common partnership development is with sister museums with a similar collecting interest or within a certain geographical range, which might be viewed as predictable given the emphasis of the Programme on collecting within a strategic framework based on research and knowledge of other bodies’ holdings.

However, in comparison with the Year One results, there is more evidence of museums working especially effectively with libraries and archives and academics. 11 organisations out

of 11 (up from 6 in Year One) were already confident that the partnerships developed during the project would outlive it.

### **Conclusions for year two**

To date the evaluation demonstrates that the approach taken in the Collecting Cultures grant programme has been effective in both extending the quality and range of collections, and engaging existing and new audiences with the heritage.

The security of funding, long timescales and freedom to purchase in a way and at a time to suit the museum, appears to be fundamental to the success of the Collecting Cultures grant scheme.

The results from Year Two, support the initial conclusions from Year One, below:

*“Results to date indicate that the programme has the potential to make a significant difference to individual organisations and the wider museums sector. For those fairly advanced in their research, partnership development and acquisitions the project has given them a new way of engaging with different audiences through the medium of their core collections, rather than more ‘traditional’ outreach means such as arts projects. This is having a demonstrative positive impact on collections development, organisational development and audience development.”*

## 1. Introduction

The overall purpose of the evaluation of the Collecting Cultures programme from 2009 to 2013 is to assess the extent to which the Programme has met its published aims to:

- make a step change in the ability of the funded museums to develop their collections for future public use;
- support the development of collections and their use through strategic acquisition programmes, related research and public programmes;
- enhance the professional knowledge and skills of staff working in museums.

This report represents an evaluation of the second year's progress of the 22 projects funded by the Programme (from April 2009 until the end of March 2010). HLF intends to commission further evaluation of progress in the third, fourth and fifth years of the Programme (from April 2010 to April 2013). Further details on the research aims and methodology, including notes on variance from year one, can be found in appendix one.

## 2. Findings: Collections quality and range

The first section of the questionnaire looked at the impact of the programme to date on the improvement, through purchase, in the quality and range of collections.

### 2.1 Improvement in quality and range

20 respondents reported that they had made progress in acquiring objects using HLF funds and that the project had already resulted in an improvement in the quality and or range in the following areas:

Table 1: Quality and range of collections

<b>Q1 The project has resulted in a marked improvement in the quality and range of the collection in the following ways (please highlight):</b>						
	<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Slightly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree Slightly</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
Uniqueness, rarity	13	5	1	0	1	0
Comprehensiveness	11	9	0	0	0	0
Geographical coverage	4	7	4	1	1	3
Thematic coverage	9	7	3	0	0	1
Chronological coverage	7	7	4	1	0	1
Better representation of key creators, makers and manufacturers	15	2	0	1	0	2
Sample: 20						

Overall acquisitions made in year 2 of the programme have had a greater impact on the overall quality and range than acquisitions in year 1. This is to be expected as fewer projects had started collecting in year 1. A clear and positive impact is demonstrated by the results in year 2 as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Quality and range reported in 2009 and 2010.

<b>Projects reporting improvement in:</b>	<b>No. of projects answering 'yes' in reported in 2009</b>	<b>No. of projects 'strongly' or 'slightly' agreeing in 2010</b>
Uniqueness	15	18
Comprehensiveness	15	19
Geographical coverage	9	12
Thematic coverage	11	16
Chronological coverage	12	14
Representation by key creators, makers and manufacturers	14	17

Comments on the impact of the acquisitions so far present a number of common themes. The improvements reported include:

- New subject areas of collecting and new mix of material;
- Developing comprehensiveness of collections including adding rare items, and works of major significance;
- Opening up new themes and filling gaps;
- Adding examples from previously unrepresented areas and makers;
- Greater, or new geographic and chronological coverage;
- The research benefits of being able to add more recent items.

The acquisitions, made within a wider strategic framework and research programme, continue to have a significant impact on the collections specialist area and the collection as a whole. This theme should continue to be monitored in future evaluation work as it supports the findings from year one that quite significant changes can be wrought within quite small amounts of funding and flexibility around purchase.

One issue which has arisen is the impact of the '10 year rule' which is hampering the development of truly chronological coverage for key themes, such as the Peace and Reconciliation Project (Herbert Museum Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery). In order to represent modern conflict post 2000 through acquisitions, they have had to seek additional funding through other sources.

## **2.2 Difference to success rate**

The vast majority of projects (17 out of 20 respondents) agreed that the HLF project had had a positive effect on the museums success rate in acquiring target acquisitions compared to the position prior to the project:

Table 3: Difference in success rate in acquisition

<b>Q2 The HLF funded project has made a difference to the museum's previous success rate in acquiring target acquisitions through purchase</b>					
<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Slightly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree Slightly</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
15	2	1	0	2	0
Sample: 20					

This is up from last year when 13 projects reported that their success rate had improved.

## 2.3 Acquisitions not through purchase

Interestingly, when asked about whether the HLF funded project had made a difference to the museum's success rate in acquiring target acquisitions *not through purchase*, responses were split 50:50 yes and no (11 positive responses against 11 negative).

Of the 11 respondents who stated that their acquisition success rate not through purchase had improved, the following means of acquisition were identified:

Table 4: Acquisitions not through purchase

<b>Q3b Have you acquired collections not through purchase as a result of any of the following?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Donations of material/archives associated with purchase	9
Raised public awareness of museum collecting project led to offers of donations	9
New contacts resulting from project led to offers from private collectors	7
Others knowledge that museum was building a collection in that area	5
Sample: 11	

Some who responded 'No' did however comment that new contacts with private collectors might lead to future donations, whilst 3 others reported that the purchase of some items had lead to donations of others – last year this type of donation by association was restricted to related archives or technical drawings rather than comparable objects and photographs.

A number of museums also reported that they had been offered long term and temporary exhibition loans of similar objects purchased as a result of the project. Whilst others commented on the extra time and support given by creators for activities and events associated with the acquisitions project, indicating that there are a number of spin off audience benefits, not directly related to building permanent collections, arising from this scheme.

The range of additional acquisitions not through purchase also identified as:

- Gift through HM Government (through development of Modern Crafts Study Centre as major collector through the HLF project);
- Major bequest from local donor to Harris Museum (which fills identified gap they had planned to fill through purchase with HLF grant);
- Additional objects and photographs donated with purchase.

### 3. Findings: Collections significance and relationships

#### 3.1 An enhanced understanding of the collection’s significance, and its relationship to other collections of the same kind

##### 3.1.1 New research

20 out of the 21 projects that responded stated that they had undertaken new research into the collection’s significance. The most common, as can be seen below, was into context and history.

Table 5: Types of new research

<b>Q5b Which best describes the type(s) of new research you have undertaken/are undertaking with your collection:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Research into manufacturing/creation	8
Research into collections context and history	17
Research into associated significance and other collections/events	10
Research into new ways of interpreting and explaining collections	6
Research into significance <b>for</b> specific target groups/communities	7
Research into significance <b>with</b> specific target groups/communities	0
Sample: 20	

The projects were asked if the research had had an impact on their understanding of other parts of the collection.

Table 6: Impact of research on other parts of collection

<b>Q6a Research has had an impact on our understanding of other parts of our collection</b>			
<b>Significant</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
8	9	2	1
Sample: 20			

Broader impacts also reported including strengthened links with archive holdings (increasing their significance) and the spread of knowledge across the organisation.

There is a new breadth of knowledge with more people knowing about the artefacts; previously this may have rested with one curator and the museum label, now the information is validated and shared so that all members of the team are engaged and involving members of the public with the information. (Enlightenment! Derbyshire setting the pace. BMDMBM, CC-07-01083)

##### 3.1.2 Impact on future strategic development and research

Of the 19 projects which responded, 9 reported that the new research had had an impact on the future strategic development and research decisions affecting the rest of the collections (beyond those directly affected by HLF funded acquisitions) while 10 stated that it had not. Common themes for strategic impact included on:

- Acquisitions processes;

- Development planning including exhibitions/displays;
- Collecting policies;
- Involvement with modern makers/manufacturers;
- New research strategies;
- Future project development/planning.

12 projects reported that they have researched the significance of the acquired objects in relation to collections in other organisations (such as museums, archives, libraries, historic sites and specialist societies) covering the same or related subject area; 5 reported that they had not and 3 reported that they intended to do so in the future within the lifecycle of the project.

Improvement in understanding of a collection's significance in relation to other collections in other organisations was also investigated, with 14 out of 16 noting a significant or moderate improvement:

Table 7: Significance in relation to other collections

<b>Q7b Our understanding of the significance of the acquired objects in relation to collections in other organisations has improved</b>			
<b>Significant</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
6	8	2	0
Sample: 16			

Of the sample of 15 projects that completed this question, the majority had looked at other museum collections for their research:

Table 8: Examples of other collections researched

<b>Q7c Please indicate where the other collections you looked at are held:</b>	<b>Number of reponses</b>
museums	13
archives	6
libraries	4
historic sites	1
specialist societies	3
university	4
private	9
Sample: 15	

19 projects stated that their museum's understanding of the collection's significance had been enhanced by experts from outside their organisation (such as academics, specialist societies and volunteers) and cited the following types of outside bodies consulted:

Table 9: Range of experts consulted

<b>Q8b Our understanding of the collections significance has been enhanced by experts from outside our organisation</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
<b>Please indicate the specialists you consulted:</b>	
academics	14
volunteers	6
community groups	2
auction houses	6
specialist societies	4

private collectors	12
Sample: 19	

In terms of adequately documenting the new acquisitions made as a result of the HLF funded projects, the project museums have made good progress with 15 of the respondents stating that the new collections had been documented to Accredited standards (of which 2 stated that some recent acquisitions were still to be done), 1 museum reporting that no new documentation had taken place, and 5 that documentation was outstanding but planned during the lifecycle of the project.

### 3.2 Changes to collections significance and anticipated changes

Responding to the question on collections significance, the museums categorised the collections across the following areas at this point in time:

Table 10: Assessment of collections significance

<b>Significance</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Local	8
Regional	8
National	11
International	5
Designated	2
Sample: 12	

This compares to results last year (2009) of:

<b>Significance</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Local	11
Regional	11
National	15
International	7
Designated	3
Sample: 17	

Of the 8 projects providing comments on changes this year, 3 noted the change to national significance (with 2 anticipating it in future years) and 4 noted that their acquisitions were of international importance.

**4. Findings: Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to specialist subject area and acquisitions**

**4.1 Subject Specialist areas**

The majority of respondents (18 or 19 out of 20 either strongly or slightly agreeing) indicated that their project had already resulted in a deeper and better understanding of the collections as well as better contacts and relationships with other subject specialists.

Table 11: Subject area knowledge and skills

<b>Q10 The HLF funded project has resulted in a marked improvement in the development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area concerned</b>						
Staff/volunteers have gained:	<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Slightly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree Slightly</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
a deeper knowledge of the collection	14	4	1	0	0	1
a better understanding of the collection's significance	15	4	0	0	0	1
better contacts and/or built relationships with other subject specialists	11	7	1	0	0	1
Sample: 20						

This is a real strength of the Collecting Cultures programme, with 15 museums giving further comments.

This has been the single greatest strength of the project to date and has highlighted the importance of rediscovering and enhancing otherwise neglected holdings. (Arctic Visions: Inuit Art and Material Culture SPRI CC-07-01106)

Commenting on their increased knowledge and skills, projects reported they had benefited from:

- Partnership working and stronger links with other institutions;
- Research increasing post-acquisition as more work done on preparing exhibitions and displays;
- Enhancing the skills of education and access staff in subject specialist areas and new interpretation;
- An expanded range of contacts.

**4.1.1 New initiatives and ways of working**

14 (out of 21 responding museums, up from 11 respondents in Year One) reported that the project had already enabled them to develop new initiatives and ways of working with their collections, and they expected this to continue to develop through the life of the project and after. 7 museums commented that the project had not yet enabled the museum to do this.

Of those that reported on new ways of working, activities included:

- Use of new media and Facebook for public consultation and research;
- Opening up new access to the collections, for example through education work and adult learning workshops;
- Using project as basis for setting up community panels/community engagement including consultation and outreach.

The project has provided the opportunity for HAGM to develop and work with a community panel, advising on how we can build our collection in ways which will make it relevant, interesting and exciting for diverse audiences. As the project develops we hope that his consultation will input into the ways in which we use our collections in display, educational work and community engagement. (Peace and reconciliation project, HCWAG CC-07-01132)

#### 4.1.2 Development of skills

12 projects reported on the development of a range of new and existing skills as a result of work to date, with research, collections management and conservation recorded most frequently.

Table 12: Development of new and existing skills

<b>Q11a The project helped develop new skills in:</b>	
<b>Type of new skills</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Documentation	2
Conservation	6
Research	9
Collections management	3
Interpretation/ learning activity	6
Archiving	1
Local history	3
Managing groups	4
Information management	4
Communication skills	5
Sample: 12	

<b>Q11b The project helped develop existing skills in:</b>	
<b>Type of existing skills</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Documentation	9
Conservation	4
Research	11
Collections management	11
Interpretation/ learning activity	8
Archiving	4
Local history	4
Managing groups	4
Information management	5
Communication skills	7
Sample: 12	

Table 13: Training offered

<b>Q12 The project offers formal training in:</b>	
<b>Type of training</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Documentation	5
Conservation	4
Research	4
Collections management	6
Interpretation/ learning activity	4
Archiving	3
Local history	3
Managing groups	1
Information management	2
Communication skills	3
Sample: 10	

#### 4.1.3 Impact of involvement on confidence and interest

The project has had a major impact on the interest and confidence of those involved.

Table 14: Impact on interests and skills

<b>Q13 Involvement in the project has:</b>						
	<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Slightly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree Slightly</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
made you more interested in the collections subject area	15	2	2	0	1	0
more confident in your subject specialist area?	14	4	2	0	0	0
Sample: 20						

Comments on this question mainly relate to the interaction between increased research time, increased knowledge and therefore interest and confidence. This confidence also seems to be leading to a willingness to investigate new resources, both internally and externally, including new networks and partnerships. It should be noted that the research value applies to those objects not acquired as well as to those acquired as it all adds to the overall body of knowledge in that subject area.

The museums were asked to rate their confidence levels, from 1 to 5, in regard to their subject specialist area at the beginning of the project, and again in year two. 20 organisations scored themselves this year, up from 8 in 2009.

Table 15: Confidence levels

<b>Q14 How would you rate your confidence level in regard to subject specialist knowledge at this point in the project?</b>				
<b>1 – not very confident</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 – very confident</b>
0	0	5	10	5
Sample: 20				

Compared to last year's result one more organisation rated itself as already being a 5 in terms of confidence. Ten reported a confidence level of 4, up from a sample of 4 rating themselves as having moved from either 2 or 3 to 4 in 2009.

#### 4.1.4 Impact on future planning

In terms of future planning, all 21 responding museums could already see where and how the experience and knowledge they had gained from the project would be used in future planning (up from 13 that stated this to be the case in Year One). 1 museum commented on the impact but did not complete the table for Q16.

Table 16: Impact on future planning areas

<b>Q16 The knowledge and experience will be used in future planning in the following areas:</b>	
<b>Area of planning</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Staff recruitment and workforce development	4
Strategic planning	9
Exhibition and interpretation	18
Collecting policies	14
Learning programmes	18
Working with new audiences	15
Developing relationships and future collaborations	18
Future research direction and strategies	13
Sample: 20	

The largest impact to date was on exhibitions and interpretation planning. The responses mirror comments provided by projects on the importance of the Collecting Cultures programme for developing public programmes and interpretation and audience development activity including in new areas, and for new target audiences – indicating that HLF have been successful so far in securing significant access and participation benefits from a collections focussed grant scheme. For example, the Museum of Garden History commented: [Our 'Good Life' exhibition showed us the benefits of combining our collecting activity with our exhibitions programme in this way.](#)

#### 4.2 Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the practical aspects of acquisition through purchase

18 out of 20 projects responding to question 18 stated that involvement had increased their understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition (compared to 5 out of 8 in Year One). Within those 20 projects, 107 staff are working on the practical aspects of acquisition associated with the projects.

21 projects reported a good understanding of the acquisition process at this point in time, this is up from 5 out of 8 responding positively in 2009.

[Gallery Oldham previously did not often acquire through auctions as we did not have the funds available and rarely had the time to put together a funding bid to support and auction acquisition given the short timescales. HLF funding had given us the opportunity to view auction acquisitions as a feasible option and therefore following the market and talking to auction houses has become part of our acquisition process. \(The Potters Art in the C20th, GOHM CC-07-01126\)](#)

Table 17: Understanding of acquisition process

<b>Q19 Please indicate how you would rate your current level of understanding of the acquisitions process at this point in the project:</b>				
<b>1 – not much understanding</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 – deep and thorough understanding</b>
0	0	5	14	2
Sample: 21				

16 out of 19 respondents (compared to 13 out of 16 in Year One) stated that the project had made a difference to the way the museum approaches acquisitions. Examples include practical changes, such as purchase via credit cards, and process changes such as greater interaction with the public in identifying potential purchases. Perhaps the greatest change is that the security of funding allows them to engage with the collector networks and auction houses in a way they never did before, and this opens up new possibilities not available for one off purchases.

The organisations are also acquiring new skills in acquisition with object identification, authentication and valuation the top three skills developed to date.

Table 18: Development of skills in acquisition

<b>Q21 Involvement in the project has helped to develop new skills in acquisition:</b>						
	<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Slightly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree Slightly</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>DK/ NA</b>
Identifying objects for potential acquisition	14	5	1	0	0	0
Identifying objects for potential acquisition through a finder service	1	8	4	0	0	7
Authentication and establishing provenance of objects	4	12	2	1	0	1
Valuation process	5	9	5	1	0	0
Bidding process	8	3	7	0	0	2
Negotiation with owners	7	6	3	0	0	4
Negotiation with creators/ manufacturers	4	4	3	0	1	8
Working with auction houses	8	4	5	1	0	2
Acquisition contracts and conditions	3	4	5	0	1	7
Knowledge of acceptance in lieu procedures	2	0	6	0	1	11
Knowledge of private treaty sales	1	3	5	0	1	10
Security, packing, transport and insurance	3	7	6	1	0	3
Sample: 20						

Compared with results from 2009, there is more acquisition activity across all areas for more projects which gives an indication of the kind of lead times required to set up and start these types of long term acquisition projects.

Table 19: Year One (2009) results for acquisition of new skills

<b>New acquisition skills reported:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Identifying objects for potential acquisition	14	2
Identifying objects for potential acquisition through a finder service	3	6
Authentication and establishing provenance of objects	9	4
Valuation process	10	2
Bidding process	7	3
Negotiation with owners	10	3
Negotiation with creators/ manufacturers	4	5
Working with auction houses	8	5
Acquisition contracts and conditions	5	5
Knowledge of acceptance in lieu procedures	0	9
Knowledge of private treaty sales	0	9

Commenting on this area, museums highlighted the development of knowledge about the market; working with auction houses; organising themselves internally to work more effectively and the practical aspects of acquisition post purchase e.g. transport, costs, legal.

Overall there seems to be more engagement with auction houses for purchase for this year (12) than year one (8), which probably reflects the amount of time it takes to research and initiate action in this area which requires 'build up' time.

Museums were asked to consider and rate whether they were more confident about the acquisition process for the collection as a result of the project. The vast majority of respondents answered positively (18 organisations out of the 21 responding), up from 4 organisations responding in 2009.

Table 20: Acquisition confidence levels

<b>Q23b Please rate your current confidence levels with regards to the acquisition process on a scale of 1-5 below.</b>				
<b>1 – not confident</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 – very confident</b>
0	0	4	14	2
Sample: 20				

### 4.3 Impact of HLF funding on the price of objects

As in Year One, grantees were asked if they thought that knowledge of HLF grant had affected the prices of objects they were seeking to purchase. The majority of responding organisations (11 out of 19) stated that they thought HLF funding had not affected prices, which was a marked rise from the 2 out of 14 organisations that had responded in this fashion in Year One. Only three reported it might have influenced prices detrimentally. In Dorset they reported that there might have been a '*modest price inflation in fossils along the Jurassic Coast*' and in Scotland, Groam House stated that from the additional information which appears on their website on George Bain, auction prices have risen. However, whether this is because of HLF funding or the consequence of greater appreciation and information on George Bain, is unclear. In Norfolk they reiterated the opinions of last year, which is that when dealing with private collectors/metal detectors knowledge of additional

funding can affect prices but that following the initial publicity splash the situation has stabilised and they continue to stress the public benefits of their award.

Some museums and galleries, such as the Herbert, Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery, commented that being included in '*a museum collection (that has the endorsement of HLF), carries a certain degree of kudos and means that they are more open and willing to negotiate on prices*'.

Other comments endorse conclusions from year one:

- Seller unaware of HLF/museum involvement therefore not relevant e.g through on line auctions;
- The museums are 'a small fish in a big pond', and HLF funding has no impact on market prices;
- Prices for some collections are fixed by bigger factors and remain unchanged;
- The need for independent valuations makes it difficult for people to ask inflated prices.

When asked what difference involvement in the purchase process had made to the projects, a number of common themes were identified, including:

- Increased confidence and practical knowledge particularly of the market and auction process;
- Closer cross department working, with education/outreach personnel more involved in collections management issues;
- Greater focus and impetus;
- A new view of collections, taking into account their monetary value.

## 5. Findings: Greater public participation and learning based on the collection

### 5.1 Involvement of Volunteers

Since Year One, there has not been a significant change in the number of projects actively using new volunteers over the last year (a total of 19 additional new volunteers across 9 projects). 13 respondents stated that their projects involve existing volunteers (a total of 72 people in total) and 9 stated that their projects involve new volunteers. 6 organisations stated that the project does not involve existing volunteers and 9 that it does not involve new ones, although it remains the case that all projects intend to deploy volunteers at some point in the project.

Whereas the volume of new volunteer activity combined for all the projects that provided figures (10) is 635 total hours, that for existing volunteer activity is 4,208 total hours reported by 13 projects. This represents a total count of volunteer hours of 4,834; a significant increase from the total in Year One of 615 hours and an average of 323 hours contributed per project by existing volunteers to date and 63.5 for new volunteers. By any measure this represents a considerable effort by volunteers in supporting the Collecting Cultures projects.

For the purposes of clarity it should be noted that museums were required to state the total cumulative total of volunteer hours contributed since the start of the project and hence the Year One figure is subsumed within the overall Year Two figure of 4,834.

Those projects which reported that they were resulting in significant and growing volunteer effort had had clear objectives about generating volunteer involvement from the start, this particularly applies to Northampton Museum and Art Gallery with Kettering Manor House Museum and Norfolk Castle Museum.

Besides assessing the volume of volunteer activity associated with projects, the evaluation sought to identify the kinds of activities and skills that volunteers are developing and the formal training they may have benefited from. The results are summarised below:

Table 21: Volunteer activities, skills and training

<b>Q30 What activities are volunteers involved in:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Acquisition process and influencing collecting decisions	6
Collections management and conservation	7
Documentation- recording, analysing and cataloguing new material	9
Interpretation	4
Working with schools, developing activities and learning resources	3
Organising and delivering activities for children and young people	2
Organising and delivering activities for the wider public	4
Creating online resources	1
Structured work placements	1
Consultation as part of a focus group or committee	2
Project management	1
Undertaking outreach work	3

Researching and working with existing collections and archives	6
Helping with marketing and publicity	6
Providing administrative or IT support for the project	3
Providing other support to the project (e.g. catering, cleaning)	1
Sample: 12	
<b>Q29a Did the project develop the skills of volunteers in:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Documentation	9
Conservation	5
Research	7
Collections management	7
Interpretation / learning activities	4
Archiving	0
Local history	2
Managing groups	1
Information management	3
Communication skills	2
Sample: 12	
<b>Q29b Did the project offer formal training of volunteers in:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Documentation	4
Conservation	1
Research	1
Collections management	3
Interpretation / learning activities	1
Archiving	0
Local history	0
Managing groups	0
Information management	1
Communication skills	0
Sample: 6	

What these responses demonstrate is the majority of activities in which volunteers are involved in are, what might be termed, core museum backroom functions associated with collections management, conservation, documentation and collections research and this bias is reflected in the emphasis within skills development. It remains the case from Year One that the level of volunteer involvement in making decisions about the Collecting Cultures projects appears to be concentrated on the acquisition and collecting process. There is little evidence from the low level of involvement in project management and consultative committees found that volunteers are having a widespread influence over the direction of projects. However, there is more evidence than was available last year to show that some volunteers are involved in more generic organisational activities and developing transferable skills (such as in marketing/ publicity, administration and IT).

There are also less "public facing" museum functions in which volunteers are involved such as managing events, working with schools and interpretation. Although projects were not specifically required to comment on volunteer activities and skills, what seems to explain some of the responses is the fact that many of the wide range of public programmes that project will offer have not yet commenced. As a consequence the opportunities for volunteers

to become involved in those activities may be demonstrated more fully in later years of the evaluation.

## 5.2 Public Programmes and Activities

17 museums provided information on the public programming activities that form the core part of how their projects are enabling people to learn from and enjoy the results of acquisition, research, documentation, interpretation and consultation. 5 museums indicated that it was too early in the delivery of their project for any these activities to have commenced and did not complete this section of the evaluation (Victoria and Albert Museum, NMNI, Valence House Museum) and 2 museums stated that their plans had not changed from those outlined in Year One but programme delivery had not yet started (Groam House Museum and Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments).

In contrast to Year One, the 17 responses received were a summary of the actual activities, which the project had offered to date, rather than those intended over the life cycle of the project, so a year on year comparison is not meaningful. It should be noted that 9 organisations were in a position to offer figures for the number of participants attending public programmes.

Table 22: Public programmes and activities

<b>Q31 What types of public programmes/activities has your project offered to date:</b>				
<b>Type of programme/activity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>
Changes to permanent displays	9	3	19	15010
Temporary exhibitions	10	5	18	207901
Touring exhibitions	2	6	4	0
Catalogue, guidebook, audioguide	4	5	4	279
Sessions for primary schools	4	6	274	7235
Sessions for secondary schools	3	6	118	3377
Session for further/higher education	4	4	8	445
Online exhibition, online catalogue, blog	8	4	90	4
Family learning events	5	4	22	2531
Workshops	3	4	4	326
Lectures	7	4	14	618
Loans or reminiscence boxes	4	6	3	6
Joint reinterpretation projects with target groups e.g. Youth groups	3	5	13	12
Oral history project	0	6	0	0
Outreach projects	1	6	1	80
<b>Total</b>			<b>592</b>	<b>237,824</b>
Sample: 17 and for number of participants sample: 9				

Compared to Year One, there has been a marked acceleration in the delivery of public programmes across the sample of 17 projects that responded and it is becoming clearer where the balance of activities lie at this point in time, with the majority of projects concentrating on changes to their permanent and temporary displays and others in working with schools and students – this mirrors results emerging in earlier sections on ‘new initiatives and ways of working’.

The figures provided mask the fact that each project has its own special blend of activities on offer tailored to the target audience. For example, Northampton has been very active in using online social networking sites and blogs as a means of reaching young people and gaining

tips on the acquisition and whereabouts of trainers. The range of additional activities provided underlines the differences in approach between projects:

HAGM has developed a community panel for the project. The panel's role is to advise on the themes they, and the groups they work with, would like us to focus upon when developing our collection. They are also exploring with us different ways in which we can use our collections to make them more interesting, exciting and relevant. All members are acting as individuals rather than representing their organisation. (Peace and Reconciliation, HCWAG CC-07-01132)

[We have put on] exhibition tours – 13 curators tours of the exhibition, 3 artist tours of the exhibitions, 7 special interest tours for booked groups and 4 informal tours by Visitor Services Assistants. (Cultural Reflections, WAG CC-07-01110)

The total number of participants attending public programmes so far is 237,824, but this figure masks very significant differences in the responses from the sample groups, in particular the Whitworth recorded a figure of 201,901 and the Garden Museum one of 6,000, which comprises the entire number of participants for temporary exhibitions so far delivered.

**5.2.1 Group participation information**

In addition to the questions asked in Year One, projects were asked to respond to an optional question on participation taken from the standard HLF Outputs survey questionnaire. 5 organisations provided a response but most of the figures for the primary and secondary schools came from one organisation, The Whitworth Art Gallery. The numbers should therefore be treated with caution as it is unclear if these figures are for the whole Gallery or specifically related to additional activities undertaken for the Collecting Cultures project in 2009-2010.

<b>Participation</b>	<b>Number</b>
Primary schools worked with	270
Secondary schools worked with	114
Colleges/universities worked with	13
Youth groups worked with	0
Community groups worked with	1
Community consultation events held	7
Other (please specify)	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>

**5.2.2 Evaluation**

Although roughly half of the museums within the Collecting Cultures Programme have now started to deliver elements of their public programming activity, there still remains an issue about the evaluation mechanisms in places for measuring the impact of their proposed programmes on stated target audiences. In general, those museums that form part of Renaissance Hubs (such as the Whitworth Art Gallery and the Herbert, Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums) have more effective evaluation strategies in place, whereas others, such as those within Scotland and Northern Ireland

appear to have less solid plans in place, particularly in relation to measuring outcomes using Inspiring Learning's Generic Learning Outcomes. Comments included:

We are currently developing a Family Friendly Strategy and methods of measuring impact will be agreed soon. (The Potters Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, GOHM CC-07-01126)

We have only purchased silver so far. A volunteer has taken part in the evaluation course run by Evaluation Scotland this winter and will be consulting further with them shortly. (Tain Silver collection, TDM CC-07-01129)

We assessed age, origins and satisfaction only. (Change and Exploration in Silk; MSM CC-07-01079)

5 museums were able to share their evaluation strategies (up from only 2 museums on Year One): Chepstow and Monmouth Museums, The Herbert Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery, The Garden Museum, The National Coal Mining Museum and The Whitworth Art Gallery but as in Year One, there was a real paucity of evaluation results. Collection of this evaluation data should form a priority for evaluation in Year Three of the Collecting Cultures Programme.

## 6. Findings: Benefits for the Wider Museum Sector

### 6.1 Development of Partnerships

20 museums (as opposed to 15 in Year One) responded to the question as to whether their project is resulting in the development of new partnerships or the strengthening of existing ones.

Table 23: Assessment of partnerships

	Yes	No
<b>Q35 Has the project involved the development of new partnerships?</b>	13	6
<b>Q36 Has the project involved the strengthening of existing partnerships?</b>	17	3
Sample: 19 for Q35 and 20 for Q36		

The results are broadly similar to those detailed in Year One, although more comprehensive this year. The increased response rate in Year Two, has made it easier to pinpoint those projects which are not being delivered through new partnerships. In addition, only the Museum of Garden History and Norfolk Castle Museum stated that the project was not creating new partnerships, although in both cases the museums were working with a range of existing partners before the project.

The range of organisations with which those 20 museums are strengthening and creating new partnerships is wide and varied:

Table 24: Partnerships developed by museums

<b>Q37 Which of the following kinds of organisations has the museum developed partnerships with:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Other museums with same subject specialist area	17
Museums within an existing specialist subject network	7
Other kinds of collecting organisations such as libraries and archives	8
Academic institutions	12
Specialist societies	9
Creators, makers and manufacturers	9
Community groups	5
Auction houses	8
Independent expert advisers	9
Sample: 20	

The most common partnership development is with sister museums with a similar collecting interest or within a certain geographical range, which might be viewed as predictable given the emphasis of the Programme on collecting within a strategic framework based on research and knowledge of other bodies' holdings. However, in comparison with the Year One results, there is more evidence of museums working especially effectively with libraries and archives and academics. The number of museums in partnership with organisations with a direct role in acquisition such as auction houses and creators, makers and manufacturers remains stable.

Other specific partners mentioned were: independent galleries and specialist agencies (The Herbert, Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery), and other Collecting Cultures curators and publishers (Museum of Garden History). The mention of a sense of partnership with other Collecting Cultures curators may indicate an appetite for further development of the curators group by HLF as a means of sharing information, expertise and lessons learnt

The geographical scope of these partnerships varies across the different kinds of projects:

Table 25: Scope of partnerships

<b>Q38 Scope of partnerships</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Local	12
Regional	12
National	16
International	5
Sample: 18	

As in Year One, the most common response was for partnerships to be local, regional and national in scope (12), with local and regional being cited by 4 respondents and solely regional by 2. Only the Scott Polar Research Institute remains engaged solely in an international partnership (through its online collection identification and documentation process with Inuit communities and cultural specialists).

In reviewing the comments made by 16 organisations about the benefits of their existing and new partnerships, the following themes were articulated again as in Year One but with greater consistency across the group of projects:

- Developing the subject specialism of the museum by building internal knowledge of the collection through sharing of expertise by external parties;
- Developing knowledge of external collections, research and interpretation, leading to a better ability to place own collection in wider context;
- Sharing of good practice with other institutions;
- Identification and donation of further items to collections by forging direct links with creators, which have knock on curatorial and educational value developing the subject specialism offer of the Museum;
- Effective audience development through working with intermediaries who have direct relationships with different age ranges and types of audiences;
- Value of external support and enthusiasm;
- A strengthening of partnership in other areas of the museum's practice;
- Improved museum profile.

Several projects again highlighted, in particular, the value of building relationships with other museums, academic institutions, makers and manufacturers as means of placing their collection in a wider context:

The partnerships have been invaluable in developing expertise and enabling us to develop a coherent strategy to avoid regional duplication in collections, developing knowledge of relevant makers and supporting our research in the subject area and supporting our attempts to acquire through the market. (The Potters Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, GOHM CC-07-01126)

The partnerships give us access to a broad knowledge base that sets our collection in a wider context. This has improved our understanding of the significance of the collection and will ultimately feed through into interpretation for visitors and other users. (Tain Silver collection, TDM CC-07-01129)

Some of the comments demonstrated the fact that the benefits of partnership have become more apparent to organisation as their projects have progressed:

We have found that the grant has earned us increased respect from bigger museums and among donors – giving a positive message about our activity levels and our ability as an organisation. We have just been deemed eligible to apply to the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund for example. (To Develop our Art and Design Collection, MGH CC-07-01147)

The programme has also engaged colleagues beyond the remit of the programme and the team has benefitted from shared skills and expertise from elsewhere in the organisation. We have begun to develop new partners with the Derby University and with the National Trust where there are opportunities to develop different events and to reach other audiences. We have been invited to assist John Smedley’s Knitwear review their commercial archive dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and this has revealed a previously unrecorded archive. (Enlightenment! Derbyshire Setting the Pace in the Eighteenth Century; BMDMBM CC-07-01083)

11 organisations out of 11 (up from 6 in Year One) were already confident that the partnerships developed during the project would outlive it:

We have been able to identify areas for joint working in the short and longer term and opportunities to extend our partnership outside of this scheme. The Imperial War Museum for example has expressed an interest in engaging in a more formal partnership with us. New contacts have opened up new opportunities for work around the collection and subject area with a range of specialists, communities and artists. (Peace and Reconciliation, HCWAG CC-07-01132)

We plan to commission work from photographers that have been working in the field for some years, resulting in new acquisitions. We also plan to tour exhibitions to member organisations of the Coal Mining Collections Group. In addition, in terms of sustainability, the Museum intends to use the project’s work as a pilot, continuing this work through workshops and loans boxes with a secondary school audience. (Seeing the Whole Picture, NCMME CC-07-01206)

Norfolk Castle Museum, as in Year One, wanted to sound a note of caution about attributing the benefits of partnership to their project in isolation from the rest of the museum’s activities in this area: *We were already an active department with good external links with many organisations and people. The main difference that Collecting Cultures has brought is the ability to be proactive, which means that there is more need or benefit to us working with others. In effect we can have something to bring to the table rather than just planning for the time that we might have enough money to do something.*

## 6.2 Sharing Expertise and Learning

Compared to Year One, more projects were able to report on how they are disseminating lessons learnt from their project at this point in time (14 compared to 6 in Year One) and 7 organisations provided figures for the number of each type of dissemination activity that had been delivered. As for last year, the Whitworth Art Gallery indicated it was not currently doing any of the activities outlined below:

Table 26: Dissemination of lessons learnt

<b>Q39 By what means are you disseminating the lessons learnt from the project?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>If yes how many</b>
---	------------	-----------	------------------------

Seminars	7	2	9
Subject specialist network meetings	6	2	16
By hosting placements for external organisation	1	2	0
Conference	3	2	1
Publishing evaluation in hard copy or online	4	2	1
Online discussion forum	6	0	2
Sample: 14			

This section of the questionnaire revealed that quantifiable progress in practically circulating the lessons learnt from projects has been made since May 2009, but that this remains curtailed until projects' have delivered a greater proportion of their outputs and evaluated them:

We are considering the possibilities of a conference and developing a subject specialist network further into the project. (Peace and Reconciliation, HCWAG CC-07-01132)

A couple of respondents mentioned that they were planning to use the Collecting Cultures Curators group as a means of sharing experiences and reflections.

Conclusions remain similar for how organisations are intending to ensure that the skills and knowledge captured by the project are shared internally, although 16 museums responded in Year Two (compared to 10 in Year One) and there was more evidence offered of ongoing activity in this area:

Table 27: Sharing of expertise and learning

<b>Q40 By which of the following means are you sharing the expertise and learning gained in this project within your own organisation?:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Work shadowing between different departments	3
Internal dissemination meetings	15
Establishing cross-disciplinary teams	11
Internal circulation of progress and evaluation results	10
Sample: 16	

The implication is that most projects are currently using standard means of reporting on their projects within their organisation, concentrating on those structures that would be in place anyway rather than in developing bespoke processes, such as work shadowing, which might have a greater impact on individual staff. However, comments reveal that some projects are at pains to stress how they are sharing expertise and learning internally:

Gallery Oldham: This project is involving cross-disciplinary team working in order to deliver most of its objectives. We are holding regular internal meetings to disseminate research, consult on what acquisitions to make and how the project can be made accessible to the public and encourage participation from existing and new visitors. The team involved in includes a curator, Access and Interpretation Officer, Learning and Outreach Officer, Schools Officer and Front of House, as well as working with a cross-disciplinary team from The Harris. (The Potters Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, GOHM CC-07-01126)

Lessons from the project and its running are also being supervised by a Project Board which is chaired by the head of Norwich Museums. (Sharing Norfolk's Past, NCM CC-07-01094).

## 7. General conclusions and policy considerations

### 7.1 Conclusions

All the organisations, bar one, are making good progress with their project, with the majority feeling the impact across their audience development activities as well as their core collections. On the basis of results from Year Two and One collectively, the projects would appear to be successfully meeting the aims and outcomes originally intended by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the programme.

#### 7.1.1 Collections: Quality and Range

Overall acquisitions made in Year Two of the programme have had a greater impact on the quality and range of collections than the acquisitions in Year One, with 20 organisations (compared to 15 in Year One) reporting good progress with acquisitions.

The acquisitions, made within a wider strategic framework and research programme (as required by the Collecting Cultures programme), continue to have a significant impact on the collections specialist area and the collection as a whole. This theme should continue to be monitored in future evaluation work as it supports the findings from year one that quite significant changes can be wrought by relatively modest amounts of funding within wider strategic plans, and with flexibility around purchase.

#### 7.1.2 Collections: Significance and Relationships

20 of the projects stated they had undertaken new research into the collection's significance, with 17 stating that the research had had a significant or moderate impact on their understanding of other parts of the collection.

The acquisitions are also changing the significance of collections, with 3 noting the change to national significance (with 2 anticipating it), and 4 noting that their acquisitions were of international importance. Responses also highlighted strengthened links with archive holdings and the importance of sharing knowledge across the organisation, demonstrating additional benefits beyond the core Collecting Cultures outcome areas.

#### 7.1.3 Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to specialist subject area and acquisitions

A high number of respondents, 18 and 19 out of 20, reported that their project had already resulted in a *deeper* and *better* understanding of the collections, as well as better contacts and relationships with other subject specialist areas (18). This is a real strength of the Collecting Cultures programme, impacting on long term partnerships, interpretation and ways of working which will benefit the organisations in the future.

Commenting on their increased knowledge and skills, projects reported they had benefited from:

- Partnership working and stronger links with other institutions;
- Research increasing post-acquisition as more is work done on preparing exhibitions and displays;
- Enhancing the skills of education and access staff in subject specialist areas and new interpretation;
- An expanded range of contacts.

#### **7.1.4 Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the practical aspects of acquisition through purchase**

18 out of 20 projects stated that involvement had increased their understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition (compared to 5 out of 8 in Year One). Within those 20 projects, 107 staff are working on the practical aspects of acquisition associated with the projects.

21 projects reported a good understanding of the acquisition process at this point in time, this is up from 5 out of 8 responding positively in 2009. Overall, compared with 2009, there is more acquisition activity across all areas for more projects which gives an indication of the kind of lead times required to set up and activate long term collecting projects.

16 out of 19 respondents (compared to 13 out of 16 in Year One) stated that the project had made a difference to the way the museum approaches acquisitions. Perhaps the greatest change is that the security of funding allows them to engage with collector networks and auction houses in a way they never did before, and this opens up new possibilities not available for one off purchases. This point has been raised in wider Collecting Cultures Forums, for example by the Jurassic Park project, who reported that they now have an on going dialogue with fossil collectors that would not have been possible without the HLF grant. Parallels could be drawn with archaeological finds where museums have, over the last 10 years, built up a relationship with private individuals for both reporting and purchase. The benefits of this should be of material consideration in any future acquisitions programmes considered by HLF.

So far it would seem that HLF funding has not had an adverse impact on the price of objects, with 11 out of 19 stating that they thought HLF funding had not affected prices, a marked rise from Year One when 2 out of 14 museums stated they thought this might be the case. Only 3 reported that they thought it might have had a modest impact on prices. The overall opinion is that it is unlikely HLF will have a significant impact on prices for all the same reasons given in Year One to do with the size, interests and independence of the different markets. Conversely, 2 museums have stated that the fact that they are acquiring for a public collection, which has the endorsement of HLF, has enabled them to negotiate on the price. The value for money of acquiring museum type collections, as opposed to fine art or modern art where a budget of £100,000 is seen as small, has also been commented on. It would seem therefore that HLF will continue to secure good value for money from their grant.

#### **7.1.5 Greater Public Participation and Learning based on the Collection**

##### **Volunteers**

Since Year One, there has not been a significant change in the number of projects actively using new volunteers (a total of 19 additional new volunteers across 9 projects). 13 respondents stated that their projects involve existing volunteers (72 people in total), and 9 stated that their projects involve new volunteers. It remains the case that all projects intend to deploy volunteers at some point in the project.

Whereas the volume of *new* volunteer activity combined for all the projects that provided figures (10) is 635 total hours, 13 projects reported a total of 4,208 hours for *existing* volunteer activity. This represents a total count of volunteer hours of 4,834; a significant increase from the total in Year One of 615 hours. By any measure this represents a considerable effort by volunteers in supporting the Collecting Cultures projects.

The majority of volunteers are involved in what might be termed, core museum 'backroom' functions associated with collections management, conservation, documentation and collections research, and this bias is reflected in the emphasis within skills development.

Volunteers are less involved in more "public facing" museum functions such as managing events, working with schools and interpretation. This could be because many of the wide range of public programmes that projects will offer have not yet commenced. As a consequence the opportunities for volunteers to become involved in those activities may be demonstrated more fully in later years of the evaluation.

### **Public programmes**

17 museums provided information on the public programming activities that form the core part of how their projects are enabling people to learn from and enjoy the results of acquisition, research, documentation, interpretation and consultation.

Compared to Year One, there has been a marked acceleration in the delivery of public programmes and it is becoming clearer where the balance of activities lie at this point in time, with the majority of projects concentrating on changes to their permanent and temporary displays and others in working with schools and students – this mirrors results emerging in earlier sections on 'new initiatives and ways of working'

The total number of participants attending public programmes so far is 237,824, but this figure masks very significant differences in the responses from the sample groups, in particular the Whitworth recorded a figure of 201,901 and the Garden Museum one of 6,000, which comprises the entire number of participants for temporary exhibitions so far delivered.

### **7.1.6 Benefits for the Wider Museum Sector**

20 museums (as opposed to 15 in Year One) reported that their project is resulting in the development of new partnerships or the strengthening of existing ones.

The most common partnership development is with sister museums with a similar collecting interest or within a certain geographical range, which might be viewed as predictable given the emphasis of the Programme on collecting within a strategic framework based on research and knowledge of other bodies' holdings. However, in comparison with the Year One results, there is more evidence of museums working especially effectively with libraries and archives and academics. The number of museums in partnership with organisations with a direct role in acquisition such as auction houses and creators, makers and manufacturers remains stable. 11 organisations out of 11 (up from 6 in Year One) were already confident that the partnerships developed during the project would outlive it.

Compared to Year One, more projects were able to report on how they are disseminating lessons learnt from their project at this point in time (14 compared to 6 in Year One) and 7 organisations provided figures for the number of each type of dissemination activity that had been delivered. In total 29 different dissemination events have been held in 2009-10. This demonstrates quantifiable progress in practically circulating the lessons learnt from projects and we expect this figure to rise once the projects' have delivered a greater proportion of their outputs and evaluated them.

## **7.2 Policy Considerations for HLF**

One of the purposes of this ongoing evaluation is to enable HLF Trustees to make an informed decision about whether to extend the principle of grant-aiding museums to

purchase a range of items which may not be identified in advance. What is emerging from the evaluation also raises issues about whether HLF could more effectively engage people with their heritage, and increase access, through the development of core collecting activity, as much as through more narrowly focussed 'audience development' activity.

To date the evaluation demonstrates that the approach taken in the Collecting Cultures grant programme has been effective in both extending the quality and range of collections, and engaging existing and new audiences with the heritage.

The security of funding, long timescales and freedom to purchase in a way and at a time to suit the museum, appears to be fundamental to the success of the Collecting Cultures grant scheme. It would be worth explicitly considering the critical success factors of the scheme in later evaluations, when the projects have also undertaken their own evaluations, and had the chance to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved either in terms of the grant policy and programme, or within their own project planning.

Research to date would indicate that the following are key features of some of the most interesting schemes:

- Good existing strategic overview of core collections and their potential;
- Allowance for adequate research time and good project planning;
- Appreciation of the value of strategic collecting, as opposed to reactive collecting;
- Good track record of, and plans for, partnership working across and beyond the sector;
- Access to expert advice, either from internal specialists or from outside the organisation;
- Willingness to work across museum departments to maximise public benefits and access;
- Willingness to commit significant staff time to the project, supported by systems for decision making;
- Enthusiasm of staff and willingness to take on new ideas and share learning
- Commitment to public involvement and engagement through the process, not just to share the end results.

As the programme progresses HLF should consider giving more thought to how to judge the relative success of the different schemes, and identify good practice to inform future schemes and assessment criteria.

The results from Year Two, support the initial conclusions from Year One, below:  
*"Results to date indicate that the programme has the potential to make a significant difference to individual organisations and the wider museums sector. For those fairly advanced in their research, partnership development and acquisitions the project has given them a new way of engaging with different audiences through the medium of their core collections, rather than more 'traditional' outreach means such as arts projects. This is having a demonstrative positive impact on collections development, organisational development and audience development."*

### **7.3 Recommendations for Future Evaluation**

On the whole the projects have been very cooperative in completing the amended questionnaire, with all but two organisations completing the form for 2009-10 (though one did send in a partial return based on last years questionnaire). A considerable amount of time was spent chasing the questionnaire returns within the given timescale, and this needs to be fully factored in to any future evaluation work. We recommend that the 4 week timescale remains unchanged. It would also be helpful if the importance of completing the

questionnaire was reiterated by the relevant Case Officers in the run up to the next evaluation phase.

The revised questionnaire has worked well and should continue to be used unchanged for future evaluation in order to allow year on year tracking of change.

Final version: 03 June 2010  
Cultural Consulting Network

# Appendix One: Notes on research aims and methodology

## 1. Research Aims and Methodology

### 1.1 Research Aims

The aims of the research in Year Two remain the same as year one, namely to assess the extent to which the projects have met the overall aims of the Collecting Cultures Programme and HLF's Strategic Priorities under its 3rd Strategic Plan, concentrating on the published key outcomes of the Programme. Further information on the overall research aims can be found in the Year One report, under section 1.1 and so are not repeated here.

### 1.2 Research Methodology

The principles of the methodology also remained unchanged from Year One and so are not repeated here. However, some changes and refinements to the surveying methodology in Year Two were agreed with HLF and are outlined below.

#### Surveying Methodology

The standard survey questionnaire from Year One remained divided into 5 sections: each based on one of the prescribed outcomes, which were in turn sub-divided into a series of quantitative questions followed by a more open ended qualitative question or opportunity to comment. A few questions required a straightforward numerical response.

For the Year Two evaluation, a number of questions were modified in order to present a series of range statements that align better with HLF's corporate mechanisms for assessing qualitative and subjective responses. These range statements asked respondents to respond to a statement choosing one of six options: either agreeing strongly; agreeing slightly; neither agreeing nor disagreeing; disagreeing slightly; disagreeing strongly; or don't know/not applicable. Some of these range statement questions (1,2, and 10) were broken down further into sub categories that were informed by types of activity stated in qualitative responses in Year One, allowing a more consistent pattern of data to emerge for these areas.

The use of range statements was also extended to some questions in Year One that had previously required a 'Yes' or 'No' response. For these questions (6a, 7b, 8b) respondents were given a choice of 4 options of: significant; moderate; no change; and don't know/not applicable in response to the statement.

Questions which asked about rating of confidence or understanding on a scale of 1-5 with 1 representing no very confident and 5 very confident remained unchanged from Year One.

Further changes were made to the survey questionnaire at HLF's request to improve alignment with its corporate output data that it seeks from completed projects. The sub-categories of activities for question 29a and 29b that referred to volunteer skills development and volunteer formal training were therefore expanded.

The survey questionnaire included optional questions which reflect the standard questions that HLF asks completed projects about volunteer profile (28), participation (31b) and visitor profile (32) and the means of data collection for visitor profile. This data has been presented separately to HLF and does not form part of this report.

As a consequence of these modifications to the survey questionnaire, it has been problematic to make some direct comparisons with some of the Year One results and hence to analyse change over time. However, where this remained possible, it has been referred to in the body of our analysis and findings.

**Note on survey questionnaire returns and data analysis**

The questionnaire and a covering email was issued to all 22 lead organisations responsible for the projects between on 31<sup>st</sup> March or 1<sup>st</sup> April, usually preceded by a telephone call to introduce and explain the purpose of the evaluation once again.

Responses were received from 21 projects by 7th May. As in Year One, Valence House Museum did not respond as the project is on hold. Tyne and Wear Museums responded but completed the Year One survey questionnaire with Year Two data so that its results are a partial return and its responses collated where they are directly comparable with Year Two's survey questions. The National Museums Northern Ireland '*Titanic Built in Belfast*' questionnaire was partially completed. The Curator with responsibility for acquisitions and collections completed the first part but left the remainder blank as public programming has not yet started. However, it is the responsibility of the Director of Learning and Partnerships to report on audience development work and he will need to complete the questionnaire in future years.

Collation of the data and its subsequent analysis took place between 26<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> May.

## Appendix Two: Summary of projects funded

<b>HLF Reference</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; partners</b>
CC-07-01106	Arctic Visions: Inuit Art and Material Culture	Scott Polar Research Institute
CC-07-01094	Collecting Cultures: Sharing Norfolk's Past	Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery
CC-07-01093	Collecting Cultures - Trainers, Sneakers, Pumps and Daps	Northampton Museums and Art Gallery; Kettering Manor House Museum, V&A Museum
CC-07-01083	Enlightenment! Derbyshire Setting the Pace in the Eighteenth Century	Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Museums & Art Gallery, Belper North Mill
CC-07-01150	Staying Power – The story of Black British Identity 1950 – 1990's	Victoria & Albert Museum
CC-07-01138	The Industries of Barking & Dagenham	Valence House Museum
CC-07-01147	To Develop our Art and Design Collection	Museum of Garden History
CC-07-01158	Collecting Design	Tyne and Wear Museums
CC-07-01123	Connection and Division	Fermanagh County Museum, Derry Heritage and Museum Service, Inniskillings Museum
CC-07-01136	Titanic Built in Belfast	National Museums Northern Ireland (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum)
CC-07-01110	Cultural Reflections: Strategic Acquisition for the Whitworth Art Gallery Wallpaper Collection	The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester
CC-07-01126	The Potters Art in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Gallery Oldham, The Harris Museum and Art Gallery
CC-07-01079	Changes & Exploration in Silk	Macclesfield Museums Trust
CC-07-01078	Developing the George Bain Collection	Groam House Museum
CC-07-01129	Tain Silver – The Collection	Tain & District Museum
CC-07-01135	Enriching our musical heritage	Edinburgh University Collection of Musical Instruments
CC-07-01184	Developing a National Collection of Modern Crafts	Crafts Study Centre, Farnham
CC-07-01169	Collecting Rural Cultures	Museum of English Rural Life, Reading
CC-07-01115	Jurassic Life Initiative	Dorset County Museums Advisory Service Dorset County Museum Portland Museum Sidmouth Museum Lyme Regis Museum Wareham Museum Swanage Museum Langton Matravers Museum Allhallows Museum Fairlynch Museum Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter
CC-07-01153	The Wye Tour	Chepstow Museum Monmouth Museum
CC-07-01132	Peace and Reconciliation Project	The Herbert, Coventry Wolverhampton Art Gallery
CC-07-01206	Seeing the whole picture	National Coal Mining Museum for England

### Appendix Three: Abbreviations used to describe museum(s) titles

BMDMBM:	Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Museums & Art Gallery and Belper North Mill
CMMCCMS:	Chepstow Museum and Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service
CSC:	Crafts Study Centre
DCC:	Dorset County Council
EUCHMI:	Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments
FMDHIM:	Fermanagh County Museum, Derry Heritage and Museum Service, Inniskillings Museum
GHM:	Groam House Museum
GOHM:	Gallery Oldham and Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston
HCWAG:	The Herbert, Coventry and Wolverhampton Art Gallery
MERL:	Museum of English Rural Life
MGH:	Museum of Garden History
MSM:	Macclesfield Silk Museum
NCM:	Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery
NCMME:	National Coal Mining Museum of England
NMKMH:	Northampton Museums and Art Gallery and Kettering Manor House
NMNI:	National Museums of Northern Ireland
SPRI:	Scott Polar Research Institute
TDM:	Tain District Museum
TWM:	Tyne and Wear Museums
V&A:	Victoria and Albert Museum
VHM:	Valence House Museum
WAG:	Whitworth Art Gallery