

Assessment of the impact of  
the Heritage Lottery Fund  
Collecting Cultures Initiative

Final Report, Year 4

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### SUMMARY

DC Research was appointed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in September 2012 to deliver an evaluation of the Collecting Cultures Initiative to ascertain how well the programme have met its aims, and, consequently, what the overall impact of the programme has been. The work has been commissioned over two phases, with the second phase scheduled for Spring 2013.

**Collecting Cultures has, for a good proportion of museums involved, delivered 'step change' in their ability to develop collections for future public use.** Some museums have used Collecting Cultures to supplement existing work and fill gaps, whilst others have used Collecting Cultures to develop new collections, and all have derived significant benefits both internally and externally. This includes:

- A marked improvement, through purchase, in the quality and range of their collections.
- Making a difference to projects success rate in acquiring target acquisitions through purchase, and also not through purchase.
- Impact on projects understanding of other parts of their collection.
- Impact on the future strategic development and research decisions affecting the rest of their collections.
- Improvements in the development of staff/volunteer knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area concerned.
- Little evidence that knowledge of the receipt of the HLF collecting cultures grant has an effect on the price of objects sought by sellers.
- Increasing confidence levels around making acquisitions.
- Opportunities provided by Collecting Cultures to speak to experts/collectors of in the field of their collections.
- Developing and enhancing internal and external partnerships.
- Evidence of entrepreneurial activity in terms of public programmes and engagement with audiences.
- Evidence of entrepreneurial activity in terms of accessing other forms of funding to boost the funds available to their collecting activities.

In terms of visitors, museums with **Collecting Cultures projects attracted 1,578,472 visitors** in the most recent year<sup>1</sup>. An average of 43% of these visitors were local to the, 31% were regional, and the remainder (26%) were from further afield. Eight museums felt their visitor numbers were higher as a result of Collecting Cultures, with visitor uplift typically being between 10% and 15%. Most museums expect these to be long term impacts. **Collecting Cultures projects also benefited from over 13,000 volunteer hours** from existing volunteers (7,000) and from new volunteers (6,600).

Throughout this evaluation there has been **a recognition that collecting is at the very core of what museums do** (*"it is what makes us different"*). Through Collecting Cultures, HLF has introduced strategy into the process of collecting, as opposed to the process being solely opportunity led, with there being significant evidence of Collecting Cultures funded collections being used for extensive public programmes, with a number

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis excludes a prominent national museum (for reasons of scale and bias), and also a partnership of 10 museums where it was not possible to gather consistent visitor data.

highlighting loans and temporary exhibitions as a key benefit of their project, and this represents a significant outcome.

Collecting Cultures has been praised by many for being **enabling, and allowing museums freedom to deliver**. Collecting Cultures is a devolved programme, with overall success being greatly dependent on the judgment of the curators and the museums themselves. **This can be regarded as an outcome in its own right, with this 'light touch' approach leading to additional outcomes that might not have been anticipated at the outset.**

Collecting Cultures **would benefit by bringing projects together on a regular basis to share ideas, experiences and learning**. A peer based approach amongst the projects themselves might have been beneficial to the projects and the programme as a whole, and should be considered as part of the successor programme. Linked to this, whilst a number of the projects have enjoyed significant profile in the sector, Collecting Cultures itself appears to have a more modest profile. HLF could look to **celebrate the programme in 2013 by hosting a showcasing conference highlighting** some of the project successes and achievements.

**Qualitative improvement in collections recognition is a key outcome**, and can often be manifested through increasing requests for the loan of material to temporary exhibitions, both in the UK and abroad. There are examples where Collecting Cultures has enhanced the relative importance of particular collections in the museum's context ("*transformed an area of our collection from weaker than other areas to one of the best*"), where collections have become more rounded and comprehensive, and that even objects that are related to a relatively narrow theme are reported as having wider relevance and resonance.

In cases of partnerships between museums, both **acquisition and research has enhanced the overall importance of the collections when making links with the partnership museum collections**.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 DC Research was appointed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in September 2012 to deliver an evaluation of the Collecting Cultures Initiative to ascertain how well the programme have met its aims, and, consequently, what the overall impact of the programme has been. This included whether, and how, the museums demonstrate a step change in their collections development, how strategic collecting has impacted on overall collections development and the degree to which the museum's project has improved professional knowledge and skills. The work has been commissioned over two phases, with the second phase scheduled for Spring 2013.
- 1.2 The Collecting Cultures programme was established partly in response to a number of developments around collections development in the museums sector. It has provided funding to enable institutions to build collections strategically through acquisitions over a period of time. The programme awarded grants to 22 projects totalling £3.14 million, supporting the aims of (i) the development and use of all types of collection; (ii) a broad geographic distribution of projects across the UK; and (iii) projects in a broad range of types and sizes of museum.
- 1.3 This Phase 1 Final Report (produced in January 2013) is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** introduces Collecting Cultures and summarises the findings of previous evaluations, and sets out the views and perceptions from key stakeholders and partners of Collecting Cultures.
  - **Section 3** details the museum specific impacts generated by the projects.
  - **Section 4** sets out the wider impacts generated by the projects.
  - **Section 5** summarises the conclusions and next steps for the evaluation in the final year of Collecting Cultures.
- 1.4 **Annex 1** lists the consultees and museums that have participated in the study, **Annex 2** lists the projects and funding awards; **Annex 3** sets out optional HLF data, and **Annex 4** presents data from the sector survey not explicitly presented in the substantive reporting sections.
- 1.5 The study team is grateful to everyone that that spent time completing the survey and engaging in consultations. In particular, the study team is grateful to HLF staff for their advice and guidance, all those who gave their time and perspectives, and to all the 22 projects for their thoughtful, detailed and comprehensive responses to the survey<sup>2</sup>.

#### Methodology

- 1.6 A range of **consultees** were selected at the start of the study. These discussions were designed to get perspectives about Collecting Cultures from museum leaders, decision makers and key influencers across the sector with an interest in the programme.
- 1.7 The critical element of this part of the study was the **project survey**, which was completed by all 22 projects. This detailed survey was built upon on the

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst not all material provided is set out in this report, it has informed the study to date, and will support further Collecting Cultures evaluation work scheduled for late spring 2013.

approach used during previous evaluations of Years 1, 2 and 3, and added where possible further impact specific questions.

- 1.8 Some projects were made up of partnerships of more than one museum. In some cases, the project elected to submit a joint response, consulting widely with partners and colleagues ahead of submission; whilst in other cases, the study team has received responses from individual partners. Both approaches were welcomed as being appropriate to the nature of the project and the partnership that supported it. As a result **there are occasions in Sections 3 and 4 where analysis refers to more than 22 responses for specific questions.**
- 1.9 Most of the project leads had been involved with the project through its lifetime, which is very much to the benefit of both the project and the programme, although in a number of cases the project lead has changed. Where this had happened, most projects took care to ensure that responses maintained continuity with, and links to previous Collecting Cultures evaluations.

### 2. INTRODUCING COLLECTING CULTURES; VIEWS OF CONSULTEES

#### Introducing Collecting Cultures

- 2.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund was set up by Parliament in 1994 to distribute a share of the money raised by the National Lottery for Good Causes to a wide range of projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom. The Heritage Lottery Fund is administered by the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), and is designed to sustain and transform a wide range of heritage through innovative investment in projects with a lasting impact on people and places. As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, with around £375 million a year to invest in new projects and a considerable body of knowledge, HLF are also a leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life. Since its formation in 1994, HLF has supported over 33,000 projects allocating £4.97billion to Heritage projects across the UK<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.2 The Collecting Cultures programme was established by HLF in 2007 to support strategic collections development programmes in the museums sector. The programme was open to all UK museums in the MLA Accreditation scheme, and offered grants of £50,000-£200,000 for projects lasting up to five years. In total, the programme awarded grants to 22 projects totalling £3.14 million to enable institutions to strategically build their collections through acquisitions over a period of time. The national focus of the programme was designed to support: the development and use of all types of collection; a broad geographic distribution of projects across the UK, and; projects in a broad range of types and sizes of museum.
- 2.3 The conditions of the Collecting Cultures programme also varied from previous HLF grant aiding conditions, as applicants did not have to identify the items to be purchased in advance, nor seek HLF approval for individual purchases as long as they were in line with the approved collecting strategy for the overall project. Additionally, whilst at least 50% of the funding was to be used to purchase items for the collection, projects were also required to deliver appropriate programmes of staff development, public involvement and public learning.
- 2.4 The key aims of the Collecting Cultures programme are therefore 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<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.5 In developing these aims, the Collecting Cultures projects are also designed to make progress against the following outcomes:
- A marked improvement, through purchase, in the quality and range of a collection.
  - An enhanced – and appropriately documented and interpreted – understanding of the collection's significance, and its relationship to other collections of the same kind.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Cultural Consulting Network, (2009), Collecting Cultures Programme Evaluation Year One, Page 3.

- Development of professional knowledge and skills both in relation to the special subject area concerned and to the practical aspects of acquisition through purchase.
- Greater public participation and learning based on the collection.
- Benefits to the wider museum sector through consultation, collaboration, evaluation and sharing of expertise and learning<sup>5</sup>.

2.6 The evaluations of Years 1-3 of the Collecting Cultures programme have demonstrated a significant amount of progress against these outcomes, with many museums extending the quality and range of their collections and their engagement with new and existing audiences. The security of funding, long timescales and freedom to purchase in a way and at a time to suit the museum, is considered to be fundamental to the success of the Collecting Cultures programme, and this is also thought to have supported continued development throughout the three years. In summary, the evaluations for Collecting Cultures Years 1-3 have found that:

- **Year 1:** In Year 1, it was found that over half of the museums involved experienced an improvement in the range and quality of their collections, with 7 projects reporting that the significance of their collections was expected to change as a result. The museums involved also reported an increased knowledge and understanding in relation to their subject specialist area and acquisitions, and a quarter of the projects had seen a positive impact on documentation and conservation skills. Over half of the projects reported an improvement in their research skills, and 8 museums reported an improvement in interpretation skills. In addition, the programme was also found to have a positive effect on the attitudes, knowledge and experience of professional staff in regards to their specialist subject area, as well as increasing their understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition. The majority of projects reported that they have gained new skills in identification, authentication, the valuation process, bidding, negotiation with owners, working with auction houses and contracts. Whilst no conclusions could be drawn about public participation in the programme's first year, the majority of projects were found to involve volunteers, and to have supported the development of new/existing partnerships with a range of organisations.
- **Year 2:** In Year 2, it was found that a higher proportion of projects reported good progress in acquiring objects than in Year 1, and new acquisitions were found to have a continuing significant impact on the collections as a whole. The majority of projects also suggested that the programme had had a positive impact on their success rate in acquiring target acquisitions, and the majority (20 out of 22) were also undertaking new research into their collections which supported improved understanding of their collections' significance. The development of professional knowledge was also found to be supported by the programme, and 14 organisations had developed new ways of working as a result. A higher proportion of projects in Year 2 also reported their understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition had increased, making a difference to the way their museum approached acquisitions. Increased confidence and the security of funding were considered to be the main reasons for this, as well as the development of new networks and relations with collectors and auction houses. In comparison to Year 1, there was also found to be a marked acceleration in the delivery of public programmes, however there was little change regarding the number of projects actively engaging new volunteers. Despite this, it was found that the

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<sup>5</sup> NHMF (2012), Invitation to Tender Brief.



number of volunteer hours for the Collecting Cultures projects by Year 2 was 4,834- representing a significant contribution, and 20 out of 22 projects also reported that their project is resulting in the development of new partnerships or the strengthening of existing ones, compared to 15 in Year 1.

- **Year 3:** In Year 3, it was found that the frequency and success rate for acquisitions, and the strength of the quality and range of collections had improved as a result of flexible funding, using a wider strategic framework and carrying out a research programme. Overall, 20 projects stated they had undertaken new research, and some museums were found to have involved their target audiences in core museum areas such as research, interpretation and cataloguing. 13 museums also reported that the new research had an impact on their future strategic development, and all projects agreed that their project has resulted in a better and deeper understanding of their collections, and has led to better contacts and relationships with other subject specialists. 17 projects were found to have developed new initiatives and ways of working with their collections, and there was a noticeable increase in the number of museums stating they had consulted external organisations, and gained new skills in interpretation and learning activity as a result of the Collecting Cultures programme. In terms of acquisition knowledge and skills, a higher proportion of staff had been involved in acquisitions in Year 3 than in Year 2, and confidence in the process was generally found to have improved. The number of new volunteers was also up from 19 in Year 2 to 91 in Year 3, and total volunteer hours had increased to 8,627. Public programmes were also found to have extended, with at least 507,873 participants recorded, and 18 museums had developed new partnerships, with the most common partnership type being with a sister museums with a similar collecting interest/geographical range, or with libraries, archives and academics.

2.7 Overall, the Collecting Cultures programme has demonstrated the benefits of taking a more strategic approach to collecting, allowing museums to take advantage of opportunities to buy items for collections which often arise unexpectedly, or with short deadlines to develop funding applications<sup>6</sup>. However, whilst the evaluations so far determine that there has been progress made, less is known about the reasons behind this. Developing a more detailed understanding of why some projects have made more progress than others, will be important in informing best practice approaches for the final 2 years of the programme and beyond.

2.8 Such knowledge will also be particularly important in light of HLF's plans to run a further Collecting Cultures initiative in late 2013, which will welcome applications from archives and documentary heritage collections as well as museums. The new initiative is designed to:

- Encourage a strategic approach to collection development and acquisition.
- Achieve a step change in how collections are used and developed.
- Help organisations to use collecting to engage with new audiences.
- Develop collecting skills through both purchase and donation.
- Develop and retain collections knowledge in heritage organisations.

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<sup>6</sup> HLF, (2012), Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Framework 2013–2018: A lasting difference for heritage and people, Page 29.

2.9 In addition, the approach to urgent acquisitions will also be simplified by removing the requirement for learning activities linked specifically to the acquisition<sup>7</sup>.

2.10 The museums currently involved in the Collecting Cultures programme are outlined in Table 2.1:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), Cambridge.</li> <li>▪ Northampton Museums and Art Gallery and Kettering Manor House Museum .</li> <li>▪ National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCME).</li> <li>▪ Macclesfield Museums Trust.</li> <li>▪ Museum of English Rural Life, Reading.</li> <li>▪ Victoria and Albert Museum.</li> <li>▪ Valence House Museum.</li> <li>▪ Museum of Garden History.</li> <li>▪ The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester.</li> <li>▪ National Museums Northern Ireland (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum).</li> <li>▪ The Herbert, Coventry Wolverhampton Art Gallery (WAG).</li> <li>▪ Fermanagh County Museum, Derry Heritage and Museum Service, Enniskillen's Museum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gallery Oldham (GO), The Harris Museum and Art Gallery.</li> <li>▪ Buxton Museum &amp; Art Gallery, Derby Museums &amp; Art Gallery and Belper North Mill.</li> <li>▪ Edinburgh University Collection of Musical Instruments (EUCMI).</li> <li>▪ Tain and District Museum.</li> <li>▪ Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery.</li> <li>▪ Groam House Museum.</li> <li>▪ Crafts Study Centre, Farnham.</li> <li>▪ Tyne and Wear Museums (TWAM).</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Chepstow Museum &amp; Monmouth Museum.</li> </ul>
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### Partner perspectives on collecting and Collecting Cultures

2.11 Most consultees agreed that **collections remain core to museums, and that collecting remains a vital skill for museums professionals**. An active museum or gallery is one that has an active collecting policy, and whilst only a proportion of acquisitions are by purchase, Collecting Cultures is one of only a few sources of accessible collections and collections development resources available to museums.

2.12 Collecting Cultures has had an important role in maintaining the prominence of collecting in ongoing debates around the future policy direction of museums, and helping to inform museums thinkers on the role of collecting going forwards. As such, it is helping to inform debates on modern collecting.

2.13 Many consultees praised the basis on which HLF have administered Collecting Cultures, recognising its trust based approach ("*delegating to museums a*

<sup>7</sup> HLF, (2012), Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Framework 2013–2018: A lasting difference for heritage and people, Page 29.

*fantastic decision*"), and regard it as enabling and not over administered. Many highlighted the positive impacts of the programme around collections development and wider impacts (such as the George Bain Collection being exhibited at the National Museum of Scotland).

- 2.14 Much credit was given to HLF by consultees for supporting collecting at a time when the policy direction has been focused toward more generic outcomes, and some argued that this was an indication of HLF becoming more entrepreneurial and outward looking than other funders.
- 2.15 Despite this, many consultees regarded Collecting Cultures as an 'atypical' programme for HLF to fund, and being close to what many would regard as being traditionally a central facet of museum activity. Some went further, highlighting its significance in terms of relationships with museums ("*...a breakthrough in terms of relationships between HLF and its clients*").
- 2.16 In terms of the Collecting Cultures projects, consultees welcomed the geographical spread of projects, as well as the range of museum size and approaches (i.e. the mix of single museum and partnership projects). In particular, the focus on supporting collecting skills and acquiring behaviours was welcomed, as was the focus towards the public benefit of collecting, supporting community engagement outcomes.
- 2.17 Many consultees recognised that Collecting Cultures has formed some interesting partnerships, with collaboration being supported where it makes sense to do so (and not being seen as either artificial or forced). The partnership approach taken by the Jurassic Life project, involving eight museums across Devon and Dorset was highlighted by many.
- 2.18 Finally, there was some interest amongst consultees as to the overall demand at the outset of the programme, and the quality/fundability of those Collecting Cultures applications that were unsuccessful. There was interest in this element of the programme as many consultees were aware of HLF's intention to launch a successor programme to Collecting Cultures in spring 2013.

### 3. MUSEUM SPECIFIC IMPACTS GENERATED BY THE PROJECTS

3.1 This section presents and analyses evidence taken from the detailed responses to the survey from the all 22 projects, covering (i) Improving, through purchase, the quality and range of collections (ii) Enhancing understanding the significance of collections, (iii) Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area and (iv) Practical aspects of acquisition.

#### Improving, through purchase, the quality and range of collections

3.2 The 22 projects answered a range of questions around how Collecting Cultures has led to **a marked improvement, through purchase, in the quality and range of their collection.**

**Table 3.1: Thinking about your Collecting Cultures project, how far would you agree or disagree with these statements: The project has resulted in a marked improvement in the quality and range of the collection in the following ways...**

Answer Options	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Response Count
Uniqueness, rarity	17	3	0	2	0	1	23
Comprehensiveness	15	6	1	0	0	1	23
Geographical coverage	7	9	4	0	0	5	25
Thematic coverage	12	9	0	0	0	3	24
Chronological coverage	8	10	3	1	0	2	24
Better representation of key creators, makers and manufacturers	21	2	0	0	0	1	24
Other	1	0	0	0	0	2	3

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012

3.3 Table 3.1 shows that across the board, most projects have noted an improvement in the quality and range of their collections. This improvement is strongest in terms of 'uniqueness/rarity' and in 'better representation of key creators, makers and manufacturers', and weakest in terms of 'geographical coverage' and 'chronological coverage'.

3.4 Projects felt that Collecting Cultures had enabled their collections to be more comprehensive, with one feeling that their collection was now the best in its subject area in the public domain. Limitations in geographic and chronological coverage tended to be a result of the narrowness of the focus of a number of the collections (i.e. they are of a particular place or time, and therefore the programme is not likely to be able to influence this in a meaningful way.

3.5 Some useful and illustrative comments are set out below:

*"We are filling gaps that we never had the money to tackle before"*

*"Collecting cultures has helped us address some thematic gaps and has enabled us, for the first time, to add a specifically related object to our collections"*

*"The collecting cultures project has enabled us not only to increase the range and comprehensiveness of our collection, but also to make much more of the small collection that we had already. By contextualising the existing collection with the expanded collection we can make much more of it, through exhibitions and displays and public sessions"*

*"The additions allowed us to tell more stories and construct more engaging narratives which different sections of our audience can relate to. The improved quality of our collection will therefore allow us to broaden our visitor base".*

*"The grant has enabled us to build a unique and very strong themed collection which includes works by some of the key artists working in this field...."*

*"....a massive leap in the strength of the collection in terms not just of original works, but works of quality by significant artists".*

*"Some of the pieces are extremely rare examples of their type, and one is unique, the only known example ever to have come to light".*

*"The project has enabled the museum collections to represent a greater balance between the different communities, traditions and political visions in our region".*

- 3.6 Most respondents (92%) felt that the Collecting Cultures project has made a difference to their museum's previous success rate in **acquiring target acquisitions through purchase**. None felt that Collecting Cultures had not made any difference. Half of these respondents felt that they were much more successful now in acquiring target acquisitions than they were prior to receiving support from Collecting Cultures, with most of the remainder stating that they were either moderately, or slightly more successful.
- 3.7 Over half (54%) felt that Collecting Cultures had also made a difference to their museum's success rate in **acquiring acquisitions not through purchase**<sup>8</sup>. A number of respondents noted that Collecting Cultures had raised awareness with collectors that their museum is interested in collecting in their field, either locally, through dealers or in specialist networks. For example, the Tain Collection received a major gift of finished and unfinished silver and tools from the widow of a 20th century London silversmith who spent much of his last few years in the Highlands. In addition, working with acknowledged experts can broaden contacts and raise a museum's profile as a collecting institution.

### Enhancing understanding the significance of collections

- 3.8 Over half of respondents (58%) have documented all objects acquired through Collecting Cultures to Accreditation standards, with a further third (33%) reporting that they have documented some but not all. The remainder plan to document acquired objects by the end of 2013 at the latest.
- 3.9 Most respondents (92%) reported that Collecting Cultures enabled them to undertake new research to enhance understanding of the significance of the objects. Table 3.2 highlights the type(s) of research undertaken.

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<sup>8</sup> See Table A3.1 in Annex 3

**Table 3.2. If you answered Yes to Q.11, which of the following best describes the type(s) of new research you have undertaken/are undertaking with your collection: (please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Research into manufacturing/creation of collection	54.5%	12
Research into collections context and history	95.5%	21
Research into associated significance with other collections/events	59.1%	13
Research into new ways of interpreting and explaining collections	63.6%	14
Research into its significance for specific target groups/communities	54.5%	12
Research into its significance with specific target groups/communities	18.2%	4
Other	9.1%	2

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012

- 3.10 Over three quarters of respondents agreed that **research enabled by Collecting Cultures had an impact on their understanding of other parts of their collection** (five in strong agreement, ten moderately agreed, and three in minor agreement). Of those that agreed, all but one felt that Collecting Cultures had **enhanced understanding the significance of collections** (seven significantly enhanced, nine moderate, and three minor).
- 3.11 A number of museums felt that they already knew their collections well (and on occasion to scholarly level with a regular output of publications), although Collecting Cultures served to improve understanding of their wider collections, suggesting **value is added in terms of connections and awareness**, and providing broader and deeper historical context, and also exchange of knowledge. Typically each new acquisition is examined in the context of the existing collection, leading to a focused assessment of the collection as a whole.
- 3.12 For example, the **Enlightenment** project reported that:
- "The project commissioned Creative Partnership post-doctoral research student from Nottingham University to map the Derbyshire ephemera held regionally and in some National collections".*
- "The project coordinator is going to the Centre for British Art at Yale on a 4 week curatorial research fellowship to look at their Derbyshire topographical views and holdings. The research from this trip will be fed back to colleagues at the museum and used to further understand and interpret our collections. This fellowship has only been possible because of the Collecting Cultures project".*
- 3.13 Other projects reported that new acquisitions acquired as a result of Collecting Cultures have resulted in museums researching existing collections (including getting specialised to identify previously unknown works). This research has uncovered the greater significance and relevance of individual artefacts within existing collections.
- 3.14 Two thirds of respondents felt that the research conducted as a result of Collecting Cultures had an **impact on the future strategic development and research decisions affecting the rest of their collections**. Typically this impact was directly linked to the acquisition - for example, one project reported that new material acquired as a result of Collecting Cultures had been a catalyst

for considering how the museum engages with its audiences, with influence on development and research in other collections being limited.

- 3.15 A number of respondents highlighted the **influence Collecting Cultures has had on their acquisitions and disposals policies**; with a number suggesting it has prompted a policy review. Some also reported that themes developed for Collecting Cultures have become central to both collecting policy, and more generally the work the overall work and direction of the museum. Another museum highlighted how the research undertaken has influenced their approach to collecting post Collecting Cultures, considering which aspects will be a focus going forwards.
- 3.16 Twenty respondents reported that they had **researched the significance of the acquired objects in relation to collections in other organisations** (e.g. museums, archives, libraries, historic sites and specialist societies) covering the same or related subject area.
- 3.17 Nearly all respondents agreed that their **understanding of the significance of the acquired objects in relation to collections in other organisations** has improved (nine in strong agreement, eight moderately agreed, and five in minor agreement). Of those that agreed, 10 reported significant improvement, seven reported moderate improvement, and five slight improvement.
- 3.18 Table 3.3 shows where these other collections were held:

<b>Table 3.3: Please indicate where the other collections you looked at are held:</b>		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Museums	90.9%	20
Archives	31.8%	7
Other	4.5%	1
Libraries	18.2%	4
Historic sites	18.2%	4
Specialist societies	22.7%	5
University	27.3%	6
Private	40.9%	9
<b>Source:</b> DC Research Survey 2012, n=22		

- 3.19 'Other' hosts of collections related to the uniqueness of one specific collection, and specific ownership arrangements for objects associated with another.
- 3.20 Nearly all respondents felt that their **understanding of the collection's significance been enhanced by experts from outside their organisation** (such as academics, specialist societies and volunteers). 14 reported significant enhancement, six moderate and two minor, with the sources of this external support being set out in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Please tick those specialists you consulted (tick all that apply):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Academics	90.9%	20
Volunteers	40.9%	9
Other	22.7%	5
Community groups	31.8%	7
Auction houses	45.5%	10
Specialist societies	31.8%	7
Private collectors	63.6%	14
<b>Source:</b> DC Research Survey, n=22		

3.21 In terms of **local significance of the collection** supported by Collecting Cultures, 18 respondees highlighted how existing locally significant collections had been enhanced and made more comprehensive, with further impacts in terms of local awareness of these collections. This enabled museums to better engage with local audiences through:

- Exhibitions (for example the sneaker peak project at **Northampton** involved an exhibition featuring a skateboard ramp in the museum)
- Awareness raising in localities (for example the collection being built, and the events being staged, as part of the project by Chepstow Museum has raised local awareness and interest in the **Wye Tour**, its art and literature).
- Sharing of acquisitions research with partner organisations (for example Enlightenment and Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site).

*".....collections are of national and international significance, yet we have a large and important audience on our doorstep. The project offered the opportunity for us to acquire internationally important artefacts which increase the richness of the collection for all audiences, including the local audience"*

3.22 In terms of the **regional significance of the collection supported by Collecting Cultures**, 14 respondees highlighted how existing regionally significant collections had been enhanced and made more comprehensive, with further impacts in terms of awareness of these collections. This includes Collecting Cultures leading to:

- Strengthening the regional significance of existing collections through making material publically available for regional studies.
- Supporting museums build *a collection of regional importance, and opening access to local students and artists, and increased visitors.*
- Acquiring objects that are not represented in other regional collections.
- Acquiring objects that are part of a region's history, and supporting the communication of this history in national and international contexts.

3.23 In terms of the **national significance of the collection supported by Collecting Cultures**, 20 respondees highlighted how existing nationally significant collections had been enhanced and made more comprehensive, with further impacts in terms of awareness of these collections. For example,

- **Trainers, Sneakers, Pumps and Daps** being recognised as the most significant trainer collection in public ownership in the UK, with loans being



made to the Wellcome Institute, V&A, Museum of Childhood, Turner Contemporary and the Javari exhibition in Covent Garden.

- The V & A augmenting the National Collection of the Art of Photography using **Staying Power** and, significantly, helping to address gaps in the current collection.
- Projects such as the **Peace and Reconciliation** project dealing with themes of national importance, with artists whose work is represented having a national standing.
- One acquisition (a fossil) acquired by the **Jurassic Coast** project being studied by the National History Museums potentially the best fossil of its type in the world (and even be the best fossil of its type in the world).

3.24 In terms of the **international significance of the collection supported by Collecting Cultures**, 15 respondees highlighted how existing internationally significant collections had been enhanced and made more comprehensive, with further impacts in terms of awareness of these collections. For example, Trainers, **Sneakers, Pumps and Daps** is also recognised as the biggest and most diverse trainer collection in Europe which has helped raise the national and international profile of the collection, with objects being loaned to the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto for an exhibition in 2013.

3.25 Furthermore, the status of **Whitworth Art Gallery's Wallpaper Collection** internationally is high, given its quality and the limited number of comparable collections, and the some of the new objects collected by **Enlightenment!** in relation to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (inscribed by UNESCO in 2001) are of international importance, with the project linking with collections held internationally, most notably at the Yale Centre for British Art.

3.26 Finally, seven responding museums that have collections formally designated by MLA/ACE or recognised by Museums Galleries Scotland highlighted **how designated collections had been enhanced in terms of significance** and made more comprehensive, with further impacts in terms of awareness of these collections.

3.27 Responding museums clearly feel that **the qualitative improvement in collections recognition is a key outcome**, and can often be manifested in through increasing requests for the loan of material to temporary exhibitions, both in the UK and abroad. There are examples where Collecting Cultures has enhanced the relative importance of particular collections in the museum's context ("*transformed an area of our collection from weaker than other areas to one of the best*"), how collections have become more rounded and comprehensive, and that even objects that are related to a relatively narrow theme are reported as having wider relevance and resonance.

3.28 In cases of partnerships between museums, both **acquisition and research has enhanced the overall importance of the collections when making links with the partnership museum collections**. For example, Jurassic Coast partners have seen the quality of their earth science displays improve – which might have been difficult to achieve across all individual partners in isolation.

Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area

3.29 Responding projects on average have 4.2 staff working on the project, ranging from one to 10. Whilst many are not working full time, there are a total of 84

people involved in working with the 20 projects that responded to this specific question. Table 3.5 below shows that most responding museums agree that Collecting Cultures has resulted in an **improvement in the development of staff/volunteer knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area concerned.**

**Table 3.5: Please state how much you agree/disagree with the following statements relating to the Collecting Cultures project and staff/volunteer knowledge & skills in relation to the special subject area concerned.**

Answer Options	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Response Count
Staff have gained a deeper knowledge of the collection	18	5	0	0	0	1	24
Staff have gained a better understanding of the collection's significance	18	4	0	0	0	2	24
Staff have better contacts and/or built relationships with other subject specialists	16	7	0	0	0	1	24
Volunteers have gained a deeper knowledge of the collection	10	8	3	0	0	2	23
Volunteers have gained a better understanding of the collection's significance	12	8	1	0	0	2	23
Volunteers have better contacts and/or built relationships with other subject specialists	7	7	4	2	0	3	23

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=24

3.30 Perspectives are mixed depending on how established collections are with specific museums. For example, whilst some respondents highlighted the longstanding existence of specialist expertise about their collections, others highlighted that staff and volunteers have an improved understanding knowledge, which helps with dealing with enquiries:

- *"Our Front of house staff have grown in confidence supporting consultation and development sessions with visually impaired and other special groups, and drop in public sessions".*
- *"The project has been a massive bonus as a focus for building knowledge across the entire organisation"*
- *"Working from a relatively low base, staff have gained sufficient understanding of the collection as a whole, of the producing communities and individual makers, to the extent that they are perceived as able to provide authoritative information to outside enquirers".*

3.31 Furthermore, others highlighted that the Collecting Cultures project has enabled them to recruit volunteers with significant knowledge and skills. For example, one project describes how *"the training elements within the project have included staff and volunteers across the Museums and have had considerable impact alongside sharing of skills, ideas and future plans"*.

3.32 The project that has the most staff involved was **Staying Power at the V&A**. The V&A report that the Project Team have benefited significantly from the project partnership. The Project Team have continued to hold acquisition meetings and photographer portfolio reviews to discuss current and potential acquisitions, as well as interpretation meetings to discuss the development of the oral history programme, events programme and website.

3.33 The Project Team have also developed their knowledge of V&A collecting policies and the social history of the subject area whilst benefiting from renewed or newly established networks created as a result of the project, and recognise the input of very capable and dedicated volunteers, including this testimony:

*"Working alongside the staff of the Learning and Interpretation department has been an enriching and informative experience and I have learnt the many layers and complications of putting on exhibitions, workshops and talks at the V&A. I have been made to feel like a valued member of staff and this has increased my appreciation and understanding of working in a large museum environment. This has led me to consider further education in the realm of museum studies".*

3.34 Some respondents highlighted the **opportunity provided by Collecting Cultures to speak to experts/collectors of in the field of their collections**, widening their knowledge of the collecting world.

3.35 Finally, one museum did report that *"sadly, most volunteers have not engaged that much - this is because it is science, and too many people still assume they can't understand it and it isn't for them - British culture... discuss!"*. This is included to demonstrate that supporting skills development is necessarily likely to be more difficult with volunteers than professional staff. This distinction is usefully highlighted in Table 3.6, which highlights **areas in which Collecting Cultures projects have helped to develop new or enhance existing skills**:

**Table 3.6: Has the project helped develop new or enhance existing skills in the following areas: (please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	Develop New Skills - Staff	Develop New Skills - Volunteers	Enhance Existing Skills - Staff	Enhance Existing Skills - Volunteers	Response Count
Documentation	4	9	15	7	20
Conservation	4	5	12	5	16
Research	9	6	15	7	19
Collections management	6	5	12	5	19
Interpretation / learning activities	7	8	16	5	21
Archiving	2	6	6	4	11
Local history	5	2	8	2	10
Managing groups	2	2	13	1	14
Information management	4	4	10	4	14
Communication skills	3	2	15	5	15
Other	1	1	3	0	3

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=22

3.36 Table 3.7 shows the provision of formal training offered as a result of the Collecting Cultures project. Interestingly, this suggests that projects recognise both the needs and difficulties in supporting volunteers (as suggested above and

in Table 3.6), and in a number of areas are offering a significant amount of formal training to volunteers.

**Table 3.7: Did the project offer formal training in any of the following: (please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	For staff	For volunteers	Response Count
Documentation	3	8	11
Conservation	5	5	8
Research	3	4	7
Collections management	3	5	7
Interpretation / learning activities	7	3	8
Archiving	0	5	5
Local history	2	1	2
Managing groups	2	1	2
Information management	2	3	3
Communication skills	1	3	4
Other	4	3	4

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=18

3.37 Table 3.8 focuses on interest and confidence derived by projects from their involvement in Collecting Cultures.

**Table 3.8. Please state how much you agree/disagree with each of the following statements:**

Answer Options	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Response Count
Involvement in the project has made <b>you individually</b> more interested in the collections subject area	18	3	2	0	0	1	24
Involvement in the project has made <b>staff generally</b> more interested in the collections subject area	14	8	1	0	0	1	24
Involvement in the project has made <b>you individually</b> more confident in your subject specialist area?	15	6	2	0	0	1	24
Involvement in the project has made <b>staff generally</b> more confident in the subject specialist area	12	10	1	0	0	1	24

**Source:** DC Research Survey, 2012, n=24

3.38 Some respondents have a career long track record in the subject of the collection supported by Collecting Cultures, whilst others have benefited hugely in terms of interest and confidence "I now feel confident to talk to other specialists in field and to talk to national media". In addition a number of respondents highlighted the **catalytic role of their Collecting Cultures project in terms of working with the public and with community groups.**

*"The opportunity to co-edit a book on European collections of Inuit art both stimulated interest and improved confidence"*

*"I've got back in touch with my inner geologist - a subject I loved, but at which I failed miserably at school".*

*".....one of the most professionally fulfilling experiences of my career".*

- 3.39 All respondents felt that their **own confidence level in regard to subject specialist knowledge** had increased as a result of Collecting Cultures. 10 reported a large increase, seven a moderate increase, and six a small increase.
- 3.40 Most respondents felt that the **confidence level of other staff in regard to subject specialist knowledge** had also increased as a result of Collecting Cultures. Eight reported a large increase, 12 a moderate increase, one a small increase, with one reporting no increase.
- 3.41 19 of the respondents felt that **involvement with Collecting Cultures enabled the museum to develop new initiatives or ways of working** with the collection. These new ways of working included:

*"The exhibition that was developed as part of the project enabled us to reach new target audiences and work with a group of young people. Understanding of how to target a young male audience was increased. We were able to try new initiatives such as a skateboard ramp in the gallery".*

*"Objects acquired through Collecting Cultures and other means have been a catalyst for engaging with audiences in, what are for us, new ways, primarily drama and programmes working with young and old people and community groups".*

*"Developing handling activities for all our ceramics shows, developed with visually impaired people through consultation sessions and this will feed into our developing VIP programme which we hope to roll out in 2013 which will include enabling independent visits to our service more generally".*

*"Relationships have been made with four new venues as a result of the touring element of the project, introducing the possibility of further partnership working in the future. The outreach / education elements of the project were particularly successful and highlighted ways in which the community could be more actively involved with the museum".*

*"Working with a community panel has encouraged us to view the collections in different ways and from different perspectives, and this will feed into the temporary exhibition and permanent displays".*

*The public involvement elements have developed our work in this area in particular the format of the consultation workshops, involvement of student placements and academics, encouragement of dialogue between museums, staff and service users through new IT elements e.g. Dropbox, telephone conferencing, interactive ipad and website.*

- 3.42 The Enlightenment! Project report in particular highlights that being part of the project has resulted in more invention and ambition with their exhibition programme.

*"In 2010 and 2011 we turned Dovedale into an open-air picture gallery and hung reproductions of our fine art collections in the landscape they depicted. This was very popular and was initially going to be a 'one-off', but we were asked by the National Trust if we could repeat the exhibition the following year, which we did.*

*These exhibitions reached a different audience for us and were seen by around 20,000 people.*

*Working on a partnership project has meant that we have strengthened our working relationships with Derby Museums and Belper North Mill. This led to us borrowing 23 art works from Derby for our 2011 exhibition 'Faces in the Crowd'. This was a major exhibition for Buxton Museum and Art Gallery and it was fantastic to see these pictures hanging in our gallery. It has made the team more ambitious in our temporary exhibition programme and led to us having the confidence to borrow three objects from the British Museum for our current exhibition 'Revealing the World'. I think this confidence will be a lasting legacy for the museum."*

- 3.43 Most (22) respondents suggested that the **knowledge gained through Collecting Cultures will be used in their museum's future forward planning**. Table 3.9 shows which areas of forward planning this knowledge and experience will influence, with the programme being especially influential in terms of *exhibition and interpretation; collecting policies; learning programmes; and developing relationships and future collaborations*.

<b>Table 3.9. What areas of forward planning will the knowledge and experience be used for:</b>			
Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
Staff recruitment and workforce development	6	4	10
Strategic planning	14	1	15
Exhibition and interpretation	22	0	22
Collecting policies	18	0	18
Learning programmes	19	1	20
Working with new audiences	16	1	17
Developing relationships and future collaborations	21	1	22
Future research direction and strategies	16	2	18
Other	1	1	2

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=22

Development of professional knowledge and skills in relation to practical aspects of acquisition

- 3.44 Table 3.10 shows the impact of Collecting Cultures on **understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition**.

<b>Table 3.10: Has involvement in the project increased understanding of the practical aspects of acquisition?</b>			
Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
Your understanding	21	2	23
Other staff understanding	16	7	23
Volunteers understanding	10	10	20

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=23

- 3.45 Projects reported that they had built on internal acquisitions expertise; gained knowledge in purchasing through private collectors, learning around the technicalities of purchase through auction, and awareness of the market and procedures. There is a tendency for volunteers to have less involvement when acquisition is highly technical/scientific.

*"This is probably the area where our understanding and confidence has developed most. We have gained valuable experience in sourcing, researching and purchasing works of art, which we had very little opportunity for prior to the project."*

*"The Project Team have witnessed and assisted the acquisition process from start to finish with all purchases to date..... the Project Team have a wide understanding of the practical aspects involved in the acquisition process. While curatorial staff would have been aware of these processes in the past, the Project Team includes education and other staff for whom these processes are new"*

*"Staff have gained knowledge, skills and confidence in the practical aspects of acquisition. We are now confident using auction houses and bidding in person, on the telephone or leaving a commission bid. We have also bought from private sellers, arranged independent valuations, ran potential purchases through the Art Loss register, applied for grant aid, arranged for delivery etc."*

*"We have also gained experience in selling stuff, e.g. if we have bought an object in a 'job lot' at auction we have then put the items that we don't want back into a sale"*

*"One acquisition proved very complex and time consuming and increased my awareness of the need for patience with a seller and not giving up!"*

- 3.46 Most respondents (21) felt their level of **understanding of the acquisitions process** has increased as a result of the Collecting Cultures project (eight reported a large increase, ten reported a moderate increase, three a small increase, and two reported no increase. In terms of levels of **understanding of other staff about the acquisitions process** as a result of the Collecting Cultures project, five reported a large increase, ten a moderate increase, four a small increase and two reported no increase.

- 3.47 15 respondents felt that **involvement in the Collecting Cultures project changed the way the museum approaches acquisition**. Some respondents reported that they were able to be proactive in acquiring (e.g. in approaching finders of material as opposed to responding to objects being offered up on the market), and were more confident in approaching dealers. Projects also reported understanding more about issues around the condition of the materials contained in objects (e.g. issues with unstable materials)

*"It has allowed us to be more proactive and has led us to revise our acquisitions policy to focus on new priorities. We have been able to contemplate purchase which we could never have looked at before. One key development has been that we are much more confident in applying for additional funding from organisations like the Art Fund and V&A Purchase Grant"*

*"The Museum is now much more proactive and strategic about acquisitions. We are also much more confident at bidding at auction and the different ways to approach this. We know the positives and negatives of things like commission and telephone bids and are more astute to the nuances of auctions"*

- 3.48 Table 3.11 highlights **how Collecting Cultures has helped to develop new skills in acquisition**.

**Table 3.11. Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements about how involvement in Collecting Cultures has helped to develop new skills in acquisition:**

Answer Options	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know/ N/A	Response Count
Identifying objects for potential acquisition	13	10	0	0	0	1	24
Identifying objects for potential acquisition through a finder service	2	4	7	0	0	11	24
Authentication and establishing provenance of objects	4	12	3	0	1	3	23
Valuation process	4	16	1	0	1	2	24
Bidding process	6	9	3	0	1	5	24
Negotiation with owners	8	7	3	0	1	4	23
Negotiation with creators/manufacturers	2	6	2	0	1	10	21
Working with auction houses	4	11	2	0	0	7	24
Acquisition contracts and conditions	2	10	4	0	0	7	23
Knowledge of acceptance in lieu procedures	0	2	3	0	2	15	22
Knowledge of private treaty sales	2	3	3	0	2	12	22
Security, packing, transport and insurance	4	8	3	0	3	5	23

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=24

- 3.49 Whilst most agree that involvement with Collecting Cultures has helped with many aspects of acquisition, it is notable that a significant number of responding museums felt that they did not know whether it had helped develop new skills in terms of 'knowledge of acceptance in lieu procedures'; 'knowledge of private treaty sales' and 'negotiation with creators/manufacturers'. It is likely that these aspects of acquisition are not common across the suite of current Collecting Cultures projects.
- 3.50 Most (19) respondents felt that **knowledge of the receipt of the HLF Collecting Cultures grant had not affected the price** of objects sought by sellers. Responding museums were typically very careful in this regard, and often find that more generally there is some degree sympathy for the financial position museums.
- 3.51 In most cases therefore, **whilst object price effects was perceived as a risk at the beginning of Collecting Cultures, there are not many instances where this has impacted on prices**. Where they do exist, price pressures tend to be wider (e.g. the high level of interest in Titanic, locally, nationally and internationally, has been the determining factor in affecting prices). In addition, as can be seen by the comments below, responding museums have been very careful to safeguard Collecting Cultures resources and take steps to ensure either none, or minimal, price effects.
- 3.52 Projects are clearly very careful to ensure prices have been fair and that sellers have not taken advantage of the fact that they have a Collecting Cultures grant.



*"The market is still somewhat depressed and some things have been acquired at relatively modest prices although there is still strong competition for rarer items".*

*"There was a marked effect in the first year of the grant, when we were contacted directly by a number of private sellers, but this has not continued, as we made it clear that we would be purchasing at auction within a very constrained budget".*

*"I think one of our acquisitions was acquired at a price that, though independently valued, was higher than might otherwise been the case. It also had the affect of one or two offers at a very high financial level coming forward (which we did not pursue)".*

- 3.53 Most respondents (22) felt their **confidence level about the acquisition process has increased as a result of the Collecting Cultures project** (ten reported a large increase, seven a moderate increase, and five a small increase, with one reporting no increase). Additionally, 20 felt that the **confidence level of other staff about the acquisition process** has increased as a result of the Collecting Cultures (four reported a large increase, ten reported a moderate increase, six a small increase, and one reported no increase).
- 3.54 Again, those museums with established acquisitions expertise did not report much additional learning, whilst others noted significant increases. Interestingly, only one respondent noted the need to develop and negotiate ways of purchase that were acceptable in a local authority environment.

### 4. WIDER IMPACTS GENERATED BY THE PROJECTS

- 4.1 This section presents and analyses evidence taken from the detailed responses to the survey from the all 22 projects, covering (i) Greater public participation and learning based on the collection (ii) Benefits for the wider museum sector, and (iii) Impact, legacy and lessons.

#### Greater public participation and learning based on the collection

- 4.2 Table 4.1 sets out **the type of public programmes/activities offered by Collecting Cultures projects** to date.

<b>Table 4.1: What types of public programmes/activities has your Collecting Cultures project offered to date: (please tick all that apply)</b>		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Changes to permanent displays	70.8%	17
Temporary exhibitions	75.0%	18
Touring exhibitions	25.0%	6
Catalogues, guidebooks, audioguides	29.2%	7
Online exhibitions, online catalogues, blogs	58.3%	14
Other	4.2%	1
Sessions for primary schools	58.3%	14
Sessions for secondary schools	50.0%	12
Sessions for further/higher education	41.7%	10
Family learning events	62.5%	15
Workshops	45.8%	11
Lectures	79.2%	19
Loans or reminiscence boxes	16.7%	4
Joint reinterpretation projects with target groups e.g. youth groups	25.0%	6
Oral history projects	8.3%	2
Outreach projects	54.2%	13

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=24

- 4.3 Projects have run a range of programmes through Collecting Cultures, with one (**Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery**) entrepreneurially encouraging events for metal detectorists (their main source of new finds), which gives wider ownership of this public collection and increases the likelihood of donation.
- 4.4 NMNI's **Titanic Built in Belfast** project included public programming associated with the centenaries of the launch and loss of 'Titanic' (2011-12) that was wide ranging, and included a range of activities (e.g. lectures by authorities in the areas of Titanic, the White Star Line and early 20th century emigration; Titanic Film weekends; brass band days; drama weekend; film weekend, street theatre; Titanic play for primary schools; drama and re-enactments), many of which helped to engage communities who did not traditionally use museum services.
- 4.5 Other projects have developed permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, touring exhibitions, lunchtime talks, outreach events in communities, events with families and learners across all age groups, day schools, guided tours and behind the scenes study sessions, demonstration events, demonstration of silver making techniques with 18 members of public attending. One project also reported that

they had used a blog to raise profile of the project and interact with the project (the blog received 16,000 visitors).

- 4.6 Table 4.2 sets out the **main target audiences** for Collecting Cultures projects. Most target families, school children and community groups. Other audiences include young males, independent adults, the visually impaired and older adults.

**Table 4.2: Who are your main target audiences for your Collecting Cultures project? (Please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Families	62.5%	15
School children	75.0%	18
Other	25.0%	6
Teachers	37.5%	9
Local community groups	62.5%	15
FE/HE audiences	41.7%	10
BAME groups	16.7%	4
Local history groups	16.7%	4
Specialist societies/groups	62.5%	15

**Source:** DC Research Survey, 2012, n=24

**Table 4.3. How have you measured the impact of your activities on each of these groups?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Families	55.6%	10
School children	72.2%	13
Teachers	50.0%	9
Local community groups	55.6%	10
FE/HE audiences	44.4%	8
BAME groups	22.2%	4
Local history groups	22.2%	4
Specialist societies/groups	44.4%	8
Other	38.9%	7

**Source:** DC Research Survey, 2012, n=18

- 4.7 Table 4.3 highlights how many projects have **measured the impact of their activities on their target groups**, with the approaches taken to measurement being set out below:

- **Families:** Numbers attending specific sessions, informal feedback, formal feedback forms, survey.
- **Schoolchildren:** Feedback forms, evaluation forms, school numbers and surveys, school bookings, formal evaluation, numbers by Key Stage.
- **Teachers:** Evaluation forms, number of teachers attending targeted workshops, informal feedback and consultation.
- **Community Groups:** Surveys, number of attendees at specific sessions, feedback forms.
- **BAME Groups:** Exit surveys, consultations.

- **Local history groups/Specialist societies and groups:** Consultation, feedback forms, audience numbers.
- 4.8 In terms of **visitors**, 20 museums attracted 1,578,472 visitors in the most recent year, ranging from 1,470 to 290,544. This excludes the V&A, (2.9m) and also the Jurassic Coast project (which brought together eight museums across Devon and Dorset). An average of 43% of these visitors were local to the, 31% were regional, and the remainder (26%) were from further afield.
- 4.9 Eight museums felt their **visitor numbers were higher as a result of Collecting Cultures**, with visitor uplift typically being between 10% and 15%. Most museums expect these to be long term impacts.
- 4.10 11 museums reported a **change in the type of visitors** as a result of Collecting Cultures, with seven suggesting increases in the number of local visitors, five suggesting more regional visitors, and another five more visitors from further afield. Four museums expect these changes to last into the medium term, and five into the long term.
- 4.11 In terms of volunteers, 12 respondents reported that **existing volunteers had been involved in their Collecting Cultures project**, amounting to a total of 75, delivering over 7000 volunteer hours.
- 4.12 13 respondents reported that **new volunteers were working on the Collecting Cultures project**, amounting to 144 (although 55 were for one project), and over 6600 volunteer hours. Table 4.4 sets out the type of activities that these (new and existing) volunteers were involved in.

<b>Table 4.4: What activities are volunteers involved in:</b>			
Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
Acquisition process and influencing collecting decisions	8	6	14
Collections management and conservation	14	2	16
Documentation - recording, analysing and cataloguing new material	16	1	17
Interpretation	10	4	14
Working with schools, developing activities and learning resources	5	6	11
Organising and delivering activities for children and young people	4	7	11
Organising and delivering activities for the wider public	9	4	13
Creating online resources	6	4	10
Structured work placements	6	5	11
Consultation as part of a focus group or committee	6	5	11
Project management	2	8	10
Undertaking outreach work	4	5	9
Researching and working with existing collections and archives	10	2	12
Helping with marketing and publicity	6	6	12
Providing administrative or IT support for the project	6	5	11
Providing other support to the project (e.g. catering, cleaning)	3	7	10

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=18

### Benefits for the wider museum sector

- 4.13 15 Collecting Cultures projects have involved/led to the **development of new partnerships with the wider museum sector**, and 16 have strengthened existing partnerships. Table 4.5 shows kinds of organisations each **museum developed/strengthened partnerships** with.

**Table 4.5: If Yes to either of the above questions, Which of the following kinds of organisations has the museum developed/strengthened partnerships with? (please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	Developed new partnership(s)	Strengthened existing partnership(s)	Response Count
Other museums with same subject specialist area	6	16	19
Museums within an existing specialist subject network	1	9	10
Other kinds of collecting organisations such as libraries and archives	2	7	9
Academic institutions	7	6	12
Specialist societies	6	3	9
Creators, makers and manufacturers	9	5	12
Community groups	8	5	11
Auction houses	4	5	6
Independent expert advisers	7	6	13
Other	3	1	4

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=20

- 4.14 Figure 4.1 shows the main benefits that museums have derived from these partnerships depicted in a word cloud. Word clouds summarise the key words and phrases emerging from the analysis of the open ended responses to specific questions within the e-survey.
- 4.15 Word clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source data (in this case the qualitative responses from survey respondents). In general terms, words or terms which feature in word clouds that have a large font size and/or weight means they have been mentioned more often than other words or terms. In interpreting a word cloud, the larger/more prominent the font, the more frequently the word has been used in survey responses. Therefore, the largest/boldest words can be regarded as the key themes that emerged from the responses to that specific question.

**Figure 4.1: Partnership Benefits**



**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012

- 4.16 In terms of **taking forward these partnerships following completion of Collecting Cultures**, projects, many expect to build on partnerships in the development of loans and exhibitions. A number are beginning to consider the ongoing legacy of their Collecting Cultures project, including ongoing relationships with partners.
- 4.17 Regarding the **benefits that Collecting Cultures projects have had for the wider museums community**, many projects highlighted the quality and uniqueness of their Collecting Cultures supported collections, the availability of collections for loans and exhibitions, and the new areas of expertise that have been developed through acquisition and the development of these collections.
- 4.18 Some projects have already disseminated their learning at workshops and conferences, with others sharing expertise and experiences through forums and museums groups. It is clear that there is plenty of scope for further learning and dissemination across the 22 projects for the wider museums community. Table 4.6 shows the range of activity that the projects have engaged in to date.

**Table 4.6: By what means have you disseminated any lessons learnt from the project and/or shared expertise with:**

Answer Options	Sharing expertise	Disseminating lessons learnt	Response Count
Direct one to one engagement with other museums	11	6	11
Through attending/presenting at seminars	10	8	12
Via subject specialist network meetings	6	5	8
By hosting placements for external organisation	3	2	3
By attending/presenting at conferences	10	6	11
By publishing evaluation results, lessons, learning etc. in hard copy or online	6	3	7
Online discussion forum	2	1	2
Other	1	0	1

**Source:** DC Research Survey 2012, n=15

4.19 Examples of such dissemination include:

- One to one engagement: through phone calls and visits.
- Subject specialist networks.
- Presenting at conferences and seminars (including Museum Association, Crafts Council, History of Geology Conference, CAS Co-acquisitions seminar, the Polar Libraries Colloquy and the International Polar Year Conference in Montreal 2012).
- Project specific events (e.g. NMAG ran and managed a Sneaker Symposium).
- Evaluation reports.
- Development of online resources.
- Temporary exhibitions.
- Direct one to one engagement with other museums.
- Museum groups and networks.
- Partnerships with national museums.
- Hosting internships and placements.

Impact legacy and lessons

4.20 Nine of the 22 projects reported that they had finished their Collecting Cultures project earlier this year, with the remainder reporting that their project was ongoing.

[The remainder of the questions under Section F have only been answered by five or less projects. In part this is due to these questions only being asked of those projects that had finished, but such questions could be core to the approach taken in the second half of this evaluation (i.e. spring 2013). See 'next steps' element of Section 5 for more details]

### 5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

#### Key conclusions

- 5.1 The evidence presented in Sections 3 and 4 demonstrate that **Collecting Cultures has, for a good proportion of museums involved, delivered 'step change' in their ability to develop collections for future public use.** Some museums have used Collecting Cultures to supplement existing work and fill gaps, whilst others have used Collecting Cultures to develop new collections, and all have derived significant benefits both internally and externally.
- Projects have reported a marked improvement, through purchase, in the quality and range of their collections.
  - Collecting Cultures has made a difference to projects success rate in acquiring target acquisitions through purchase, and also not through purchase.
  - Research enabled by Collecting Cultures had an impact on projects understanding of other parts of their collection.
  - Research conducted as a result of Collecting Cultures had an impact on the future strategic development and research decisions affecting the rest of their collections.
  - Project's understanding of the collection's significance been enhanced by experts from outside their organisation
  - Collecting Cultures has resulted in an improvement in the development of staff/volunteer knowledge and skills in relation to the special subject area concerned.
  - Most projects reported that knowledge of the receipt of the HLF Collecting Cultures grant had not affected the price of objects sought by sellers
  - Most projects felt their confidence level about the acquisition process has increased as a result of the Collecting Cultures project. Furthermore, most felt that the confidence level of other staff about the acquisition process has increased as a result of the Collecting Cultures.
  - In terms of visitors, 20 museums attracted 1,578,472 visitors in the most recent year. An average of 43% of these visitors were local to the, 31% were regional, and the remainder (26%) were from further afield.
  - Eight museums felt their visitor numbers were higher as a result of Collecting Cultures, with visitor uplift typically being between 10% and 15%. Most museums expect these to be long term impacts.
  - Collecting Cultures benefited from over 7000 volunteer hours from existing volunteers, and 6600 hours from new volunteers.
- 5.2 Throughout this evaluation there has been **recognition that collecting is at the very core of what museums do** (*"it is what makes us different"*). Through Collecting Cultures, HLF has introduced strategy into the process of collecting, as opposed to the process being solely opportunity led, with there being significant evidence of Collecting Cultures funded collections being used for extensive public programmes, with a number highlighting loans and temporary exhibitions as a key benefit of their project.
- 5.3 A number of museums have **developed and enhanced partnerships as a result of Collecting Cultures**, with evidence from larger museums that



Collecting Cultures has supported the development of internal relationships between departments as well as relationships with other museums.

- 5.4 A number of museums have showed **evidence of entrepreneurial activity** in terms of public programmes and engagement with audiences, with others also being entrepreneurial in terms of accessing other forms of funding to boost the funds available to their collecting activities. For example, The Purchase Fund Grant, funded by the Arts Council and administered by the Victoria and Albert Museum, has provided further funding to a number of the museums supported by Collecting Cultures (namely Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry, The Herbert, Derby Museums & Art Gallery, Monmouthshire Museums Service, Oldham Gallery, Harris Museum & Art Gallery and Wolverhampton Art Gallery & Museums).
- 5.5 The **inclusion of a national museum** (the Victoria and Albert) as one of the successful projects **was on balance regarded as a positive development**. The V&A project, 'Staying Power: Photographs of Black British Experience 1950s-1990s' has included a very significant public programmes element, and has the potential to engage with a range of other museums and communities through further events and programmes, and the project was highly regarded by a number of consultees. Whilst some queried whether a national museum should benefit from such a programme, others welcomed Collecting Culture's approach to supporting quality projects, and treating museums as a whole and as one community (and not applying any museum stratification approach).
- 5.6 Collecting Cultures has been praised by many for being **enabling, and allowing museums freedom to deliver**. However concerns as to whether the programme had provided sufficient specialist advice to projects in terms of acquisitions experience and market value have been noted, although these should be balanced against the learning and experiences gained by projects as they have negotiated the acquisitions process (which, in the main, would appear from the evidence presented in Sections 3 and 4 to have been successful). Nevertheless, it is recognised that Collecting Cultures is a devolved programme, with overall success being greatly dependent on the judgment of the curators and the museums themselves. **This can be regarded as an outcome in its own right**, with this 'light touch' approach leading to additional outcomes that might not have been anticipated at the outset.
- 5.7 There has been a suggestion that Collecting Cultures **would benefit by bringing projects together on a regular basis to share ideas, experiences and learning**. Whilst it is clear from Sections 3 and 4 that there have been a number of learning and dissemination opportunities taken by projects, a peer based approach amongst the projects themselves, perhaps building on the 'Collecting Cultures: transformational approaches to collecting' session from the 2011 Museum Association conference might have been beneficial to the projects and the programme as a whole, and should be considered as part of the successor programme.
- 5.8 Linked to this, whilst a number of the projects have enjoyed significant profile in the sector, Collecting Cultures itself appears to have a more modest profile. HLF could look to celebrate the programme in 2013 by hosting a conference showcasing some of the project successes and achievements.
- 5.9 **Collections at risk are an issue of concern to a number of Collecting Culture's partners** consulted as part of this evaluation. Looking to the successor programme, there could be scope for Collecting Cultures to have an 'at risk' role, perhaps with an element of targeted funding in support, which could continue to be on Collecting Culture's entrepreneurial/opportunity led basis. To

do this, HLF should look to engage with curatorial groups to understand where the opportunities might be.

- 5.10 On balance, Collecting Cultures had a good mix of projects, and whilst some consultees questioned whether the size of resources available to projects could be raised or lowered, most agreed that the approach taken was appropriate. Looking to the successor programme, some wondered whether an element of public participation could be used to determine what is collected.
- 5.11 Finally, whilst all supported museums have been able to deliver and also to respond to HLF's evaluation requirements, it should be noted that a number of the smaller museums did not appreciate at the outset the level of effort that delivery would involve.

### Next steps

- 5.12 In Spring 2013, there is an opportunity to HLF to take a different approach to the final evaluation for the current Collecting Cultures programme. The approach to evaluation taken to date has yielded a very detailed and consecutive evidence base covering the duration of the programme, but it should be noted that the annual provision of such detailed information is, on balance, demanding on projects (the questionnaire used for this evaluation contained over 100 separate questions). For future evaluation of Collecting Cultures, HLF could consider alternative options to capture the progress made by projects, and the outcomes they achieve.
- 5.13 There now exists four years of standardised evaluation data on the programme, and on balance, HLF is likely to learn little from repeating this approach again in the spring of 2013 having sought detailed evidence in October and November 2012. The one element of the questionnaire that projects struggled to report on was progress against the three aims of Collecting Cultures – only those 'finished' projects were asked to comment, and in contrast to the remainder of the questionnaire, responses were poor.
- 5.14 Given that there are 22 projects in the Collecting Cultures programme, there is value in considering whether a full suite of case study project reviews, which would entail: in visits to each project;; the compilation of an impact case study;; and a programme wide impact analysis, would provide the level of impact analysis that HLF requires, and that the projects deserve.
- 5.15 Many projects, whilst recognising the need and requirement of the evaluation questionnaire, expressed a strong desire to be visited as part of the evaluation process. On balance, it is unlikely that responses from both projects and stakeholder consultees will alter or change significantly between late 2012 and spring 2013, and therefore an impact case study approach should be given serious consideration by HLF in scoping its final year evaluation approach to Collecting Cultures.

### ANNEX 1: CONSULTEES AND RESPONDING MUSEUMS

The individuals consulted as part of this review are listed below.

- Sandy Nairn, National Portrait Gallery
- Janet Davies, The Victoria and Albert Museum
- Nick Poole, Collections Trust
- Mark Taylor, Museums Association
- Hedley Swain, ACE
- Sam Hunt, AIM
- Lesley-Anne Kerr and Sarah Paul, CyMAL
- Sharon Paton and Jenny Siswell, MGS
- Chris Bailey, NIMC
- Suzie Tucker, NMDC
- Maurice Davies, Museums Association

Responses to the survey were received from individuals working/volunteering at the following Museums:

- Dr Tim Pestell, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery
- Dr Jim McGreevy, National Museums Northern Ireland
- Jane Seddon, Northampton Museums and Art Gallery
- Arnold Myers, University of Edinburgh
- Dinah Winch, Gallery Oldham
- Russell Clark, The Garden Museum
- Stephanie Murfin, Harris Museum and Art Gallery
- Wendy Sanders, Groam House Museum
- Martin Roberts, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
- Sim Panesar, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums
- Lucy White, Victoria & Albert Museum
- Anne Rainsbury, Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service, (Chepstow Museum)
- Annabel Wills, Macclesfield Museums Trust
- Jo Beggs, The Whitworth Art Gallery, the University of Manchester
- Morag Bremner, Tain & District Museum
- LEEANNE WESTWOOD, Valence House Museum
- Ros Westwood, Buxton Museum and Art Gallery (Derbyshire County Council)
- Rosemary Preece, National Coal Mining Museum England
- Marguerite Nugent, Wolverhampton Art Gallery
- Heather Lane, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge
- Sarah McHugh, Fermanagh County Museum
- Professor Simon Olding, Crafts Study Centre
- Isabel Hughes, Museum of English Rural Life
- David Tucker, Lyme Regis Museum

### ANNEX 2: COLLECTING CULTURES PARTICIPATING PROJECTS

- Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), Cambridge - *Arctic Visions: Inuit Art and Material Culture* (HLF grant: £200,000).
- Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery - *Collecting Cultures: Sharing Norfolk's Past* (HLF grant: £199,500).
- Northampton Museums and Art Gallery and Kettering Manor House Museum - *Collecting Cultures - Trainers, Sneakers, Pumps and Daps* (HLF grant: £130,000).
- Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Museums & Art Gallery and Belper North Mill - *Enlightenment! Derbyshire Setting the Pace in the Eighteenth Century* (HLF grant: £200,000).
- V&A - *Staying Power – The story of Black British Identity 1950 – 1990s* (HLF grant: £157,500).
- Valence House Museum – *The Industries of Barking and Dagenham* (HLF grant: £60,000).
- Museum of Garden History - *To Develop our Art and Design Collection* (HLF grant: £99,400).
- Tyne and Wear Museums (TWM) – *Collecting Design* (HLF grant: £145,000).
- Fermanagh County Museum, Derry Heritage and Museum Service, Enniskillen's Museum – *Connection and Division* (HLF grant: £100,000).
- National Museums Northern Ireland (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum) - *Titanic Built in Belfast* (HLF grant: £174,500).
- The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester - *Cultural Reflections: Strategic Acquisition for the Whitworth Art Gallery Wallpaper Collection* (HLF grant: £196,500).
- Gallery Oldham (GO), The Harris Museum and Art Gallery - *The Potters Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (HLF grant: £82,000).
- Macclesfield Museums Trust - *Changes and Exploration in Silk* (HLF grant: £74,500).
- Groam House Museum - *Developing the George Bain Collection, Rosemarkie* (HLF grant: £99,000).
- Tain and District Museum – *Tain Silver – the Collection* (HLF grant: £98,400).
- Edinburgh University Collection of Musical Instruments (EUCMI) – *Enriching our Musical Heritage* (HLF grant: £80,000).
- Crafts Study Centre, Farnham – *Developing a National Collection of Modern Crafts* (HLF grant: £180,000).
- Museum of English Rural Life, Reading – *Collecting Rural Cultures* (HLF grant: £95,000).
- 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 – *Jurassic Life Initiative* (HLF grant: £200,000).
- Chepstow Museum Monmouth Museum – *The Wye Tour* (HLF grant: £200,000).
- The Herbert, Coventry Wolverhampton Art Gallery (WAG) – *Peace and Reconciliation Project* (HLF grant: £199,500).
- National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCME) – *Seeing the Whole Picture* (HLF grant: £60,000).

ANNEX 3: ADDITIONAL SURVEY MATERIAL

**Table A3.1: Has the project made a difference to your museum’s success rate in acquiring target acquisitions NOT THROUGH PURCHASE?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	54.2%	13
No	37.5%	9
Don't Know	8.3%	2

Source: DC Research Survey 2012, n=24

**Table A3.2: If yes, what difference have you noticed in acquisitions NOT THROUGH PURCHASE compared to before Collecting Cultures?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Acquisitions not through purchase happen much more often than previously	13.3%	2
Acquisitions not through purchase happen slightly more frequently	66.7%	10
Acquisitions not through purchase happen slightly less frequently	0.0%	0
Acquisitions not through purchase happen much less frequently	0.0%	0
Don't know/not applicable	20.0%	3

Source: DC Research Survey 2012, n=19

**Table A3.3: Have you acquired collections NOT THROUGH PURCHASE as a result of any of the following? (please tick all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Donations of material/archives associated with purchase	75.0%	12
Raised public awareness of museum collecting project led to offers of donations	62.5%	10
New contacts resulting from project led to offers from private collectors	62.5%	10
Others knowledge that museum was building a collection in that area	37.5%	6
Other (please state):	0.0%	0

Source: DC Research Survey 2012, n=16