



# SEEING THE MUSEUM THROUGH THE VISITORS' EYES: THE EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND



**Eilean Hooper-Greenhill**  
and **Jocelyn Dodd**



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## **FOREWORD**

by Tessa Blackstone, Minister for the Arts

In 1999 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport set up an Education Challenge Fund, which was developed and managed first by the Museums and Galleries Commission and then from April 2000 by Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. The fund was directed through the regional museum councils with the aim of building educational capacity in small museums.

I welcome this evaluation report into the success of an initiative that added even more evidence to support the fact that education in museums matters, and not just to the young but to people of all ages and backgrounds. I believe that museum educators have a key role to play in developing new and innovative ways to engage and involve people in the enjoyment of museums and their collections, in outreach activities, and in helping people to overcome social exclusion.

But I know I do not have to convince any readers of this document of the value of museums in education. The evaluation has shown that the fund has demonstrated the potential of small museums to deliver against the learning and inclusion agendas and has also highlighted the time and investment needed to enable small museums to develop user-focused programmes.

I recognise that funding is important to developing education in museums. The improvement of educational opportunities for lifelong learners is at the heart of what my department is seeking to promote through museums, libraries and archives; and we will continue to work closely with Resource and the Department for Education and Skills to achieve this. The aim is to ensure that regional agencies have the skills to work with museums, libraries and archives to develop and realise the learning potential of these sectors and to raise standards of learning and education services throughout the country. I hope that the result will be improvements in museum education services, which can then be assessed over the long term, so that many more people can benefit from the wonderful educational resources that museums, libraries, galleries and archives have to offer.



## GLOSSARY

AMC	Area Museum Council
CHNTO	The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation
CLMG	Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment, now the DfES
DfES	Department for Education and Skills, formerly DfEE
DNH	Department for National Heritage
ECF	Education Challenge Fund
MGC	Museums and Galleries Commission
MGEP	Museum and Galleries Education Programme
RCMG	Research Centre for Museums and Galleries
Resource	The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

### **Area Museum Services and their acronyms**

EMMS	East Midlands Museums Service
LMA	London Museums Agency
NEMs	North East Museums
NEMLAC	North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
NWMS	North West Museums Service
SEMS	South Eastern Museums Service
SEMS E	South Eastern Museums Service, Eastern Region (Now Museum Service for the East of England)
SEMS S	South Eastern Museums Service (Now South East Museums)
SMA	Southern Museums Agency
SWMC	South West Museums Council
WMRMC	West Midlands Regional Museums Council
YMC	Yorkshire Museums Council





## SUMMARY OF REPORT

### **1. The context and aims of the Education Challenge Fund**

1a The ECF was introduced as a response to the rapidly growing need for increased educational capacity in all museums in Britain. The ECF was managed by MGC in the first instance, and later by Resource.

1b The aims of the ECF were to:

- Increase the number of museums able to implement the guidelines for good practice set out in *Managing Museum and Gallery Education*
- Build up a picture of existing provision throughout each AMC and use this as a benchmark to measure the impact of the ECF on the provision of education services, programmes and resources
- Create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to museum education across the country in accordance with DCMS policy objectives
- Raise the standard of educational work in museums and galleries
- Enable museums and galleries to be able to take advantage of the other funding opportunities for education work.

1c The funds were used by the AMCs to set up projects that focused on professional development for the staff of museums, galleries, and

(occasionally) other historic properties in their areas. As part of the emphasis on professional development, some workshops were organised for museum and gallery users.

1d The RCMG at the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester was commissioned as the consultant organisation to externally evaluate the ECF.

### **2. The achievements of the Education Challenge Fund**

2a The ECF was very much welcomed by the museum and gallery sector. It has enabled a funding-led focus on the development of the educational potential of museums for the first time. All AMCs in England were able to make successful bids to the ECF and to relate the objectives of the fund to their core objectives.

2b All AMCs established projects that have enabled capacity-building in relation to museum education. Each AMC developed its own method of recruitment to the project, and used the ECF to achieve what seemed the most cost-effective approach to capacity-building according to its own level of development and that of museums in its region. This has led to a rich and productive diversity.

2c Over 400 projects focused on increasing the professional knowledge and skills of those museum and gallery staff who were involved in educational work but who were not educational specialists. The projects included in-depth training and professional development in museum and gallery education; the writing of education policies for museums and galleries; site visits from mentors and 'critical

friends', who reviewed, assessed and advised on current provision; and the development of workshops and activities based on museum collections and other cultural resources.

2d Staffing for the programme involved experienced museum educators based in the AMCs, and also freelance museum and gallery education specialists acting as consultants. In the vast majority of cases, the projects and the relationships between AMCs, freelance specialists and museum participants were managed very competently and effectively. The programme as a whole has been extremely successful.

### **3. The impact of the Education Challenge Fund**

3a The ECF has created considerable impact overall and there is excellent potential for a long-term effect if these impacts can be supported and sustained.

3b Two fundamental ideas have been accepted by all professional staff of museums, galleries and the AMCs who were concerned with the ECF. The first was an increased awareness of the knowledge, skills and experience of museum educators and an acknowledgement of the need to have access to this expertise. The second was a realisation that not withstanding the need to have access to specialist high-level knowledge and expertise, all museum and AMC staff also need to have a greatly increased awareness of the potential of museum education. Both specialist staff and greater general knowledge and experience are required to respond to government policies for education and social inclusion.

*'Specialist educators, both staff and consultants are vital... We need a professional member of staff with education as a main responsibility. I was sceptical of this initially, but education agendas are changing quickly, and with the greater importance of education as a core function of museum work, we need a voice for education in the AMC.'*

*'There is a wealth of experience in using people who work on a consultancy or freelance basis; they have experience outside one institution and they have many different facets and many different areas of specialism. It is equally important to have somebody employed in the organisation too; the Southern Museums Agency could not do its job without the education post.'*

*'We need educators with a broad vision not limited to activities, but something that is moving people forward and pushing people to think in terms of museums as a whole. This breadth is enormously important.'*

3c In addition to the acceptance of the existence, relevance and importance of educational knowledge and expertise, significant impact can be identified at two main levels - at the level of the individuals who were involved (museum and gallery users and the professional staff) and at the level of the organisations (museums and AMCs).

3d At the level of the individuals involved in the ECF programme, the ECF focused on professional development for museum and gallery staff and the bulk of the outcomes reflect this. However, where workshops and cultural activities were organised for museum users, the outcomes for the participants begin to demonstrate the power of museums and galleries to develop new perceptions, to change attitudes, to increase confidence, to develop new knowledge and to practice new skills - in short to make a difference to people's lives. There is a suggestion too, that this is what people expect museums and galleries to be for. As one person involved in one of the projects funded by the ECF said:

*'Before embarking on the project I had no real expectations other than that it would succeed and that it might change my life. As yet I've had no flashes of white light or been struck dumb, but slowly I'm beginning to realise that my life has changed for the better due to the people I've met and worked with. Represent gave me a job and the chance to prove it could work and I feel differently to how I used to. Museums have helped broaden my horizons and altered my thinking, but in my eyes that's what a museum is for.'*

3e The ECF has had a major impact on the staff of the museums that took part; there has also been a considerable effect on those members of staff of the AMCs that were involved, and also on the education freelance consultants that were used to deliver the projects. Confidence and professionalism has grown.

3f This impact goes beyond the individual staff members to challenge the museums themselves as communities of practice. The ECF has created the potential for a culture of change within the museums themselves, although there are significant issues of

sustainability. Within the museums evidence for changes in perception and practice can be seen along a number of dimensions, which include a new awareness of the importance of education within museums on the part of staff and governing bodies; a resulting repositioning of education within the priorities of the work of the museums; a more structured and focused approach to educational development and delivery; an increased demand for training; and the establishment of new museum education posts.

3g The ECF has had a major impact on the AMCs of England. It has increased their level of understanding of the character and potential of the educational role of museums and has increased their knowledge of what this means in concrete terms. For the AMCs, the major impact of the ECF has been the increase in strategic planning for education, supported by more firmly established specialist staffing.

#### **4. Major issues for the future development of the educational potential of museums and galleries**

4a The ECF has created a fertile climate for educational development in museums and galleries. It is a beginning rather than an end, and there is still much more to be done. A great number of museum education policies have been written and confidence has grown. The challenge is now to realise this potential. The impact of this excellent work should not be lost through lack of continuity.

4b The ECF has demonstrated clearly that there are a number of key issues that need to be addressed in the future development of the educational potential of museums and galleries. The most significant of these is the most basic – the development and broadening of the understanding of the educational role of museums. Support is needed here. A further matter is that of partnerships and the use of freelance educational consultants.

4c Two other major issues were identified: the relationship of small museums to the professional mainstream and the specific needs of museums in rural areas.

4d Finally, although all AMCs have very specific ideas about how to take things forward, the sustainability of the achievements and the necessary future professional development is a major concern, especially where funding is concerned.

#### **5. Operational issues: informing the management of future projects**

5a The overall management of the ECF has been exemplary. It was applauded by the AMCs, and the openness of the fund's criteria was appreciated. Everyone welcomed the fund.

5b The collection of baseline data proved problematic, and this needs to be managed more strategically and with more consultation in future.

5c A longer time-frame for the programme as a whole, with an earlier announcement to enable a longer planning time, would have been appreciated.

5d Questions were raised about cross-sectoral understandings of education and investigations of this were called for.

5e The introduction of related initiatives during the lifetime of the ECF led to some overload, and future partnership working between government bodies and other agencies is recommended.

#### **6. Conclusions**

6a The ECF has been an enormous success. Educational capacity has been built in the regions served by English AMCs and there is on the whole a much more developed understanding among the AMCs and participating museums of what the educational role of museums and galleries can encompass.

6b Many museum professionals have been involved in exciting developments that they wish to sustain. The enhancement of the experience of visitors can already be observed, and many museums are poised to develop their educational work further to the benefit of their users in the future.

6c The ECF has created a climate of enthusiasm for the development of museum and gallery education, and a can-do attitude. These attitudes and perceptions are critical to the growth of the educational function of museums, but on their own they are not sufficient. Further funding from DCMS, managed in a careful, planned and strategic way, is needed now in order to enable the development and implementation of education action plans. In addition, instead of the ad hoc emergence of a range of unrelated initiatives springing from a number of different governmental and other bodies, such as occurred during the period that the ECF was in progress, a more strategic, inter-related and developmental approach should be developed across interested agencies.

6d The ECF has been well managed and the funds have been used to extremely good effect. Further funding should also be dependent on realistic, focused and strategic objectives that are clearly articulated. It should in addition be subject to evaluation that is integral to the programme, and will produce evidence of the impact of the funding on institutions and their staff, and on museum users.

6e The training and mentoring provided by the AMCs was essential during the rapid development in educational capacity that was brought about by the ECF. This kind of developmental strategy for capacity-building, which integrates training into personal, professional and organisational growth, and which provides a useful measure of accountability, is vital. There is scope for further research to identify, monitor and evaluate effective support structures, especially for those museums with a low baseline in educational capacity at present.



# 1 THE CONTEXT AND AIMS OF THE EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND

## 1.1 The need for the Education Challenge Fund

1.1.1 The ECF was introduced as a response to the rapidly growing need for increased educational capacity in all museums in Britain. The extensive review of the educational provision of museums and galleries carried out for the Anderson report, *A Common Wealth: Museums and Learning in the United Kingdom*, in 1997, showed that museum education was patchy and underdeveloped, particularly in museums without specialist staff. This lack of development was confirmed when the MGC suggested the inclusion of its guidelines, *Managing Museum and Gallery Education*, into the proposed standards for museum Registration; in the view of the AMCs, the majority of museums in their regions would be unable to meet these standards. The second edition of the Anderson report, *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age*, 1999, urged that all museums should indeed adopt the MGC guidelines and recommended that the AMCs should provide more expert educational advice and support. It was from within this context that the ECF was launched.

1.1.2 The DCMS launched the ECF in December 1999 to provide museums and galleries with access to professional advice and support in the fields of education, access, audience development and lifelong learning. A sum of £500,000 was made available to the AMCs to develop pilot projects in the museums in their regions that would:

- broaden access to museums and galleries
- increase the educational use made of collections
- serve as models for other museums in developing their educational services.

Through the support of the AMCs, those museums that did not have specialist education officers on their staff would have access to the knowledge, skills and experience that they needed in order to increase their capacity to fulfil the educational potential of their museums and collections.

## 1.2 The management and scope of the Education Challenge Fund

1.2.1 The MGC, and its successor Resource: The Council for Museums Archives and Libraries, were given the responsibility for the development and management of the ECF. The ECF was available to all the English AMCs\*, which were invited in December 1999 to put forward their bids for projects. The introduction of a range of initiatives was agreed in each of the regions.

The ECF was managed by MGC in the first instance, and later by Resource. Continuity of management and control was achieved despite the closing of one body (MGC) and the establishment of a new organisation (Resource) with much broader responsibilities. The funding was released in phases following quarterly reports between March 2000 and March 2001.

\*The function of AMCs is to give advice to, and support, museums and galleries in their regional area. This includes local authority and independent museums, and museums run by other organisations such as military authorities. As the AMC remit does not cover national museums the ECF was not available to these museums. The ECF was not open to museums in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

## 1.3 The aims of the Education Challenge Fund

1.3.1 The aims of the ECF were to:

- Increase the number of museums able to implement the guidelines for good practice set out in *Managing Museum and Gallery Education*
- Build up a picture of existing provision throughout each AMC and use this as a benchmark to measure the impact of the ECF on the provision of education services, programmes and resources
- Create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to museum education across the country in accordance with DCMS policy objectives

- Raise the standard of educational work in museums and galleries
- Enable museums and galleries to be able to take advantage of the other funding opportunities for education work.

The funds were used by the AMCs to set up projects that focused on professional development for the staff of museums, galleries, and (occasionally) other historic properties in their areas.

#### 1.4 The external evaluation

1.4.1 The RCMG at the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester was commissioned as the consultant organisation to externally evaluate the ECF.

1.4.2 The evaluation ran from September 2000 to March 2001. Each of the AMCs was visited and a range of research methods were employed to review the ECF, and the projects that it funded. Interviews were

carried out with AMC directors, AMC employees responsible for developing museum education work in the region, and museum and gallery education consultants working on the ECF; focus groups of participants in the projects were held, and visits to participating museums were made. In addition, a large number of related documents were reviewed as part of the evaluation, including the original project bids, the quarterly reports and those final evaluation reports that were available.

#### 1.5 The evaluation report

1.5.1 This report describes the achievements of the ECF, discusses its impact at a number of levels, identifies major issues for the future development of the educational capacity of museums and galleries and makes some suggestions in relation to operational matters for the management of any future funds. The quotations used in the report are drawn from the interviews and focus groups carried out as part of the evaluation processes.



## 2 THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND

### 2.0 Section summary

The ECF was very much welcomed by the museum and gallery sector. It has enabled a funding-led focus on the development of the educational potential of museums for the first time. All AMCs were able to make successful bids to the ECF and to relate the objectives of the fund to their core objectives. All AMCs established projects that have enabled capacity-building in relation to museum education. Each AMC developed its own method of recruitment to the project, and used the ECF to achieve what seemed the most cost-effective approach to capacity-building according to its own level of development and that of museums in its region. This has led to a rich and productive diversity. The projects focused on increasing the professional knowledge and skills of those museum and gallery staff who were involved in educational work but who were not educational specialists. The projects included in-depth training and professional development in museum and gallery education; the writing of education policies for museums and galleries; site visits from mentors and 'critical friends', who reviewed, assessed and advised on current provision; and the development of workshops and activities based on museum collections and other cultural resources.

Staffing for the programme involved experienced museum educators based in the AMCs, and also freelance museum and gallery education specialists acting as consultants. In the vast majority of cases, the projects and the relationships between AMCs, freelance specialists and museum participants were managed very competently and effectively. The programme as a whole has been extremely successful.

### 2.1 Welcoming the Education Challenge Fund

2.1.1 The ECF was very much welcomed by the museum and gallery sector. The aims of the ECF were well understood and addressed imaginatively and robustly, with each AMC developing its own models and programmes of delivery.

*'The ECF was taken up with great enthusiasm and alacrity.'*

2.1.2 All AMCs, without exception, saw the educational role of museums and galleries as being critical to the future development of museums, and indeed this had already become a major priority of their advice and support to museums in their regions. However, the AMCs were all at very different stages of development; some had permanent specialist education staff while others were employing specialists on short-term contracts. In addition, some AMCs were working at a strategic level in relation to the educational development of the museums in their region, while others were operating in a responsive advisory way with individual organisations. The ECF has benefited all AMCs, notwithstanding their stage of development or their specific understanding of the value of museum education and as a result, expectations and expertise have increased across England.

2.1.3 The ECF offered the AMCs the opportunity to work towards development in a strategic way:

*'We very much welcomed the idea of the ECF; working with a top-down approach from DCMS, through Resource, and then through the AMCs, was a real opportunity to achieve something strategically.'*

2.1.4 The levels of funding (£65,000 for most AMCs and £80,000 for SEMs) were perceived as highly significant within services where every penny is considered with enormous care:

*'The ECF provided a huge window of opportunity. It enabled us to do a seriously good quality project. In proportion to our base budgets it was a really significant amount of money, and this was important in terms of the calibre of people we were able to employ on the project who could provide an in-depth, quality experience, which over an extended period of time was tailored to meet the specific needs of delegates.'*

2.1.5 Most AMCs were already repositioning themselves in relation to their support of museum education, spurred on by the Anderson report. The desire to raise the status of education and for the educational role to become integral to the identity of museums was very strong. The criteria and aims of the ECF were welcomed, therefore, as being highly relevant and very useful, as they were broad, adaptable and

general. Education was already central to most AMC corporate plans, with a focus not just on formal, but informal and lifelong learning:

*'Education is a key objective in our corporate plan.'*

*'It fell very well within the corporate plan, it meshed in entirely.'*

*'The ECF related very well to our AMC's objectives.'*

2.1.6 The flexibility of the ECF was welcomed as this enabled it to be used in a diversity of ways meeting the specific needs of individual regions.

*'It was exactly what was needed; it was spot on - it was really clear, you could see that the West Midlands could deliver what it wanted.'*

A priority for one AMC was to:

*'...professionalise museum education in the region, upgrading professional skills'.*

2.1.7 While most of the aims of the ECF were welcomed there was some misunderstanding in relation to the meaning of 'consistency'; one of the aims of the ECF was to 'Create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to museum education across the country in accordance with DCMS policy objectives.' Rather than seeing this as referring to the encouragement of similar levels of provision, it was sometimes understood as meaning the provision of the same forms of delivery:

*'There is a huge differential between the large urban museums and the plethora of small museums, also between rural and urban museums. This is not necessarily negative. I do not believe there would ever be consistency, and there are such differences in capacity.'*

*'Do you want consistency? An underpinning of consistent values is important; however the delivery may be diverse.'*

## **2.2 Recruitment to the projects; cost-effective responses to local needs**

2.2.1 The welcome given to the ECF meant that AMCs seized the opportunities it offered with both hands. The recurrent theme that can be seen running

through each AMC project is the development of education policies and action plans; however each AMC did this in its own way. Most projects were imaginative, timely, professionally managed and delivered, and effective in achieving most of their aims. The form of the achievements of the projects depended to a considerable extent on the level of existing knowledge and experience of museum education in the group of museums that were involved. Where this was at a high level to begin with, work was carried out at a similarly high level of sophistication. Working with those new to the concepts of museum education was more difficult and more challenging than working with those who were already enthusiastic and aware, but nonetheless, achievements were significant here too.

2.2.2 The AMCs took different approaches to the ways in which their projects recruited museum participants. A decision had to be made whether to establish a specific range of museums that were invited to bid to the ECF, or to leave the access more open. Having decided to establish criteria for inclusion, AMCs had to decide whether to involve those museums that were well under way with educational development, or to target those that still had a long way to go. Some AMCs used a range of approaches. Two AMCs targeted specific groups of museums; one targeted a specific geographical area; and others adopted methods where self-selection was stronger.

*'We concentrated on the 50% of museums we could have the most effect on. This seemed more cost effective than trying to work with the hard-to-reach groups, where it would be hard to have any great impact.'*

*'We wanted to build a slim infrastructure in the region. We selected one specific county because it had the potential to develop and be sustained, while other counties either had nothing to build on or there was already something happening. The work was focused on eight museums, using a cascade process to ensure that more than the eight museums that participated would benefit.'*

Some used information they had previously gathered in order to select participants:

*'As a result of a mapping exercise, the 30 museums that were selected for the project were those that had the least developed education provision in the region.'*



2.2.3 Where AMCs focused on those museums with least educational capacity, advisory visits and audits were widely used. For this group, a range of support strategies was developed which included training, nurturing, visits from a 'critical friend', advisory support, and a newsletter, along with formal training to develop policy and action plans.

The 'critical friend' – an experienced museum educator who paid an on-site visit to make suggestions for improvements that were specific to the site and the individual education service – was found to be very effective as a follow-up to training days.

*'Training days raise awareness; individual visits change practice.'*

Networking and skills-sharing was a feature of the ECF as a whole. 'Cluster groups' were used to set up and pilot mini education forums to develop partnerships, promote networks and share skills. Email discussion groups were developed to share information, ideas and experiences and to explore solutions. Only one AMC developed a website, but this was widely used within the specific AMC and by other AMCs; this mutual benefit has sown the seeds for future collaboration between AMCs on a more strategic and planned basis.

2.2.4 The accommodating nature of the broad aims of the ECF, in addition to their clarity and focus, enabled AMCs to choose how to best use it to suit their requirements. This capacity to respond to local need meant that AMCs took ownership of the programme:

*'The ECF meant that we were able to develop an in-depth, quality experience, over an extended period of time, which was tailored to delegates' needs.'*

*'It was logical to continue my post, to give advice and information to small and medium sized museums... those museums without educators. It gave an opportunity to push the practice of museum education forward.'*

*'Lots of small museums have found it difficult to access funding and to engage in the education agenda. The ECF was a great opportunity to fast-track these museums, for the AMC to be strategic, proactive, supportive and trouble-shooting. We at the AMC were well placed to support less confident museums.'*

## **2.3 The range, scope, diversity and examples of projects**

The ECF was open to all the AMCs in England. Each AMC addressed the aims of the ECF in different ways, but all concentrated on increasing awareness of what we know about museum learning and on developing relevant professional skills so that museum users would find improved educational services and increased opportunities for lifelong learning. Many of the AMCs had found ways to match the ECF funds, and much of the work carried out involved partnerships. This section briefly outlines the approach taken by each AMC.

The North Eastern Museums Service (now NEMLAC) made a bid with two strands to the ECF. The first was for advisory consultants to develop educational services at 24 museums that had a limited history of educational provision. The second strand was awarded to provide 12 project grants for museums with established educational programmes to develop new audiences within an initiative entitled Creativity and New Audiences in Museums. The £30,000 given in grants was matched with other funding sources. Altogether, the ECF was deployed to benefit 38 museums across the north east, including volunteer-run museums, military museums, local authority and university museums. Six training seminars were held for 154 museum staff. Over 2,000 new users were involved in museum projects. At the present time 96% of the Registered museums in the region have a complete or draft education plan and 92% have statements relating to education in their forward plans.

The North West Museums Service (NWMS) built on an existing survey of the level of provision for museum education in the region. There were three strands to this project. In the first, Consultants focused on 25 smaller museums working intensively over three to four days to enable all staff in the museums to work together to develop educational policies, and the consultants were also available via email and phone for the period of the whole project. In the second strand, a programme of five clusters of over 30 museums with external partners worked together to develop educational projects through supportive networks. In the third strand, management training which took place over an eight-month period was provided for 16 museum educators to develop a self-sustaining network.



The Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council (now YMC) used the ECF to employ an education and lifelong learning adviser who visited 29 museums identified as having no access to professional education advice. Museum staff, district museum officers and some curatorial advisers were involved in the programme. Advisory visits were made which audited current provision and discussed future developments. Training and assistance was given in writing education policies. Assistance was given in the development of new education sessions in each of the museums.

The East Midlands Museums Service (EMMS) employed two part-time education advisers. One visited 34 museums, most of which did not employ specialist museum education staff. Advice was given on how to improve physical and intellectual access and how to better support lifelong learning through collections and displays. Project grants were offered for small innovative projects resulting from these visits; 32 grants were awarded, many supported through additional funds from the main AMC budget. A directory of freelance museum educators was compiled by the second education adviser and this has been distributed to museums in the region. Training is being developed for the freelance group of museum educators, Interact, and potential routes to accreditation by a regional university have been identified. Seven training days were provided for 180 museum staff and every museum has been provided with information on writing education policies.

The West Midlands Regional Museums Council (WMRMC) used the ECF in two separate ways. The first was to extend the contract of its education officer. This enabled the education officer to develop range statements for measuring performance in museum education in 150 museums; to carry out advisory visits in 18 museums; to carry out education audit visits with a full report and recommendations in a further 11 museums; and to run a three-stage training course on the writing of museum education policies and help 15 museums to do so. Currently 60% of museums in the region have education policies. The second element funding a landmark project, Represent, which was developed and delivered as part of the strategic deployment of the funds. Initially 12 young people were targeted to be trained to act as ambassadors to help Birmingham Museum work with families. The training involved five visits to museum and art galleries in other cities, as well as focusing on informal learning especially communication skills and confidence building. The project evolved, with the focus changing into a much stronger young persons'

project that attracted 40 young people. A project officer was employed through the New Deal scheme. Museums in the region were involved in the development and progress of the Represent project in order to learn from it, and potentially to use it as a model for their own developments.

The South West Museums Council (SWMC) focused its bid around a training course entitled The Museum Learning Initiative. This was a three-part project which comprised of a seven-module course on how people learn in museums; professional advisory support through site visits and written reports; and a website. Thirty-six museums and four museum development officers were involved; 13 professional learning and education advisers, ten of whom had not worked in the region before, were employed; and 50 people attended the training days. The original aims of the ambitious training course were to facilitate the development of the skills and knowledge needed to help a wide range of museum users learn from museums and their services. One hundred and eight advisory visits were carried out, and the website that complemented the training course has been completed and is already being heavily used. The 36 museums involved in the training programme are revising or writing education or learning policies and action plans and 72 museum learning projects involving a large range of audiences have been set up.

At the time of the award of the ECF, SEMS was one AMC to whom the award was made, it was split between its four separate regions which included SEMS London, SEMS Eastern region, SEMS Western region and SEMS Southern region. During the lifespan of the ECF, SEMS was disaggregated to form three AMCs: The London Museums Agency; the Museum Service for the East of England; and the Southern Museums Agency.

The London Museums Agency (LMA) ECF project consisted of four main parts. A London Museums Education Database, based on 103 responses to the 250 questionnaires sent to London's museums, has been produced. This has been completed and gives a snapshot of the state of museum education in London at the beginning of 2000. Information on the training and development programme was included with the survey, and 41 people from 36 museums responded. Education development programmes were delivered in two training groups with places for 20 museums in total; one with people from volunteer-based museums and the other with people in paid curatorial posts. Education policies and action plans were developed

during the course of these. Satisfaction with the training courses and the related advisory visits has been high, with participants commenting that their museums now have more innovative and inclusive education services which can reach new audiences, and they themselves feel more confident, motivated and capable. A publication *Planning for Learning: A Guide to Developing an Education Policy* has been produced and widely distributed to all museums in the London region.

The SEMS Eastern (now the Museums Service for the East of England) region offered the package Writing an Education Policy to all their members, supporting 25 museums more formally to develop educational policies and associated audience research. Participating museums were offered a grant of £400 to carry out market research, training or resource provision to implement their policies. A half-time professional educator delivered this project in conjunction with the then recently appointed museums education and access officer. In practice four training sessions were delivered to over 60 participants from 40 different museums, and 23 museums were awarded grants for development work. Informal clusters were developed, where the same training needs were identified, while training days were organised centrally.

The Southern Museums Agency (SMA) project, Beacon Museums, was designed to ensure that eight museums in the region developed the skills and experience to implement the MGC guidelines for good practice, *Managing Museum and Gallery Education*, 1996. In the event 13 museums which were registered, but had no education officer and no education policy, were involved in the project. This involved 29 museum staff, and the number of museum users who benefited (based on visitor figures from the museums) is in the region of 192,000. A range of different projects linked across the museums. These included developing a handling collection and workshop to explore Nepalese culture and link this to cultural diversity and citizenship; the development of teachers' resources; the production of interpretation policies (with input from consultants specialising in developing a museum vision, the needs of families, audience advocacy and writing effective texts); and training in writing a museum education policy. One museum participant wrote afterwards:

*'I have a direction, a methodology, and by the time I've completed, a strategy - an action plan. This will*

*put education into the earliest stages of every museum project as fundamental - a core activity.'*

SEMS Southern Region (now South East Museums) focused on West Sussex. This was an area that had been identified as having the potential to increase educational work, but where there were no education specialists. A part-time museum educator worked with eight museums and approximately 20 people in West Sussex museums to develop education policies and plans. Initially the target museums were audited, then a series of courses were offered which included training in developing handling and interactive sessions, developing resource material, marketing, and evaluating museum education programmes. Some of the training sessions were made available to other West Sussex museums. Written guidelines or development reports were produced to cascade to other volunteers and staff for the future, and practical help was given to develop practical sustainable resources. A further component of the project was to work towards raising the profile and standard of museum learning services in the county as a whole. This was achieved through a networking forum, training sessions and a newsletter. Twenty-five museums participated in training and the network.

## **2.4 Staffing the Education Challenge Fund projects**

2.4.1 Experienced education staff played a key role in the delivery of the ECF programme.

*'The project has been managed by the education audience development manager. As director I have only been involved in giving policy direction, particularly when museums do not seem to have been taking the ideas sufficiently seriously.'*

However, the role of experienced museum educators within the AMCs varied from those who operated at a very strategic level to others who were more rooted in practice. There is evidence that where education was considered at a strategic level a higher quality of outcomes was achieved.

2.4.2 In addition to experienced staff, all AMCs used freelance educators in some way. There was an awareness that the continuity and integrated expertise that AMC education staff could ensure was complemented by the range of specialisms that freelancers could offer.



*'There is a wealth of experience in using people who work on a consultancy or freelance basis; they have experience outside one institution, and they have many different facets and many different areas of specialism. It is equally important to have somebody employed in the organisation too; the SMA could not do its job without the education post.'*

Projects drew on a wide range of freelance specialists - including people specialising in early-years teaching, museum visitor studies, museum learning theory, museum management, or Information Technology. The AMCs varied in their ambition in relation to their use of freelance specialists, with some using the best people both nationally and internationally, and others being more cautious and restricting themselves to people within a much smaller geographical area and potentially, therefore, a more limited range of skills.

## **2.5 Building on existing developments**

The ECF was used in the main to take forward developments that had already been identified as integral to the AMCs' forward plans. ECF funds enabled specific development and the opportunity to make concrete Long-held convictions:

*'The ECF enabled us to do the things we had planned for but were not able to do within existing resources.'*

*'We wanted a planned approach to policy, and to create action plans that were relevant to the point at which museums are now, with the ultimate objective of fulfilling our mission of museums for more people.'*

*'We wanted to create a broad base level for education, to get education policies developed, raise awareness of policy, and to increase capacity. Also to develop sharing of skills and knowledge.'*

## **2.6 Relationships between Area Museum Councils and participating museums**

2.6.1 The relationships between AMCs, the education consultants and the participating museums were, in the vast majority of cases, very well handled. The museum participants appreciated the level of detailed planning, consultation and commitment to the ECF that they witnessed:

*'The Museum Learning Initiative has been excellent, enormously useful and successful... the organisation had been splendid, and considering the challenges of the time, petrol shortages, severe delays on the railways and floods, the level of attendance was really high, which showed just how motivated we were! Our major criticism is that we would like more, it would have been good to look at gender differences in learning, more on different types of intelligence, more on lifelong learning...'*

*'The project has been really good, everything has been very clear, you were not left to flounder, you were given plenty of advice, they were accessible, it gave authority to education having somebody coming in from outside to advise you. We were given the tools to find solutions for ourselves, and the visits and feedback were very useful.'*

*'...Our needs were not assumed, we were regularly consulted so that the course really did meet our needs... the facilitators drew on our experiences... we were encouraged to do presentations and feed back to the rest of the group... they created a really good learning environment for us... we learnt to apply issues to our organisations, to develop transferable skills...'*

2.6.2 However, while very nearly all project participants were extremely enthusiastic, a number of issues were raised by one group which highlight some of the points at which things can go wrong if projects and relationships are not well managed:

*'It was a very short timescale... but our views of education have developed and we have grown in confidence. But we would have liked more consultation... more information... and to be more involved from the beginning...'*

...the group realised that they had been selected and targeted...

*'We feel "pressurised" into being involved, as if we had been branded as not interested... it makes you feel uncomfortable. It feels as if small museums were being stifled; we think we know what we need. It would have been better if fewer museums had been involved in the programme... There would have been more attention, and more guidance from the beginning to create the right frame of mind. It would have been good to elicit debate about what museum education really is. It would have been good to have advice and assistance on audiences other than schools and how to focus on them and not endless training.'*

## 3 THE IMPACT OF THE EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND

### 3.0 Section summary

3.0.1 The ECF has created considerable impact overall and there is excellent potential for a long-term effect if these impacts can be supported and sustained. Significant impact can be identified at two main levels –at the level of the individuals who were involved (museum and gallery users and the professional staff) and at the level of the organisations (museums and AMCs).

At the level of the individuals involved in the ECF programme, the ECF focused on professional development for museum and gallery staff and the bulk of the outcomes reflect this. However, where workshops and cultural activities were organised for museum users, the outcomes for the participants begin to demonstrate the power of museums and galleries to develop new perceptions, to change attitudes, to increase confidence, to develop new knowledge and to practice new skills –in short to make a difference to people’s lives. There is a suggestion too, that this is what people expect museums and galleries to be for.

The ECF has had a major impact on the staff of the museums that took part; there has also been a considerable effect on those members of staff of the AMCs that were involved, and also on the education freelance consultants that were used to deliver the projects. Confidence and professionalism has grown.

This impact goes beyond the individual staff members to challenge the museums themselves as communities of practice. The ECF has created the potential for a culture of change within the museums themselves, although there are significant issues of sustainability. Within the museums evidence for changes in perception and practice can be seen along a number of dimensions.

The ECF has had a major impact on the AMCs of England. It has increased their level of understanding of the character and potential of the educational role of museums and has increased their knowledge of what this means in concrete terms. For the AMCs, the major impact of the ECF has been the increase in strategic planning for education, supported by more firmly established specialist staffing.

### 3.1 Impact on museum and gallery users

3.1.1 Most of the projects funded through the ECF focused on matters of professional development such as training, policy writing, and the development of education action plans. These are long-term developmental processes but the impact of this work on the quality of the experience of museum users is already noticeable in some instances. The impact encompasses both apparently very small, and clearly very significant, issues. However, some very modest amendments, such as the introduction of seats, often had a very real significance for visitors, and in addition, small modifications such as this are symptomatic of an increased awareness of the needs of visitors.

To take this awareness further, some museums were beginning to seriously evaluate what they were doing from the perspective of the visitor:

*‘Small museums have begun to think more about informal learning and less about schools, and potentially this will have much more impact on visitors who will get the benefit of displays which are far less didactic. Some museums have been setting up [exhibit] mock-ups, observing visitors’ use and changing them as a result of responses.’*

3.1.2 At London Canal Museum, for example, the ECF project enabled a more critical view of the content of the displays. The project had promoted the development of ideas and skills to improve the permanent exhibition, which was felt to offer both insufficient information for the canal enthusiast, while at the same time being too difficult for the non-specialist. As a result, the educational approach of the museum has been broadened from being limited to a strong focus on school services to becoming the underpinning philosophy of the museum as a whole. The educational role of London Canal Museum is now understood to include the displays, exhibitions and related learning materials as well as workshops.

3.1.3 At Rhodes Memorial Museum, Bishops Stortford, the impact on museum visitors is less immediately visible, but the potential to impact on visitors is huge. There are major plans to redevelop the currently dreary and dated museum, which

suffers from what the curator describes as 'sixty years of inactivity'. There is plenty of scope for improvement. The curator initially saw the prospect of undertaking an education policy a daunting task: 'I did not know where to start. What the ECF did was to make it approachable... it is a critical tool for the development of the museum, for our future focus.' The museum used £400 of project money to carry out market research with local teachers. This has formed part of the long-term goal of transforming the museum to create a display entitled The Spirit of Africa, where the challenges of representing a colonial history within the context of a multicultural society illustrate some of the complexities of creating a socially-inclusive museum.

3.1.4 Newark Town Treasures, a small and recently opened museum, has been able to improve visitors' experiences through a project that has focused on the mayor's parlour. The project consisted of three main strands; the commissioning of replica costumes (including those of the mayor and town crier) and artefacts; the interpretation of the objects; and a guided visit and quiz sheet in the mayor's parlour itself (when the mayor does not have important visitors!). The project has significantly increased the scope of visitors' experiences. Every local school has been able to use the costumes (which are provided in a range of sizes) and has found the project particularly relevant to the teaching of citizenship. The project has also enabled the town councillors to see the educational potential of their museum.

3.1.5 While the projects above are full of future potential, some of the ECF workshop-based projects clearly demonstrate the powerful impact that involvement with cultural organisations such as museums and galleries can have on the participants. The Represent project in Birmingham has impacted in extraordinary ways on some of the young people involved. One of these was an unemployed young man (Dan) who was recruited on to the project as a youth worker through the New Deal initiative. As the WMRMC said of its involvement in the ECF:

*'...the biggest impact has been through the Represent project. Here there was a very obvious impact. It has enabled and empowered the young people to have a sense of cultural ownership.'*

3.1.5.1 One of the young participants in the project talked about how her involvement had changed her ideas about both her own identity and the potential of museums:

*'I would not be caught dead in a museum... the project made us feel good, we had gained knowledge, we felt more confident and had our eyes opened to new things... when I was young my mum made me wear traditional African costume. I hated it and felt ashamed. Now I think museums should have things like that in them. I want my culture to be part of the mainstream culture. I want to see something positive about it, not all the negative things in the slavery gallery in Liverpool.'*

3.1.5.2 A second young person has become aware of museums and galleries for the first time. Travelling to other cities and being part of the project had contributed to establishing a more settled lifestyle; the project was seen as a catalyst between old and new ways of living.

*'I'm 18 years-old and I'm originally from Manchester and now I live in Birmingham. I've lived in Birmingham for just over three years and things never worked out at first so then I moved into youth accommodation. There I met Dan who told me about a project that he was involved in.'*

*'Since being a part of this group [Represent] a lot of us in the group have had a change for the better and especially since we had our sessions with Roy. He told us things and demonstrated to us how we could improve our lives. Before I met Roy I was in and out of jobs and relationships and my life wasn't really going anywhere and then I decided I needed to make some changes and this project, Represent, gave me the chance.'*

*'Now I have a girlfriend that I have been with for eight months and she's got a little three-year-old girl and I have also got my own flat and I've been in my job for about six months. I'm really glad Dan asked me to join because I probably wouldn't have made these important changes.'*

*'Since joining the group we've been taken to some of the most interesting museums in England. We have been to a few in Birmingham and the London Tate Gallery and the Tate Gallery in Liverpool where we looked at slavery. Also we've been to Madame Tussauds and as a group we went to Bristol Carnival which was probably one of the best experiences we, as a group, were involved in.'*

*'For me personally the London Tate was the best and had the biggest collection of historical, collectors' items and I think the biggest ruby in England. I was so*



*interested in there that time went so fast and we never got time to see everything. I would take time out and visit there again with my girlfriend and her daughter.*

*'For a lot of us Represent gave us historical and religious knowledge and we enjoyed a lot of this project and I hope I get to visit another museum before it ends.'*

3.1.5.3 Dan, the project youth worker for Represent was unemployed before he worked on the project. Since being involved, he has increased aspirations for the future and increased confidence and self-awareness. Museums have broadened his horizons and his thinking.

*'The only other option at the time was to sign on and claim benefits, which I did for over two-and-a-half years. Having no money, what pursuits are there that don't cost the earth? Well the short answer is not many. If I had thought about it maybe I would have contemplated visiting the museum and art gallery, after all they don't cost you. To be truthful though I didn't actually know where the museum was and that it was free to enter, and this after living here for nearly seven years.*

*'So why then did I apply for the job of the project worker with Represent knowing it was a museum job? I'm not too sure but I thought that it could be a challenge and when you're on New Deal you have to keep on applying for whatever is out there and I do mean whatever is out there. It also matched up with the skills I'd picked up and was the closest job to what I wanted to do, so it was a nothing ventured nothing gained type of attitude and it actually paid off and they employed me. The prospect thrilled yet unnerved me too as I knew nothing about museums, thought that they were boring and full of blokes with beards and I know now that they are full of blokes with beards!*

*'Before embarking on the project I had no real expectations other than that it would succeed and that it might change my life. As yet I've had no flashes of white light or been struck dumb but slowly I'm beginning to realise that my life has changed for the better due to the people I've met and worked with. Represent gave me a job and the chance to prove it could work and I feel differently to how I used to. Museums have helped broaden my horizons and altered my thinking but in my eyes that's what a museum is for.'*

3.1.5.4 One project worked with a school for children with special needs. Secondary pupils from the Northern School for the Deaf developed their IT skills working alongside an artist exploring the stunning natural history collections at the Hancock Museum. An IT specialist from school, a geologist and an ethnographer facilitated the group's investigation of collections in store, including sensitive ethnographic material that was not on display. Complex debates emerged, as well as highly-creative montages produced from scanned images.

3.1.5.5 Some museums developed several projects. Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum, for example, established three different ventures, each of which has impacted on participants in different ways.

3.1.5.6 Bensham Grove Community History project was a collaboration between Beamish and three community groups in Bensham, a neighbourhood in Gateshead. One group used archives from Beamish and oral history to create an exhibition of their area. A lively member of the group who was well into his 80's interviewed his former teacher, Jessie, who is now in her 90's, and her story now forms a central part of the exhibition A Tale of Three Women. Not only did this exhibition provide a great insight into schooling in the 1920's and 30's in the north east, but also it did much to boost the self-esteem of those involved.

Jessie said:

*'I have been given a new lease of life, I feel so proud and so pleased to see the exhibition.'*

For the community group much had been gained too. As one member pointed out:

*'I have grown in confidence. We have worked together as a team, we have worked to deadlines, learnt new skills... digital photography, and oral history, we have created something for the community too.'*

3.1.5.7 New skills were also learnt by participants in the Beamish New Beginnings Group who researched the history of underwear. The group developed curatorial and historical research skills, but were more shocked by their ability to use digital cameras!

3.1.5.8 Beamish was also the source of inspiration for an English as a Foreign Language group made up of Kosovans, Muslims and Africans, who took photos of the views of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century streets at the open air museum and then incorporated themselves into

the image creating Postcards Home. The messages on the postcards, with text in English and many other diverse languages represented the complex feelings, thoughts and experiences of living in a different country and in a different culture – one which had not necessarily been chosen.

3.1.5.9 As the outcomes discussed above show, the impact of involvement with museums and galleries is potentially rich, diverse and multiple. Participation in museum projects has encouraged higher and more focused aspirations, increased feelings of confidence, self-worth and personal identity, has led to the development of skills and increased employability, and broadened knowledge and awareness of cultural institutions. While these outcomes are difficult to measure in the statistical sense, they give a clear sense of the character of the social impact that museums can achieve.

### **3.2 The impact of the Education Challenge Fund on professional staff**

3.2.0 The ECF has had a major impact on the staff of the museums that took part; there has also been a considerable effect on those members of staff of the AMCs that were involved, and also on the education freelance consultants that were used to deliver the projects.

The vast majority of participants felt pleased by their experiences, and for some it was especially significant:

*'I think we felt we had participated in a really prestigious experience.'*

*'The ECF has sown the seeds of ideas... it was difficult to know exactly how it would materialise, but we all feel like enthusiastic ambassadors... the training has been fantastic.... we have had first-class facilitators.'*

3.2.1 The staff of participating museums and galleries

3.2.1.1 Among individuals from participating museums, galleries and (occasionally) historic houses there were enormous and specific gains.

The specific skills acquired that museum staff mentioned included:

- report writing
- record keeping and statistics
- tracking of demographic usage
- networking
- assertiveness
- sharing ideas
- problem solving
- planning in the short and long term
- strategic thinking skills
- setting effective objectives
- partnership development and management
- evaluation methods.

Participants became aware of the importance of 'thinking time', of stepping out of everyday activities and of seeing the bigger picture. They developed time management skills, and began to appreciate the importance of continuing professional development (CPD). They also began to be aware of how valuable their roles are to their organisations. In addition participants became much more aware of the breadth and depth of education, and their growing confidence and assertiveness was evident too.

3.2.1.2 Working on the ECF project has therefore provided valuable CPD experiences:

*'The management training over a ten-month period has given time to plan, to implement and to reflect and consequently will be sustainable especially with the email network, where experiences and challenges can be shared and solutions found.'*

*'We have learnt to think more strategically, and to see things in terms of building blocks and to use our enthusiasm, but in a much more structured way.'*

3.2.1.3 The ECF has also had an effect in relation to more intangible matters. It helped to prevent participants, who were frequently the only people involved in educational work in their institutions, from feeling isolated. At several of the focus group discussions, participants made it clear that there had been an increased fertilisation of ideas, and that when problems arose they were better informed and knew who to talk to and who to test ideas on. The individuals who had been involved in the projects felt more confident through improved networks.

*'...You can feel very isolated. This was an opportunity to discuss problems, frustrations, to deal with real*



*issues using the theory of management... to put education at the core of museum policy... CPD has an important role to play it is a way of seeing how your role is valuable and how you as an individual can progress...'*

3.2.1.4 A major outcome has been a shift in perspective concerning professional practice. The projects had emphasised for museum staff the value of seeing things from the users' viewpoint:

*'... It made me feel humble... I realised how much I didn't know, and didn't see... how much I needed to see things from a visitor's viewpoint.'*

3.2.1.5 It has made museum staff aware of the breadth of education, and of the ways in which staff with educational experience and knowledge could be used across the museum.

*'It has shown me the value of specialist education in the development of major design projects, especially at an early stage.'*

### 3.2.2 AMC education managers

3.2.2.1 AMC education managers gained new skills and awareness. Their management and strategic skills developed dramatically as did their understanding of the needs of museums with little previous exposure to education.

*'I have learnt how to use and manage consultants... and that I have to become more strategic... to become more conceptual... that understanding the needs of users is a process rather than a mechanism like producing a teachers' pack which does little to broaden the understanding of audiences' needs... and how important it is to see and understand the interrelationships between different projects.'*

*'I have developed my project management skills... and a feeling that if you have a heartfelt commitment to a project it tends to shine through and elicits a commitment from others too.'*

*'My project management skills have developed, and my report writing, time management, and prioritisation, and I have learnt a huge amount about training.'*

*'I have learnt not to make assumptions... to understand the complexities of working with volunteers.'*

*'It has increased my knowledge and awareness of many new initiatives, reports and publications.'*

### 3.2.3 Freelance consultants

3.2.3.1 Freelancers were on a learning curve too. Two people who worked full-time in large national museum education departments and had taken the freelance consultancies on as additional work said:

*'We had new opportunities that are not available at work, which is specialist and very narrowly focused. Here we worked in a broader way, we saw the beginning and end of projects and processes. We experienced a different set of relationships and became involved in hands-on management... we felt valued and useful.'*

3.2.3.2 Other freelancers said about their experience of the ECF:

*'I have learnt an enormous amount from other tutors, but most of all my confidence has grown because I was able to attract really high-quality people to deliver these programmes... it really boosted my self confidence that they came.'*

*'I have been on an enormous learning curve.'*

*'I have learnt how significant evaluation is as part of the process.'*

*'I am much more aware of the huge variety of museums and their concerns, priorities and enthusiasm, particularly volunteer-run museums. As an education adviser you need to respond to each of their individual needs. Education may be new to them, so you must be sensitive and flexible to their needs.'*

*'I have learnt to assess things more quickly, to understand capacity issues especially of small museums... my confidence has grown.'*

3.2.3.3 In one or two instances there was evidence that the impact on individuals has been profound. One of the project workers had been long-term unemployed before he joined the staff of Birmingham Museums to work on the Represent project as part of the New Deal initiative. The ECF project not only offered him a job, but also a job in a museum, a field he had not previously considered. He now has ideas about the relationships of museums to young people that he can use in looking for future employment:

*'Things need to be convenient for the young people. The opening hours, they need to be relevant, and you need to have someone who communicates with them... and the most effective way to communicate with young people is by mobile phone and text messaging!'*

3.2.3.4 Across all staff and professional participants in the programme an increased awareness of the scope, potential and value of museums and galleries in education can be identified along with a greatly increased understanding of the specific professional knowledge, skills and experience required to develop this educational role.

### **3.3 Impact on the museums and galleries involved in the projects**

3.3.0 The ECF has had a major impact on the museums that took part. This impact goes beyond the individual staff members to challenge the museums themselves as communities of practice. The ECF has created the potential for a culture of change within the museums themselves. However, organisations are made up of individuals, and while the evaluation processes identified considerable change in perceptions and a resultant potential for long-term changes in working practices, the shifts demanded are considerable. Changes in perception may not be sustained in the long term if the focus on education as a major priority for the museum field as a whole is not sustained. It is all too easy to slip back into previous ways of thinking and working if continued change is not supported.

Evidence for changes in perception and practice can be seen along a number of dimensions. These include a new awareness of the importance of education within museums on the part of staff and governing bodies; a resulting repositioning of education within the priorities of the work of the museums; a more structured and focused approach to educational development and delivery; an increased demand for training; and the establishment of new museum education posts.

*'The ECF made us see the museum through the eyes of the visitor.'*

*'... It has given us a new vocabulary, a new way of talking, about what you do, expanding out from working directly with schools into a much broader*

*remit, looking at learning more generally. It's been about improving skills to deliver educational provision, increasing the breadth of what was happening, looking outwards, rather than inwards.'*

*'We feel as if we have been taken on a journey; the policy creates the good foundations for the activity afterwards... the challenge fund has given us a new language, it has given us street credibility!'*

*'...Education has had a lower profile than collections management, and the ECF has done much to raise that profile.'*

3.3.1 Some governing bodies and trustees are now better able to appreciate museums' mainstream concerns:

*'One example of the impact of the ECF is at Bede's World, where the trustees are now beginning to get into the mainstream issues of the museum world, the ECF having been the catalyst.'*

*'It raised the significance of education to members of the board of the AMC.'*

3.3.2 The ECF created an opportunity to put education at the core of museum policy:

*'It has put education at the core of museum policy rather than as an add-on, so it is integral to planning exhibitions and developing displays.'*

3.3.3 The ECF enabled the embedding of education into the mainstream of museum work, so that it was no longer seen as marginal but was perceived as integral:

*'Previously education had been a tag-on, but the stakes have been raised. There was a great impetus to improve.'*

*'Education is now integral to the museum's redevelopment.'*

3.3.4 There is now a better understanding of the breadth of potential education provision - educational work is not just seen as more school parties and more coach loads:

*'People have begun to think more about informal learning, less about schools and more about other groups... with much less focus on the didactic*

*approach, but setting up mock displays, observing them, evaluating them and changing them as a result.'*

3.3.5 The ECF has encouraged the development of a structured approach to education:

*'I used to take a reactive approach to education. This project has taught me to be proactive, it has given me structure, focus and realistic targets.'*

*'Writing down a policy helps give a focus. It acts as an advocacy document and can be used to attract funders too.'*

*'Writing policy shows the gaps.'*

3.3.6 One or two projects could even be said to have brought about a regeneration of the museum service:

*'... The Represent project has not just been about the young people, it has raised Birmingham Museum staff's opinion of themselves, and they deserved to be proud of what they have done. There was a political dynamic here, where the museum was going through some kind of a regeneration.... This sort of focus on the individual needs of the institution was absolutely paramount...'*

3.3.7 There was a significant increase in the skills of those delivering education in small museums:

*'The idea of writing an education policy was a daunting task... I didn't know where to start. The ECF made it approachable. The education policy will be for the museum of the future and will help shape that future.'*

*'... The audit has been very useful... I feel as if I can make massive strides forward now... the impact of writing and the education and access policy, of having so much training and advice, has enabled me to be much broader, confident, to take a holistic approach and to focus on my action plan.'*

3.3.8 For many, working together created valued networking opportunities and peer pressure. They got things done because there was a deadline and because others were involved. For some museums, being involved in the ECF project had built expertise and confidence and an awareness that they were not working on their own.

*'In the past education had felt as if it was the responsibility of one person; it was good to realise that education has a much broader role in the museum, it is not just my responsibility! ...The action plans were within the realms of possibility, you can make real progress.'*

*'We have learnt that we don't have to work on our own, we can find advice and solutions from a network of people... and that we need to focus on the users' needs rather than the museum's needs.'*

3.3.9 The greater awareness and interest in education is being reflected in the desire for greater professional development.

*'Training days in the region are now at capacity.'*

3.3.10 The ECF has raised the profile of museum education, and with that some new education posts have been established.

*'In some ways the competition had spurred people on, raising the stakes, the standards, and increasing the number of education posts. For example there were potential new jointly-funded posts at the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Museum.'*

*'The Manchester Museum appointed a new education manager. It was the first time there that education had been integrated into the museum service.'*

### **3.4 The impact of the Education Challenge Fund on the Area Museum Councils**

3.4.0 The ECF has had a major impact on the AMCs. It has increased their level of understanding of the character and potential of the educational role of museums and has increased their knowledge of what this means in concrete terms. Managing the ECF has demonstrated the value of increased educational capacity in museums for the development of an enhanced experience for their visitors. This greater awareness of the value of museum education has led to a repositioning of education at a much higher level within AMC priorities, which has been reflected in the employment of specialist staff. Although this process had to some extent begun in some AMCs, the ECF has led to a very rapid increase in educational capacity in these key organisations. Through participation in the ECF, AMCs have become much more aware of the educational potential of museums, and of the ways in

which the AMCs might facilitate this. The profile of museum education as part of the work of the AMC has increased dramatically, and the AMCs now perceive with greater clarity that they have a role in the delivery of advice and support on museum education. Prior to the ECF there was a difference in the way in which education was viewed in the AMCs – some approached it in a more strategic way, and this was reflected in their staffing, but some did not. The major impact of the ECF is the increase in strategic planning for education, supported by more firmly established specialist staffing at the AMCs, and also the strategic use of freelance educators.

*'...It revealed how much work needs to be done to change attitudes and for education to be part of the wider message... the temptation is to be piecemeal... the ECF has been more strategic and balanced and has moved the stakes forward considerably, addressing many of the underlying issues. Its focus on education has helped the AMC to think more effectively about its strategic aims.'*

3.4.1 Within the AMCs there has been a significant repositioning of education. The way in which the AMC now perceives itself and its role both within its region and in the museum sector as a whole has changed. This is especially noticeable in those AMCs that were least engaged with education agendas and where specialist education staff were not employed at strategic levels.

*'The ECF put education higher up the agenda of the AMC.'*

*'Traditionally education was lower profile than collections management; the ECF has done much to change this.'*

*'Museums increasingly see the AMC as a source of advice on education and social inclusion, repositioning and broadening the role of the AMC from its traditional curatorial base.'*

Lack of confidence and a preconception that museum education equated with school services were major barriers in some AMCs, but once these were overcome, the potential for an educational vision across the museum was enthusiastically seized.

*'We want to take a proactive rather than reactive approach, opening doors of opportunities, we want a fresh view!'*

3.4.2 The repositioning of education within the AMC has led to a demand for more skilled and knowledgeable specialist staff. There is an increased awareness that all AMC staff need to understand what can be meant by museum education and that all staff need to develop at least some specialist expertise.

*'We need to have a breadth of expertise across all staff.'*

*'All staff should be exposed to education.'*

*'Specialist educators, both staff and consultants are vital... We need a professional member of staff with education as a main responsibility. I was sceptical of this initially, but education agendas are changing quickly, and with the greater importance of education as a core function of museum work, we need a voice for education in the AMC.'*

*'There is a wealth of experience in using people on a freelance or consultancy basis; they have such different facets of experience... it is vital to use this diversity.'*

*'We need educators with a broad vision not limited to activities, but something that is moving people forward and pushing people to think in terms of museums as a whole. This breadth is enormously important.'*

3.4.3 The ECF has led to a greater awareness and knowledge on the part of the AMCs of what was already happening in their regions.

*'It is not that work is not being done, but that it does not have a high enough profile.'*

This has contributed to an awareness of an holistic picture of education across their areas, with their own role in relation to this becoming clearer. And as a result of knowing more about how museum education works to enhance the experience of visitors across the whole museum, and of seeing how the AMC could support and extend this, educational work has now become more integrated into the identity of the AMC.

*'The whole office is better informed; we are more knowledgeable and can give better advice to museums in our region. It has made us review our grant aid, and change our policy. Education is now embedded into the whole service.'*

3.4.4 The repositioning of education within AMCs has resulted in increased employment of specialist staff. Formerly, with education being of lower priority within AMCs, educational support for museums in their areas had been managed by AMCs in a number of different ways. A range of staff who were at different levels of responsibility within the organisation, and who had a range of other responsibilities, had also adopted some responsibility for education. For example, an assistant director, a professional development manager, and a head of corporate services were all in charge of museum education. However, the appointment of members of staff with specific responsibility for museum education had already begun before the ECF was introduced, with four AMCs having made appointments, three of which were permanent. The titles of these specialist posts included audience development officer, education officer and access development director. The ECF has accelerated this process of appointing staff with specialist knowledge, skills and experience. During the timescale of the ECF a further two specialist education staff have been appointed.

*'Having an education post is critical. There needs to be parity with other DCMS cultural agencies, for instance sports and arts which have education posts... museums have a key role to play in Regional Cultural Consortium and Regional Development Agencies.'*

3.4.5 All AMCs now appreciate the value of specialists in museum education. All those who have not already done so now want to employ museum education specialists; as full-time staff members as part of their core strategic team and also to do hands-on work with museums, some of which, it is acknowledged, should be innovative and risk-taking.

*'The first post that I appointed was an education/access post. The SMA could not do its job without this post.'*

*'Age counts. You need an educator with doc martins, not pearls! You need a non-traditional risk-taking approach.'*

3.4.6 Consultants and freelance educators were used by a number of AMCs prior to the ECF, and this increased dramatically during the programme, especially in those AMCs that had already begun strategic educational development in their regions and that already had specialist staff in place. Many AMCs now understand the value of a pool of

freelance education specialists with diverse specialist skills and knowledge (of for example, under-fives, or schooling, working with elderly people, outreach, drama, history, science, etc) and in some areas the development of such a pool has become an issue.

3.4.7 There were mixed views in AMCs about the capacity of museums to meet the demands of future standards (museum Registration or its replacement). Some felt better equipped, but some saw the challenges and difficulties more clearly:

*'I feel much more confident. More museums have education policies and an understanding of what having that in place means. I feel much better placed than I did five years ago.'*

*'The thought of putting education into Registration is more terrifying than it was three years ago, because the difficulties are more evident. I am much more aware of how difficult it would be to include education as part of Registration.'*

3.4.8 The ECF enabled AMCs to raise their educational profile and this has impacted on their potential contribution to regional developments.

*'The ECF has heightened regional awareness of museum education.'*

AMC directors felt confident that their organisations had a role to play in terms of the general development of education in their region through partnerships with a range of other regional organisations:

*'...The most significant impact of the ECF regionally will be in relation to the Regional Development Agency, where museums can show they have an educational significance and role.'*

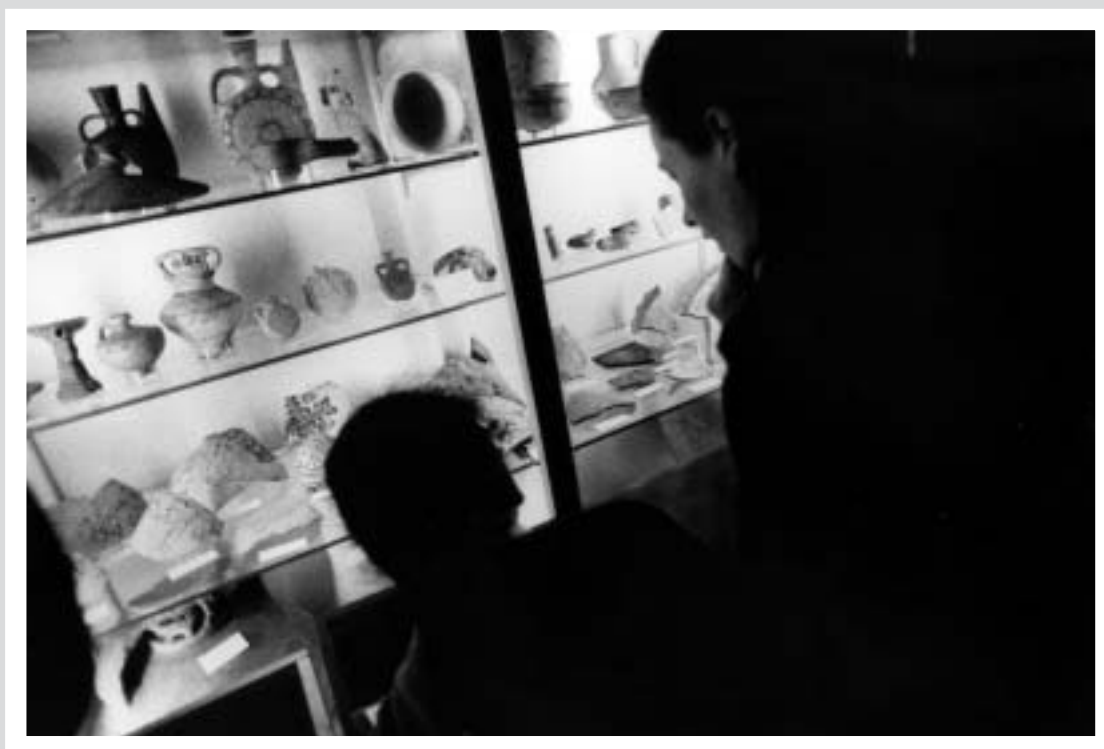
*'We expect to have greater links with the Learning and Skills Council.'*

3.4.9 There was unanimous enthusiastic support from AMC directors, educators, and project participants for Resource and its prioritisation of education, and a call for an even greater push for further developments. Everyone saw the ECF as a beginning and not an end, and were hugely enthusiastic about future potentials.



*'We want more capacity and skills building; the AMC has a critical role to play in future developments, because of its strategic role.'*

3.4.10 All the AMCs have developed a more detailed and concrete understanding about how future potential might be achieved. A range of specific concrete suggestions about how to take things forward were suggested. These included: making AMC-based education posts permanent, training for those who had not yet participated in educational development programmes, mentoring small museums who were just embarking on education action plans, developing the projects that had been delivered during the ECF, and giving opportunities and support for more risk-taking in developing new audiences. Each AMC had clear ideas about what was relevant and useful in its own area, and about how it could extend the work of the ECF in the future.



## 4 MAJOR ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

### 4.0 Section summary

The ECF has created a fertile climate for educational development in museums and galleries. It is a beginning rather than an end, and there is still much more to be done. A great number of museum education policies have been written and confidence has grown. The challenge is now to realise this potential. The impact of this excellent work should not be lost through lack of continuity.

The ECF has demonstrated clearly that there are a number of key issues that need to be addressed in the future development of the educational potential of museums and galleries. The most significant of these is the most basic – the development and broadening of the understanding of the educational role of museums. Support is needed here. A further matter is that of partnerships and the use of freelance educational consultants. Two other major issues were identified: the relationship of small museums to the professional mainstream and the specific needs of museums in rural areas. Finally, although all AMCs have very specific ideas about how to take things forward, the sustainability of the achievements and the necessary future professional development is a major concern, especially where funding is concerned.

### 4.1 Understanding the educational role of the museum

4.1.1 The educational function of museums is diverse and complex. The evaluation study has shown that prior to the ECF, the general expectation of the educational potential of museums among many of the museums involved (and some of the AMCs) was limited to the provision of a school service. Through involvement in the ECF this rather limited understanding has been broadened.

However, although there is a greater conceptual understanding of the scope of the educational role of museums and galleries, the fact that most of the funding was used for training and education policy development suggests that there is still a need to explore what 'seeing the museum through the eyes of

the visitor' means in practice. In addition, those museums that were not involved in the ECF are likely to still retain a rather narrow approach to museum education.

4.1.2 The development of the educational potential of those museums that are not in touch with mainstream professional ideas, and that do not always see themselves as part of the main museum and gallery world, raises specific issues. More research needs to be carried out to unpick the challenges of the development of education work with hard-to-reach groups where the professional baseline is extremely low, and where conceptual understanding of education is extremely limited. In addition, the characteristics of small museums, many of which are not fully integrated into the professional mainstream, need to be examined to consider their differences from larger museums. Issues include the aging volunteer workforce and related capacity issues, and sustainability and appropriate development for this sector which may feel itself to be closer to the volunteer world than the museum world. In relation to rural areas there is a need for a common language and firm professional networks to hold museums dispersed across large areas of the countryside together.

### 4.2 Continued support and development for the educational role of museums and galleries

4.2.1 Although understanding, attitudes and perceptions of museum education have changed for many of those involved in the ECF programme, continued support for educational agendas to become fully embedded in museum culture is necessary. There is an enormous willingness among museums that have only just begun to grasp their educational potential to develop this further, but they will not be able to do so without help.

4.2.2 For those who were not involved in the ECF, particularly in small museums, there is still a great deal of work to be done. Developing the educational role of the museum demands the engagement, involvement and training of all museum staff including senior managers, front-of-house staff, and

volunteers as well as trustees and councillors. A parallel process needs to take place in AMCs, so that education is core to all activities here too.

4.2.3 Developing skills and building capacity are strategic activities, and AMCs are well placed to do this. They have played a pivotal role through the ECF but this role needs to be maintained and nurtured. The evaluation of the ECF suggests that sustained core funding for AMCs is necessary to develop and build on the achievements of the ECF. Project funding would complement core funding, but without some core funding incremental improvement will be difficult to sustain.

4.2.4 To create a real significant improvement in the educational roles of museums a combination of strategic approaches need to be used. These might include mentoring, specialist support, professional networks and training to create change. Larger museums might be able to provide educational advisers (the equivalent of curatorial advisers).

4.2.5 The role and development of education consultants and freelancers needs to be considered as they are key to future developments. Recruitment, training, quality management and sustainability of expertise will need to be considered strategically and methods of quality assurance will need to be devised. Areas of the country where there is a shortage of specialists also need to be considered.

4.2.6 There is a dearth of museum education AMC staff, consultants and freelancers with experience of working with small volunteer-run museums. Specific training and professional development in relation to this issue, and also in relation to the challenges facing rural museums need to be developed.

### **4.3 Working with partners**

4.3.1 Partnerships were a critical part of the ECF at a number of different levels. However, building partnerships with libraries and archives was a new idea for many, and one that will take time to develop.

*'Not necessarily a happy marriage, especially when it is forced.'*

Many museums felt more familiar with other kinds of partners.

*'There is also the notion of including learning organisations and the broader cultural sector, and linking in with the Regional Cultural Consortium. Museums, libraries and archives are an artificial divide; there is a need to be as outward looking as possible.'*

4.3.2 While most AMCs built partnerships with a range of educational and cultural organisations, they also, by the end of the programme, wanted to establish partnerships among themselves. It was generally agreed that cross-fertilisation and networking between the various AMCs would be beneficial. This became particularly evident in relation to one or two projects. The website produced as part of the educational management training project in the south west, for example, was cited by at least two other AMCs as being an excellent source for information as well as something of a benchmark:

*'There was a lot to be learned from the website, it was really impressive.'*

### **4.4 The use of consultants and freelancers**

4.4.1 The involvement of consultants and freelancers was critical to the ECF; it would not have happened without them. Freelance specialists in museum education provided a rapid increase in the capacity of the AMCs to respond to the challenges of the ECF, which could not have been supplied in any other way. Every AMC made extensive use of outside specialists on short-term contracts.

4.4.2 The quality, calibre and range of specialist skills in relation to museum and gallery education was considerable, reflecting both the complexity of educational provision, and also the sophistication of the diverse projects that were developed. Although most projects used education specialists based in the UK, one training project invited internationally acclaimed authorities.

4.4.3 There were very few examples of the skills of consultants being mismatched with participating organisations. An area of particular concern, however, was that of small museums; the ECF has demonstrated that there is a dearth of freelance museum education consultants who have experience of working with small museums.

4.4.4 Very different approaches were used in the selection of consultants and freelancers; while some AMCs used people on a national basis, other AMCs restricted themselves to those available in the local region and this severely restricted the breadth, calibre and experience of people used.

4.4.5 The reliance of the ECF on freelance museum and gallery education specialists who acted as consultants to the AMCs raised a number of important issues which have been raised at 4.2.5. In some regions of England (for example, the north east) there are particularly low numbers of individuals with the required skills and this will become a problem if further capacity-building is to be encouraged.

4.4.6 One excellent suggestion was the idea of a group of museum education specialists, each with their own particular field of expertise, who would be available to museums in the region to deliver generic training and support in museum education, but whose specific expertise could also then be available. A group such as this would need close supportive arrangements with the relevant AMC. Networking between AMCs could also be beneficial in relation to this group.

#### **4.5 The capacity of small museums**

4.5.1 The ECF has demonstrated the potential of small museums to support learning and to act as centres for the community. However, it has also shown that where the professional baseline is very low the demand on time and resources is considerable. AMCs face decisions about the effective use of funds and choices as to where and how these funds are deployed. The experiences of several AMCs would suggest that there are significant differences in working with small museums. One AMC that had focused exclusively on the hard-to-reach museums commented:

*'The ECF has done as much to raise issues of small museums within the AMC as issues about education. The AMC staff who are usually encouraged to think in segmented, compartmentalised ways, have been prompted by the ECF into debating the barriers to small museums engaging in the education agenda. This prompted links between museum advisory visits and ECF projects.'*

4.5.2 The ECF prompted debate in at least two AMCs about the positioning of small volunteer-run museums; do they sit more comfortably within the voluntary sector? One AMC educator pointed out: *'Volunteers have a role in the community... a very particular kind of person is attracted to be a volunteer... volunteer groups are of a particular ilk... Could organisations like the Association of Community and Voluntary Organisations help to understand how best to work with this group?... Do they want to become increasingly professionalised?'*

And a member of one focus group of museums said firmly:

*'We will plough our own furrow despite the museum agenda... there needs to be a stick and a carrot to get us to embrace education... there needs to be more understanding of how volunteer-run museums actually operate.'*

4.5.3 The AMCs were aware of the issue of the appropriateness of developing the school audience in relation to the size and resources of small museums:

*'We needed to think more about informal learning, less about schools and more about the general visitor experience.'*

*'...not all museums should be doing formal education work with schools, but all museums should be doing informal work.'*

*'The use of the term education in the ECF may have been a barrier to working with small museums, which associated it with schools, and felt anxious about working with them. One of our projects was focused on interpretation, and the group seemed to react more positively to this.'*

4.5.4 Many volunteer-run museums have an aging workforce and this posed questions about the viability of some museums.

*'There is not always the capacity or energy to embrace new ideas... many volunteers are retired and now old, and quite tired really... education work has been done by one individual who has died. The question is what will happen now?'*

4.5.5 The age of the workforce is not the only capacity issue for small museums. Many buildings are physically small, and the volunteer capacity is finite.

*'We are anxious that we need to expand with regard to the resources of the gallery, which, located in an old chapel, is small. We are glad to maintain the 40 school groups a year we currently get, but feel with the volunteers that we have, this is probably as much as we can cope with, together with general visitors.'*

4.5.6 Museums took very different approaches to capacity-building. To what extent can the AMC have much impact on the hard-to-reach museums? Is the huge effort worth the effect?

*'Concentrating on the 50% of museums that you can have an effect on is more useful than trying to reach the hard-to-reach groups where it is difficult to have any great impact... Is it cost effective to work with museums with very modest visitor numbers (less than 1,000) where there is a lack of development potential?'*

4.5.7 Small museums can be difficult to draw into the museum community and this may discourage AMCs. Those AMCs who did target the hard-to-reach groups had least evidence of progression and impact, and often felt discouraged when they saw the success of AMCs who had used a voluntary self-selection method for participants.

*'It is hard to reach the most challenging museums. Other museums have accepted education conceptually, they understand the bigger picture, they are easier to engage. The others are conceptually some distance behind.... and consequently much harder to connect.'*

4.5.8 Small museums also have fewer skills to use from outside:

*'There are very few consultants with experience of working on small museum projects. There is a great need for training in terms of education and small museums, particularly in relation to volunteers.'*

4.5.9 Small museums need considerable hand-holding, mentoring and supporting:

*'What we need is someone to advise us, to be neutral, to be outside our museum, who can help to get our action plans implemented.'*

4.5.10 While the ECF has opened up the issue of small museums in relation to education, the baseline is extremely low and much more thought and research needs to be done to unpick the challenges this group

of museums and those working with them face. Could the role of the Association of Independent Museums be strengthened to support education in small independent museums?

#### **4.6 Rural agendas**

4.6.1 The specific context of rural museums posed particular issues. Common to areas like the south west, Cumbria, Northumberland and North Yorkshire are practicalities such as rural isolation, long journey times and poor transport which make networking and attending formal training difficult. These areas also tend to have high proportions of small volunteer-run museums.

*'There are physical and geographical reasons why it is difficult to meet up.'*

*'About 70% of the museums in this region are of this kind, it is much more similar to Wales and Scotland.'*

4.6.2 The infrastructures in some AMCs are often focused on urban agendas; moreover the models that work in urban areas are not always directly transferable to a rural context.

*'The clusters [of museums] were very fluid. They have been very different in each region. Four clusters [in urban areas] were operating extremely well, one was now looking to the future, but we have not been able to get a cluster operating [in Cumbria]... the need, the want and the will did not seem to exist in that region.'*

*'The idea of the cluster was cracking, but it needed to be adapted to account for the geographical isolation and the range of museums many of which were one man and his dog.'*

4.6.3 There seemed generally to be a slower pace of development of new ideas in rural areas. And some rural museums were very uncomfortable with the language of New Labour.

*'It can take a long time to implant new ideas. This is particularly significant in rural areas, especially when much of the language... the vocabulary like social inclusion... is very urban.'*

Issues arose of a perception that the overall rural social agenda was not a government priority, and that as a result there was a poor fit between DCMS policies and activity at the local level.

4.6.4 In one or two limited cases a mismatch ensued between the style and experience of some consultants used to working in large urban museums and the needs of participants from small rural museums.

*'Some people felt really bemused, it was pitched too high and there was too much emphasis on statistics.'*

#### **4.7 Sustainability and continuous professional development**

4.7.1 The sustainability of the achievements of the ECF is a major issue. There is considerable concern among all AMCs about the sustainability of education work within their organisations, with future funding a critical worry:

*'There is a mismatch between an increased level of educational activity demanded both at a strategic level in relation to regional bodies like the Regional Cultural Consortium and Regional Development Agencies, as well as demands at a grass-roots level, while core funding was reducing in real terms.'*

*'I am very concerned that we will no longer be able to support key education staff. I am anxious about funding absolutely critical posts; how will we do it?'*

4.7.2 In the many individuals who participated in the programme considerable good will has developed and significant up-skilling has occurred. However, there is a need to maintain the momentum so as not to lose the energy, enthusiasm, good will and the willingness to develop further that has been created. AMCs are well aware of the need to continue what has been so successfully started.

*'It will have enabled us to build up skills and knowledge, but it is very much first steps, a huge input is needed for this process to reach significant conclusions... the project has been enthusiastically received, and you can see the result of this.'*

*'We do not want to leave museums that have started work hanging on... we feel we have only really just started the process.'*

Individuals become critical, because of the range of museum education skills that need to be developed (for example expertise in the needs of specific audiences such as early-years teaching, other school groups, and community groups; expertise in visitor studies; and experience of interpretation and gallery developments). In addition, museum and gallery educators need to develop skills at both the strategic level and at the level of face-to-face delivery. There is a need for each of these to be tailored for a range of environments, which are both based on specific collections (art, natural history, archaeology, social or industrial history) and related to museum type (depending on governing body and location). The skills and knowledge of individuals enable the effective working of teams across both the museum and the AMC, as one AMC director observed:

*'Structures don't solve problems, effective teams do.'*

4.7.3 Existing achievements need nurturing through structures of support, mentoring and training. The ECF programme acted very effectively as a process of continuing professional development, and there now exists a fertile climate and the desire for more CPD.

*'The AMC still needs to continue to operate at an enhanced level, providing training and support, particularly in some areas where significant support is needed.'*

Because many of the ECF projects focused on the enabling of strategic development through training in the development and management of museum education (how to develop education policies and establish partnerships, how to make displays more effective learning environments, etc) in many instances the skills have been developed, but the actions which should follow are still at a rudimentary level. There is a need for continued support to maximise the projects begun, for example, to put the new policies into focus, or to continue gallery development. Awareness has been raised and museums have been prepared to develop their educational roles, but this awareness and readiness to act needs to be carried forward. For example, museum education policies need to be converted into action plans and then acted on; the policies need to be implemented and evaluated. This is necessary to reinforce and to maximise current achievements and to nurture and develop some of the experiences that for many of the museum-based participants are as yet still very recent. Participants currently have the confidence, willingness and readiness to implement

what they have learnt, but need continued support to take this state of affairs forward, to consolidate their learning and to observe the impact of their efforts on museum and gallery users. If this final stage is not enabled there is a real danger that the achievements of the ECF will be lost as confidence evaporates, lessons are forgotten, and new ambitions are overridden by long-established older ways of thinking. In addition to consolidating the achievements of those who took part in the ECF, there is also a need to reach those museums that were not able to take part.

4.7.4 There is a general acknowledgement that the timescale required for capacity-building in museum and gallery education and the resulting creation of a change in museum culture is a long-term process. One AMC illustrated the length of time needed to change a museum's approach by describing how:

*'... a museum which despite being involved in many initiatives in the past had just moved forward with the ECF. It is now using its military collections from a cultural perspective as well as a military one and in so doing engaging new audiences. It has been a joyous event!'*

The museum's assistant curator also explained how:

*'The timing was just right this time, the organisation was at a point when it was able to move forward'.*

4.7.5 There is an enormous need to improve practice in relation to the development of the educational role of museums, and a great deal of willingness to do so, but it will not happen overnight and it will not happen without support.

#### **4.8 The use of future funding**

Participants in the ECF have very clear, concrete ideas about what they would do with more money:

*'What I would most like would be to fund a permanent education post in the AMC... also funding for education posts within museums, perhaps shared education posts, say a five-year commitment to this... upgrading of museum displays is critical too, many have not changed since 1980... an increase in the number of museums with websites... resources should be targeted at the middle band of museums... more pilot projects which will be ground breaking too... more resources for cross-sectoral working.'*

*'Extend existing programmes, there are still gaps... more emphasis on informal learning... much more focus on evaluation... developing resources from existing projects, toolkits for example from the Represent project.'*

*'We need to consolidate what we have, to be aware that there are real needs for resources in the AMCs... a cross-sectoral approach is important too, linking with ICT too... but to bring on board those museums that have not yet engaged with the agendas.'*

*'Training for freelancers and consultants to better understand the needs of small volunteer-run museums... more mapping... more mentoring... celebrating success...critical friends... sharing of good practice.'*

*'Thematic groups... clusters of museums... mentoring... all embedded into the organisation.'*

*'Look for funding from other sources eg DfEE, DTI,... ICT projects... cross-sectoral working groups, including learning organisations.'*

The management of the funds released through the ECF has been exemplary at all levels; Resource has exercised appropriate control, AMCs have accounted fully for their grants, and the projects have provided extremely good value for money. As such, the ECF provides an excellent model for the management of any future funds.

## 5 OPERATIONAL ISSUES: INFORMING THE MANAGEMENT OF FUTURE PROJECTS

### 5.0 Section summary

The overall management of the ECF has been exemplary. It was applauded by the AMCs, and the openness of the fund's criteria was appreciated. Everyone welcomed the fund. The collection of baseline data proved problematic, and this needs to be managed strategically and with more consultation in future. A longer time-frame for the programme as a whole with an earlier announcement to enable a longer planning time would have been appreciated. Questions were raised about cross-sectoral understandings of education and investigations of this were called for. The introduction of related initiatives during the lifetime of the ECF led to some overload and future partnership working between government bodies and other agencies is recommended.

### 5.1 The open management style

5.1.1 The ECF was well managed; it offers many models for future planning and development. The general management of the fund was applauded; the hands-off approach was appreciated by all. The AMCs liked being involved in the initial planning and liked the openness of the approach to management.

*'Resource was very good discussing the project especially in pre-application phase and was extremely helpful with project planning of the Represent project.'*

*'The support from Resource has been excellent and enabled us to achieve the aims and a balance between Resource and the needs of our region.'*

5.1.2 The fact that Resource was prepared to take a risk, for example with the Represent project, which was large and innovative and therefore potentially risky, was greatly applauded.

5.1.3 The flexibility and responsiveness of the ECF management was praised. For example, while there was initial scepticism of the amount of contact needed between the projects and Resource, the AMCs were pleased with the flexibility demonstrated through calling a previously unscheduled meeting in December 2000, when the AMCs felt they needed one.

5.1.4 The openness of the criteria for the ECF was a major strength. This open approach enabled a diversity of projects to be developed; it stimulated and enabled groundbreaking high-quality initiatives including the management courses in the south west and north west regions, and the Represent project. These diverse examples are all testaments to the freedom that the ECF offered.

5.1.5 However, this freedom sometimes appeared to those AMCs that had targeted the hard-to-reach groups of museums to place them at a disadvantage. For these museums with very low baseline in educational work, there was little expertise in place, and there were few existing learning resources or models of good practice to form a basis for development. AMCs had to begin their educational capacity-building from a much lower base. They feared, therefore, that in comparison with those projects that had the advantage of a higher baseline, their achievements would look much less significant.

*'... It is good to be flexible, but as an AMC we are aware that some regions have worked much more successfully with groups that are easier to target. We feel slightly aggrieved that in choosing the harder to reach groups our success appears more limited. What did Resource really want us to achieve?'*

There are lessons here to be learnt about how to reassure those who take risks, and perhaps to be more specific about the choices of approach in relation to open-style objectives.

5.1.6 A further risk of the open-management style is a potential lack of structure or support when it is needed. The hands-off management style was appropriate and appreciated when projects were going well and this was the case for the overwhelming majority of projects. However, one project might have benefited from more intervention.

### 5.2 A real challenge fund?

5.2.1 There were varying views of what a challenge fund might be, but general agreement that there were positive elements to the circumstances of this particular fund.



*'My understanding is that a challenge fund is a competitive process with winners and losers. Education is a priority for all AMCs... and all AMCs did get funding. This challenge fund was unusual in being inclusive.'*

5.2.2 Another director thought there were no 'quick-hit solutions' to the development of museum education, which required a lengthy developmental process, and which fitted poorly with the idea of a challenge fund. An alternative view was that challenge funding was the way in which health, education and many local authority developments were now being funded, and that this type of funding had become the norm. Having the funds available was very much appreciated.

*'It was good that the money had been ring-fenced for AMCs; this was a very positive aspect of the fund.'*

5.2.3 There was unfamiliarity by some AMC educators with the procedures required by externally-funded projects, such as a challenge fund. The educators wanted more feedback on the quarterly reports they wrote for Resource. These reports were actually the management reporting system for project chasing, but they were generally viewed as a way of getting positive reinforcement and feedback. This illustrates the culture change needed to adapt to new ways of working and perhaps this needs to be discussed with the museum education profession in clear and detailed ways through the existing professional dissemination and discussion routes (GEM conferences, newsletter, email discussion list etc).

### **5.3 Baseline data collection**

5.3.1 It was a requirement of the ECF that data was collected, and all AMCs were involved in developing the database questions. Nonetheless, many found the baseline data collection problematic.

*'The mapping was the weakest point. The form was unexpected; the questionnaire itself was very complex and not appropriate to our needs. An incomplete picture will emerge because prior data was not included.'*

*'The questionnaire, which was very long, could have been much more user-friendly. The language and the vocabulary was entirely inappropriate for small volunteer-run museums, and did little to encourage people.'*

*'The inputting of data was extremely time consuming... it would have been better if it had been something that had fitted into a broader mapping exercise, not a stand-alone exercise... There should have been a broader consultative brief in relation to the questionnaire.'*

5.3.2 Some AMCs had not understood that they could have included the costs of data collection in their funding bids. This was exacerbated by delays in hardware installation, which made planning uncertain, a particular concern when working with freelancers whose time may be allocated elsewhere when delays occur:

*'This impinged on freelance work planning.'*

5.3.3 Training in the use of this database was provided. However, the AMCs seemed to be already using different methods of data collection for their own purposes. At least three AMCs had broader mapping systems in place and in relation to these systems they seemed both more confident of the process of data collection and more convinced of its value too. In addition, it was felt that there was no clarity as to what the 'baseline' might or should be, and there was overlap with a range of other initiatives where the collection of data was required (for example, the CHNTO skills mapping of educators).

5.3.4 All this led to confusion, displeasure and frustration, particularly as the data collection was really too late to inform the ECF programme. Several AMCs thought that the Resource questionnaire would not produce the data to serve the purpose, as it was too complex.

5.3.5 However, in spite of all the difficulties, the idea of mapping the provision of museum education was a good one; to be able to really demonstrate the impact of new activities benchmarking data is necessary. Much of the knowledge about educational provision prior to the ECF was anecdotal '*... From knowing it on the ground*' as one person put it. Because a range of different methods of data collection were being used there was no consistency in classification or description. Pictures of educational provision were built up from a patchwork of sources ranging from the take-up of grant aid, to sophisticated mapping exercises; and from the membership of education fora to in-depth surveys. In addition, it appears that a significant proportion of the work being carried out was not documented at all, and that much was invisible and unknown.

5.3.6 The AMCs expressed a guarded interest in repeating the exercise to measure the impact of the ECF, but any repetition of data collection would need to be handled very carefully, fully considering all the issues involved, and involving considerable consultation and training.

#### 5.4 Issues of timing

5.4.1 While everyone welcomed the money, there were some problems in relation to timing. Many felt that the time period over which the programme ran was too short, and that two years would have been more productive. In addition, had the fund been announced earlier this would have enabled better planning.

*'If it had been spread out over an 18-month to three-year period it would have been more evolutionary and the consultants could have worked in a more intensive way with them, resulting in better outcomes.'*

5.4.2 The time of the year of the beginning and end of the ECF also created a mismatch in some projects between the needs of small volunteer museums to have training and development when they were closed over the winter period. The timing of the ECF meant that this was not possible within the constraints of the project.

5.4.3 A small number of AMCs, however, said that the short timescale with a defined end-point acted as a great motivator to make significant and measured progress;

*'it was very important that there was a cut-off time'*.

5.4.4 Increased levels of funding were given to SEMS as it was by far the largest of the AMCs. With SEMS now reconstituted as three distinct AMCs, each will in future need the same level of grant as the older AMCs. With the fragmentation of SEMS, the educational support formerly given to museums in the region by the South Eastern Museums Education Unit had ended, and here the ECF was described as especially welcome to partly fill the resulting void.

#### 5.5 Cross-sectoral working

5.5.1 Is there a difference between how libraries and archives view education and learning and how museums and galleries view education and learning? The general perception among participants in the ECF at all levels was that this is the case. The perception was that for librarians, education means children's libraries, or giving information, while museums are about complex mediated experiences. There was a real desire for a research study to explore these issues and to examine possible ways of partnership working, rather than immediately moving into the delivery of cross-sectoral programmes.

5.5.2 Differences between sectors were perceived by museums to be as important as similarities.

*'Are the educational objectives the same? There seem to be different cultures within the sectors; archives are about digitising things, and stopping people from handling their archived material, libraries are about information-giving and museums are about giving greater access, connecting people with objects... research needs to be done first to see if the educational objectives match.'*

*'The current feeling is that cross-sectoral working doesn't happen at all, all the sectors have different understandings of the terminology... there needs to be an analysis of libraries, archives and museums, and time to develop some understanding... projects could take place in a unitary authority for example, or in a specific geographical area. However it is unrealistic to expect projects to take place across the region.'*

*'There needs to be a broader study of the cultures, what is shared and what is different... school library services are very different from museum education, because of the statutory element.'*

*'Some cross-sectoral pilot projects have been very history-based and did not explore broader cultural issues, this was a real cul-de-sac.'*

5.5.3 The participants of the ECF were willing to become involved in partnerships, but were cautious about over-hasty commitments. There was a general perception that the cross-sectoral agenda would be best approached by research into the similarities and differences between the sectors and an

exploration of the potentials of partnerships. In addition, the range of partners should be seen as much broader than libraries and archives. Partnerships should draw more widely from regional cultural consortia.

5.5.4 Resource has now funded regional research studies that will explore these issues and report on how best to support regional learning agendas.

## **5.6 Related developmental initiatives in museum and gallery education**

5.6.1 When the ECF began, it was the only educational initiative in the museum and gallery sector; however, during the life of the programme several other initiatives were introduced. These included the Lifelong Learning projects managed by the Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries (CLMG); many AMCs had museums and galleries in their region involved in major projects funded through the DfES (formerly DfEE) Museums and Galleries Education Programme (MGEP) which was managed through CLMG. The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) carried out a major review of the training needs of museum and gallery educators during the period (through CLMG).

5.6.2 Given that the ECF was about capacity-building, and therefore was designed to strategically stretch the capacity of the sector in relation to the development of the educational role of its organisations, the introduction of further large-scale programmes had the potential to cause overload. In many instances, the same museum educators were involved in several of the initiatives. There was also opportunity for confusion in the multiplicity of roles played by CLMG in relation to a number of overlapping projects, some of which involved judgements about levels of expertise.

5.6.3 The very rapid demand for increased capacity in relation to new ways of conceptualising, developing and delivering the educational functions of museums and galleries has created potential stresses across the sector. The success of the ECF within this complex and confusing environment is to its credit. As capacity takes time to build and overload is counter-productive, strategic partnerships between Resource, the DfES (formerly DfEE), DCMS and other bodies would be helpful in the future.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The ECF has been an enormous success. Educational capacity has been built in the regions served by English AMCs and there is on the whole a much more developed understanding among the AMCs and participating museums of what the educational role of museums can encompass.

6.2 Many museum professionals have been involved in exciting developments that they wish to sustain. The enhancement of the experience of visitors can already be observed, and many museums are poised to develop their educational work further to the benefit of their users in the future.

6.3 The ECF has created a climate of enthusiasm for the development of museum and gallery education, and a can-do attitude. These attitudes and

perceptions are critical to the growth of the educational function of museums, but on their own they are not sufficient. Further funding from DCMS, managed in a careful, planned and strategic way, is needed now in order to enable the development and implementation of education action plans.

6.4 The ECF has been well managed and the funds have been used to extremely good effect. Further funding should also be dependent on realistic, focused and strategic objectives that are clearly articulated. It should in addition be subject to evaluation that is integral to the programme, and that will produce evidence of the impact of the funding on institutions and their staff, and on museum users.



# APPENDIX 1: List of interviewees and focus group members

## EAST MIDLANDS MUSEUMS SERVICE

<b>Director:</b>	Adrian Babbidge
<b>Educators:</b>	
Gill Tanner	Education Adviser
Paul Monk	Education Development Co-ordinator
Rosemary Bower	Head of Corporate Services
<b>Focus Group:</b>	
Julie Biddlecombe	Erewash Museum
John Lee	Royal Lincolnshire Regimental Museum
Mary Smedley	Derwent Valley Heritage Centre/ Belper North Mill
Cynthia Brown	Leicester City Museums
Mark Curteis	Northampton Museums
Jon Finch	Museum of Lincolnshire Life
<b>Visits: -</b>	
<b>Donington le Heath Manor House:</b>	
Peter Liddle	Keeper of Donington Park
Kath Perry	Lifelong Learning Officer
Brian Kennedy	Head of Interpretation
<b>Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery:</b>	
Liz Weston	Curator
Clare Pope	Assistant Curator
Susan Sentence	Freelance Educator
<b>Newark Town Treasures:</b>	
Paul Temple	Curator and Education Manager

## NORTH WEST MUSEUMS SERVICE

<b>Director:</b>	Ian Taylor (Telephone interview)
<b>Educators:</b>	
Paul Parry	Assistant Director for North West Museums Service
Debbie Walker	Education Officer
Nicola Nuttall	Consultant and Co-ordinator for the Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries
Peter Lumley	Consultant
<b>Focus Group:</b>	
Susan Bulleid	The Manchester Museum
Susan Arnold	Knowsley Museum Service
Jas Sohel	Manchester Art Gallery
Maria Smith	Astley Hall Museum and Art Gallery
Mike Hardman	Grosvenor Museum, Chester
David Chadwick	Gawthorpe Hall, Lancashire County Museums Service
Katy Melville	Warrington Museum and Art Gallery
Esme Ward	The Whitworth Art Gallery
Rupert Gaze	Tameside Museums and Galleries Service
<b>Visits:-</b>	
<b>Keswick Museum (part of Allerdale District Service):</b>	
Philip Crouch	Heritage and Arts Manager, Allerdale Museum Service
Hazel Davidson	Curator
<b>Museum of Lancashire:</b>	
Malcolm Davies	Head of Education

## NORTH EAST MUSEUMS SERVICE

<b>Director:</b>	Sue Underwood
<b>Educators:</b>	
Ian Blackwell	Education Access Officer
Maria Neeson	Consultant
Jane Fisher	Consultant
<b>Focus Group 1:</b>	
Anne Moore	Curator of Morpeth Baggpipe Museum
Alison Gibson	Bowes Railway Museum, Gateshead
John Murphy	Head of Tourism, Heatherslaw Corn Mill and Lady Waterford Hall
John Stelling	Military Vehicle Museum, Newcastle
<b>Focus Group 2:</b>	
Anne Conoley	Outreach Officer and Volunteer Co-ordinator Bedes World, Jarrow
Sandy Plough	Hartlepool Arts and Museums Service
<b>Visits:-</b>	
<b>Anker's House, Chester-le-Street:</b>	
Lorraine Kane	Volunteer
Mike Rutter	Volunteer Curator
<b>Bensham Grove Community Education Centre in Gateshead:</b>	
Shirley Brown	Volunteer
June Wilson	Volunteer
Fred Pegg	Volunteer
Lynda Green	Officer for Local Initiative Scheme
Robert March	Volunteer
Anne Wilson	Education Officer at Beamish Museum
<b>Hancock Museum:</b>	
Gillian Mason	Education Officer

## MUSEUM SERVICE FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND (formerly SEMS Eastern region)

<b>Director:</b>	Tim Heathcote
<b>Educators:</b>	
Rosy Hayward	Education Fund Officer
Lyn Gash	Museums Education and Access Officer
<b>Focus Group:</b>	
Sue Booth	Education Officer, Wisbech and Fenland Museum
Janet Huckle	Halesworth Museum
Julia Mael	Long Shop Museum, Leiston
Jo Roberts	Bedford Museum and Cecil Higgins Art Gallery
Gillian Rose	Anglesey Abbey
Peter Jones	St Edmondsbury Museum Service
<b>Visits:-</b>	
<b>Forge Museum, Much Hadham:</b>	
Cristina Harrison	Curator
<b>The Rhodes Memorial Museum, Bishops Stortford:</b>	
Hannah Kay	Curator

**SOUTH EAST MUSEUMS (formerly SEMS East, and now amalgamated with SEMS Western region to become the South East Museums Agency)**

**Director:** Elaine Sansom

**Educators:**  
Margaret Ann Museum Development Officer (Education)  
Guy Purdey Assistant Director (SEMS Southern region)

**Focus Group:**  
Allan Barwick Henfield Museum  
Margery Carrick Henfield Museum  
Elizabeth Pace Chichester Museum  
Chris Drake Museums Development Officer (West Sussex)

**Visits:-**

**Royal Military Police Museum:**  
Lt Col (Retd) P H M Squier Curator

**Worthing Museum:**  
Dr Sally White Principal Curator

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**SOUTHERN MUSEUMS AGENCY (formerly SEMS Western region, and now amalgamated with SEMS Eastern region to become the South East Museums Agency)**

**Director:** Sophia Mirchandani

**Educator:**  
Isabel Hughes Museums Development Officer  
(Education and Access)

**Focus Group:**  
Sheila Lewis The Old Jail Museum, Buckingham  
Gavin Edgeley Harris Assistant Curator, Ghurka Museum, Winchester  
Pat Brooke Education Trustee, The Old Goal Museum  
Richard Halliwell The Vale and Down Museum, Wantage  
Derek Armitage The National Army Flying Museum  
Liz Hollis The National Army Flying Museum  
David Matthews The Buckingham Railway Centre  
Gwyn Matthews The Buckingham Railway Centre

**Visits:-**

**The Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers  
Museum of Technology. Arborfield, Berks:**

**Director:** Bill Cleasby

Judy Booth Senior Curatorial Officer

**The Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham:**  
Becky Pinnigher Education Co-ordinator  
Richard Hurley Chairman of Trustees

**The Vale and Downland Museum, Wantage, Oxfordshire:**  
Richard Halliwell Curator

**LONDON MUSEUMS AGENCY (formerly SEMS London)**

**Director:** Fiona Talbott

**Educators:**  
Rowena Ferneley Development Manager  
Frazer Swift Development Manager  
Marion Carlisle Consultant  
Liz Gilmour Consultant  
Kate Pontin Consultant

**Focus Group:**  
Jane Hughes Royal College of Surgeons  
Martha Godfrey Osterley Park House  
Gary Heales Vestry House Museum  
Lucy Davies Museum of Garden History  
Magaret Gwalter London Canal Museum

**Visits:-**

**University College London Geological Sciences Collection:**  
Glenys Wass Assistant Curator

**London Canal Museum:**  
Margaret Gwalter Education Officer/Vice Chair

**Old Operating Theatre, Museum and Herb Garret:**  
Karen Howell Curator

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**SOUTH WEST MUSEUMS COUNCIL**

**Chief Executive** Sam Hunt (telephone interview)

**Educators:**  
Kate Osborne Access Development Director  
Peter Clarke Consultant  
Jeany Robinson Consultant

**Focus Group:**  
David Chilton Redcoats in the Wardrobe  
Vicky Dawson Consultant for the Jenner Museum  
Patricia Wright North Cornwall District Museums  
Mary Gryspeerdt Somerset Rural Life Museum  
Victoria Rogers Cold Harbour Mill and Working Wool Museum  
Patsy Williams National Waterways Museum

**Visits:-**

**Old Priest's House Museum and Garden:**  
Emma Ayling Curator

**Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth:**  
Sandy Wilderspin Events and Exhibitions Officer

## WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL MUSEUMS COUNCIL

**Director:** Kathy Gee

**Educators:**  
Emma Hawthorne Museums Development Officer  
for Education and Communication

**Focus Group Day1:**  
Gillian Wilson Staffordshire Museum Service  
Jane Carney Dudley Museum Service  
Siriol Collins Herefordshire Heritage Service  
Noel Meeke Director, Hereford Waterworks Museum  
Michael Vanns Ironbridge Gorge Museums  
Simon Penn Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings

**Focus Group Day2:**  
Simon Redgrave Education Resource Officer  
and Represent Project Manager  
Dan Packe Represent Project Co-ordinator  
Post funded through the New Deal  
Sinead Byrne Birmingham History Curator  
Hazel Cartledge Education and Outreach for Soho House  
Sarah Riddle On Workplace involved in the project

**Meeting:**  
Odeena Gregory Represent Project  
Liah Foster Represent Project  
Masikol Benjamin Represent Project

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## YORKSHIRE MUSEUMS COUNCIL

**Director:** Barbara Woroncow (telephone interview)

**Educators:**  
Jane Walton Training and Access  
John Greenwood Education and Lifelong Learning Adviser

**Focus Group:**  
Margaret Devonshire Beck Isle Museum  
Fiona Keaton Bridlington Museum  
Gordon Clitheroe Beck Isle Museum  
Pat Wiggle Malton Museum  
Frank Wiggle Malton Museum  
Graham Pickles Whitby Museum  
Martin Watts Ryedale Folk Museum

**Meeting:**  
Alison Bodley Museums Development Officer for Ryedale,  
Malton and Beck Isle Museums  
John Greenwood Education and Lifelong Learning Adviser

# APPENDIX 2: Protocols used

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUM STUDIES, RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

## EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND EVALUATION - INTERVIEWS WITH AMC DIRECTORS

Name of organisation..... Name of interviewee(s).....  
.....  
Name of the interviewer..... Date.....

### A. The aims of the Education Challenge Fund and your Area Museum Council's objectives

The aim of the ECF was to enable AMCs to build their capacity in relation to museum education within their area.

The specific aims were: -

- To build up a picture of the existing provision of museum education across the various AMCs in order to establish a benchmark
- To raise the standards of museum education work in each of the AMC areas
- To increase the number of museums able to implement the guidelines for good practice set out in *Managing Museum and Gallery Education*, especially in relation to Phase three of registration
- To create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to museum education across the country
- To enable museums and galleries to take advantage of other funding opportunities.

A1. In relation to the needs that you perceived in your area, did you think that the aims of the ECF were relevant and useful?

A2. How did you go about establishing a picture of provision across your area?

A3. What did you think of the idea of this being a challenge fund? Did you think you could use it to good effect?

A4. How did the ECF aims relate to your AMC's objectives?

A5. Did your AMC have any other educational objectives that were not encompassed by the aims of the fund?

A6. What specific strategic objectives were you trying to achieve in your use of the fund?

A7. As AMC director how will you judge the success of your strategies?

A8. Have you experienced any problems in managing the project?

### B. The impact of your Area Museum Council's use of the Education Challenge Fund

B1. When the project is complete, what will the ECF have enabled you to achieve?

B2. What impact do you expect the project your AMC has devised to have on museums in your area?

B3. What impact do you think the project will have on your region as a whole?

B4. Do you feel that the use of the ECF has resulted in you feeling more confident about the future demands of Registration?

B5. Do you think that the outcomes of the ECF will lead to greater consistency of museum education across your region?

### C. The lessons learnt from the Education Challenge Fund

C1. Has the ECF enabled you to think differently about the delivery of education in your region?

C2. What do you feel about the value of specialist educators, both in terms of staff and consultants?

C3. Can you summarise the main learning points to come out of the ECF: 1 For yourself as director 2 For the AMC 3 For anyone else

### D. Resources management of the Education Challenge Fund

D1. The ECF has been managed by Resource.



Could you comment on the management of the project, and it would be helpful if you could refer to:

- the clarity of the intention of the ECF
- support given by Resource
- timing of the project as a whole
- the financial management

D2. Looking back, if you had the money over again, is there anything you would have done in a different way?

**E. And finally, looking forward**

- E1. If Resource was to obtain more money for museum education from the DCMS what would you like to see it spent on? What strategic targets would you suggest?
- E2. Resource's main aim was to increase capacity for museum education. Following your experience of the ECF can you make any suggestions about the supportive professional frameworks or models of delivery to build capacity for education in your area?
- E3. Is there anything else you would like to recommend to Resource for future consideration or action in relation to increasing the level and quality of museum education in your area?
- E4. And looking across museums, libraries and archives, is there anything you would like to recommend to Resource in relation to increasing cross-sectoral education provision?

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**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUM STUDIES, RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES**

**EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND EVALUATION - INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS**

Name of organisation..... Name of interviewee(s).....  
.....  
Name of the interviewer..... Date.....

The aim of the ECF was to enable AMCs to build their capacity in relation to museum education within their area.

The specific criteria were:

- To build up a picture of the existing provision of museum education across the various AMCs in order to establish a benchmark
- To raise the standards of museum education work in each of the AMC areas
- To increase the number of museums able to implement the guidelines for good practice set out in Managing Museum and Gallery Education, especially in relation to Phase three of Registration
- To create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to museum education across the country
- To enable museums and galleries to take advantage of other funding opportunities

**A. Objectives and your use of the ECF**

- A1. In relation to the needs that you perceived in your area, did you think that these criteria were relevant and useful?
- A2. How did you go about establishing a picture of provision across your area?
- A3. How did you think that you would be able to use the ECF to good effect?
- A4. What were the specific strategic aims of your approach?
- A5. What were the actual objectives of your project(s)?
- A6. Looking back, do you now feel that the objectives were realistic?
- A7. Have you experienced any problems in managing the project(s)?

**B. The impact of your AMC's use of the ECF**

- B1. What impact do you expect the project your AMC has devised will have on the museums in your area? Do you have any evidence to support this?
- B2. What impact do you expect the project your AMC has devised will have on museum users in your area? Do you have any evidence to support this?

### C. The lessons learnt from the ECF

C.1 Do you think the ECF has had any effect on the way your AMC thinks about museum education?

What effect has it had? For example:

- standards raised..... how?.....
- the need for education posts seen more clearly?.....
- a greater consistency of delivery?.....

C.2 Can you summarise the main learning points to come out of the ECF: for yourself, for the AMC and for the museums involved?

### D. The management of the ECF

D1. The ECF has been managed by Resource.

Could you comment on the management of the project, and it would be helpful if you could refer to:

- the clarity of the intentions of the fund
- the support given by Resource
- the timing of the project
- the financial management of the project

D2. Looking back, if you had the money over again, is there anything you would have done in a different way?

### E. And finally, looking forward

E1. If Resource was to obtain more money from DCMS what would you like to see it spent on? For example?

- building on what has already been achieved with some museums in your region?.....
- introducing education to museums not involved in educational work to date?.....
- anything else?

E2. What structures do you think would help build capacity in relation to museum education in your area?

E3. What models of delivery might be useful to recommend as good practice?

E4. Is there anything else you would like to recommend to Resource for future consideration or action in relation to increasing the level and quality of museum education in your area?

E5. And looking across museums, libraries and archives, is there anything you would like to recommend to Resource in relation to increasing cross-sectoral education provision?

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## EDUCATION CHALLENGE FUND EVALUATION - FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### Participants

1 You have been doing work with the AMCs which is part of the ECF. What do you know about the ECF?

2 What impact do you think the ECF is likely to have on your museum?

3 Thinking about the specific project you have been involved in, how do you think it has been managed?

4 Thinking about the resources, including the money that has been spent on your project, do you think the resources could have been used in another way?

5 What do you feel you have learnt from this project?

6 One of the aims of the ECF is to develop the educational role of the museum. What would it take to enable museums to do this better?



