

Capturing Outcomes from Regional Museum Hubs' Community Engagement Activities

Final Report

November 2010



Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	8
2. Methodology	9
3. Approaches to Community Engagement	11
4. National Level Findings	14
5. Case Study Findings	23
6. Non-Hub Museums	36
7. Conclusions and Recommendations	40

Executive Summary

In December 2008, the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council commissioned ERS Ltd. to undertake a project to capture the outcomes from Regional Museum Hubs' Community Engagement activities, using the Social Return on Investment method where appropriate. The Renaissance-funded projects featured in this research have been motivated by aspirations to make the profile of visitors more diverse and involve visitors in shaping services. In some cases, projects also reflected a commitment to build skills amongst a museum's workforce to engage with some under-represented visitor groups. The projects featured in this research are a selection and not the totality of Renaissance-funded community engagement activities. Furthermore, there is a specific focus on activities and achievements within the 2009-10 financial year.

As such, this study does not purport to assess the overall success or failure of Renaissance investment in community engagement activities, as the research focused on one project of many in each Hub, and were drawn from fewer than half the Hub museums. However, the study has been able to assess the performance of individual projects and identify the factors that have contributed to their achievements (or lack thereof). Although these projects may not be representative of all Renaissance-funded community engagement activity, it is apparent that performance has been varied, with the very best making a real difference to target beneficiaries and museums, whilst those at the other end of the scale have struggled to make progress, in spite of the best efforts of museums staff to do so. However, even those that fell short of their ambitions during the period in question have learnt a lot about working with target beneficiary groups, have explored new partner relationships and report being better connected with other museums within their Hub.

Museums are working with partners and engaging with their communities in new ways

Although most museums have experience of community engagement, many have used Renaissance funding to explore new forms of engagement (by activity and/or target group), thereby exploring more sophisticated levels of community engagement.

The main focus of activities has been young people (who featured as a target group in about half of the case study projects), with a particular emphasis on those young people considered unlikely to visit museums (other than by compulsion on school trips) and/or thought likely to benefit from engagement because of their personal circumstances (behavioural issues, learning under-achievement etc.). In addition, there were examples of projects targeting older people, black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, disabled groups and offenders, whilst many others sought a broader appeal.

Prospective participants were identified/recruited by partner organisations working with those specific groups. In all cases partnership working has been a key characteristic of projects, most commonly involving just 1 or 2 partners. These have been drawn from other local authority departments, other public sector bodies and the voluntary/community sector.

Featured projects span a diverse range of activities, with the most common characteristic the involvement of volunteers. About half of the projects have sought to offer some form of learning/work experience, either to improve the employability of participants or to enhance specific skills. This learning has mainly been informal/non-accredited.

In many regions, prior to Renaissance, Hub members rarely had cause for interaction with one another, hence there is now a stronger sense of a museums sector at regional/sub-regional level. There have also been significant improvements in capacity/skills in having the ability to employ additional staff and by drawing some of them from outside the museums sector. At its best, Renaissance is seen as being more than just funding, promoting much more positive and creative attitudes amongst those museums staff that have participated in community engagement projects. As such, there is hope that the experience gained from these community engagement projects will promote wider change across the museums in question and indeed the sector as a whole.

Museums are delivering real value to communities

The findings in Appendix 3 show how some projects have positively changed perceptions of museums and removed psychological barriers to access, as well as delivering notable outcomes for individuals and communities.

Some of these outcomes are summarised here, with more detail on each individual project in appendix 3.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)¹

Stronger and Safer Communities – was a particularly strong theme, with improvements in inter-group dialogue and understanding. For example, the *Working with New Communities* project in Thetford demonstrated how place attachment and identity could be strengthened.

Strengthening Public Life - projects that have involved people in designing and/or delivering activities have been able to demonstrate participant involvement in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement. For example, the work of Leicester Arts and Museums Service with a group of elderly South Asian women helped to build their capacity and confidence to organise events and museum visits.

Health and Wellbeing – physical and mental, particularly the latter. For example, a very high proportion of beneficiaries in Museums of Oxford's *Reminiscence* project reported enhanced wellbeing as a result of their participation.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)²

Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity – came through especially strongly, projects have provided an opportunity for beneficiaries across all age ranges to have fun and be creative. The *Working with Young People in Fostering* project in Colchester is one of many that has provided an opportunity for young people to have fun, as well as be creative and explore, experiment and make things through working with artists.

Attitudes and Values - improved confidence was widely reported. For example, those supervising the *Yorkshire Museum and Gardens* project reported much more positive attitudes amongst the offenders taking part.

Knowledge and Understanding - projects have promoted informal learning, encouraging beneficiaries to explore the museum and ask questions about the objects on display, and greater knowledge and understanding of local areas, the issues impacting upon them and their histories. For example, young people participating in the *Made in the Tees Valley* project learned facts and information about their industrial heritage which they used to make sense of their social history and present experience.

¹GSOs help museums to describe the wider impact of their work in communities. For more information visit <http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericsocial/>

² GLOs identify the broad learning benefits that people gain from interacting with museums. For more information visit <http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericlearning/>

Skills - young people in particular have developed social and communication skills and grown in confidence, in addition to which some participants have developed more specific vocational and other skills designed to enhance employability. For example, all of the young people participating in Bolton Museum and Archive Service's Cell by Date project indicated that the skills they had learnt would help them in future training or employment.

Action, Behaviour and Progression - young people who have previously been excluded from museum visits are reported to have behaved much better, whilst projects focusing on volunteering also reported positive outcomes. For example, the all of the volunteers involved in the *London Moves East* project reported improved confidence in becoming involved in community activities, with participants keen to promote to the wider community the importance of engagement in relation to the changing built environment.

Museums are changing and are working with community partners

Across the case study projects, museum staff have developed their competencies, in terms of project/service planning, organisation, project management and community engagement skills (especially in gaining a better understanding of the challenges posed by community engagement). In some cases projects have been used to build community engagement capacity but, even where this existed there was often a need to gain experience of working with new groups. In these cases, projects have facilitated greater understanding amongst museum staff of specific communities of interest and relevant issues pertaining to them, proving a good foundation for future working.

Partnerships have strengthened, with partners reporting having gained a better mutual understanding, and a greater appreciation of the opportunities and benefits linked to collaborative working. It therefore seems plausible to suggest that the relationships fostered by projects could lead to further joint working and, in turn, the generation of additional positive outcomes and impacts in the future. However, there is a need to ensure that such partners work strategically, not just in a project-specific way, and that appropriate resources can be made available to facilitate partnership working.

In some cases, museums believe that projects had helped to raise their profile with specific community groups, with the general public and among the wider museums sector.

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

The SROI method was utilised in about one third of cases, these being those cases where use of the method was appropriate and feasible. The social values generated by Renaissance investments related mainly to volunteering, learning, employability and confidence building. SROI calculations were undertaken in respect of 5 of the case study projects, with 3 of the 5 generating an SROI ratio greater than 1 (i.e. the benefits generated outweighed the costs of delivery). Further detail can be found in paragraph 5.47 and in Appendix 3. Subject to skills and capacity issues being addressed, this study has demonstrated the potential for museums to adopt SROI-type techniques in order to demonstrate the full value of their activities, especially in arriving at monetary proxies for the value of projects in improving confidence and enhancing employability.

Challenges/Learning Points

Exploring new approaches to community engagement has required some museums to scale rather steep learning curves, added to which most projects suffered delays and/or disruptions (see paragraph 5.20). Key challenges/learning points included:

- Developing projects from the concepts set out in Hub Business Plans, proved difficult because this often required new staff to come into post and/or because these concepts were based on assumptions about target groups that could not be properly tested until projects got underway (when they were sometimes found to be false).
- Identifying target individuals, attracting their interest and sustaining that interest were common difficulties. In some cases, the response was to alter the approach. For example, if a group of 'hard to reach' young people could not be engaged, another group of young people have been engaged. This was considered by some museums to be a pragmatic response, although others decided to retain their focus and seek to change the basis on which the target group was engaged in order to make their participation in a project more appealing. The Cell by Date project (see Appendix 3) is a good example of how this was achieved successfully.
- Whilst partnership working was a strength in many cases, reliance on partners resulted in some projects being vulnerable to partners failing to deliver on promises, pursuing their own agendas or experiencing staffing difficulties.
- Where new groups were to be engaged, through work with new partners in challenging contexts, delays and difficulties might be regarded as almost inevitable, and yet the possibility (probability) of this happening was not provided for in project planning or delivery.
- There is no clear rationale for the selection of targets set out in Hub Business Plans and interviews with Hub Managers and museums staff suggest that output targets fail to adequately capture the added value of Renaissance funding, in terms of its transformational impacts (upon users and/or museums). The focus on generating outputs actually encourages engagement with large numbers of people/groups rather than meaningful/sustainable engagement. As such, there is little incentive to pursue activities that work with smaller numbers of people/groups in a more intensive way and/or over a long period, potentially generating more meaningful outcomes and impacts.
- Concerns have been expressed that the loss of staff/secondees once projects come to an end will see the loss of the knowledge that has been built up as well as the capacity to deliver. In this context, Renaissance ought to be being used as a resource to develop/embed community engagement skills/practices (especially soft skills, managing groups, managing expectations, recognising different learning pace etc.).

Key Recommendations

The Museums Sector

- Hub Business Plans tend to describe loose aspirations to engage with particular groups, whereas they ought to set out detailed justification for doing so and for pursuing the courses of action proposed. The practicalities of engaging target groups and sustaining that engagement need to be fully considered in advance, including the testing of new partnerships to ensure that they can be relied upon to make the contribution envisaged by the museum.
- Partnership working might be aided by entering into written agreements which set out each party's roles and responsibilities, as well as the target outputs, outcomes and impacts from which all partners (or the interests they represent) can derive benefits.
- Deploying existing staff to 'do' community engagement places unreasonable expectations on those individuals and is unlikely to always deliver desired outcomes. Where this approach is adopted as part of a strategy to instigate cultural change within a museum, it ought to be supported by appropriate training and guidance in all cases.
- Seeking to engage particular groups may be aided by employing staff who are themselves from those groups (acknowledging the potential contribution of MLA's Diversity Programme); seeking to engage groups via particular types of project may be aided by employing staff with a background in those types of projects rather than the museums sector (see Cell by Date project in Appendix 3).

MLA

- In spite of its efforts to date, MLA needs to do more to promote a 'whole museum' approach to community engagement, with all staff having a sense of responsibility and a role to play, breaking down the silo mentality that community engagement resides in a project or a post. This might be helped by a move to multi-annual funding of projects or by convincing museums to view their collections of individual projects on a more strategic basis, with an emphasis on integrating activities into core functions.
- There is scope for MLA to promote a more strategic approach to volunteering and to involve volunteers in core/ongoing (and higher level) activities rather than restrict their participation to project-based work. To facilitate this, MLA could offer advice, guidance and support on working with the voluntary and community sector.
- MLA has a role in promoting learning and exchange of experience, both across the Hubs and between Hub and non-Hub museums. For example, a central project database would enable project staff to identify colleagues in other museums with experience of delivering similar activities, based on similar themes to similar groups.

There is a need to ensure that targets do not encourage the achievement of outputs over the generation of outcomes (e.g. visits to a museum by members of a target group) and impacts (e.g. members of a target group moving into employment/learning). MLA should encourage the use of more intelligent quantitative performance measures as well as having museums report on qualitative achievements.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2008, the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council commissioned ERS Ltd. to undertake a project to capture the outcomes from Regional Museum Hubs' Community Engagement Activities, including through the use of Social Return on Investment techniques (SROI), where possible. The study also aimed to capture the effectiveness of organisational development activities undertaken to deliver community engagement activities across the Renaissance Programme
- 1.2 Focusing on the community engagement strand of the Renaissance Programme, the research pursued the specific purpose of answering key evaluation questions, covering:
- **Reaching targets & strategic objectives:** Has the programme reached its agreed targets? What contribution does it make to MLA's strategic objectives?
 - **Implementation:** How effective is the management of the Programme in delivering agreed objectives and reaching targets?
 - **Outcomes:** What are the effects of the Programme on MLA's main stakeholders (in particular, users and non-users)?
 - **Additionality:** Could the same impact have been reached through different mechanisms or programmes?
 - **Policy and Programme Development:** What are the needs of the sector? What models have been tried before to deal with these needs? Which specific needs is MLA best positioned to address?
- 1.3 The conclusions of the study in respect of the above are set out in Section 7.
- 1.4 An inception meeting for the study was held on 9 January 2009, following which exact terms of reference for the evaluation were agreed between ERS Ltd. and MLA. The study has been supported by a Steering Group, members of which have included:
- Amanda Burke (East of England Hub)
 - Bridget Khalifa (London Hub)
 - Carol Bowsher (West Midlands Hub) – replaced by Rachel Cockett
 - Finella Bottomley (East Midlands Hub)
 - Javier Stanziola (MLA) - replaced by Ailbhe McNabola (MLA)
 - Jennifer Ngyou (MLA)
 - John Hentley (North East Hub) – replaced by Ann Fletcher Williams
 - Jon Bradley (Yorkshire & Humber Hub)
 - Julia Davis (MLA Renaissance Team)
 - Michael Cooke (MLA Field Team)
 - Myna Trustram (North West Hub)
 - Reethah Desai (South West Hub)
 - Susan Griffiths (South East Hub)
 - William Brown (MLA Renaissance Team)
- 1.5 A list of all 42 Renaissance-funded museums can be found in Appendix 1, with principal contacts at each of the 17 case study museums together with other stakeholders consulted listed in Appendix 2. These, together with other appendices, have been published separately (<http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=1150>).

2. Methodology

2.1 The methodology divided into 2 stages: Establishing the Context; and Data Capture and Analysis (including SROI).

Stage 1 - Establishing the Context

2.2 The study team undertook discussions with the MLA Research Team, Regional Hub Managers, Regional Hub Research staff and regional MLA staff. These discussions covered the background to the Renaissance Programme in each region and the rationale for types of community engagement activities undertaken. In addition, relevant literature was reviewed, including Hub Business Plans. An Interim Report was submitted in May 2009, based on the findings from Stage 1.

Stage 2 - Data Capture and Analysis

2.3 Originally, it was anticipated that the research would involve an Intensive Group of 9 Renaissance-funded community engagement projects (1 from each region), a larger Intermediate Group of projects (17) and a National Level analysis of Renaissance Programme monitoring data. However, the Steering Group decided there would be more to be gained by replacing the Intermediate Group with a larger Intensive Group and including some non-Hub museums.

2.4 Nominations for case studies for the Intensive Group were forwarded by each of the Regional Hub Managers, and selections were made on the basis that they represented good coverage of each of the regions (2 were chosen from each region, plus one from London); they covered a representative sample (and good breadth) of target groups ; and they demonstrated a variety of levels of engagement (based on the 'Ladder of Participation', as depicted below³).

Table 2.4: Ladder of Participation

	Engagement Level
	Information
	Consultation
	Deciding Together
	Acting Together
	Supporting independent community initiatives

2.5 The first round of meetings with case study museums took place in June/July 2009. It was originally intended that these exercises would be repeated (with appropriate modifications) in February/March 2010. In the event, projects as a whole were visited more times than had been planned and often required contacts to be made in between visits, in order to monitor progress/provide support and to take advantage of opportunities to undertake fieldwork as they arose (e.g. attend events). An Update Report was submitted to the Steering Group in September 2009 covering the approach to data capture, based on visits to each of the museums delivering case study projects.

³ Adapted from Arnstein, Sherry R (1969). 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation'. JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

-
- 2.6 The process of capturing data within the case studies was undertaken according to a Logic Model and Evaluation Framework (see Appendix 5). This approach maps the logical relationship from project actions, through indicators to the intended impacts. In this context, it sought to provide the basis for establishing the causal relationship between community engagement activities, outputs and outcomes. This process involved the accumulation of a great deal of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The findings are therefore based on a balanced assessment of this evidence, considering all data, reported experiences and views.
- 2.7 Amongst other things, the study set out to capture the Social Return on Investment of these activities. SROI is a measurement approach, developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis that captures the economic value of social benefits by translating social objectives into financial measures and focuses on the most important sources of value as defined by stakeholders.
- 2.8 In the context of this study, this was taken forward on a project-by-project basis, exploring the potential to undertake an SROI analysis in each case and then seeking to exploit that potential, where possible. However, delays to the start of a majority of the case study projects and stumbling blocks encountered in the delivery of many projects, meant that it proved impossible to capture any SROI impacts for most projects within the timescale for the study (see Appendix 3). Furthermore, whilst approaches to capturing the outcomes and impacts from projects were discussed with stakeholders, in no case did they take ownership of the SROI analysis. As such, although some of the steps in the SROI process were followed, not all of those indicated in the current guidance⁴ were undertaken.
- 2.9 Going forward, the provision of training and support will assist more projects to utilise SROI techniques in future. Specifically this approach can be adopted where projects are working with a reasonably consistent group of beneficiaries, are able to engage those beneficiaries for a sufficient period of time to be able to claim any outcomes/impacts with justification and where appropriate/necessary data capture systems are put in place from the outset of the project. To use this approach effectively it will be important for project staff to have the skills and capacity to be able to capture and analyse data as part of the SROI analysis. SROI is explained further in Appendix 6. Impact Maps relating to the 5 case study projects in respect of which SROI values could be calculated are presented in Appendix 7.
- 2.10 With regard to the overall report, all of the evidence gathered was reviewed in order that statements of fact could be verified (e.g. by reference to written materials) and statements of opinion could be cross-referenced with other views/evidence and accorded due weight. Case study draft reports were shared with the museums in question (and amended as appropriate) and drafts of the overall report were circulated amongst the research team (to ensure their individual contributions were accurately represented) and the members of the study Steering Group (prompting further amendments).
- 2.11 A Practitioner Workshop took place on 30 April 2010 and involved almost all of the Hub museums featured within the case studies, as well as some Hub managers and MLA staff. The Workshop discussed the draft findings of this study and provided corroboration for the evidence that has been presented within this report.

⁴ A Guide to Social Return on Investment, Cabinet Office, April 2009

3. Approaches to Community Engagement

Across Government

Communities in Control White Paper

- 3.1 Over recent years, there has been a clear movement towards encouraging volunteering, higher levels of community involvement in local decision making and widening participation in learning and culture. In this context, one of the key documents published by the Labour Government was the Community Empowerment White Paper: 'Communities in control: real people, real power'⁵, which aimed to facilitate the passing of power into the hands of local communities.
- 3.2 The White Paper noted that, increasingly, local communities were being given opportunities to help shape the design and delivery of a variety of publicly-funded activities, including regeneration programmes and health services, as well as playing a stronger role in areas such as education and policing. In other words, it was encouraging providers of public services to move on from informing and consulting their service users to actively involving them in the planning, management and delivery of services: "We want to shift power, influence and responsibility away from existing centres of power into the hands of communities and individual citizens"⁶.
- 3.3 Set out below are the themes identified in the White Paper relevant in this context, together with summaries of MLA's views as to how museums might respond⁷:
- Active citizens and the value of volunteering* – based on the view that this is a means of enabling local people to influence service provision, develop skills/confidence and build their sense of identity. Museums were seen as having much to offer in terms of volunteering opportunities.
- Access to information* – in order to inform communities about the potential for their involvement. Museums based within local communities were considered especially well placed to support dissemination of relevant information.
- Having an influence* – as measured through the Place Survey which, a few months after the publication of the White Paper, showed only 11.2% of people feeling they had influence over local cultural services.
- Involvement in decision making* – relates to the statutory duty on public bodies to involve interested persons in the making of decisions which affect them. Museums need to honour this legal requirement but also see the opportunities for improving service delivery and widening participation.
- Supporting/working with the Voluntary and Community Sector* – such groups can represent 'interested persons' under the above duty to involve as well as provide access to under-represented groups with which museums might wish to engage.
- Ownership and control* – as well as volunteering this might be achieved through participatory budgeting, community management and community ownership. Museums are encouraged to explore ways in which a sense of ownership and control might be engendered amongst local communities.
- 3.4 Subsequently, the Labour Government introduced the 'duty to involve' interested persons or their representatives in decisions which may affect them.

⁵ 'Communities in control: real people, real power', CLG, (2008)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ The Community Empowerment Agenda, Briefing Paper, Jennifer Ngyou, MLA, January 2009

Priorities of the New Government

- 3.5 The priorities identified by the new Government in 'The Coalition: our programme for government'⁸ earlier this year seek to deliver a stronger society based on a "smaller state" and "empowered citizens".
- 3.6 It is envisaged that distributing increased power to the local level will encourage communities to play a greater role and assume a greater responsibility over the social, economic and political challenges which face their regions, towns and neighbourhoods. This 'Big Society' approach to overcoming challenges through the collective workings of the state and its citizens is based on:
- Giving communities more power
 - Encouraging people to take active roles within their communities
 - Transferring power from central to local government
 - Supporting co-ops, mutuals, charities, and social enterprises
 - Publishing government data⁹
- 3.7 Central to this philosophy is the programme for local government, where increased levels of power and financial autonomy will be devolved to local government and community groups, opening up options which "give neighbourhoods and local authorities the powers and freedoms to lead economic growth and regeneration"¹⁰.
- 3.8 As part of this priority The Government has committed to implementing the Sustainable Communities Act which will allow citizens "to see how taxpayer's money is spent in their area and have a greater say over how it is spent"¹¹ working with the principle that "local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area"¹².
- 3.9 One of the especially pertinent commitments to date made by the Government in this regard concerns the introduction of "new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services"¹³.
- 3.10 The move to localism and higher levels of community involvement chime very well with the principles underpinning the community engagement strand of the Renaissance Programme. Going forward, there ought to be continuation of approaches that facilitate local communities playing a significant and ongoing role in the design/delivery of museum activities.

⁸ The Coalition: our programme for government, HM Government, 2010

⁹ Building the Big Society, Cabinet Office, 2010

¹⁰ Structural Reform Plan: Monthly Implementation Update, Department for Communities and Local Government, September 2010

¹¹ The Coalition: our programme for government, HM Government, 2010

¹² Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007

¹³ The Coalition: our programme for government, HM Government, 2010

The Museums Sector

- 3.11 The 2001 Renaissance in the Regions report recommended a new, integrated framework for the museums sector based on a network of regional 'Hubs' consisting of four or five museums operating in partnership (a Hub) in each English region. Between 2002 and 2008 nearly £150 million of government funding was made available to make museums centres of life and learning, which people want to visit. Over this period, visitor numbers increased by 18.5%, and there are now around 15 million visits a year to Hub museums. By the end of March 2011, nearly £300 million will have been invested in Renaissance.
- 3.12 Renaissance represents more than 75% of MLA's funding and is its prime mechanism for driving improvement in the museum sector. The successful delivery of the Programme is a key component of the National Action Plan for museums that MLA has developed in consultation with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- 3.13 Funding has been provided to the regional museum 'Hubs' in order to develop them as centres of excellence and as leaders of their regional museum communities. Using the funding provided by central government the regional hubs aspire to the highest standards in exhibition content and presentation; learning, education and outreach services; collections management; and other key museum activities.
- 3.14 Subsequent to the independent Review of Renaissance (2008) and MLA Council's response to it (July 2009), MLA reiterated its desire to work with partners to re-state the vision for Renaissance, re-establish its shared ownership and plan the future of the programme.
- 3.15 In response to MLA's strategic priority to support sustainable communities and extend museums' reach into the community, Hub Museums are increasingly looking to invest resources in community engagement activities, in particular to support delivery against their recognised role in education, learning, inclusion and quality of life.
- 3.16 The MLA Council and Hubs have identified a number of community engagement outcomes that funded activities should help to support (of which two are included within the National Indicator framework). These include:
- People are satisfied with their local area (National Indicator 5);
 - People are participating in the local community (National Indicator 3);
 - People perceive museums as places for the community; and
 - People perceive museums as places for inter-group dialogue and understanding.
- 3.17 Additional outcomes that may also be supported are:
- % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (National Indicator 1); and
 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (National Indicator 4).¹⁴

¹⁴ It should be noted that all references to National Indicators pertain to those that were in place during 2009/10, rather than the revised list of indicators published in April 2010, which no longer includes some NIs. In the context of this report, the most notable deletion from the previous list is NI10 (Visits to museums or galleries).

4. National Level Findings

4.1 This section of the report is based on an analysis of Renaissance Programme monitoring data for the first three quarters of the 2009/10 financial year (Q4 data not being available at the time of report drafting), a review of Hub Business Plans, interviews with museums staff involved with the 17 case study projects and discussions with Hub Managers. It also draws on some of the discussions at the Practitioner Workshop at which museum representatives already consulted had an opportunity to debate the draft findings.

Organisational Outcomes and Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

4.2 As might be expected, the nature and scale of organisational outcomes and impacts are, in part, a reflection of the manner in which the Renaissance programme has been designed and embraced. Consultations with a variety of museums staff and Hub managers indicated a majority view that Renaissance is not designed as a strategic programme seeking to effect long term change. Rather, it is seen as a succession of annual programmes comprising a series of time-limited projects contained within one of a number of separate themes. It should be stated that this is not a view shared by MLA, which continues to regard Renaissance as a transformational programme that seeks to facilitate long term changes to service delivery. It is recognised that the timescales imposed on museums for Business Plan submissions were challenging, but there remained an expectation that Hubs/museums would adopt a strategic approach.

4.3 Nevertheless, and as a consequence, the 'silo mentality' that this (mis)perception about Renaissance has encouraged appears to treat community engagement as distinct from, say, collections, whilst some projects that would support community engagement remain 'hidden' within audience development or workforce development, for example. As a result, in some quarters, community engagement remains an addition to core business rather than being embedded in organisational practice. In seeking to address this, MLA either needs to move to multi-annual funding of community engagement activities or to convince all museums to view their collections of individual projects on a more strategic basis, with an emphasis on succession planning once Renaissance funding reduces/runs out. In short, community engagement does not yet form part of the fabric of many museums and MLA needs to impress upon all museums that community engagement ought to be a whole museum philosophy and not defined by a project or a post.

4.4 Interviewees recognised that building an effective community engagement structure takes time and requires a culture change in some museums. The challenge of overcoming organisational resistance to losing control, in particular with regard to empowering the community to shape collections, displays and other museum services, has been successfully tackled in many instances (see Appendix 3). In a minority of Hub museums there is a concern regarding staff not having appropriate skills to be able to engage effectively, and this is being addressed through training.

4.5 There were also fears that community engagement might prove 'too successful', with the possibility that some museums might struggle to cope (in terms of staff and buildings capacity) if demand were over-stimulated. It was felt that this in turn could backfire on museums were new visitors to have a negative experience that might discourage repeat visits/more advanced engagement. In practice, these fears were not realised, possibly because of a focus on working intensively with particular groups rather than trying to drive up numbers.

4.6 In many regions, prior to Renaissance, Hub members rarely had cause for interaction with one another, hence there is now a stronger sense of a museums sector at regional/sub-regional level. There have also been significant improvements in capacity/skills as a consequence of having the ability to employ additional staff and by drawing some of them from outside the museums sector. However, at its best, Renaissance is seen as being more than just funding, promoting much more positive and creative attitudes amongst those museums staff that have participated in community engagement projects.

4.7 Although not without its challenges, partnership working has characterised all of the projects. Where this has worked well, there is the legacy of a positive relationship which can be developed further. Where it has worked less well, there are lessons to be learnt that should better prepare those museums and their partners for future collaborations.

Community Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts

4.8 In terms of communities shaping museums services, it is imperative to establish clear parameters and obtain the buy-in of museum staff. There is also the challenge of overcoming organisational resistance-to empowering the community to shape collections, displays and other museum services

4.9 Engagement of community groups has been useful in stimulating ideas for new projects and more creative approaches. However, there is some concern that this may lead to a project as opposed to strategic approach; addressing opportunities/weaknesses in an isolated and ad hoc fashion rather than through more fundamental measures likely to deliver more sustainable outcomes/impacts.

4.10 An analysis of monitoring data provided by MLA for the first three quarters of the 2009/10 financial year (1 April – 31 December 2009) reveals that outreach work features most prominently. The top 10 outputs on which projects are reporting are set out below.

Table 4.10: Number of Projects Relating to Community Engagement Outputs

Output Pursued	No. of Projects
No. of instances of children and young people participating in museums' outreach activities	65
No. of instances of adults participating in museums' outreach activities	53
No. of instances of adults participating in on-site informal learning (or organised) activities	42
No. of volunteers	42
No. of instances of participation in on-site family learning activities	36
No. of groups engaged with through outreach activities	30
No. of instances of participation in on-site learning activities for young people aged 16-19	24
Instances of participation by people in priority groups	21
No. of learners registered in formal learning projects	15
No. of volunteer hours	7
No. of people involved	1

4.11 Monitoring data indicates that, in most cases, target outputs have been exceeded, in many instances by a comfortable margin (see also Appendix 8).

Table 4.11: Project Performance Against Community Engagement Target Outputs

Output Pursued	Variance
S13b: No. of activities involving priority groups	+36%
S14a No. of people involved	-60%
S14b No. of Volunteer hours	-4%
G03 Instances of participation by people in priority groups	+44%.
G05 No. of instances of adults participating in on-site informal learning (or organised) activities	+82%
G06 No. of instances of participation in on-site family learning activities	+61%
G08 No. of instances of participation in on-site learning activities for young people aged 16-19	+11%
G10 No. of learners registered in formal learning projects	+533%
G11 No. of instances of adults participating in museums' outreach activities	+40%
G12 No. of instances of children and young people participating in museums' outreach activities	+46%
G13 No. of groups engaged with through outreach activities	-3%
G14 No. of volunteers	+30%
G14b No. of volunteer hours	+3%

- 4.12 For clarity, the analysis above is the most extensive and detailed that can be carried out based on the data that has been captured. In due course, the availability of a full year's data will be helpful, but there is perhaps more of a need to move to a system of monitoring that seeks to focus more on outcomes and impacts than outputs. It has been possible to capture these in respect of the case studies and in respect of 2010/11, but there is a case for broadening this approach to embrace all projects and over a longer time period.
- 4.13 The fact that targets have been exceeded comfortably might be regarded as highly successful but, equally, could be a reflection of targets being set at modest levels. Unfortunately, there is nothing in Hub Business Plans that clarifies the target setting methodology. Indeed the focus on generating outputs actually encourages engagement with large numbers of people/groups (i.e. high levels of beneficiary turnover) rather than meaningful/sustainable engagement. For example, having a stall at a large community gathering could lead to a claim for having engaged thousands of people, but the extent of that engagement might have been a cursory glance as they passed by. In contrast, and as currently designed, the focus on outputs does little to encourage activities that work with smaller numbers of people/groups in a more intensive way and/or over a long period, potentially generating more meaningful outcomes and impacts. Interviews with Hub Managers and museums staff suggest that output targets fail to adequately capture the added value of Renaissance funding, in terms of its transformational impacts (upon users and/or museums).
- Community Engagement Approaches/Activities of Regional Museum Hubs**
- 4.14 In total, there are 42 Hub museums in receipt of Renaissance funding, a full list of which can be found in Appendix 1. They comprise a mix of organisations in terms of their governance, size and setting, though most are local authority controlled and found within larger towns and cities.
- 4.15 Although these museums are long established, the extent of engagement with their local communities is variable, prompting the development of specific community engagement projects in each local context.
- 4.16 Renaissance funding is distributed in a variety of ways: allocated amongst Hub museums; distributed thematically (e.g. work with families); and drawn down on a project-by-project basis.

- 4.17 There are good working relationships with non-Hub museums above and beyond that promoted by use of the Museum Development Fund. In some cases, there is said to be a lot to learn from non-Hub museums which, based on the fieldwork with the 5 case studies and discussions with other non-Hub museums, appear to rely on volunteers to a greater extent than Hub museums. The non-Hub museums visited for this study demonstrate a number of strengths in respect of community engagement (see Appendix 4). It is though acknowledged that, having been nominated by Hub Managers, this is a skewed sample of non-Hub museums exhibiting good practice and therefore ought not to be taken as representative of non-Hub museums as a whole nor indeed as a comparator group to Hub museums.
- 4.18 Hubs are not working to a standard definition for community engagement; rather it is loosely, self-defined by each Hub or, in some cases, by each partner within a Hub. Consequently, and whilst it is entirely appropriate for very different approaches to be adopted across the regions as fits local circumstances, there is an argument in favour of establishing a core framework, not least to distinguish community engagement from audience development.
- 4.19 Furthermore, there is recognition that Hub museums are not all starting from the same point and that seeking to engage different communities will involve tackling a range of challenges, depending on the characteristics and size of those communities, their willingness to be engaged and at what level. In several instances this has been supported through partnership links with organisations working with target groups, (e.g. local authority departments, Youth Offending Team, Entry to Employment providers etc.).
- 4.20 In many instances there are no specific groups being targeted (other than 'non-users' or 'hard to reach' groups) and there is a lack of detail on outputs, outcomes and impacts (or how they are to be measured) in many cases. Understandably, museums are focused on generating the outputs as defined in their Renaissance funding agreements. However, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of individual projects there is a need to go further, in order to capture necessary detail. For example, a project engaging a minority ethnic group ought to record the specific ethnicity and ensure that future visitor surveys provide a category for that ethnic group in order that impacts on museum visits by members of that group are recorded. There would also be benefit in the greater use of beneficiary tracking, especially for projects aimed at improving employability/encouraging further learning. However, it is acknowledged that the capacity and skills required to be able to capture outcomes and impacts may be beyond many museums, albeit that some (such as in Tyne and Wear) have a longstanding commitment to gathering data and using it to inform practice.
- 4.21 Nevertheless, Renaissance monies have encouraged greater emphasis on community engagement generally and, in a few cases, going beyond audience development and seeking to facilitate local people in playing a role in how museums operate (in terms of curatorial input, planning/delivery of services, promotion of access etc.). Although a commitment to community engagement is still not embedded across many museum services, there is now greater awareness of the need to accurately identify barriers to engagement through research and analysis rather than assuming what they might be.

East of England

- 4.22 At the start of this study, Hub partners had only started working with groups to support active participation in and decision making around museum services to a small degree, although they aspired to do so to a greater extent moving forward. There is now a stronger emphasis on community engagement and as a Hub it is moving towards supporting people to get involved in decision making through using community panels.
- 4.23 The Hub has been using an evidence-based approach to targeting audience groups, (e.g. using the socio-economic profiling software MOSAIC) and they have done work around identifying the barriers to engagement and training staff in accessibility issues. However, the Hub did acknowledge that capturing the outcomes and success of community engagement activities is not easy.
- 4.24 A variety of groups are being targeted through the Renaissance programme, based on the community profiles of each Hub museum but with an overarching focus on non-traditional audiences and hard to reach groups. These include young people, children in foster care and foster parents, people with disabilities, BME, homeless, young offenders and the travelling community.
- 4.25 Non-traditional audiences are targeted through specially designed programmes delivered by outreach and access staff, working with priority groups and building on the region's national and international reputation in the field of disability and access, to include working with both users and non-users with mental health issues. Engagement with these groups has been supported through partnership links with organisations working with target groups, e.g. Prince's Trust, Youth Offending Team etc.
- 4.26 Each museum has developed its own specialism in accordance with its local context and target groups. For example, in Cambridge the Fitzwilliam Museum has engaged with prisoners from a secure unit and with Alzheimer sufferers. In Luton there has been a strong emphasis on disability access, engagement with young people and working with gypsy and traveller communities.
- 4.27 Although the majority of engagement activities are outward looking, the Hub is funding a number of activities focused on staff training, for example developing the potential of front of house staff and volunteers to better meet the needs of all users.

East Midlands

- 4.28 The Hub operates through the Renaissance East Midlands Programme Board, made up of Heads of Services from each of the Local Authorities. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Programme is running smoothly and reflects the business plan. The Board is also responsible for developing the next business plan.
- 4.29 The Hub is committed to working with non-Hub museums across the region and indeed it has tried to get away from the terminology of Hub and non-Hub museums.
- 4.30 Community Engagement projects are stand alone. However, under the Open Space project the intention is to bring together all the participating museums through a regional celebration event at the end of the project. The Hub does not have a framework in place to measure and evaluate the impact of its activity.
- 4.31 Priority groups include C2DE families, young people, older people, BME groups, Polish communities, people with disabilities, group organisers and tour operators and tourists. As well as reaching out to target groups, the Hub has focused activities inwards, especially in respect of staff training relating to community engagement.

London

- 4.32 London is unique given the local political landscape (i.e. the number of local authorities and the Mayor's Office). There is engagement with local authorities but this is different for each museum and dependent on the nature of the project/activity being undertaken. One problem is linking museum activities to local authority agendas as measurements of success are not always compatible (e.g. as is the case with National Museums). It also ought to be noted that these museums operate at various 'community' levels e.g. international visitors, domestic visitors plus work with adjacent local authorities and communities/community groups.
- 4.33 Funding is distributed thematically, not organisationally, with Programme Management Groups for Learning, Audience Development and Diversification, Organisational and Workforce Development, Collections and Regional Offer. These groups discuss project ideas and those supported are forwarded to the Board for approval.
- 4.34 There is no community engagement strategy across the Hub, but the overall approach is to increase participation amongst members of the community not just engagement with new user groups (or existing groups to a greater extent). In addition, the Hub is aiming to have communities shape services not just participate in activities, i.e. going beyond informing/consulting to deciding together/acting together¹⁵.
- 4.35 Many of the projects being taken forward are a continuation of previous activities, with variations based on learning and experience and identified new approaches or target group.

North East

- 4.36 Renaissance has been deliberately integrated within the work of museums, rather than drawing a distinction between non-Renaissance and Renaissance funded activity. One third of the budget is used for regional programming, such as the Regional Learning Team. The successful collaborations of museums in Tees Valley (covering five local authority services plus independent museums) has led to them getting a higher level of funding proportionally to other partners.
- 4.37 A strategy pre-dating the current Renaissance round (North East Regional Museums Strategy) had identified a lack of shared understanding of community engagement, including a concern regarding the presence of appropriate skills to be able to engage. It also highlighted a lack of embedded commitment to community engagement.
- 4.38 There are commonalities across participating museums but there are some geographic variations as would be expected depending on catchment profiles. Developing relationships beyond initial contact remains a challenge; for all museums there is said to be pressure to engage then move on, mitigating against sustained relationships.
- 4.39 Over the last two years, the 'Broadening Horizons' project has focused on audience development (including how museums collect data and use it to inform their strategies). Activity has focused on reaching out to communities not previously engaged, including BME, C2DE and disabled people. There are a number of other audiences who are currently underrepresented but who would not necessarily feature in published statistics (for example, Jewish communities and asylum seekers), therefore outreach has focused on 'diverse audiences'. The next stage will be audience involvement in planning and delivery of services.

¹⁵ Arnstein, Sherry R (1969). 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation'

North West

- 4.40 There are clear distinctions between community engagement, community development and audience development and recognition of the need for a balanced approach, targeting volume as well as specific groups. Furthermore, there is a recognised danger in stimulating demand too much and being unable to deliver due to capacity issues (staff and building), which may lead to new visitors not having a positive first experience.
- 4.41 There is also an understanding that each community has different starting points in terms of capacity and willingness to be engaged. There are links to the community cohesion agenda and some tension with regard to focusing on specific classifications of a community as opposed to trying to bring communities together. Effectively and accurately identifying the barriers to engagement is essential in achieving success. There is also recognition of the different levels of engagement (e.g. information, consultation, joint planning) and that this links to the focus of the engagement activity.
- 4.42 It was reported that the use of volunteers can be effective in reaching specific communities as well as providing additional capacity. However, there is uncertainty as to whether volunteer programmes should be included as a community engagement approach (i.e. the beneficiary may be the volunteer not the wider community).
- 4.43 Partners acknowledge the importance of engaging with representative groups that have an interest in the museum, otherwise discussions can descend into 'what can the museums offer my community'. It was highlighted that floor staff within museums are a very good source of information as they pick up comments from visitors (albeit in an unstructured way). Word of mouth and snowballing techniques can be the most cost-effective methods of bringing in new visitors. There is recognition that building an effective community engagement structure takes time and requires a culture change in some museums.

South East

- 4.44 Hub Partners worked together to identify their contribution to the core priorities as identified by MLA, related this to the needs of their users and apportioned funding accordingly.
- 4.45 In the first instance, targeting of groups was dictated by MLA requirements. However within those categories museums are developing activities in response to locally identified gaps and needs such as young people, people with learning difficulties. Needs are identified through both national indicators such as MORI/ACORN surveys and locally captured quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal evidence.
- 4.46 In addition, there are a number of external partners undertaking community engagement activity that might impact on Hub museums. For example, within local authorities there are Adult Care Services, Children's Services and Cultural Services, each of which will be undertaking engagement with the same target groups.
- 4.47 Each project is based on research and/or evidence from previous work with communities and each will be evaluated to develop good practice and to assess impact. In most instances, projects have developed and built upon previous projects and so are not significantly different. However there is perhaps a greater emphasis in this plan on the development of exhibitions and displays involving engagement with communities. Generally, projects are stand alone although there are synergies in approach and target audiences between some of the projects.

4.48 Projects have been developed for and have been marketed to target groups, and there has been provision made for training for staff, before, during or after the projects as appropriate.

South West

4.49 Funding distribution was reorganised in 2009/10 and MLA now has individual spending plans with each museum, removing the Bristol hub from the process. MLA is helping the Hub to encourage the relevant Local Authority Heads of Culture to sit on the Hub Board, oversee the work of the Hub and participate in decision making. The Hub has a broad range of partners, including Subject Specialist Network, the National Portrait Gallery, Tourism South West, and various research organisations.

4.50 Amongst Community Engagement Theme group members there is a shared ethos and approach to community engagement and participation although this is not an agreed or ratified definition. It was noted that there is a need to get museums services /local authorities/partners to think about/take on board 'community engagement' and not just leave it to dedicated staff/teams. It was generally agreed that there is a greater focus on a community participation approach and empowerment.

4.51 In the first instance, the focus of activities was dictated by MLA requirements. However, museums are developing activities in response to locally identified gaps such as BME groups, older people, and rural communities. In the 2009/10 Business Plan there is a 70/30 split between continuing and new projects, though new projects cannot be seen in isolation as they tend to build on previous work.

West Midlands

4.52 The relationships between local authority and other partners appear to be strong. The Hub works with a range of regional agencies and local organisations, including schools, colleges, universities, LEAs, libraries, etc. There are working relationships with non-Hub museums, with individual Hub museums working with regional museums in support of their audience development and education programmes.

4.53 The Renaissance West Midlands Business Plan 2009-11 is not prescriptive in respect of how partner museums should approach community engagement. Each museum has its own community engagement and staff development plans. The Hub used to have a working group for community engagement which is no longer operating. The Business Plan promotes a strong message on a commitment to Community Engagement across the programme.

4.54 The Business Plan refers to the dramatic transformation in community engagement in the West Midlands. This is attributed to having dedicated staff capacity to support community engagement across all partner museums. The Hub reported a definite increase in community engagement activity and participation.

4.55 Each Hub museum has developed its own priority groups:

- Birmingham: responding to the diversity of Birmingham's population, targeting under-represented groups (C2/D/E and BME).
- Coventry: BME, disability group (focus learning disability), disadvantaged young people, residents from priority neighbourhoods.
- Ironbridge: local automotive/high-tech engineering.
- Stoke on Trent: older people, BME (especially Asian and Polish communities).
- Wolverhampton: BME, NEETs, people with disabilities (mental and physical).

- 4.56 A challenge identified is gaining the buy in of museum staff. This is being addressed by the Hub through training programmes and support available to all regional museums. Stoke has developed and delivered training on cultural diversity and disability, tailored for museum staff in addition to community consultation training.
- 4.57 The Hub felt that it had made significant organisational changes regarding the thinking towards engaging excluded groups, particularly in relation to empowering the community to shape collections, displays and other museum services.

Yorkshire & Humber

- 4.58 There are some interesting relationships between curatorial teams and learning/ audience development/outreach teams. A strong message was that community engagement needs to be supported from the top of the organisation and it needs to be part of everyone's job, with clear guidelines that are standardised to show what can be achieved. There is still some evidence of resistance to objects being taken from museums, but also some very positive experiences of doing so. Concerns also relate to both the time and effort involved in organising outreach activities as well as the precious nature of artefacts. Where local people are involved in curating and/or designing exhibitions, an interesting balance was described in that museum staff were said to need to maintain an element of editorial control, given the requirement for a neutrality and/or objectivity of space, and equality of access.
- 4.59 In respect of specifics:
- In Bradford, a full time post was created focusing on communities that do not currently access provision, especially BME communities and young people, with a part time post established with a family focus
 - In Hull, Hub funding has been used primarily for education work, and is said to have transformed the offer to local schools.
 - In Leeds, there is a Hub-funded post which sits with the curatorial team rather than learning, which enables a greater degree of collections being taken out to people as well as encouraging people into traditional spaces.
 - In Sheffield, the Communities Manager has a responsibility to draw in new audiences and develop relationships. Specific work includes activity with the Yemeni community, and young people from disadvantaged communities.
 - In York, the museum is focusing on developing relationships between the public and its collections. It is considered that there is a degree of detachment at present.
- 4.60 The Hub has facilitated learning between partners. Joint working has cultivated more formalised relationships between partners, and e-learning activity has generated a big collective identity, genuinely shared. The China in Yorkshire project was delivered collectively, and Hub partners submitted a joint Yorkshire response for Cultural Olympiad funding – this would never have happened without the Hub collective.

5. Case Study Findings

Overview

- 5.1 It is important to stress that the findings presented in this section relate to the selected case studies and not the totality of Renaissance-funded community engagement activities. Furthermore, there is a specific focus on activity and achievements within the 2009/10 financial year, whereas community engagement activities were undertaken prior to and subsequent to this period. This section presents summary findings, with the full case studies found in the appendices (<http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=1150>)
- 5.2 The 17 Renaissance-funded projects featured in this research have been motivated by the dual ambition to make the profile of visitors more diverse (also supporting attempts to boost visitor numbers) and to involve visitors in shaping services. In some cases, this required the development of new skills to engage with under-represented visitor groups. Some museums were also seeking to raise awareness of how they could support other local priorities (e.g. worklessness, health) in order to put them in a better position with regard to being commissioned by other services.
- 5.3 A few projects also sought to address specific issues on the museum site (e.g. vandalism) or within its locality (e.g. rising worklessness), with a particular emphasis on the latter, encouraging projects that developed general employability skills as well as some vocational skills.

East Sussex Archaeology and Museums Partnership's Workskills and Volunteer Development Project offered sessions in Identifying and Finding a Job, Completing Job Application Forms and Interview Preparation and Interview Techniques, as well as an Introduction to Adobe Photoshop.

- 5.4 It should also be noted that several projects were late replacements for others due to feature in this research or late additions to the list of case studies (the Bristol project replacing another Bristol project, the Lewes project replacing one in Chatham and the London project being added). In the two cases where projects originally proposed were withdrawn (one of them after some initial interview work/evidence gathering had begun) this was done on the advice of project officers/Hub managers, given they were unlikely to proceed as envisaged. A full list of the case study projects is presented in Table 5.5 over page.
- 5.5 At the time of the first round of visits to case study museums that took place in Summer 2009, only 5 of the 17 projects had commenced. Of the remainder, most were due to commence in September and all but 1 by October 2009 (although some elements of some projects did not actually get underway until the final quarter of the financial year). As a consequence, whereas the study was designed to capture a full year's worth of activity and the outputs, outcomes and impacts generated by that activity, in most instances this will have been at least halved. This also means that some projects may not have generated any measurable impacts during the evaluation period. It is hoped that liaison with the study team will have enabled museums staff to adopt approaches and specific tools that will facilitate the capture of impacts in the future, although again, skills and capacity constraints are recognised.

Table 5.5: Case Study Projects

Project	Museum Service	Region	Themes
Adult Literacy Resources	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum	West Midlands	Community cohesion Adult learning
Belonging	Museums Sheffield	Yorkshire & Humber	Community cohesion and adult learning
Broadening Horizons	North East Regional Museums Hub – Regional Programme	North East	Staff/organisational capacity building and volunteer upskilling
Building Diverse Audiences	Stoke-on-Trent Museums	West Midlands	Community cohesion, anti social behaviour, youth employment, health and volunteering
Cell By Date	Bolton Museum and Archive Service	North West	Youth employment/empowerment
Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service	Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service	East	Educational attainment and increased self-esteem
London Moves East: Community Collectors	London Transport Museum	London	Volunteering
Family Resource Packs	Nottingham City Museums and Galleries Service	East Midlands	Volunteering and improved family relationships
Growing Communities	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service	East	Community cohesion
Harris Museum and Art Gallery	Harris Museum and Art Gallery	North West	Volunteering, community cohesion and adult learning
Hidden Gems Project	Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum	South West	Community cohesion/ community ownership
Made in the Tees Valley	Hartlepool Museums and Heritage Service	North East	Youth employment/empowerment
Museums of Oxford Reminiscence Project	Oxford University Museums	South East	Health/wellbeing
Neighbourhood Postcard Project	M Shed	South West	Community cohesion/ wellbeing
Working with Leicester's Older Gujarati Community	Leicester City Arts and Museums	East Midlands	Wellbeing and inclusion
Workskills and Volunteering	East Sussex Archaeology and Museums Partnership, Lewes	South East	Skills development/ employment
Yorkshire Museum and Gardens	York Museums Trust	Yorkshire & Humber	Rehabilitation, Employability and community cohesion

- 5.6 The adoption of target outputs, outcomes and impacts varied from non-existent to quite detailed, with most projects having a reasonable idea of what they were setting out to achieve. However, the adoption of specific indicators of success and means of measurement was an area where there was scope for improvement and something that the study team tried to help to address where appropriate through the provision of advice and support.
- 5.7 SROI calculations were undertaken in respect of 5 case study projects (Cell By Date, Family Resource Packs, London Moves East: Community Collectors, Made in the Tees Valley and Working with Leicester's Older Gujarati Community). This is reported in Appendix 3 and Impact Maps relating to each of these SROI calculations can be found in Appendix 7. See also paragraph 5.47 onwards.

Hub/museum approaches to community engagement

- 5.8 It is difficult to determine the nature of and extent to which community engagement was being undertaken by Hub museums prior to the Renaissance programme. In many cases, museums' past experience has been mainly based on the work of 1 or 2 Outreach Workers and/or liaison with schools (largely involving the hosting of educational visits), but even these more traditional activities tended to be limited and often sporadic. In particular, due to resource constraints in the past, there appears to have been very little done to seek to engage the 'hardest to reach' groups, understandably given that the time required would make it difficult to justify the required investment over a short timeframe.
- 5.9 In attempting to do so more recently, most projects have not progressed at the pace originally envisaged as it has taken much longer than expected to identify target individuals and attract their interest. Thereafter, there have also been challenges in some instances in sustaining that interest. Nevertheless, it is certainly encouraging that there have been attempts by Hub museums to use Renaissance monies to explore new types of engagement (by approach and/or target group) with their communities. The approaches of a minority of Hub museums would suggest there is merit in providing guidance to clarify the distinction between community engagement and audience development.
- 5.10 The projects in question involve a mix of continuation work with specific groups (defined by age, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic status) and entirely new undertakings, with the latter requiring museums to scale rather steep learning curves in some instances. The learning itself is of course a big positive, albeit that, for some, it has been a less than comfortable journey. Even so, lessons will have been learnt from failures/frustrations as much as from successes, with short term difficulties almost an inevitable consequence of piloting new ways of working.

-
- 5.11 In all cases partnership working has been a key characteristic of projects with most commonly involving 1 or 2 partners. These have been drawn from other museums (e.g. *Broadening Horizons*), other local authority departments (e.g. *Working with Young People in Fostering*), other public sector bodies (e.g. *Workskills and Volunteer Development*) and the voluntary and community sector (e.g. *Neighbourhood Postcards*). However, in a few of the cases where new relationships were being developed, capacity issues within partner organisations have frustrated delivery, especially where only 1 partner was involved. This highlights the benefits (in terms of lower risk) of working with multiple partners, wherever possible.
- 5.12 Unfortunately, the nature of some projects has been such that they relied on one partner (or one partner in particular) to play a key role. This does not necessarily mean them taking on significant responsibilities (museums have been prepared to do that) but, crucially, providing access to the target group that was to be the focus of the project. Furthermore, where this relied upon a single individual within the partner organisation, there were problems caused in at least a third of the projects where that individual was absent from work for an extended period (and not replaced) or was unable to deliver on the commitments given due to other work pressures/priorities. It has also been the case that some individuals within partner organisations have either been unable to convince colleagues to share their personal enthusiasm or have acted as blockers, hindering rather than facilitating access to target groups or seeking to control access to an extent that has proved unhelpful.
- 5.13 The best partnerships (e.g. *Cell by Date*) have been based on a mutual understanding of the shared benefits arising from collaboration. In short, these partnerships deliver benefits to each partner that exceed those that would be expected to be achieved from working in isolation or with other partners, encouraging commitment and sustained interest.
- 5.14 The main focus of activities has been young people, which were identified as a priority group in their own right within 6 of the projects and included within a priority group (e.g. families) in 4 other projects. More specifically, there was a particular emphasis on those young people considered unlikely to visit museums (other than by compulsion on school trips) and/or thought likely to benefit from engagement because of their personal circumstances (behavioural issues, learning under-achievement etc.). In addition, there were examples of projects targeting older people, BME groups, disabled groups and offenders, whilst others sought a broader appeal.
- 5.15 Indeed, it is worth noting the challenge/potential incompatibility between focusing on boosting visitor numbers and focusing on making the profile of visitors more balanced, it being easier to attract those minded to visit museums rather than spend a lot of time, money and effort seeking to engage (potentially small numbers) of people from under-represented groups. This also underlines the previous point (paragraph 4.13) about the danger of over-emphasising the role of outputs in measuring the value of community engagement projects, where the emphasis ought to be on the quality/intensity of the intervention rather than generating large output numbers.
- Community engagement activities**
- 5.16 Projects span a diverse range of activities, with the most common characteristic being the creation and fulfilment of volunteering opportunities. In most projects in which this featured, a Volunteer Co-ordinator had been appointed to promote volunteering opportunities, although in one case this was more about capturing the amount of existing volunteering than generating new volunteering opportunities/attracting additional volunteers.

- 5.17 About half of the projects have sought to offer some form of learning/work experience, either to improve employability generally or to enhance specific skills. This has mainly been informal/non-accredited. However, whilst work with some groups is expected to have significant impacts, other activities appear no different to those that might take place on a school/group trip to a museum, for example, with no ongoing engagement and no apparent legacy outcomes/impacts (which may reflect the time-limited nature of the current Renaissance programme).
- 5.18 5.18 There were also marked differences in the level of engagement achieved through various activities. With reference to the Ladder of Participation, a few were clearly about acting/deciding together (i.e. quite advanced levels of community engagement) and in these cases the rationale has been to give beneficiaries more of a say in the process, to the point where they will be working with the museum to deliver the activity, receiving guidance and assistance rather than the activities being prescribed by museum staff, or even informing future programming. However, in most instances, people have been simply participating, albeit gaining a lot from the experience in many cases.
- 5.19 In addition, a number of projects (most notably in the North East Regional Museums Hub project, but also those in East Sussex, Nottingham, Preston and Sheffield) included some capacity building within museums as they explored new partner relationships and/or working with new communities of interest.
- 5.20 The majority of projects have suffered delays and/or disruptions in delivery, causing some museums considerable problems in undertaking community engagement activities. In part, this is a reflection of the fact that many projects were based on vague concepts set out in Hub Business Plans, which subsequently had to be worked up (and sometimes not until new staff were in post) or based on assumptions about target groups that proved inaccurate. The main difficulty appears to have been identifying and maintaining engagement with target groups, especially young people. Some projects seem to have progressed without investing sufficient time in project planning/scoping to develop an understanding of who the target group really were, what their needs and demands were and what to do to engage them and sustain their interest. It should also be recognised that where new groups were to be engaged, through work with new partners in challenging contexts, delays and difficulties might be regarded as almost inevitable, and yet the possibility (probability) of this happening was not provided for in project planning or delivery.

There is a clear need for better planning to ensure theory can be converted into practice, seeking support and guidance from appropriate partners at an early stage but ensuring that any further partner commitments are formalised, not merely reliant on the goodwill of one individual.

- 5.21 In some cases, the response was to alter the approach. For example, if a group of 'hard to reach' young people could not be engaged, another group of young people have been engaged. This was considered by some museums to be a pragmatic response, although others decided to retain their focus and seek to change the basis on which the target group was engaged in order to make their participation in a project more appealing. As one project officer put it: "we need to forget our own agenda and adopt other people's".

Community engagement is inherently difficult when it involves groups that do not traditionally engage with a service to any significant extent. Whilst understandable that encountering difficulties (and given a need to generate outputs) may encourage a re-focusing of activities on a different group, the preferred re-design is of the project itself in order to make it more appealing to the original group with which it sought to engage .

Organisation/staff outcomes and impacts

- 5.22 The extent of organisation/staff outcomes and impacts has inevitably been limited by disruptions and delays to projects, as well as some projects not progressing as anticipated. Some museums staff have developed their competencies, in terms of project/service planning, organisation project management and community engagement skills.
- 5.23 However, there are concerns that the loss of staff/secondees once projects come to an end will see the loss of the knowledge that has been built up as well as the capacity to deliver. Although in some cases there is recognition of community engagement being the responsibility of all staff (not just Outreach Workers or Education Officers), this has still not permeated across all museum services/the museums sector (as represented by the case studies). In this context, Renaissance ought to be being used as a resource to develop/embed community engagement skills/practices (especially soft skills, managing groups, managing expectations, recognising different learning pace etc.), not merely bolt them on for a time-limited period.
- 5.24 There are two main organisational legacies: firstly, the greater understanding amongst some museums staff of specific communities of interest and relevant issues pertaining to them; and secondly, in an increasingly positive approach to engage with communities that have featured within projects and others that might be engaged by using the lessons learnt in project delivery.

Staff at the Herbert Museum in Coventry reported impacts on their skills development from their experience of working with adult learners, not least in being able to speak with knowledge and authority about the local adult education curriculum.

- 5.25 In spite of the difficulties reported, partnerships have strengthened, with partners stating that they have gained a better understanding of each other and a greater appreciation of the opportunities and benefits linked to collaborative working. It therefore seems plausible to suggest that the relationships fostered by projects could lead to further joint working and, in turn, the generation of additional outcomes and impacts in the future. However, there is a need to ensure that such partners are strategic, not just project-specific and that resources can be made available to facilitate partnership working.

The Cell by Date project offered a means for Bolton Museum to work with the local authority's Entry to Employment (E2E) provider (Genesis) for the first time, offering the Museum new partnership and community engagement opportunities and giving the E2E provider a new option for the delivery of its programmes.

- 5.26 In some cases, museums believed that projects had helped to raise their profile, both with the specific community groups on which projects have been targeted and, in some cases, with the public (and, indeed, across the museums sector) more generally.

5.27 Other outcomes/impacts are more project-specific, for example:

- In one project, museum staff have been volunteering in the project to further their understanding of relevant issues, both to be able to offer support to the project and to inform their longer term engagement with a new partner.
- In one case, the project has contributed to a museum 'reinventing itself' by promoting an approach to interpretation that incorporates peoples' experiences and reflects these back to wider audiences.
- Non-hub museums engaged in one of the projects reported significant enhancements to partnership working (identifying new partners and new types of collaboration) and that this in turn was facilitating engagement with a variety of communities of interest.

Beneficiary outcomes/impacts

5.28 Few projects worked with the same cohort of beneficiaries throughout the project period, which inevitably made assessing outcomes and impacts particularly difficult given inconsistent levels of individual engagement. Other challenges were presented by beneficiary numbers being smaller than expected (requiring caution in making too much of findings based on small numbers of people i.e. they were accurate for those involved but ought not be extrapolated) and beneficiary interests being different to those originally envisaged. It is also noteworthy that Business Plans did not articulate the rationale for target setting, raising questions about the appropriateness of targets adopted.

In designing projects it is important not to assume too much in advance of initial engagement and to gain a full understanding of relevant issues in order to ensure that activities are attuned to beneficiary needs/interests.

5.29 Through the work carried out by the study team ~~ERS~~ with museums/museum services, they will now be much more aware of the importance of capturing and disseminating evidence of outputs, outcomes and impacts. However, although museums staff will be better versed in approaches to data capture and some will be able to utilise specific tools, it is unclear as to whether the technical skills and capacity exist to amass and analyse evidence or indeed the will to go beyond MLA's existing monitoring requirements. Furthermore, some of the individual contacts changed during the course of the study and many of those that remain are on fixed term contracts and face the possibility of not having contracts renewed should Renaissance funding be reduced from April 2011, which could see any organisational learning lost. Towards the end of the study period, and reiterated at the Practitioner Workshop, there appears to be an expectation that public sector funding cuts feeding through to the museums sector will force a return to 'core business', which may in part explain an apparent disinclination in some quarters in putting data capture systems in place that might have limited scope for application.

5.30 It is also important to note that not all beneficiaries participated of their own volition, with one project working with offenders involved in a Community Payback scheme and two others working with Entry to Employment providers. However, even these projects were able to encourage improved behaviour, more positive attitudes, raise levels of confidence and enhance skills.

5.31 In many cases, project participants report that they are strongly inclined to visit the museum in question in the future. The findings presented in Appendix 3 show how many projects have positively changed perceptions of museums and in doing so made them more accessible. It would be interesting to establish whether the enthusiasm generated by projects is sustained and the intentions to visit museums is followed through but, in the absence of beneficiary tracking and given the limitations of visitor surveys (which, for example, do not identify specific ethnic groups), it will not be possible to determine this definitively. Related to this is whether museums continue to explore community engagement opportunities, the planning process followed in doing so and outcome/impact measurement mechanisms adopted to verify results.

Contribution to National Indicators¹⁶

5.32 Given the relatively small numbers of beneficiaries (hundreds rather than thousands across the 17 projects), and the relatively short amount of contact time in many cases, there is a need for caution in claiming significant contributions to National Indicators (NIs). It is though possible to describe the NIs to which these projects have the potential to contribute. Across the 17 projects there appear to be a wide range of contributions, hence whilst aggregation is inappropriate (as it would imply an average which would be misleading) each project can assess the nature and scale of its own contribution.

5.33 Although on the face of it there are obvious contributions to NI 10 (Visits to museums or galleries) and NI 11 (Engagement in the arts), it is too early to say definitively whether this is likely to be sustained over the long term. In any event, more important in this context are NIs that relate more closely to community engagement than audience development. Other National Indicators to which projects have or have the potential to contribute towards included the following, with the most common in bold:

NI1: % of people who get on well together

NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood

NI 3 Civic participation in the local area

NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering

NI13: Migrants' English language skills and knowledge

NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

NI 18: Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision

NI 19: Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders

NI 23: Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration

NI 45: Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, training and employment

NI 50 Emotional health of children

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities

NI117: 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment

NI 119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing

NI 125: Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care

NI 138: Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood

NI152: Working age people on out of work benefits

NI173: Flows onto incapacity benefit from employment

¹⁶ References to NIs pertain to those in place during 2009/10, rather than the revised list of indicators published in April 2010, which no longer includes some NIs (including NI10: Visits to museums or galleries).

- 5.34 In respect of the most common NI contributions, some examples from a selection of case study projects are offered below:

NI 2 – The **Neighbourhood Postcard Project** (M Shed, Bristol) involves working with local people to interpret Bristol and create displays which aim to challenge perceptions of what it means/meant to live and work in the City across time.

NI 4 – The **Growing Communities Project** (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) involves the engagement of the local community in planning and decision making in a 'growth point' area.

NI 6 - The **London Moves East: Community Collectors Project** (London Transport Museum) has used volunteers in a curatorial role as part of its community engagement strategy, involving 340 volunteer hours.

NI 110 - The **Family Resource Packs Project** (Nottingham City Museums and Galleries Service) has provided backpacks aimed at children aged 3 to 6 and aged 7 to 10, with the activities designed to encourage interaction between family members and to improve their engagement with the museum.

NI 117 – The **Cell By Date Project** (Bolton Museum and Archive Service) worked with young people attending the local Entry to Employment (E2E) provider in recognition of the local priority within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to reduce the number of NEETs.

NI 119 - **Museums of Oxford Reminiscence Project** (Oxford University Museums) delivers a reminiscence service to elderly people, using heritage objects to stimulate discussion and encourage participants to share their memories with each other.

- 5.35 Where museums are able to demonstrate contributions to NIs, this could open up opportunities to be commissioned by funders outside the sector to help them deliver against their targets. There is therefore a need for museums to recognise the broader implications of their work and promote to Primary Care Trusts, Youth Offending Teams, training bodies etc. the potential to use museums as a conduit to engage target groups and to deliver projects that will generate relevant outcomes.

Museums should use some of the good practice examples within this report to demonstrate to prospective funders how collaborations can work to good effect, whilst ensuring that appropriate data gathering mechanisms are in place and measurement tools utilised to evidence outcomes and impacts.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.36 Some projects have given local people the opportunity to find out about activities and opportunities that could contribute toward healthy lifestyles and to mental and physical wellbeing. One provided an opportunity for 48 offenders to work outdoors on physical activities and another provided 10 older people with the opportunity to participate in group sessions with self-reported health benefits.

Stronger and Safer Communities

- 5.37 Several projects have sought to improve group and inter-group dialogue and understanding. This seems to have worked well across different cultures but less well across different generations, other than through the promotion of family activities and strengthening relationships within families. There have also been good examples of strengthening place attachment and identity and a project involving older people also seems to have promoted greater confidence and with it a sense of feeling safer within their community.
- 5.38 Interviews with offenders indicated changing attitudes in terms of increased pride and self-worth and a greater value being placed on social spaces, which might suggest that further offending had been discouraged, but caution is advised in placing too much weight on this.

Strengthening Public Life

- 5.39 Those projects that have involved people in designing and/or delivering activities (not merely participating in them) have been able to demonstrate the potential for involvement in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement. This has also been supported by attracting new volunteers and improving/broadening the skills of existing volunteers. Offenders reported a new sense of civic pride arising from their involvement in projects.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Action, Behaviour and Progression

- 5.40 One of the upsides of beneficiary numbers being relatively small in some cases has been the ability to engage with individuals on a more intensive basis. This appears to have been especially helpful in respect of those with behavioural issues. In particular, young people who have previously been excluded (or excluded themselves) from museum visits as a result of poor behaviour are reported to have behaved much better by being actively engaged in project activities. Similarly, those responsible for offenders reported much improved standards of behaviour, which appears to be linked to having them involved in positive activities with a purpose.
- 5.41 There also seems to be an appetite to learn more and it will be interesting to see the extent to which this is followed up.

Attitudes and Values

- 5.42 Improved confidence was widely reported, especially amongst young people and members of minority ethnic groups. In one project, offenders reported more positive attitudes as a result of participation in one project and a greater sense of belonging to society in their local area.

Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity

- 5.43 Projects have tended to provide an opportunity for beneficiaries, especially young people but across all age ranges, to have fun and be creative. Across almost all projects, high levels of enjoyment were reported.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 5.44 A number of projects have promoted informal learning, encouraging beneficiaries to explore the museum and ask questions about the objects on display (e.g. learning facts or information) and make sense of what they were seeing. Several projects also promoted greater knowledge and understanding of local areas, the issues impacting upon them and their histories. Non-hub museums involved in one project reported gaining knowledge and understanding of partners and local communities and their respective interests.

Skills

- 5.45 These related to both generic and more specific (vocational) skill. In respect of the former, young people in particular have developed social and communication skills and grown in confidence.
- 5.46 In respect of the latter, one volunteer training project involved the development a range of skills designed to improve participants' prospects of finding employment, through training sessions on identifying and finding a job, completing job application forms and interview preparation/ techniques. Several projects involved learning specific skills relating to photography/digital images, one involved the development of research skills and another improvement of English basic skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

- 5.47 Where it has been possible to evidence social value generated by Renaissance investments, these related mainly to volunteering, learning, employability and confidence building. SROI calculations were undertaken in respect of 5 of the case study projects, with 3 of the 5 generating an SROI ratio greater than 1 (i.e. the benefits generated outweighed the costs of delivery). In this context, it is important to stress that SROI ratios are specific to each case and it is not appropriate to compare the ratios generated by different projects and thereby seek to determine one as performing better than another.
- 5.48 Barriers to utilising SROI highlighted during the delivery of the study included: the late start to many projects (shortening their delivery time); the short duration for which many participants were involved in a project (with very few working with the same cohort of people throughout the project period); and the vagueness of expected outcomes/impacts in some cases (with more of a focus on outputs, in terms of boosting museums visits by under-represented groups). This is further explained (on a project-by-project basis) in Appendix 3.
- 5.49 It is noted that a number of the case study project leaders have adopted the use of SROI for other projects and as such the future evidence base on the use of SROI will continue to grow as more staff explore the use of this analytical tool, as a means of capturing the full range of project benefits, including 'softer' outcomes/impacts. Capturing social values is more straightforward and robust where activities take place over a reasonably long period of time, enabling their full impacts to be appreciated, where sample sizes are large enough to be reliable and where activities take place with a fixed cohort of people. Further detail can be found in the full case studies within the appendices (<http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=1150>).

Summary

- 5.50 Project delays and disruptions have made consultation very difficult in many cases, with activities (and consultation exercises linked to them) being postponed and cancelled, beneficiaries being difficult to access and projects extending beyond the study period. Whilst these challenges were not presented by all projects, at least one of these descriptions could be applied to the vast majority of case study projects. The reasons for delays and disruptions were of course individual to each project (see Appendix 3), with common themes being as described in paragraph 5.20.

Successful community engagement

- 5.51 Decisions to focus on particular target groups appear to have been based largely on past work with those groups or a desire to work with particular partners (including other departments within the same local authority as the museums service). However, whilst some projects might be regarded as 'strategic' in fitting into a wider plan (at museum level, Hub level or in line with MLA guidance), the absence of a strict definition of community engagement appears to have afforded museums a good deal of flexibility as to who they engage with and on what basis.
- 5.52 The ability to deliver projects has required a degree of pragmatism in some cases, be it in terms of target groups engaged, the activities undertaken or the timescales for delivery. Whilst the reasoning is understood, there is a danger of some museums compromising to the extent that there is project delivery for the sake of it and which does not generate the desired outcomes and impacts for the types of people for which this element of the Renaissance Programme was intended. For example, several projects, having faced barriers to engaging target groups, switched to engaging groups that were easier to access. Whilst this satisfied output targets, it failed to address the issues on which projects were predicated.
- 5.53 Whilst there are a few good examples of particular groups becoming involved in the design/selection of some displays/exhibits, this stops well short of community groups becoming involved in the management of museums (albeit this was unlikely to be achieved over the timescale within which case study projects were delivered). Even where these higher levels of engagement are evident, they relate to discrete projects that are time-limited. For the most part, projects focus on attracting under-represented audiences, although it should be recognised that this might be regarded as just the first stage of longer term and more fundamental engagement.

Providing evidence of success

- 5.54 Whilst museums have set output targets, the degree to which they have been exceeded and the lack of a justification for those targets within Hub Business Plans would suggest that these figures are rather speculative in many cases. There is therefore a need for better planning and better evidence to establish what sorts of indicators of success are most appropriate and what scale of achievement ought to be expected given the resources available and the project context.
- 5.55 Thereafter, there is a need for museums to ensure that they have systems in place to measure the outcomes and, in particular, the impacts of their community engagement work over the longer term. For example, there is a need to demonstrate that projects that have enhanced perceptions of museums and enthused people about visiting museums do actually lead to more visits by under-represented groups. Similarly, there would be considerable merit in establishing the extent to which participants in projects that have enhanced generic or specific employability skills have gone on to secure jobs and those that have expressed an interest in further learning have successfully followed this up.

- 5.56 In order to provide further evidence of achievement, museums need to ensure that they capture GSOs, GLOs and their contribution to local and national performance frameworks. Where appropriate, they might also pursue SROI as a measurement tool. This would provide valuable qualitative evidence (and, possibly, additional quantitative evidence) to complement and supplement existing performance management indicators.
- Organisational learning**
- 5.57 Key learning points for museums/their staff appear to have been:
- the need to allow sufficient time for planning (and to have the skills to do so effectively);
 - the need to engage partners (internal and external) and to do so not only with those who have the right credentials, but also sufficient capacity to perform their designated roles;
 - an appreciation of the difficulties in identifying target beneficiaries, engaging them and sustaining that engagement (focusing on outcomes and impacts, rather than simply ticking the community engagement box); and
 - securing the commitment of senior management to community to community engagement from the outset, embedding approaches to community engagement and developing a succession plan for when dedicated resources reduce.
- 5.58 There are serious concerns that any depletion in resources for community engagement will see skills and capacity lost, in part due to the fact that in many cases skills/capacity have been vested in one or a few people and not embedded across the organisation. Furthermore, with numbers of non-Renaissance funded museum staff having reduced in many instances, there would be fewer staff available to undertake community engagement, with no guarantee that they possess appropriate skills. This is not necessarily an argument for sustaining all community engagement posts but recognition that in many cases the learning afforded by community engagement activities has not crossed too many internal museum boundaries.
- 5.59 Mapping out the extent to which skills/capacity are embedded within each of the 17 case study museums is no easy task and, in any event, will have been impacted by all of their community engagement projects, not just the one on which this research has focused. Nevertheless, feedback from museums suggests that there are issues about the time that non-Renaissance funded staff can devote to active community engagement and relating to museum priorities/strategies. Part of the solution might be to sustain resources, but part of it lies in convincing some of those in more senior roles that community engagement is a priority and ought to form part of core business.

6. Non-Hub Museums

Introduction

- 6.1 In order to explore alternative approaches to community engagement, visits were made to a selection of non-hub museums, suggested by members of the Study Steering Group. They were as follows:
- Harewood House Museum, Leeds
 - Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL), Stowmarket
 - Watford Museum
 - Woodhorn Museum, Ashington
 - Yorkshire Waterways Museum, Goole
- 6.2 It should be noted that it is not intended for direct (and inappropriate) comparisons to be made between non-Hubs (undertaking long term programmes, in some cases with Renaissance funding and Hub support) and Hubs (undertaking short term projects, some of which are exploring new areas of activity). It is simply the case that some of the approaches adopted by non-Hubs may offer additional ideas and inspiration to Hubs in the context of their community engagement projects. It is also acknowledged that some of the good practice described here is also a feature of Hub museums.
- ### Approaches to community engagement
- 6.3 Naturally, all museums have a vested interest in increasing visitor numbers, as this generates income (through admission charges and retail sales), raises their profile and can lead to other outcomes, such as the attraction of volunteers. However, in many cases, non-Hub museums have not traditionally been overly interested in the profile of their visitors. The prevailing view amongst many such museums has been along the lines of: "we don't care who they are, so long as they pay to get in".
- 6.4 That said, there are some non-Hub museums that are very much rooted in the communities that they serve and which have a clear aim to attract and involve people from communities that tend to be under-represented in the profile of museum visitors as a whole. Indeed, there were good examples of this amongst the non-hub museums visited as part of this study, with at least 3 of the 5 explicitly stating their commitment to local communities and indeed owing their existence to local communities. Some even go so far as to articulate a 'social mission'. As such, the notion of community engagement is woven into their fabric.
- 6.5 Even where in receipt of local authority funding, non-Hub museums tend to have different targets/motivations to Hub museums and therefore adopt different performance indicators,. As such, they are in the advantageous position of being able to operate freely and flexibly, being open to suggestions and quick to respond to new opportunities. These can either be ideas emanating from local communities or partners/prospective partners seeking to use the museum as a conduit through which they can engage with local communities.
- 6.6 Most commonly, community engagement activities undertaken by the 5 non-Hub museums listed above focus on the following groups:
- Adult learners
 - Low income groups
 - Offenders
 - Older People (especially those at risk of social exclusion)
 - People with mental health issues
 - Rural/isolated communities
 - Young people

- 6.7 In addition, they also cover the following:
- African and Caribbean communities
 - Asian Communities
 - Long term unemployed
 - People who have drug/alcohol problems
 - The travelling community

Community engagement activities

- 6.8 These have covered a wide variety of activities:

At Harewood House, specific activities have been based on particular themes designed to appeal to specific audiences (e.g. Caribbean Food Weekend and Older People's Day).

MEAL has a particular focus on learning/training.

Watford Museum has taken advantage of the positive perception of museums as safe, trusted and accessible spaces to work with mental health groups/charities.

Woodhorn has focused particularly on the mining heritage of the surrounding area and the personal histories of local people, seeking to get them involved as participants not just visitors. In this way, the museum has sought to develop a sense of ownership; a museum that is both in the community and of the community.

Yorkshire Waterways Museum undertakes projects with specific target groups, including young people, offenders and other non-traditional museum visitors.

- 6.9 More routinely, there has commonly been liaison with local schools, mainly in terms of hosting visits, but also involving some outreach work. More recently, several non-Hubs have accessed additional funding, (e.g. through Heritage Lottery Fund) in order to resource new community engagement activities with under-represented groups. Where external funding has been sourced, this has been the prompt to articulate audience development/community engagement strategies.
- 6.10 The audiences that each museum attracts do of course relate to their settings and their history, which in turn provide attachments (or not) to particular communities of interest. So, Harewood House (a stately home) tends to attract white, relatively affluent people. Nevertheless, it has been specifically targeting black and minority ethnic groups and has become one of the very few 'stately homes' to develop an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) resource pack for use by local colleges.

Organisation/staff outcomes and impacts

- 6.11 Non-Hub museum staff interviewed reported positive experiences from a personal point of view (greater job satisfaction, increased confidence and enhanced community engagement experience). Although these benefits do not appear to have been fully embedded into the wider organisation in all cases, equally, there are instances where skills development and attitudes to working with different groups of visitors have enhanced the museum as a service provider.

- 6.12 Furthermore, in pursuing community engagement activities, some staff have been given accredited training (such as undertaking an NVQ in Customer Service) as well as non-accredited training (such as equality opportunities and diversity). In this context, Watford Museum in particular has been at pains to stress that community engagement is everyone's responsibility, ensuring that all front of house staff are equipped with appropriate skills and information.

The 'whole museum' approach to community engagement evident in some non-Hub museums means community engagement being seen as everyone's responsibility, not just those in 'community' posts.

- 6.13 Through their community engagement work, non-Hub museums have established partnerships with a range of organisations, including universities and colleges, government agencies, voluntary and community sector bodies and Renaissance-funded museums/regional Hubs. In the case of Watford, these relationships have developed to such a point that the museum is seen as a key element in the delivery of services for people with mental health problems.

Community outcomes and impacts

- 6.14 Whilst there is quantitative evidence in terms of numbers of projects and participants, there is nothing substantive that has been recorded in respect of community outcomes and impacts. For the most part, non-Hub museums are restricted to reporting anecdotal evidence and feedback from partners. Generally, this suggests that people enjoy participating in museum-related activities, enjoy the interaction with other people and feel more confident and, often, healthier (in mind and body).
- 6.15 In one case (Museum of East Anglian Life), a social enterprise - Abbot's Hall Enterprises - was set up to address inequalities in the labour market and support people into meaningful work based activity. As well as providing training, it offers a vehicle for selling the products produced by its trainees. Training opportunities have delivered positive outcomes for the participants, most notably in relation to skills development and employment. To date, 35 people have entered work and more than 129 have had certified training.
- 6.16 The museum also has an active volunteer programme, with the Volunteer Co-ordinator currently looking after 140 volunteers, who are involved in a variety of tasks such as assisting in front-of-house roles and maintaining steam engines. Volunteers reported making new friends, learning new things, becoming physically more active, looking at the world in new ways and having gone on to do new things with families and friends.
- 6.17 In addition, these museums tend to draw most of their paid staff from their local area, thereby providing a valued source of employment. Numbers vary, but can be significant at some of the larger sites, especially in respect of seasonal employment (50 jobs at Woodhorn is significant in a town such as Ashington, where unemployment is relatively high). In addition, several of the non-Hubs offer placement opportunities. More generally, there is a sense of improving people's employability, through the development of both generic and specific skills.

Contribution to National Indicators¹⁷

- 6.18 Non-Hub museums tend not to capture any outputs or outcomes that are linked to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) or National Indicators (NIs) for the simple reason that they sit outside of local authority structures, hence there being no requirement or incentive to do so.
- 6.19 Nevertheless, amongst the 5 non-hubs that featured in this research, it is thought likely that their work contributes to a number of NIs. In addition to obvious contributions to **NI 10 (Visits to museums or galleries)** and **NI 11 (Engagement in the arts)**, they appear to have contributed to the following, with the most common in bold:
- NI1: % of people who get on well together**
 - NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood**
 - NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering**
 - NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities
 - NI 119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
 - NI124: People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition
 - NI 151: Overall Employment Rate
 - NI152: Working age people on out of work benefits
- 6.20 Museums ought to be alive to their actual and potential contributions to local and national performance frameworks, given that this might persuade other agencies to commission museum-based activities in order to help them achieve their target outcomes.

¹⁷ References to NIs pertain to those in place during 2009/10, rather than the revised list of indicators published in April 2010, which no longer includes some NIs (including NI10: Visits to museums or galleries).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1 The key evaluation questions posed by MLA in the study brief were as follows:
- **Reaching targets & strategic objectives:** Has the programme reached its agreed targets? What contribution does it make to MLA's strategic objectives?
 - **Implementation:** How effective is the management of the Programme in delivering agreed objectives and reaching targets?
 - **Outcomes:** What are the effects of the Programme on MLA's main stakeholders (in particular, users and non-users)?
 - **Additionality:** Could the same impact have been reached through different mechanisms or programmes?
 - **Policy and Programme Development:** What are the needs of the sector? What models have been tried before to deal with these needs? Which specific needs is MLA best positioned to address?
- 7.2 In seeking to answer the above, it is important to emphasise that this study looked at 17 case study projects and can therefore only comment authoritatively on those projects, rather than the community engagement strand of Renaissance as a whole. Where there are consistent findings across the case studies it might be reasonable to suggest that they have broader currency but, equally, some of the findings were specific to individual projects.
- Reaching Targets and Strategic Objectives**
- 7.3 Output data at national level indicates that most of the targets set for the totality of community engagement projects for 2010/11 are likely to have been met, given the progress achieved over the first three quarters.
- 7.4 In particular, learning activities appear to have engaged numbers of young people and adults far in excess of the levels anticipated. As ever, this raises questions as to how stretching these targets were in the first place (given the extent to which they have been surpassed), in addition to which there is no further information about the nature/extent of individual engagement. As such, whilst progress against targets would appear to represent a significant contribution to MLA's strategic objectives, it is impossible to determine overall impact. Nevertheless, the scale of engagement has to be encouraging and this suggests a wealth of qualitative evidence is available to be gathered, analysed and presented to demonstrate the value of these activities.
- 7.5 Based on the evidence gathered in this study, most projects have been unable to match their aspirations within the time period under consideration (2009/10), although there was potential for some activities to bear fruit after the study period (both because activities were continuing and to allow sufficient time for outcomes/impacts to be realised). It is also the case that museums were at different starting points with regard to community engagement, and so MLA's assumption that the groundwork had been done, enabling Renaissance funding to be used to make further progress, did not hold in all cases. So, whereas some projects were able to utilise existing partnerships/engagement routes, others were starting from scratch. Even so, it should not be taken that there was a direct correlation between the extent of past experience and success, as some of those building on past activities failed to make much progress whilst some others undertaking wholly new work made great strides. Nevertheless, in allocating funding, there would be merit in considering what are reasonable expectations in each local context and gearing targets accordingly.

- 7.6 Hub Business Plans tend to describe loose aspirations to engage with particular groups without setting out detailed justification for doing so or for pursuing the courses of action proposed. With Renaissance resourcing both a learning process for museums to undertake engagement as well as delivery, this means that projects can be ill defined at the time of funding approval. Target groups may well represent a priority, but the practicalities of engaging them and sustaining that engagement are often not fully considered in advance. Even where partners have been identified who might appear helpful in delivery, they cannot be relied upon until those partnerships have been tested. Effective partners can play a major role in ensuring project success, but ineffective partners can scupper a project, and there is therefore a strong case for museums mitigating associated risks. In this context, short term project achievements can be modest, but the experience gained ought to usefully inform community engagement in the future

Implementation

- 7.7 The approach to programme management appears to have some scope for improvement. The relatively recent introduction of procedures that require museums to provide information on outputs and finances has not have been universally welcomed by Hub museums, but is no more onerous than those attached to any other funding regime of this scale. At the time of writing this report, only three quarters worth of monitoring data had been submitted (alongside evidence gathered in various monitoring/verification/audit visits) and there will need to time to analyse at least one year's worth of data and reflect upon it, in order to guide the future development of Renaissance. Some museums report the introduction of new and more demanding performance management procedures to have been challenging. Implementation would be greatly helped were there to be more clarity about what activities were being pursued and why, the most appropriate means of assessing impacts and how these might be reported most meaningfully. As it is, there is a lot of bureaucracy around performance management, but very little intelligence is being gathered that can inform future practice.
- 7.8 Deploying existing staff to 'do' community engagement places unreasonable expectations on those individuals and is unlikely to always deliver desired outcomes. In addition, there is potential to utilise a broader range of skills than those traditionally found within the museums sector. Ideally, existing staff would develop skills by working alongside those with community engagement experience, rather than being simply allocated a role. This would both help to deliver projects more successfully in the short term and embed learning over the longer term.
- 7.9 Indeed, it is apparent that Renaissance monies have not been used to their fullest extent in developing approaches to community engagement that are embedded and sustainable. Furthermore, this might be less of an issue were it confined to natural staff turnover and people moving between museums and transferring skills/knowledge along the way. The concern here is that posts will simply be lost across the sector. Once again, these comments ought to be viewed within the context of a museums sector that had very limited community engagement experience and skills prior to 2009/10 Business Plans being implemented.

Outcomes

- 7.10 Notwithstanding the above, museums report having learnt a great deal from undertaking community engagement projects, albeit that a significant component of that learning relates to the difficulties in delivering certain types of activities. In particular, many museums report difficulties in respect of partner relationships, despite which partnerships have strengthened, leading to better understanding of partner agendas, priorities and the ability to follow up initial enthusiasm with concrete actions.

- 7.11 In addition, museums have gained deeper insights into specific communities of interest and the issues pertaining to them and are much better placed to engage with these groups now than before they commenced work on their projects.
- 7.12 So far as communities are concerned, given the timing of project delivery, it is as yet too soon to expect many of the projects to have generated longer term/significant beneficiary impacts. Nevertheless, they have certainly produced a wide range of benefits, including a variety of Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) and Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs), as well as contributions to corresponding local and national performance frameworks (including National Indicators).
- 7.13 In respect of GSOs:
- Stronger and Safer Communities* – was a particularly strong theme, with improvements in inter-group dialogue and understanding. For example, the *Working with New Communities* project in Thetford demonstrated how place attachment and identity could be strengthened.
- Strengthening Public Life* - projects that have involved people in designing and/or delivering activities have been able to demonstrate participant involvement in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement. For example, the work of Leicester Arts and Museums Service with a group of elderly South Asian women helped to build their capacity and confidence to organise events and museum visits
- Health and Wellbeing* – physical and mental, particularly the latter. For example, a very high proportion of beneficiaries in Museums of Oxford's *Reminiscence* project reported enhanced wellbeing as a result of their participation.
- 7.14 In respect of GLOs:
- Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity* – came through especially strongly, projects have provided an opportunity for beneficiaries across all age ranges to have fun and be creative. The *Working with Young People in Fostering* project in Colchester is one of many that has provided an opportunity for young people to have fun, as well as be creative and explore, experiment and make things through working with artists.
- Attitudes and Values* - improved confidence was widely reported. For example, those supervising the *Yorkshire Museum and Gardens* project reported much more positive attitudes amongst the offenders taking part.
- Knowledge and Understanding* - projects have promoted informal learning, encouraging beneficiaries to explore the museum and ask questions about the objects on display, and greater knowledge and understanding of local areas, the issues impacting upon them and their histories. For example, young people participating in the *Made in the Tees Valley* project learned facts and information about their industrial heritage which they used to make sense of their social history and present experience.
- Skills* - young people in particular have developed social and communication skills and grown in confidence, in addition to which some participants have developed more specific vocational and other skills designed to enhance employability. For example, all of the young people participating in Bolton Museum and Archive Service's *Cell by Date* project indicated that the skills they had learnt would help them in future training or employment.
- Action, Behaviour and Progression* - young people who have previously been excluded) from museum visits are reported to have behaved much better, whilst projects focusing on volunteering also reported positive outcomes. For example, , the all of the volunteers involved in the *London Moves East* project reported improved confidence in becoming involved in community activities, with participants keen to promote to the wider community the importance of engagement in relation to the changing built environment.

- 7.15 In respect of NIs:
- NI 2 – The Neighbourhood Postcard Project (M Shed, Bristol) involves working with local people to interpret Bristol and create displays which aim to challenge perceptions of what it means/meant to live and work in the City across time
 - NI 4 – The Growing Communities Project (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) involves the engagement of the local community in planning and decision making in a 'growth point' area
 - NI 6 - The London Moves East: Community Collectors Project (London Transport Museum) has used volunteers in a curatorial role as part of its community engagement strategy, involving 340 volunteer hours
 - NI 110 - The Family Resource Packs Project (Nottingham City Museums and Galleries Service) has provided backpacks aimed at children aged 3 to 6 and aged 7 to 10, with the activities designed to encourage interaction between family members and to improve their engagement with the museum
 - NI 117 – The Cell By Date Project (Bolton Museum and Archive Service) worked with young people attending the local Entry to Employment (E2E) provider in recognition of the local priority within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to reduce the number of NEETs
 - NI 119 - Museums of Oxford Reminiscence Project (Oxford University Museums) delivers a reminiscence service to elderly people, using heritage objects to stimulate discussion and encourage participants to share their memories with each other
- 7.16 Given that the MLA Council and Hubs had identified National Indicator 3 (People are participating in the local community) and National Indicator 5 (People are satisfied with their local area) as priorities for the Renaissance programme, it is disappointing that neither have come through within the case study projects to any significant extent. Of the additional outcomes that could also be supported by Renaissance-funded activities, whilst NI4 features in the above list, NI 1 (% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area) does not.
- 7.17 This would suggest that projects have developed in ways that suited local circumstances, not least the practicalities of being able to deliver successfully, but in doing so deviated from MLA priorities. Indeed, this was borne out in discussion at the Workshop event which confirmed that in some cases projects had engaged with those most willing to be engaged rather than face the prospect of doing nothing because original target groups were not interested in participating.

Additionality

- 7.18 Organisational learning is evident in terms of greater understanding amongst some museums staff of specific communities of interest, relevant issues pertaining to them and in community engagement approaches/skills. However, museums are continuing to rely on Renaissance funding to deliver community engagement activities, with little evidence that they have fully embraced the structural and organisational shifts that would see such activities part of 'core business'.
- 7.19 In respect of the additionality generated by projects that achieved outcomes that would not have been achieved to the same extent, or at all, without the involvement of museums, there are more encouraging results to report. Some projects were wholly reliant on the intrinsic qualities and values associated with museums whilst, in other cases, museums provided an interesting option for the delivery of a certain type of project, invariably lending itself well to the purpose.

Policy and Programme Development

- 7.20 Museums provide a unique setting for community engagement activities, but equally they pose a number of barriers to engagement. They are situated in a variety of locations, but rarely in the heart of residential communities which can mitigate against a sense of 'ownership'. Museums are typically associated with the white middle classes and it can be difficult to convince some minority ethnic groups of their relevance to their communities, especially where those seeking to do the convincing reinforce the cultural, ethnic and social stereotypes they are seeking to overcome. Interviewees suggested that for many people, museums are places you are taken under duress (by parents or teachers) rather than for enjoyment.
- 7.21 Many of the case study projects have sought to tackle these issues head-on and, above all else, have been successful in promoting museums as places in which people of all ages can have fun. Another significant achievement has been in learning/skills development, in respect of which museums have successfully exploited their buildings and collections as a means of engagement.
- 7.22 Although the case studies include some very good practice and notable achievements, they also include projects whose delivery has been frustrated and which have achieved failed to fulfil their potential. Although output returns relative to targets have been impressive, more intensive research carried out in respect of the case study projects, suggests that outcomes and impacts are likely to be modest overall, notwithstanding notable achievements in respect of some individuals.
- 7.23 Some projects have sought to encourage more visits by under-represented groups than embed their involvement. Whilst there are examples of groups influencing/leading on specific displays/exhibits, there is no sense of them increasing their influence over the museum/its activities in a more fundamental way/over the longer term. None of the Hub museums featured has progressed community engagement to the extent that communities are exercising any control or have any sense of ownership, nor do any of them appear to have plans to do so in the short term.

- 7.24 Whilst it is interesting to compare and contrast the approaches and successes of some of the non-Hub museums with those of the Hub museums, there is a need for caution in doing so. Firstly, the study looked at a nominated sample of non-Hubs exhibiting good practice which ought not to be taken as representative of non-Hub museums as a whole. Secondly, it is important not to judge short term projects delivered by Hub museums with longer term programmes undertaken by non-Hubs. Nevertheless, for the most part, this sample of non-Hubs appears much more rooted in the communities that they serve than Hub museums and often being of communities not merely in communities. In this context, they have the considerable advantage of being borne out of community interests whereas many of the Hub museums are seeking to make a connection with community interests. Whilst some non-Hub museums can learn a lot from the experience, expertise and professionalism of Hub museums it might equally be said that Hub museums could learn a lot about community engagement from the non-Hub parts of the museums sector.
- 7.25 In this context, addressing the under-representation of certain communities of interest within visitor profiles (not to mention management structures) requires museums to move in the direction of their communities at least as much as it does getting those communities to move in the direction of their local museums. In view of this and the extent to which project staff have been seeking to ascend rather steep learning curves, there is considerable potential for MLA to act as a facilitator in the exchange of knowledge and experience across the museums sector.
- 7.26 In respect of the museums sector's ability to deliver against the anticipated priorities of the new Government, the potential for museums to offer volunteering opportunities is being realised in a number of projects, although the emphasis is more on developing the skills/confidence of individuals than enabling local people to influence service provision.

Key Recommendations

- 7.27 Addressing these issues requires a response from the museums sector as a whole with continued support from MLA. The recommendations below are based on the analysis of evidence gathered in the course of this study, including examples of good practice amongst Hub and non-Hub museums that have potential for broader applications.

The Museums Sector

- Hub Business Plans tend to describe loose aspirations to engage with particular groups, whereas they ought to set out detailed justification for doing so and for pursuing the courses of action proposed. The practicalities of engaging target groups and sustaining that engagement need to be fully considered in advance, including the testing of new partnerships to ensure that they can be relied upon to make the contribution envisaged by the museum.
- Partnership working might be aided by entering into written agreements which set out each party's roles and responsibilities, as well as the target outputs, outcomes and impacts from which all partners (or the interests they represent) can derive benefits.
- Deploying existing staff to 'do' community engagement places unreasonable expectations on those individuals and is unlikely to always deliver desired outcomes. Where this approach is adopted as part of a strategy to instigate cultural change within a museum, it ought to be supported by appropriate training and guidance in all cases.

- Seeking to engage particular groups may be aided by employing staff who are themselves from those groups (acknowledging the potential contribution of MLA's Diversity Programme); seeking to engage groups via particular types of project may be aided by employing staff with a background in those types of projects rather than the museums sector (see Cell by Date project in Appendix 3).

MLA

- In spite of its efforts to date, MLA needs to do more to promote a 'whole museum' approach to community engagement, with all staff having a sense of responsibility and a role to play, breaking down the silo mentality that community engagement resides in a project or a post. This might be helped by a move to multi-annual funding of projects or by convincing museums to view their collections of individual projects on a more strategic basis, with an emphasis on integrating activities into core functions.
- There is scope for MLA to promote a more strategic approach to volunteering and to involve volunteers in core/ongoing (and higher level) activities rather than restrict their participation to project-based work. To facilitate this, MLA could offer advice, guidance and support on working with the voluntary and community sector.
- MLA has a role in promoting learning and exchange of experience, both across the Hubs and between Hub and non-Hub museums. For example, a central project database would enable project staff to identify colleagues in other museums with experience of delivering similar activities, based on similar themes to similar groups.
- There is a need to ensure that targets do not encourage the achievement of outputs over the generation of outcomes (e.g. visits to a museum by members of a target group) and impacts (e.g. members of a target group moving into employment/learning). MLA should encourage the use of more intelligent quantitative performance measures as well as having museums report on qualitative achievements.