British Museum

World Conservation and Exhibition Centre Activity Plan evaluation

Year 2 report

Image shows WCEC behind the scenes tour of the stone, wall paintings and mosaics studio

The Audience Agency

Report activity period: till end June 2017

Commissioned by the Head of Interpretation & Volunteers
Executive Summary

Collections Skills Training
A series of training films and face-to-face sessions utilise the collections, staff and WCEC facilities to provide skills training and experience to the museum sector.

Extensive progress has been made since Year 1. 34 (out of the 60 target) training sessions have been delivered, supporting 524 colleagues from partner museums to benefit from the Museum’s collection expertise.

The training received excellent feedback. Over 95% of participants rated the tutors’ knowledge as excellent. 98% rated the training very good or good, and following the training 92% rated their ability in the subject to be very good or good.

The practical elements of the training, such as demonstrations and workshop activities were the most popular. Going forward participants would prefer training resources in advance.

100% want to take part in future training.

Whilst only one training film out of the target of ten is live, the remaining nine are in post-production, ready for release in May 2018.

World History Lab
This strand of activity aims to provide a wider public platform to showcase the conservation and science work at the Museum in the WCEC, by creating better online resources.

World History Lab’s online content, which shares the Museum’s work with a wider public audience through online channels, has already exceeded total project targets by 254%, with around 1.3 million visits.

Year 2 has seen a huge increase in quantity, frequency and popularity of content with the Museum’s digital audience.
Year 2 alone exceeded its target web visits by 1,095%. There has been an average of 55,499 views per post across Years 1 and 2, exceeding the target of 500 views by 11,099%.

The Roman Urn series was especially popular, with audiences eager to watch weekly instalments. The success of this format, which allows the process of the conservation to be shared over a longer period and therefore in more detail, will be built upon for future content.

Live streaming of content has also been very popular, from the Hirayama Conservation Studio Periscope broadcast to Science Week on Facebook Live. There has been significant development work on the website and the publishing plan for this is underway.

**Volunteering Programme**

The WCEC Activity Plan has successfully enabled the British Museum to expand volunteering opportunities, thereby supporting visitor engagement - especially in new areas of activity. Volunteering activity has continued to build momentum in Year 2.

**Hands On desks**

Authentic objects and artefacts have been successfully used in six desks in the Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery so far - significantly exceeding targets. The desks are offering visitors tactile experiences, and opening up interesting conversations about themes explored in the related special exhibition and permanent galleries.

*The evaluation demonstrates a high level of satisfaction from both the public and the volunteers who facilitate desk experiences.*

87% of visitors said that they would recommend the Hands On desk to other visitors, and 91% of visitors said that the desk had enhanced their visit. Visitors continue to rate volunteer knowledge highly.

Volunteers have been successfully recruited and trained to schedule, and overall engagement levels are very high. Some would like access to a slightly wider range of objects.

There is still potential to increase visitor awareness of the desks.
Volunteering Programme

Behind the Scenes tours

The first tours were delivered in August 2016 and following that monthly throughout Year 2. Visitor satisfaction has generally increased over time.

Due to the delays in Year 1 arising from lift problems the overall targets for numbers of tours and attendees will not be met. Whilst only 22% of initial tour delivery targets have been reached, 73% of the total available slots have been delivered (482 out of 669).

Visitor feedback has been extremely positive. Wanting to improve understanding of the Museum’s Conservation and Scientific work and have an introduction to behind the scenes were the top factors cited by visitors in deciding to attend. These were achieved to a very high extent (99%).

96% of visitors agreed that the tours demonstrated the purpose of the WCEC effectively and 98% of visitors agreed their understanding of the Museum’s work had improved. 99% would recommend the experience. Around a third of visitors would prefer a longer tour.

Volunteers also rated their experience highly - 93% agreed it was a valuable and enjoyable experience. Volunteers would like to be able to better manage the time-keeping of staff involved in delivering the tours.

Whilst staff feedback has been more neutral, it has improved over time, and 88% rate the experience very good or good. Some staff responded that whilst the tours do have wider benefits they did not recognise the direct impact for their own work.

Exploring staff attitudes to the relationship between this kind of engagement and any direct benefits for their own professional development could be explored in future evaluation.
Volunteering Programme

Object Moves and Object Journeys

Five intakes of volunteers have been recruited and trained to assist with the WCEC Storage Moves project. Learning from last year ensured that greater time was invested in planning. This resulted in smoother recruitment, selection and training of volunteers. The opportunity was extremely popular, with high numbers of applications.

302 days of volunteering has been achieved, exceeding Year 2’s target of 80 days by 378%.

It has been a challenge to manage the planning and management needs of the project, but staff have recognised that more informal learning opportunities for volunteers could enhance their experience.

The feedback from volunteers has been excellent. Volunteers especially value the direct object handling experience.

Four volunteers have gone on to secure paid roles at the Museum.

Volunteers are continuing to support the Object Journeys project.

Object Journeys

‘It can open doors in the future. It could change something, the balance, especially within partnerships and the British Museum is still at the top but maybe in the future that it will create a more balanced way of working.’ (community partner)

Community partners

The Somali Object Journeys display successfully opened in autumn 2016, complemented by a range of popular public events. Much of the development work for the second project, with Kiribati community partners, was completed in Year 2, in advance of a summer 2017 opening.

Somali community partners had a positive experience overall. They learned more about their heritage, were proud of their display and felt the project opened a dialogue with their
Partners would have liked greater access to collections and staff expertise, as well as other benefits such as additional training. It is important to consider how to support partners’ understanding of museum processes and access limitations.

Click this image to watch a short film of poet and spoken word artist Theresa Lola’s interpretation of the evaluation feedback from Somali community partners.

**British Museum staff**

The experience of working with community partners and being proud of the final display were key reasons why the Internal Steering Group members (British Museum staff) had a positive experience overall.

*Staff have learnt new ways of working, new knowledge about collections and developed relationships with community partners. Internal buy-in, capacity and supporting partners’ full access to collections have been key challenges. Staff are also concerned about how the practice will be embedded long term.*

Whilst progress has been made, there is still some way to go before the project
successfully establishes a model for collaborative working with community partners, and staff reach a greater level of confidence with this practice.

Some staff believe greater staff advocacy at a senior level is needed to increase awareness and support capacity planning.

External Steering Group

The External Steering Group, made up of professional experts in collaborative practice, value the group as a space for sharing learning and reflection. Members believe involvement has invigorated their own practice and thinking. They are proud of their contribution to procuring funding from the British Museum Research Fund to explore the research context of Object Journeys more widely with the sector.

Members have been pleasantly surprised by the production quality and size of the Somali Object Journeys display, and believe the British Museum has been more open to the collaborative process than they expected.

The External Steering Group think that Object Journeys is successfully facilitating a process that is developing new learning for the British Museum and the sector. It is supporting learning around ways of opening dialogue with communities and using collections authentically, as well as highlighting the British Museum as a role model for large and national museums doing similar work.

Like the Internal Steering Group, this group believes that ensuring the project has a meaningful legacy will be a challenge and suggest the British Museum could do more to advocate for the project at a senior level.

Partner museums

Object Journeys has been a catalyst for change.

For Manchester Museum the project has developed community relationships and acted as a pilot project to develop methodologies for their South Asian Gallery development. For New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, the project has provided the opportunity to
work with a wider range of stakeholders. Manchester Museum commented that the British Museum loans process was not flexible to collaborative practice with community partners. Both museum partners valued how the project has developed their relationship with the British Museum.

**Visitor responses**

Visitors are not aware of the co-creation process behind the Somali Object Journey cases, but when were made aware of this process through engagement with evaluation, they do value what they perceive to be more in-depth and authentic information. This is an interesting area for more in-depth research.

**Digital engagement**

Social media platforms have provided additional in-depth engagement opportunities for community partners, interested professionals and wider communities. Platforms have been particularly successful at generating new understanding about objects.
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Introduction

Introduction to the WCEC Activity Plan

The World Conservation and Exhibition Centre (WCEC) is a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported development which has enabled the British Museum (BM) to provide first-class facilities for visitors and researchers, taking conservation, scientific research and collection management to a new level of excellence. The WCEC includes the Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery (SEG), Conservation Studios and Science Laboratories, world-class storage and the Collections Hub.

The WCEC Activity Plan includes the Object Journeys project, Collections Skills Training Programme, World History Lab, Behind the Scenes Conservation and Science Tours for the public, and a Volunteers’ programme. The WCEC Activity Plan Steering Group meet monthly to review activity across all strands.

Aims of this evaluation

This report explores how effectively the Activity Plan is meeting its aims through bringing together reporting from internally collected evaluation data from the Collections Skills Training, World History Lab, Tours and Volunteering programme strands. The Audience Agency has been commissioned as external evaluator to support internal data collection of the above strands and undertake a mainly qualitative evaluation Object Journeys. The findings are being brought together in three annual reports each summer, plus a final overall report in autumn 2018, to communicate the impact and learning with both the British Museum and the wider sector.

Scope of this report

This second report - Year 2 - covers delivery activity between July 2016 and June 2017. In some cases, evaluation undertaken this year and featured in this report, relates to Year 1 activity. An overview of the activity, progress against HLF targets as set out in the Activity Plan, evaluation approaches and findings - framed as ‘successes, challenges and key learning’ is contained in each section. Object Journeys is more detailed, reflecting the scale and complexity of the project, and the opportunity to generate insight of value to the wider museum community.
Collections Skills Training

An introduction to Collections Skills Training

Through this strand the British Museum is able to utilise the collections, staff and facilities of the WCEC to provide collections skills training and experience to other museum professionals. There are two parts to the programme: a series of short training films and face-to-face Skills Sharing Sessions.

Project Team:

- Senior Collections Manager/Project Sponsor
- Learning and Partnerships Co-ordinator
- Training Project Co-ordinator
- Assistant Collections Manager/CST Project Co-ordinator

The following roles are HLF funded posts:

- Conservation Mounter
- WCEC Web Content Producer

Steering Group:

- Registrar
- Head of National Programmes
- Head of Conservation

How is Collections Skills Training progressing against targets set out in the Activity Plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target per year</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner training opportunities delivered</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short training films produced</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films are downloaded as or more often than other comparable films on Collections Link</td>
<td>Evaluation data to be collected and reported on subsequent reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in UK loans including training opportunities</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of activity

A) Short films

All initial filming sessions have now taken place and an opening sequence animatic for the training films is in development. The progress of each film is outlined below:

Films currently in post-production:
- Loans Part 1: An introduction to loans
- Loans Part 2: Researching your loan request
- Loans Part 3: Writing a loan request and the British Museum loans process
- Mounting prints and drawings
- Heavy object handling
- Exhibition Delivery Part 1: Project management and interpretation
- Exhibition Delivery Part 2: Design and accessibility
- Exhibition Delivery Part 3: Production, installation and evaluation
- Textiles Collections Care

Finalised films:
- Framing prints and drawings

B) Collections Skills Sharing Sessions

Year 2 has seen 22 individual Skills Sharing Sessions developed and 34 delivered across all BM sites and at partner museums.

Loans Administration: This has included a six-part session delivered in Manchester to colleagues in the North West called ‘Getting Loans Ready’. The second of these is currently being delivered to colleagues in the South West in Exeter. Other loans administration skills sharing sessions have included ‘Exhibitionism: Loans at the BM’, held at the Museum of London.

Collections Management: General collections management courses have been delivered on repeat due to high uptake of participants, including ‘Storage Solutions’, ‘Heavy Object Collections Care’, and ‘Integrated Pest Management: Introduction’.
More specialist collections management courses have included ‘Money and Medals Collections Care’, held at the BM, and ‘Bladed Weapons and Japanese Sword Handling’, held at Durham Oriental Museum.

A further 26 sessions are scheduled to take place before the end of May 2018, totalling 60 as per the HLF commitment. 524 colleagues will have attended the courses in total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Sharing Session</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of times held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladed weapons and Japanese sword handling</td>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Museum Loans Programme</td>
<td>Museum of London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of Egyptian collections</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection moves</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern pictorial art handling</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 1: Introduction</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 2: Making a loan request and the timeline of a loan</td>
<td>Manchester/Exeter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 3: Budgeting and costs</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 4: Display and environment, facilities and security</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 5: Agreements and insurance</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready Part 6: Making the loan happen</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy objects collections care</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Pest Management (IPM)</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money and medals collections care</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prints and drawings: mounting and storage</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: ceramics + strong room storage</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: European glass care + storage</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: ivories care and storage</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: ethnographic care and storage</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage solutions</td>
<td>Bloomsbury</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Successes, challenges and key learning

The main challenge has been providing the resources needed to meet the hosting responsibility for this strand. This includes arranging and collecting security passes, meeting delegates, escorting delegates to and from the training venues at the start and end of the day (and either side of lunch breaks) and organising the provision of refreshments. This time-consuming role has been primarily undertaken by the Training Project Coordinator with the assistance of Visitor Operations staff when available.

Several additions have been made to the ‘important note’ on the Eventbrite advertising page to address concerns that have arisen. These notes are:

We regret that the following are not eligible to apply for this training:

- students / those on study placements
- independent consultants
- conservation studios
- those working or volunteering at the British Museum

These courses are proving extremely popular, and places are therefore limited to:

- a maximum of two places per organisation for one skills sharing session
- a maximum of three sessions per individual, per year

Plans for Year 3

More sessions will be developed enabling the sharing of a wide variety of collections management and loans administration skills. All films are scheduled to be available online by the end of May 2018.

Evaluation

Following an internal audit and review of the Collections Skills Management’s existing evaluation form, the questionnaire was revised to allow the project team to explore feedback in greater detail. Every participant was emailed a link to a new revised e-survey to obtain feedback after they attended a Skills Sharing Session. Prior to this, paper surveys were collected, and the data inputted manually. Where applicable, data which remains comparable across the two evaluation forms has been included.
Positive independent feedback has been received by the project team via other sources, including a blog post and unsolicited emails.

Sample sizes and margins of error

139 participant feedback forms (45 paper surveys and 94 e-surveys) were completed over the period; this gives a margin of error of c. ±8% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if we had asked any of the questions shown to the entire population, a proportion of no more than between 8% higher and 8% lower than the one given would have also picked that answer.

The margin of error is affected by the number of responses in the sample. If a question has less than 100 responses then the margin of error will be quite high so the results need to be used with caution, in an indicative way only. The margin of error and base sizes for each question is provided below each chart.
Participant feedback

The participants

Skills Sharing Session attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladed weapons and Japanese sword handling</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Museum Loans Programme</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of Egyptian collections</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection moves</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern pictorial art handling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting loan ready</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy objects collections care</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money and medals collections care</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prints and drawings: mounting and storage</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: ceramics + strong room storage</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: European glass care + storage</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: Ivories care and storage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills sharing case study: ethnographic care and storage</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage solutions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles collections care: handling and storage</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents: 137
The following responses have been presented as word clouds, the larger the word the more often it was used by respondents.

**Organisation**

**Museum role**

Base: all respondents: 108

Base: all respondents: 132
What were your motivations for attending the Skills Sharing Session?

Participants were generally motivated by a desire to further their skills, for professional development, in an area which they were not very familiar with. In particular, many participants were approaching a specific project in their role that would require these skills, and used this as an opportunity to learn best practice from British Museum staff. In addition, a number of participants used the sessions as a refresher to update their existing knowledge on the subject.

‘As the Head of Collections for an historic house museum pest management is a constant battle. I have an ad-hoc IPM but wanted to introduce something more logistical which would allow me to build up accurate data, monitor pest activity and create more effective solutions.’ (IPM, 16/11/16)

‘Find out best practice for handling textiles and learn how to best pack and store them.’ (Textiles, 21/03/17)

‘From April, I will be working full time at Milton Keynes Museum who are building a new store. I will oversee the move and be in charge of the collections and stores.’ (Storage Solutions, 10/10/16)

‘I am working on a project that involves cleaning and repackaging over 600 textile items, I wanted to find out how the British Museum stores their textile collections, find out more about identifying different types of textiles and look into storage solutions for more difficult textile objects.’ (Textiles, 21/03/17)

‘We have recently had to move several large objects, including glazed paintings and sculpture, as part of a large scale temporary exhibition. It was agreed that an extra member of staff should receive some training towards large object handling.’ (Heavy Objects Collections Care, 11/05/17)

‘I have quite a lot of experience managing incoming loans but no formal training - I wanted to consolidate my knowledge and make sure I was following best practice.’ (Getting Loan Ready, 06/09/16)
Base: all respondents: 138
How would you rate the general communications and information you received prior to the session?

Additionally, all those (100%, 44 respondents) who filled in the paper survey said they received the appropriate information prior to the session.

The Tutor(s)

How would you rate the following?

This is supported by those who answered the paper survey, of which 96% (43 respondents) rated the tutor’s knowledge as ‘excellent’ and 4% (2 respondents) as ‘good’. 89% (40 respondents) rated the tutor’s overall ability at delivering the session as ‘very good’ and 11% (5 respondents) as ‘good’. 
When asked how this could be improved, most (8 respondents) mentioned that no improvement was necessary, however 2 respondents suggested that the time was limiting.

‘I highly enjoyed the delivery and knowledge shared by Helen and Imogen. They seemed to have endless knowledge and hearing about their work made me excited to use the techniques in my own work.’ (Textiles Collections Care, 21/09/16)

‘Limited time for the amount of information presented. Very interesting would make an ideal two-day course. More coverage of basic conservation issues - e.g. more in-depth discussions on methods of dealing with insects/pests.’ (Textiles Collections Care, 21/09/16)

The Skills Sharing Session materials
How would you rate the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The quality of session materials</th>
<th>67%</th>
<th>26%</th>
<th>6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relevance of session materials</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, this is supported by those who answered the paper survey; 75% (33 respondents) rated the quality of the session materials as ‘excellent’ and 25% (11 respondents) as ‘good’. 79% (34 respondents) rated the relevance of the session materials as ‘very good’ and 21% (9 respondents) as ‘good’.

Only one respondent offered feedback on how the materials could be improved and suggested that handouts should have been offered.

‘By giving more hand-outs instead of attendees having to rely on taking notes. Everything that was presented should have been sent out to participants. As our
museum sent four people in place of our line manager, it would have been helpful if those who hadn’t attended a session could access the material from other sessions.’ (Getting Loan Ready, 17/11/16)

The Skills Sharing Session

Practical and demonstration style learning is preferred, but presentation and discussion is also popular.

*In general, which form of learning suits you best? (e.g. presentation, demonstration, practical, discussion)*

Overall session length is considered just right, although some would prefer longer.

*How did you find the length of the session?*

![Graph showing the lengths of sessions](image)

*Base: all respondents: 135*

Margin of error: ±8%
How do you rate this as an investment of your time?

In addition to the e-survey respondents, 73% (33 respondents) of those who completed the paper survey rated this as ‘excellent’ and 27% (12 respondents) as ‘good’.

Overall, how would you rate the session?

47% (20 respondents) of respondents to the paper survey said their expectations of the session were ‘exceeded’, 51% (22 respondents) were ‘met’ and 2% (1 respondent) was ‘partly’ (met).
Please describe below what aspect(s) of the Skills Sharing Session has been most useful or interesting, and why.

Participants were complimentary overall, with many citing that the whole session was useful and interesting. In particular, the practical elements such as demonstrations and workshops, were mentioned numerous times as a useful way of applying theory to practice. The tour was useful for many as a way to see certain solutions in action, as was being able to have specific questions answered. Also, the social aspect in networking with other museum staff and learning from others was mentioned by many.

‘Talking to other professionals about their experiences, especially staff from the BM as it would make me less nervous about approaching people at other institutions regarding loans. Also the practical sessions and tours of the BM.’ (Getting Loan Ready, 06/09/16)

‘All of it. It was useful to have the presentation and then be able to see it in practice and finish off having a go.’ (Storage Solutions, 10/10/16)

‘Identifying the pests by using the factsheets and the provision of hand-held lenses and also microscopes was very useful. I will definitely be investing in a couple of the hand-held lenses!’ (IPM, 16/11/16)

‘Overall this session offered a very focused opportunity to learn appropriate techniques for handling Eastern Pictorial Art formats. The day was well organised, with a clear structure, and time allocated to each different format. Learning about the conditions required for storing and displaying Eastern Pictorial Art was particularly useful, however, the most valuable part of the session was the opportunity to practice handling different formats. Being able to handle hand and hanging scrolls emphasised some of the challenges of handling these formats while also highlighting the differences between them.’ (Eastern pictorial art handling, 21/04/17)

‘I found that the practical and the background tour were most useful as the tour helped me get into the mind-set required when moving heavy objects, i.e. check that the ceiling is high enough and the floor is strong enough for the object, you and the machinery.’ (Heavy Objects Handling, 11/05/17)
Please describe below what aspect(s) of the Skills Sharing Session has been least useful or interesting, and why.

There were a few ‘least useful’ aspects, which, as expected, were elements where participants had existing prior knowledge or extensive knowledge. Also, when the session focused on particular cases or facilities which were not available to all, this was found to be unrelatable.

‘Something that also applies to the previous training session I attended (Storage Solutions), please keep in mind that the delegates often come from small museums with little or no budget. Finding out about the British Museum’s excellent facilities is great but simple low cost or no cost solutions and procedures are going to be more relevant and practical.’ (IPM, 16/11/16)

‘The whole session was useful and interesting. There were one or two bits that won’t apply in our particular museum, but that doesn’t make having the knowledge any less valuable.’ (IPM, 18/01/17)

If you could make one change to the Skills Sharing Session that would enhance the experience, what would it be?

A number of participants mentioned that handouts or printouts of the materials used would have been useful for familiarising themselves with content prior to the session, or to take away as a reminder of the content covered. Similarly, a forum for sharing materials was suggested. In terms of changes on the day, there were a few suggestions for longer time to be spent on the practical elements or in general - a few participants thought their sessions could easily stretch to two days. There were a few requests from participants to be able to introduce themselves at the start of the sessions and to have some more breaks during the day.

‘It may be useful to have a group discussion where attendees can share storage or conservation issues they are having in their institutions.’ (Care of Egyptian collections, 01/02/17)

‘Would it be useful to have an online forum which candidates on the programme could communicate via whilst they are undertaking the sessions and after to further networking? I don’t think that I would change anything as it was all really interesting.’ (Getting Loan Ready, 06/09/16)
‘Having slightly more time to practise the techniques that were demonstrated would have been helpful. The session could also include some more theoretic points about handling heavy objects.’ (Heavy Objects Handling, 11/01/17)

‘Have an introductory ten minutes or so when the people from the BM who were leading us give us chance/encourage us to introduce ourselves to each other and discuss our roles and what we want to gain from the day.’ (Heavy Objects Handling, 11/01/17)

Future Collections Management Skills Sharing Sessions

All respondents (100%, 136 respondents) said they would be interested in participating in future Collections Managements Skills Sharing Sessions.

What other areas related to Collections Management would be useful to be covered in future Skills Sharing Sessions?

Many areas of interest were already offered, however some participants requested more specific sessions, tailored to their particular needs.

‘More subject specific course would be great - this level of training is hard to come by in regional museums. For me: Firearms: handling, identification etc. Weaponry: handling, materials, care - I’m especially thinking of ethnographic or world cultures collections Geology Fossils.’ (Skills sharing case study: European glass care + storage, 12/07/17)
‘I personally don’t have much knowledge of collections care, apart from a session about cleaning and materials handling we had in the museum. We have a lot of documents books and photographs in our museum so I suppose sessions on the care and handling of these would be useful.’ (IPM, 18/01/17)

‘More detailed sessions on documentation - perhaps with a practical session. Session on minting/striking and production techniques. I don’t actually know how medals, coins etc, are really made.’ (Money and medals collections care, 29/09/16)

‘Digitisation of collections - photos and media skills, marking. Basic conservation and techniques to care for pictures (frames and canvasses). Taking care of historic floors.’ (Textiles Collections Care, 21/09/16)
World History Lab

An introduction to World History Lab (WHL)

This strand of activity aims to provide a wider public platform to showcase the conservation and science work at the Museum in the WCEC. It supports the Museum’s strategic objective of deepening engagement with the collection and increasing virtual access to the Museum’s work. The expertise within the Museum’s departments of Conservation and Scientific Research is sector-leading, and by creating better online resources using video, audio, images and text this expertise can be shared and used more effectively by a wider audience.

The four content themes within which the work is being presented are:

1. **Conservation projects**: Films that capture conservation projects in their entirety.
2. **The people of the World History Lab**: Profiles of various colleagues within the Conservation and Scientific Research teams, highlighting the fascinating roles people have within the field.
3. **Tools and processes**: A series of short films or animations which highlight some of the tools, processes and terms used in the field.
4. **Live events**: When suitable opportunities arrive across these themes, live streaming apps are used to engage a large global audience.

By applying the Museum’s expertise to content creation, a greater variety of conservation and research activities can be shared, allowing wider public access to facilities, people, knowledge and objects at the Museum.

How is World History Lab progressing against targets set out in the Activity Plan?

This table provides an overview, which is explored in more depth in the detailed findings that follow. Overall the content produced is already exceeding the measures set out for the programme in the Activity Plan. The statistics on each of the videos will be used to inform future content planning and publishing schedules.

Some headline successes include:

- By the end of Year 2, WHL has exceeded the total three year project’s target for web visits by 245%. There has been a total of almost 1.3 million visits, just over 1 million of which were achieved in Year 2.
- Year 2 alone exceeded its target web visits by 1,095%.
- There has been an average of 55,499 views per post across Years 1 and 2, exceeding the target of 500 views by 11,099%. These figures demonstrate how online engagement has changed since the targets were set when the original Activity Plan was written.
- There has been an average of 110 comments per post across Years 1 and 2, exceeding the target of 3 by 36,667%.
- Overall Year 2 has seen a huge increase in activity and engagement with content.

These figures are also presented in charts below the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target per year</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of web visits across all platforms</td>
<td>Year 1: 72,000</td>
<td>528,000</td>
<td>Year 1: 245,572</td>
<td>1095% of year target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 96,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 1,052,036</td>
<td>245% of total target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 3: 360,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 1,297,608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 12,376%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall average:</td>
<td>11,099%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 87,367%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall average:</td>
<td>36,667%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of views of web videos (during project duration)</td>
<td>500 per post</td>
<td>Year 1: 49,114 per post</td>
<td>Year 2: 12,376%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 61,884 per post</td>
<td>Overall average:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yearly average: 55,499</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 87,367%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall average:</td>
<td>36,667%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of public comments per post</td>
<td>3 per post</td>
<td>Year 1: 265 in total; average 66 per post</td>
<td>Year 2: 87,367%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 2,621 in total; average 154 per post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yearly average: 1,443 total posts; 110 per post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart above shows number of web visits

Chart above shows number of views per post (target 500 per post)

Evaluation approach

Website statistics and digital feedback are the key evaluation approaches for World History Lab activity. Going into Year 3, other approaches may include interviews or questionnaires with staff to explore what they gained from being involved in the project.
Summary of activity

This table expands on the data presented above and provides a more detailed summary about not only views, but also comments, reactions and shares.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 films published 5 times</td>
<td>17 films, 2 as individual films, 2 as series containing multiple episodes, and 3 live streams</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245,572 views</td>
<td>1,052,036 views <em>(80,254 of which are live views)</em></td>
<td>1,297,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265 comments</td>
<td>2,621 comments</td>
<td>2,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,099 thumbs up/reactions/likes</td>
<td>34,246 thumbs up/reactions/likes</td>
<td>37,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,256 shares</td>
<td>18,925 shares</td>
<td>33,181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table details the statistics by film, or series of films. There is more in-depth information about each film later in the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film and web link</th>
<th>YouTube statistics</th>
<th>Facebook statistics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of a 12th century textile  Published 25 July 16</td>
<td>5,518 views 145 thumbs up 8 comments</td>
<td>35,250 views 1,800 reactions 43 comments 637 shares</td>
<td>37,768 views 1,945 thumbs up/reactions 51 comments 637 shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of a Romano-British urn - a ten-part series  Published Sept - Oct 16 <em>(stats per episode are detailed later in report)</em></td>
<td>31,577 views 1,110 thumbs up 91 comments</td>
<td>382,472 views 13,448 reactions 878 comments 3,948 shares 328 live views</td>
<td>414,049 <em>(41,404 per episode ave.)</em> 14,548 thumbs up/reactions 969 comments 3,948 shares <em>(live view stat views are presented in ‘live views’ form)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Successes, challenges and key learning

Building on the excellent start to the project in Year 1, this year has seen the content produced for the World History Lab growing in quantity, frequency and popularity with the Museum’s digital audience.

The WCEC Content Producer has worked closely with colleagues from the Conservation and Scientific Research departments to find interesting and engaging projects to showcase on the Museum’s digital channels. In addition, a number of live broadcasts were produced, and were equally well received on the Museum’s digital channels.

Audience feedback has been very positive. Comments on Facebook and YouTube are generally very positive, with viewers expressing their eagerness to see more of this type of behind-the-scenes content.
The series on the Roman Urn was particularly popular with the digital audience and a regular audience was developed who eagerly awaited each week’s new instalment. The format of telling the conservation story over a longer period of screen time allowed BM staff to show each stage of the process that normally would not be possible in a short documentary. This successful format is being built on with a new series on the conservation of a Tang Dynasty embroidery depicting the Buddha preaching at Vulture Peak.

Staff continue to seek out interesting and suitable content to highlight as part of this project. Below is a list of all the content created and published throughout the year. Where relevant, statistics per episode/broadcast are detailed in this section of the report. More comment-based feedback relating to each post is also shown below.

**Conservation of a 12th century textile**

This film tracks a conservation project to prepare a 12th century textile for inclusion in the *Sicily: Culture and Conquest* exhibition (April - August 2016)

*Anna Harrison*
Conservator: Organics

*Conservation of a 12th-century textile*

‘It would be great if the pieces could be recreated so we could see how they would have looked’ (Online visitor comment)
‘it is amazing, just the kind of thing that I need right now Jill. How wonderful to be involved in a project like that. Always makes me wonder what background these guys have… textiles, history, science.’ (Online visitor comment)

‘Fascinating video. Was there ever a design motif in Sicily showing a circle with a fat, duck-like bird holding a string of pearls in its beak?’ (Online visitor comment)

Conservation of a Romano-British urn - a ten-part series

This series tracks the conservation of a Romano-British cinerary urn by conservator Dr Duygu Camurcuoglu.

YouTube statistics by episode:

The introductory episode has more views, which is to be expected, but beyond that the number of views per episode remains fairly consistent, demonstrating the content has sustained audience engagement throughout the series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Conservation of a Romano-British urn</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Thumbs up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ep1 - Introduction</td>
<td>6,197</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Views to date</td>
<td>Comments to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep2</td>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>30,437</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep3</td>
<td>Preparation for dismantling</td>
<td>23,625</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep4</td>
<td>Dismantling</td>
<td>55,049</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep5</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>20,252</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep6</td>
<td>Reconstruction</td>
<td>23,786</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep7</td>
<td>Gap fills</td>
<td>46,415</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facebook statistics per episode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation of a Romano-British urn</th>
<th>Views to date</th>
<th>Comments to date</th>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
<th>Live views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ep1 - Introduction</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep2 - Investigation</td>
<td>30,437</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep3 - Preparation for dismantling</td>
<td>23,625</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep4 - Dismantling</td>
<td>55,049</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep5 - Analysis</td>
<td>20,252</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>788</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep6 - Reconstruction</td>
<td>23,786</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>924</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep7 - Gap fills</td>
<td>46,415</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ep8 - Mould making and resin casting  |  21,117  |  5  |  199  |  686  
Ep9 - Colour matching  |  21,511  |  18  |  188  |  714  
Facebook Live  |  44,666  |  553  |  554  |  2,300  
Ep10 - Completion  |  42,614  |  54  |  348  |  1,600  
Total  |  382,472  |  878  |  3,948  |  13,448 

‘I’m sad this journey is over but I certainly enjoyed the glimpses into the restoration and would like to see more of this sort of thing. When I was young I wanted to be an archaeologist so a series like this scratches that itch a bit.’ (Online visitor comment)

‘Thanks for this one. Surprisingly entertaining. When I started watching months ago a few people in the office laughed at me, but then they wouldn’t let me watch it on Friday until the whole team was here to see it today. 10 thumbs up!’ (Online visitor comment)

Conservation for South Africa: the art of a nation

Four films to highlight the conservation work done in preparation for the South Africa: the art of a nation exhibition (27 October 2016 - 26 February 2017).

Conserving a Ndebele beaded blanket
YouTube statistics per episode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Africa: the art of a nation films</th>
<th>Views to date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Thumbs up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conserving a Ndebele beaded blanket</td>
<td>5,735</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of a Xhosa pipe and snuff holder</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking for pests on ‘Potent Fields’ by Karel Nel</td>
<td>2,417</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu rifle headrest</td>
<td>3,983</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,884</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>236</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facebook statistics per episode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Views to date</th>
<th>Comments to date</th>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conserving a Ndebele beaded blanket</td>
<td>12,526</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of a Xhosa pipe and snuff holder</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not published on Facebook</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking for pests on ‘Potent Fields’ by Karel Nel</td>
<td>9,348</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu rifle headrest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not published on Facebook</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,874</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>274</strong></td>
<td><strong>867</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘*Heck yeah, more conservation videos <3.*’ (Online visitor comment)

‘*What can I do to work with this type of stuff? What job title/degree is this? I find this fascinating. Thanks.*’ (Online visitor comment)

‘*What were the reasons for adding new layers? Particular occasions like birth or religious events?*’ (Online visitor comment)
Conserving Dürer’s Triumphal Arch

The film shows the complex conservation process of Albrecht Dürer's Triumphal Arch - one of the largest prints ever produced. Curator Giulia Bartram and Paper Conservator Caroline Barry talk through some of the steps involved in tackling this unusually large conservation challenge.

Conserving Dürer’s Triumphal Arch

‘My daughter is studying to be a curator in Florence, she began learning how to treat paper this week; she is fascinated.’ (Online visitor comment)

‘So amazing the details and hard work of preserving the print. Kudos to the patience and knowledge of people working to preserve this and other important works.’ (Online visitor comment)

‘That is fascinating!!! I'm fortunate enough to work in a place with many Dürer prints and when I first found out about them I was so excited to see them. This is an amazing undertaking and the piece is clearly in good hands with these conservators. What a special opportunity they have.’ (Online visitor comment)
Live broadcasts

Statistics per broadcast:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Peak live viewers</th>
<th>Total unique viewers</th>
<th>10 second views</th>
<th>Ave. watch time</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Week Facebook live</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>35,167</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Urn Facebook live</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>41,000</td>
<td>12,551</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>3,815</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirayama Periscope</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,055 (plus 5,469 on replay)</td>
<td>5,288</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>951</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80,524</td>
<td>47,718</td>
<td>5,288</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>951</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Science Week Facebook live

Meet our scientists in a behind-the-scenes tour for British Science Week!
‘This is so cool! Thank you for showing us the behind-the-scenes. Your work is sometimes forgotten because people only focus on the end, on the exhibitions, but it’s so important to know and study all these things!!’ (Online visitor comment)

‘This is by far the best use of social media I’ve seen. Many thanks for allowing this look at your processes.’ (Online visitor comment)

- Roman Urn Facebook live

Note, these comments relate to the films series, not the specific live-streamed episode.

‘Awesome! I would love to see more videos like this.’ (Online visitor comment)

‘I, through you and these videos feel connected to this piece…’ (Online visitor comment)
• Hirayama Conservation Studio Periscope

British Museum @britishmuseum

Come behind the scenes in the British Museum’s #conservation studio of East Asian #art

ENDED 360 8.7k Viewers

British Museum @britishmuseum
Come behind the scenes in the British Museum’s #conservation studio of East Asian #art — Camden Town, London, United Kingdom

pscp.tv

4:43 PM - 24 May 2017

190 Retweets 279 Likes
AntiquArt @AntiquArt · May 25
Replying to @britishmuseum
Magnifico!!!

Stephanie @steps273 · May 24
Replying to @britishmuseum
So interesting. I love it❤️❤️

Charles Beaver @CharlesBeaver6 · May 24
Replying to @britishmuseum
just incredible age in which to live here I am in New Mexico watching you at the British museum #amazing

Samantha Grimsley @swgrimsley · May 25
Replying to @britishmuseum
Love this. Thank you for presenting this wonderful art and information.

margarita cortes @vestidodeletras · May 25
Replying to @britishmuseum
Hello from Colombia

Being Graphic @BeingGraphic · May 24
Replying to @britishmuseum
This is so cool!
Plans for Year 3

The World History Lab website

Work on populating the website has continued, and the site will soon start to be publicised to the audience. The Content Producer is working with the Marketing team to create a publishing plan for the site.

Glossary of Terms

The Content Producer is also working with colleagues in Conservation and Scientific Research (CSR) to create a series of three short animations to highlight some of the most used terms in the field. Work has begun with a scriptwriter to create the scripts for these animations. It is hoped that these films will make a good introduction to the glossary of
terms. Once the scripts are completed an animation company will be commissioned to work on the production of the films.

Vulture Peak embroidery series

The next ten-part series on the conservation of the Vulture Peak embroidery on YouTube and Facebook has started to be published. This ten-part series will run until the first week in September 2017. The team are also considering the feasibility of doing a live broadcast from the organics studio to tie in with the series.

Science films in production:

- Scientific research on the Mold Gold Cape.
- Documenting Lucia Pereira-Pardo’s work on laser cleaning objects.
- TBC scientific research into the Oxus treasure for the Scythians exhibition (this is dependent on agreement from various sponsors).
WCEC Volunteering programme

The WCEC Activity Plan has continued to enable the Museum to expand volunteering opportunities, allowing more members of the public to get involved at the Museum, including new areas of activity. Significant progress has been made during 2016-17 with each of the main volunteering strands.

Hands On

The Hands On desks allow members of the public to handle original artefacts and to engage with a knowledgeable volunteer. The WCEC Activity Plan enabled the Museum to extend its Hands On programme beyond the six pre-existing desks. The addition of a desk in the WCEC has allowed the Hands On programme to support six different special exhibitions to date in the Sainsbury Exhibition Gallery (SEG).

Behind the Scenes tours

After prolonged planning, recruitment and training during Year 1 (2015-16), the first volunteer-facilitated Behind the Scenes tours took place on Tuesday 30th August 2016. The tours have taken place at regular monthly intervals subsequently throughout Year 2 (2016-17), with levels of satisfaction generally increasing over time. The significant delay to the commencement of the tours means that original targets for the number of tours to be run, and the numbers of attendees, can no longer be met during the period of the Activity Plan.

Object Moves and Object Journeys

Significant progress has been made with Object Moves volunteering as the Africa, Oceania and Americas (AOA) collection and other collection material moves in to the new WCEC building. Volunteers have continued to support community programmes, in particular providing significant support for the Object Journeys programme.

Each of these strands is explored in more detail below. The WCEC Activity Plan Volunteer Co-ordinator and Programme Conservator have both been central in coordinating these volunteering strands. Sophie Elby, WCEC Activity Plan Volunteer Co-ordinator, left the Museum during Spring 2017. Rebecca MacRae has been recruited as her replacement and started working on Monday 5th June 2017. Existing members of staff ensured the volunteering programmes continued to run smoothly despite staff turnover.
How is the Volunteering strand progressing against targets set out in the Activity Plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target per session or/and year</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall volunteering programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. volunteer slots for Hands On desks</td>
<td>180 half day shifts per exhibition</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>Potential slots March 14 to June 17: 1,568 Slots used (due to gaps and absences): 1,484</td>
<td>Target exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. volunteer slots for Object Moves</td>
<td>80 days per year</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>March 14 to June 17: Total 771.5</td>
<td>Target exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. volunteer slots for Behind the Scenes tours for public</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Volunteer slots June 2016-June 2017: 40</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Object Journeys volunteers</td>
<td>12 volunteer days</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>March 14 to June 17: 44</td>
<td>Target exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of volunteer time created</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td></td>
<td>March 14 to June 17: 1,631</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers recruited and trained on schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A) Hands On desks

Background

The location of the SEG Hands On desk remains unchanged; it is located in the SEG foyer area where it can be freely accessed by members of the public as well as exhibition ticket holders. At the time of writing Hands On desks have been developed for six exhibitions: Vikings: life and legend (6 March - 22 June 2014); Ming: 50 years that changed China (18 September 2014 - 5 January 2015); Defining beauty: the body in ancient Greek art (26 March - 5 July 2015); Celts: art and identity (24 September 2015 - 31 January 2016); Sunken cities: Egypt’s lost worlds (19 May - 27 November 2016); and The American Dream: pop to present (9 March - 18 June 2017).

The last two exhibitions in this list, Sunken Cities and The American Dream, fall within the period of reporting covered by this document.

As with previous desks the handling collections for both of these exhibitions were assembled with guidance from curatorial, conservation and interpretation staff. A team of volunteers was recruited and trained by the WCEC Volunteer Co-ordinator with support from other colleagues. Detailed objects notes were prepared for the volunteers by the curator and the interpretation team. Visitor and volunteer experience of the desk was thoroughly evaluated, indicating high levels of visitor usage and satisfaction.

The development of each handling collection has been relatively straightforward. The exhibition curatorial teams for each exhibition show have responded enthusiastically to the Hands On concept. The Sunken Cities exhibition allowed the Museum to experiment with the use of 3D printing and equipment used by underwater archaeologists. The development of the WCEC Hands On desks during 2016-17 progressed smoothly, building on the previous years’ experience and evaluation.

The volunteers’ key role is to facilitate visitor engagement with the handling objects at the desk. There is a content guide for the volunteers which covers all of the 10 or so objects. The notes are provided by the relevant curator and edited by the interpretation team. Typically, only a small number of objects are used at any one time; the selection is at the volunteer’s discretion, although at any one time around three to four are on display - chosen by the volunteer.

Prior to Sunken Cities and The American Dream opening, volunteers delivering the Hands On desk received a training session and a tour of the exhibition led by the curatorial team.
Each Hands On desk is supported by a team of 28 volunteers. Each volunteer usually delivers one half-day (two and a half hour session) every other week.

**Hands On desks visitors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Hands On visitors</th>
<th>Total visitors to WCEC exhibition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream: pop to present</td>
<td>6,475</td>
<td>72,544</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities: Egypt’s lost worlds</td>
<td>17,314</td>
<td>290,500</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celts: art and identity</td>
<td>11,127</td>
<td>153,991</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining beauty: the body in ancient Greek art</td>
<td>7,961</td>
<td>100,614</td>
<td>7.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming: 50 years that changed China</td>
<td>6,886</td>
<td>109,532</td>
<td>6.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikings: life and legend</td>
<td>20,570</td>
<td>279,257</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Success against Activity Plan targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target per session or/and year</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hands On desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of desks available for 3 exhibitions in the SEG over the 3 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>On track to exceed target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor numbers match those of desks across the Museum</td>
<td>On target: Visitor numbers for each SEG desk have been comparable to other desks at the Museum. The current <em>Scythians</em> exhibition Hands On desk will mean that the obligation to develop one desk in each of the three years of the Activity Plan has been fulfilled.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers recruited and trained on schedule</td>
<td>On target: A team of volunteers has been recruited and trained on schedule for each of the Hands On desks so far.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Successes, challenges and key learning**

The evaluation demonstrates a high level of satisfaction from both the public and the volunteers who facilitate desk experiences. 87% of visitors said that they would recommend the Hands On desk to other visitors, and 91% of visitors said that the desk had enhanced their visit. Knowledge of the volunteer was rated most highly by visitors and 93%
of visitors said they learnt about a specific area or topic. Dwell time at the desks remains high - 68% of visitors engaged for 4+ minutes (26% for 6+ minutes). 72% of volunteers agreed their experience had been valuable and enjoyable overall.

Evaluation

Following the audit of the volunteer programme’s existing evaluation forms, the questionnaires were revised to explore feedback in greater detail. Where applicable, data which remains comparable across the different sets of evaluation forms have been included.

Evaluation of the desk that accompanied Sunken Cities and The American Dream is complete. The Sunken Cities exhibition had an unusually long run. The Hands On desk accompanying The American Dream was open for a more typical time period. The evaluation tools consist of the following:

- Questionnaires/interviews with members of the public completed by the WCEC Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Observations of visitor behaviour undertaken by the WCEC Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Questionnaires completed by volunteers about their experience on the desk.

Evaluation methodologies will be reviewed and revised going forward into Year 3 (2017-18) to ensure that useful, actionable feedback is collected.

Sample sizes and margins of error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Data collection dates</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant feedback</td>
<td>09/16 - 06/17*</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>±8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer observations</td>
<td>09/16 - 06/17*</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>±8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer feedback</td>
<td>08/16 - 09/16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>±30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To include The American Dream

163 participant feedback forms and 163 volunteer observation forms were completed over the period; this gives a margin of error of c. ±8% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if we had asked any of the questions shown to the entire population, a proportion of no more than between 8% higher and 8% lower than the one given would have also picked that answer. 11 volunteer feedback forms were completed, which gives a margin of error of ±30%.
The margin of error is affected by the number of responses in the sample. If a question has less than 100 responses then the margin of error will be quite high so results need to be used with caution, in an indicative way only.

The margin of error and base sizes for The American Dream and Sunken cities is provided below each chart. Base sizes for the 2014-2016 data (Vikings: life and legend; Ming: 50 years that changed China; Defining beauty: the body in ancient Greek art; Celts: art and identity) were not provided, so margins of error have not been included and comparisons made should be used indicatively only. The sample size for each of these is estimated to be in the region of 100 interviews (slightly fewer were achieved for Ming). Where applicable, the 2014-2016 data has been given as an average for comparison.

**Participant feedback**

**Previous visits**

*Have you visited the Hands On desk at a WCEC special exhibition before?*

![Chart showing participation in Hands On desks](chart.png)

- The American Dream: pop to present
- Sunken cities: Egypt’s lost worlds
- 2014 - 2016 average

Base: all respondents: 63 / 100

Margin of error: ±10% / ±6%

Amongst respondents who had visited a Hands On desk before, there was an even split in attendance to sessions across all previous special exhibitions at the WCEC.
Prior awareness

Did you plan to visit the Hands On desk before you came to the British Museum today?

Outer ring: The American Dream / Inner ring: Sunken cities

Base: all respondents: 63 / 100

Margin of error: ±3% / ±6%
Of those who found out about the Hands On desk in another way, most came across it incidentally, without planning. This suggests there is scope to improve awareness of the Hands On desk.
Importance against achievement

Derived from: How important were the following factors in your decision to visit the Hands On desk today? - ‘Very important’/‘Important’. And to what extent do you agree or disagree that you achieved the following? - ‘Strongly agree’/‘Agree’.

The learning outcomes and experiences to be gained from the Hands On desk were less of a driving force for visitors to The American Dream, compared to Sunken cities.
### Learning outcomes

How important were the following factors in your decision to visit the Hands On desk today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning about the American Dream</th>
<th>Sunken cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the Museum and its collections in general</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about a specific area of topic</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about handling objects</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an interesting encounter with a Museum staff member/volunteer</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ask questions about museum collections or a specific topic</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base:** all respondents: 63~64 / 100

**Margin of error:** ±11~±12% / ±10%
### Value of the experience

*And to what extent do you agree or disagree that you achieved the following?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learned about the Museum and its collections in general</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learned about a specific area of topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learned about handling objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had an interesting encounter with museum staff/volunteers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had questions answered about a specific topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken cities</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all respondents: 63 / 100*

*Margin of error: ±12% / ±10%*
Nearly all visitors agreed that they gained something from the Hands On desk experience; most visitors agreed that they had an interesting encounter with a Museum staff member/volunteer (93%) or learnt about a specific area or topic (93%). This reflected the 2014-2016 data, where the top three things gained from visiting the Hands On desk were ‘interesting encounter with person/objects’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘was able to ask a question’.

Favourite objects

Which was your favourite object? - The American Dream

The gorilla mask worn by the contemporary artists the Guerilla Girls was particularly popular. Work by the Guerilla Girls was displayed in the exhibition space.

Which was your favourite object? - Sunken Cities

Base: 92
Rating the Hands On desk

How would you rate the following elements of the Hands On desk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>The American Dream</th>
<th>Sunken cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicity and signage of Hands On Desks</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the Desk</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the volunteer</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of the session</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of objects available for the desk</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting and handling of objects</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available outdoors and hands</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents: 63-64 / 100
Margin of error: ±11-±12% / ±10%
Knowledge of the volunteer received the most positive ratings. This is consistent with the results from 2014-2016 where this element received 90%-98% ratings of ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. On the contrary, ‘Publicity and signage of Hands On desks’ and ‘Resources and hand-outs available’ received the fewest positive ratings. This was not assessed in 2014-2016, although 16% of visitors to Celts suggested that the publicity and signage could be improved.

To improve elements of the Hands On desk which were rated as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very poor’, most visitors suggested the visibility of the desks could be better, both with better signposting and better placement of the desks.

‘More publicity. They made it clear that the desk was a special experience. Perhaps have the desk at the end [of the exhibition].’ (Visitor)

‘Move to end of exhibition and bottleneck.’ (Visitor)

However, as discussed in last year’s report there is currently no scope to relocate the Hands On desk. Additionally, evaluation generally shows that the desk in the SEG is actually one of the better visited desks of the Museum’s Hands On desks as a whole. This suggests that the ‘problem’ of location may be more of an issue of perception rather than reality.

A few visitors also cited more choice of objects to be handled:

‘There could be a wider variety of the objects.’ (Visitor)

‘Didn’t feel there was an element of choice.’ (Visitor)

This is in line with the results from Celts, where 40% said the Hands On desk could be improved with a ‘different desk location’, and 19% suggested ‘more objects’ would be beneficial.
Enhancing the visit

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ‘The Hands On desk enhanced my visit to the museum’?

The majority of visitors agreed that the Hands On desk enhanced their visit to the Museum. This is in line with the 2014-2016 results, where 91%-97% of visitors said it enhanced their visit.

Likelihood to recommend

How likely are you to recommend a visit to the Hands On desk to a friend, family member or colleague?
In 2014-2016, 95%-100% of visitors to the Hand On desks said they would recommend it. As this was previously asked as a ‘Yes/No’ question, the results this year give more nuanced insight and suggest that there is room for improvement.

The British Museum membership
Are you a member of the British Museum?

This chart indicates that a significant number of Members do use the Hands On desk.

Age group
Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

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Geographical location

Derived from: Do you live in the UK? And: If you live in the UK, what is your full postcode?

![Bar chart showing geographical location]

- The American Dream: pop to present
- Sunken cities: Egypt's lost worlds
- 2014 - 2016 average

Base: all respondents: 63 / 99
Margin of error: ±11% / ±10%

Overseas visitors

What is your country of residence?

The American Dream

- France
- Israel
- Brazil
- USA
- Netherlands
- Norway
- New Zealand
- Turkey

Sunken cities

- China
- Russia
- Australia
- Spain
- Egypt
- USA

Base: all overseas respondents: 9
Base: all overseas respondents: 11
Volunteer observations

Visitor dwell time

Approximately how long did they spend at the desk?

Base: all respondents: 60 / 94
Margin of error: ±11% / ±10%

Dwell time - grouped

Approximately how long did they spend at the desk?

Base: all respondents: 60 / 94
Margin of error: ±11% / ±10%
Level of engagement

How would you rate the visitor's level of engagement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Level</th>
<th>Base: all respondents</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very engaged</td>
<td>60 / 94</td>
<td>±13% / ±10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite engaged</td>
<td>66 / 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither engaged nor not engaged</td>
<td>45 / 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not engaged</td>
<td>48 / 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all engaged</td>
<td>26 / 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparisons have not been made between the 2014-2016 data as the categories for measuring engagement were not on a balanced scale.

Did they ask a question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Base: all respondents</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60 / 93</td>
<td>±12% / ±9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40 / 93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Selection of available objects

How would you rate the visitor’s response to the selection of objects available on the desk?

For those who rated the visitor’s experience as ‘Poor’ or ‘Neither good nor poor’, this was due to a lack of interest in object handling in general, or a lack of interest in the specific objects available:

‘The visitors in question were, by their own admission, not particularly interested in object handling.’ (Volunteer)

‘She was honest about the fact that the desk wasn’t to her taste. However, she said that she thought it might be of interest to children.’ (Volunteer)

‘She would have preferred objects which were interesting to handle, rather than objects which were interesting to look at.’ (Volunteer)

Those who rated the visitor’s experience as positive, attributed this to enthusiasm for the subject matter and the objects:

‘Very excited by objects, asked about volunteering after seeing what a meaningful experience desks offer.’ (Volunteer)

‘Very enthusiastic, was excited for Sunken Cities and thought handling real objects added even more to the day.’ (Volunteer)

‘Actually said very interesting to learn something before the exhibition.’

‘Interested in talking about each object in turn.’ (Volunteer)
Volunteer feedback - Sunken Cities

Rating the Hands On desk

How would you rate the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection of objects available for the Desk</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>55%</th>
<th>27%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The object notes provided</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training provided</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two volunteers suggested that more time spent training on the individual items would have been beneficial. A further two volunteers mentioned that restrictions on the objects available were limiting and not representative of the exhibition.

Objects used

Which objects did you use the most and why?

‘Osiris, votive box coin and model boat. These objects are tactile, of different materials and tell a story spanning the period when Egypt was ruled by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans and their interactions thus giving visitors an introduction to the exhibition.’ (Volunteer)

‘Lizard coffin for children's interest. Coin as the history is a useful preparation for the exhibition. Alabaster, aesthetically pleasing.’ (Volunteer)

‘I have been using the 3D printed tower house. My visitors and I are very interested by this item. I believe some have gone to Room 61 to look at the original. Young people are also interested in the 3D printing effect, we have had conversations about duplication and forgeries as well as appreciating the items.’ (Volunteer)
‘I used the objects equally except the modern diving equipment. Though it was great to include, the feedback from visitors was that this wasn’t an object they preferred to handle. It also meant if you had it out you couldn’t also show any other items.’ (Volunteer)

‘The mudbrick tower house because it cannot be seen in the exhibition and I have visited oasis towns in Egypt which have mudbrick houses so can talk to visitors with interest and knowledge as well as providing some of my own photos to show more about construction.’ (Volunteer)

**Value of the experience (Sunken Cities)**

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ‘Overall, this has been a valuable and enjoyable experience for me personally as a volunteer’*

Of those who did not agree to the statement, two volunteers mentioned that the restrictions on the objects available and in particular the removal one of the more popular items for security reasons (a statuette of Isis) meant that the appeal was not as great as it could have been.
Future improvements

In line with suggestions for improvements made by visitors, the volunteers also thought the desk could be better placed to attract more visitors. Also, there was mention of more training and a wider variety of objects to be used.

If you could make one change to the Hands On experience for the next exhibition, what would it be?

‘The placement of the desk. Visitors miss the desk if they are not directed by staff. If I could choose the placement I would say after visitors show their tickets and closer to the exhibition door. It feels counter intuitive to have timed ticketing and then ask visitors to delay their entrance time by a visit to the desk. Of course, this doesn’t impact my love for the desk at all! Just a desire for better real estate.’ (Volunteer)

‘It should have been one of the most rewarding desks but somehow it hasn’t worked for me. Always the same issue: the position of the desk and the critical role played by visitor services who can have a major impact on numbers visiting the desk.’ (Volunteer)

‘The desk location has been frustrating. It would be better at the end of the exhibition, at the beginning people are anxious to go in at the time on their tickets. Change the location of the desk! The whole of the exhibition entrance space needs re-thinking, it doesn’t work. At the very least increase the size of the sign pointing to the desk.’ (Volunteer)

‘Curators to understand the reason for the desks. Too many restrictions. Having only one object out is boring. I do not want to handle replicas, the whole point is handling the past. Occasionally it is helpful when alongside the real object like on the Room 2 Hands on Desk.’ (Volunteer)

‘Work with conservators/curators who trust the Hands On staff more. After all, most if not all of us have substantial experience of hands on work and as far as I am aware without any harm coming to the objects shown.’ (Volunteer)

‘Despite this, tracking and observation of visitors in other areas of the Museum indicates that there is a significant proportion of visitors who choose not to engage with a Hands On desk. In the context of the WCEC it is inevitable that a high proportion of visitors passing through the SEG foyer enter the special exhibition directly because that is their main focus.’ (Volunteer)
This feedback about location reflects last year’s evaluation; the earlier evaluation report shared the limitations of the space and noted that the location cannot be changed. It is debateable that the number of visitors using the desk would increase if it were relocated. Visitor numbers are still high - for example, visitor statistics show that the Celts Hand On desk received more visitors than four of the other desks in other permanent galleries across the Museum.

There does seem to be potentially a stronger case for arguing that locating the Hands On desk within the special exhibition would encourage an even higher proportion of exhibition visitors to engage with it. However, locating the desk within the exhibition space itself would restrict access to exhibition ticket holders only, and run counter to the Museum’s commitment to HLF, to provide free access to the SEG Hands On desk.
B) Behind the scenes tours

Behind the Scenes tours began on Tuesday 30 August 2016 following the completion of works on the WCEC lifts. The first tours visited Ceramics, Glass and Metals (CGM). The lifts have caused only minor disruption subsequently with the exception of November 2016. During November the availability of the lift to access Scientific Research could not be guaranteed and therefore that month’s tours were cancelled. Tours of Stone, Wall Painting and Mosaics and Facsimile were rescheduled to Tuesday 28 March 2017 when there was greater reliability in the lifts.

Experiences to date

These tours are led by volunteers from the Information Desk in the Great Court. On arrival in the conservation studios, staff take the lead. The larger group is usually then split into three groups who rotate between three different conservators who talk about their work. This has, on the whole, worked well for the conservation studios and the participants, with visitors being able to hear from conservators about a range of objects.

This format worked less successfully for the first visit to Scientific Research on Tuesday 25 April 2017. Scientific Research is a challenging space for the volunteers to navigate and
access. Because of the complexity of the space, and the need for higher level swipe card access to the laboratories, additional staff support from within Scientific Research is also required. For the second round of tours the group will be split in two rather than three.

Visitor feedback has been extremely positive and volunteers are generally very positive about their experience. Staff feedback has remained largely neutral. However, tours do seem to be more positively received the more they are run, as staff get more used to the practicalities of the day. There are still concerns over the time implications that giving up a significant part of the day has on work schedules, but most staff see the wider benefit of this kind of outreach activity even if there is not a significant direct benefit to their work.

It was hoped that the Hirayama Studio, the only conservation space that is not located in the WCEC, would be included in the tour programme. However, after much investigation it proved impossible to make the studio fully accessible and therefore it was not possible to run a tour here. In order for the public to have an opportunity to experience the Hirayama Studio, conservators took part in a live Periscope broadcast on Twitter on Wednesday 24 May 2017. Further information about this successful initiative is included on page 43.
Iterative improvements

After the first two tours, a number of changes were made in order to help the tours run more smoothly:

- Following staff feedback, tours were scheduled so that they did not occur immediately after a Bank Holiday, when staff levels are often low.
- Each section was asked to draw up a tour plan in advance of the Meet and Greets, so that the volunteers had a better understanding of what to expect when they arrived in the studio.
- Volunteers now wear a sash to identify themselves as tour guides, making them more visible to both staff and visitors.
- A refresher session was held for the volunteers.
The 2016-17 period saw an introduction of a large-print copy of the tour script that the volunteer guides deliver en-route from the Great Court to the WCEC. This was done to improve accessibility in recognition of the difficulties some visitors were experiencing in hearing the guide over the background noise of the public areas of the Museum.

It is hoped that the tours can run increasingly independently of Museum staff as the project moves into Year 3. The additional support the tours currently requires a significant investment of staff time, and in order to make them sustainable for the remainder of the Activity Plan this needs to be minimised. The Volunteers’ Office and the WCEC Activity Plan Conservator are gradually withdrawing on-the-day support, while volunteers continue to gain confidence and experience.

As previously mentioned, a new WCEC Volunteer Co-ordinator has recently been recruited, following Sophie Elby’s departure in March 2017. Her replacement, Rebecca McRae, started on Monday 5th June 2017. Emma Webb has been liaising with the volunteers in the run up to each scheduled tour, with the support of Francesca Goff (Volunteer Co-ordinator). Jessica Starns (Volunteer Co-ordinator: Youth) and Wei Kiat Chen (Administrator, Conservation) have also occasionally provided support during the tours.
Success against Activity Plan targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target per session or/and year</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behind the scenes tours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers recruited and trained in time for tours to commence</td>
<td>Target achieved: The team has been in place for some time now.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>15 per tour/720 per year</td>
<td>2,160</td>
<td>482 (out of 660 available slots)</td>
<td>22% of original target (but 73% based on slots available following Year 1 delays)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% public tour places booked</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successes, challenges and learning so far

Visitor feedback has been extremely positive. A desire to improve understanding of the Museum’s conservation and scientific work and to have an introduction to behind the scenes, were the top factors cited by visitors in deciding to attend. These were achieved to a very high extent (99%). 96% of visitors agreed that the tours demonstrated the purpose of the WCEC effectively and 98% of visitors agreed their understanding of the Museum’s work had improved. 99% would recommend the experience. Around a third of visitors would prefer a longer tour.

Volunteers also rated their experience highly - 93% agreed it was a valuable and enjoyable experience. Volunteers would like to be able to better manage the time-keeping of staff delivering the tours.

Whilst staff feedback has been more neutral, it has improved over time, with 88% rating the experience ‘very good’ or ‘good’. The awareness of the Guide and Meet and Greet sessions seems varied, although some staff did report these opportunities were either not valuable or were not needed, suggesting the need for review. Some staff need more clarification around the volunteers’ role.

In addition, some staff involved responded that whilst the tours do have wider benefits they did not recognise the direct relevance for their own work - concerns around workload implications were prominent. Exploring attitudes to the relationship between this kind of engagement and direct benefits on staffs’ own professional development may be explored in future evaluation.
Evaluation

Evaluation of the Behind the scenes tours consisted of the following:

- Questionnaires completed by volunteers about their experience of the tours.
- Questionnaires/interviews with members of the public.
- Questionnaire completed by staff about their experience of the tours.

Following the audit of the Volunteer Programme’s existing evaluation forms, the questionnaires were revised to explore feedback in greater detail. Where applicable, data which remain comparable across the different sets of evaluation forms have been included.

Comparisons have not been made in this section, as previous evaluation collected was of staff participating in practise tours, rather than of genuine visitors participating in public tours.
Sample sizes and margins of error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Data collection dates</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant feedback</td>
<td>09/16 - 05/17</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>±5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer feedback</td>
<td>05/17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>±25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff feedback</td>
<td>10/16 - 05/17</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>±11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

345 participant feedback forms were completed over the period; this gives a margin of error of c. ±5% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if we had asked any of the questions shown to the entire population, a proportion of no more than between 5% higher and 5% lower than the one given would have also picked that answer. In addition, 15 volunteer feedback forms were completed, which gives a margin of error of ±25% and 74 staff feedback forms were completed, which gives a margin of error of ±11%.

The margin of error is affected by the number of responses in the sample. If a question has less than 100 responses then the margin of error will be quite high so the results should be used in an indicative way only.
Participant feedback

Importance against achievement

Derived from: How important were the following factors in your decision to attend the tour today? - ‘Very important/Important’. And to what extent do you agree or disagree that you achieved the following? - ‘Strongly agree/Agree’.

Improving understanding of the Museum’s conservation and scientific work was the greatest factor in deciding to attend, closely followed by having an introduction to the behind the scenes work. Both were achieved to a high extent - 99%. Even less important factors were achieved to a high extent.
### Learning outcomes

*How important were the following factors in your decision to attend the tour today?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the Museum and its collections in general</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about a specific area or topic</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving understanding of the Museum's conservation and scientific work</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an introduction to the behind-the-scenes work of the Museum</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an interesting encounter with a Museum staff member/volunteer</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ask questions about the Museum and its collections in general</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ask questions about the WCEC</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all respondents: 329 - 338*

*Margin of error: ±4% - ±5%*
### Value of the experience

*And to what extent do you agree or disagree that you achieved the following?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learnt about the Museum and its collections in general</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnt about a specific area or topic</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved your understanding of the Museum’s conservation and scientific work</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an introduction to the behind-the-scenes work of the Museum</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an interesting encounter with a Museum staff member/volunteer</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had questions about the Museum and its collections in general answered</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had questions about the WCEC answered</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all respondents: 329 - 338
Margin of error: ±4% - ±5%*
Motivating factors

Which of the following describe your motivations for visiting today? And which of these was your main motivation?

To learn something (85%) and/or be intellectually stimulated (77%) were the most popular motivators.

Base: all respondents: 320 / 69
Margin of error: ±5% / ±10%
Tour areas
Which area of the building did you most enjoy visiting?

The most popular area is the conservation studio, followed by labs, organics, ceramics and paper, although there is crossover.

Knowledge
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- The tour fully demonstrated the purpose of WCEC: 59% agreed, 37% strongly agreed, 4% disagreed.
- My understanding of the Museum’s work has improved as a result of the tour: 72% agreed, 26% strongly agreed, 2% disagreed.

96% of visitors ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ the tour demonstrated the purpose of the WCEC. 98% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that their understanding of the Museum’s work had improved.
Likelihood to recommend

How likely are you to recommend a tour to a friend, family member or colleague?

The vast majority of visitors said they would be very likely to recommend the tour to a friend.

Tour length

How did you find the length of the tour?

Whilst just over half of visitors thought the tour length of 90 minutes was just right, almost 40% thought it should be longer.
Visitor comments

Most visitors were very positive about the tour, although there were some requests for more time to be spent in certain areas of the tour or for a longer tour overall. Some visitors suggested more information should be made available online in general, as well as some handouts/information for visitors to take away.

*Is there anything else you would like to say about the tour?*

‘Absolutely wonderful. If I’d had the chance to do this when I was young, I’d have a completely different career. Thank you.’ (Visitor)

‘Fantastic privilege to go behind the scenes and see/talk to experts. Much appreciated, thank you.’ (Visitor)

‘A little more time in the organics area would have been good, maybe ten more minutes. That part was a bit rushed.’ (Visitor)

‘Great tour, perhaps it could be advertised online which area the tour will visit for anyone who has a specific interest in something.’ (Visitor)

‘Volunteers and conservators are all very friendly and helpful. I hope there can be more information posted online so that we can be well prepared before we come.’ (Visitor)

‘The people giving the talks appeared willing and interested. They were fascinating, it was wonderful. Truly memorable. Thank you so much. The tour guide was also inspiring and very helpful.’ (Visitor)
**Volunteer feedback**

**Motivations for volunteering**

*Why did you choose to volunteer on this particular programme?*

‘To increase my knowledge of the BM’s history and impart this to the public and to facilitate the public’s opportunity to visit the conservation studios.’ (Volunteer)

‘Because this project gives the visitor a completely new insight into the work of the Museum, which is largely funded by the tax payer.’ (Volunteer)

‘This development (WCEC) is very important for the Museum and I feel strongly that this programme improves understanding of the wider importance of the Museum.’ (Volunteer)

‘Sounded interesting - would extend and enrich my knowledge of the Museum and its work - would complement my other tours.’ (Volunteer)

‘I wanted to take on another role at the Museum, something different from the hands-on desk. I always enjoy the opportunity to see what happens behind the
scenes and thought it would be nice to help the public to have these experiences.’ (Volunteer)

Rating their experience

Overall, how would you rate your experience of being a Behind the Scenes tour Volunteer?

![Bar chart showing ratings]

- Very good: 67%
- Good: 33%
- Neither good nor poor: 0%
- Poor: 0%
- Very poor: 0%

Base: all respondents: 15
Margin of error: ±24%
Personal outcomes

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Volunteers were asked to explain their answers, and for many, personal aspirations did not play a part in their decision to volunteer. For those who found this to be a valuable experience most enjoyed the knowledge they gained for academic/work and personal interest and the ability to pass this knowledge on.

‘I am not sure I have any personal aspirations on this context! I just want to do something useful and enjoyable.’ (Volunteer)

‘I am interested in the work of conservators and the development of techniques which help in the study, conservation and display of objects and facilitate deeper understanding of the past. Being a volunteer helps keep me informed.’ (Volunteer)

‘I have learnt a lot about the history of the British Museum and about the nature of the conservation and scientific research work and its importance with regard to understanding objects and preserving them for future generations.’ (Volunteer)
Rating the experience

How would you rate the following?

The training provided
- Very good: 53%
- Good: 47%

The meet and greet sessions with the studios, before each tour
- Very good: 53%
- Good: 27%
- Neither good nor poor: 13%
- Poor: 7%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The tour script and PowerPoint were well scripted and engaging
- Strongly agree: 20%
- Agree: 73%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 7%

The time in the studios was informative
- Strongly agree: 100%

The time in the studios was engaging
- Strongly agree: 100%

Suggestions for improvement - the volunteer’s experience

The main areas for improvement from the perspective of volunteers included time-keeping, how to indicate time is running out to staff, the use of the cloakroom and wearing a sash during the tour.
If you could make one change to the Behind the Scenes tours that would enhance your experience as a volunteer, what would it be?

‘Stop watches for accurate timing of the talks, maybe a sign to alert the person giving the talk that time is running out because putting a hand up can be easy to ignore and interrupting is not always easy.’ (Volunteer)

‘As the steward, I always get a little stressed about the timings, as I hate to interrupt people when they are talking and I am always worried about causing offence, which I would not like to do. Also, I find the part where I’m trying to persuade everyone to put their bags into two lockers and give me the keys a little awkward. In winter, when everyone has coats and stuff to put in the lockers, this will get more tricky. Having highlighted that, I’m not sure how to make it any easier. Could I say here a big thank you to all the staff for their great support during these tours - it has been very reassuring to know they are there if needed.’ (Volunteer)

‘Focusing on the time-keeping in the studios does mean that I can’t really listen to the conservators, and that is a little frustrating. If the tours were a bit longer and timing not so critical then this would be less of an issue.’ (Volunteer)

Suggestions for improvement - the visitor’s experience

Volunteers mentioned that the tour should be longer to account for the time spent getting to the different areas. There were two requests from the public for an object handling session to end the tour. Also, there were a couple of mentions of sound issues in the Great Hall, where visitors were unable to hear the volunteer.

And if you could make one change to the Behind the Scenes tours that would enhance the tour attendees’ experience, what would it be?

‘Again, making the tours a bit longer seems to be the only significant change that could be done, though I don’t know if that’s practical.’ (Visitor)

‘Everyone I have spoken to all wish for more time in the studios - although I understand how difficult that would be.’ (Visitor)

‘Bit more time - especially for moving from A-B Something in the small room at the end - an object that could be handled, perhaps?’ (Visitor)

‘Something needs to be done about the part of the tour that is in the Great Court. On the last tour it was impossible for attendees to hear the guide, and nobody
seemed to want to admit to being hard of hearing and use the laminated cards.’”
(Visitor)

Staff feedback

In the lead up to the tours

How would you rate the following?

When asked to explain their ratings, it appeared that the awareness of the Guide was low and many staff members did not attend a ‘Meet and Greet’ session. Of those who gave feedback, many mentioned that the ‘Meet and Greet’ was useful for familiarising themselves with the volunteers, so they could distinguish them from the tour participants. However, some staff members also suggested that the session was unnecessary as volunteers would be distinguished by their sashes and also thought that little information was passed on in the session, as the content of the tours were finalised on the day. This was also mentioned in context of the content of the Guide too.

‘We didn’t have the meet and greet, which actually would have been useful, because I wasn’t always sure who the volunteers were.’ (Organics)

‘Information in the guide regarding the actual logistics of the tours was useful, but as a section we have a programme for tours and visits which we adapt each time, and so in this respect those sections weren’t overly applicable. However, I can see how they would be helpful if we didn’t already have a system in place. The volunteer meet and greet was useful for familiarising ourselves with the volunteers
and allowing us to recognise them on the day - though this is obviously an addition to the sashes.’ (Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics)

‘I suppose we all got to meet each other but really it felt a bit awkward and as we weren’t sure exactly which objects we were going to show and which order conservators were going to speak in it meant there was little really useful information exchange.’ (Ceramic Glass Metalwork - CGM)

Most staff members said they received the right level of support to help them prepare for the tours. However, a few members of staff in Organics suggested that to help them prepare the content, it would be useful to know how engaged the visitors in their groups are.

‘Forward a list of tour attendees to participating conservators before the tour would be helpful. On this occasion, one of the attendees had already seen and heard about the object/work I was presenting during the tour. If I had known that he was attending the tour and which tour he was attending, I would have chosen a different time slot to give him the opportunity to see and hear about an object/project new to him.’ (Organics)

‘One group was largely made up of fellow conservators, it is difficult enough pitching your work to a member of the public and getting it at the right level, having a mixed group made this very difficult, even though I knew the people. Had I known the group would include my peers I would have had extra objects, as it was I finished that mixed group early. If the decision is made known to include peers in
future groups please let us know in advance and keep this group separate from the general public.’ (Organics)

Feedback was positive overall and suggested there was little change to be made to improve the tours.

Is there anything else you would like to say about the lead up to the tour?

‘It works well because we are now quite familiar with the format and the event. The only problem is that on the third tour I’ve forgotten what I’ve said or not said to that group. Two tours is ok.’ (Organics)

‘Overall I think it was very well prepared, if anything needs improving it certainly won’t be anything major.’ (Organics)

‘I think it is very important for the public to see and experience our work within the Museum.’ (Unknown)

How the tours went
How would you rate the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither good nor poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The timetable for the day</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The volunteer tour leaders</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of moving around the space</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, feedback on these three elements was positive. The timetable appeared to have worked well for staff, however there were a couple of suggestions for an earlier start and finish and for the sessions to last slightly longer, although there was recognition that this may not be possible due to space restrictions. Some staff members suggested that the role
of the volunteer needed to be clarified, in terms of their time-keeping, helping visitors around the spaces, and their role whilst sessions were underway.

‘I think the timetable allowed for sufficient time with each group without becoming too tiring or repetitive. The tour leaders (volunteers) were great at keeping time and moving people along, as well as engaging in discussion when groups were a little quiet.’ (Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics)

‘Moving around Science is different to the other sections, so staff from Science accompanied the groups. I don’t feel the tour leaders (volunteers) contributed anything once they had brought the visitors to us.’ (Scientific Research)

‘Regarding the timetable, I think both scientists and visitors would have benefited from slightly larger groups: if the 15 people had been split in 2 groups instead of 3, it would only have meant 7-8 people per group which is still manageable within the spaces visited but would have allowed for more time to talk to them. 10 minutes per group was slightly rushed and if we could give them 15-20 minutes, it would be much better. Some spaces may however not allow for that many people in one go.’ (Scientific Research)

‘Need to be clear on if volunteers are keeping the time and also if they are the ones to ensure that the groups move around the lab quite smoothly. It looked like some of the conservators did a bit of organising this time.’ (CGM)

‘The movement around the space was fine, but could have been better. However, that was more our responsibility of setting up stations that the tours visited. I think overall, the timetable was good as it allowed us to have sufficient breaks in between as well as a substantial lunch hour.’ (CGM)

How did you find the length of the visit to the CSR section?

![Survey Response Chart]

*Base: all respondents: 57
Margin of error: ±13%*
Is there anything else you would like to say about how the tours went?

Most staff found the tours enjoyable, and said they ran smoothly at around the right pace. Slightly more staff members thought longer sessions with larger groups would enable them to go into more depth, compared to those who thought the length was right for the purpose of the tour. Issues occurred when sessions overran, which had an impact on the rest of the tour. A few Western Art in Paper (WAP) staff suggested that the volunteers were not very effective in leading the visitors.

‘About 10 minutes is a comfortable time to do a "show and tell" (for the giver) and we thought that 4 different speakers gave variety.’ (CGM)

‘I thought the time in the section was just right. Had about 10 minutes with each group, which was good to introduce a project and the conservation work.’ (Organics)

‘I thought the tours went very well and found it an enjoyable experience. There was one volunteer who went over his/her allotted time for the introduction, which impacted on the studio tour time - I am sure you are aware that this shouldn’t happen again, if possible.’ (Organics)

‘I would have preferred to present to two groups of 7-8 people rather than three groups of 5 people. It can be slightly confusing giving the same tour three times in succession, and sometimes I forgot which information I had told which group. Also, I felt that sometimes the tours were cut a bit short when questions were being asked.’ (Scientific Research)

‘The problem is that you could always say more but then if the tours became longer it would be a very tiring day.’ (SWPM)

‘First group was late and it was difficult to prevent it over-running. Limiting staff to 5 mins was not enough (6-7 mins was ideal). Couldn’t tell who volunteers were and they were not proactive when tour was over. One visitor was left behind in the studio!’ (WAP)
Again, some staff members suggested that fewer sessions which were longer would give visitors a fuller experience and would be less disruptive to their work. Also again, there were a few suggestions that the role of the volunteer needed to be clarified - this seemed to be a particular problem for WAP.

‘Less people talking or dividing the visits between different conservators so that not the same people talking all day. More people in the lab, working, visually better. Maybe longer time rather than 45 min. 45 min seemed to be very tight.’ (CGM)

‘I quite enjoyed presenting my work to the public, particularly as the visitors on these tours are genuinely interested in learning about our work. So it is an easy audience to address.’ (Organics)

‘As I said before, only slightly larger groups if possible to allow for more time with each. Presenting the same thing 6 times in one day is too much and the repetition very tiring.’ (Scientific Research)

‘Volunteers should be more easily identifiable and should try to stand back during the visits (hard to know who you’re talking to). Would help if they were more proactive in moving people around.’ (WAP)
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed the tour</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The experience is beneficial to my on-going work</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents: 54 / 54  
Margin of error: ±13% / ±13%

Staff members generally understood the reasons for running the tour and enjoyed sharing their work with members of the public. A few respondents said it had helped them develop their public speaking skills. A number of respondents from Organics said they did not gain much from it in a professional sense and it added pressure to their workload. Why do some staff not see how this form of engagement is directly beneficial to their work?

‘I did enjoy the tour. It’s lovely seeing visitors’ interested faces and I always love to talk. It’s outreach and it’s a chance to spread the word about conservation to the general public but it doesn’t benefit me directly (it does take up my time) and the reach of the tours is limited for the amount of time spent on them. A lecture to the general public where you might have 3 conservators speaking to 300 people would be a better use of resources.’ (CGM)

‘Public speaking is only improved by practising. Having the opportunity to speak in public three times in a row helped on my confidence. This combined with an engaged audience provides a perfect environment for improvement.’ (Organics)

‘Always nice to talk to public about what we do. Not really beneficial to my on-going work - really means whole day out of doing practical work. But can make contacts. Would be good to know in advance if museum professionals/conservators have applied for tours - don’t know if you can get this info from bookings.’ (Organics)

‘It is good to interact with interested parties and be able to respond to their questions and areas of interest, in order to explain what we do. It is important that
people know what happens behind the scenes and the importance of conservation to the wider work of the museum.’ (Organics)

‘I believe we could create interest in some people who had no idea before, I believe that we should use that to potentially orientate talks around fundraising or that all these instruments cost money in a subtle way to start triggering possible donations? So it is not beneficial for my current on-going work but could be beneficial for the department as a whole if we could raise money through these indirectly somehow.’ (Scientific Research)

‘The visitors appeared to enjoy the visit and I felt we gave them a flavour of what we do. In future, I think it would benefit everyone [including those from Science] if they had more time. The possibility of some of the visitors being potential donors is incentive enough for us to continue providing this event.’ (Scientific Research)

‘Advocacy and engagement is essential to ensure sustainability. I am all for tours.’ (WAP)

If you could make one change to the Behind the Scenes tours that would enhance the tour attendees’ experience, what would it be?

‘It would be interesting to know if attendees feel that the balance of time spent with the introduction to the department and the section, and the amount of time actually spent looking at conservators’ work is right. As a conservator, it feels that relatively little time is actually spent in the studio, and an average of under 10 minutes to talk through an object and sometimes complex treatment is not enough - members of the public seems to want longer. But perhaps it is better to leave people feeling they wanted more!’ (Organics)

‘Some take away info about the conservation department - some people were writing notes as quickly as they could.’ (Organics)

‘Perhaps would be best to organise the tours out of holiday season so more conservators would be able to participate and take turns to speak to the public.’ (CGM)

‘Give them more time in larger groups; logistically it might mean the rooms are more cramped but their experience would be greatly improved - there was no time for questions really which was a shame, but we were keeping so tightly to the timetable that it just wasn't possible.’ (Scientific Research)
‘Make the visits to each science lab longer so that they get 15 to 20 minutes’ worth of each scientist’s time, rely on in-house SR and C hosts for the in-lab talks, use the volunteers as shepherds moving groups round the building but not coming into the labs.’ (Scientific Research)

Image shows WCEC Behind the scenes tour of the stone, wall paintings and mosaics studio
C) Object moves

The Storage Moves Team is committed to recruiting 12 volunteers annually (2015-2017), who will together complete 80 days per year. The volunteers are accommodated within the Storage Move Team (Collections Services) and work with the Collections Project Manager (Christina Murphy), Storage Manager (Elaine Hunter) and Curators within the Africa, Oceania and Americas (AOA) department.

The use of volunteers in direct collections care/collections management roles at the Museum is a new area of activity which only started in 2015. During 2016-17 volunteers have continued to actively support the WCEC Storage Moves project.

The Object Moves volunteer programme was delivered in five intakes this year in the following formats:

**Intake 1**
- Two volunteers carrying out two days per week (Tuesday and Wednesday), for 18 weeks. One volunteer per day.
- This intake started in the week commencing 22 February 2016 and ended on 1 July 2016.

**Intake 2**
- Two volunteers carrying out two days per week (Thursday and Friday), for 18 weeks. One volunteer per day.
- This intake started in the week commencing 22 February 2016 and ended on 1 July 2016.

**Intake 3**
- Four volunteers carrying out five days per week, for two weeks.
- This intake began on the 18th July 2016 and ended on 29th July 2016.

**Intake 4**
- Two volunteers carrying out two days per week (Tuesday and Wednesday), for 16 weeks. One volunteer per day.
- This intake started in the week commencing 29 August 2016 and ended on 16 December 2016.

**Intake 5**
- Two volunteers carrying out two days per week (Thursday and Friday), for 16 weeks. One volunteer per day.
• This intake started in the week commencing 29 August 2016 and ended on 16 December 2016.

Volunteers working on the Storage Moves project completed 302 days of volunteering in total during this year. This means the target of completing 80 days of volunteering was exceeded by 378%.

*Image shows the storage at Franks House 1, Orsman Road, where the Object Moves volunteers are based*
Evaluation overview

All 12 volunteers participating on the Object Moves volunteer programme completed a questionnaire towards the end of the programme. Informal feedback was also collated through interviews throughout the volunteer programme.

Successes, challenges and key learning

Image shows staff-led training session for the Object Moves volunteers

Building on the learning from the previous year’s volunteer programme, planning started earlier for the 2016-17 programme, which enabled the recruitment, selection and training process to run much more smoothly. The volunteer opportunity attracted great interest and a large number of applications, which reflects the high demand for direct collections management experience at the British Museum. One of the challenges, however, was to balance planning and management of an effective volunteer programme whilst also ensuring the project’s many other deliverables were met. For a complex project that needs to achieve ambitious objectives within a tight schedule and with limited resources, this was a major challenge. A key learning was the need to plan in appropriate opportunities for the volunteers to learn about museum work on an informal basis, such as
socialising with the storage team at lunchtime and other breaks. Informal feedback through interviews shows that volunteers valued learning from the staff sharing their experience of working in a museum as much as the hands-on aspects of the volunteer programme.

Excellent feedback was received on the Object Moves volunteer programme, with volunteers valuing the opportunity to gain direct object handling experience. This experience has also helped some volunteers to gain employment at the British Museum, as four of the volunteers from the 2016-17 programme have now joined the WCEC Storage Moves Project as Assistant Storage Managers.

Volunteer feedback showed that:

- The application form was clear to understand and easy to complete (100%).
- Information volunteers received before their first day was excellent/good (100%).
- The training sessions covered what was expected of them and prepared them enough for the opportunity (100%).
- The Moves Manual was rated as excellent/good (100%).
- There was a good mix of theory and practical hands-on activities (100%).
- Volunteering at the British Museum would be recommended to others (100%).
- Volunteering for the WCEC Storage Moves Project would be recommended to others (100%).
- The volunteering placement helped them achieve their learning outcomes as well as their personal development (100%).

Volunteer comments:

‘My time with the WCEC Storage Moves team has been really enjoyable! Choosing to volunteer here has turned out to be one of the best decisions for my personal development and understanding which direction to take my career.’ (Volunteer)

‘I found the experience very enjoyable and a great source of personal development. The team was friendly and easy to work with as well as being very informative about the job, sector and objects.’ (Volunteer)

‘I have truly had a wonderful experience volunteering with the WCEC and will be forever grateful for all the valuable things I have learned. I am delighted and honoured to have been part of the project.’ (Volunteer)

‘Brilliant experience - loved learning so much, getting to handle the objects, see how the museum works, etc.’ (Volunteer)
Object Journeys

An introduction to Object Journeys

Object Journeys is a three-year HLF funded programme, part of the WCEC Activity Plan, in which community partners are being supported to research and explore the collections and to work collaboratively with staff to produce a display, a programme of events and new information in response to the collection. Object Journeys is an exciting opportunity for community partners to work intimately with the collections and for the Museum to draw on the experiences and knowledge of individuals within different communities. It is about learning and exploring together and is intended to facilitate a genuine sharing and exchanging of knowledge. Object Journeys is also about trialling - and evolving - new engagement methodologies and embedding more collaborative community-led display development approaches across the British Museum.

How is Object Journeys progressing against targets set out in the Activity Plan?

The following table details the key quantitative targets from the project Activity Plan, as well as indicating progress against these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Per project</th>
<th>Target per 3 years</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Target achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 complete 4 in progress</td>
<td>On target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community participants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10 for 1st BM project 6 for 2nd BM project Around 15 for Manchester project Around 10 for Leicester project</td>
<td>On target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider community involvement</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>The wider community has engaged through involvement in project activities, attendance to events and via social media. Whilst numbers cannot be recorded, they will have exceeded the targets.</td>
<td>Exceeding target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. British Museum visitors</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>It is likely that a minimum of over 1,800,000 passed through Room 24 over the course of a year. Tracking studies suggest that only a smaller proportion of this figure is likely to have stopped at the Object Journeys case. The target</td>
<td>Firm data is lacking but the target is likely to have been met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
is likely to have been exceeded.

NB. A very conservative estimate based on existing studies of visitor behaviour would be an estimated 153,000 per year stopping for a meaningful engagement (based on knowledge that 1,800,000 visitors enter Room 24; 900,000 stop and look at displays - although mainly the central art installation; 17% of these look at wall displays = 153,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Partner museum visitors</th>
<th>90,000</th>
<th>270,000</th>
<th>230,266 (data provided by Manchester)</th>
<th>Exceeding target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. Public programme participants</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>BM 1st project - 625 (Launch 250 Family event 700 Somali week event 320 Little feet 25) The above figures represent those recorded by evaluation at events only. There is no way of knowing the exact numbers of those who engaged in some capacity, although real numbers have exceeded the target.</td>
<td>Exceeding target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Object records amended</td>
<td>At least 1</td>
<td>At least 3</td>
<td>1st BM project - 7 records amended 2nd BM project - 8 objects, 2 new donations, commissions of 5 new objects, 1 new object film</td>
<td>Exceeding target</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative data is equally important to project learning and is explored in greater detail below.

**Summary of activity**

Whilst the first evaluation report (2015-16) summarised the developmental project activity of the Somali Object Journeys community partners, this year has subsequently seen the opening of the Somali display and the delivery of the public events.

Since late 2016 the BM has been working with six members of the UK’s Kiribati community (The Republic of Kiribati is an island nation in the central Pacific Ocean), including those who were born on the islands, as well as those who are second and third generation. As
with the first project, the community partners have been researching and exploring the Kiribati collection at the Museum, developing a display, which opened in July 2017 and co-producing a series of public events, which will be delivered across autumn and winter 2017.

The group have been working together, meeting up monthly on average, although sometimes more, and communicating between sessions online. These meetings were a mix of discussion-based workshops, training and skills exchange sessions, talks from experts and study seminars in the Museum’s Kiribati collections and archives.

The project has loosely followed the usual stages of exhibition development - exploring and researching the collection, seeking advice from curatorial staff and other researchers, suggesting new objects for acquisition, developing interpretive approaches (including a new film) and developing design ideas.

Image shows community partners facilitating an object handling session as part of the Somali Object Journeys events programme

Evaluation approach

The overall aim of the external evaluation is to develop insight into how effectively this research-based project explores the potential for - and effect of - community-led display
development at the British Museum and in the sector. The evaluation of all Object Journeys project iterations at the British Museum focuses on:

- Impact on community partners.
- Mapping attitudes towards - and impact of - collaborative working on internal BM staff and stakeholders.
- Investigating views and experiences of the external advisory groups and Steering Groups.

Both data collection and analysis of responses from visitors and the broader community towards the project outputs has been undertaken by trained Museum volunteers. The analysis is supported by the external evaluator (The Audience Agency) and presented in this report.

This evaluation also explores experiences of staff at the British Museum’s national partners delivering Object Journeys projects. These were Manchester Museum (Year 1) and New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester (Year 2).

Key evaluation methodologies utilised include: in-depth interviews, observations, e-surveys, discussion groups and creative responses. Specific approaches used have been described in each section of the report.
Successes, challenges and key learning

A) Impact on Object Journeys community partners

i. Somali partners

Click this image to watch a short film of poet and spoken word artist Theresa Lola’s interpretation of the evaluation feedback from Somali community partners. Below is the transcription.

Object Journeys

To reclaim objects your ancestors once used

is like pulling a mirror closer to your face

to give a clearer reflection of home.

Home is an alien until

you create a space for both of you to co-exist together.

The British Museum was that space

for the Somali partners to share the stories of Barkin,

Masafared, even the Dacas, goat-leather sandal

pinched intricately together by a mother’s soft hands.
Out of the objects, the Somali partners got to touch a few, but there is no set figure of how much of your heritage you can swallow to feel it bloating your body with joy.

The British Museum has the world condensed into a building, so you too would want to touch everything you can, but for large organisations access is a challenging process.

Partnership is a malleable term that can be bent in many directions. The Somali partners and the British Museum, tried to define their position without treading on egg shells. A structure is important but the Somali partners wished they could make more decisions on the structure of the project.

No one wants to feel like a ticked box, The British Museum reached out and welcomed the community into its arms. With all the sweat and dedication, who benefitted more from the project?

Sharing their heritage with the wider community made their faces glow like newly refined diamonds showing the world the side of them that sparkles in hopes it will blind out the narrative of the Somali culture that is displayed to the world.
Sustenance is the magic word
that will keep lemonade dripping from lemons,
what happens from now is the important question.

By Theresa Lola

Summary

Overall, the first year Somali project partners were very positive about the project - they enjoyed the experience, were proud of the display and learnt more about their heritage. However, all partners believe the BM has gained more from their contribution than they did. They recognised that financial remuneration was beyond the scope of this project, but would have liked more access to collections and internal Museum expertise throughout (and after) the process, such as training about how the Museum operates and being given access to space for events - for them and Somali community organisations. Key considerations, challenges and opportunities that could be explored further have been presented at the end of this section of the report.

Researcher’s note: It is important to reflect here upon where different community partners are starting from and the cultural sensitivities of certain groups (or individuals within groups) in terms of a working relationship with the BM. In this case, some of the Somali partners came to the project with complicated and, for a few, very critical perceptions of the Museum, what they saw it representing (especially in terms of the British Empire and its colonial collecting practices) and the provenance of some of its Somali collections. The partners were, however, open to exploring this tension, engaging in dialogue and discussion around the collection and developed a positive relationship with the BM.

Overall, this group were culturally engaged, with highly developed critical thinking skills and were able to feed back both positive and negative experiences. This has been mentioned because it is important to communicate that whilst they did have some negative feedback on some elements of the collaboration, they were still generally positive.

Whilst not part of the data collection, the evaluation from the community partners was summarised and presented back to the Internal Steering Group in spring, which enabled staff to reflect on responses whilst the second project was in the delivery phase.
Notes on the data

- Discussion group, December 2016, attended by seven partners.
- In-depth interview, January 2017 with one partner.
- Creative response to evaluation findings of Somali community partner experiences by spoken word artist and poet Theresa Lola.

The importance of access

Overall, for partners, access was by far the most important element of the project, mainly to collections, but also to Museum staff and space. This theme is explored further in the detailed findings below, along with other responses.

What did partners enjoy and gain from experience?

- Exploring objects provided a sense of familiarity:

  ‘Familiarity, all these things are very old and they were used by people who were thousands and thousands of miles away; even things that we didn't know, in their texture, in their colour, in their tone, felt familiar in some way.’ (Partner)

  ‘Like nothing felt very alien because these are stuff that we've either seen in pictures or that we've had like around our house.’ (Partner)

- The majority of the partners said they had learnt about the exhibition development and curation process: From realising it is a more involved process than they first thought, to learning how to write labels and picking themes - demystifying the process.

  ‘Initially I thought we’d be helping the Museum create a display, just pick certain items from the collection and put it on, but there's actually a lot more that goes into that.’ (Partner)

  ‘For me one of the most insightful bits was when we had the curate...when we got to talk with the curators and they showed us how they break down criteria of like... Okay, this is how you break down a display, you have to have X amount of words in this display, they have to hit these particular points.’ (Partner)
‘She basically had like this kind of pamphlet, it’s like a presentation thing where she took images of all the exhibitions that she’d gone to in different museums and galleries and broke it down into all these different elements. And I was like actually these things...like with everything, anything creative there are ways of breaking them down into their constituent components, and for me it’s like demystifying a lot of that stuff around curating.’  (Partner)

- Meeting different people and staff, especially the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager (OJPM)

‘Also, like I got to meet...like a lot of people, I got to meet Kayte and Kayte is like an amazing person, she was really nice, she helped us a lot in the whole process.’  (Partner)

- Developing research and interpretation skills: For example, exploring what objects really were, cataloguing, and describing objects.

‘I learned how to research more, like that it’s...because we are Somali we knew which resources to look for and like there were a lot of mistakes, in terms of how to catalogue, how to write, and half of the items were...the way they were describing what they were used for. Because a lot of the objects that we actually selected has still been used in modern day, so often I thought this is not a hat.’  (Partner)

- Working with the British Museum brought a sense of pride

‘I didn’t have experience, so it’s something you can like sort of boast about and be like ‘Oh I did that’, or write in your CV, I worked with the British Museum and all of that stuff.’  (Partner)

- The majority of the partners thought that the project had supported them to develop their understanding of their own heritage. One partner said the experience had offered a more ‘multifaceted’ way of learning about their heritage.

‘I don’t know, maybe I’m speaking from personal experience, like how we were taught about Somalia, nothing compared to how we learned what it was during the research. I think I was learning like one language, one culture, one religion, but when I was reading, when I was doing the research about Somali culture, Somali people, and it’s very diverse and a multifaceted community. Through that project I learned about it now, through that I learned it. For me that’s the main thing I gained from it.’  (Partner)

- Connecting with a wider Somali community

‘I met these fantastic people as well. In the beginning as well I thought that maybe I might like not stick through with it all to the end, because I thought I might snowflake
out, but because it was so interesting I just kept going and I kept like building on what I’ve learnt before. I connected more with my community than I would have before then that’s one thing that I can say is a positive.’ (Partner)

How did partners feel about the final display case and the events?

Room 24: Somali Object Journeys display
Image shows musician Ali Eid Farrah performing at an event

- Sense of pride

‘I feel proud, like whenever I look at it and I see people going up towards the case.’ (Partner)

- Valued the opportunity to develop a positive narrative of Somali culture
- The events programme added depth and dialogue

‘To be honest I think the events were really useful, like in terms of being able to engage with not just Somali community but with the wider community.’ (Partner)

‘Just to, kind of, have a space where you’re having a tactile relationship with your culture.’ (Partner)

Partners said they wanted more input into decision making around the events programme. They believed there was a rigid, museum-led format for events - the type and range of activities, with only limited ways they could inform this. However, staff believed that the events were not overly museum-led; that there were opportunities for partners to plan additional events, which were not taken up. In addition, one partner acknowledges they had not attended all the sessions related to event planning, so there may be some clear reasons for their responses. Further evaluation is needed to explore this topic in more depth, especially if this theme emerges with the other partner groups.
‘The formula was already set. Poetry and music, display talk and handling the objects.’ (Partner)

‘The only thing that we could add was ‘why don’t you bring this poet or arrange to bring this musician?’ but in terms of the set up that is already pre-decided. I think that’s maybe something that comes out from the British Museum at the end of it, if they were willing to give certain spaces only for a specific period of...is it really a community partnership or is it just brief like...?’ (Partner)
Is somebody getting more out of it than the other person? And I definitely feel like maybe the British Museum got more out of it than we did... personally.’ (Partner)

- **Valuing different kinds of expertise:** An important question raised during the formal project evaluation was the difference between how they - and what they defined as ‘other’ experts - were remunerated for their partnership with the BM. Most of the partners thought the BM must have valued their input because their work created a public display and events programme. However, they questioned whether, because of lack of payment, the BM did not place the same value on their specialist knowledge as it did for curatorial staff. This raised questions about the extent to which museums value different kinds of expertise equally.

‘Is a partnership just a way for the Museum to say that they’ve reached out to the community or is partnership actually thinking we value your skills, your knowledge in a way that we would value from other organisations?’ (Partner)

‘So what is it? What kind of relationship do you [the BM] want, what does a partner mean and why is that something that you don’t think requires this [remuneration]? Even though we do get lots of benefits from it, it’s... like what is our knowledge worth if there is an exhibition going on there?’ (Partner)

- **Desire for greater access to staff expertise:** This support was sought to help them undertake their own research and creative projects related to the Museum’s collection.

‘I don’t think it was an equal partnership in most cases, there was ‘Here this is your job’, besides not being paid but the fact that there’s this huge hierarchy and the only representative that we’ve seen of the British Museum, the majority of that was Kayte.’ (Partner)

‘I feel like we gave them our knowledge, more than they gave us their knowledge.’ (Partner)

**What could support a more equal partnership?**

- **Greater access to space and the collection:** This was something all partners agreed would support a more equal partnership. Around half the partners expressed a desire for support to undertake independent research.
‘I would love to have access to the collections, and if I want to do research or if I want to do anything that will benefit me and that was never really offered as far as I know.’ (Partner)

‘And I think also like [she] said in terms of access it was quite limited and the only time that I really had access to the collections [was] during the meetings. I don’t think there were facilities available that one...of us...[could] come and do our own research, I don’t think those things were offered.’ (Partner)

‘I guess...for me personally what attracted me was...an opportunity for me to have an exclusive access to the collection, and obviously we all feel that we didn’t get much access to it.’ (Partner)

- Opportunities to curate own events.
- Access to staff, expertise and training: Although it is important to note that opportunities were offered and not always taken up, which partners confirmed in their feedback.
- Partners recognised that access was a challenge, so expressed need for sharing these limitations.

‘Tell people, okay, these are things that you can access and these are things that you can’t access, but explain why.’ (Partner)

Attitudes to the British Museum

- Overall, partners are positive about a future relationship with the BM: Although the point when the evaluation happened was perhaps too early for accurate reflections on this. However, there was a recognition that change, like that being attempted via this project, happens slowly, and that it may be manifested behind the scenes initially, rather than in public spaces.

‘I recognise that for me museum spaces are very, very stale, in particular the British Museum, but just recognising that behind the scenes that there are people who are trying to do things a bit more creatively, a bit more differently. Recognising that it does take time for things to kind of change and to shift. So for me it’s like knowing that behind the scenes all these other things are happening, but sometimes it’s not reflected on the outside.’ (Partner)
• Partners said they would like to organise events, take part in training, visit and use the BM as a space for research: However, they did not specify their preferred process for facilitating this.

• Clearly defined parameters and benefits: The partners talked hypothetically about how the BM could work more effectively with other partners in the future on similar projects. Whilst they weren’t responding on an individual level, most of the group agreed that for partners to have a more positive experience it would be preferable for them to have clearly defined parameters, articulation of benefits and information about what they can and can’t access - with very clear reasons why and why not - from information about the need to book in advance to conservation requirements.

‘I would say have an agreement of the parameters of relationship and attempt to ensure that there is equal benefits for both partners involved, so making those partnerships much more equal.’ (Partner)

• All partners wished for some kind of future relationship with the Museum: Even if primarily as a visitor.

Expectations versus reality?

• Views were mixed going into the project as most did not know what to expect: In addition, because it was the first Object Journeys project it was hard for BM to specify in detail, but most feedback they did not expect the level of workload required.

‘I knew what I was expecting out of it but the workload was more than I anticipated.’ (Partner)

• Collections access reality versus perception?: Lack of awareness around access issues that affect any partner or staff member.

‘I thought I’d see a lot more objects in the collection. I mean I understand it’s kind of difficult because they were all stored and they had to get all of it out, but I just had bigger expectations.’ (Partner)

Challenges for the partners

• The process of object selection was a key challenge: For example, a few of the partners said they would have liked to have had more objects to choose from and
more objects to put in the final display. Another said they didn’t have enough time to explore objects with the wider Somali community and apply that learning to the selection. In this case the partner did acknowledge personal responsibility for joining the project late.

- **Size of the case allocated to the display:** All partners expected it to be larger to start with.
- **Limited selection of objects**

> ‘The first thing my mum said, ‘Why is it so small?’ Like I agree as well, but also we had to stick with a particular theme and certain objects didn’t. I think it would have been better if we had more access to more objects. Because the objects that we already were given in the first place were already limited, at the end we were left with even less.’  
> (Partner)

- **Concern from a few in the group that the project was a one-off and not part of a sustained relationship:** Although it was unclear about whether this was because they had not been informed about the project more widely, or had not had time to digest this information. Whilst the wider group seemed to agree with these views, it was only articulated by a couple of partners.

> ‘Oh great we’ve done this outreach to the Somali community, but like this is one project and this is one bout of funding to do this one particular thing. Is it really a consistent agenda that they have, they want to reach out to different communities?’ (Partner)

> ‘Because that for me is the ultimate goal, because it’s like is there going to be consistent effort to make sure that different types of audiences come in?’ (Partner)

**Ownership**

- **Mixed attitudes:** A few partners said that because the outputs reflected their content, ideas and heritage, they did feel a sense of ownership, but the majority (including some of the same partners) also thought that the BM had ultimate control because it had final approval over all decisions. The Project Manager (Kayte) advised that the partners did have final sign-off, but if this was the case, the partners did not seem aware of it in the feedback discussion.

> ‘The content is ours, I mean the way we selected and the images that we’ve selected, that’s us and the knowledge, that’s completely us. For me that’s where the ownership comes.’ (Partner)
‘Ownership in the fact that the collection is Somali I think, and the fact that it represents our people and what we are, so I guess in that sense we felt a sense of ownership’ (Partner)

‘Because on every count they have the final say. It’s not like I can do something that they don’t want me to do, like everything that I contribute, or anybody contributes, it has to be with their…approval’ (Partner)

‘I’d say that like there are certain things that I can take ownership of but I recognise that this isn’t mine, it’s the British Museum’s, so like yeah, I contributed some work to this project and I’ve done events but ultimately this is the British Museum’s project and I am a part of the project.’ (Partner)

One partner commented on how not being able to upload digital content, via having their own BM staff computer log in for example, led to a feeling of not being trusted. There was the assumption that any partners working with the Museum, would have the same kind of access to Museum systems, collections database and computer accounts as staff, and this combined with a perceived lack of clarity over what they could and couldn’t do contributed towards feeling a lack of ownership. The response here indicates the importance of communicating the level of control partners have over Museum spaces and platforms. How to raise partners’ awareness that no curators, whatever background, have complete control or ownership should be considered.

Positive views about the impact of the project on their wider community

- Opening a dialogue with their community: Showcasing that the BM has Somali collections and supports future partnership with organisations from their community.
- Setting a precedent and encouraging others to undertake more collections-focused research

‘I loved the fact that it could open dialogue; this could trigger something in terms of like some other Somali can go after it and do their own research.’ (Partner)

‘It can open doors in the future. It could change something, the balance, especially within partnerships and the British Museum is still at the top but maybe in the future that it will create a more balanced… [partnership way of working]’ (Partner)
ii. Kiribati partners

Impact on Kiribati partners will be shared in Year 3 reporting.
B) Mapping attitudes towards - and impact of - collaborative working on internal British Museum staff (who are all stakeholders in the Object Journeys project)

This area is being explored through charting the experiences of the staff who are part of the Object Journeys Internal Steering Group (ISG). The list below shows the topics the evaluation has explored in Years 1 and 2. These topics were informed by the evaluation framework and key questions the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager (OJPM) wanted to explore to inform project development and learning as Object Journeys progresses.

Year 1: 2015-16

- Current understanding of the terminology of co-creation
- Understanding of and attitudes towards the practice
- Current understanding of community collaborations and co-creation within the BM setting generally and in display creation
- How the ISG think Object Journeys will build on other community based projects at the BM
- How the ISG think the project will bring value to the Museum
- What staff hope to gain professionally
- Challenges and fears
- Visions of what successful and unsuccessful outcomes for the Object Journeys project would be
- What would be most disappointing to see happen throughout the development process and in the final offer
- Vision of what would be a valuable experience of being part of the Internal Steering Group.

Year 2: 2016-17

- Experiences of the project
- Thoughts on the project outputs
- Successes
- Challenges and frustrations
- Learning - individually and organisationally
- Views on how the next project should be delivered
- Experience as part of the Internal Steering Group
- Inspiration or new ideas from being involved.
In Year 2 the ISG is made up of a wide range of staff who are either directly involved in delivery of the projects outputs or are more strategic stakeholders for the Object Journeys project. Members met several times during 2016-17.

Notes on the data

- Ten in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews took place, late 2016/early 2017.
- One observation of ISG meeting took place during February 2017.
- Interviews were conducted post-Year 1 install of the Somali Object Journeys display (these do not include ISG experiences of the Year 2 projects).

Reflections on evaluation across Years 1 and 2 - Is the Object Journeys project meeting and challenging expectations?

- Specific challenges to this way of working in a large national museum still resonate with staff and relate to many of the challenges identified this year.
- Staff expected they would learn new ways of working, new knowledge around collecting and a greater understanding of (and develop relationships with) London’s diaspora communities, and all agree these expectations have been met.
- Staff also expected significant challenges to include internal buy-in, giving project partners full access to collections - and both proved true - the latter even more so than expected.
- Concerns about embedding this methodology and its long-term legacy persist, but there was consensus that it is too early to comment on this.
- At the start of the project staff said that successful outcomes would include the community partners being valued, and this was clearly the case - although perhaps only to a degree. There has been progress towards other outcomes staff wanted too - a model for collaborative working with partners, confidence in delivering this work, as well as a more positive attitude and advocacy for it, but, these outcomes are not yet fully achieved.
- Some staff were worried that goodwill and positive attitudes to the project and new ways of working were a case of ‘rhetoric over reality.’ Responses in Year 2 show that overall this positive attitude persists. However, some staff feel that actions, lack of capacity and delay challenges, have been indicators of some continuing resistance.
• Staff were concerned about the sustained engagement of community partners across the project, but partners did remain very engaged.

Experiences of the project so far

Summary

• Overall feedback was extremely positive, largely due to the experience of working with community partners, and the sense of achievement around the display.
• Wider staff buy-in, installation challenges and lack of staff capacity were recognised as on-going issues, but did not distract from an overall positive experience.

The majority of staff said their experiences had been positive, although all were able to cite both positive and more challenging elements. Some more senior staff felt removed from the day-to-day process and tended to only be drawn in to support staff meeting specific challenges, so thought they were less able to comment.

Key factors contributing to positive experiences:

• A sense of achievement and pride with the display (in this case the Somali exhibit).
• Working with the community partners.
• Learning from the process of a new kind of project - the process being ‘exciting’, ‘different’, ‘pioneering’ and ‘an eye-opener’.
• Staff willingness to engage despite challenges such as limited capacity and resourcing.

Negative responses were far outweighed by the positive, but included:

• Practical exhibition installation challenges were recognised by most staff, although there was key learning from this going forward - the need for a dedicated lead person to co-ordinate and project manage in this area.
• Time and resources - not enough staff time and capacity, and it was challenging to prioritise Object Journeys against other demands within the Museum. It was felt that this impacted most on community partners.
• Perceived limited advocacy at a Directorate level, which some staff believed resulted in a lack of discussion around resource allocation, causing poor awareness and capacity challenges for operational staff.

Thoughts on the project outputs - display and events

Summary

• Staff were extremely proud of the display and believed it to be high quality and engaging. Being able to see a tangible result from the project is valued by staff because they feel they now have a concrete, successful outcome to use to support project advocacy.

• There are mixed opinions about how visibly different the Somali Object Journeys display looked and felt from the rest of Room 24: Living and Dying, with concerns around whether visitors were aware of the collaborative development at all. Most had a preference for the Object Journeys displays to stand out, and a few wanted the process to be articulated more visibly (explained below). Some questioned if, or how, the BM can support partners to be more experimental and create different kinds of displays within existing parameters.

• Events were seen to be extremely powerful for supporting and showcasing partners’ relationships, demonstrating the BM is a place for the Somali community and informing future programming.
All staff were extremely positive about the display, saying the former was ‘brilliant’ ‘beautiful’ ‘lovely’ ‘interesting’ and ‘the jewel in the crown’. They felt it made up for the challenges experienced, especially installing a display in what was a logistically difficult case, and the long delays that ensued. The install was more challenging than staff had initially thought due to the requirements of an ambitious design, hanging vinyl, installation of technical equipment and object re-display. These unexpected elements required additional staff time, which was hard at a time where there were also staff shortages. However, once complete staff valued the relatively high production value of the display, and believed this meant it would be considered on an equal status with other displays in Living and Dying (Room 24).

One staff member said that seeing the outputs had made them think the BM should be doing more community-led work. It is evident that these physical tangible outputs have been important for staff to start advocating for Object Journeys and the collaborative process more broadly.

- **Staff support the idea of Object Journeys displays standing out as different:**
  However, there were very mixed opinions about whether the Somali display did, or whether it blended in.
Around a third did feel it had a subtly different feel, supported by the inclusion of poetry, quotes, colour and AV content.

Most had hoped it would stand out more. They had acknowledged that whilst the partners had been asked to create something different, they had made the decision to conform towards a BM tone. The inclusion of the Somali display in a gallery with a pre-existing identity and structure exacerbated this. A few staff suggested this tension made them think about how the BM can support partners be more experimental or challenging.

Some staff were also concerned visitors would not be aware of the collaborative process. One said it was a real challenge to be able to highlight that collaborative element, without some very overly visible marker, and that it would be a shame for visitors not to know the hard work and relationships that had gone into the display. Another staff member was positively surprised that visitor feedback had been very positive; they were surprised because they thought most BM visitors are used to a particular institutional tone and voice ('the BM voice'). However, this staff member may have been assuming that visitors had recognised different external voices without any firm evidence.

**Location:** Some staff said the location of the display in Room 24, which is a busy transitional space between the Museum’s north entrance and the Great Court, could limit the attracting power of the case. This is supported by visitor data.

Staff who were either involved in planning or attending events, were overwhelmingly positive, saying they were high quality and engaging. Some said that whilst the display felt more traditionally BM in look and tone, the events more successfully highlighted the collaborative partnership work.

**Reaching new audiences:** A staff member working in event programming felt that BM programming tends to attract a very traditional audience demographic, but these events had attracted a new and different audience profile in a way that no other event had. Small-scale ‘snapshot’ observational data recorded by internal evaluators did indicate that the events attracted a Somali audience, but there is no evidence to explore whether they are new or existing Museum visitors.

**Supporting Somali community ownership of BM:** Staff felt the events helped show the Somali community that the BM is a place for them - they were very positive about seeing a visible Somali presence at the event, especially the ‘modern, contemporary’ voices of the Somali partners.
• **Relationships to inform future programming:** Programme staff said that new relationships had been established to feed into future event programming - especially Somali Week festival.

*Image shows a handling session as part of the Somali Object Journeys events programme*
What ISG members perceived to be successes of the project - both for the Museum and other stakeholders

Summary

- An effective working relationship with the community partners, developed and sustained throughout the project, was considered the most successful part of Object Journeys so far.
- The fact that this process, which is relatively new to the BM, resulted in a high quality display, was considered a real achievement and was a surprise to some. Staff said they believed this work was new; previous engagement work at the Museum involving community partners in exhibition development has been more consultation-based - Object Journeys builds on this.
- The hard work of the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager was recognised by many and seen as pivotal to the success of the project and the sustained engagement of community partners.

Overwhelmingly the three key successes for staff have been the relationship with the community partners, the belief that a display was successfully created through this ‘new’ process (as described by staff) and the effective co-ordination of staff input through the work of the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager.

- **The co-creation process created a successful display:** This was almost a surprise for some, mainly because it was believed to be a new way of working for the BM.
- **Relationship with community partners:**
  - Programming staff were especially positive about this and said that developing a relationship with a key cultural political spokesperson within the UK Somali community is potentially a vital link that can inform future programming. This same staff member said that although BM events are meant to be accessible to a ‘global’ community, the project had highlighted the lack of Somali audiences at events (non-specific Somali events). A key success was that this project had developed their thinking around how to engage audiences that may come to culturally specific events, to want to connect to wider programming. It provoked questions around sustaining engagement with wider content whilst acknowledging their specific preferences.
Overall many staff believed that the process had successfully engaged the partners for the entirety of the project. Staff also enjoyed opportunities to work with the partners and enjoyed feedback about sessions they had been involved in via the OJPM.

- **Object Journeys Partnerships Manager**: Staff noted that the staff member in this role had been vital in making the project a success - from supporting the relationships for events, to communicating and negotiating with the wider team and partners to make the display happen. Many said the sustained engagement of the partners was a direct result of the hard work and dedication of the OJPM - building both internal and external relationships to ensure the project’s success. Another said the OJPM had a real skill and patience.

- **Other successes**:
  - That it has been a learning experience - overcoming the challenges and challenging institutional barriers.
  - Developing a relationship with Powell Cotton Museum through bringing the collections together into a tangible output, via a community-led co-creation process.
  - Navigating the loan process in the context of this co-creation work which can be applied to similar work in the future.
  - From a curatorial perspective, it was considered a success that the collections database had been updated with information from the community partners’ research. Particularly because these are not in a ‘special separate box’ but are listed as a standard curatorial comment with a community partner acknowledgment.
Challenges and frustrations for the Internal Steering Group

Summary

- Whilst the logistical and timetabling delays with installation of the display were cited by many staff, views about the causes of these difficulties varied - from expectations around this being a new project, to lack of designated exhibition lead, as well as inflexible attitudes towards the project from certain staff or departments? Poor communication - and the lack of effective advocacy at senior level - were seen to be key factors in negative attitudes.
- Access to collections for community partners, the project timeline and a rigid BM loans process were other frustrations identified.

Researcher’s note: Whilst staff have been able to specify several challenges, overall it is useful to note that within the research context of Object Journeys, challenges potentially present greater opportunities for exploring how this way of working can be achieved at the BM; i.e. the project is working to identify issues within BM systems and processes, thereby building internal learning around engagement methodologies.

Some major frustrations for ISG mentioned include:

- **Design and installation process:** Taking the final concept from the Somali community partners and turning this into a physical display was recognised by many as a major challenge during the first project in 2016 - although views on the causes of this varied. Most mentioned capacity issues and resourcing - there was insufficient staff capacity in certain areas. One mentioned a lack of a designated design lead (not a special exhibition project manager) within the exhibitions team, and another believed the true cause was internal inflexibility and lack of engagement with the project. There was also agreement that some delays with the installation were to be expected as this was the first time this process had been trialled, and Room 24 was designed as a permanent display space (and therefore it is less easy to rotate objects within it).
- **Not enough internal buy-in:** There were different attitudes to this; many in the ISG expressed a positive attitude toward the project, but think that wider staff buy-in, especially of senior staff, is the main challenge. Four ISG members specifically mentioned senior staff buy-in. Two explicitly shared concerns that there was not buy-in to the project at Directorate level, which therefore meant
there was both a lack of advocacy and discussion around proper resource allocation. This resulted in more operational staff having work placed onto them when they already felt very busy, and despite an appetite to want to engage with the project, capacity limited this.

However, they believe that now the first project is complete, and the outputs are visible, getting wider buy-in will be somewhat easier. A minority thought that even within the project team there was resistance to the project, and some staff de-prioritised the project and used capacity issues as an excuse. One person said that seeking internal buy-in was taking too much of the OJPM’s time - and distracting them from the other elements of their role. They were very explicit that this did not mean that the OJPM was failing at their role in any way, but that too much time was having to be spent on internal influencing work.

- **Communications**: Related to the issues of wider staff buy-in is the perception amongst many that poor communication around the project at a senior level (Directorate) is the main reason why on-the-ground staff were allocated OJ project-related work at short notice, as opposed to being planned, which caused resourcing issues and resulting resistance. Some ISG members believed that had awareness and planning been in place, more staff would have been able to properly engage with and learn more from the project earlier on. Whilst evaluation can support communication to a degree, one ISG member felt that if involvement in OJ projects was limited to just one person from each department, the potential for wider staff awareness is limited. A need for more reflection time was registered, with more open, honest internal dialogue.

- **Access to collections for community partners**: Staff agreed that delays with the Object Moves project (moving collection from off-site into the SEG) impacted on access to collections, they also believed they had overcome these by utilising approaches such as use of images (to compensate for the real objects).

- **Loan process**: Some mentioned that the BM’s loan process is very rigid in the context of working with external partners, especially the requirements for requests to be made a year in advance. Although the Loans Committee itself was said to be new and still being honed so there has had to be some exploration about how to give more control to external partners.
Learning from involvement with the project - individually and organisationally

Summary

- There was a wide range of individual and organisational learning, although there is a lot of crossover. Many felt it would take some time before learning from the project was embedded in the organisation - if at all.
- Key areas of learning cited included Somali cultural insight, the co-creation process and discovering more about other departments’ work. Of co-creation in particular, staff said they have learnt how worthwhile it can be, yet how time-consuming and challenging it can be to involve community partners as much as possible.
- Staff were easily able to articulate how learning will inform the next stage of Object Journeys (Years 2 and 3) - mainly longer lead in planning time, recognising the need for more flexibility whilst still wanting a defined process, and managing partners’ expectations.

Individually

Note - many staff found it hard to separate individual and organisational learning, so there is some crossover, and inevitably one often informs the other.

- Cultural insight: Both about Somali culture and the collections.
- Co-creation process: There were many elements to the learning around this - and not all positive:
  - Believing it is worthwhile.
  - Feeling more confidence about working within this process in the future.
  - Need for very senior advocacy within the BM to get buy-in, so that future Object Journeys projects are better supported and resourced. One staff member said they had to talk about the project multiple times to the same colleague before they ‘got it.’
  - One member believed that the BM was not as open to co-creation practice with community partners as they thought they would be. This was a minority opinion, but within a small sample worth presenting. They felt the BM was not seeing the bigger picture, not willing to take risks - meaning they were less open and comfortable about trying new ways of working and putting in extra time to do this; perhaps not always seeing the potential...
long-term benefits of new learning and organisational development that the project may bring.

- **Learning about the work of other departments:** The project was seen to provide more opportunities than other BM projects to work cross-departmentally, which enabled some staff to learn more about what other teams did.

**Organisationally**

- **Too early, but there have been ‘ripples’ across the British Museum:** A significant number of staff said it is too early in the project for there to be any major organisational learning, however, one did say there were ‘institutional ripples’.
- **Time-intensive:** Learning how labour-resource heavy creating collaborative work with community partners is.
- **Creating genuine relationships with community partners is hard:** Some staff said that they hadn’t realised how hard it would be to create genuine, effective relationships.
- **Other learning:**
  - Challenges working with objects such as loans processes, access to collections and installation.
  - How hard it is to deliver a project conceived in 2009, especially when the organisation is now structurally different.
  - Surprise by the reaction of the community partner evaluation (which was shared in a staff workshop) - especially around their views on remuneration and negative perceptions around object provenance.
- **How staff think this learning will feed into the next project:**
  - Better timetabling, planning and resourcing - with the latter in range of roles - not just core team - to encourage cross-team working.
  - Different ways of working with community partners - allowing for reactivity and patience; and for a balance of both proactive and reactive ideas.
  - Recognition of the need for flexibility but also a standardised approach for co-creative work - that can work for any external partner.
  - Managing expectations of partners by having a key communicator that can support and prepare partners for the challenges and ways of working of a large institution.
Thoughts about how the next stages of Object Journeys should be delivered

It is useful to note that the second project - Kiribati Object Journeys - had been mostly delivered by the time of writing this report.

Summary

- There should be more to support the research objectives of the project, such as different formats for displays and more prominent locations for the exhibitions. Staff did not spontaneously express a deep understanding of the research context of the project, but many did note that different kinds of displays, varying the locations of these and working with different community partners would generate new learning.
- Earlier involvement in the planning from wider project team, as well as better internal communications and senior advocacy.

Overall, now tangible outputs have been successfully achieved, staff believe some strong practice and internal relationships have been established to form a base to build on. The following elements were identified by staff as an important focus for the next stage:

More to support the learning and research project objectives:

- **Location of display:** If displays are in different locations - rather than using the same room each time - there is likely to be greater learning.
- **Different type of display:** As above.
- **Different community partners:** Still being aware that different community partners will bring new learning, although some staff said they were so not sure wider staff were aware of the importance of this.

Earlier planning and involvement in process from wider project team and community partners:

- Ensure the installation of the Object Journeys exhibit does not require redisplay of other displays, which takes additional staff resources.
- Staff want more involvement with community partners, earlier in process.
- Some said earlier staff engagement would support greater ownership - a recurring response. One member believed that some of the team were not aware of the wider Activity Plan that Object Journeys is part of; they see it as an ‘add-on’
Being more engaged in the planning of a major project could support a change in attitude.

**Better internal communications:**

- Not just from OJPM, but within departments and across the whole project team, especially over installation work.
- The ISG to be more proactive about reading emails and project updates so they are responsible for being informed and up to date.
- To raise the profile that this is part of the wider Activity Plan (as mentioned previously).

**Other suggestions:**

- Community partners more involved in creating digital content. Not having to go through a central BM staff member for community partners to create content, and exploring different kinds of content that are quicker to create on social media.
- Continuity in staff involved.
- Clearer process for working with partner museums.
- Earlier relationship building and planning between National Programmes team and OJPM so the latter can understand how that team works.

**Experiences of being part of the Internal Steering Group**

**Summary**

- Whilst most members were positive about being part of the ISG and did say it was a useful forum for sharing ideas and issues, at least half believed that members are not fully opening up and being honest during meetings. This suggests a review of the format could be needed.
- One said it was too large a group for active decision making and another said they would prefer the dates much further in advance to secure attendance.
- There was agreement that the success relied on members being proactive, bringing ideas and making the time, so a recognition the OJPM was doing as much as possible to make the meeting work. There was also the sense at the time of the interviews, that the group was beginning to become more active, so it will be useful to review in the future.
Inspiration and new ideas

Summary

• Most staff involved have been inspired by community-led practice, and many were able to specify clear examples of how they plan to apply the process or methodologies into their own area of work.

Only two members interviewed said they had not taken any new ideas or inspiration from the project so far. Most ideas related to:

Community-led practice:

• More interest in community-led projects, especially when exploring other museums. Some staff said they were actively seeking out this kind of work for ideas.
• Increased appetite to understand if or how participants and audiences from community-led projects transition into BM’s mainstream programming.
• Inspired by the longer-term relationships that have been built both with community partners and partner museums.
• Feeding into own their practice:
  o Curatorial: How learning from Object Journeys can inform work in the African galleries - mainly about how to respond to potential audiences more effectively. A staff member said that attending an event, and talking to real community partners, provided inspiration to provoke this thinking.
  o Learning programmes: An ISG member said they had utilised the Object Journeys model of partnership work and object loan work to have a greater impact on an audience through a film project they had developed.
  o Events: Considering how to bring community based knowledge to the BM, not just through displays but in other kinds of work such as a collection research project, or work with other communities of interest such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex+ (LGBTQI+).
  o Design: Inspired by having such deep engagement with community partners within design work - for example, sitting around a computer planning together.
Somali heritage and culture:

- Awareness of Somali heritage - how culturally rich it is, and recognising appetite within London’s Somali community for exploration of their heritage and culture has inspired a number of ISG staff members.
C) Investigating views and experiences of the External Steering Group

i. External Steering Group

The ESG is made up of leading practitioners and academics in this field and meets quarterly.

Overall evaluation has aimed to explore:

- Value of having an External Steering Group attached to the project
- Value of the Object Journeys project to the field - for members, the BM and sector
- Challenges raised through this way of working
- Impact on advisory panellists.

Specifically, evaluation in Year 2 has explored:

- Engagement and interest
- Whether expectations for the project have changed
- Surprises
- Any change in understanding of and attitude towards co-creation with community partners
- Impact on own practice
- View on creation of new learning/knowledge for member, the British Museum, its partners and the sector
- Views around whether Object Journeys is creating opportunities for sharing any new learning
- Recognition of challenges that still need to be overcome
- New opportunities
- View around that the BM be doing differently to push this project even further
- Role ESG can/should have.

Notes on the data

- Reflective telephone interviews, May 2017, with five ESG members.
Summary

Whilst this way of working had started to emerge at the end of Year 1, members felt that the group has shifted towards being an established shared learning or community of practice group. This space and place for reflection is highly valued across the group, and members think it better describes their activity. They have been extremely positive about their involvement in the Object Journeys projects, find participation ‘invigorating’ and beneficial to their own thinking and practice. Collectively the group are particularly proud about the procurement of some specialised funding from the British Museum Research Fund that has been received to explore the research context for the Object Journeys and are excited about these forthcoming workshops and events. They believe that the OJPM is doing a great job in a challenging environment and successfully facilitating a process that is developing new learning for the British Museum and the sector.

What keeps ESG members attending the sessions and what keeps up their interest in the project? Is the format still working for them?

Summary

- Learning is the main motivator - participation informs their own practice - whether academic, work or studies. Members also value learning about community-led practice at the BM.
- Networking and supporting the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager are also important.
- The group value the learning emphasis of the group which focuses on the higher-level philosophical topics rather than operational challenges; one member even described the group as operating as an Action Learning set.

Learning and informing their practice, academic work and studies:

- Sharing universal issues around co-creation.
- Hearing about different approaches and methodologies around this practice, especially across different size and types of museums.
- For one, the work informs their PhD around how museums with world cultures collections can use these as basis for engaging with diaspora communities.
- Supports one member’s role as PhD supervisor.
• One sees this ESG as an Action Learning set, supporting exploring the bigger philosophical and political issues rather than the operational elements of Object Journeys.

Learning more about this work at the British Museum specifically:

• To better understand the BM’s commitment to community work and to understand the level of and challenges around internal buy-in.

Other factors:

• Sharing their expertise.
• Supporting the OJPM, especially around stakeholder relationships and ensuring she feels the projects is moving in the right direction.
• Networking, especially valued by freelance members.

Have External Steering Group members’ expectations for the project changed?

Summary

• This question prompted ESG members to share how expectations had changed so far, which focused on the OJPM exceeding expectations about overcoming challenges which enables the co-creation process to work.
• The project was also enabling thinking around some of the bigger questions relating to the role of museums.

Object Journeys Partnerships Manager exceeding expectations around overcoming the challenges:

• Whilst this was not a surprise for the group, some said the OJPM has surpassed their expectations in terms of overcoming challenges, progressing a form of practice and creating a space for this work within a museum that is less focused on - or experienced in - this work.

Raising questions about the role of museums:

• One member said that although this project is a small project at the BM, and co-creation practice happens at many museums, the Object Journeys project seems larger because it raises lots of fundamental questions about the role of museums in the 21st century.
Has anything surprised External Steering Group members?

Summary

- Overall no, because they had expectations for things to surprise. They were surprised about accessioning difficulties, and pleasantly surprised about the size and production quality of the display. They also cited the persistence of the OJPM to ensure the project was a success, but also said they thought the BM as an organisation was more open to the process than expected. One member believes framing of the project within a research context contributed to the latter.

Overall, ESG members said they expected there to be challenges, however, there were some minor points:

**Accessioning:**

- One member was surprised about the challenges that came with getting information added to the collections management database, and said this raised fundamental questions around knowledge creation.

**Somali display was much larger, with higher production quality:**

- One commented that they were pleasantly surprised by what they perceived to be the large size of the display. They expected the display to be a more ‘obvious’ intervention that they described as a ‘community case’, and they were pleasantly surprised it had the same production quality of similar displays in the BM. This encouraged the members to feel that community work may have a growing status within the organisation.

**Openness of the British Museum due to research context:**

- One ESG member was surprised by this and suggested that perhaps the fact that Object Journeys has been framed as a research project may have more successfully engaged staff from across the BM. They questioned whether similar projects should be framed as research to support organisational buy-in?
Has the understanding of and attitude towards co-creation with community partners within museums changed at all for External Steering Group members since they first joined the ESG?

Summary

- There has been learning on an individual level, but overall the group believe the learning from Object Journeys can really contribute to sector wide understanding of this subject.
- Object Journeys has contributed to a greater understanding of the nuances of co-creation practice, and underlined the belief that perseverance is the key driver for making change happen.

Object Journeys is a contributing factor to a greater and more nuanced understanding:

- Most members said they are involved in a lot of practice or research in this area through their wider work, so whilst it has added to understanding, it is not a direct cause. Despite this they all find being part of the group extremely valuable, and emphasised the benefits of the learning created by bringing theorists and practitioners together.
- One said that being part of the group helped her as a practitioner to translate the sense of unease in the sector, to better frame and articulate this tension and unease. It has supported greater realisation that this practice is not ‘black and white’. It has helped nuance thinking around cultural authority and ownership.

Has the participation of External Steering Group members in this Steering Group affected their own practice at all?

Summary

- Exposure to different perspectives and seeing the work in practice were the main ways Object Journeys is informing ESG’s own practice.

Different perspectives:

ESG members really value being exposed to the different perspectives of other members - especially the range of roles, organisations and levels of experience.
Seeing this work in practice:

- Providing a case study for practice.
- Exposure to co-creation work within a museum that has very different collections from them - type and nature of acquisition.
- One member said the experience had encouraged them to think differently about people and how they can contribute to collections.

Reflection on the different contexts that participatory practice can be undertaken in:

- One member, an academic, said participation in the group made them appreciate that they can do participatory work as a researcher, without having the pressure of museum needs and the related challenges of working with material culture. This member reflected that they can be free and more ‘anarchic’ with their collaborators compared to museums.

How Object Journeys is creating new learning or knowledge and opportunities to share?

Summary

- The project is supporting ESG members share and discuss participative practice within their own organisations.
- Members were most positive about sector-wide learning, although believed this would take time. Key learnings they believe the project is developing are:
  
  o how to open up dialogue with communities
  
  o showcasing collections authentically (informed by expertise from people who have lived experience or knowledge about use - developing a more truthful and valid understanding of collections)
  
  o promoting the message that visitors benefit from wider knowledge
  
  o the BM being a role model for large and national museums.

Members were positive that the learning so far would really inform the next stage of the project, although they were less able to say whether or what learning would be for the British Museum yet. There were some clear examples of learning and sharing on an individual level and on a sector-wide level:
Individual:

- **Supporting their organisational dialogue:** One member said the project blended the divide between practice and theory, and supported conversations which they were having at their own museum, with colleagues and senior staff, around some of the tensions of this work.

- **Strengthening belief that collections should be at the core of participatory practice:** One member expressed that collections needed to be core to this work and the sector should be careful about the relationship between social activism and collections; that this needed more interrogation. They said the project had strengthened this belief about the role of collections in this practice.

Wider sector:

- **Time needed with different project iterations:** Overall, members agreed it would take time for learning to disseminate. Another said the different iterations of the project had a lot of scope for generating new knowledge. One member commented that learning across the sector will only become apparent after the project. How will the BM move forward, what will the legacy of the project be, will it be embedded and how much sharing will there be with the sector? So far, this member felt the very existence of the Steering Group and on-going discussion pointed in the right direction.

- **How to open dialogue with communities:** One member said the project is showing how to open dialogue with community partners and create opportunities to understand and present opportunities in different ways.

- **Using collections authentically:** One commented that this practice would empower museums as they will learn more about their collections.

- **Visitors can benefit from external knowledge:** That museums hopefully understand that it is not always internal knowledge that should be presented, visitors benefit from this wider knowledge too.

- **That national - and other large - museums can learn a lot:** Whilst most in the group agree the BM is not a leader in this field, the very fact it is doing this work as a national museum, with all the specific challenges this can bring, means there is real scope for other large museums to take note and learn.
Has the External Steering Group recognised any challenges that still need to be overcome? Do they think any new opportunities have arisen so far?

Summary

- Navigating the cultural sensitivities of different partners and ensuring the legacy beyond the scope of the project are the main challenges identified.
- One member’s participation in the ESG has led to them becoming an organisational partner in the Object Journeys programme. This funding and support will allow them to enhance a community-led collecting project by adding a display dimension.

Navigating cultural sensitives of different community partners:

- Believed to be both a challenge and an opportunity. Practicalities around community partners and their different needs such as access to collections, preferences for session formats, display design and social preferences about meetings and communications needs. Needing to start from scratch with each new partner means constant learning, but need for on-going sensitivity. Learning from previous projects won’t always be applicable. One member said this would be managed well by the OJPM but had concerns wider BM staff may find it challenging having to work to different approaches for each community partner.

Legacy:

- This is a persistent theme; one member said the real challenges would be about legacy and embedding the work once externally funded roles were gone.

Giving equal status to diaspora communities versus source communities at the BM:

- One member was interested in what they perceived to be the difference in the way source communities and diaspora communities were treated at the BM. They said voices and knowledge from partnerships with the former had a higher status. This topic had not arisen from discussion with partners or staff, so perhaps needs further interrogation.

Opportunities:

- One member said the project had brought the opportunity for them to be a partner organisation. They had received funding from HLF Collecting Cultures project around post-1960s African fashion and have been working with a collection
development panel. They had no funding for the display so are now becoming part of Object Journeys, and funding will go toward the co-created display and related content.

What does the External Steering Group think the British Museum should be doing differently to push this project even further?

Do they think the project is pushing at the boundaries of community collaboration work enough?

Summary

- Overall it is doing what it intended, but the BM could do more to communicate the project across the sector and champion it at a senior level nationally?

The ESG believed the project is successfully doing what it set out to do so far, so it could not really do anything differently. Some members did have minor suggestions which included:

- Understanding co-creation work with community partners within its existing special exhibitions programme. There was the perception from one member that the BM does more collaboration with academic partners, but less with ‘everyday people’.
- The BM could do more to communicate this work and share how it plans to embed it. Some wanted to know whether the OJPM role will be made into a core strategic role, not placed in the Learning team or in an area where it could be perceived as an ‘add on’.
- The BM doing more to champion this work at a senior level both internally and in the wider sector.
Do members have any other comments about their experience as part of the External Steering Group, or the Object Journeys project more widely?

Going into the third year what role do members think this External Steering Group can/should have?

Summary

- Overwhelmingly this is an enjoyable experience for members. They enjoy exploring the bigger picture and the space for reflection. They have a real desire to share learning from the project, and are very excited about the forthcoming research workshops and events.

- **Enjoyment**: All ESG members are enjoying being part of the group. Even those who said they have not been to many meetings said they still really value being a part of it.

- **Appetite to share learning**: They are keen to ensure they are capturing their discussions about this practice - to continue sharing learning and think even more about how this can be disseminated. They are proud and excited about the research funding and events.

- **Valuing the space for reflection**: Enjoying the move to being a ‘mutual support mechanism’ and learning group, a place for reflection is very much valued - many feel they do not have enough reflection space in their day to day work. Not using the name ‘External Steering Group’ is suggested by one member, who thinks they need a name that reflects the change in focus.

ii. **Community Advisory Panel**

In the first year of the project the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) was set up to act as a critical friend to the BM supporting the project in how it engages community partners. Members come from a range of organisations including voluntary and charity organisations, community groups, arts organisations, community history organisations and local education centres. The Object Journeys Project Manager did not feel the meetings were beneficial to those involved, especially as different members from organisations tended to attend.
D) Exploring the experiences of British Museum’s regional museum partners

Notes on the data

- In-depth semi-structured telephone interviews with two project lead staff at Manchester Museum, spring 2017.
- Interviews with project lead staff at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery and observation of that group in spring 2017. This included an informal interview with two participants, which will be included in the next report.

i. Manchester Museum

Starting in Year 1, Manchester Museum (MM) worked with the community organisation Community on Solid Ground (COSG) to develop a display in response to their exploration of both Museums’ collections and their own research into traditional Pakistani past-times. The project was also related to MM’s ambitions to do more direct local community engagement for their new major South Asian Gallery (opens 2020). The project involved working with an intergenerational group of South Asian elders and younger women to pass on skills, especially textiles-based skills. The Object Journeys project explored both the BM and MM collections related to Pakistani textiles, games, beauty and cooking. The display opened in January 2017 and closed during September 2017.

Because the community group were already an established project group with their own HLF funded heritage project, they had their own Coordinator and a very clear view of the specific outcomes they wanted to get from the MM partnership element of the project. This meant the Coordinator was able to take on a shared role for communications and planning.

How this project will support their South Asian Gallery development

- MM’s South Asian Gallery is due to open in 2020, so the Object Journeys partnership project has been a good catalyst for creating these new relationships to feed into this development. It has enabled this dialogue to happen and allowed MM to explore how they might work with these specific/or general community partners in the future.
• The project has acted as a case study or pilot project for their HLF stage 2 applications.

• In terms of deciding what is going into the gallery, it is too early because they are not yet at the point of deciding content, but there will be a contemporary collecting strand, so this project has helped shape thinking around this.

• In addition, an ESG member said they had discussed the Object Journeys project with the MM staff lead, who said the project had influenced this wider South Asian project and was carrying a lot of political and diplomatic weight within the Museum.

Views of the display and the community partners’ involvement in this

• The two staff interviewed stated that wider MM Staff were very positive about the end result, and said it had received a lot of attention from staff and visitors, and generated attention for the South Asian Gallery.

• They also gave feedback that the community partners and their families have come back to visit the Museum; they said it was the first time any South Asian community groups (they are aware of - so within their community networks) have had their work displayed in any museum, and this resulted in a huge sense of pride.

• A number of visitor services team members were interested in the project and blogged about it.

• At the time of interview, they had not done any formal gallery evaluation.

Views about co-creation of displays as a manageable way to create exhibition content in the future

• MM staff believed that having an established community partner group with existing clear objectives (as was the case with COSG) was a key to the success of the project. For example, they had inbuilt support and leadership from the community group coordinator and an understanding around partners’ aims was transparent. MM staff explained that there was a clear point of contact with that extra capacity to support group coordination.

• They would like to undertake some research about the impact on the group and their wider community. They observed that having their partners’ work on display gave credibility to their skills and heritage - they really appreciated the fact the
Museum wanted to take their work and display it, so MM would like to understand more about this.

- They believe this project has established some momentum and a way of working, so they are keen to build on this.

Challenges

- Whilst MM were very positive about their relationship with the BM - especially the OJPM, they thought the BM loans systems were not flexible or responsive enough to meet the needs of community partners. Their concerns mainly revolved around a rigid object selection and loans process. They felt they and the BM OJPM worked hard to support the community partners, but that it was difficult to communicate to community partners the way a large museum works.

- MM said both they and the BM needs to better support partners’ understanding of large institutional ways of working. They would have liked to see more face to face involvement from the wider BM team rather than just the OJPM.

Benefits

- The project strengthened MM’s working relationship with the BM.
  - It put faces to names and enabled them to get to know BM colleagues better.
  - It developed a greater understanding about where the community engagement practice happens at the BM, and supported learning about its ambitions for connecting communities to collections around the UK.

ii. New Walk Museum and Art Gallery - Leicester

Feedback is from the Project Lead at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery (NW).

Motivations for getting involved in the OJ project

NW was motivated to take part in Object Journeys because it provided an opportunity to transform part of the World Art Gallery. Curator, Malika Kramer, leading the Object Journeys project, said that there were many issues with the Gallery which had been
identified through discussions with the museum’s stakeholder communities. Two main issues:

- There were no paintings in the World Art Gallery which gave the impression that only Europe produces and values paintings.
- Perceived cluttered nature of the displays.

Object Journeys provided a catalyst for change. It presented the opportunity to:

- Work with a range of stakeholders, both community partners and the BM (only the range, not depth of engagement was articulated).
- It brought vital funding.
- Explore the different directions they could take with the Gallery.

**Nature of the project**

NW aimed to think about ‘community’ in a different way. As a museum, they do a lot of ‘community projects’ but wanted to explore doing ‘inter-identity’ work (as termed by the staff member interviewed); in this context the staff member said they wanted to engage partners from a range of different communities. The display will feature art collections from all over the world. They developed a community of ‘global artists’ who are based in Leicester. They did not restrict this to professional artists, and engaged art makers, students, professionals and amateurs. They were keen to engage those with experience or knowledge of art in different parts of the world, but a general interest rather than a specialist expertise was fine. They have been working with objects from different collections.

The Museum lead thinks this project is providing an exciting opportunity to explore ‘inter-community’ - which they think is vital for Leicester as a multicultural city. They did a Cultural Olympiad exhibition which started to consider some similar cross-cultural work, so hope to build on this. Through Object Journeys, the lead hopes that art from across the world can be treated with equal status to Western art, and is very excited about the outcomes.

**Relationship with the British Museum**

- The project lead said the experience of working with the OJPM has been ‘brilliant’ - there has been clear communications and their relationship is collaborative and discussion based.
• They valued learning from the BM OJPM about how BM Object Journeys projects were progressing.

Challenges - working with community partners

• Community partners are all partly working and/or studying, so logistics and management of the session can be complicated. The project lead said that they need to make a lot of effort to get decisions made. This may imply a wide range of things - that the partners were not fully informed about involved workload; that the lead and/or wider NW team were not prepared for the challenges of ensuring shared decision making with the partners; that the wrong partners had been selected to take part; or that sustained engagement of partners is not happening - they are not attending enough sessions for some reason.

Challenges - with the engagement methodology

• The lead said they were disappointed they had to make the initial long list object selection before the group had even started due to the year-long BM loan lead in time.
• Utilising objects from different collections, which they felt has surprised the BM and required more resourcing from the BM. However, they said the OJPM really championed this approach for them.
E) Responses from visitors to the Somali Object Journeys display and events programme

This section is based on evaluation data and feedback to the Somali display and events gathered by volunteers at the British Museum. In addition to the display, the Somali partners also co-produced some events for the BM’s public programme. The events included:

- Special event for the opening of the display, which took place on the evening of Friday 7th October 2016, during the BM’s later opening hours 18.00-21.00. This included object handling sessions, poetry and musical performances, and a talk by partners about the project. The event took place near the display, in Room 24, and was open to BM public as well as guests partners had invited along. It attracted about 50 Somali people coming specifically for the event and many other visitors who happened to be in the Museum for the late-night opening.

- A family friendly event on Saturday 12th November 2016, which included object handling, an all-day craft workshop (Somali-inspired clay artefact making), a storytelling session, a few poetry performances and a musical performance from a popular Somali musician. This event was incredibly well attended with the craft workshop full all day and all performances busy with visitors.

- A Somali Object Journeys Little Feet, an under-fives workshop, on 6th December 2016, which was a two hour drop-in session showcasing a range of toddler specific activities with a Somali flair including storytelling, craft making inspired by the objects on display and multi-sensory games highlighting Somali ingredients, smells and sounds. This was attended by around 14 families throughout the morning.

- The BM also hosted the Launch of Somali Week festival on the evening of Friday 21st October 2016. This is an important international week-long event and was attended by around 320 UK and international Somali guests.
Image shows a family activity, part of the Somali Object Journeys events programme
i. Display and public programmes

Display

making the earth's curves heavy;
when is the light red light of evening
the sky's collecting clouds
the exact hue of henna
bearing the sun's brand;
when the sun itself is clothed in
the contours of cashmere,
when rain-promising rays hang on its neck:
your looks are cousin to all this
and who if not accustomed to it
could tell you two apart?

From Cajuqay (Amantea)
By Maxamed Ishaaq Warsama ‘Hudranaa’
Translated into English verse by W. N. Herbert
LITERAL TRANSLATION

Objects of survival: the beauty of Somali craftwork

The Somali region has a rich, diverse cultural heritage
dating back over thousands of years to the ancient
kingdoms of Dura and Hadiya. The beauty of Somali
craftwork reflects the creativity and skills of its makers,
and often surprises when it is applied to practical
everyday objects.

Until the late 1900s, many Somali people lived as
nomadic herders, and the objects selected here reflect
this lifestyle. Nomadic Somali people had, and still
have, an intimate understanding of their environment
and landscape, and the items they chose to carry
with them, while practical, were often richly
decorated and ornate.

Image shows woman in front of the Somali Object Journeys display
Whilst the internal evaluation (available on request) of the Object Journeys Somali display included responses to the broad approach and general visitor engagement, the focus for this report is solely on visitors’ perception of - and responses to - the co-creation process. This particularly focused on:

- What does visitor engagement look like for co-created displays?
- What is the value of these collaborations for visitors?
- Can we define what we mean by a successful visitor encounter with co-creation outputs in galleries?

Notes on the data

- The display was evaluated by trained and supervised BM volunteers and key findings and reflections have been drawn together within this report. This has involved reviewing the overall findings from the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager’s summary report and the more detailed project team (volunteers/student placements) evaluation reports.
- Evaluation approach
  o Part 1 - Tracking, observation and intercept interviews (50 tracking and 30 interviews).
    ▪ Tracking and observation: Visitors’ moment-to-moment interactions with the Somali Object Journeys display case were studied and documented through use of a bespoke tracking map, as well as their engagement with other nearby display cases within the pre-selected section of the gallery space.
    ▪ Intercept interviews: Visitors who were observed engaging with the Somali Object Journeys display case were stopped and interviewed briefly (two to five minutes), using an interview questionnaire.
  o Part 2 - Accompanied visits with interviews (20 adults, 10 family groups)
    ▪ Participants were recruited from locations around the Museum and asked to visit the display, accompanied by the evaluator. Adults were asked a series of eight qualitative open-ended questions relating to both the content and to the wider context of participatory practices with communities and museums. Children in family groups were asked six, simpler questions, focused mainly on the content of the display. Initially, visitors
were not told about the co-creation process. It became clear however this context was not easily recognised from their encounters with Object Journeys display case. It was decided to introduce the visitor to the project and the community collaborative nature of the display case before commencing the accompanied visit.

It was mainly the second approach with explored responses to co-creation.

Challenges of evaluating the Somali Object Journeys display

- The display is a small-scale intervention, located in one section of a long wall case in a larger gallery with a different focus. The Somali Object Journeys display is a small part of one long wall case in Living and Dying: The Wellcome Gallery (Room 24).
- The average dwell time in any individual British Museum gallery is usually low, typically around three to four minutes. Most visitors only stop at a smaller number of displays in any given room.
- A highly facilitated evaluation methodology was needed to explore detailed visitor responses. This does not reflect a typical or natural engagement - visitors needed to be informed about the co-creation process to be able to effectively and meaningfully respond to it.

These questions and considerations will be revisited through the evaluation of each project display.

Summary

- This evaluation has not resulted in a full understanding of visitor engagement with co-created content. The sample size and the location of the case have both influenced this. However, on-going Object Journeys display evaluation will add further insight.
- Most visitors who stop at the case are unaware of the co-creation process which means they are unable to naturally respond to more specific questions around the participatory nature of the display. More in-depth exploration required heavily facilitated evaluation, which does provide insight into public perceptions, but has obvious limitations.
• When visitors are aware of the co-creation process, most respond positively; they feel it adds to perceived value of the content, is seen to offer more in-depth and authentic information, and is seen as part of the BM’s social responsibility.
• However, due to an obvious lack in awareness of museum practice, visitors do not really understand what co-creation means; they are not sure how it differs from cultural representation.
• There is a clear need for more research into this area of museum practice. This could be prioritised for Object Journeys displays in Years 2 and 3.

More detailed findings

Note: Due to the small sample size findings are indicative.

• Whilst the co-creation process was not noticed by most visitors involved in this evaluation they did spontaneously report the display feeling ‘different’ - in a positive way - for example: ‘They were more useful, part of everyday life and not just decorative.’ (Visitor) However:
  o Only eight out of 30 interviewed recognised the co-created element.
  o Visitors generally responded that co-creation was not clearly explained in the relevant panel.
• The community-led content and object information was reported as being:
  o Easy to relate to - about everyday things, stories visitors could personally connect to.
  o Being less technical - about the uses and importance of objects to people rather than information about their materiality, provenance or connections to specific rulers or places.
  o Focused on the objects themselves rather than on the broader stories or themes e.g. religion or symbolism.

Interestingly, these perceptions led visitors to report on the information being more ‘in-depth and informative’ though the word count and information quantity was similar to other areas of the Museum.

Several visitors noted the Somali bank note, for example. One young visitor described the objects as ‘Not just pieces of rock.’
• The tone of the object labels and panels was considered to be:
  o More ‘personal’ compared to other museum texts, and more explicitly about people. For example, visitors spontaneously described the text as more personal. They felt it was more about people - the people that made the objects.
  o Authentic and authoritative - community-led knowledge and experience was implied and communicated to the visitors. For example, one visitor stated participatory practice ‘gives the museum a more genuine look’ - here referring to the information coming directly from people whose culture is represented in the display case. It was also felt the information chosen ‘offered more background and cultural awareness’ of the objects and that the groups had put in what is important to them in the written interpretation.

• The inclusion of historic photographs of people in the display added to the sense of this being about people: It also helped support contextualising the objects in their time and place. This is not unique to the Object Journeys display, but was still valued by visitors.
  o 30% of those interviewed (both adult groups and families) believed the photographs within the exhibit introduced personal stories and narratives. One visitor said:

  ‘It connects people and objects, something you don’t see very often.’ (Visitor)

• Visitors think that collaborating with partners whose collections, artefacts and culture are represented in the displays at the BM is a responsibility and duty of the Museum: Part of its role to represent more diverse and culturally appropriate displays.

  ‘It doesn’t make sense not to.’ (Visitor)

• Visitors reported that knowing about the collaborative nature of the display’s production added to its value and importance: This was about the sense of authenticity and culturally relevant content being chosen for display.
  o 13 of the 20 visitors interviewed were interested in the co-creation process.
  o One visitor said it made them feel closer to the people the display discussed.

  ‘It’s a perfect way to show other cultures; and to share knowledge (and objects) with communities.’ (Adult visitor, 20-30 yrs)
‘Good way to involve people.’ (Adult visitor, 30-40 yrs)

- The interviews carried out at events also explored whether visitors had noticed the display, what their thoughts were about, and whether they noticed the co-creation process. Whilst it is unwise to draw firm conclusions from small sample sizes, more visitors from the evening event were aware of the display, but there were mixed views about its content and process. Most likely because some were personally connected to partners and had expectations about the size of the display. From the family event, fewer groups noticed the display, but those who did seemed much more positive about the content and the process used to develop it.

Public programmes

Notes on the data

- The data for event evaluation was gathered by BM volunteers under careful supervision, and key findings and reflections based on this have been presented within this report.
- Evaluation approach:
  - Launch night event
    - Interviews: 11 interviews were undertaken (14 individuals).
    - Observations across the whole day.
  - Family event
    - Interviews: Nine interviews were undertaken (25 individuals - mainly in family groups).
    - Observations across the whole evening.
Image shows storyteller and educator Zainab Dahir leading a storytelling event as part of the Somali Object Journeys events programme
Events visitor profile

Evening event - launch event 7th October 2016

‘I love the poetry’; ‘have to find the poet and get her Facebook.’ (Event Visitor)

• **Motivations:** Most of those who attended had a social motivation - such as being invited by a community partner they knew, curiosity - from seeing it promoted online, or due to connection to their own identity - mainly being Somali. Those who chanced upon the event were generally visiting the BM and were drawn to the event.

• **Meeting expectations:** For those who had planned to visit the event it matched or exceeded expectations. Attendees were pleased to see many young Somali people.

‘Didn’t expect to see so many Somali youth.’ (Event visitor)

• **Satisfaction:** The majority were very positive about their experience. Again, the strong inclusion of young people and the ‘community’ element were key factors. In relation to specific elements:

  **Positive:**

  o **Poetry:** Found it beautiful, a sense of ‘wow’ factor, and ‘blown away.’
  
  o **Community partner talk:** Attendees valued understanding partners’ personal insights and the reasons why they had selected certain objects. The talk supported visitors to learn about Somali heritage.

‘It was good to learn from someone young and to hear about their ‘personal insights’ and ‘what intrigued them’ to choose certain objects for the showcase.’ (Event visitor)

  o **Object handling:** Volunteers were cited as being very informative, encouraging and friendly; the activity supported personal connections to the objects.
  
  o **Musical performance:** Attendees valued exposure to traditional and unfamiliar music; there was recognition of its importance in Somali culture.

  **Less positive:**

  o Some visitors found the community partners talk too fast and in too much detail.
  
  o There was frustration around not being able to use some of the handling objects.
Some felt more introduction and context was needed for the musical and poetry performances to avoid visitors unfamiliar with both the project and Somali culture ‘feeling lost.’

The observations from the event support the interview responses, especially around the high levels of engagement with the object handling and the poetry. The observations were able to consider all the visitors at the event and captured some of the high engagement around the music and poetry that the interviews may have missed - such as cheering, being ‘amazed’ by performance, taking photos and recording on phone and attentive listening.

Family event - 12th November 2016

‘It’s fantastic. A treat.’ (Event visitor) (about the craft activity)

- **Motivations:** The one family who had made a planned trip had heard about it on social media and read good reviews of the Object Journeys case; they also cited personal connection in relation to their own identity as Somali. Other groups were made aware of the event from a poster at the Info Desk, a flyer from a volunteer, and information from taking part in a Kids Trail - so internal information sources were key motivators.

- **Satisfaction:** Overall very positive - there were not any negative responses about event activities. Specific elements:

  Positive:

  - **Craft activity:** This received lots of positive feedback - it was valued as fun, a good learning activity, well organised and facilitated and a way for the whole family to do something together.

  ‘Staff were friendly and helpful; the activity really ‘captured the mind’, it’s good to learn by ‘touching.’ (Event Visitor)

  - **Storytelling:** Some visitors enjoyed the sense of nostalgia, as well as valuing learning about other cultures through stories.

  - Other elements, from the poetry to the object handling were also seen as engaging and enjoyable.

As with the adult event the observations provide some additional insight. For both the poetry and musical performances there was some participation, as well as cheering at the end, and photo/recording documentation by parents. The activities were possibly too long...
as saw visitors both join and leave halfway through, although this may just indicate it was more of a relaxed, informal drop in style. The observations demonstrate just how engaging the craft activity was - children seemed very focused, parents were engaging with their children, and there were significant numbers of 16 - 25 years olds participating.

ii. Web presence of Object Journeys project

Below the Object Journeys Partnerships Manager explains the change in approach from the original Activity Plan ambitions for online content for the project.

**Adjustments to the HLF Activity Plan Web Evaluation for Object Journeys;**

**Changes to original ambitions**

‘Changes to website usage and the rise of social media have meant that the way people engage, collaborate and share information online has changed since the WCEC Activity Plan was written and finalised in 2009. This means that, while the Object Journeys project did develop a website (http://objectjourneys.britishmuseum.org) where content and information about the Object Journeys projects could be stored and shared, we have also embraced the use of existing social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook which has ensured that the project has reached a far wider audience and had opportunities to communicate with people through mediums they were already using rather than trying to create a new site for engagement.

Facebook was for the Somali and Kiribati projects the partners most popular choice as they felt this was where they could reach the most potentially interested stakeholders and the platform offered opportunities for sharing content, photos, event information and requesting advice. Facebook also offered opportunities for wider interaction and commentary which was one of the original aims of the Object Journeys Web tool.

The project also embraced the use of Twitter (@objectjourneys) for promoting and sharing information. While some community members followed this cross-project platform most followers were from other museums, cultural organisations, or were academics and those interested in participatory museology and community engagement practice.

Despite these changes we feel we are still achieving our objectives of providing opportunities for collaboratively developed content production, dissemination and connecting with wider members of the public and showcasing the process and experience of the projects for museum and community partners.’
To note: Despite the low sample size, visits to the Object Journeys website were generally targeted, with most having heard about it through the British Museum’s online platforms or Object Journey’s social media. This supports the decision to focus on social media channels. In addition, many visitors were researchers or museum sector colleagues, who had heard about the project and website through project partners or word of mouth. The Object Journeys website statistics also support this, with a similar proportion of visitors finding the website organically (34%) as through social media (32%).

Evaluation approach
Considerable time was invested in setting up and running a pop-up survey on the Object Journeys website, and whilst the low response rate provides strong evidence for investing future evaluation resources into social media analysis, the findings from the pop-up survey have been presented in this report. This approach will not be continued in Year 3. Web-statistics about the website has been presented after this, followed by analysis of social media engagement.

Pop-Up survey
Methodology
A timed pop-up survey was placed on the Object Journeys website between February and June 2017. The pop-up survey appeared for all visitors to the website after 30 seconds and invited them to take part in a short e-survey, which asked about their experience of the website.

Sample size and margins of error
23 questionnaires were completed over the period; this gives a margin of error of c. ±20% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if we had asked any of the questions shown to the entire population, a proportion of no more than between 20% higher and 20% lower than the one given would have also picked that answer.

The margin of error is affected by the number of responses in the sample. Due to the very low sample size, all results should be used with caution, and in an indicative way only.
Information sources and motivations to visit

Key findings

• Around half of visitors were aware of the Object Journeys project. 52% were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ familiar with it, whilst 48% were not.

• Visitors cited a range of information sources. The British Museum Twitter account and being a researcher/museum sector colleague were mentioned slightly more than other sources.

• The strongest motivation to visit was split between being a researcher/museum sector colleague, the British Museum website, Object Journeys Facebook/Twitter and word of mouth, all of which received 13%.

• Reasons for visiting were targeted; most said they wanted to find out about the Object Journeys project in general or find out about a specific project.

• In particular, the Somali Object Journeys was the most popular, with a third (33%) of visitors wanting to learn more about this, followed by the South Asian Object Journeys at Manchester Museum (24%). This may reflect the length of time these had been established.
Information sources

How did you find out about the Object Journeys project? And: Thinking about how you heard about the Object Journeys project, which gave you the strongest prompt to visit the website today?

Base: all respondents: 23 / 23
Margin of error: ±15% / ±14%
Reasons for visiting

Why are you visiting the Object Journeys website today?

- To find out more about the Object Journeys project in general: 43%
- To find out more about a specific Object Journeys project: 43%
- To find out more about a specific object: 5%
- To have a general look around the site: 10%
- Other: 14%

Base: all respondents: 21
Margin of error: ±21%

Specific projects

Which, if any, of the following projects are you interested in finding out about today?

- Somali Object Journeys at The British Museum: 33%
- Kiribati Object Journeys at The British Museum: 5%
- South Asian Object Journeys at Manchester Museum: 24%
- Global Artists Object Journeys at Leicester Museum and Galleries: 0%
- Object Journeys project in general: 29%
- None: 10%

Base: all respondents: 21
Margin of error: ±20%
Experience and ratings

Key findings

- Users rated all elements of the website positively. ‘It made me want to see more community-led museum projects’ and ‘I learnt/discovered something new’ received the highest ratings of ‘strongly agree’, both at 63%.

- The majority of visitors (94%) said the information presented on the website was of a high quality and 88% said the information was pitched at the right level for them.

- On the other end of the scale, ‘it made me want to see more community-led museum projects’ was the only statement which received any disagreement (5% disagree).
Website ratings

Still thinking about the Object Journeys website, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- The information presented on the website is of a high quality: 50% strongly agree, 44% agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree, 6% disagree, 4% strongly disagree.
- The information on the website is pitched at the right level for me: 44% strongly agree, 44% agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree, 6% disagree, 6% strongly disagree.
- It made me want to see more community-led museum projects: 63% strongly agree, 26% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 5% disagree, 5% strongly disagree.
- I learnt/discovered something new: 63% strongly agree, 32% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 5% disagree, 5% strongly disagree.
- It deepened my understanding of other cultures: 53% strongly agree, 37% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 5% disagree, 5% strongly disagree.
- I enjoyed it: 53% strongly agree, 37% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 5% disagree, 5% strongly disagree.
- I felt inspired: 50% strongly agree, 44% agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree, 6% disagree, 6% strongly disagree.
- It is useful to my work or study interests: 56% strongly agree, 39% agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree, 6% disagree, 6% strongly disagree.
- I could relate to it easily: 40% strongly agree, 45% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 5% disagree, 10% strongly disagree.

Base: all respondents: 18 - 20
Margin of error: ±22% - ±23%
Submit a comment

Key findings

- Awareness of the ‘Submit a comment’ facility was split; just over half of (53%) visitors were unaware of the function and 47% were aware of it, but had not used it.
- Just under two thirds of visitors (64%) said they were either ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ likely to use this function. Just 18% said they would use the ‘Submit a comment’ function.

Likelihood to use

How likely are you to use the "Submit a comment" facility?

![Bar chart showing the likelihood of using the submit a comment facility.](image)

Base: all respondents: 21
Margin of error: ±20%
Web analytics

For the period 1st September 2016 to 29th May 2017

- Users 1.1k
- Sessions 1.7k average
- Session duration 3 mins 10 seconds
- 66% of visits are from within the UK, the remainder are international (from Somalia 1.5%)
- Page views 4,949
- Pages per session 2.92
- Bounce rate (navigate away from site after one page) 55.49%
- % new sessions 62.22%

Location of audience

- UK 1,133
- US 145
- Canada 52
- Sweden 43
- Australia 33
- Somalia 25
- France 22
- New Zealand 20
- Italy 17
- Netherlands 17

Where are hits coming from by total sessions

- Search engine 34%
- Social media 32%
Social media engagement

Evaluation approach

Overall social media engagement stats were reviewed, identifying popular posts; these have then been explored to understand reasons for deeper engagement.

Overall engagement

Overall reach on social media platforms is quite low compared to engagement on cultural organisations platforms, although it is very hard to compare to another similar kind of project as this one is unique. However, depth of engagement with partners, interested professionals and the wider communities is strong, so whilst some top line statistic information is included, the way audiences have engaged with posts provides more interesting insight - especially around providing advice regarding objects.

The Object Journeys project Twitter account audience profile

Twitter audience:

- 71% female
- 100% followers main language is English
- 63% aged 25 - 34, 16% 35 - 44, 9% 16 - 24, 8% 45 - 54
- 74% based in UK, 9% US
### Region

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State or region</th>
<th>% of audience</th>
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<td>West Midlands, GB</td>
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### Twitter engagement

*For the period May 2016 - May 2017*

- In terms of content, this is one of the most popular tweets, which links to Manchester Museum exhibition
Great to be here at @McrMuseum to share 1st viewing of new @ObjectJourneys display. Well done @COSG_UK so beautiful!

Tweets that linked to the events garnered greater engagement (see post below)

A great free event this Sat 11-4pm @britishmuseum. Somali Object Journeys family day: craft w/@numbiarts, poetry, storytelling, music, talks
Facebook - Somali group

Scale of the engagement is less than for the Kiribati group (Somali Object Journeys posts have not had as much engagement), but some notable elements include:

- Lots of engagement around post relating to objects, (see following posts), especially to gather advice and understanding around them.
Hello Facebook friends,
The Object Journeys project group are at the interpretation and text writing stage of display production and would be grateful of some advice. We will have both the Somali and English names for the following objects on the text labels. We are aware however that some objects might have two names or be called different things in different areas/regions/dialects. The group have chosen the following words but be good to get your advice on this. I will post the names they have chosen next to each picture and be good to get your thoughts.
Thanks all.
What is this used for?

Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 18:18

as a serving mat or as a wall hanging
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 18:19

Kaye McSweeney snap!
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 18:19

We believe this had a dual function - to serve food and as its very ornate and has a hanging loop at the top for decorative purposes.
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 18:19

This looks more of a wall decoration item than serving food. What material is it made of and how hard is it? How does it feel?
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:20

It's made from woven grass, cotton, glass beads and cowry shells
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:22

Woven or bound/dyed/incredible (probably) grass? If it is woven, then some sort of palm is usual (carr). Other materials also exist, such as qabo (forget its English name) fiber... See more
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:31 · Edited

Like · Reply · 1 Like · 5 July 2016 at 20:35

Kaye McSweeney There is a picture of Fatuma holding it up so you can see the underside further back in the trail of potter. Quite solid and woven - basketry or reed. Plain or reverse. Research the group did suggest it would have been used to serve food on it but also had decorative function.
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:38

What did the original collector/document suggest?
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:45 · Edited

Seem the back side, suspect carp (carr palm) and not grass. Suspect also other possible function as grain sifter (woven/made). Anyone agree?
Double function (each side) decorative when not in use, sifter on the palm side... See more
Like · Reply · 5 July 2016 at 20:57 · Edited

http://www.britishmuseum.org/.../collection_object...
Came across this, we use this type for burning incense but the wide open top and the tea pot probably explains its original purpose.

There are pictures of using it for anjeroo too.

Kayte McSweeney http://www.britishmuseum.org/#collection_object...

stove / burner

Kayte McSweeney I just looked this up - this one has an open top but is not made of the same material. Think some of the photo's we saw at the Powell Cotton showed one like yours Abukar

Yeah they use this to cook back home too. It's still used today

This one (bijikotburjiko) is particularly for cooking only. The other, much smaller, in several forms (dabqaad) is for for burning incenses and transferring live fire ambers from place to another (the name literally means this latter purpose).
And some discussions around representation of culture (which relates to wider challenges in project) - see post below.

https://youtu.be/AzVRqNz9a0
Our Interweaving cultural crafts project documentary. #preservingourheritage
Newly produced following the project. Sheffield South Yorkshire, UK

Secret Women's Business
Secret Women's Business - a documentary from Frontier Media for the Durnban Association, http://frontiermedia.blogspot.co.uk/

Just in case of a need of expertise in media, which I believe lacking of it is a case here and not a deliberate malice, there are plenty of geniuses in our young generations. So, please seek advise. They may suggest you to let the Somali artefact crafters speak Somali whilst English or other languages are used as screen captions.

We feel the heritage will be dying if we don't teach the young, hence the language used! Thanks for the advice we have the media involved and will be included in documentary festivals nationally at first. I feel Somalis in Somalia should continue their tradition, but as we all know it's imported cultures they appear to go for lately. That needs changing or at least including it in the curriculum.

The media is not lacking our premier was 2 nights ago, this is newly produced material.

By the way how are we descrediting? You have issues with western aspects of our lives I think.

To spclude a culture to another is descrediting the initial culture.

Do I have issues with western aspects of your lives? You need to elaborate more.

This is a great video, I would welcome any initiative that enables us to engage with and learn about our heritage. I don't see the language used as a barrier at all if your target audience is young Somalis who may not be fluent in Somali and non-Somalis.
Facebook - Kiribati group

The following posts which have the highest levels of interest (at time of reporting) suggest that there is lots of interaction and sharing of knowledge from the wider Kiribati community. This engagement with the wider community has shown excitement, congratulations for partners on their achievement creating the museum content.
9 May

Great day working on the Kiribati Object Journeys - it's all coming together!!!
So excited to see the film produced by and featuring dancers...

Can't wait to watch the film soon xxx
Like · Reply · 9 May at 22:20

Well done to you all on the Kiribati Object Journeys keep on journeying, Tei ma te kaka tonga.
Like · Reply · 10 May at 00:05

How exciting!!! xx
Like · Reply · 10 May at 07:36

. Beautiful Can't wait to watch the film. Tekeraoi wakil
Like · Reply · 10 May at 09:22

Aue aue, Ngaia Ngaia lets us know the date of showing
the film. 🎥❤️
Like · Reply · 11 May at 21:56
Hi all, we are looking for some advice about these objects. We will be displaying a full Kiribati dance costume (female) in our new display. We have some parts of the costume in our collection here at the Museum and others parts we are sourcing direct from Kiribati. The two longer belts (one 103cm and one 110cm approx) in these pictures are something we are thinking about using but have some questions and concerns. They come from the Admiral Davies collection, so from late 19th century, and are catalogued as belts or necklaces but there is some concern from the group that they are very different to the shell belts used on dance costumes today - smaller shells, two rows of them etc. Does anyone have any thoughts on what these might be? Might they be older style belts or are they something else? All advice, help, comments etc welcome. Thanks all.
Seeing the photos, the small shells looks very much like the ones we call te ningonino, found on land. I have seen it many awhile ago used as a sash, sometimes decorated with short thin strips of coloured leaves/feathers. It's use more for making headdresses nowadays. They are fewer and harder to find now. I have not seen it used as a belt but I see no reason why not. If anything else I hear or remember re that I'll let you know.

Kaye McSweeney: Thanks for that. So, I looked these up on our database and there isn't any specific information regarding the exact place they were collected - sorry about this. What we have is that they were collected on Admiral Davis' third voyage on the HMS Royalist to Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, specifically between 25th May 1892 and 14th July 1892.

Like · Reply · 24 May at 10:54

Kaye McSweeney: The longer belt must be for the hip, the medium one for the body worn from shoulder down to underarm, and the small one for the neck. These shells are quite rare in some islands, and Kaelaeta is right they're called te ningonino. What we're using now... See more.

Like · Reply · 24 May at 12:57

Kaye McSweeney: Thank you! We have just bought a new set of coconut beads to Katau from Kiribati. We just wondering about displaying the long shell belt in photo in our display or perhaps finding another more usual one. Thanks all for input - very helpful.

Like · Reply · 24 May at 14:39

Kaye McSweeney: Having another look at these shells again, and the small one, I think it is for the head than the neck. I have one similar to that and it is for the head. I'll have a look for it and take a photo and send it to you.

Like · Reply · 1 June at 18:02

Kaye McSweeney: Agree - think the smallest one might be for the head. thanks

Like · Reply · 2 June at 12:21

Write a reply...

Mauri Katey and your team... See more

Like · Reply · 4 · 25 May at 21:38 · Edited

Agree with this, thanks. E raraba.

Like · Reply · 25 May at 23:13

Write a reply...

I appreciate and agree with your explanation. Ko bati n rabwa. Kaelaeta

Like · Reply · 2 · 25 May at 22:27
Considerations

Somali community partners

These points for the Museum to reflect on are listed in order of priority

Access:
- How can the BM support greater community access to collections and internal expertise differently considering the internal limitations? Can any additional digital methods be offered when it is not possible to physically access objects?
- Should there be a greater focus on supporting partners to develop understanding of the wider context of how museums operate (i.e. limited capacity, access issues etc)?

Defining the nature of the partnership:
- Should a ‘term of reference’ or ‘memorandum of understanding’ be developed at the start of projects to facilitate discussions around expectations, workload, defining the partnership?
- How can the BM explore what different kinds of remuneration or benefits partners would value in terms of exchange for their time and input into collaborative work - above and beyond skills development and the opportunity to work with the BM? Does the BM need to question wider staff assumptions that the opportunity to work with the BM or to create a display is not always seen as an equal partnership? How can they be offered space, recognition and/or staff expertise?

Ownership:
- Can complete ownership ever be fully felt by the partners if the BM needs to have final sign-off? Is a scenario where final sign-off is given to the partners a realistic ambition? If collaborative work is initiated and managed by the BM, as the main resource manager (via an external funder), is it even realistic to consider a partner will feel a sense of meaningful ownership or equal partnership?

Sustained partner engagement, especially in the context of the research:
- Can partners’ engagement be sustained beyond their projects and how can they be engaged in the wider research aims of the project? There is evidence of sustained engagement already, but should the project be more explicitly framed as a research project to partners from the outset. Even though the research aims were
articulated by BM staff to the partners, they did not express any explicit understanding of these, or reference them, through their feedback.

**Resourcing this way of working:**

- Did the BM underestimate the time and resource needed to deliver authentic co-creation with partners in Object Journeys? Is this something the sector and funders need to consider?

**Supporting learning from this practice:**

- Which partners should the BM be working with and why? What kind of co-creation practice may challenge the BM and support learning?

*Mapping attitudes towards - and impact of - collaborative working on internal BM staff*

*These are listed in order of priority*

**Turning the perceived challenges that come with being a national and large museum into a strength - a role model for other large/national museums:**

- Challenges about this way of working in a large national museum like the BM is an on-going theme: can this be used to advantage? Can the BM’s identity as a national museum be an asset in how it shares learning from Object Journeys? Can engagement methodologies be successfully rooted in ‘national and/or large’ size museums? Is there an opportunity for the BM to be a leader in developing co-creation approaches for a certain type of large-scale museum?

**Legacy and embedding this methodology:**

- Whether these approaches can be embedded at the BM long term and in a sustainable way is still unclear. As the project is moving into the third and final year this is becoming increasingly urgent. Who should lead on this? Who should be championing this work at the British Museum and how can the Object Journeys project help them advocate for it? Should the OJPM role be a key part of this?

- What are the realistic options for building a lasting legacy from Objects Journeys that informs future work at the Museum when the Activity Plan is over?

- How can the need for increased capacity, greater resources, longer lead in time and greater flexibility in relation to museum processes be managed to enable Object Journeys Year 3 and future projects to be successful?
Importance of wider staff buy-in and internal dialogue:

- How can the Object Journeys projects be used to demonstrate to senior stakeholders at the Museum the value of community partnerships and co-creation?
- How can the BM solve the on-going challenges of getting internal staff buy-in, at various levels, but particularly encourage senior advocacy and better cross-departmental communications? How can those involved in Object Journeys deepen their understanding of barriers to embedding these methodologies? How aware of the project are staff at very senior levels?
- How can staff, especially in the ISG, be supported to be more honest and open about ideas and challenges of the project? Is the ISG forum the best way for this? Could the way the ISG runs be revised? Are there other ways of empowering people to express concerns in a sensitive and appropriate way?
- The project has acted as a catalyst to challenge systems and approaches across a wide range of departments - from Events to Interpretation, Exhibitions and Loans. Is the project’s potential as a ‘cross-departmental catalyst-for-change’ being fully exploited?
- Could project updates and evaluation involve more senior staff and those not directly part of the ISG? What would this aim to explore? Would it be able to test some views about level of senior buy-in to this way of working, and whether and/or how this would make a difference to project advocacy?
- How can the core team encourage the wider project team and staff to be proactive about getting involved and sharing ideas? Particularly in the ISG context?

Valuing the research context:

- Should the outcomes from each Object Journeys display dictate certain requirements for subsequent projects to ensure the research needs are met and give equal priority to community partners’ preferences? For example, if most staff think having the display in a different location and in different formats will bring new learning, how can this be achieved?
- How can the team document and disseminate examples of how staff have taken learning and applied it to their own professional practice?

Supporting community partners to be experimental:

- How can community partners be supported to be confident in considering more experimental approaches and thinking differently to the existing BM models? To
what extent should community partners be pushed to consider alternatives if they feel comfortable with more traditional and conservative approaches?

**Investigating views and experiences of the External Steering Group**

- The group is working extremely effectively as a sharing and reflection group. How can this impact positively on the wider project - how much are staff and community partners aware of their thoughts and existence? Can their experiences and positive feedback be utilised to support internal advocacy and buy-in for the project?
- Framing Object Journeys as a research project is seen as a success factor by the ESG - can more be made of this across wider stakeholders? Clearly the research events will focus on this, so it will be vital to see what comes from these. There is more scope for study into the ‘research framing’ of community-led work.
- Like the ISG, the ESG were surprised by the high production quality of the display. What does this mean? Do staff and experts in this field have lower expectations for community-led work, and is this just due to budget, or are there other reasons? Does this matter?
- Likewise, the ESG and the ISG think the OJPM role is pivotal to the success of this project, so consideration of embedding this is crucial. Could a wider group of staff at the Museum be empowered by gaining greater experience and confidence through Object Journeys to take on aspects of this role for future projects?
- Visitor responses to the co-created work is of particular interest to the ESG. How can this be explored more fully in the future? Does something more need to be done to ensure co-created content is more visible and obvious, to enable a greater sample for future research of visitor responses? Findings are only so limited with the small samples sizes from this and other sector studies.
- Can there be better or more documentation about how ESG is using learning to inform their own practice? For example, more developed case studies?

**Partner Museum experiences**

- The partner museums reflect some of the wider project challenges around long lead in times for loan and object selection. Whilst they believe the direct contact (OJPM) is supportive, how can wider BM staff presence be introduced across the Object Journeys project?
• How can the BM and the partner museums find a joint way of communicating the ways larger institutions work (and therefore barriers community partners may come up against) to the community partners?

Responses from visitors and the broader community towards project outputs

• How can the British Museum effectively communicate the collaboratively developed nature of these displays, when:
  o The BM does not want to ‘other’ the displays or distance its responsibility from their authorship.
  o The processes involved in making displays is largely unfamiliar to visitors anyway.
  o The chosen themes are still the most important element of the displays, not the process that was undertaken to develop them.

• What is the extra value? What are the most appropriate projects to utilise this way of working?

• What can the BM deliver to visitors through the collaborative processes of co-creation and co-curation with community partners? How could the methodology be applied more widely to the Museum, and not limited to specific AOA collections?

• As mentioned, do projects of this nature need to consider outputs in larger spaces and that are visible, so that visitor engagement is long and evaluation more meaningful, therefore creating a more robust and meaningful base of understanding of value to the visitor?

• How could the meaning of ‘authenticity’ be explored more in this context as it is a recurring theme in relation to wider visitor research around this topic?

• Could further research explore the relationship between experiencing the displays and events together - and assess how the participative and creative elements of events may impact upon engagement with the co-creation process?

Web presence

• Social media platforms are working effectively to engage partners, wider communities and sector professionals with the project. How can engagement be deepened further, or have an even greater reach?
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