



Esmee Fairbairn Community and Collections Fund

Impact Review

By Creative Arts Social (CAS) Consultancy Ltd

April 2026

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Executive Summary

Background

The Esmée Fairbairn's Communities and Collections Fund (and its previous iteration as the Collections Fund) has been running since 2011, awarding 10+ grants per year of around £100k over around two years. In total we have awarded 212 grants to a value of £16m. The criteria for the fund have evolved over time, from an approach based on museums making better use of stored collections, to one that begins with communities wishing to make use of collections to support inclusion and social and climate justice. Having awarded over 200 grants, the Museums Association (MA), who manage the grants, wanted to look back over a sample, to explore the lasting impact and legacy of the funded work to inform how the fund works in the future.

This impact research forms part of a review of the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund (EFCCF) and sits alongside other research aiming to understand and develop work at the intersection of social and climate justice, collections development and inclusion in museums. Creative Arts Social Consultancy (CAS) have been commissioned to conduct the review between December 2025 and April 2026.

Scope and Limitations

This research predominantly reviewed completed grants from earlier iterations of the fund and measures impact; however, this means that the grantee experience in the report also slightly falls behind the evolution of the fund towards equity, community-led work and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's [Creative, Confident Communities](#) aims. For example, MA now offer partnership grants where there is co-leadership between community organisations and museums, where a community organisation can be the "financial host" partner. MA cannot measure the impact of that yet. MA's learning plan also includes an end of funding period conversation with their Grants Manager for the Communities and Collections Fund grantees, however, none of these have completed yet so they have not taken place yet.

For this impact review CAS surveyed 34 grantees and interviewed a sample of 12 grantees, representing different formats, geographical locations and different grant periods. Further research, covering a larger sample of the grantees, could enable a more detailed understanding of the impact across specific museum formats and regions.

Please see the [Timeline of EFCCF](#) image below, along with the Methods section to understand our approach.

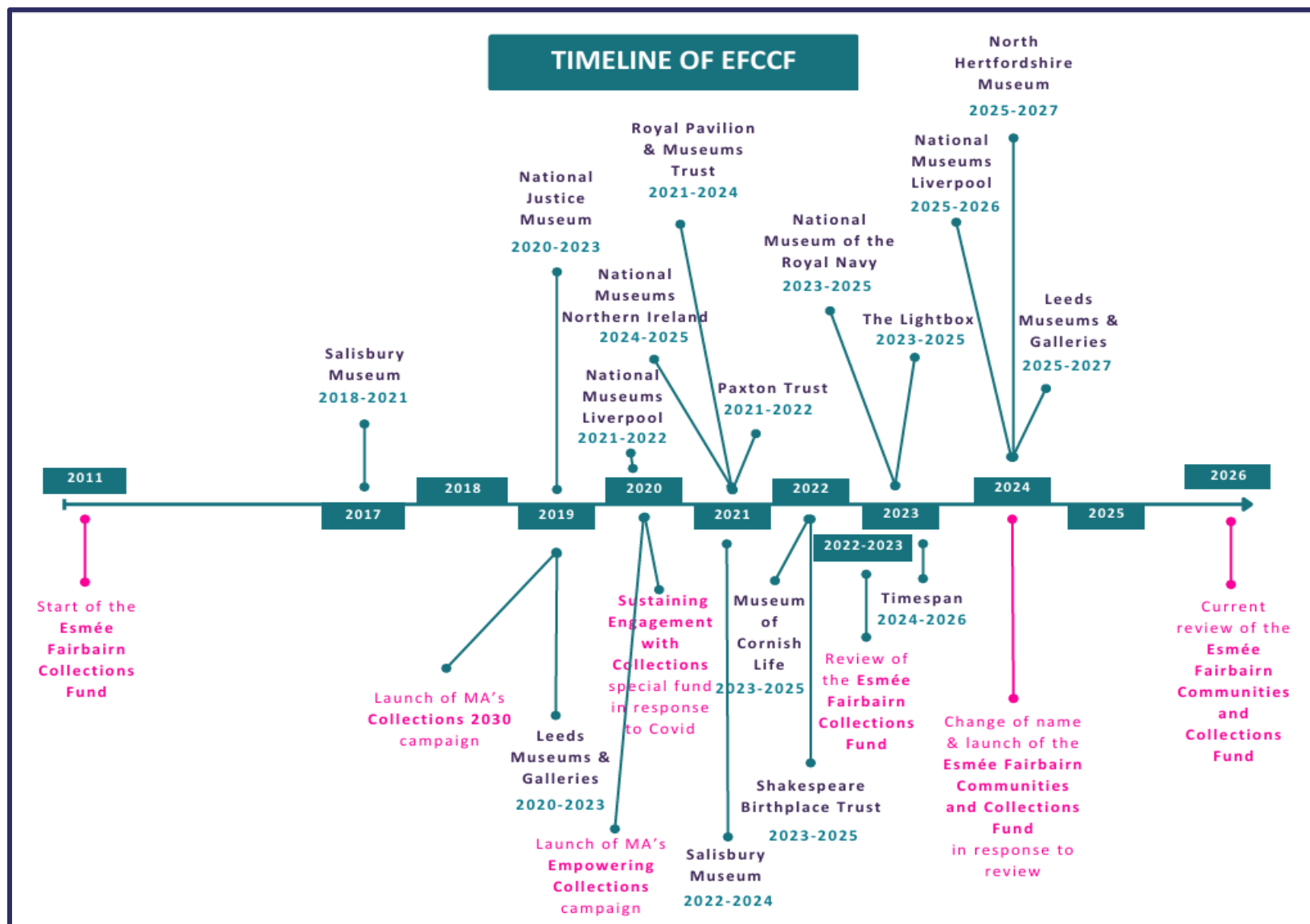
Key Review Findings

- The most significant areas of positive impact included: collaborative working internally, strengthened partnerships with communities, the ability and time to get creative and listen to their audiences and communities, increased audience engagement and access, adoption of decolonial, equitable museum practices, and climate aware practices and action.

- Overall, grantee organisations have significantly benefitted from the flexibility of grant management, the ongoing communication and support from MA, and the peer support networks.
- There is scope for improvement, in relation to MA engaging with senior grantee staff to embed advocacy at the start of grant period, going further with providing reflection and follow up support at the end of the grant period, doing more to implement existing guidance on ethical practice, pay and wellbeing, referenced in MA's terms and conditions. This is also includes, ensuring grant disbursement for ethical community remuneration, support with legacy planning and improving access to the grantee network.
- Continued growth after the funding period depends on whether the work becomes part of wider organisational purpose and long-term practice, rather than remaining as a stand-alone project.
- Community partners taking a leadership role in the grant process , rather than the museum and prioritizing and more regularly gathering their feedback in the action learning collection would significantly shift the depth of community engagement and empowerment through the museum. However, this is beginning to emerge in the new partnership grants since 2025.
- Features of the grantee network was most useful when they provided practical exchange, encouragement, and a sense of connection to others doing similar work. Direct conversations, case studies, ethics guidance, senior management training options and opportunities to hear openly about challenges as well as successes were particularly valued.

Report Orientation

The report consists of four key sections: [Section 1](#) sets out the Objectives, Research Questions and Methods used to collect data for the review. [Section 2](#) presents the Findings from the review; including survey, qualitative interviews, Case studies and a brief analysis of EFCCF Action Learning Sets and Empowering Collections recommendations [Section 3](#) lists short, medium and long term recommendations to iterate and improve the mechanisms of the fund and finally, [Section 4](#) is the Appendices section. The Timeline below represents key dates in the fund, its different iterations of the fund and the grant period for the grantees we interviewed. We wanted to speak to grantees across different museums formats, geographical locations and time periods, which you can see in [Appendix 1](#).



Visual representation of EFCCF Grants (2011-2026) © Creative Arts Social Consultancy Limited, 2026

Section 1: Methods



This section outlines the objectives of the review, the key research questions explored and the data collection methods used.

Objectives

The following objectives were identified by MA for this research:

1. Explore (through research), where EFCCF funding has had most impact over 10+ years; for recipient organisations, people they work with and learning that helps develop sector practice.
2. Include at least one museum funded in each year 2018-2023, across a range of formats, size, type and UK nations.
3. Recognise how funding criteria has evolved from a museums making better use of stored collections, to communities using collections to support inclusion and social and climate justice.
4. Use findings to inform how EFCCF works in the future; shape where we target our future funding, considering features such as the size of museum; the role the organisation plays in the place where it operates; and how being part of an MA network affects outcomes.
5. Identify features that help museums to make of the most of funding opportunities like ours – for the benefit of applying museums and other funders going forward.

Key Research Questions

Our review focused on answering the following research questions (RQ).

Proposed by MA:

RQ1: What impact or legacy can grantees identify from their Collections Fund/Communities and Collections Fund grant for the museum, the people they worked with and the collections?

RQ2: What helps a museum to make the most of time-limited or project funding for strategic development? What enables short-term funding to influence how a museum works?

RQ3: What does it take for a museum to develop as a social and climate justice organisation that is at the heart of its community?

RQ4: Among the case study museums, what difference did it make to be part of a grantee network, or to have the MA sharing learning from your work?

Proposed by CAS

As additional questions, focusing on Impact and Legacy, Enablers, and Needs and Networks:

RQ5: What positive changes have the grants enabled, what has lasted, and where can we see it in everyday museum practice (including collections, programmes, schemes, partnerships and organisational policies), do these changes reflect social and climate equity? (Impact and Legacy)

RQ6: What support, conditions, or organisational factors turned a short grant into lasting ways of working? (Enablers)

RQ7: What does it take to keep growing as a social, climate-justice or inclusive organisation? What roles do the grantee network or the MA play in sharing learning, and what needs are still unmet? (Needs & Networks)

Data Collection Methodology

This section lists the mixed methods data collection activities undertaken by CAS, in order to understand the impact of the grants. Using the above Research Questions, CAS focused on understanding the positive changes that have occurred, how museums maybe making better use of stored collections, to communities using collections to support inclusion and social and climate justice, which factors or conditions are necessary for creating an impact, and recommendations for the future.

- Survey of 34 past and present grantees
- 12 semi structured interviews, comprising 12 organisations across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, including national, local authority, independent, and specialist museums. The grantee

museums varied considerably in size, from small museums with operating budgets below £329,500 to large national institutions with budgets over £10.9 million.

- The funded projects covered a broad range of themes, most commonly decolonisation, inclusion, relevant collections, inspiring engagement, and climate crisis, with some also focusing on health and wellbeing or place-based outcomes.
- Most grantees were awarded between 2019 and 2024, with a small number of earlier awards also represented (in 2014 and 2017). Some interviewees were repeat grantees and reflected on more than one EFCCF project, so the sample captures both single-project experiences and longer-term organisational engagement with the fund. Please see [Appendix 1](#)
- An interview with Eleri Butler on running the EFCCF Action Learning Sets
- 9 case studies collected from grantees across 2018-2023
- Monthly meetings with MA to collect interim insights, helping with grantee selection, and finalising reporting format
- Attending Empowered Collections workshop - March 2026
- 60-minute reflection workshop on Legacy and Learnings with MA stakeholders

Section 2: Findings



Source: <https://www.jus.uio.no/ikrs/english/research/projects/beyond/the-beyond-blog/preventing-misuse-janmyr.html>

The findings are predominantly based on the analysis of the grantee survey, semi structured qualitative interviews, ten case studies.

Quantitative Findings

- We had 34 survey responses from grantees.
- Most survey Participants had received Project Grants (76%), the Partnership Project Grants (12%), Core Grants (9%) and one participant had received funding as a Covid-19 response.
- Most popular project focus was *Community Participation*, then *Decolonisation*, followed by *Relevant Collections*. No respondents had projects based on just *Community Cohesion*, *Creating Better Places to Live and Work* or *Representing Diverse Voices and Perspectives*.
- 62% said that their projects were Community Led and a further 15% said they were led by community participants/partners.
- 79% felt that the grant had either had Very Significant (38%) or Significant (41%) impact.
- According to respondents, the funding has had the most impact on Community Engagement and Participation (29%) and Implementation of New Approaches /cultural shifts in the museum (26%). Interestingly respondents felt that Diversification of Museum Workforce (2.9%) and Equitable Working Practices (2.9% - e.g. paying community collaborators) was where the funding was having the least impact.

- Key challenges faced were Lack of Time (generally), Difference in Museum and Community Partner Capacity and Reaching Relevant Communities.
- The most useful aspects of the support received by grantees were *MA's Coaching Conversations/ Application coaching, The Community and Collections Network, MA's flexibility in adapting plans* and the *Power to the People Framework*. The least used were *Measuring Social Engaged Practice Toolkit, Museum Essentials E-Learning modules*.
- 44% of respondents found it easy to evaluate the project, 9% found it difficult and the remainder were yet to reach the evaluation stage.

Qualitative Interviews:

Summary of the Findings from Interviewed Grantees:

- EFCCF-funded work often led to impacts that extended beyond individual activities or outputs, specifically changes in internal working, partnerships, collections practice, access, and, in some cases, climate-aware action.
- One of the clearest legacies was more collaborative internal working. In several museums, grants helped connect programmes, collections, learning, front-of-house, and community-facing roles, contributing to more joined-up planning, delivery, and organisational change.
- The grants also supported longer-term partnerships and more open museum practice. In many cases, the most durable legacy was not a single output, but an ongoing relationship, repeated collaboration, or a more participatory way of working.
- A major area of impact was more decolonising and equitable collections practice. Grants supported museums to rethink language, cataloguing, displays, and interpretation, while also recognising community knowledge and participation as central to how histories are researched and presented.
- Social-equity impacts were visible in efforts to reduce barriers to access, improve affordability, create safer and more inclusive spaces, and involve people who were not regular museum visitors.
- In climate-focused projects, grants supported a shift from presenting climate as information or a crisis alone towards climate action, public engagement, and more accessible ways of involving audiences in environmental issues.
- Short-term grants were most likely to become lasting ways of working when they created real capacity and resources, including staff time, specialist roles, consultants, training, equipment, and infrastructural improvements.
- Responsive communication and flexibility from the Museums Association (MA) were an important part of what made EFCCF grants workable in practice. Grantees valued being able to communicate openly with MA staff, adapt delivery when circumstances changed, and receive support that extended beyond the grant money itself. This was especially important during disruption and where projects needed flexibility in timings, budgets, or delivery.

- Internal organisational conditions shaped whether grants had longer-term effects. Leadership backing and alignment with wider institutional priorities helped projects embed beyond the funded period.
- How projects were delivered mattered as much as what they delivered. Careful listening, regular communication, responsive partnership-working, and moving at the pace of participants or partners were all important in making new practices sustainable.
- Continued growth after the funding period depended on whether the work became part of wider organisational purpose and long-term practice, rather than remaining as a stand-alone project.
- The grantee network and the Museums Association were most useful when they provided practical exchange, encouragement, and a sense of connection to others doing similar work. Direct conversations, case studies, ethics guidance, and opportunities to hear openly about challenges as well as successes were particularly valued.
- Access to the network was uneven, with geography affecting who could participate fully.
- The clearest unmet needs emerged after funding ended. Grantees frequently described challenges around continuity, staffing, follow-on support, and sustaining momentum once dedicated project funding or roles came to an end.
- Evaluation and feedback were also experienced as underdeveloped parts of post-grant support. Some museums described evaluation as feeling more like a reporting requirement than a learning process, and wanted more feedback, legacy planning, and support to evidence impact and make the case for continuation.

Impact and Legacy

Participants described a range of changes, including more collaborative internal working, stronger and more sustained partnerships, adopting decolonised approaches and equitable collections practice, improved access and inclusion for visitors, and, in some cases, more climate-aware practice and action. 80 % of the 34 respondents from the survey administered stated that the grants had a ‘very significant’ or ‘significant’ impact on their work.

1. Stronger partnerships, inclusive museum practices, and increased engagement with audiences

The grants enabled the development of more sustained relationships with participants, communities, schools, and partners, alongside more open ways of working. In several cases, the most durable legacy was not the single output, but an ongoing partnership or a replicable working model for sustained community engagement. This can be seen in ongoing partnerships, repeat projects, and increased volunteer or participant involvement. The survey findings also suggest that grantees focused on community participation (22 respondents) throughout their funded projects. 10 respondents said that the grant has had the most significant impact in the area of community engagement and participation.

“The funding has been crucial for our independent museum to be able to run events that centre community voice and engagement in a more empowering way that enables the volunteers and staff to co-create events and reinterpret the collection with the environmental and social impact of technology.”

“The trust that we have with Descendants, and the partnership we’ve built with them... subsequently, we built on that and worked with them again.”

2. Equitable and increased access and engagement for visitors

The grants supported more equitable access and participation for visitors. Several organisations described ways of reducing barriers to access. This is best understood as a social-equity legacy in everyday museum practice. It can be seen in access schemes, emphasising affordability, safe spaces, the involvement of those who were not regular visitors, and efforts to make museum spaces and programmes feel more inclusive.

"We've introduced Pay As You Wish Wednesday... we lift that paywall. ... every half-term or holiday, we make that Wednesday a family day."

"The funding has supported the development of a space to create an accessible and safe space called Our Library Lounge."

"The fact that the funding was there, enabling the communities to attend, because it allowed us to address some of the barriers....you were able to bring people in comfortable groups within their community."

3. Adoption of Decolonised and Equitable Collection Practices

Another major impact was on how collections were used, interpreted, and understood. Across the interviewed museums, it emerged that the grants supported more critical, equitable and decolonising approaches to collections. This included rethinking established narratives, questioning existing language and cataloguing systems, and reorganising museum records, displays and interpretation. In several cases, staff described how the grant enabled them to bring in perspectives that had been marginalised, overlooked or misrepresented. This was reflected in practices such as revising labels and displays, changing cataloguing language, bringing overlooked collections into use, and involving community members directly in interpretation.

In this sense, the grants not only increased curatorial confidence but also helped museums shift authority: from speaking about communities to working with them, and from fixed institutional narratives to more dialogic and accountable interpretation. This also extended to participatory practice, where community knowledge and contribution were recognised as central to how histories were researched, interpreted, and presented. These changes are significant for equity, because they do not simply diversify content, but challenge how knowledge is generated. These changes make collections practice more representative, more transparent about power, and more open to histories and voices that had previously been excluded. Additionally, the survey also confirmed (21 respondents) that a more inclusive museum practice has been enabled, and the work is being codeveloped with community participants/partners.

"There's a huge difference in how you think about objects and how they relate to different people and their histories... now it's very much through a decolonising lens."

"I think some of the changes that have been really helpful are looking at our cataloguing, so looking at the language that we use when we put up interpretation on the catalogue, and creating a kind of a guide for people who are both accessing that catalogue, but who are also then interpreting that catalogue, to understand the power that language has to both as well as harm."

"It allowed us to bridge the gaps in our delivery in terms of the type of research and the type of support that we can provide for our community that want to know more about how their voices can be heard, how they can commit to action, and how they can come together, and look at models, not just locally, about how that's being done, but look at models of communities internationally, and have a conduit of research, a research that's accessible, multi-layered, and challenging."

4. More collaborative internal working and organisational change

The grants supported more joined-up working across teams, with programmes, collections, learning, front-of-house, and community-facing roles becoming more connected. This is particularly salient among larger-scale and national museums. In some museums, this changed day-to-day planning and decision-making and enabled stronger cross-departmental collaboration. What lasted was not only the funded activity itself, but a shift in organisational culture and a more shared way of working internally. This can be seen in programme planning, development, delivery, and in some cases, more project-based on cross-departmental structures.

"Everyone's included, everyone's involved. So, when I started, there was a programme meeting, which was just curatorial. Now, it is... education, youth collective, exhibitions collections, volunteers, front of house... they're all involved in... these are the kind of ideas for the forthcoming program."

"So I think the things that have lasted are raising better working practices, so we now have lots of different working groups in the organisation. We're not working anymore on collections learning. We're much more project-based and working group-based."

5. Adoption of climate-aware practices and action

The grants supported climate-aware practice and action, particularly in climate-focused projects. In these cases, the grants supported a shift away from presenting climate only as information or a form of crisis, and towards climate action, participation, emotional support, and public engagement. This included addressing climate anxiety, creating accessible ways into environmental discussion, and using programmes or collections to connect environmental change to community action. Grantees also shared that it has helped them shift as a carbon neutral space, and invest in how to engage the audience with climate issues in meaningful ways. This often looked like having discussions with the public, including children on issues such as climate anxiety.

"So I think the things that have lasted are raising better working practices, so we now have lots of different working groups in the organisation. We're not working anymore on collections learning. We're much more project-based and working group-based."

"This funding stream has been vital in sustaining our work with collections and communities in climate justice and decolonisation at a time of stretched sector resources. The focus of the grant, delivered by an organisation with an in depth understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the sector, makes it a really important space to be working in. Our grant has given us the in depth opportunity to build authentic foundations for longer-term change, which are now coming to fruition."

Enablers

This theme examines the key enablers that helped short-term EFCCF grants become sustained ways of working. Grantees highlighted a combination of external and internal conditions: increased capacity and resources, responsive support from EFCCF, leadership backing, effective communication with partners, and the embedding of project values and methods into wider organisational purpose.

More than 85% of the grantees rated the support provided by the MA in managing the grants as 'Very good'.

1. Grant support increased capacities and resources

A key enabler to develop lasting ways of working is the support provided by MA. More than 85% of the grantees rated the support provided by the MA in managing the grants as 'Very good'. Organisations described how the EFCCF grants allowed them to create time, capacity, expertise, and practical resources that made the work possible. This included fixed-term staff posts, specialist roles, consultants, training, equipment, time for creative play and infrastructural improvements. Therefore, the grants not only funded activities or single projects, but also created the conditions through which different ways of working became possible. Grantees shared that it allowed them to bring in curators, consultants, and other members of staff as employees. It also allowed them to pay fees to artists and archivists, develop training for operational staff and financially support community partnerships in an equitable and sustainable way.

2. Ongoing communication, support, and flexibility from EFCCF helped projects adapt and continue

Several organisations described communication with EFCCF as an important enabler. This was not only about receiving funding, but about feeling supported during delivery, being able to communicate openly when circumstances changed, and having flexibility around budgets, timings, or delivery models. This seems to have been especially important during disruptions, including the pandemic, and in projects where unforeseen challenges required adaptation. These suggest that responsive funder relationships can play an important role in helping short-term grants become sustainable in long-term practice. In particular, grantees found the MA's application coaching support (20 respondents) and the flexibility in adapting to plans (18 respondents) to be the most helpful. Respondents also mentioned (16 respondents) that they found the Power to People framework to be really useful, along with the learning for dissemination opportunities (11 respondents).

"The flexibility was there....which allowed us to kind of switch some of the... funds for... other uses that were relevant in our project."

3. Support from leadership teams and effective organisational practices

Grant-funded work may be more likely to become a lasting way of working when it is actively supported inside the museum. Grantees described the importance of leadership backing, selecting the right staff, trusting project teams, and aligning the project with wider institutional priorities. These helped the grant sustain beyond the funded period, rather than act as a one-off initiative. This may indicate that the effectiveness and impact of a grant also depends on whether leadership understands the value of the work, whether the staff are supported to carry it forward, and whether the project aligns with wider organisational development strategies.

“Our leader for community engagement was fiercely protective of the project; that was incredibly helpful. And our director of collections... was absolutely, do it, be playful, make mistakes.”

Grantees often described the most effective projects as those involving careful listening and effective communication. This was especially important in co-productions or community-based work, where sustainability depended not only on delivery but also on how relationships were built and maintained. Effective organisational practices included: regular meetings with partners to foster collective decision making, connecting face to face with community members, and respecting the time and pace of community members.

Grantees suggested that growth after the funding period depended on whether the work had become part of the museum’s wider purpose and everyday practice. This included building on long-term partnerships, centering lived experience in future work, connecting climate or inclusion agendas to wider institutional aims, and ensuring that the project did not remain isolated from forward planning. In this sense, continuing to grow as a social, climate-justice, or inclusive organisation was described less as extending a single project and more as carrying its values, relationships, and working methods into future practice.

“This particular project solidified our partnership with ...(the partners)... and that element of understanding the importance of having lived experience within every single exhibition that we do.”

Future Needs and the Importance of Networks

This theme focuses on what museums need in order to keep growing after the funding period, particularly as social, climate-justice, or inclusive organisations. Across the interviews, participants spoke less about what made the original project possible, and what helps the work continue: staying connected to peers and the wider sector and having access to ongoing support. The findings also highlight that unmet needs often emerge most sharply after the grant ends, when projects risk losing momentum or continuity.

1. The grantee network and the MA helped most when they supported practical exchange, solidarity, and ongoing connection

Participants valued direct conversations with MA staff, encouragement, case studies, ethics guidance, and network meetings where they could hear honestly about other peer's work. Many of the grantees (19 respondents) mentioned that they found the community and collections network to be the most useful. The network seems to have been most useful as a space for reassurance, informal troubleshooting, and staying connected to others doing similar work. This mattered because continuing to grow after the grant often depends not only on internal capacity, but on feeling part of a wider field of practice. Grantees benefitted from hearing about the kind of challenges or learnings others have recognised, as well as building alliances with others. However, the value of the network was uneven, particularly depending on geography.

2. Continuity, follow-on support and the capacity to sustain the work

Grantees repeatedly described the difficulty of sustaining work once funding, staff time, or dedicated posts came to an end. This suggests that post-grant growth depends not only on the quality of the original work, but on whether they have the time, funding, staffing, and follow-on support to keep building on it. There was also a strong desire from the grantees to have support with legacy planning, think about how to continue and grow the work, as well as stay connected with the leadership teams around legacy.

3. Project evaluation and feedback were experienced as underdeveloped parts of post-grant support

Grantees suggested that evaluation and post-project feedback were weaker than they needed to be if grants were to support longer-term growth. While museums submitted interim or final reports, some described receiving little or no response, making evaluation feel more like an administrative requirement than a learning process. Others wanted stronger support with external evaluation, or feedback that could help them reflect on what had worked and make the case internally for continuing the work. This suggests that post-grant evaluation could also play a more useful role in helping organisations understand their impact, plan next steps, and sustain momentum after the funding period.

Other challenges highlighted by grantees were: a general sense of lack of time (12 respondents), difference in museum and community partner capacities (11 respondents), reaching relevant communities (10 respondents).

Case studies

CAS conducted ten case studies of the grantees interviewed. Of those ten, four appear in the report and the remainder appear in [Appendix 4](#).

Summary

- All organisations noted the flexibility of the funding timeline, which remains one of the impactful features of the Fund. The benefit of this flexibility is that it allows the community work to take shape without the pressures of short delivery timelines. Additionally, organisations found Museums Association personalised relationships with organisations valuable and helpful in providing direction, even before the application bid and success of the award.
- The challenges identified by many of the organisations appear independent of any work the funding structure could have provided, except in one case where project participants are not being remunerated for the work they did and for their expertise. In this case, and in similar cases, a condition of the Fund may be for project leaders to include remuneration as part of community engagement as to not reproduce exploitative structures of engagement.

1. [Museum of Cornish Life](#): South West England

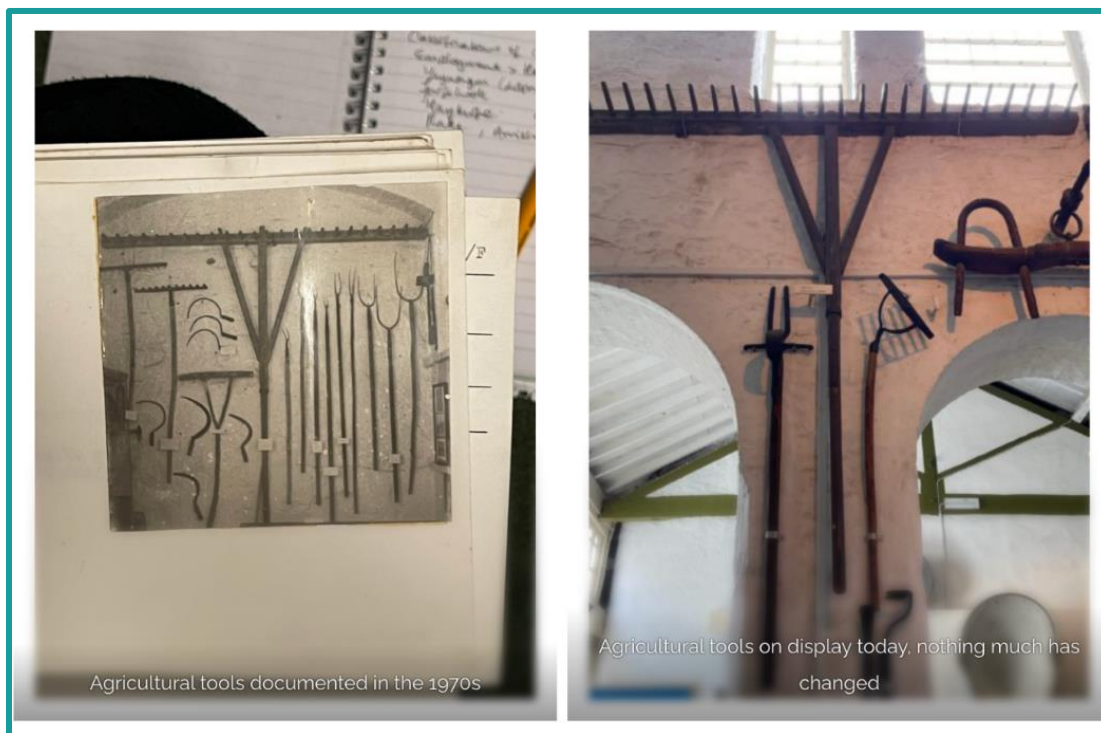


Image showing the same object (centre) on show in the 1970s and today © Museum of Cornish Life

Year of award	2022
Year of project	2018-2021 & 2023-2025
Summary of Impact	The Museum has received funding on two occasions: the first as part of the <i>Citizen Curators</i> , which aimed at providing skills, knowledge and support for people who wanted to learn more about museums and curatorial work. This was a 6 months programme in collaboration with museums with the Cornwall Museums Partnership. Though the funding did not come directly to the Museum, it benefitted from EFCCF. A project directly funded at the museum was <i>Farmers Will Like It</i> which focused on researching the Museum's farming collection, including conservation work for vulnerable objects and new ways of telling the history of the objects. While the focus was on the objects, it revived the human histories associated with them, offering the region its history of agriculture and horticulture. The project presented an opportunity to work with the farming community in Cornwall to tell the histories associated with the material.
Challenges	The main challenge was fitting the schedule of the project around the availability of the participants. This was resolved by requesting a 6 months extension to the project. From a project management aspect, the leads would have appreciated more dialogue and response from Museums Association after the submission of their report. This offers ongoing engagement as well as insight into what aspects of the work Museums Association valued.

2. Royal Pavilion and Museums: South East England



Taxidermist Jazmine Miles-Long working on the new diorama
© Booth Museum of Natural History.

"We realized that we hadn't had a new diorama for over 100 years, so we thought it was about time to create a new diorama that represented what the city was today, and especially in that context of our collections being useful in the story of climate change. And it just felt like 100 years was a really useful moment to look at and explore - what does a diorama in Brighton look like today?"

Year of award	2021
Year of project	2021-2024
Impact	The fund was for a project titled <i>Discover Our Dioramas</i> at one of the museums within the Royal Pavilion and Museums system, the Booth Museum of Natural History, the home of the Natural History Diorama. The project focused on engaging the primary audience of the museum, audiences under-10 years old. Access to EFCCF enabled an often neglected museum to revisit its collection in ways it could not have done previously and gave them time to play and get creative as well as listen to what their audiences really wanted. The focus on both collections and community aligned the work the Museum wanted to do with the aims of the fund.
Challenges	The biggest challenge for the project was that it was coming to an end. The engagement with the audience and the activities developed as part of the project created a desire for more such activities, but with finite funding, it was not possible.
Future	The community, network and relationships created have lasted the life of the project, and the museum continued to engage with the outside this project.

3. [Paxton House](#)

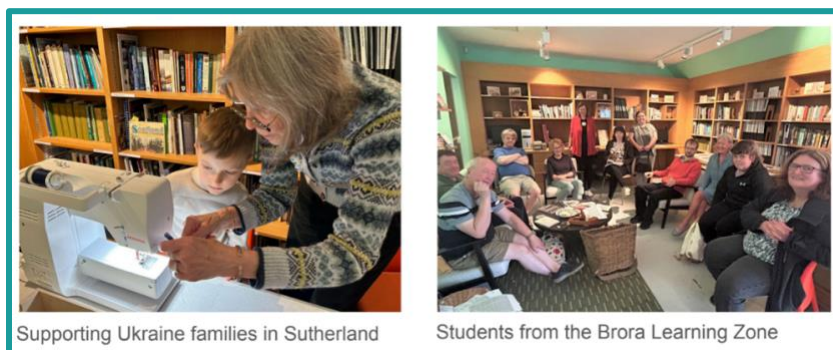


Image from the permanent exhibition *Caribbean Connections, Slavery, and Paxton House* including the view of two mannequins dressed in Ghana's kente cloth, which was commissioned specially for the exhibition © Paxton House

Year of award:	2021
Year of project:	2021-2022
Impact	The organisation developed a permanent and temporary exhibition focused on the connections of Paxton House and its slave-owning owners Ninian Home and his family to enslavement in the Caribbean. This work comprised the conservation of period furniture and reproduction of period textiles as part of the shows, and digitisation of archival material, now available to the public. Part of the work included developing a strong and now long term relationship with the community through a collaboration with the charity Descendants, who work with children and young people aged 4 to 16 years. The museum developed a total of 12 workshops in person and online with children from England, Ghana and South Africa, strengthening both the local community engagement as well as international connections. Public engagement was extended throughout the House by presenting a 'trail' of objects related to enslavement in the other rooms of the estate.
Challenges	This project was executed during Covid, which created extraordinary difficulty to deliver public engagement, as well as to the supply chain to acquire material. This increased the expected cost of production of the project. In the course of the project they also realised that they should have considered more time to initiate and develop partnerships and relationships, which take time to create.
Future	The project was shortlisted for Museums Change Lives Award, and it led to collaborations with partners in Edinburgh and in Granada. Additional funding was raised (£89k) from various sources for a project with the Granadian artist Billy Gerard Frank, which was realised in 2025.

"[T]he three partners came together, so it was National Museums Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Museums Council, and the African Caribbean Support Organisation, so we all drafted the funding application together, I think, which was a really kind of beneficial part of the whole process."

4. Timespan: Northern Scotland



One of the engagement activities © Timespan

“The fund has enabled our equitable climate justice and decolonising research framework, which engages diverse and remote groups as part of the broader People’s Mobile Archive connecting and wellbeing initiative. We are delighted that the Museums Association recognised this impactful community practice by awarding Timespan the Museums Change Lives Award 2025.”

Year of award	2023
Year of project	2024-2026
Impact	Initially titled <i>PMA & Coastal Commons</i> , the funded project was later titled <i>Re-collection</i> and has been working on narratives about social and climate justice and its intersection with culture (contemporary art, heritage, language and media). EFCCF seemed like a great funding stream with the same values as those of Timespan, and an organisation that could support the vision of the project. “The research is based on an analysis of what extractivism means, and how this is affecting our coastal communities. We are intending extractivism not just as a resource extraction, but also, I mean, it's related with land, labor and many other issues that are affecting the region.” In practice, the project worked on podcasts that were conversations between different generations within the community on issues of climate change, the environment and what sustainability means in their community in Scotland. These conversations created connections between different groups of the community, bringing them together on issues that touch them all.
Challenges	“You are meeting people at a very, very vulnerable point in their lives, when they're opening up about challenges and issues. And so I feel that the sector has not got enough support for people like me [the project lead], who are working in museums and are working very closely with groups that have such a keenness to explore, to investigate. To be more critical about challenging the past ... it's a very emotional experience as well, so people are very anxious.”
Future	The activities of the project were well received by the community and the organisation is thinking about applying for EFCCF again in the future, to develop more engagement for the community, particularly focused on skills-based knowledge sharing.

5. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: West Midlands, England



Source: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/our-projects/esm%C3%A9-fairbairn-project/>

Year of award:	2022
Year of project:	2023-2025
Impact	"... [I]nitially, the project set out to look specifically at our huge range of Indian collections and to look at how that had been acquired and interpreted over the years with a particular focus on decolonisation. ... how our relationships with Imperial legacies were established or created by those acquisitions, and how that material had been interpreted over the last 150-odd years." EFCCF has "a history of creating radical interventions," which made it a natural place to apply for funding for the kind of work the project leaders wanted to deliver. "... intervening in traditional conservative and imperial narratives that support museums in developing a different practice. So, given the kind of history and legacy of the Birthplace Trust, for us, it was a funding stream that spoke directly to our ambitions, but also resonated with our values." In many ways the impact of this project was on the internal team. They shared they had a lot to learn to deliver this project: "what collaborative working looks like, and what co-curation actually means. And I think at the beginning of the project, there was a big learning piece about when you invite community partners to come into your spaces and hand over your collections and your assets that you do that freely. And I think that that was a journey for our team, to be able to...Stand back, and actually let the curation take place."
Challenges	Organisational restructure and changes impacted the staff involved in the project between the time of application and time of execution. These changes created some internal challenges, making the delivery of the project harder. Additionally, "I think the bigger challenge for us was our Board and Trustees, because ... they didn't know and weren't prepared to know where to position themselves within that conversation. So, I think what we learned as an organisation was, firstly, to identify the risks, so that when we go into these projects, we know that we're taking ... a public position in some ways."

Future

The project is ongoing, but there have already been paths of research and further work, such as translations of documents, that will continue beyond the lifetime of the fund.

Action Learning Sets (ALS)

Eleri Butler and Julia Hoffbrand were hired to facilitate ALS as an independent, safe space for grantees to develop their funded work and support one another for the kind of embedded change that has been highlighted earlier in the report. Eleri gives anonymised feedback to the MA, with the consent of ALS participants, to support MA's understanding and development. While ALS was available to museum grantees, it was not made available to community grantees. This has created some disparities in capacity building, as the method of work does not reflect the intended goal of MA. However, MA has shown that they are committed to equitable grantee support across museums and community partners more formally, through the partnership grants awarded in 2025 so this is an area for development.

"[T]he points of feedback was that they should be more brought together, and the community should be more formally part of the grant process, and in fact, communities should maybe lead the application process in collaboration with museums, or, you know, being equal partners, or community members apply, and museums be the partner ... The community organisations, for me, in my view, weren't really visible, even though they were part of the work that they were doing within the previous iteration of the grant. And one of the things we proposed when we were talking to [MA] was that the Action Learning could potentially be run in parallel with museums and with community organisations, or we could bring them together."

Empowering Collections Review

The Museums Association's *Empowering Collections* (2019) campaign called for museums to make collections more accessible, relevant and community-focused, producing 11 recommendations under its Collections 2030 vision. A 2025 review highlighted major sector challenges, including the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, alongside a growing need for museums to foster dialogue and social change. By 2026, progress has been strongest in decolonisation and using collections for social impact, while gaps remain in reinterpretation of outdated displays and, notably, partnerships and knowledge-sharing. Evidence shows organisations need more sustained support to build long-term community relationships and capacity, making partnerships a key priority for future investment. Similarities in recommendations to our impact review in regards to knowledge sharing and support, can be found in the most [recent report](#).

Section 3: Recommendations



Summary

1. In the short term (1-2 years), it would be important to support grantees with legacy planning, provide reflection and feedback on their evaluation reports, make networking opportunities more effective. With an understanding of the changes being made to the most recent grant awards, outside the scope of the review, it is important that MA goes further to ensure that grantees use resources; Working Equitably Toolkit, Wellbeing, Code of Ethics that is suggested in the Terms and conditions. Give community partners a co-leadership role in the grant process, along with the museum and prioritize gathering action learning sets from communities to improve the impact that grants have on community engagement and empowerment.
2. In the medium term (2-5 years), provide follow up grants or other forms of support after end of grants, provide capacity building support around impact measurement, bring more community partners to collaborate on the grant application process.
3. In the long term (beyond 5 years), support in building organisational capacities, equity focused and systems change oriented practices within museums so that long lasting change is possible.

Short-term (1-2 years)

1. Stay in touch with grantees more consistently, particularly after the grant.
2. Acknowledge interim and final reports, and offer brief evaluation feedback so organisations know their work is being acknowledged and can help them plan for long-term legacy.
3. Build senior management advocacy and responsibility into the application process so support for grantee project managers and an understanding of accountability for the grants impact is understood and resourced at senior levels.
4. Offer some light-touch support with legacy planning as projects come to an end which can feed into the evaluation stage.
5. With an understanding of the changes being made to the most recent grant awards, outside the scope of the review, MA needs to go further to ensure that grantees use its resources; Working Equitably Toolkit, Wellbeing, Code of Ethics that is suggested in the Terms and conditions.
6. Ensure that funding to community partners is distributed in equitable ways through ethics guidance.
7. Make network opportunities easier to join for people in different locations and with different resource capabilities.
8. Group some network spaces around shared themes or challenges, so exchanges feel even more relevant.
9. Encourage community partners to take a leadership role in the grant application process along with museums and gather action learning set data to significantly impact the depth of community engagement and empowerment.
10. Conduct further research, covering a larger sample of the grantees, could enable a more detailed understanding of the impact across specific museum formats and regions.

Medium-term (2-5 years)

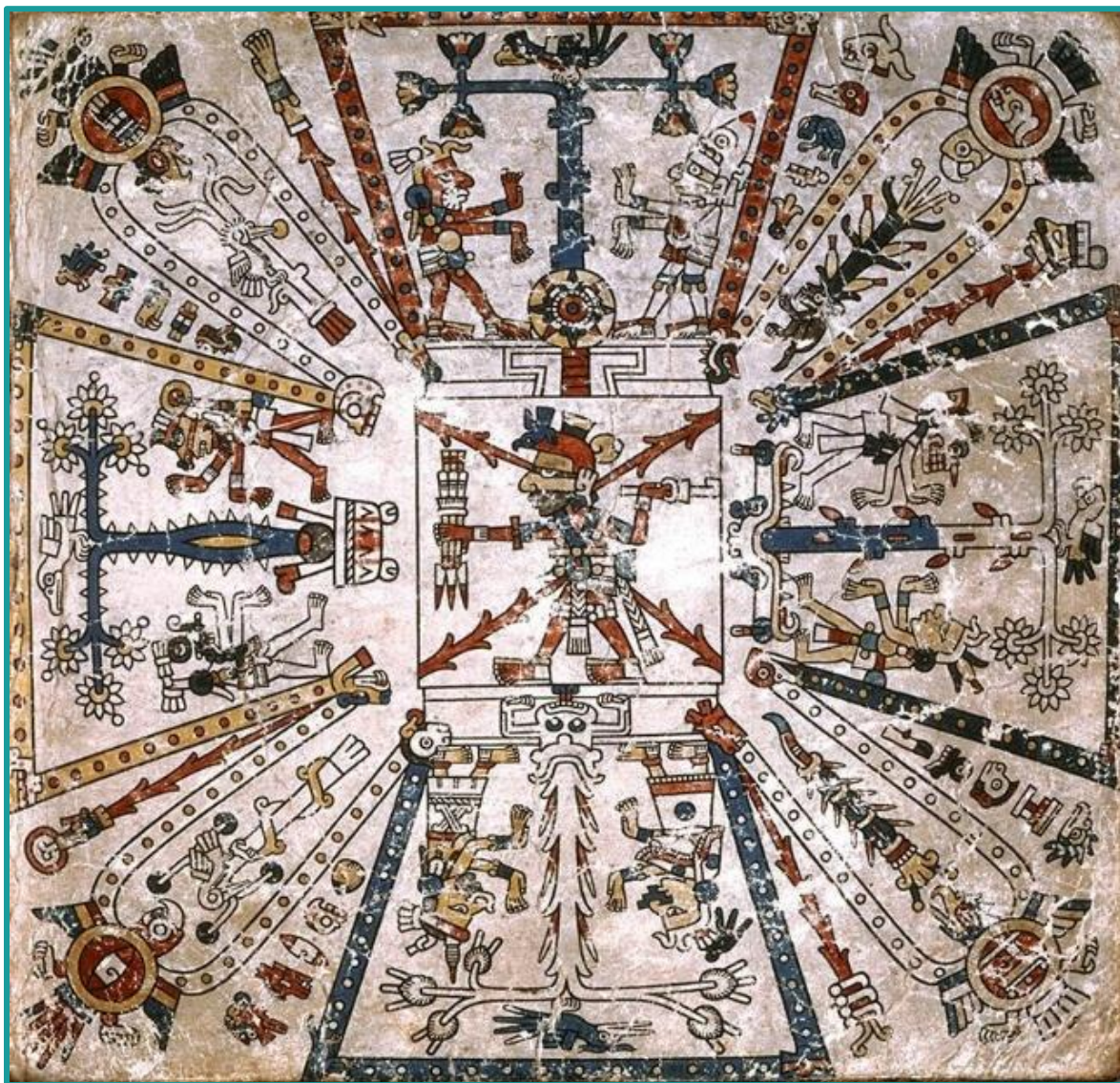
1. Build in a bit more support for what happens after delivery, not just during it.
2. Consider small follow-on or transition grants where projects have strong potential to continue.
3. Offer more structured help with showing impact (including providing evaluation frameworks) reflecting on learning, and making the case internally for continuing the work.
4. Strengthen and leverage network opportunities to develop as communities of practice, reflection, and learning
5. Bring community partners to lead the application process in collaboration with museums.

Long-term (Beyond 5 years)

1. Continue backing work that is equity-focused, builds internal organisational capacities, and is able to influence long-term change.

2. Put more emphasis on continuity, whether through follow-on support, staffing, or legacy-focused strands.
3. Recognise that lasting change often depends on people, skills, and relationships, not only on project outputs or evaluation reports.
4. Create a stronger bridge between funded projects and longer-term organisational change (including supporting leadership teams), so promising work is less likely to stop when the grant ends.

Conclusion



The Amoxitli Tezcatlipoca (detail) © National Museums Liverpool

Impact and Legacy:

What positive changes have the grants enabled, what has lasted, and where can we see it in everyday museum practice (including collections, programmes, schemes, partnerships and organisational policies), do these changes reflect social and climate equity?

- The grants have provided much needed resources and support which have allowed grantees to engage with communities and audiences meaningfully, encouraging community centred action, adopting climate aware practices, and decolonial and equitable approaches to their work, from the inside out.

Enablers:

What support, conditions, or organisational factors turned a short grant into lasting ways of working?

- Grantees that were able to achieve significant impact had access to ongoing support and coaching from MA, had the backing and advocacy of their leadership teams, and utilized the grant to increase staff and organisational capacities.

Needs and Networks:

What does it take to keep growing as a social, climate-justice or inclusive organisation? What roles do the grantee network or the MA play in sharing learning, and what needs are still unmet?

The grantees would benefit from having some reflection time with MA, follow up support after the end of grant period and support around impact measurement. The network was a great source of connection and solidarity.

Overall, the EFCCF awarded grants have had a significant impact on the work of the grantee organisations. It is clear from the evaluation that these grants fill much needed gaps in providing organisations with resources, networks, and other forms of support which are essential for them to be successful. It is also clear that flexible grants support organisations to be able to sustain their work, ensure smooth running, experiment with new ways of working, and much more. Flexible grants remain the backbone of success, and must be continued. There is also a strong desire from organisations to not 'feel left' suddenly after the end of the grant period. This means that it would be an important consideration for future grantmaking to think about provided wrap around or follow up support, so that the equitable aims of the grantmaking can truly shine.

Section 4: References

Appendix 1: List of Grantees Interviewed

Name	Type	Geography	Project Themes	Grant awarded
North Hertfordshire Museum	Local authority museum	E ENGLAND	Decolonisation, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection	July 2024
National Justice Museum	Independent museum	E. MIDS	Health & Wellbeing, Inclusion	Dec 2019
Paxton Trust	Independent museum	SCOTLAND	Decolonisation, Inclusion, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection	July 2021
Salisbury Museum	Independent museum	SW	Climate Crisis, Relevant Collections, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection and Relevant Collections, Creating better places to live and work	Dec 2021 Nov 2017
Timespan		N. SCOTLAND	Climate Crisis, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection	Dec 2023
Cornish Life Museums		SW	Inclusion, Relevant Collections	Dec 2022
National Museums NI	National museum	N. IRELAND	Decolonisation, Relevant Collections, Inclusion	Dec 2021
National Museum of the Royal Navy	Military museum	SE	Decolonisation, Inclusion	July 2023
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust	Independent museum	W. MIDLANDS	Decolonisation, Inclusion, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection	Dec 2022
Leeds Museums & Galleries	Local authority museum	YORKSHIRE & HUMBER	to conserve and share the works on paper collection through courses, study days, workshops, lectures and exhibitions	June 2014
Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust	Independent museum	SE	Climate Crisis, Relevant Collections, Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection	Dec 2021
National Museums Liverpool	National museum	NW	Relevant Collections, Inclusion, Decolonisation and Health & Wellbeing, Inclusion, Creating better places to live and work and transatlantic slavery and its legacy, and black social history, and to test a model for working with community groups in Liverpool	July 2024 Dec 2020 Nov 2015
Lightbox Gallery	Independent museum	SE	Inclusion, Relevant Collections	July 2023

Appendix 2: Survey Questions for Grantees

1.	What is the Name of your Museum?
2.	What type of MA membership do you have?
3.	What years did your EFCCF grant cover? [from XXXX (year) to XXXX] (year)
4.	What type of EFCCF funding did you receive? • Project grant • Core grant (since 2023) • Partnership project grant (since 2025) • Covid Response - Sustaining Engagement with Collections
5.	What Nation are you based in? • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales
6.	What option best describes the format of your Organisation? [Drop down menu] • National • Local Authority • Independent • University • Sector body or network • Community organisation • Community centre • Other (please specify)
7.	What specialism does/did your grant cover? [Drop down menu] • Social History • Archaeology & Paleontology • Numismatics • Costume & textiles • Fine & decorative art • Sound and film • Oral history • Natural history • Archives & manuscripts • World collections • Military • Photographic • Maritime • Industrial history • Rural history • Other (please specify)

8.	What is/was the key focus of your project? [Drop down menu – please choose up to 3] • Health & Wellbeing • Relevant Collections • Equity & Inclusion • Inspiring Engagement, Debate and Reflection • Creating better places Live and Work • Community participation • Representing diverse voices and perspectives • Community cohesion • Climate justice • Anti racism • Decolonisation • Other [please specify]
9.	What level of social impact do/did you feel that the fund had? [Drop down menu] • Very significant • Significant • Some impact • Little impact • Impact at the time until the funding ran out • None
10.	Where has it had the most impact? [click on one option only] • Community engagement and participation • Community leadership development • Collections development and diversification • Social impact • Diversifying museum workforce • Learning dissemination and training • Peer learning between partner organisations • Implementation of new approaches/cultural shifts in the Museum • Leading participatory practice • Equitable working practices (e.g. paying community collaborators) • Safeguard collection • Developing Relevance through more diverse voices/perspectives • Other [please specify]
11.	To what extent is/was your funded work community led? • Led by the museum to reach audiences/participants • Codeveloped with community participants/partners • Led by community participants/partners (e.g. designed by and/or decision-making managed by community partners) • Other [please specify]
12.	What key challenges did you face with your grant? • Lack of time (generally) • Length of time of grant award • Evaluation reporting

	• Difference in museum and community partner pace of work • Difference in museum and community partner capacity • Building trust with communities • Reaching relevant communities • Application process • Application timeframes • Funding cycle • Other (please specify)
13.	Was it easy to evaluate the impact of the grant for reporting? • Yes If yes, why? [Needs an open comment box - maximum 200 words]] • No If no, why not [Needs an open comment box - maximum 200 words]] • Other [Needs to have an open comment box – maximum 200 words]
14.	How would you rate (between 1-10) the experience of the support you received from the Museums Association in managing this grant? 1 = not supportive to 10 = incredibly supportive
15.	What was the most useful aspect of their support? [Click on all those that apply] • The community and Collections Network • MA's Coaching Conversations • Learning Dissemination Opportunities • Museums Change Lives • Previous EFCCF Funded Case Studies • Power to the People Framework • Measuring Social Engaged Practice Toolkit • Supporting Decolonisation in Museums • Communicating Decolonisation • Museums for Climate Justice • Empowering Collections Report Recommendations • Museum Essentials E-Learning modules • Equitable Working guide • Supporting Wellbeing guide • Action learning sets • MA's flexibility in adapting plans • Core grant flexibility • Other [please specify]
16.	Is there anything else relevant to our review that you would like to say about the EFCCF fund that these questions have not covered? [Open comment box – 200 words maximum]
17.	Would you be interested in taking part in a 60 minute online interview as part of the review? • Yes [If yes, please include your name and email address.] • No • Maybe

Thank you for your time and input!

Appendix 3: List of (Semi Structured) Interview Questions

Main interview questions

Theme 1: Impact and Legacy	Q1: Project overview Could you <u>briefly</u> please share with me what your EFCCF project was about and the funding period your grant covered?
	Q2: Expectations What motivated you (or your organisation) to apply for the EFCCF? What was your expectation? Probes: • What need were you responding to? • What did you hope to improve/change?
	Q3: Impact Looking back, what are the 2-3 most important changes that came from the project? Probes: • Changes for the organisation and staff/curators? • For communities/visitors? • For collections, including access, activities, care, etc.?
	Q4: Social and climate equity To what extent do you feel the changes from this project support social and/or climate equity in your organisation or community? Probes: • Who benefits most from these changes? And who might still be missing out? • Did it change whose voices are included in decisions, or how power is shared? • Did it influence anything related to climate responsibility (e.g. priorities, programming, collections care, ways of working)?
	Q5: Story for case study Can you please share one or two specific examples that show the changes or impact? Probes: • What was the situation? Who was involved? What changed afterwards? • Why does this change/impact matter to your organisation?
	Q6: Legacy What has lasted since the project ended, and how can we see this in day-to-day practice? Probes: • What is still active/available, including organisational culture/policy, ways of working, activities and events, internal and external relationships? • What stopped after the project ended? Why?
	<u>Role-specific questions (if not covered in the answers to the above questions)</u> <u>For CEO/Director:</u> Did the project influence strategy or leadership decisions beyond the project itself? Probes: • Priorities, staffing, governance, partnerships, fundraising, reputation etc.

	<u>For curators</u>: What changed in your curation or how you work with collections because of this project? Probes: • Interpretation, accessibility, content, etc. <u>For programme manager</u>: Among all the changes mentioned above, which outcomes were easiest to deliver or maintain, and which were the hardest, and why? <u>For Volunteer coordinator/community engagement manager</u>: What changed for the people who took part? Probes: engagement, inclusion, belonging, ongoing involvement.
Theme 2: Enablers	Q7: What the funding enabled or translated into outcomes What did the funding enable you to do that you could not have done otherwise? Probes: • Staff/capacity building activities • Partnerships • Equipment/space/access support • As 'seed fund' to start a new scheme
	Q8: Make the most of the grant What helped you get the most value from the grant while it was running? Probes: • Leadership support, governance, teamwork, community trust, etc.
	Q9: Challenges What were the biggest challenges? Probes: • Why did that happen? • What did you do to deal with them? Or what external support did you receive to overcome that?
	Role-specific questions <u>For CEO/Directors/Project managers</u>: What leadership decisions mattered most for making the project work? Probes: • Staffing plans • Authorising ways of working <u>For curators</u>: What skills or methods were most important to delivering the work well? Probes: • Co-production, climate literacy, etc. <u>For Volunteer coordinator/community engagement manager</u>: What helped participation feel welcoming and fair in this project?
Theme 3: Needs and Networks	Q10: Museums Association support What support from the Museums Association was most useful, and what support was missing or could have been better?
	Q11: Grantee network and shared learning

	Did being part of a grantee network make a difference? Could you please share with me one or two stories? Probes: • Any specific examples where shared learning influenced decisions or practice? • What would make networking more helpful?
	Q12: Keep growing Thinking beyond this project, what helps your organisation keep moving forward as a social justice, climate-justice and/or inclusive organisation?
	Q13: Needs after the project What do you need next to build on this work/expand the impact? Probes: • Skills (knowledge learning) • Funding • Partner/network support • Evaluation capability
	Q14: Improving EFCCF for long-term impact If you could change one thing about how EFCCF can help your organisation/project increase long-term impact, what would it be? Probes: • Duration • Amount • Support package • Peer learning
	Role-specific questions <u>For CEO/Directors:</u> Where should future funding be targeted to create long-term impact? <u>For Curators:</u> What sector support would help you keep improving collections practice linked to inclusion or climate justice? Probes: • Training/network/peer learning <u>For Project manager:</u> What practical infrastructure would make future projects easier to deliver well? <u>For volunteer coordinator/community engagement manager:</u> What would help you sustain relationships with participants and communities after the funding ends?
	Closing the session Before we finish, is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered? Or do you have any questions for me? Thank you so much for your time today.

Appendix 4: Case studies

National Justice Museum

Shotgun

Matchsticks, glue, pins and varnish
11" x 1" (28cm x 2.5cm)
20th Century

Researcher: Bernie



This amazing piece of art was made in 1997 by a 27 year old woman by the name of Sally Spence. Spence was in HMP Holloway when she was pulled into a competition being held in the prison's art department.

There were 12 contestants and she came first. She was presented with a Level 1 certificate in arts and crafts along with a certificate for Student of the Year. To show her huge effort and great work, her name was also featured in an edition of Inside Time.

The model was made in memory of her grandfather who sadly passed when Sally was a teenager.

Since her time in prison, Spence has made great effort and work in art and had her work displayed in many different exhibitions.

One of the objects in the NJM collections about which an incarcerated person, Bernie, imagined a story about.

Year of award:	2019
Year of project:	2020-2023
Impact	The funded project focused on engaging incarcerated people to co-produce material using the Museum's historical collection as a point of departure and inspiration. The work was done across 54 prisons in the UK. The work done was used to curate a temporary exhibition called <i>Ingenuity</i> , launched from March 2023 to January 2024. "... [T]his funding gave us the opportunity to think about how we work with closed communities, and I suppose reach into communities and allow them to reach out. ... [I]t enabled us to use an aspect of our historical collection of prison artwork, with people with actual lived experience of being incarcerated, and so it was getting those lived experienced voices who are still experiencing incarceration to respond to objects that have been

Year of award:	2017 & 2021
Year of project:	2018-2021 & 2022-2024
Impact	Salisbury Museum has received the EFCC fund twice, the first project, titled <i>Look Again: Discovering Centuries of Fashion</i> worked with young people (aged 11-25) to re-interpret and redisplay the museum's fashion collection. The second was to develop a project that culminated in an exhibition titled <i>Fashioning Our World</i>, which worked with young people (aged 11-25) to engage on stories of sustainability told by clothes and accessories in the past. The first project enabled young people from local schools (The Collective) to learn about museum work while engaging with staff, volunteers and their peers, including on design, curation, interpretation, presentation and mounting objects. This project, among other things, addressed a specific barrier that the museum had been facing—young people's access to the museum, in general and the fashion gallery, specifically. Before 2015, young people were not visiting the museum and this project drew them in by taking into account their interest and perspective. The second award served a similar project, with heightened need due to the isolation young people faced during Covid.
Challenge	The Covid pandemic created a distance between young people and public venues such as the museum. With these projects, particularly the second one, the museum created an invested connection between the young people of the region and the work of the museum.
Future	The project equipped young people, particularly those interested in a career in the arts and heritage sector with the skills and knowledge to pursue further skills. It also brought together young people from different schools within the region of the museum.



Everything We Love We Will Lose, the exhibition by artist duo YARA + DAVINA, funded in part by EFCCF © National Trust
Clandon Park and Lightbox Gallery and Museum

Year of award:	2023
Year of project:	2023-2025
Impact	The social needs of the area (Woking) within which the Lightbox sits prompted the application to EFCCF, as a way to bring engagement and vitality to the area through the arts. In the meantime, while they received the award, the Council declared bankruptcy, driving the organisation's funding from almost half a million pounds to zero pounds. "I managed to get emergency funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £250k. I managed to get emergency funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £150k, Trust Garfield Weston, £30k ... so I've managed to cobble very quickly, and it literally was September to December. ... the Museums Association supported us to keep that funding, and they almost said it could be unrestricted." In many ways the impact of the funding is its support in keeping the organisation open, to do the collaborative work with artists and community members that it set out to do.
Challenges	Team capacity has been a major challenge for this project due to the challenges the organisation has faced in financial cuts. This created an overwhelming amount of work for all staff members.
Future	The relationships built across the Museums Association through the collaborative work of bringing the funding together is something the

organisation carries forward. Their focus remains audience development and collaboration with artists.

National Museums Liverpool



Abdulwase Sufian, the young man of Yemeni heritage who inspired the project as he sought support for his grandmother © Gareth Jones

Year of award	2020 & 2024
Year of project	2021-2022 & 2025-2026
Impact	National Museums Liverpool has received two rounds of EFCC funding, the first one addressing a community-specific project, and the other supporting collections work with community engagement. 1st Award The funding was used to create a project called Connecting with Yemeni Elders' Heritage (CWYEH), a community-initiated and led project within the National Museums Liverpool flagship <i>House of Memories</i> programme, a dementia awareness project initiated by the Museum and other partners in 2012. CWYEH was aimed at understanding Liverpool Yemeni elders and connecting them with their heritage in the Museums' collection. Its start was rooted in creating resources to aid a Yemeni elder living with dementia, to help them connect with their life and story through museum objects. An impact of the project was the funding enabling the creation of community-led collection gathering, and the opportunity to create something "meaningful for the community in terms of social history."

	2nd Award The funding supported a project called Cuerpos del Tiempo (Bodies of Time) at World Museum, aimed at working with the Latin American community in the North West of England to work collaboratively on the redisplay of a pre-colonial manuscript from what's now Mexico. The project is ongoing, and with their partner organisation Luma Creations, a Latin American arts organisation based in Liverpool, they aim to bring Latin American communities together to inform the re-display of the material. One of the features that has enabled this project to be successful is the flexibility of the Museums Association, which has facilitated, in turn, flexibility of engagement.
Challenges	One item of note for both cycles of award was how the project challenged the Museum's structures of financing activities and paying partners, businesses and culturally appropriate hospitality: "paying for things from shops that are in the local community, from... for catering that's from the local community, and making sure that some of the flow of the funds while serving and going back into the community. The mechanisms for doing that in the financial systems are really difficult, so that's definitely a big learning point for us."
Future	CWYEH was well received in the community and in the dementia awareness community. It has spotlighted a health issue that many elderly people live with, including elders from immigrant backgrounds. The <i>House of Memories</i> programme continues in the Museum and across museums in the UK.