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Learning as we go: testing options for self-evaluation

A pilot study to explore whether two nef tools can show the benefits of the Heritage Lottery Fund's heritage projects

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1. Summary

1. Heritage is more than buildings and exhibitions, it is about having a positive impact on people and communities, whether in large or small ways. Funding organisations and the projects they support are increasingly being called to account for not only how money is being spent, but the effects it has on people – particularly their quality of life and well-being.

2. The Heritage Lottery Fund wanted to encourage greater uptake of appropriate measurement tools to capture these effects because of the potential benefits that a different approach to measurement can bring. In this action research, HLF and **nef** tested two tools: Prove It! and LM3- the local multiplier tool.

   - *Prove it!* : This tool (or range of tools) engages local people in a process of identifying the outcomes of a project for its beneficiaries, and in particular its effects on people's relationships with each other, the wider world, and their well-being or quality of life. By identifying indicators or 'ways of knowing' that reflect these important changes, a Prove It! evaluation can build a more meaningful picture of the social impact a project is having.
   - *LM3 / Plugging the Leaks*: Plugging the Leaks, as a set of ideas, explores how money flows into, circulates within, and potentially 'leaks' out of a local economy. It also provides a methodology to measure the extent to which the flow is contributing to the sustainability of that local economy. For HLF's purposes it was thought that LM3, which can be used with individual organisations, had particular value as a tool which encourages projects to consider their role within sustaining local economies, and by using it they could make more of a positive contribution.

The aim of the research was to determine whether using these tools would require any HLF procedures to be changed, how much support would be necessary for grant recipients on an ongoing basis, and how this support might be provided.

3. The act of impact measurement is important in its own right, regardless of whether the findings are destined for proving effectiveness to outsiders, or improving effectiveness for the people associated with project. This is because it provides opportunities for

   o Richer involvement when engaging with people and communities (the stakeholders)
   o Better understanding between project partners
   o More effective project delivery

4. The reality of busy project schedules means that additional evaluation (looking beyond output measures and contract compliance) is unlikely to feature as important unless there are strong incentives for doing so. There is a culture that emphasises project delivery more than it does reflection, evaluation and celebration. Yet when evaluation is embedded in the management of the project, and not viewed as an add-on at the end, the experience of the projects in this pilot shows that it brings additional value. Crucially the measurement process and the lessons learnt are owned by the people who are best placed to influence or benefit from the outcomes, whilst the act of recognising and celebrating achievement is a strong incentive for further action or sustained impact.

5. In spite of the fact that the tools are designed as stand-alone packages that projects can take up and use by themselves, during this study a significant amount of mentoring and support was needed for them to be used. On average each of the 8 projects that remained in the pilot required 3.5 **nef** support days to undertake a range of activities including a combination of the following:
   - an initial introductory impact seminar for Project Officers with **nef** and HLF
   - a participative Storyboard and impact mapping exercise with a selection of Project Officers and stakeholders (without **nef** present),
   - a questionnaire administered with stakeholders (with minimum **nef** input)
   - a project Reflection Poster Workshop with a group of stakeholders. (also without **nef** present)

   The **nef** support included telephone conversations and email exchanges to prepare and reflect on the use of the various elements of the tools.

6. Four Project Officers who agreed to try out one or more of the tools were unable to maintain the commitment or momentum necessary to complete the pilot as the benefits of spending the additional time on evaluation did not for them outweigh the costs. With a limit on the resources available for delivering a project it may have been detrimental to the relationship with the funder, and indeed perhaps to the project itself to dictate otherwise. One of the project officers who completed the pilot suggested that if the use of specific tools become a formal requirement they might be used grudgingly and therefore ineffectively.

7. The success and usefulness of the stakeholder engagement elements depended more on the nature of the activities rather than the size of the projects and was dictated by whether a project was delivered *for beneficiaries* (e.g. an exhibition, or capital works) or *with beneficiaries* (e.g. outings, community activities etc.) Put simply, although both sets of tools were useful, the participative elements proved more valuable for those projects that involved people more closely.

Recommendations

8. One way forward would be to make sure that a project considers evaluation at the outset alongside the activities and deliverables as part of the application process. It could be made clear that as good practice, Project Officers should decide alongside HLF:

   a. The type of evaluation needed (objective or subjective[i]) based on what is most important to measure

   b. Whether the evaluation is valuable more as an exercise for proving impact or improving the delivery, or both,

   c. The extent to which the evaluation activities will be integrated into delivery, and how they will contribute to achieving the aims of the project

   d. Which meaningful indicators of success should be used in order to identify impact and /or influence the way the project's activities are to be delivered.

9. As a responsible funding organisation it is important for HLF to be able to provide guidance and support to awardees wishing to carry out evaluation of outcomes and impact. This includes being able to signpost project officers towards a range of tools identified as evaluation options or plain good practice. The experience from this pilot study suggests that the principles of impact measurement must be applied for HLF projects, but that the ways of carrying it out should be left to the grantee to suggest rather than as a standardised funding package. This ties in with the principle that each project must be allowed to negotiate its own priorities and parameters for impact evaluation, as it is those closest to the point of delivery who are best placed to choose not only the best ways of knowing that a project has succeeded, but also the best ways to identify, capture and present that information.

10. HLF is in a strong position to influence the wider community's perception and relationship with heritage. Through the way it seeks to tell that story it can influence the way measurement is thought of as a positive tool for change, rather than just as an exercise in accountability.

2. The Research Context

Background

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 under the National Lottery Act to distribute money raised by the National Lottery to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom (except the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

The HLF's second strategic plan, 'Broadening the Horizons of Heritage[ii] sets out its priorities for heritage in a future that will see a significant change in the way the sector is supported and understood. Consultation carried out so far on the new Strategic Plan has highlighted that there is a demand for HLF to play a greater mentoring role as part of its support for projects. This has been coupled with the anticipation of a significant decrease in the share of Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) funding available to heritage projects in the light of other priorities, most notably the 2012 Olympics. There is an increasing interest, reflected across all aspects of social policy, in demonstrating the real social, environmental and economic value of investment. This implies the need for a shift in emphasis from a target and output culture to one that attempts to measure outcomes and impact. To this end large funders such as the Big Lottery Fund are pursuing 'outcomes funding.'

To achieve its priorities HLF operates a number of targeted funding initiatives in addition to its two generic programmes, 'Your Heritage' (£5,000-£50,000) and 'Heritage Grants' (greater than £50,000). The targeted funding initiatives have specific research questions set at their inception.

The emphasis for monitoring and evaluation of Heritage Grants and Your Heritage has predominantly been on ensuring financial probity and contract compliance – i.e. that people spent the money they said they would spend, on the things they said they would buy. Although projects may be expected to deliver economic or social benefits these are not, at the moment, formalised. Projects are not expected to report back on specific outputs or outcomes relating to the benefits the projects deliver, although they may be doing their own work in this area, either for their own benefit or to meet the requirements of other funders.

HLF wanted to encourage greater uptake of appropriate measurement tools because of the following potential benefits that a different approach to measurement can bring:

- In some cases it would help applicants think more fully about the social and economic benefits their projects might have – or about what greater impact they could have.

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- Theory suggests that projects that maintain a formal approach to monitoring and evaluation stand a better chance of delivering success because the process feeds into ongoing programme development (formative evaluation);

- It would help HLF develop its role as an agent of change (particularly in terms of regeneration), from being a project 'banker' to a genuine project 'partner';

- It would provide better evidence for both grant recipients and HLF to show what is achieved with its funding. Although this might include quantitative evidence this 'evidence' could also ensure that the 'story' of a project is captured and recorded providing useful qualitative information and a sense of 'soft' outcomes.

In 2005 HLF was beginning to think about its' next Strategic Plan (SP3) and it was thought that evaluation of social and economic benefits was likely to be emphasised more strongly in future. A second theme which was anticipated might emerge during consultation was for HLF to play a greater and more active role as a development partner on projects. Both of these ideas, if followed through, would require new approaches to monitoring and evaluation, both by grant recipients and by HLF itself.

HLF asked **nef** (new economics foundation) to investigate existing tools that could help to measure social and economic benefits more fully. HLF wanted greater clarity about the self-evaluation tools that would be appropriate for different types of grant recipients. These tools would be flexible enough to speak to different sizes and types of projects. HLF chose to pursue two tools that nef had developed- 'LM3 / Plugging the Leaks' and 'Prove It!' These were piloted because of the potential understanding of economic and social impact they could provide.

The Brief

HLF asked **nef** to test two tools with grantees:

o *LM3 / Plugging the Leaks*: Plugging the Leaks, as a set of ideas, explores how money flows into, circulates within, and leaks out of a local economy. It also provides a methodology to measure the extent to which the flow is contributing to the sustainability of that local economy. For HLF's purposes it was thought that LM3, as a tool that can be used with individual organisations, had particular value as a way to encourage projects to consider their role within sustaining local economies, and how they could make more of a positive contribution.

o *Prove it!* : This process engages local people in a process of identifying the outcomes of a project for its beneficiaries, and in particular its effects on people's relationships with each other, the wider world, and their well-being or quality of life. By identifying indicators or 'ways of knowing' that reflect these important changes, a Prove It! evaluation can build a more meaningful picture of the social impact a project is having.

The impetus behind using these tools was that they would encourage grantees to think about the ways that heritage projects can build bridges and bonds between and within communities, organisations and institutions.

HLF appreciated that both tools had already been used successfully by projects in many different fields, and expected that both would provide a good way of encouraging better evaluation of heritage projects. The aim of the research was thus directed at establishing whether the introduction of the tools would require any HLF procedures to be changed; how much support would be necessary for grant recipients on an ongoing basis; and how this support might be provided.

HLF asked **nef** to address several action research questions including:

- Whether LM3 and Prove It! are useful evaluation tools for a range of different types of heritage project, from grants of less than £50,000 to multi-million pound projects;
- To what extent it is possible to involve HLF development staff and grant officers in the purposes and process of social and economic monitoring and evaluation;
- What each of the different applicants thinks and feels about using the tools.

In order to achieve these objectives, **nef** was asked to:

- Provide initial training for grant recipients and HLF staff in the purposes and uses of the tools;
- Provide support to the case study projects (as far as was feasible within budget limits)
- Report back to HLF on the experience of grantees and HLF staff of using the tools, and on their suitability for HLF-funded projects;
- Make any recommendations for changes in HLF procedures.

Overview of Work

Very early on it became clear for practical reasons that the research needed to develop a rigorous methodology for selecting which grantees to involve, in order to make optimal use of support that could be delivered.

The selection methodology

It was agreed that the research:

- could involve a small number of projects;
- could include a mix of projects in development, and those which were just getting going;
- should aim to have a range of large and small, from the tens of thousand pounds up to around £5m of HLF funding. It depended on the choice of projects that would be available (by dint of having reached the right stage in HLF processes) at the start of this work.
- should concentrate on just one or two regions depending on the choice of projects available.

In matching projects to the appropriate tool, a framework was developed (Table 1):

Table 1: Framework for type of project and toolkit

	LM3	Prove It!
Size of grant	Over £50,000 i.e. Heritage Grants Only	Any
Area of the UK	Any	Any
Heritage Sector	Any	Any
Stage at which project has reached	Stage 1 Pass + Full Award	Full Award Only

Small projects (or smaller parts of large projects) were thought to be best suited to Prove It! otherwise it would be too difficult to attribute specific impacts directly to project funding. On the other hand, a project needed to be at least of a minimum size before using LM3 otherwise the 'spend' could too easily disappear into very small amounts making it harder to undertake effective tracking and traceability of its impact on a local economy.

For LM3 two general risks were foreseen:
- the potential need for HLF to get involved in defining an appropriate geographic area within which spending was being counted,
- if this were not done, then the need for HLF to define how data was collected so that data could be revisited for analysis and (in some cases) comparison.

The selection of projects was not restricted to areas of 'economic need' as there were likely to be an insufficient number of projects that could participate in the research, and – in areas of wealth – there was an interest in projects trying to pro-actively 'leak' spend into less wealthy communities. It was noted that LM3 could therefore be used in two ways for HLF: either to measure the outcome of committed expenditure or to influence spending decisions of the grantees.

To keep the initial set up manageable the research concentrated on working with two regional teams aiming for about 20 projects to participate overall. London, and Yorkshire and Humberside were selected on the basis that they would offer contrasts in terms of size and spread of population as well as landmass covered. Both Regional Managers were receptive to the idea of joining this research and agreed to send the appropriate regional staff to a training day prior to roll out with grantees. From then on the regions had slightly different approaches to their schedule for this research.

3. The Tools: theory and practice

In this section:

- 3.1 Why add to the workload?
- 3.2 Measuring what matters
- 3.3 Impact and why it is worth measuring
- 3.4 Prove It!
- 3.5 LM3 (and Plugging the Leaks)

3.1 Why add to the workload?

Currently HLF procedures rely on traditional project monitoring and evaluation methods to keep track of spending and achievement of project outputs, and there is little opportunity on a project-by-project basis to explore the narrative behind these numbers. HLF relies on gaining a wider sense of impact by targeted in-depth studies undertaken as dedicated pieces of work with the help of outside evaluators. However, to gain a more in-depth view of each project's impact would require a different approach to the way information on a project is collected from the initial assessment stage onwards throughout the project's delivery.

Before exploring whether it is necessary or desirable for HLF to make the changes implied by a new approach to its existing procedures, it is important to review the potential benefits and costs both for the projects themselves and the Grants Officers at HLF in undertaking the additional work that the tools can represent. Then we describe how each of the two tools works, specifically looking at the theories that underpin them, and how the processes themselves can add value to the way a project is managed.

3.2 Measuring what matters

Traditionally the word 'evaluation' is associated with the work of external consultants taking an objective snapshot of an organisation or initiative. However, when it is viewed as much as for providing evidence of effectiveness as a process for learning and growth, this necessarily brings evaluation back home so that those more closely associated with the project can take a more active part in its evaluation. This provides a strong argument for incorporating a degree of **self-appraisal** into an evaluation methodology. In this way those most closely associated with the activities and the outcomes (including project workers and beneficiaries) are encouraged to bring their own experience and insight into understanding the extent to which change has really happened.

The act of measurement is important for proving *and* improving. The latter is crucial but often crowded out due to external demand for 'proving'. If there is not a focus on learning, then the usefulness of any measurement process is likely to be limited. Likewise measuring isn't just about collecting numbers. When reduced to this, it can become a burden to an organisation that prevents the real work from being done. Therefore for measurement to be useful, and for the potential benefits to be manifest, it needs to incorporate four key principles.

- **Look beyond outputs** – the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. To evaluate change means looking at outcomes and impact, and doing so at a project's inception. Very often impact happens at the level of the individual, and so the methods involved must be sensitive enough to pick up whatever individual stories are hidden behind the numbers.
- **Tell the story** – It is important to be clear about the link between activities and actions and the change that they are designed to bring about. This is about knowing how (not just whether) a particular activity is bringing about change, and requires an effort to understand the narrative of how outputs lead to the longer-term outcomes and impacts.
- **Make it a conversation** – A search for a meaningful narrative requires a dialogue amongst and between stakeholders, rather than a mere extraction of data. By providing a common language for this dialogue to take place, measurement can become a tool for enhancing the quality of people's involvement.
- **Choose indicators that matter –** With a better understanding of the path of how an activity or initiative is designed to bring about change it is possible to identify milestones along that path that demonstrate whether or not it is on course. The indicators (literally "ways of knowing") that change is (or is not) happening can be a combination of numbers and descriptions of people's experience, and must be chosen based on what stakeholders themselves have identified as important to measure, and not just what is easiest to count.

The elements of Prove It! and LM3, the use of which was explored in this pilot, illustrate this more in-depth approach to measurement. If these principles are embraced, then clearly the process of measurement becomes as important as the outcome; in doing so measurement can build confidence and ownership and therefore contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of an initiative.

The tools themselves are by no means the only methods available to managers for adding this degree of value to a project, but were chosen by HLF because they demonstrate a way to incorporate these principles into its ongoing management.[iii] Both Prove It! and Plugging the Leaks / LM3 draw on the principles and practices of Participatory Appraisal (PA).[iv] The field of PA is a well-researched and widely utilised approach to evaluation that puts the stakeholders with whom and for whom the measurement is being undertaken at the heart of the evaluation process, which is in contrast to approaches that rely just on external evaluators to collect information. PA methods

engage with project participants in ways most appropriate to their needs and interests, typically focussing on visual images and semi-structured discussion.

3.3 Impact and why it is worth measuring

It is clear to HLF and the projects they work with that supporting heritage is more than paying for buildings, exhibitions and delivering activities. Funding organisations generally need to be more accountable to the people for whom (and with whom) these projects are being carried out and this means looking at the changes – the impacts, that come about as a result of their investments.

The range of terms associated with the language of outputs and outcomes, and the way those terms are interpreted by different constituencies can bring unnecessary confusion to the study and understanding of impact and the way it is achieved. Box 1 attempts to clarify these.

Box 1: The language of outputs, outcomes and impacts

When we talk of outputs, outcomes and impacts resulting from the a project's activities and actions it is important to note that an *output* is the thing over which the project team has *most control*, and which creates the environment for one or more outcomes (and therefore value) to a particular stakeholder group.

An *outcome* is something over which there is *less control* (inevitably there will be other interventions and conditions which will also be contributing to bringing it about) and is the demonstration of value to the stakeholder that is in line with the objectives they had for engaging with the organisation.

An *impact* is the extent to which an outcome can be attributed to a particular intervention. Strictly speaking this should attempt to take into account what might have happened anyway, offset against any negative effects that may result.

LM3 and Prove It! are tools for measuring impact (social or economic) and understanding where it is happening. Although Prove It! was originally designed to look at the effects of projects on people, the way they relate to each other and the communities around them (predominantly associated with the term 'social capital'), discussions about these effects naturally identify potential impact in a wider sense, for example in terms of the physical changes they experience that affect people's well-being and quality of life, of which social capital is only a part.

This study was not predominantly about collecting evidence of the impact of the projects who took part, but was looking at the act of measurement (particularly self-evaluation), and the associated effects on the project workers, users, beneficiaries and on the effectiveness of the project itself. We now look at how each tool was described to the officers from HLF-funded projects who agreed to take part in this pilot.

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3.4 Prove It!: measuring impact on people and communities

Summary

Prove It! was originally developed by **nef** in partnership with Groundwork UK and Barclays PLC to provide a method for measuring the effect of community regeneration projects on the quality of life of local people. This tool was conceived to help those managing neighbourhood renewal projects look beyond the physical and environmental changes that had taken place (e.g. the number of trees planted; amenities created) and be able to highlight the positive outcomes of regeneration that can often go unnoticed – particularly in relation to the way projects bring people together and build the capacity for communities to get on and get ahead. This is sometimes included under the banner of 'increasing social capital'.

Prove It! is an impact evaluation methodology that puts data collection as central not only to the way it is monitored and evaluated, but planned and delivered. It emphasizes a role for stakeholders (particularly users and beneficiaries) as delivery agents as well as participants thereby allowing a space for evaluation to contribute to the aims of a project, its ownership and the lasting effects of its impact. As a way to allow projects to assimilate some of the principles of impact evaluation practice into the day-to-day running of projects a lighter version was designed in order to make impact measurement manageable and possible within the limited time resources that small-to-medium–scale projects have available to them. In this way it is hoped that principles of impact evaluation become part of the culture of an organisation, rather than a burden. Ultimately the aim is that the evaluation process itself contributes positively to the desired outcomes of a project.

What's involved?

The essential elements of an impact evaluation have been condensed into three tools:

- A **Storyboard Exercise** for understanding how a project's intended activities will lead to change, and for choosing the measures to be used to know whether that change is happening.
- A **Survey Questionnaire** template to be used at the start and end of the project. This fulfills one aspect of the data collection necessary to understand what is happening on the ground. Projects are encouraged to find the questions and method most appropriate to their project.
- A **Poster Evaluation Exercise** to be used at the end of a project to allow stakeholders to reflect on its impacts and the lessons that have been learnt.

In addition there are notes, guidance and templates provided to assist project managers in planning the evaluation process and presenting findings. All of these materials are available as electronic files that can be downloaded and printed out as and when they are needed.[v]

For a more in-depth look at the approach, the learning from the initial Groundwork / Barclays project is encapsulated in the original handbook "*Prove It! Measuring the effect of neighbourhood renewal on local people*" which can be downloaded from www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_proveit.aspx . It describes the process of involving

communities in agreeing on the most important issues, deciding on indicators and collecting data. It also provides the rationale for this type of participative evaluation and community engagement.

3.5 Local Multiplier 3 (LM3): measuring impact on the local economy
Promoting local economic linkages

For many years, the proposed solution for regenerating urban and rural areas has been to attract more money into them, whether it is in the form of tourism, agriculture, corporate relocations, and other forms of inward investment. There is, however, a different approach that can have an even greater, more sustainable, impact: regenerating the local economy from within by taking advantage of the resources that communities already possess.

In many areas, the issue is not that too little money comes in but that most of the money that does enter the local economy flows right out again in the form of spending on and contracts to non-local businesses and labour. Research by the Countryside Agency has shown that on average upwards of 40 percent of business turnover 'leaks' outside of the local economy. By finding ways to 'plug the leaks' by creating economic linkages between local businesses, labour, and public bodies, poorer communities can build a healthy local economy that can stand on its own long after regeneration funding dries up.

The Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) tool has been developed by **nef** to help communities tackle issues of deprivation from within.[vi] LM3 enables organisations to measure the impact they have on a local economy by tracking where the money they receive is then spent and re-spent. The purpose of tracking and measuring this spending is to identify opportunities to get more money circulating locally. Deprived communities can achieve more local circulation of money by strengthening linkages in their local economies.

The name 'Local Multiplier 3' indicates how the tool works. The multiplier is an economic tool, usually applied at the national or regional level, to measure how income into an area circulates, and hence multiplies, within the economy. **nef** has adapted the multiplier for use at the local level. Since the multiplier measures how money is spent and re-spent, we stop after three 'rounds' of spending rather than continue onwards. This is where the bulk of spending takes place, and it also becomes unfeasible to keep tracking beyond this point.

Using LM3

Before the surveying and calculating is embarked upon, there is a participative element to the approach which involves a stakeholder focussed "Plugging the Leaks" workshop which helps a community get to grips with the concepts behind local spending and money flows, and helps identify where money is currently being leaked out. The full details on how this works, and how it links directly to using the LM3 tool can be viewed at http://www.pluggingtheleaks.org/.

When it comes to measuring the effect of a project's spending on a local economy the LM3 tool itself works like this:

1) Measure an organisation's income, which may be a combination of public and private funds (Round 1);

2) Then look at how that organisation spends its income in a defined local area (i.e. parish, ward, district, or 30 mile radius) – suppliers, staff, subcontractors, and overhead are typically the principal expenditures (Round 2);

3) Then look at how the local people and local businesses who received money from that organisation – the suppliers, staff, etc. – spend their money (Round 3);

4) Finally, run through some quick maths to arrive at the LM3, which tells you how much spending by the organisation impacts the local economy.

LM3 therefore results in a number, literally a ratio, which is an indicator for how the organisation is having an impact on the local economy. More importantly, the LM3 process enables those involved in the analysis to determine how to increase their local economic impact through procurement and other strategies thereby enabling a better figure to be achieved were the exercise to be run again.

4. What the pilot projects did and what they found

In this section:

- 4.1 Summary of each projects' involvement including:
    - An analysis of why projects continued or dropped out
    - Overview of the time spent by Project Officers and support by **nef**

- 4.2 What they found: lessons from the experience of the pilots

4.1 Summary of each project's involvement

Table 2 provides a detailed overview of which projects were approached for the pilot, and the extent to which they took part in subsequent activities. Involvement started for the London projects with a half-day evaluation seminar (with their HLF Grant officer present) and for the Yorkshire pilots with a 20 to 30 minute telephone conversation with **nef** explaining the background to the pilot and inviting them to a first seminar. The table also outlines how each project followed up whatever intentions they expressed for continuing in the study.

Of the 20 projects fulfilling the selection criteria who were chosen to take part:

- 17 projects were represented at **nef** evaluation seminars either at the HLF offices in Leeds or at the **nef** offices in London
- 14 projects expressed an intention to use one or more of the elements of the toolkits
- 8 projects followed this through by using one or more elements of the toolkits, although not all of these maintained the additional activity throughout the length of their project.

The approach to choosing pilots used in Yorkshire and Humber was more successful than in London in terms of yielding a take-up of the approaches amongst the selected projects. In London **nef** introduced the principles and practices of the tools at an initial workshop, and then projects decided subsequently whether or not to take part. The intention expressed by eight of the London projects to continue involvement was only followed through by three Project Officers remaining in the pilot. Whereas in Yorkshire more time was spent up front communicating principles and practices to Project Officers, who then decided whether or not the tools were appropriate for their projects. It was on this basis that the projects were invited to take part. Those that found them relevant made up the participant list for the initial workshop. As a result the evaluation tools were used by 5 out of the 6 participants who had expressed an intention to do so.

Table 2: Project Pilots - Summary of their involvement

Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot / dropping out)
London Pilots					
Museum of Croydon –"Museum Redevelopment" The HLF Award was used to create a fully accessible local history museum including new displays, an exhibition, multimedia framework and interpretation, and a research database which underpins a number of other educational facilities. The Hoardings Project entailed the creation and display of artwork by local community groups of adults with learning difficulties and formed a small part of the HLF funded activity at the museum.	933,500	Yes	Yes	Storyboard exercise with project stakeholders	The use of Prove it! fitted with the Museum's desire to engage with community groups, which is already a feature of its operation. The Museum has already benefited a great deal from having to go out and engage with the community, as the outreach has been good for identifying and linking up with potential new audiences – particularly schools and young people. The Storyboard Exercise was undertaken towards the end of January 2006 with six representatives from the Croydon Museum and Geffrye Harris House (the latter provides art therapy sessions for adults with learning disabilities). The participants looked specifically at one element of the museum's work, the 'Hoarding's Project' which aims to involve excluded and hard to reach audiences in the work of the museum. The exercise itself was relatively straightforward to undertake, although some of the language used in the Storyboard template was thought to be a bit repetitive and unnatural. A completed Storyboard was submitted to **nef** providing information for choosing indicators for use at the end of the project. The Hoardings project at time of writing is on hold as general management of the museum has taken priority, however the Storyboard document is on file to be referred to if and when this element of the museum's work is re-instated.
Africa Audio-visual Library – The project awarded the HLF grant was entitled "Our African Heritage in Masks and Drums" and consisted of Education workshops with local schools, open day exhibitions and a library archiving project.	49,988	Yes	Yes	No	Time constraints of both the Project Officer and the teachers in the participating schools meant that there was no opportunity to arrange a Storyboard Exercise with stakeholders, and so no further part was taken in the pilot.
London Wildlife Trust– "London's Summer Stag Party" The project combined a London-wide, internet-based, public survey of the distribution of the stag beetle with a programme of awareness-raising and educational activities relating to this internationally endangered species.	17,350	Yes	Yes	No	It was clear that although the tools could have provided helpful information for the project – particularly the Storyboard for planning, this pilot began too late in the project cycle (the planning and much of the delivery was already underway) to be able to contribute to the project. Time constraints meant that the project took no further part in the pilot.
London Parks and Gardens Trust– "Open Garden Squares Weekends (OGSW)" The project	50,000	Yes	No	-	The tools were not appropriate for this project, as the project was already underway (too late in the project cycle for Storyboard to be

					London Pilots

Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot / dropping out)
extended an annual celebratory event allowing access to private squares in order to increase the visibility of historically interesting, public gardens not generally known.					deemed useful) and there were no further opportunities for stakeholder engagement.
Crystal Palace Fans' Centenary Project –"Oral Archive project". As part of its centenary celebrations the project collected oral history recordings and compiled a range of materials relating to the history of Crystal Palace Football Club with a view to presenting them to local schools and the wider community in a comprehensive and accessible format. At the core of the project was a web based "virtual museum" which included a range of content including text, images and multimedia elements such as audio and video clips. An additional output was the development of a Learning Pack to be used as an education resource for local schools.	50,000	Yes	Yes	Storyboard Exercise with Project Officers, Project Reflection Poster with project committee	The schools participating in the project were already undertaking regular evaluation by recording notes from each lesson and through ongoing discussions between Project Officers and the school staff based on their observations of each lesson. These comments were particularly helpful to the project team as the teachers and teaching assistants were able to place pupils' responses to the activities and materials in the context of previous and subsequent learning behaviour, and so they were particularly sensitive to the changes that might have taken place as a result. Many of the practical implications from both these sources of data were included in the Teachers Notes accompanying each unit in the Learning Pack. Rather than adopt an additional process of data collection in the form of a Prove It! social capital questionnaire it was decided to concentrate the use of the tools offered in this pilot by involving the project's volunteers in a Poster Reflection workshop after the work was done. These volunteers were the people who had been trained and supported to carry out interviews with local residents in order to provide the material for the archive. At the initial nef seminar (where a range of HLF-funded Project Officers had taken part in an introduction and overview of how to measure impact), the Crystal Palace Project Officers prepared a Storyboard for the project which they reproduced at the end of the project for participants in a final Reflection Poster workshop. Thirteen volunteers took part in this exercise and used the Storyboard as the basis for a comparison between the project plan and the reality as it was told through the highs and lows of the timeline.
MoDA (Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture), Middlesex University – "What's For Dinner: Fifty Years of Eating Habits in Britain" The project examined eating practices as part of the changing structure of home and society in a multicultural Britain.	49,800	Yes	No	-	Although providing a helpful framework for planning a project and its evaluation, the Tools were deemed to be more useful for projects with a greater level of stakeholder engagement, and to be effective would need to be used earlier on in the project cycle.

London Pilots					
Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot / dropping out)
Groundwork Camden and Islington – "Up 2 No Good" This project undertook an exploration of local history as a way of bringing together different groups in a diverse community (including young, old and people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds)	134,500	Yes	Yes	No	The project was underway at the time of the first workshop, but there was a possibility (not realised) of using the Storyboard Exercise to set up the second strand of work with a new group of young people. Time constraints and a change of Project Officer meant that this was not followed through.
London Borough of Lambeth – "Clapham Common Bandstand" The project undertook to carry out the conservation of the bandstand and the surrounding landscape. The aim was to enhance the local environment and make the facilities available to a wider and more diverse range of people.	898,500	Yes	Yes	No	The capital works for refurbishment of the Bandstand were almost complete when this pilot started and so the tools were not appropriate at this late stage of the project's cycle. However, a community-liaison officer was appointed some months afterwards to co-ordinate community engagement and activity around the Bandstand itself. Initially the original community steering group had disbanded, but the new officer plans to re-engage a new group of residents in 2007. The new officer suggested that the tools may be appropriate to provide a framework for this stakeholder engagement activity.
LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre) – "LIFT Living Archive Project Development" The grant has allowed LIFT to work with a qualified archivist and other professionals to implement Archive Project Development and build capacity thus making accessible the story of LIFT's quarter century history.	49,100	Yes	No	-	Taking part in this pilot project brought LIFT into close contact with a new set of ideas on measurement, however this project did not provide a suitable opportunity for committing time and effort in undertaking Prove It! or LM3. This is partly due to the nature of the archiving and presentation work which didn't offer the appropriate opportunities for stakeholder engagement, and partly due to their progress in the project cycle.
Museum of Childhood – "Redevelopment of the Museum". Major capital project where a complete refurbishment of the building at Bethnal Green was being undertaken.	3.5m	Yes	Yes (LM3)	Used the process to look as far as the second round (LM2)	The Project Officer agreed that the tool was useful for understanding a project's impact, and for communicating with key stakeholders (particularly funders). However the agreement already established with the main contractor meant that it was not possible to insist they collect information to inform the third round – i.e. where they spent the money.
Victoria and Albert Museum – "Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership - the V&A in partnership with culturally diverse communities" - Hidden Histories. The project will research historical collections and develop new collections of relevance to the heritage of London's diverse communities.	984,000	No	-	-	The Project Officer responsible for the project was not able to attend the first workshop.
Council for National Parks–"The Mosaic Partnership". The project will identify BME community leaders who wish to be developed into and supported as Community Champions for	635,000	Yes	Yes	No	There was already a large–scale evaluation commissioned for the Mosaic Partnership Project. The appointed consultants did not have the capacity to incorporate the participative elements of the tools into their methodology, and there was insufficient capacity on the ground to

Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot / dropping out)
community activities in the National Parks.					support the individual projects within the mosaic project to undertake use of either the Storyboard or Reflection poster exercises. It was thought that the tools themselves required too much of an individual focus to be useful across such a large project.

					Yorkshire and Humber Pilots
Project	**HLF Grant Award**	**Attended First Workshop**	**Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits**	**Elements of the toolkits used**	**What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot or for dropping out)**
Promenade Promotions – "We Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside!" An action research cultural heritage project that aims to preserve, develop and pass on to new participants the heritage of traditional British seaside entertainment focussing on the seaside Pierrot troupes of the late 19th and early 20th century and the tradition of the seaside concert party.	49,900	No	-	-	Time constraints and limited extra benefit that the tools would bring to the project meant that the project manager was not able to take part in the pilot.
Meadowhall Junior School – "Parish Map Project". Meadowhall Junior School has been working with its local community to research and produce an archive illustrating the experience of going to school in the Kimberworth area between 1880 and 2006. The project focussed on organising a series of school and community-based workshops culminating in a Parish Map to make a lasting visual representation of the memories and information uncovered during the research process. With the HLF portion of the project completed and the archive installed, the emphasis has shifted to involve the wider community, creating the space for various family learning activities.	18,200	Yes	Yes	Storyboard Exercises with project team, parents and a small group of young people; and Reflection Poster with Steering Group	The project team, lead by the project manager, undertook to use two elements of the Prove It! Toolkit: two Storyboards and a Reflection Poster exercise. The Storyboard exercises were carried out with an adult group (including parents of some of the children taking part), and an adapted version with the children themselves from the school. Both Storyboard exercises were difficult to manage in the short time available, but with the school children it identified some useful learning for the delivery of the project – particularly for understanding how the children perceived what the project was about. The Reflection Poster exercise took place at the end of the project with a diverse group of the project's stakeholders made up of members of the project's steering group, including teachers, Project Officers and parents of the children who had been involved. It provided a useful lens for looking at the effect the project had had on a personal level for those people involved. In terms of impact it highlighted some important insights into increases in confidence and attitude of steering group members that would have otherwise either gone unnoticed, or at best unrecorded. Alongside this HLF required more formal evaluation of outputs that included photographic evidence, numbers of participants and beneficiaries, milestones, and a section on what the project manager herself had learnt about project management.
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund – "Learning through Limestone". The aim of the project was to encourage people who do not normally make use of the countryside (either because of physical barriers, or cultural norms) to explore	292,500	Yes	Yes	Storyboard with project team; Reflection Poster with project participants	The approaches appeared to suit the way the project team managed this project from the start. The Storyboard exercise that the project team undertook at the start of the pilot helped identify important learning in terms of how to manage the activities and measure their effect.

Yorkshire and Humber Pilots					
Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot or for dropping out)
and benefit from experiencing the rich natural heritage of the Yorkshire Dales. As well as working with community groups representing a range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds, the Project Officers also worked with groups of urban based young people in an effort to enrich their view of the world, and provide a challenge to the sometimes stifling urban culture in which they had grown up. Another aim of the project was to bring together groups of people who may not normally have done things together and thereby begin to remove the barriers that may exists between different age or cultural groups.					The officers responsible for the two strands of the project (one with schools, the other with community groups) undertook their own ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Instead of using or adapting the social capital questionnaires provided in the Prove it! toolkit, Project Officers used debriefing sessions and encouraged participants to complete "Chuff Charts" tracking each of their responses to particular activities and events. Combining these gave a very real sense of the overall success of an activity, providing vital information for improving upon it in the future. This was supplemented by a Reflection Poster exercise with a selection of the community groups' participants drawn from the various community groups who had taken part in the project. Overall the event was very inspiring; as peoples' stories came out it allowed the Project Officers to see the real value that their endeavours had brought about.
Age Concern Calderdale – "Voices From the Past - A Hidden History of Halifax". The project involved organising reminiscence activities in day care centres, sheltered housing and community settings in the Halifax area. It brought together people from different communities normally separated by differences in culture, age group or socio-economic background in order to contribute to building an oral archive of the local history. This was then presented at different venues in the region.	50,000	Yes	Yes	Storyboard Exercise with project team; Some questionnaires were completed in the course of collecting informal feedback from participants. Reflection Poster exercise with project team	The Storyboard was used by the project team to identify the key areas where they would be looking for change as a result of the project. The exercise provided a useful opportunity for bringing people together, and was particularly helpful for assessing the potential barriers that might prevent the project from achieving its objectives. As well as a completed Storyboard, the exercise also provided the team with information for developing a simple exit questionnaire for people who visited the final exhibition. This was completed by a small number of participants who had experienced the project and provided some additional anecdotal evidence of expected changes taking place – particularly in terms of participants' shift in attitudes. At the end of the project the team planned to hold a meeting of a similar size to the initial Storyboard exercise in order to run the Project Reflection workshop, but it was difficult to get people together again, and so the core team of three spent a few hours working through the process for themselves, looking at the project from a management perspective. This proved to be a very helpful exercise for the team, as it provided an opportunity to capture "*those things that you have in your mind at the end of a project but never acknowledge*". (Age Concern Project Manager) The highs and lows identified useful learning,

					Yorkshire and Humber Pilots
Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot or for dropping out)
					particularly where there had been successes, as the team's experience of projects in the past often focussed on what had gone wrong, even when a great deal had gone well. The exercise provided a "graph" of how the project had progressed.
Ryedale Folk Museum – "Development Project" Creation of a new gallery for the exhibition of collections in reserve and visiting exhibitions, new educational facilities, storage and workshop space.	418,500	No	Yes	No	The Project Officer was unable to attend the initial workshop, although expressing an interest in the approaches advocated was not able to find the time to follow this through.
Bradford Metropolitan District Council – "Connect: People, Place & Imagination - Bradford Museums, Galleries & Heritage Collections" Connect involves the revisioning and redevelopment of the Permanent Galleries of Cartwright Hall on the basis of common themes and a shared heritage rather than categorisation by culture, chronology and medium. The grant included provision for capital and revenue expenditure for maintenance of the existing collection, and activities associated with the Audience and Learning Development Programmes.	1,022,000	Yes	No	-	There was already a rigorous programme of evaluation in place that involved a high degree of stakeholder engagement. It was decided that Prove It! would not have added significant value to the existing evaluation methodology.
North Yorkshire County Council –"North Yorkshire's Archives Revealed". The project makes more widely available the holdings of the North Yorkshire County Council by mounting accurate and comprehensive collection-level descriptions on the internet. The grant funded the employment of a Project Archivist for 16 months to set up the data base and and deliver an awareness programme. It also paid for web access software, computer and office equipment, and publicity materials.	48,800	Yes	Yes	Storyboard Exercise, Questionnaires and a Reflection Poster Exercise was undertaken with staff members.	It was evident from the outset that while the impact of this project on members of the public and potential users of archives would be monitored as a matter of course, what would not be assessed through normal statistical analysis would be the effect the project had on members of staff. The Project Officer used the methodology to assess the impact of the creation of an internal database (for staff use) and an online catalogue (for public use) on the skills, confidence and daily activities of members of staff. *The Storyboard exercise was carried out in a staff meeting [...] with all fourteen members of staff who work at the Record Office. Overall, the exercise [was] a very useful one. It encouraged staff to think about all*

	Yorkshire and Humber Pilots				
Project	HLF Grant Award	Attended First Workshop	Expressed intention to use part or all of the toolkits	Elements of the toolkits used	What happened next and why (Reason for continuing in the pilot or for dropping out)
					of the possible effects this project [would] have on them. The meeting itself proved to be a great way for the people who work at the Record Office to voice their opinions and concerns about the project and to suggest ways round the barriers *The questionnaire [was] designed around the results of the Storyboard exercise and [was] intended to measure the direct impact of the project on members of staff. A total of twelve people participated in the questionnaire survey.* *Finally eight representative members of staff took part in the Poster Evaluation session which was used to reflect on the lessons learned throughout the project.*[vii] A report was produced based on findings from the Storyboard, Questionnaire and Reflection exercises undertaken.
Natural England (previously English Nature) – "Coversands Heathland" – Working with local partners across statutory boundaries (including local authorities) to develop and deliver practical site management and interpretation activities promoting the restoration of the heathland habitat.	366,000	Yes	Yes (LM3)	Used the process to look as far as the second round (LM2).	The Project Officer started to use the tool, and went as far as preparing the questionnaires for investigating the third round of spending. However, there was a difficulty defining the local area to be covered, and time constraints preventing effective administration of the surveys. The value of the tool was acknowledged, and the officer plans to make use of the method in 2007.
Sheffield Museum –"Upper Don Furnace Trail" The aim is to increase access to and awareness of the industrial and natural heritage of the Upper Don for the benefit of, in the first instance, the local community, but also the wider population and visitors to Sheffield. The grant supported the key appointment of a development worker to build the relationships with the local community over the two year period.	50,000	No	-	-	The costs of taking part in the pilot outweighed the benefits in terms of contributing to the project's objectives.

Of the total 14 projects who expressed an intention to use the tools, the 6 that dropped out stated their reasons as a combination of either time constraint or the fact that the pilot's activity had come too late for them in the project cycle. It was made clear from the start that use of the tools was not compulsory, and it was up to each project manager to decide which impacts were most appropriate to focus on, and therefore which tool would be most useful to tell their project's story. It is interesting that across all the projects who took part only two decided that the local economy was an important enough area of impact to focus measurement, whereas for all the others the projects' effects on the various local economies was considered less significant than its potential effects on people.

Undoubtedly time constraints are an issue for busy project managers operating in a culture of delivery and accountability for outputs, and the experience of this pilot demonstrates a wider issue about the perceived value of evaluation. The instinct is to focus all energies on doing and completing, which naturally results in evaluation being the first thing to fall by the wayside when the going gets tough. Where evaluation is viewed as a necessary, indeed a vital part of the delivery, only then is there a chance for the additional benefits to be manifest. However, it is clearly difficult at the outset to make a sufficiently good case for extra measurement.

A comparison between projects that continued and projects that dropped out suggests another interesting point about the nature of the suitability of the approach to evaluation advocated by Prove It! and LM3. Broadly Prove It! and to an extent the 'Plugging the Leaks' conversation that accompanies the LM3 tool are participative in their nature. They are about groups of stakeholders engaging with an evaluation process as much for a learning exercise for themselves as a proving exercise for outsiders. For those projects where the nature of the deliverable is a building or for example an exhibition – essentially something *for beneficiaries* (such as with Promenade Promotions, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture and the London International Festival of Theatre*)* then often impact evaluation means gathering formal feedback from people who have undergone the experience, and this was already being done using exit questionnaires or other formal feedback mechanisms. However, where a project's deliverable involved activities *with beneficiaries,* then naturally the Project Officers and the participants are already involved together on a much more intimate basis, therefore it is easier with these projects to embed the stakeholder-based approach in the management of the project itself. The difference between those projects that pursued the pilot and those that dropped out at the initial stage broadly reflects that distinction.

However Prove It! and LM3 are designed to be flexible enough to be used with both types of projects, but both need to be incorporated at the very early planning stages of the project to have a meaningful effect on its delivery and understanding of impact. Particularly in the case of Prove It! if that early stage has already passed then it is harder to justify going over planning ground already covered. The example that helps prove this rule is Meadowhall

Junior School, who's Project Manager pursued the Storyboard exercise finding that it did not add a great deal to an already comprehensive planning and visioning process that had been undertaken with the HLF Grants Officer at the pre-application stage.

Table 3: Distribution of support and evaluation time spent by and with each project

Project	Paid Project Officer days	Unpaid Stakeholder days	nef workshop days per project	nef support and follow-up days per project
Museum of Croydon	1.5	2	0.5 (one workshop)	1
Crystal Palace Supporters Club	3	7	0.5 (one workshop)	2.5
Museum of Childhood	2 (estimated)	-	0.5 (one workshop)	1
Meadowhall Junior School	3	2.5	0.5 (one workshop)	2.5
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund	5	7	1 (two workshops)	3
Age Concern Calderdale	5	5	1 (two workshops)	3
North Yorkshire County Council	7 (estimated)[viii]	5	0.5 (one workshop)	2.5
Natural England	2 (estimated)	-	0.5 (one workshop)	1.5
Totals	**28.5 days**	**28.5 days**	**5 days**	**17 days**

Table 3 shows that of the 8 projects that stayed with the pilot throughout it is possible that their continued involvement was due at least partly to the high level of mentoring support offered by **nef**. Across the 8 projects **nef** delivered 21 days of additional support, averaging at about 2.6 (between 1.5 and 4) days per project. This included the delivery of the initial seminar, which although was attended by more than one Project Officer we have counted separately for each project in order to present a 'maximum days' scenario. If a similar model of support was developed in the future, then the actual support time could be used more efficiently by ensuring that a number of projects attend a single half-day seminar.

From the point of view of the projects themselves, subsequent conversations with Project Officers indicate that altogether the 8 projects contributed approximately a further 28.5 of their paid days towards additional evaluation activity (attending seminars, managing and following up stakeholder workshops) and that selected stakeholders together also contributed the equivalent of around 28.5 days of unpaid, or volunteer time to take part in the participative

evaluation exercises. These average at about 3.5 days per project, although they range from 7 stakeholder equivalent days for those who ran larger community workshops, to one of the two projects exploring the use of LM3 which had no significant involvement by stakeholders.

Overall it is clear that the tools do represent an increase in time needed for both delivery and support, although during subsequent feedback 5 of the project managers expressed that most of it had been time well spent.

4.2 What they found: lessons from the experience of the pilots
The combined experience of the eight projects that followed through with the pilot activities and used one or more of the tools provides an insight into the ways different Project Officers approach evaluation, as well as interesting information on how a more general view of impact can be assessed across a range of fundamentally different projects.

Each of the eight approached the tools in a different way, some immediately embracing the concepts into the way their project was managed, while others struggled to find the additional time and resources that were needed to get the greatest benefit. The following points emerge as common across the range of the projects that took part.

Different methods are needed to understand different types of outcomes
It was important for Project Officers to be clear which elements of a project's impact it was most feasible to focus on with the available resources for evaluation. A project's impact can manifest in several areas and amongst many different groups of stakeholders. The Reflection Poster exercises that project offices undertook were demonstrated to be the most universally accepted and easiest to justify in terms of the time spent, followed by the Storyboard exercise, although this was only carried out with people closely involved with the project's delivery, rather than with wider groups of beneficiaries.

Only two projects had identified economic impact as an important effect of their activity, and therefore LM3 as useful for identifying that impact. Both of these projects were focussing on large and very visible physical outputs – either in terms of geographical scale – the Coversands Heathland Restoration by Natural England, or size of investment -the Museum of Childhood refurbishment in Bethnal Green. Although attempts were made to pursue the LM3 approach with these projects, the issues of scale of area for the Heathland area (and therefore complexity of the different levels of impact), and the fact that collection of data would have required a re-working of an existing agreement wit the main contractor for the museum meant that only a cursory use of the approach was possible. However, both Project Officers reflected that the process had made them think seriously about the impact their activities were having, which would have implications for future work.

Two projects pursued the use of questionnaires. It was clear that these needed to be used with judgement, and possibly with extra support for developing robust questions and data collection methodology. The Prove It! Toolkit provides some guidance for this which is expanded into a section in **nef**'s publication *"Proving and Improving: a quality and Impact toolkit for social enterprise"*.

For Age Concern Calderdale the questionnaire was seen to be particularly useful for providing evidence of the changes in attitude that had been anticipated in the Storyboard. The questionnaire itself was administered informally, and the questions were developed by the project team who only had limited experience of designing questions. However, although the use of the methodology was not robust it provided a helpful triangulation of the observations of changes in attitude that had been noticed at the participants' events.

Identifying impact below the radar
It was clear from what projects were discovering in their evaluations that impact often happens on the level of the individual participant. For some of the projects in this study the individual stories of this nature would not have been formally captured in any other way.

At the Meadowhall Junior School the Reflection Poster Exercise with a group of stakeholders undertaken alongside other evidence collection provided a useful lens for looking at the effect the project had had on a personal level for other people involved. In terms of impact it highlighted some important insights that would have otherwise either gone unnoticed, or at best unrecorded.

For example, one of the parents noted that being asked to join the steering group in the first place had represented a change in her own life. Realising that she had skills to offer and a valuable role to play had increased her own confidence to take part, which was subsequently demonstrated by her increased involvement in other school activities. Other parents asserted that the project itself had changed their view of the school, moving from a position where they were nervous about whether the school was providing an adequate experience for their children to appreciating fully the many benefits that the school was offering.

These personal insights ran as a parallel story to the main narrative about what the HLF-funded research and archive activity produced. They are important as they represent the kind of lasting impact of a project that often only appears below the radar.

Likewise the findings from the Reflection Poster workshop for the Crystal Palace Supporters' Club reflected a personal take on the impact the project had had on the volunteers, as well as identifying some of their observations of the changes that had taken place for a wider

community of beneficiaries. Overall the volunteer interviewers felt that they had developed their skills and raised their confidence. In particular the self esteem of those older volunteers who spoke, what they called, 'non-standard English' with a strong local accent. Their comments caused the project manager to observe that:

We have been able to get over the diffidence of many non-standard English speakers who thought 'nobody will be interested in my experiences' or were so self-conscious about their accents that they did not want to have their voices on tape.

[Crystal Palace Supporters' Project Manager]

Comparing different perspectives
The projects that made opportunities to bring stakeholders together noted the benefit that the exercises had for shedding new light on a project through combining different perspectives. Whether in preparation for a project or on reflection it brought a more comprehensive account of the areas of learning and impact.

For example with Age Concern Calderdale the initial Storyboard exercise identified that success of the project meant that people who experienced the final exhibition would demonstrate a more understanding attitude towards people from different backgrounds. This helped shape the questions for the exit questionnaire, and also added weight to observations at a community event where the exhibition was presented where it was noticed that people mixed up after the event when before they had kept to their own groups.

Also at the Meadowhall Junior School the timeline used at the Reflection Poster workshop with the steering group provided a good starting point for visualising the progress of the project – just how far the group had come, particularly celebrating the achievement of having stayed together. In terms of learning, the distribution along the timeline of high points and low points for each of the participants highlighted how the steering group had successfully managed a tricky situation where a project partner had turned out to be unsuitable for a role and subsequently replaced.

Celebrating success
Knowing that the work of Project Officers has brought about change and that being able to see and be acknowledged for the impact that they have had helps build a project team's confidence and cement relationships and ownership amongst project participants.

With the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund "Learning through Limestone" project some of the young people taking part had approached the project activities with mis-trust and scepticism.

However as the contact developed with these groups it became clear that they were undergoing a significant change in attitude towards the outdoors as the enthusiasm of the project workers was beginning to rub off. Seeing this change happening, and being able to track it as it happened using 'chuff charts'[ix] for ongoing monitoring and evaluation was vital for planning and delivering the next event, as well as confirming to the workers that the approach they were using was the right one. The Poster Reflection workshop that the Project Officers ran at the end of the project turned into a celebration event that consolidated the trust and understanding amongst and between the groups that had taken part in the project.

Likewise for the Crystal Palace Supports' Club the reflection workshop participants felt the project had provided a significant encouragement to the managers of the Football Club by spurring them to action where they had been initially slow in responding to the opportunities the local centenary celebrations had presented. The Football Club had eventually commissioned a mural from a local artist, produced and distributed an educational CD and gained sponsorship from Nestle in order to mount a highly successful exhibition at the Clocktower museum in Croydon. Knowing that their work had contributed to this happening provided a great boost to morale to the supporters for further activity.

Timing and time spent
It was clear that for some projects the Storyboard process would have been more appropriate at an earlier stage in the development of the project, as by the time the pilot began much of the discussions had already been had about how the project was designed to bring about change.

An example of this was with the Meadowhall Junior School. Because of the high level of support that the Project Manager had received from the Grants Officer at HLF at the pre-application stage (including two separate meetings), the Storyboard exercise seemed like a repetition of the planning and visioning work that had already been undertaken. However, doing the exercise provided some useful insights into how the different groups, particularly the children, viewed the project and their role in it. This encouraged the project manager to think differently about how they would involve them in subsequent activity, and so in that respect at least was a timely intervention. Overall, participating in this pilot project helped the project manager think differently about evidence collection beyond the usual tick-box counting of outputs that they were already having to do.

Undertaking additional stakeholder activities for gathering date (both for visioning, planning and reflection) does incur extra management work for a Project Officer. However, for some this additional time could be justified as being part of the management of the project and was

not necessarily viewed as a burden where it was able to contribute to the project's aims being achieved.

Realistically, the level of input contributed by the HLF officer for Meadowhall Junior School can not be administered to all projects, however, the principle that warranted the decision to do so in this case could be upheld by offering a range of do-it-yourself approaches in the manner of a Storyboard and impact mapping exercise that can go some way towards achieving the same ends.

The assessment of the Reflection Poster process for the Crystal Palace Supports' Club was that it was a useful exercise that would not have taken place if it hadn't been for the project's involvement in this pilot, particularly as it required a significant amount of extra volunteer time (13 volunteers attending the half-day session – approximately 50 hours), in addition to the 20 hours over the 18 months that the project manager himself had contributed in meetings and in conversations with **nef**.

In terms of extra time spent by the project team at Age Concern Calderdale using the tools and participating in the pilot represented an additional 10 days of project time for people involved in the project – of which 4 days were contributed by volunteers and staff in a Storyboard exercise. The breakdown of this time spent was a follows:
- Half day each for the 10 participants in the Storyboard exercise (5 days),
- The equivalent of 2 days spent undertaking and writing up the Poster Reflection workshop.
- In addition to this, 3 days were spent by the project manager and core team attending the evaluation seminars with **nef** and HLF in Leeds.

The meetings with **nef** and HLF were identified as having been particularly useful for the project team in terms of meeting other HLF funded Project Officers, and for learning about how other people had approached their projects.

Overall, although to be recommended as part of good evaluation practice, it was noted that there was a danger that if the approaches become a formal requirement, they might be done grudgingly and therefore badly, and so it was important to maintain them as an offered suggestion for evaluation, rather than a mandatory stipulation as part of a funding agreement.

Changing the way projects view evaluation
Once furnished with the tools and the principles of evaluation that they advocate the Project Officers who saw through their use claimed to be assimilating them into their day-to-day practice – especially in terms of preparing future applications.

For the team at the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust the Project Officers gained a whole new way of looking at measurement of the impact of a project. This involved them adopting a more formal use of reflective practice, not only as a way to improve subsequent activities, but also as a way to identify the changes that had taken place for the participants.

Likewise as result of taking part in this pilot the project team at Age Concern Calderdale plan to run similar evaluation exercises for the next HLF-funded project (a similar idea of collecting oral history from local residents), and so overall this exploration of a new way of measuring has changed the way the team approach evaluation of impact.

Both Project Officers who experimented with LM3 described how the tools had highlighted a whole new area that was not only useful for making the effects of what they were doing visible, but which provided a range of issues that would be helpful for engaging a wider range of stakeholders. This was particularly the case for the Museum of Childhood, for whom LM3 would be a way to identify how it was contributing to some of the local government objectives by contributing to the local economy, and thereby opening up scope for a closer relationship and potential for additional support.

5. Conclusions

In this section:

- 5.1 Are LM3 and Prove It useful evaluation tools for a range of different types of heritage project?

- 5.2 How far is it possible to involve HLF development staff and grant officers in the purposes and process of social and economic monitoring and evaluation?

- 5.3 What was the feedback on the experience of the different applicants having taken part in the pilot and used the tools?

5.1 Are LM3 and Prove It useful evaluation tools for a range of different types of heritage project?

Types of projects for which these approaches were suitable
In section 4.1 above we explored some of the reasons why some projects maintained their involvement in the pilot and their suitability for using the approaches. It is clear that there are some criteria that need to be in place for a project to gain the maximum value from engaging with these tools.

From the experience of projects in this pilot Prove It! is suitable for projects:
- Where a project involves the delivery of activities *done with* beneficiaries / people / a community
- If a project involves the delivery of activities or outputs *done for* beneficiaries (E.g. a building, or an exhibition) *only* where there is an opportunity at the project's inception to use a Storyboard with a sample of stakeholders to identify what success looks like to them or the outcomes the project is likely to have
- Where it is anticipated that a project will have an impact at several different levels (E.g. On the attitudes or confidence of individuals, the capacity of groups, people's quality of life or the physical environment).

Because Prove it! is looking at Impact often on the level of individuals, then it is less suitable for a project that covers a wide area or incorporates a large number of individual project activities. Although each individual element would benefit from using the tool, it would be less

useful for aggregating many disparate elements, unless there is the capacity to support and coordinate each individual project's evaluation activity.

The LM3 tool can be used for any size of project, but is most useful where there is a significant level of spending on a large capital work or deliverable. In addition it can be useful:

- If it is incorporated into the framework of a project at the start so that relevant information on, for example, contractors' spending can be collected throughout.
- Where there is the possibility of using it as a mechanism for involving other local organisations in the measurement of local money flows in order to have a greater impact on the local economy, to the benefit of a range of partners and stakeholders.
- Where an organisation needs to be able to demonstrate how it contributes to local authority objectives in a way that would assist in accessing more funding from them in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Where a project has an anticipated impact on a single local economy. It is much harder to asses the impact if a project is potentially having an effect on many different economies.

Incentives for measuring

Effective use of a tool depends not only on the availability of resources, but often comes down to the level of commitment by the project team to the evaluation process itself. It is more likely to happen if it is clearly defined in a project manager's job description at the start of the project. One of the lessons coming from those projects that failed to complete the pilot is that for evaluation to be helpful for a project rather than seen as a hindrance it needs to be fundamental to how the funded activity of the project itself is shaped. This means that Project Officers need to have strong incentives and identified resources to take up tools and approaches that require time and effort to be diverted from the more visible project activity.

Likewise for those project managers less familiar with or less confident undertaking an outcome-focussed evaluation, a significant level of support and encouragement is needed from a mentor or expert, whether or not this is an officer at HLF. This is about structuring an ongoing relationship in order to build the capacity of project managers so that they can:

- Understand what evaluative activity is necessary
- Be able to carry out the evaluative activity
- Remember to follow it up

The evaluation needs to be meaningful in helping the project manager to make decisions or perhaps even use with other funders or in PR.

Conditions necessary for taking up participative evaluation tools

The evidence from four of the participants shows that the use of the participative elements of the tools was able to add value to the project (these were Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund, Crystal Palace Supporters' Club, the Museum of Croydon and the North Yorkshire County Record Office):

- o Where stakeholder engagement was already an important part of the project's activity,
- o Where it was necessary to build and sustain a good relationship with those stakeholders
- o Where an important desired outcome of the project was its effect on people (beneficiaries or staff)
- o Where project managers were aware of existing complementary approaches to measuring outcomes, and engaging stakeholders.
- o Where there is an evaluation champion who is prepared to follow through its use for choosing indicators and shaping the project's delivery
- o Where the processes are introduced early enough in the project cycle to be useful in the shaping of delivery and subsequent evaluation activity.

Use of questionnaires

Project managers need to be clear at the start of a project's evaluation where there is need to be subjective and where to be objective; measurement can be a way to improve as well as to prove. Only two projects (Age Concern Calderdale and Yorkshire Archives Revealed) experimented with the prepared questionnaire templates provided in the Prove It! Toolkit. They were used informally either amongst staff, or with only a small and non-representative sample of stakeholders. The findings from these exercises provided useful triangulation for findings from other sources of data collection (including the reflection poster exercise) but were not adapted robustly enough and delivered in a way that provided objective evidence of outcome.

Formal data collection using random sampling surveys are difficult to deliver robustly and are unlikely to be undertaken with the time and resources that are usually available to these types of projects. However, the value of the findings from these exercises in terms of indications of change should not be underestimated.

It is clear that often project participants are the ones best placed to identify what questions should be asked, and so their involvement in the questionnaire development process is important. When developing questionnaires guidance on how to involve stakeholders in choosing appropriate ways of knowing is necessary in order to decide which questions to ask and how to ask them. To address this Prove It! provides the Storyboard exercise and the template and instructions for how to develop, test and use certain types of questions.

However, unless the template supplied in the toolkit can be used without too much adaptation then a Project Officer will need a developed level of knowledge on how to design and deliver a questionnaire for it to be an effective objective proving tool for an outside audience.

5.2 How far is it possible to involve HLF staff in the purposes and process of social and economic monitoring and evaluation?

A large number of projects did not follow through with the pilot from the initial seminars and a large amount of mentoring and support was delivered by **nef** to maintain the 8 projects that did. [x] When considering the extent to which HLF officers can be involved more in the evaluation processes represented by Prove It! and LM3, there are therefore two issues to consider. Firstly the extra time that it would be necessary to contribute to each project's development, and secondly the amount of additional training that the officers might need in order to maintain an adequate level of support throughout the lifetime of the project itself.

For this pilot the Grants Officers' involvement was difficult to maintain. Overall the 7 Grants Officers in London and the 4 in Yorkshire contributed a total of 240 hours of time in choosing and notifying projects for the pilot study and the attendance and follow-up for the individual Project Officers; this equates to approximately 3 days each. Busy schedules and differing priorities often meant that attendance at the follow-up workshops with projects, or a continued contact with individual project managers was limited to the existing monitoring and evaluation requirements of HLF. This raises questions about the extent to which these officers would be able to offer the additional mentoring and support (as was required of **nef** in this pilot) throughout the length of a project. Likewise it is probable that the real value that the HLF Officers can bring to the evaluation is at the pre-application stage when a project plan is being developed with the project manager which is when the evaluation framework for the project should properly be mapped out.

Meadowhall Junior School's project demonstrates an example of a project that had a high level of input from HLF at the pre-application stage of the project to the extent that the Storyboard exercises felt like a repeat of the 'excellent' preparation and visioning work already undertaken by the project manager in conjunction with her Grants Officer in Leeds. This example implies that the second point about training is less likely to be an issue, as the principles of good project management and planning should come with the territory of an effective Grants Officer. All it should take is that the tools are available and familiar to the officers, so that they can pick and choose from the elements of the various approaches and recommend them to potential awardees as they see fit.

Following the initial workshops a questionnaire was completed by attendees reflecting on the practicalities and appropriateness of the tools.. In principle the Grants Officers broadly agreed with the Project Officers that the tools were complementary to existing ways of measuring and managing projects, and could be useful advocacy tools, particularly for telling the project's story to other partners. In particular it was noted that LM3 would enable Project Officers to "strengthen their arguments for funding from local sources." At the end of the project Grants Officers were again contacted to find out what impressions they had gained from the projects using these tools. Given their current approach to grant assessment and workloads they were sceptical about how realistic it would be to implement these tools. Although they were supportive of the approaches advocated, they did not feel they could incorporate them usefully as part of their ongoing work unless the processes were embedded into standard procedures and agreed at the outset of funding a project.

5.3 What was the feedback on the experience of the different applicants having taken part in the pilot and used the tools?

The first section of this report expressed the theory behind why HLF was considering a different approach to evaluation of its projects. This study engaged with a range of project managers in order to see whether this different approach would add value to their projects and contribute to a better understanding of the changes they were designed to bring about.

The intention was to bring about the following potential benefits*:*

a) That it would help applicants think more fully about the social and economic benefits their projects might have – or about what greater impact they could have.

b) Theory suggests that projects that formalise monitoring and evaluation stand a better chance of delivering success i.e. evaluation should be formative

c) It would help HLF develop its regeneration role, from being a project 'banker' to a genuine project 'partner'.

d) It would provide better evidence for both grant recipients and HLF to show what is achieved with the funding. Although this might include quantitative evidence or hard data, this evidence should ensure that the story of a project is captured and recorded as it unfolds.

a. Project applicants think more fully about the social and economic impact their projects might have

Basing evaluation exercises on real experience is vital, particularly allowing for stories to be told, and then by identifying what the stories themselves are saying, individually or as a whole. Good stories are fun to tell, and can be explored for what contributes to good practice,

but at the same time the stories of where things have not gone so well are key for learning. All are important to get a sense of the extent to which a particular outcome has been achieved.

The five project managers out of the final eight in the pilot who made use of the Poster Reflection workshop found that the exercise yielded good stories identifying unexpected points of impact, useful points of learning or endorsements of other evidence that had been collected from elsewhere. Both the Meadowhall Junior School Steering Committee and the project team at Age Concern Calderdale were able to reflect usefully on what they had learnt from some difficult staffing issues that might otherwise have been dropped from the collective memory. The Crystal Palace Supporters Club was able to acknowledge not only the effect their project had had on the management of the football club, but also celebrate the fact that many of the volunteers who had taken part as interviewers collecting their own stories for the archive had increased their confidence, overcoming perceived barriers that they attributed to the way they spoke English with a heavy accent.

Where Project Officers are taking part in the evaluation exercises alongside participants, the participants may feedback what they think the officers want to hear, rather than be honest about what they really thought for fear of hurting feelings. Because of the rapport that had grown between project participants and some members of the community groups taking part in the project, the team at Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund suspected that this might have been the case with some of the participants at the large community Reflection Workshop they organised at the end of the project. If this is likely to happen then participative evaluation exercises must provide safe space for constructive criticism; the guidelines in the instructions for the tool itself make some suggestions on how to manage this. Likewise it is sometimes difficult obtaining meaningful feedback from certain groups, for example very young children, and so in these instances evaluations may need to focus more on observation of behaviour.

It is important to be able to articulate at the start of a project what sort of changes (outcomes) are expected. This provides a context and a framework in which to present the stories that are gathered at the end of a project thereby giving strength to the evidence that collected stories and observed data provide.

In summary, the discussions stemming from the use of the Storyboard and the Reflection poster:
- Provided a helpful learning framework (both for planning and review) of how a project is managed and delivered,
- Helped Project Officers think more widely and creatively about measurement – particularly how to understand the wider impact of their work,
- Were an aid to identifying meaningful indicators of outcomes and impact.

b. Projects that formalised monitoring and evaluation stand a better chance of delivering success

The practical application of tools

Feedback on the Storyboard exercises form those who undertook them highlighted the following points:

- The exercise provided an opportunity to bring people together and helped them articulate what the desired outcomes and impacts of the project would be and how they would come about. Participants are naturally encouraged to be more analytical.

- The discussion over the barriers to bringing about the project's objectives produced a useful debate on what was really important for the project.

- The exercise also flagged up important things to look at for the data collection.

- The exercise highlighted the importance of embedding evaluation throughout the project – from the pre-proposal stage onwards. For example before and after questions are particular important for capturing changes in people's attitudes - a commonly desired impact of many of these types of projects.

The wider culture of project delivery

As mentioned in the section above, it was much harder for some project managers to engage with the evaluation process beyond the statutory requirements of HLF. This could be for two reasons; firstly participation in the pilot was entirely optional, it was made clear from the start that it would mean extra work, and where other aspects of the project's delivery took precedence evaluation went down the list of priorities.

The second reason is more general and is reference to the wider issue of the culture of project delivery and the view of evaluation within that process. In a world where resources for delivering social goods are scarce (particularly in relation to leisure or learning activities) the people who are in the front line of this sector are necessarily more geared to the delivery of outputs expected of them by the funder, and less able to reflect on and celebrate the achievements that they have brought about.

The experience of the case studies who were able to give the evaluation of the project a more central role found that not only it was a great opportunity to build their own confidence through acknowledging what they had done, but also found that it was naturally part of good project management practice.

Overall for those projects that followed through the use of one or more of the tools, they added value to the work being done in terms of identifying learning for future projects, realising that their endeavours had had an effect, and most importantly facilitated a more effective planning and delivery of the work. Although a difficult one to sell, the experience of these projects help strengthen the case for changing the culture so that the benefits of evaluation (and particularly impact evaluation) are more readily recognised.

c. Developing HLF's regeneration role
Looking at Impact requires a different relationship with projects
It is clear that HLF projects are more than delivering buildings and exhibitions and activities. They, like most funders, are aiming to bring about positive change for people, i.e. to have a lasting impact. In order to measure that impact, make it visible and therefore sustain it, the evaluation methods HLF advocates must strive to involve the stakeholder groups who stand to gain value from the activities, and to understand fully what that value actually means to them. Where a project aims to benefit whole communities, then the involvement of a wide range of stakeholder and participant groups from within those communities is important so as to be able to compare and learn from the different perspectives they offer.

Engaging with these different groups is vital for ensuring ownership and sustainability of a project 's outputs and outcomes. Evidence from this study demonstrates that this must be done in a way that is suitable for the different audiences. To achieve this level of ownership data collection tools need to be simple to use, quick to understand and straightforward to deliver particularly in situations where time or concentration spans are short. Clearly the nature of impact can be diverse as it can be unique, meaning that no one data collection method will suit all situations. Although Prove It! has a well defined framework for undertaking the steps of a thorough impact measurement process, it makes it clear that the methods can be adapted as long as the integrity of the principles are maintained.

HLF can advocate other tools being used to measure impact
In the course of this pilot it was clear that many of the project managers who agreed to take part already embraced, in principle if not wholly in practice, the importance of outcome/impact measurement and the 'looking beyond the numbers' in a project. Prove It! and LM3 represent pieces in a jigsaw of different approaches to measuring impact, and naturally other approaches emerged from project managers' existing experience as being useful for addressing the same issues. Three of the most significant that may be useful for further study, and that could be advocated by HLF as they increase their project mentoring role are outlined below.

Wildlife Trusts Change Evaluation Tool

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2004 the 'Change!' handbook describes an evaluation process that draws on many of the principles of Prove It! and other impact evaluation methodologies. It measures the personal and social benefits of The Wildlife Trusts 'people focused' projects in ways that better reflect the successful outcomes and quality of work that The Wildlife Trusts are achieving

It was developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, volunteers, funders and partner organisations in 12 Wildlife Trusts around the United Kingdom. They identified the need to determine the desired and actual personal and social benefits of taking part in the various trusts' activities.

The tool aims to allow Project Officers to:

- Assess progress and see whether personal and social objectives have been met
- Demonstrate results to funders, managers and colleagues
- Improve the quality of projects

The tool comes in the form of a PDF document that can be downloaded for free[xi], with instructions and worksheets that can be printed out for use by officers and project participants.

Chuff Charts

The provenance of this approach is unclear, although it undoubtedly has its origins in participatory appraisal methods for collecting evaluation data in ways other than asking questions and filling in forms. The idea is simple and intuitive enough to have been thought up simultaneously by different people, and relates closely to the principle and practice of the Reflection Poster Workshop with its 'Highs' and 'Lows'.

The tool simply plots out a graph with time along the 'x' axis and satisfaction along the 'y' axis. A participant whose response is being evaluated after (or during) an activity can draw a graph representing their reaction and feelings towards the exercise throughout the event. Chuff charts from a number of participants can then be collected by the project manager and used to gauge the overall success of an activity (as shown in Figure 1). As well as completing the graph, the participants can be invited to fill in comments along the line to prompt and aid the analysis.
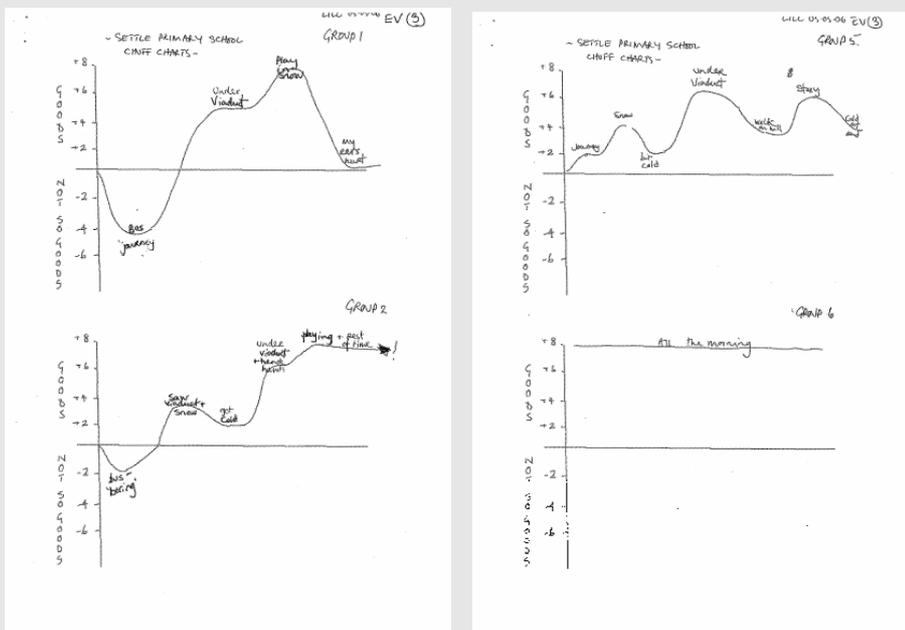

Figure 1: Aggregated Chuff Charts

The tool is particularly appropriate for use with children and young people as it involves minimal writing up, and gives a good graphic representation of individual experience.

During this pilot *chuff charts* were used regularly as part of the ongoing evaluation of the outdoor activities with community groups in the Learning Through Limestone project delivered by the Yorkshire Millennium Fund.

> **Museums Learning Association general Learning Outcomes assessment tool**
>
> One of those "intangible" aspects commonly held to be important for museums and exhibitions is the quality of the learning experience for an individual. In the course of this pilot more than one Project Officer has made the connection between the rationale and approach advocated by *Prove It!* and the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) website "Inspiring Learning for All"[xii] which provides an evaluation framework and detailed methodology for analysing and collating qualitative comments, and identifying in a quantifiable way how they relate to specific "Generic Learning Outcomes" (GLOs).
>
> The government-supported programme helps those practitioners who are designing and delivering services for museums and other learning institutions to analyse participant responses in a way that helps them shape future exhibitions to maximise the potential of the learning experience. The MLA are currently looking at the development of a methodology to carry out self-assessment of what they are calling Generic Social Outcomes.

d. It would provide better evidence for both grant recipients and HLF to show what is achieved with our funding.

A challenge arises for any evaluation process when it attempts to use double-facing indicators; that is to say 'ways of knowing' that when collected are equally useful for a funder looking at a bigger picture, and an individual project wanting to understand the impact it is having at ground level. Although difficult to deliver, it is a challenge that the approaches in this study are attempting to address.

The very nature of the participatory approach to evaluation advocated in this study is that it is less helpful to wade straight in with a bank of indicators that can be picked up by any project and used, and therefore aggregated across a whole programme of work. This is because one of the most important aspects of the approach is that indicators are chosen on a project-by-project basis in order to look at the aspects of a project's impact that matter to each particular group of stakeholders. Just adopting someone else's indicators list misses out the potential for ownership and understanding that a participative approach to choosing indicators can deliver.

However, by allowing a freer approach to choosing what to measure this study did highlight a range of ways of knowing that were common to a number of projects that had close associations with their beneficiaries. Generally where these were measured they were done so qualitatively by recognising and highlighting anecdotal evidence. This means that over

time it should be possible for a leading funding organisation like HLF to build on the experience of individual projects carrying out their own evaluations, by collecting and comparing the measures that they choose so that similar projects can speak not only to their own agendas, but to the agendas of projects elsewhere. If this is coupled with a commitment to shared learning from common experience through bringing Project Officers together, then it gives evaluation a completely different emphasis, and can provide a significant step towards delivering the dual goals of proving and improving.

In this study we were able to demonstrate the potential for this by collecting a range of common indicators that had emerged from discussions using the Storyboard as well as in more general reflections with Project Officers after the projects had been completed. The material represents findings from the experience of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Fund Project team as well as from the team at Age Concern Calderdale. When combined with findings from a review of the evaluation materials (mainly from Storyboards and Evaluation Poster Exercises submitted to **nef** by the Museum of Croydon, the Crystal Palace Supporters' Club, Meadowhall Junior School and the North Yorkshire County Record Office) they contribute to a list of 'ways of knowing' that share common themes whilst at the same time spanning a wide range of potential project experiences. The combined list is as follows:

Immediate outcomes for participants
- Observed enthusiasm demonstrated by the participants – from letters, personal stories and photographs
- Verbal appreciation of the value of the activities and the project staff supporting them
- Transfer of knowledge and skills –
    a. As noticed by Project Officers when seeing participants in new or challenging situations,
    b. Also those acquired by the Project Officers themselves during the course of the project.
- Recognition / remembering things from the last visit – making connections, demonstrating more than just passive acceptance of a situation, but showing a different level of active engagement or empathy.
- Participants bring other people along with them the next time.

And more particularly for museums and exhibitions
- Increased confidence of service users in using public venue and attending workshops and events.
- Service users experience a growing sense of purpose and value.
- Increasing access for all to a range of exhibitions, events and workshops.
- Heightened expectations of their future involvement experienced by staff and service users.

Longer term outcomes for participants and a wider group of people
- Things that happen with their own momentum (E.g. a young person going on to do some specific dry-stone walling training off their own bat as a result of an experience they had on one of the visits.)
- Participating schools doing things differently in relation to their practice or policy
- People come back to the area on their own
- Confidence is seen to be built up amongst people who have been taking part in the project's activities
- People demonstrate a greater understanding / empathy of their neighbour
- Feedback about the psychological and physical benefits of the activities for the participants, either from themselves or their parents, guardians or carers
- Good connections made with the community groups / acceptance amongst the groups taking part of the Project Officers and staff. E.g. shown by an invitation to a group's Christmas lunch.
- Continuity – people want to be involved with us
- Project grows on its own – other agendas are seen to emerge and crystallise.

And particularly for museums and exhibitions:
- A change in service user's perceptions of the museum service and cultural activity
- A change role of service user from 'viewer' to 'participant'
- An increase in the engagement of service providers and users with other local and national organisations and initiatives

Success of the project delivery and management
- Word of mouth – the project story has 'legs' ("I've heard about you"…)
- The project is identified as a flagship or example of best practice (e.g. shown by someone's request for photos)
- Other Project Officers come to us for advice
- A desire to work together again on similar projects
- Request for more activities from people we have not heard about before The project is copied or replicated elsewhere (sincerest form of flattery)
- Increased credibility - as observed by the positive way teachers and leaders of community groups relate and work with the Project Officers.

What this demonstrates is that it is possible to gain a better understanding of the evidence of change by allowing projects to identify their own measures of success on an individual level, whilst providing the groundwork for developing an evaluation framework on a much wider scale.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Whether the introduction of the tools would require any HLF procedures to be changed

Making use of stories of impact

Impact is just as likely to happen below the radar as it is above. Many of the positive outcomes that a project can attribute to its activities are represented and captured by existing HLF post-project evaluation mechanisms. However beyond these, much of a project's sustained impact happens, for example, when an individual who has been affected by a project changes their behaviour or their view of the world.

A systematic way to bring these smaller, but equally significant impacts within the reach of HLF policy-makers, and the projects themselves, requires the funder to advocate and provide some support for the use of tools that highlight these issues. This would bring a rich vein of evidence to the surface that could then be harvested and used to demonstrate impact and identify where small scale activity can have an influence on issues of wider policy.

Identifying where impact happens

An exploration of a project's theory of change encourages thinking about impact. An exercise at the application or even the pre-application stage undertaken by potential grant recipients would both help projects to plan their own monitoring and evaluation more effectively, as well

as provide a better understanding for the Grants Officers as to what the project is aiming to achieve and how.

This can bring a stronger significance to the story and case study evidence that is subsequently collected during a project, or once the activities have been completed at the end. It increases the status of anecdotal evidence, by setting it in a robust framework of what impacts were to be expected, and how they would manifest for the beneficiaries. Thus, even if there are only a handful of stories collected, demonstrating the achievement of a detailed hypothesis can carry more weight than stories collected in isolation and only analysed retrospectively.

When to intervene and how much

It is clear that once a grant has been awarded and a project is underway, it becomes harder for the Grants Officer to maintain more than a basic level of contact with the Project Officer. HLF mechanisms are in place to monitor the project in terms of compliance with the contract and to provide evidence of money spent. Therefore it is at the pre-application stage, or during assessment for 'Stage One' or full application that the project experiences the closest contact with the funding body. [xiii] Were the assessment procedures to change we would recommend that the grant officers be freed up to have more contact with the project, and therefore have a greater involvement in the development of the project plan.

Each regional office has a different degree of contact at this stage depending on workloads and priorities of the officers managing the process. In some cases new or inexperienced project managers can benefit from a great deal of help in the preparation of their bid, and undoubtedly this is seen by both parties as thorough preparation and planning for the way the project will be delivered. Where currently this resource is available to new projects, it would not take a great change in practice to include in the process mentoring or support for some form of evaluation planning (like a Storyboard exercise) involving a small group of a projects' stakeholders (e.g. steering group members and one or two potential beneficiaries) that allows for a comprehensive discussion about impact.

Feeding back the findings from such an exercise or even inviting a representative from the Heritage Lottery Fund along to take part would provide an opportunity to share common aims and objectives between funder and recipient. More importantly the ensuing discussions can help establish not only indicators of outputs achieved, but can also take the project story a stage further so that indicators of impact can also be agreed and appended to the final award contract. These need not be legally binding, but would be intended more as a way of embedding a more meaningful evaluation process at the heart of each project.

It would be difficult for HLF to maintain a high level of contact across all projects, the practicalities of time constraints alone mean that contact with different Project Officers will vary in terms of the nature and amount of support that it is possible to manage. However even an approach taken with only a selection of newly awarded projects would demonstrate a commitment to good evaluation practice, without having to impose rigorous and possibly onerous methods on busy or inexperienced project managers. It could be made clear that findings from impact evaluation need not be sent back to HLF, but that they are recommended rather than mandatory for the projects to carry out for the purposes of their own proving and improving.

Ultimately the degree to which HLF seeks to advocate principles or impose specific practices in relation to evaluation will depend on what its stakeholders require in terms of accountability. As many of the principles of measuring impact represent a shift in culture for the sector **nef** would recommend this *phased approach* to implementation, where at first these principles are advocated and the approaches strongly recommended in the spirit of exploration and learning, and in time as priorities change and more is learnt about how to understand impact, HLF can implement and stipulate for particular projects that they engage with the measurement processes that work best for meeting both their own and the projects' needs.

Not only is HLF in a strong position to influence the wider community's perception and relationship with heritage, but through the way it seeks to tell that story it can influence the way measurement is thought of as a positive tool for change, rather than just an exercise in accountability.

6.2 How much support would be necessary for grant recipients on an ongoing basis and what is realistic to expect busy project managers to undertake?

As the various projects in this pilot were not provided with additional resources to undertake evaluation beyond the usual monitoring that HLF required, their involvement relied heavily on outside input from **nef** and the HLF policy team.

Using the experience of this pilot as a guide, we can make the following assumptions (as described in Table 4) about the amount of additional time that may be necessary to invest in a project that has undertaken to incorporate elements of the Prove It! and Plugging the Leaks / LM3 toolkit into its management processes. The assumption we have made here is that the project will be engaging with up to 50 beneficiaries and stakeholders. All of these additional activities can be justified as good management practice for any project, and in many cases would not be considered as 'additional'.

Crucially Stages 1 to 3 occur in the time leading up to the award being made – i.e. still at a point when the HLF and the project are undergoing project planning, or negotiating a contract. Stages 4 to 6 run parallel with the delivery of the project itself, whilst Stage 7 represents an opportunity to reflect on learning and the extent to which other findings are telling the real story of what took place. Assuming that it is possible to identify a cluster of projects at a similar early stage of development, then Stages 1-3 would also represent an opportunity to bring together a range of project officers, achieving the dual goal of saving HLF resource in delivering this support, whilst facilitating valuable networking and shared learning exercises amongst their potential or realised awardees. This opportunity to meet others was highlighted as an additional bonus spin-off of having taken part in the pilot study. Even if this is all the additional contact time that HLF has with a Project Officer, it will have been a useful exercise both from the point of view of HLF understanding the potential for impact across a range of projects, and the project itself capitalising on an opportunity to be smarter and more focused in its planning.

Table 4: Estimations on evaluation support time needed

Action	Estimated additional project manager time needed	Estimated additional HLF support time needed
Stage 1: Approach to HLF for award. Mentoring by HLF to help prepare funding application to include: • the background to HLF's approach to impact evaluation • Introduction to some recommended tools for measuring impact • How to run a Storyboard and Impact Mapping exercise with a group of stakeholders	0.5 days	0.5 days
Stage 2: Storyboard and Impact Mapping exercise with stakeholders (plus writing up)	1 day	0.5 days if invited to attend
Stage 3: Feedback Storyboard findings to HLF and use them as the basis for preparing the application. To include a discussion about: • 'Ways of knowing': identifying meaningful impact indicators • How to incorporate impact evaluation into the activity plan for the project	0.5 - 1 days	0.5 - 1 days
Stage 4: Once the award has been confirmed: • Prepare questionnaires for surveying beneficiaries • Incorporate findings from Storyboard discussions into shaping other evaluation opportunities	1 - 2 days	0.5 days
Stage 5: If local economic impact is identified as important to measure, then mentoring from HLF may be needed on:	0.5 days	0.5 days

• how to undertake Plugging the Leaks workshop (if required) • and /or undertake how to undertake an LM3 study (if required)		
Stage 6: Monitoring and impact data collection by the project manager	1 - 5 days	-
Stage 7: Poster Reflection Workshop with stakeholders: • Mentoring support by HLF for preparation • Feeding back findings to HLF from Poster workshop and other impact evaluation (optional)	0.5 days	0.5 days
TOTAL	**5 – 10 days**	**3 - 3.5 days**

6.3 How this support might be provided, when and how much would it cost HLF to get this level of detail and information on a regular basis?

As we have seen impact evaluation is as much about process as it is about content. The diverse and sometimes unique nature of a project's outcomes means that no one method of collecting data will necessarily pick up the full story. For this reason, it is difficult for a funding body to impose any one form of outcome/ impact measurement on a grant recipient.

Likewise, it is much easier to build in the principles and practice of impact evaluation up front in a project rather than trying to retro-fit them at the end, as sufficient or useful information is unlikely to have been collected throughout the delivery stages of the work. Much of **nef**'s work relating to social accounting advocates principles of comprehensive, regular and ongoing data collection as part of good management practice.

There is an argument, congruent with the idea of a gradual shift in the way a funding organisation imposes or advocates impact evaluation (characterised by the phased approach described in 6.1 above) for HLF to encourage good evaluation practice without necessarily needing to have findings collected and fed back centrally from the outset. For the immediate future it would make sense for HLF to continue with centrally-directed evaluations looking at specific issues that currently speak to the bigger picture agendas of their stakeholders (such as Government). Meanwhile, by advocating approaches that look at change on an individual project basis they can draw on this project-level experience when they are able, in order to inform the choice of priorities for the bigger picture evaluations whilst preparing the ground for a time when the emphasis shifts to a culture of detailed impact-orientated evaluation for all.

Therefore **nef** would suggest that in the short term it is less about obtaining a 'level of detail on a regular basis', and more about encouraging and enabling projects (through building capacity) to obtain their own appropriate level of detail for their own use as part of good project management. This implies an implementation of the level of support described at Stages 1 to 3 above as a minimum, leading to more elaborate or focussed support through stages 4 to 7 where a project is addressing a particularly key priority. A stronger case for this can be made to the projects themselves by pointing out that when an organisation or steering body is in charge of its own plans, targets and reporting it can ensure that it is not driven off track by the measurements that funders, lenders, and others might ask of it to ensure their own accountability.[xiv]

To summarise, one way forward would be to make sure that a Project Officer considers evaluation at the outset alongside the activities and deliverables as part of the application process. It could be made clear that as good practice, Project Officers should decide alongside HLF:

a. The type of evaluation needed (objective or subjective) based on what is most important to measure,

b. Whether the evaluation is valuable more as an exercise for proving impact or improving the delivery, or both,

c. The extent to which the evaluation activities will be integrated into delivery, and how they will contribute to achieving the aims of the project,

d. Which meaningful indicators of success should be used in order to identify impact and /or influence the way the project's activities are to be delivered.

As a responsible funding organisation it is important for HLF to be able to provide guidance and support to awardees wishing to carry out evaluation of outcomes and impact. This includes being able to signpost project officers towards a range of tools identified as evaluation options or plain good practice. The experience from this pilot study suggests that the principles of impact measurement must be applied for HLF projects, but that the ways of carrying it out should be left to the grantee to suggest rather than as a standardised funding package. This ties in with the principle that each project must be allowed to negotiate its own priorities and parameters for impact evaluation, as it is those closest to the point of delivery who are best placed to choose not only the best ways of knowing that a project has succeeded, but also the best ways to identify, capture and present that information.

Endnotes

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[i] An objective evaluation is based on fact rather than perception and delivered from an impartial or outside perspective. A subjective evaluation will be influenced by personal beliefs or feelings rather than externally observable facts. Both perspectives can play an important role in helping to identify impact.

[ii] Currently available on the HLF website at www.hlf.org.uk

[iii] See also Sanfilippo et al (2005), Prove and Improve: A quality and impact toolkit for social enterprise, **nef**

[iv] For more on PA visit the websites of the International Institute for Environment and Development at www.iied.org and the Institute for Development Studies (Sussex University) at www.ids.ac.uk

[v] More can be read on Prove It! at http://www.proveandimprove.org/new/tools/proveit.php where in addition copies of the MS Word and Excel files are available to be downloaded.

[vi] For a more in-depth account of how LM3 works, including detailed step-by-step instructions on how to undertake an LM3 study, see the nef publication *The Money Trail: Measuring your impact on the local economy using LM3* which can be downloaded at: http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=128

[vii] Adapted from *North Yorkshire's Archives Revealed: Prove It! Report* October 2006, reproduced in Appendix 8

[viii] The Project Officer produced a full-scale report on the process using the Prove It! methodology reproduced in Appendix 8

[ix] A 'chuff chart' is an example of one of the evaluation tools complementary to the approaches advocated by Prove It! and identified in this pilot as a helpful addition to a Project Officer's participatory evaluation toolkit. The tool is described in more detail in Section 5 below.

[x] When considering the number of projects that did not complete the pilot activity (over half) it is important to remember that it was made clear at the start to Project Officers that taking part in this pilot was optional, and that it should not be allowed to disrupt their delivery of the project itself.

xi See http://www.hlf.org.uk/HLF/Docs/change_handbook.pdf to download the CHANGE! Evaluation tool.

xii See the website at http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/introduction/default.aspx for more details.

xiii HLF offers advice, prior to submitting an application in a variety of ways, known as the pre-application process. Once the decision has been made to put in an application to HLF, the process to be followed is dependent upon the size and complexity of the project. The two-stage process is mandatory for projects asking for a grant of £1 million or more and allows HLF to make a decision earlier in the project-planning process based on less detailed information. Should the project meet HLF's priorities, the project will be given a stage one pass indicating the likely level of support and areas the project needs to develop. Within 12 months the applicant will be expected to re-submit a full application for assessment.

Projects seeking grants of between £50,000 and £1 million may opt for the two-stage process which enables them to also apply for Development Funding, but takes longer to deliver the envisaged progect, or may chose to submit a single full application with detailed information to seek a full award. For further details see p6 of the Heritage Grants application pack Guidance downloadable from www.hlf.org.uk

xiv See www.proveandimprove.org for more details on the benefits of an organisation using evaluation as a tool for management.