Pitt Rivers Museum
&
Oxford University Museum of Natural History
Audiences and Access
Including Everybody
Heritage Lottery Fund Project 2000-2002
Internal Evaluation
March 2003

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Appendices

FORWARD

This report is based on the responses from those involved[1] in the Inclusion Project at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum, to a survey about its success.

The project represented a new approach for the museums and so inevitably there were a number of elements which the respondents now believe could have been improved on. However, despite these feelings, those involved also emphasised the overall success of the project.

This report will focus on those aspects which raised concerns in order to highlight issues which may be of interest to other museums considering similar projects. This should not detract from the successes as itemised in the full report.

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[1] Those surveyed included staff involved in the project and members of the Steering Group which included museum professionals from other organisations

SUMMARY

The "access project" run jointly by the Oxford University Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum started in December 2000 and finished at the end of 2002. Its primary aims were to attract new and excluded groups and for the museums to work more closely together in achieving this.

This evaluation considers perceptions and feelings about the project, its successes and its impact on the museums and staff involved. Staff involved and steering group members were asked to respond to a survey emailed to them in March 2003. They gave detailed and positive feedback about the impact of the project.

Successes worth highlighting are the:

1   New focus on Access and Education within both museums,
2   Outreach/events working with excluded groups such refugees and those with disabilities,
3   New determination to work together again.
4   Family Sundays – joint museum activities held for families,
5   New fixed-term, full-time Education Officer in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Staff should be congratulated for their hard work in making this a successful project. The evaluation also raised some interesting points that can inform future work, here in the university museums at Oxford, and elsewhere.

Concerns worth highlighting
The results of this evaluation highlight the short term funding of such projects. Two years is not long enough to run such a project and certainly does not allow time to involve staff sufficiently in developing aims or in planning the programme properly. **Funding bodies do need to consider changing this short-term approach**.

Linked with this then is the problem of sustainability: it is important with short term funding to plan ahead for what will happen when the funds run out[2]. Where else could funds have been sought? What aspects of the project could continue after the project ended? How could the programme be linked better to what was already being done?

It is also important to look in what ways the museum's policy and practice and staff attitudes changed during the project. The two museum's histories and approaches are very different and thus working on a project together caused a certain amount of tension. This was inevitable and the benefits outweigh the problems that arose. However the data clearly shows that some of the project staff were happier with the process than others. **The responses indicate that there was a greater need to involve project staff at the beginning of the planning process and continue to involve them as the**

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[2] Considerable efforts were made in applying for further funding, some of which may eventuate.

project developed. This would have meant that the project would have become even more deeply embedded within everyday practice.

1.0 <u>Introduction</u>

1.1 Aims of the internal evaluation

"*The aim of this project was to enable new audiences, especially the socially excluded, to access the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museum displays, collections, staff and knowledge and to create opportunities for others to learn from the project[3]".*

An essential part of this project has been the extensive evaluation, which has informed staff of the success of the project. One aspect of the evaluation focused on here, is the evaluation of the working practices within the two museums and how they have changed as a result of the project. An objective was set up for the project in relation to this: "*looking at how the museums as organisations need to change to support this kind of access and audience development work[4]".*

The aim of this component of the evaluation was thus to find out whether this objective was achieved.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation brief provided a list of questions[5] that were to be used when consulting staff in a survey and relate to the structure of this report.
The questions were used to form the basis of an emailed survey, sent to all staff involved in the project (nine members of staff, including three new project staff plus three external profession members of the project's steering committee). Follow up phone calls were used where necessary and informal discussions were also held with a number of steering group members.   All staff consulted responded to the survey.   Two out of the three external steering group members also responded.

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[3] Quoted from Final Report
[4] summary of final report, page 3
[5] Please see survey form for a list of these

APPENDIX 1
Survey

Social Inclusion Project
Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum

Evaluation of involved staff

As part of the overall evaluation we are considering staff views of how the project when. We would appreciate honest feedback from you to the following questions. We will of course keep all information and any quotes anonymous.

1   What, in your view, were the real targets for the project?

_____

_____

2   What did you feel were the achievements of the project?

_____

_____

3   How successful has the project been in reaching the original targets?

_____

_____

4   What could have been done differently to achieve the targets?

_____

_____

5   How far were the posts of Emma, Ann and Andy and the project able to have an effect of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum as a whole?

_____

_____

6   Thinking about the joint museum nature of the project - was it a good idea to structure it in this way? Can you identify any specific benefits or drawbacks from this approach?

_____

_____

7   Which elements of the project do you consider will be sustainable in the future?

_____

_____

8   Have you learnt anything from being a steering group member for this project that other similar groups could benefit from?

_____

_____

9   If you were approached by someone planning a short-term audience development project what advice would you give?

_____

_____

Please make any further comments on the reverse of this form

Thank you for your help.