

# intouch

volunteer programme



*An innovative skills and training programme at  
The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North*

# About us



## The Manchester Museum

As a university museum, The Manchester Museum uses its international collection of human and natural history for enjoyment and inspiration, working with people from all backgrounds to provoke debate and reflection about the past, present and future of the earth and its inhabitants.

The Manchester Museum  
The University of Manchester  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

tel: 0161 275 2634  
email: [museum@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:museum@manchester.ac.uk)  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/museum](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museum)

**MANCHESTER**  
1824

The University of Manchester  
The Manchester Museum



## Imperial War Museum North

Designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to represent a globe shattered by conflict, the multi-award winning Imperial War Museum North reveals how war shapes lives through powerful exhibitions, the Big Picture Show (a 360 degree light and sound show), tours, object handling sessions and family activities all available daily.

Imperial War Museum North  
The Quays  
Trafford Wharf Road  
Trafford Park  
Manchester  
M17 1TZ

tel: 0161 836 4000  
email: [iwmnorth@iwm.org.uk](mailto:iwmnorth@iwm.org.uk)  
[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



## Heritage Lottery Fund

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage through innovative investment in projects with a lasting impact on people and places. HLF has supported more than 28,800 projects allocating £4.3billion across the UK.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is administered by the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) which was given the responsibility for distributing a share of money raised through the National Lottery for Good Causes, to heritage across the UK, in 1994. The HLF are a non-departmental public body accountable to Parliament via the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Heritage Lottery Fund, 7 Holbein Place, London, SW1W 8NR  
tel: 020 7591 6000 email: [enquire@hlf.org.uk](mailto:enquire@hlf.org.uk) [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)



LOTTERY FUNDED



# Welcome

*The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North have a long and well established tradition of working with volunteers. Both museums are committed to lifelong learning, community engagement and working with local people in innovative ways.*

The In Touch volunteer and training programme was one of the first of its kind in the museum sector. In 2007 The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North formed a partnership to launch the In Touch programme, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund for three years. The programme has helped over 180 individuals from a variety of backgrounds in Greater Manchester access heritage, re-engage with learning and develop key transferable skills for future employment.

The specific aims of the programme were to:

- Engage people who are socially, culturally and economically excluded
- Diversify the museum volunteer workforce
- Offer accredited training opportunities
- Help individuals develop transferable skills towards future employability, education or voluntary work
- Increase the availability of collections by direct access
- Establish a national blueprint for museum volunteer training and community involvement which could be rolled out regionally and nationally to the heritage sector.

The core of In Touch was a 10 week Cultural Heritage Course with embedded literacy skills, training in a variety of museum roles and a relevant, informal and enjoyable learning experience. On completion of the programme individuals are able to play an active volunteer role in the delivery of both museums' visitor provision.

Each volunteer has a story to tell and unique reasons for joining the programme. It is each individual's journey, from the initial recruitment stage to completion of the training programme and beyond, that provides inspiration and has been fundamental to the success of the project.

“ Both The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North recognise that volunteers provide an essential part of their service, bringing fresh enthusiasm and motivation to a variety of roles and projects. Volunteering offers a unique way for both museums to diversify their workforce, contribute to government agendas, such as life long learning and active citizenship, whilst also strengthening links with local communities.

Dr Nick Merriman  
Director, The Manchester Museum



## Headline achievements

*The In Touch volunteer programme has won a number of awards and attracted interest from organisations locally, nationally and across Europe. The key objectives have been successfully achieved: diversifying the museum workforce; allowing increased access to collections; helping individuals step back into employment and re-engage with learning.*



### Awards

Winner in the Heritage Groups category in the Nationwide Community and Heritage Award, 2008

Finalist in the Connecting to Communities category in the Greater Manchester Employers Coalition Awards, 2008

Winner of the Opening Doors category in the Niace Adult Learners Week Awards, 2009

Individual Adult Learners Week Award, North West region, Gary Jaye, 2009

Individual of the Year, finalist in the Greater Manchester Employers Coalition Awards, Neil Campbell, 2009

“The project has had many benefits. For the individual it provides an opportunity to move away from isolation, engage in social interaction, learn new transferable skills in a safe and supported environment and gain increased confidence. For the museum, it has enriched the visitor experience, changed staff attitudes and opened up connections into the local community, particularly amongst socially excluded groups. For the cultural sector, it has overturned the conventional approach to volunteering and modelled how museums can be learning organisations in new and unexpected ways, tapping into new seams of enthusiasm and energy. When everyone is learning in an imaginative project, accelerated change occurs more easily and innovation becomes the norm.”

**Jim Forrester**  
Director, Imperial War Museum North

### Workforce diversity

88% of participants were unemployed, 64% of these were long term unemployed (unemployed for longer than a year)

40% of participants state they have a disability

### Increased access to collections

Increased the number of handling tables for visitors to access objects

Introduced new objects to existing handling tables

Established strong training procedures with curatorial and conservation staff

Developed new object-based outreach sessions, delivered by museum staff and trained volunteers

“Hundreds, if not thousands of members of the public have had physical contact with objects, which they would otherwise have not had. The volunteers have been positive advocates for the museum to the outside world.”

**Curator of Palaeontology,  
The Manchester Museum**

### Impact on local people

84% of participants completed the 10 week training programme

79% took the literacy qualification, 95% of whom passed

89% of the people who completed the course went on to volunteer, with 42% volunteering for 6 months or more

41% of volunteers have taken part in further learning on completion of the training programme

18% of In Touch volunteers have moved on to employment.

### Legacy

Victoria Baths Trust, a Heritage Visitor Attraction, has secured funding for a volunteer project called Moving On, modelled on the In Touch programme.

In Touch is involved with three European projects supported by the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning programme of the European Union.

- VoCH European Research Partnership
- Museums Literacy (MusLi)
- Senior Volunteer Exchange Programme with the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest

*Cultural consultants Morris Hargreaves McIntyre carried out a range of quantitative and qualitative research to evaluate the programme against the original aims and in three specific areas: impact on the museums, impact on participants and the development of a transferable model. 79% of participants who completed the programme took part in research including baseline and outcome surveys, creative workshops, in-depth interviews and participant observation. Partner organisations, museum staff and non-In Touch volunteers were involved in the research to explore the wider applicability of the In Touch model.*

## Impact on the museums

### A diversified volunteer workforce

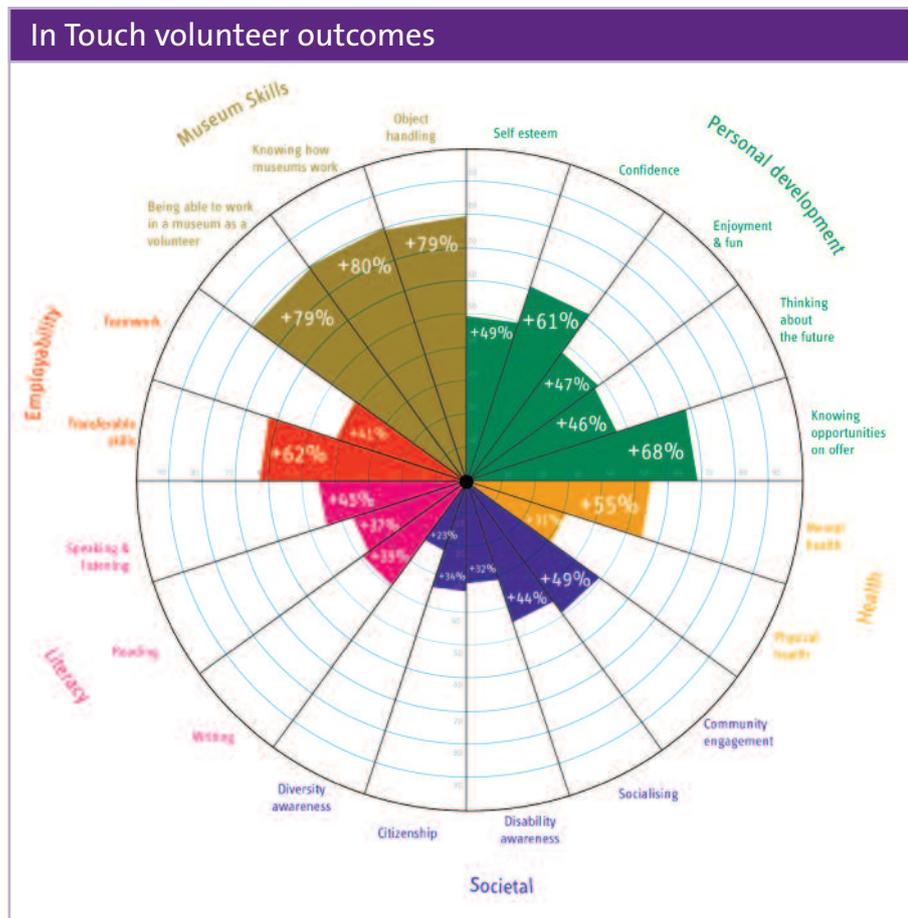
In Touch was extremely successful in engaging individuals who were socially, economically or culturally excluded, creating a more diversified volunteer workforce at both museums and in comparison to the more general HLF profile of heritage volunteers. In Touch volunteers were significantly younger, more likely to be male, less highly-educated, unemployed rather than retired, more likely to experience poor mental and physical health and there was a higher representation of those of BME origin or with a disability.

## Workforce development

In Touch engaged museum staff more directly with volunteers resulting in significantly increased awareness of the needs of diverse groups at both museums. Staff now have increased skills in working with diverse audiences, highlighted by new or enhanced action plans to address equality, diversity and disability. The Manchester Museum has also introduced a Diversity Bursary which offers a disabled person a paid six month training and work placement.

## More relevant public programmes

Museum staff have commented that working with In Touch volunteers has influenced their approach to public engagement. The participants received training and practice in object handling and engaging with the public. This has increased opportunities for museum visitors to have direct access to collections.



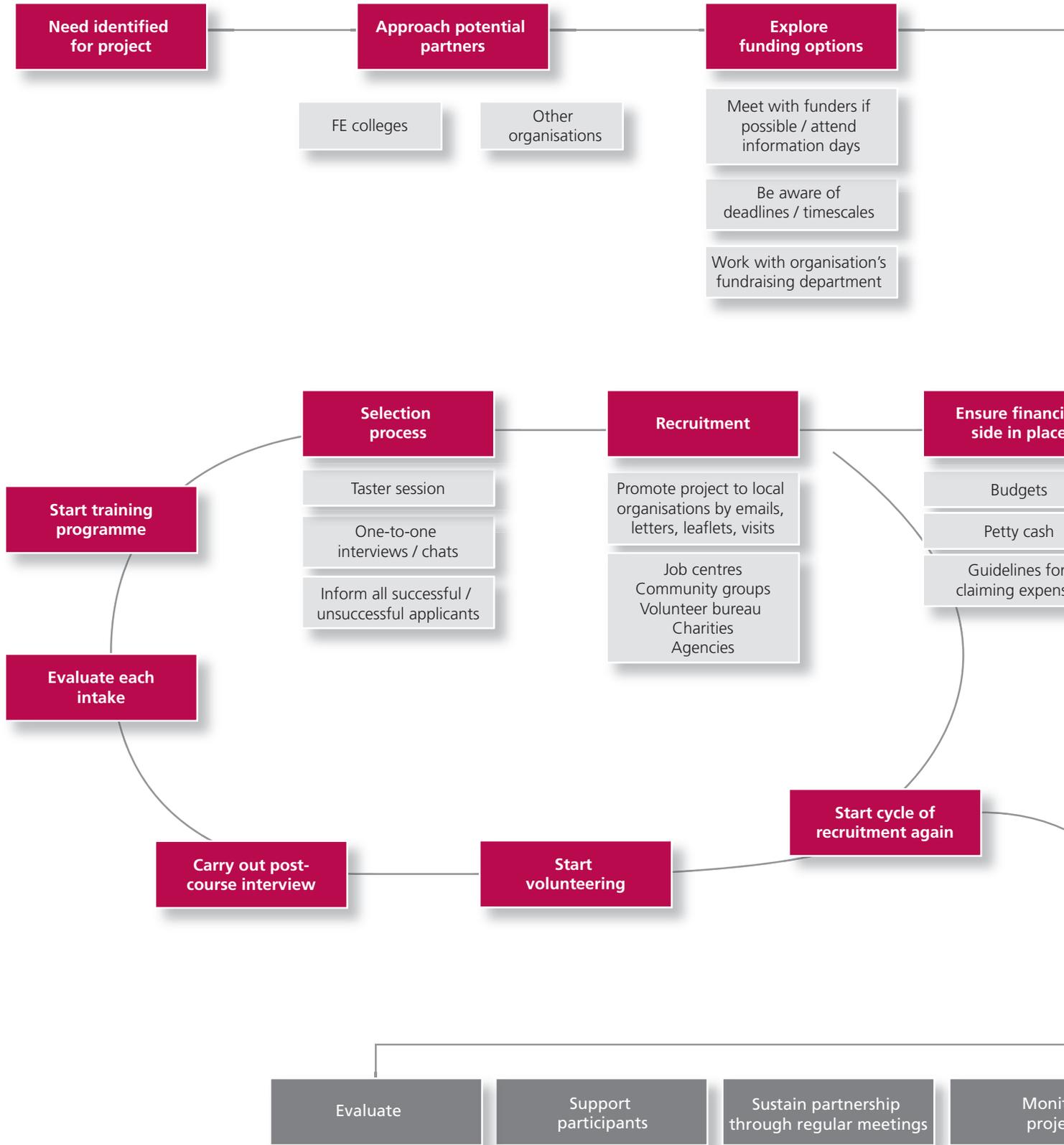
## Impact on participants

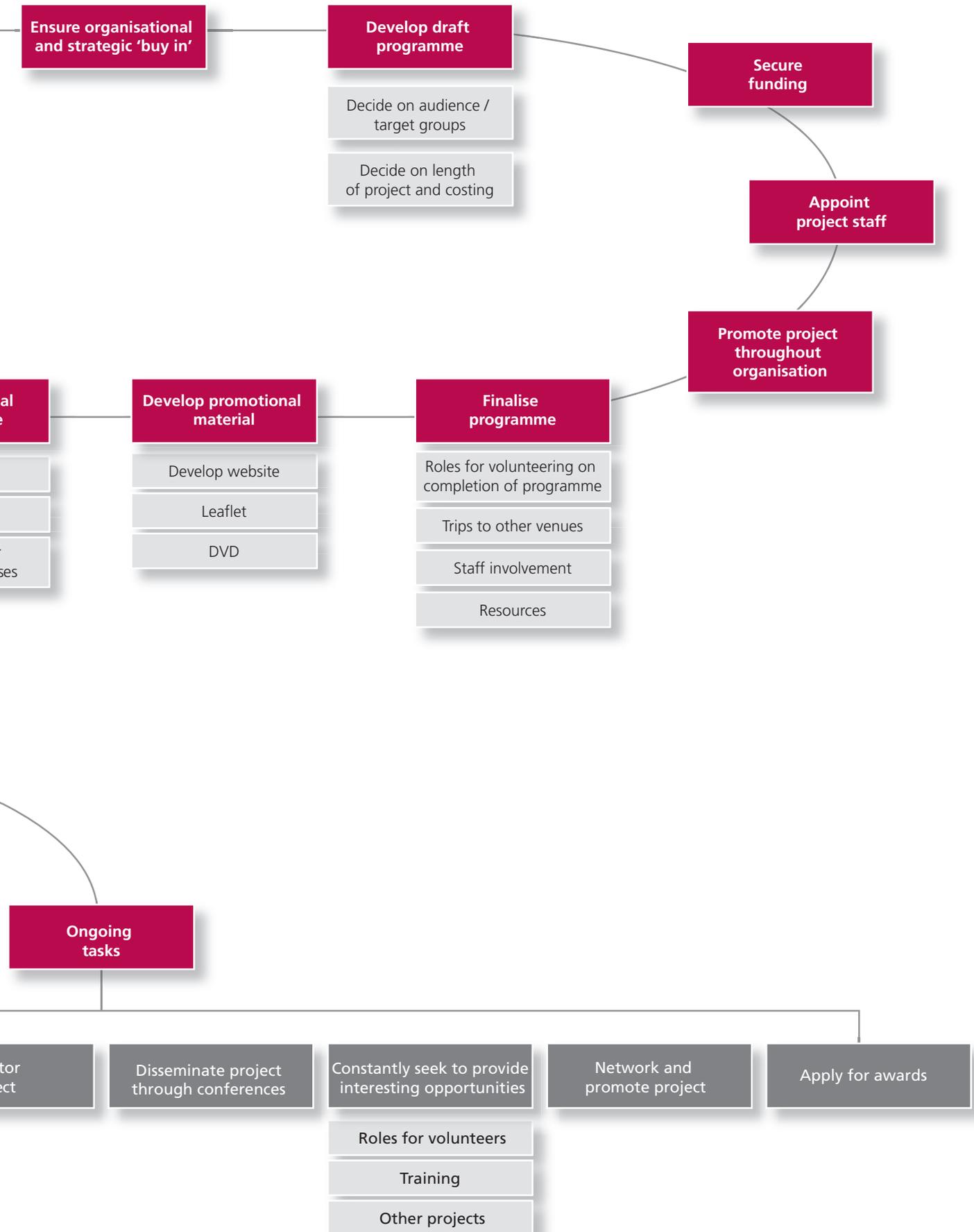
In Touch contributed strongly to the personal development of volunteers, significantly increasing their self-confidence (+61%) and self-esteem (+49%), which provided participants with a firmer footing for the development of inter-personal and employment skills. By the end of the course, 62% of participants said that In Touch made them feel differently about themselves or their families and 81% felt positive about their lives.

## Developing a transferable model

In Touch intended to provide a blueprint for volunteering in the museum and heritage sector. The proactive dissemination throughout the life of the programme has ensured that In Touch has been widely profiled regionally, nationally and internationally. A range of heritage organisations and museums are already piloting similar programmes or are interested in doing so.

*The In Touch model can be replicated and transferred to other venues at a local, regional and national level.*





*The In Touch programme has developed and maintained a strong network of partners across the Greater Manchester area.*



Partnership working has been key to the success and the sustainability of the project. Main partners include The University of Manchester, Salford College, Jobcentre Plus, Manchester City Council, Refugee Action, Connexions, Voluntary Action, Mental Health agencies, local community groups.

Strong links have been established with these agencies as they have witnessed the direct benefits of the programme for the individuals they have referred.

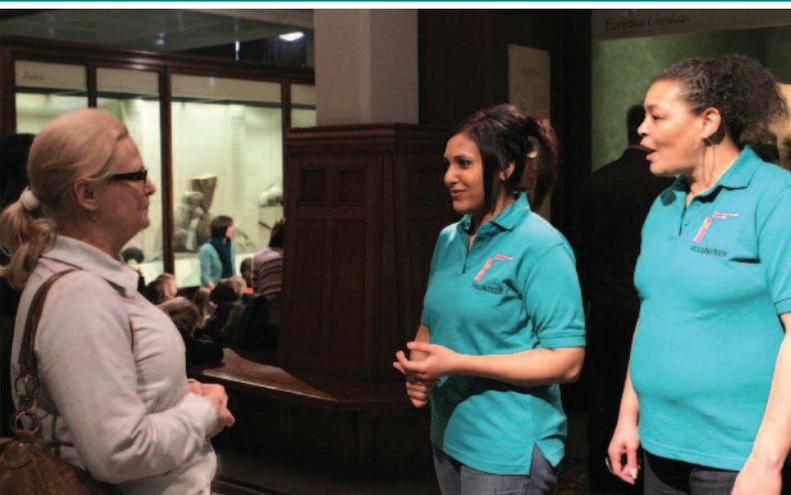
“ I was intrigued by In Touch from the first occasion I met volunteers who had been through the programme. I had to find out more, so met the organisers and visited two of the training sessions. From this emerged a discussion leading to a partnership to develop and deliver a similar programme at Victoria Baths. We see the programme as a really effective way of working with members of the local community and encourage involvement with the heritage sector. ”

**Steve Helme**  
Project Coordinator, Victoria Baths

“ The partnership has proved to be a rewarding and successful one for Salford City College and is an example of how community-based teaching can reap benefits for the local community and the college itself.

The feedback from learners at the end of the course has shown a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment which is mirrored in the high retention and achievement rates. One key outcome of the course has been the visible increase in self-confidence and self-worth amongst group members and the relationships which have developed between them over the duration of the ten week programme. As tutors we have seen the benefits that the programme has given to the individual and the museum. Learners have gone on to improve their numeracy and literacy skills with extra courses at the museum. Many of the volunteers are now fulfilling roles that they could not have envisaged before they joined In Touch.

**Craig Stafford and Marie Curliss**  
Skills for Life Tutors, Salford City College



“ The In Touch Programme has been hugely beneficial to the students we have referred over the last year. They have gained valuable experience in working in a stimulating environment where they have been encouraged to develop their work and interpersonal skills whilst also receiving support with their literacy, numeracy, ICT and job seeking. The growth in confidence and self-esteem has been marked and in my opinion more schemes of this nature should be encouraged. ”

**Sue Hall-Smith**  
Tutor, Loretto College

“ The innovative In Touch Volunteer Programme enables individuals to gain real work experience in a museum setting. Volunteers are offered invaluable training opportunities including nationally recognised courses in customer care which provides real substance to include in their CVs. The combination of a broad range of front-line work experience underpinned by excellence in training gives the volunteers an attractive package of skills to offer potential employers. ”

**Gloria Vessey**  
Tutor, Blackpool and Lancashire Tourist Board

“ The In Touch Project was initially developed to enable both museums to increase their representation of volunteers and visitors from the wider communities. The project has offered volunteers the opportunity to build self-esteem and confidence, enabling many participants to realise their true potential in their chosen field of education, training and employment. The project team have built extensive partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and key stakeholders to address issues of worklessness and social exclusion, helping those who faced the greatest economic and social challenges make a prompt return to the labour market and in doing so improved both social and community cohesion across our communities. The In Touch Project has taken a unique approach in breaking down community perceptions of the museum, seeing it evolve from being perceived as an inaccessible establishment to one now regarded as a vibrant and welcoming community facility, where people and families from all communities are equally represented and welcomed as both visitors and volunteers. ”

**Christine Hulse MBE**  
Partnership Manager, Jobcentre Plus

## The Volunteer voice

*A key legacy of In Touch is the positive impact it has had on the volunteers that have been involved in the programme. A number of volunteers have gone on to secure sustained employment, many have engaged with further learning and a strong volunteer workforce has been created at both museums. It is each volunteer's unique story that provides inspiration and has contributed to the success of the project.*



### Shaun Bennett

"After being made redundant I became very de-motivated and depressed, losing my self-respect and confidence. The In Touch programme at The Manchester Museum was brought to my attention by my local Jobcentre. Once I was accepted on the course, I did not look back. As the course progressed I could not wait for the next session. At last my life was getting back on track. There are so many activities I enjoyed and the training I received helped me gain back my confidence in my personal life and prepared me for my role as a volunteer."

Shaun proved himself to be an excellent volunteer, he helped with the delivery of subsequent In Touch courses and established links with the Curator of Egyptology, setting up the Egypt handling table. In December 2008, Shaun gained employment at The Manchester Museum as a Visitor Services Assistant and has since been promoted to Supervisor for the Front of House Team. Shaun now says, "The project helped me when I needed it the most. I am over the moon to have secured employment at The Manchester Museum and am very happy to be giving something back!"



Shaun Bennett



Cameron Abercrombie

### Cameron Abercrombie

"I had become extremely depressed from my previous employment, feeling useless and very down. My doctors told me I could be off work for a long time and advised me to not sit about the house doing nothing. It just so happened that a few months into my sick leave, I got in contact with an old school teacher whom was now working at Blackburn Museum and from here he got me involved with Imperial War Museum North. I started the 10 week In Touch training programme and really enjoyed it, learning loads about the museum, other museums and working in museums. Since finishing the training course I have made so many wonderful new friends. I love the staff too and the fantastic welcoming atmosphere. Imperial War Museum North has really 'upped' my self esteem, giving me confidence to get out and about again and do something with my life. If given the chance I would love to work at Imperial War Museum North, it's just a great place to work in. I also volunteer at Waterway Recovery Group and have enrolled on a City & Guilds Computer Installation and Management Course."

## Helen Hopkins

Helen has been a volunteer at Imperial War Museum North for over 18 months and joined the In Touch volunteer programme after several months of unemployment when her confidence levels were very low.

"There were a few months when I wasn't doing very much. I tried to look for a job and I found it very difficult. I realised I was lacking in skills and that was preventing me getting a job. I would go to an interview and they would tell me "You've not got enough customer service experience", so for me it was about focussing on skills that I needed to get a job."

The course and the volunteering role have significantly increased Helen's confidence and she is now working on attaining an NVQ in Customer Service. Although having some qualifications, Helen realised that she needed to build up experience and as she says 'learn how to be professional'. She has a great interest and passion for researching and enjoys telling stories about the objects in the museum to visitors. Helen provides invaluable support to museum staff in administrative tasks, in particular the recording of visitor comments.

"Being in the museum has enabled me to use skills and shine at them, skills like talking to people, even talking to big groups sometimes. It's shown me the skills that I have. It's given me opportunities to show these skills but I still feel I need to develop them. I'm still at the embryonic stage of developing them, and developing my knowledge. I enjoy learning."



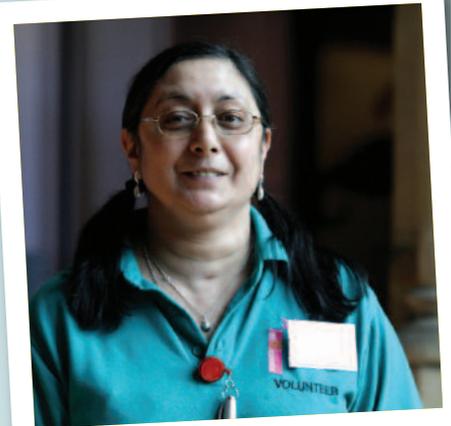
*Helen Hopkins*



## Patricia Taylor

Patricia has been a volunteer at The Manchester Museum for over two years. Her journey during this time highlights the benefits the In Touch programme can bring to an individual's life.

"When I was introduced to the programme back in 2007 by Standguide, I was severely lacking in confidence to the point I did not want to leave the house. I was really happy to be accepted on the programme, but very nervous and apprehensive. I had lost all of my people skills. Through the training programme and my role as a volunteer I have regained my confidence, developed a strong social network within the museum and challenged my educational needs, by taking up courses such as numeracy and literacy. I currently volunteer on the Egypt handling table and in public programmes. I talk to visitors from around the world and give them the opportunity to handle objects from the museum's collection. The programme is a huge help to people from all walks of life, I have made lifelong friendships and received support that has enabled me to grow and embrace my role. I now feel motivated and have the confidence to take the next step."



*Patricia Taylor*

### Path less travelled

At the beginning is darkness, like a funeral wreath  
But I learnt to renew my self-belief

I walked on a volunteering path  
At the Museum I learnt to have a laugh

Society is a jigsaw and now I fit in  
I was drowning, now I've learnt to swim

It's my turn in the limelight, like a movie  
I'm here to stay, don't try to move me

The inter-personal interaction  
Gives my soul some satisfaction

A sense of purpose and pride  
I came along, not just for the ride

This experience expanded my mind  
I never knew the light I would find

**This poem was created by In Touch volunteers,  
during a poetry workshop with nationally  
celebrated poet Chanje Kunda**

## Further information

Adele Finley  
In Touch Project Manager  
The Manchester Museum

tel 0161 275 8775  
email [adele.finley@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:adele.finley@manchester.ac.uk)  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/museum](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museum)

Danielle Garcia  
Volunteer Programme Manager  
Imperial War Museum North

tel 0161 836 4080  
email [dgarcia@iwm.org.uk](mailto:dgarcia@iwm.org.uk)  
[www.iwm.org.uk/north](http://www.iwm.org.uk/north)

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