

Executive Summary

Museums provide knowledge and inspiration, while also connecting communities. At a time of economic recovery, and in the run-up to the Olympics, they are more important than ever. Museums and galleries deliver world-class public services which offer individuals and families free and inspiring places to visit and things to do. Museums attract audiences from home and abroad. They build confidence in Britain and stimulate the creativity and innovation that will help drive economic success. Museums provide the places and resources to which people turn for information and learning. They care for the legacy of the past while creating a legacy for the future.

Museums have reinvented themselves in recent years. Using public funding, they have generated substantial private investment to rebuild, remain relevant and become truly outstanding. With continued public support, our museums will grow through such partnerships. Museums represent the core values of human integrity and ingenuity to which we turn in a crisis, and that we celebrate in times of success. With continuing support, they will provide the outstanding public services and programmes which Britain can be proud of in 2012.

From the global stage to the local high street

Our museums have reach and resonance. By working with local partners museums engage communities with their cultural heritage right across the UK. Museums are spaces in which identities are understood, formed and shared. They provide a stimulating public space in which people can come together and be inspired. As the recession challenges peoples' values and beliefs, we need them more than ever.

The reach of museums is global too. They connect communities with partners around the world, and they connect our diverse communities with our shared and complex heritage. They make a vital contribution to international relations and play a unique role in fostering international cultural exchange. Our museums are internationally renowned and respected, used and referenced, boosting the UK's international reputation.

- In 2008, museums attendance in the UK increased at over three times the national average for visitor attractions.¹

"Museums are uniquely egalitarian spaces. Whether you are rich, poor, or uniquely-abled, the museum door is always an open welcome. A sense of history and beauty, gifts from our cultural heritage, inspires the ordinary soul into extraordinary possibilities. They bind communities together, giving them heart, hope and resilience. If life was just about earning to eat, we'd be depleted and tired. Museums bring to life the opportunity to experience meaning beyond the mundane. Museums make the soul sing!"

**Camila Batmanghelidjh, Founder,
Kids Company**

Opening eyes and expanding minds

Museums collect and display the greatest achievements of humankind and the natural world – they can also change perspectives and challenge perceptions. In 2008–09 over one in five visits to museums in the UK were made by under 15 year olds. This is more than the proportion of visitors of that age who go to the cinema. Nearly 2 million adults participated in organised events at national museums and art galleries.² Museums are the nation's great learning resource – they introduce new subjects, bring them alive and give them meaning. Learning in museums improves confidence and attainment: it also opens us to the views of our fellow citizens. Museum collections and the knowledge of museum professionals inspire learning. As the world around us changes, museums and galleries promote awareness of the critical questions of place, humanity, science and innovation.

- More than two thirds of children aged 5–11 visited a museum outside of school last year.³
- 1.9m children under 16 took part in formal learning sessions in museums 2008–2009 – for every child who participates in formal learning, four more attend a museum.⁴

“Museum education nurtures a sense of community, shared history and cultural value. Museums engage children in complex and sensitive issues and provide a secure forum for debate. They stand as educational powerhouses across the country.”

Baroness Estelle Morris

Economic impact

National museums use public money to generate £240m of additional funding.⁵ They combine public donations, corporate partnerships, trust funding and income from their enterprises with government support to provide a responsive, relevant, world-class service – free for all. By generating their own income they make possible many outstanding museum programmes. Success in leveraging funding from such a wide range of sources relies on government funding as a base.

The economic multiplier effect of museums goes beyond their fundraising efforts. By attracting tourists, contributing to knowledge and skills, driving the creative industries and regenerating our cities, museums make a demonstrable contribution to UK plc. 33m overseas residents visited the UK in 2008, spending £16.3b.⁶ Overall, the visitor economy contributes £114b or 8.2% GDP.⁷ Museums are central to this. Visit Britain has identified that culture, history and heritage are overwhelmingly the most popular reasons to visit the UK, with museums having higher proportions of overseas visitors than other attractions. In 2008, 35% of visits to national museums were by overseas visitors.

- On average, national museums generate almost half of their own income (45.6%). In the cultural sector, museums have led the way in gaining investment from trusts and foundations, winning 19% of the grants made. They have also encouraged more corporate investment in the sector (£26.3m).⁸ This is despite an overall general decrease in corporate support for culture in 2007/08.
- Each year, the Gross Value Added of culture is £7.7b; overall, private businesses, trusts, foundations and individuals invest £599m in culture and the public sector spends £1.57b. Putting these together this means that, for every pound invested in culture, a further £3.50 is generated.⁹

“Essentially I see the relationship between private giving and public funding as a mutually beneficial partnership. Public support helps unlock private support because if there is a public commitment, the private donor can have long-term confidence in the future of the project.” **Dame Vivien Duffield**

“The UK's museums and galleries could, with greater capacity to expand and improve, allow this country to be a world leader in creativity and scholarship.” **Professor Tony Travers, London School of Economics**