



Cambridge Future Museum Voices 2024

Final Report for the Isaac Newton Trust, January 2025

Cambridge Future Museum Voices is an innovative outreach programme from Clare College and the Museum of Zoology that uses the museums and collections at the University of Cambridge to provide academic enrichment to young people from underrepresented backgrounds and regions of the UK. In its second year, the programme expanded to host 29 Year 12 students for a week-long residential in April 2024, during which the students co-curated a public exhibition, *Trodden Earth*, at the Museum of Zoology and Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The exhibition opened on the 28th September with a private launch event for participants and their guests and ran until the end of December 2024. This report covers participant Widening Participation characteristics, an evaluation of the programme, the total expenditure, and considerations for future projects.



Figure 1. The 29 CFMV 2024 Participants.

Evaluation of programme

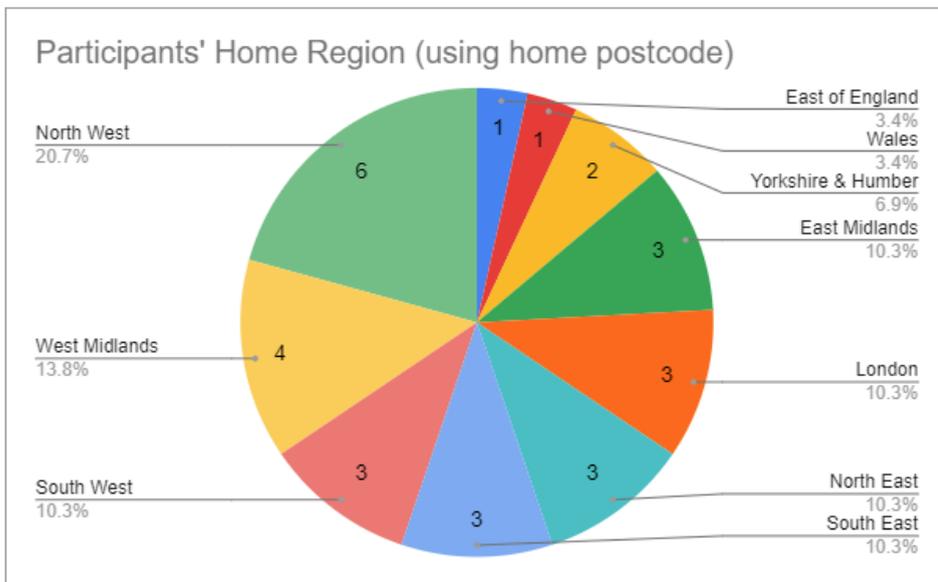


Figure 2. Home regions of the 29 participants in CFMV 2024, determined by their home postcodes.

Participants: 30 students were chosen to take part in this programme from 61 valid applications. A last-minute withdrawal resulted in 29 total participants. Students were selected based on the strength of their statement of interest, their academic background, and Widening Participation criteria. Three of these students had experience of local authority care, 6 were eligible for FSM or had been within 6 years, 13 had a home postcode in IMD Q1+2, and 11 had a home postcode in

POLAR4 Q1+2. Participants achieved an average of 7.2 GCSEs at 8/9/A*.

Offering a fully-funded week-long residential allowed many students to join us from further afield than many shorter outreach events permit; we were pleased to welcome 22 participants from outside London, the South East, and the East of England.



Feedback: Our approach for monitoring the impact of the programme consisted of targeted surveys for participants at the start and end of the residential, including written and quantitative feedback, guided reflection and feedback each evening of the residential, and the recording of casual views and responses throughout the course.

In the pre- and post-residential written surveys, students were asked to use a six-point Likert scale (very likely - likely - neither likely nor unlikely - unlikely - very unlikely) to rate how likely they were to apply to university, Cambridge, and to courses in biological/environmental/conservation sciences or in anthropology, and how likely they were to pursue a career in museums or in biological/environmental/conservation sciences.

In the pre- and post-programme evaluation forms, we saw a modest effect on students' future plans. The numbers of students responding 'likely' or 'very likely' to apply to university and to Cambridge remained consistent before

and after the programme, but we saw an increase in students reporting being 'very likely' to apply to Cambridge (10 pre-programme to 18 post programme). The students who reported being 'likely' or 'very likely' to apply for a course in anthropology or biological sciences remained consistent before and after the course, but there were increases in the number 'likely' or 'very likely' to pursue a career in biological, environmental, and conservation sciences (from 6 to 8) or in museum curation (from 8 to 11).



Figure 3. Participants co-curating their exhibition, *Trodden Earth*, at the Museum of Zoology.

Attitudes towards Cambridge and museums:

The pre- and post-programme forms also asked students to provide three words they would use to describe a) the

University of Cambridge and b) museums. The three words students chose to describe Cambridge and museums changed after the course. The three most common words used to describe Cambridge before the programme were, in order of frequency, academic (13 uses), 'prestigious' (10 uses), and 'old' (7 uses). 43 unique words appeared; other repeated words included 'historic' (3 uses) and 'posh' (2 uses). The majority of the words focused on the age, beauty, and academic prestige of Cambridge. After the programme, academic remained the most frequently used word (10 uses), but a greater variety of 59 unique words featured, including 'camaraderie', 'creative' (2 uses), 'inspiring' and 'pioneering', with more words focusing on Cambridge's friendly community, diversity, and forward-looking research.

The students' attitudes to museums also changed over the programme. Before the course, 'History' (17 uses) was the most frequently used word, followed by 'old' (5 uses) and 'learning' (5). Conversely, after the programme, 'history' was only used 5 times, as chosen words instead focused on the value of museums in the present and particularly for the future. 'Vital' or 'valuable' appeared 5 times, while 'impactful', 'stories', 'diverse', and 'future' each appeared twice.

These changes in students' perceptions of Cambridge and of museums reflected what we had hoped to achieve with this programme: developing museums as a gateway to widening participation in both museums and the University.



Verbal feedback:

'I have learnt so many new things that I would never have explored or thought I would be interested in before.'
'I have learned that Cambridge is a much more welcoming and accessible place than I originally thought.'
'I have thoroughly enjoyed staying in Clare's student accommodation, gaining an insight into student life here, and having access to the beautiful grounds.'

Applications to Cambridge: One of the key aims was to encourage students from underrepresented backgrounds to make a competitive application to Cambridge. Of the 29 participants, 18 made an application to study at Cambridge (of whom 9 applied to Clare), across 14 undergraduate courses. All students who applied met the standard grade and subject requirements for their course, after we increased the emphasis on this crucial information for the 2024 cohort.

15 applicants from CFMV were invited to interview. Following interviews, 10 students received an offer to study at Cambridge, 3 of whom received offers from Clare. This included several of the most highly flagged participants. Several of the students whose applications were unsuccessful after interview are eligible for the August Reconsideration Pool and may therefore still study at Cambridge.

Considerations for next time

- 19 students opted for the early arrival (1 extra evening in college with student ambassadors, who ran social activities and icebreakers). This large group had more opportunity to bond as a group than those who arrived on Day 2 and immediately began the academic workshops. For next year's programme, we are adding an additional, social day, making it a 6-day residential.
- Following our successful collaboration with the MAA for the 2024 programme, we intend to continue working with a partner collection to keep the subject focus broad and varied. In 2025, we will partner with Kettle's Yard alongside the Museum of Zoology.



Figure 4. The participants' exhibition, *Trodden Earth*, launches at the Museum of Zoology and MAA.

Financial Statement

Of the grant of £31,332 awarded in February 2024, we spent a total of £23260.84. The full spend is broken down below:

Element	Item	Spend (£)
Clare accommodation and catering costs	B&B Accommodation in Clare	7650
	Buttery lunches and dinner in Clare	5545



	Formal Hall in Clare	1884
	Catering for exhibition launch event	986
Museum costs	Designer Fees for Exhibition	2660
	Printing Exhibition	529
	Guide Booklet Printing	565
	Refreshments at Museums during residential	92.10
	Materials for audience reflection panels	20.60
Travel & reimbursements	Participant reimbursements - residential	1448.59
	Participant & guests reimbursements - exhibition	1353
	Ambassador reimbursement and honorarium	384
	Staff overtime pay for feedback provision	143.55
Total spend		23260.84

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