

Example Unsuccessful Application

SHAPE Involve and Engage 2027-28

This is a fictional application created by the British Academy team to demonstrate the kind of proposal that would not be awarded funding.

Application Details

Title: Local History Through Archival Talks and Creative Zine-Making

GLAM Partner: Midlands Town Museum & Archive

Grant sought: £8,000

Project Summary

Local Labour Histories is designed to introduce local residents to the industrial and labour history of X Town. Drawing on my existing academic research, the project will deliver a series of three public lectures and a hands-on zine-making workshop hosted in partnership with the Town Museum & Archive. The project aims to raise awareness of the town's social and industrial past and to encourage participants to reflect creatively on historical materials.

The three lectures will cover key themes including the development of the town's factory system, the emergence of organised labour movements from 1880–1930, and the role of women workers in shaping local industry. These talks will take place in the museum's education room and will be accompanied by projected slides, archival photographs, and short readings from period newspapers. Each lecture will be open to the general public, with no prior knowledge required.

Following the lectures, the project will host a two-hour zine-making workshop where up to twelve participants will create simple handmade booklets inspired by selected archival images provided by the museum. Participants will be encouraged to explore themes such as workers' rights, industrial change, and community identity. The zines produced will be displayed in the museum foyer for a few months afterwards.

The project will conclude with a short blog post summarising the activities and reflecting on the importance of local history. By combining academic lectures with an accessible creative activity, *Local Labour Histories* hopes to spark interest in the town's past and strengthen community connection to local heritage. While modest in scale, the project offers a straightforward introduction to archival material and provides an opportunity for the public to engage with historical themes in a relaxed environment.

How does your idea meet the call's innovation requirement?

My project is innovative because it brings together academic lectures with a hands-on creative workshop. While lectures are a traditional means of sharing research, pairing them with zine-making offers a creative way for participants to respond to archival materials. This combination allows the public to learn about local labour history while experimenting with simple visual storytelling techniques.

Details of the Outputs

- Zines created at the workshops exploring the town's industrial history
- Blog post summarising activities
- Three public lectures
- Exhibition of zines in hotel foyer

Partnership Working

The partnership with the Town Museum & Archive involves:

- Providing a room for the lectures and workshop at a 30% discount hire rate
- Supplying photocopies of archival images
- Promoting the events on the museum's website

Audience and Venue

The project primarily targets people already interested in history, such as members of local heritage groups or retirees who attend the museum's lunchtime talks. All events will take place in the museum's education room.

How do you intend to reach your audience

Advertising will be handled through:

- The museum website
- Printed posters in the museum foyer

Do you intend to work with vulnerable audiences

Yes

Name of proposed venue/platform – why this is a good place to reach your audience

The events will take place in the Town Museum education room, which is where many of the museum's public talks are already held. This venue is familiar to regular museum visitors and has enough chairs, presentation equipment, and table space for the zine workshop.

Accessibility details

The museum has step-free access, accessible toilets, and seating available. The lectures will use a microphone.

Intended Aims and Outcome

The project aims to share research on labour history with the public and allow them to produce creative responses through zine-making. The outcomes will be greater awareness of Midlands Town's industrial heritage and a selection of community-created zines for display.

Reasons why this would be unsuccessful:

Although this proposal demonstrates some... it would not be awarded funding as it does not meet enough of our criteria.

- Although zine-making is a wonderful introductory activity, it does not meet the innovative nature of the kinds of events or activities we are looking to fund with this award.
- Offering a lecture series is more in-line with academic audiences rather than a leading form of Public Engagement (which this award was created to champion).
- By focusing on working with people already familiar with the museum and its works, there is little scope for new public engagement to come out of this award, and it feels like this is continuing existing work of the museum.
- It is unclear why the making part of the activity is so limited: to be requesting £8,000 for a low-cost activity and have so few people able to take part raises questions about how the money will be spent, and if there was a better way to budget or design this.
- The GLAM-partner is not offering much in-kind, and seems as though the space is more being hired than a true working partnership. There is nothing indicating how this has been co-curated or how the researcher's values and aims align with the GLAM partner.
- There is no indication of how vulnerable audiences will be enabled to take part and what will be put in place to support them taking part. An example would be employing an emotional support worker during sessions where difficult issues may be raised. Making an event truly accessible is about going beyond just looking for step-free access.