

Thinktank Science and Heritage Career Ladder

Diversifying your organisation to support and
facilitate social and cultural change

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The Model

- New York Hall of Science has been running a career ladder for over 25 years
- The Hall is located in Queens; the most ethnically diverse county in the USA
- More than 100 languages are spoken within 5 miles of the Hall



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The Model

- Hierarchy of paid experiences in the museum
- Programme recruits, trains and pays students to work as ‘Explainers’ – at any time there are around 150 people in the program



Dissemination Program

- In 2007, NYHoS received funding to disseminate their program around the world to a total of 7 organisations
- Open application process based on merit, experience, commitment and potential benefit



Dissemination Program 2007

- Thinktank was one of the seven successful applicants and the only organisation from within Europe
- No funding from NYHoS, other than initial training



Thinktank S&HCL

Project definition

The Science and Heritage Career Ladder is a sustainable and structured employment based training programme for young people from Birmingham provided by Thinktank to develop new skills in science and heritage communication



Thinktank S&HCL

Aims

- **Local community:** creating paid opportunities in a high-deprivation area.
- **Science/ learning:** encouraging young people to follow careers in science/heritage. Participants enter a high impact learning programme.
- **Thinktank:** staff become more representative of local communities & foster a sense of ownership amongst local people
- **Museum sector:** trained individuals armed with the skills necessary to carry out entry-level museum jobs



How did it happen?

- Staff development session to gain wide variety of input from all departments
- Risk analysis
- Project Board formed
- Project Team formed + working groups
- Continued support from NYHoS



Year 1

- Recruitment days Apr 2008



Year 1

- 63 applications for 6 places



- Selection matrix to find which applicants showed good communication skills and an enthusiasm for science or heritage
- 36 invited to interview



Year 1

- 2 selection days in June
 - Interactive
 - Task based
 - Who was confident but not too confident
 - Who could interact well with team members & us
 - Who could understand the concept of 'enabling'
 - Who could follow instructions
 - Who showed enthusiasm for the role



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Year 1

- Selection sessions were tiring but fun



Year 1

- Ended up with 7 strong candidates for 6 places, with nothing between them
- So we took all 7!



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Year 1

- Trainee Enablers

- 16 days paid work over the Summer

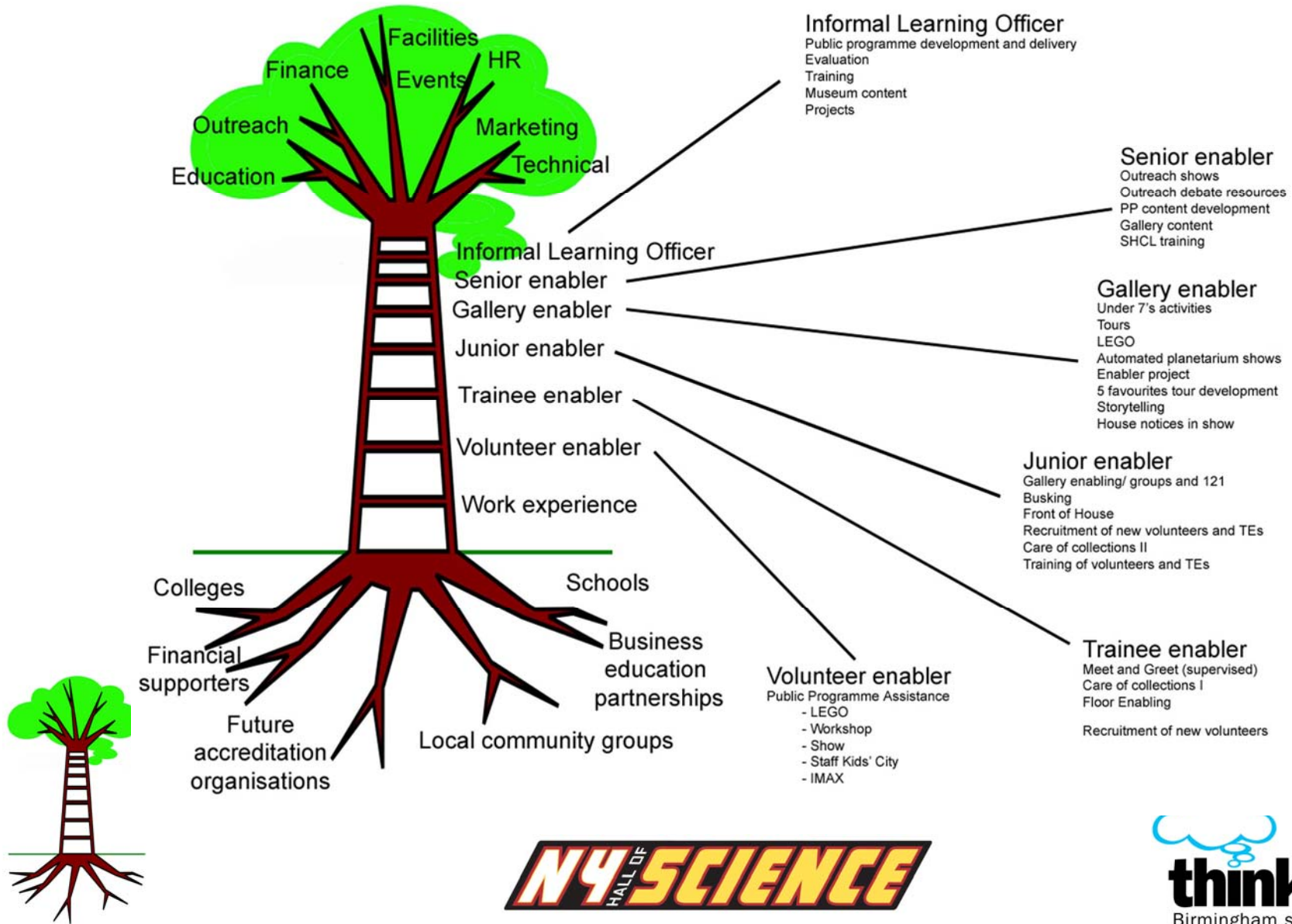
- Induction process & familiarisation
 - Training and development programme
 - Working on the floors with visitors
 - Will be an integrated part of the ILO team, but wearing 'I'm in training' badges
 - Career advice and assistance e.g. CV writing, applications, interview practice



Year 1

- At the end of the 16 days, 3 of the Trainees will be taken on as part-time permanent staff
- Work 1 day a week to coincide with their studies





External Interest

- **Museums Association** – in terms of providing training for entry-level museum jobs
- **HR/Personnel journals & magazines**, for our innovative recruitment strategy
- **Local press** – for providing paid opportunities for local young people



The Future

- As the participants move up the ladder, they will end up at the Gallery Enabler position
- From here onwards they will be developing content and programmes as part of their role



The Future

- This will ensure that our content and programmes are responsive to local communities
- An important part of the S&HCL is that it works in both directions – current participants will help recruit future participants!



The Future

- Build in the volunteer rung of the ladder
- Create a long term sustainable programme which is championed by the local community



The Future

- This will only improve our relationship with local communities and organisations
- Increase ownership of the museum within the local community
- Provide jobs, skills and opportunities as part of Birmingham's wider social agenda



Operational perspective

- The ladder has changed the existing structure of the museum – for the better!
- Provided a clear progression throughout the Informal Learning Team and beyond
- Forced us to formalise the training programmes that we only had informally before



Operational perspective

- More staff – after they have been trained
 - More programmes available to visitors
 - More holiday opportunities for permanent staff, while we had cover!
- Forced trainees into existing schedules etc



Strategic perspective

- The Thinktank S&HCL could not have happened without the complete support of the SMT and Trustees
- There was no funding available to support the project, it all had to come from internal sources



Strategic perspective

- It has been a highly cost effective project, particularly when weighed up against outcomes – high impact!
- The major cost has been in salaries but these are young persons development rates.



Strategic perspective

- We are providing jobs, training, skills development for young people in our local communities
- We are promoting science, heritage and museums experience to a demographic that would not normally interact with us





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