Going Places

Community Engagement Toolkit

Art Fund_

Heritage Fund

ef Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

Community engagement supports museums to develop relationships with audiences, generate visitors, become more relevant, build trust with local people, and give audiences a sense of ownership over a museum and its collections.

It provides an invaluable opportunity to truly understand visitors' needs and desires and design services and content that meet these needs.

Skills
- Facilitation
- Multitasking
- Listening
- Timekeeping
- Communication

Qualities
- Professional
- Flexible
- Adaptable
- Authentic
- Enthusiastic
- Energetic
- Awareness
- Empathetic
- Caring

Community engagement

Consultation
Cultural and heritage organisations seek feedback, views and opinions from stakeholders, often local communities..

Consultation Might Look Like...
- Focus group with young people to shape the content of an exhibition or programme.
- Online survey for local communities to explore their perceptions and awareness of a museum.
- Placing ideas for a new gallery design in a space in your museum and/or community setting and inviting people to comment.

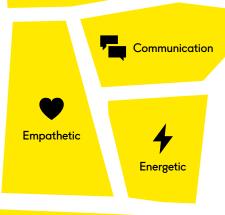Professional

Timekeeping

Adaptable

Participation
Cultural and heritage organisations initiate, lead and control the work, but participants actively engage and contribute to the creation and sharing of content, with opportunities to connect to each other.

Participation Might Look Like...
- Artist-led workshop in which participants create artwork that is displayed at the museum.
- Visitors being given the opportunity to put a choice of artworks on display.
- Community photography competition where entries to the competition are put on display at a museum.

Communication

Empathetic

Energetic

Multitasking

Facilitation

Authentic

Flexible

Co-creation
Decision-making, responsibility and ownership of work is shared between collaborators and cultural and heritage organisations. Organisations give collaborators support, tools and resources to co-lead the work and achieve their shared goals.

Co-creation Might Look Like...
- Working in collaboration with a community group to create a new exhibition.
- Collaborating with teachers to produce schools resources.
- Working with local families to create a new family programme.

Caring

Enthusiastic

Awareness

Listening

Hosting
Cultural and heritage organisations turn over some of their facilities and/or resources to stakeholders so that they can use the museum to satisfy their own needs and desires.

Hosted Engagement Might Look Like...
- Providing space for a community or social group to meet on a regular basis.
- 'Takeover' of a whole museum or space within a museum by a community group.
- Hosting a community-created exhibition in a museum space.

Introduction

The Going Places Community Engagement toolkit is designed to support you to plan, deliver, and evaluate community engagement work in museums.

The toolkit is aimed at anyone who is working, or would like to embark, on a community engagement project, including people with lots of experience and none, and those working in a wide range of museums, galleries and cultural organisations.

Going Places is an Art Fund programme made possible with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and additional support from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Going Places aims to engage and involve underrepresented and underserved audiences with museum collections through high-quality collaborative touring exhibitions and public programmes.

We are grateful to Going Places partners for co-creating this toolkit, contributing valuable ideas and experiences and shaping its scope and content. Thanks also to the team at Art Fund and independent consultants who supported the Going Places project and offered expert advice to support the creation of the toolkit.

Community engagement is always a work in progress; terminology and leading-edge are continually being developed. To acknowledge this, we have included an Incomplete Glossary in the toolkit, setting out definitions relating to community engagement as they stand in 2024. We hope this toolkit and glossary will continue to be updated as the sector develops its community engagement practice.

The toolkit has been created by independent museum consultants:
Laura Crossley (www.lauracrossley.com), Sarah Plumb, and Marek Romaniszyn.

How to use this toolkit

There is no right or wrong way to use this toolkit.

You can read the whole toolkit at once, dip in and out, or read the section(s) that particularly appeal to you. We'd encourage you to download it and keep it with you on your community engagement journey.

We have also created a number of short videos to accompany the toolkit.

These give introductions to:

- Aligning your community engagement project with your overall strategy
- Planning your community engagement project
- Types of community engagement: Consultation, Participation, Co-creation, and Hosting

The videos contain similar content to the written toolkit.

The toolkit includes space for you to write or draw your learning, thoughts and ideas. This is your toolkit to use as you wish and in a way that works for you.

Image caption: SAINTS & HAINTS, workshop with Kandace Siobhan Walker as part of Call the Waves at Chapter 2022 Courtesy Chapter 2022

Why Community Engagement Matters

Community engagement supports museums to develop relationships with audiences, generate visitors, become more relevant, build trust with local people, and give audiences a sense of ownership over a museum and its collections.

It can be a powerful practice for social good and platforming community voices, and an important tool in creating positive social change, both in your organisation and wider society. Community engagement can also play a progressive role in creating increased diversity in the cultural and heritage sector workforce.

Consultation, participation, and co-creation with communities provides an invaluable opportunity to truly understand visitors' needs and desires in order to design services and content that meet these. This can include, for example, developing new displays and exhibitions, retail and cafe offers, and developing indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as collecting data that will support practical and operational decision-making e.g. opening hours, admission prices, etc.

With museums dealing with so many competing priorities, community engagement can feel like an 'add-on' or a 'nice to have'. What if, instead, it was placed at the heart of museum practice? What if project planning began with, **"What do our communities need and want?"** or **"How can we best serve and support our communities?"**. Community engagement is not an add-on but an essential part of developing resilient museums. If museums do not reach out to their communities, they risk becoming irrelevant, unknown and unvalued, all of which can lead to falling visitor numbers and loss of income and funding.

While community engagement is not a silver bullet that will create a financially resilient museum on its own, it can be an effective way to support resilience in the long-term. Connecting to new audiences, growing visitor numbers, and developing support (e.g. membership fees, donations, event admission, etc.) can help create a number of sustainable income streams that can complement other income generating activities.

Community engagement works best when it is embedded into a museum, with trustees and senior leaders prioritising community approaches and setting budgets to allow for this, and all staff taking a community-based approach - considering audience needs and wants when designing new experiences, products and services. We hope this toolkit supports staff, trustees and volunteers to learn more about community engagement, understand the value of involving communities in museums, and feel confident to try some of the approaches outlined.

Image caption: Visitors with Old Money Bags (1964) by Bruce Lacey, Leeds Art Gallery, Art Funded in 2003 © Janie Airey/ Art Fund 2022

What does community engagement mean to you?

Why is it important to you?

Why does it matter to your museum?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

What Do We Mean by 'Community'?

'Community' is a general term for a group of people. It can mean many different things, including groups of people with similar interests, commonalities, from a specific geographic location, and/or sharing an identity, culture or protected characteristic. You can decide how to define what 'community' means for your museum and your community engagement work.

It's important to remember that communities are always shifting, that people might identify with some communities more than others, or not feel part of a community at all, and that just because two people are part of a community doesn't mean they have anything else in common.

You might decide to work with underserved or minoritised communities as part of your community engagement project. Use staff and volunteer knowledge and audience data (e.g. admission data, demographic data, survey data, etc.) to understand which communities your museum engages with, and which communities are underserved. If you don't have a lot of audience data available to you, consider how you can collect this - you might, for example, carry out consultation with people in your local community (e.g. survey, focus groups, interviews) or talk with other organisations and charities working with communities in your local area.

Image caption: People take part in 'Women's Lot', a performance involving maypole dancing and song inspired by C18th folk ballads, created by Sally Gilford in collaboration with community arts group Oakenhoof, for Art Assembly 2022 © Chris Payne/ Art Fund 2022

What data can I use to understand which communities engage with my museum?

What additional data, if any, do I need to collect to further understand the make-up of existing audiences?

Which communities does my museum engage with now?

Which communities would my museum like to engage with in the future? Why?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

A Strategic Approach to Community Engagement

It is important to align community engagement work with your museum's vision, mission, aims and objectives. What is your museum trying to achieve and how can you ensure that your community engagement work helps to achieve this?

Set aims and objectives for your community engagement project that are aligned with your museum's overall strategy. These should be defined and agreed at the start of the project.

Aims are what you hope to achieve i.e. the overall intention of your project – or the reason(s) you're doing the project. To set aims, think about the impacts you want the project to have on the communities you're working with, your museum, your staff, and your stakeholders.

Aims are usually written as 'To + action'. For example, 'To build better connections with young people in our city'. 'To develop a co-created exhibition with local families'. 'To better understand the needs of local adults who currently do not visit our museum'. 'To develop staff skills in creating touring exhibitions'. You don't need to create lots of aims for your project; you might just have one overall aim for your project, or four to five aims at the most. Think about the key things you really want to achieve as a result of your project.

Objectives are aims broken down into specific targets. While project aims show what you are doing, objectives show how you are doing it. To define your objectives, think about what you will need to do in order to achieve your aims.

To set objectives, use the SMART system:

- **Specific:** Be precise and clear about what you will achieve. What exactly are you going to do?

- **Measureable:** Quantifying your objectives makes it easier to track progress and know when you've reached the finish line. Objectives should be designed in a way to make sure you can measure the extent to which objectives have been met.

- **Achievable:** Achievable within the limitations of your project e.g. time, capacity, resource; and aren't overly ambitious. Ask yourself: is this objective something that can reasonably be accomplished within the time and resource available?

- **Relevant:** To the aims of the project and to your museum. Make sure the objective aligns with your overall aims and ambitions.

- **Time-bound:** Show when each objective needs to be completed. What is the deadline for accomplishing this objective?

Some examples of SMART objectives are:

- Increase the number of families we engage with by 5% by the end of the project.

- Work with 5 new external stakeholders by the end of the project.

- Tour our exhibition to 3 museums in the next 18 months.

- Increase the number of monthly e-newsletter subscribers by 500 in the next 12 months.

- All museum staff will have completed community engagement training by the end of the project.

Setting objectives helps with evaluating the project, as you can measure the extent to which the project has met these objectives. Carry out evaluation to measure the extent to which the work meets your intended aim(s) and objectives. You can find out more about evaluation in the Evaluation section of the toolkit.

What are my museum's vision, mission, aims and objectives? How does this project align with these?

What are the aims of this project?

What are the objectives of this project?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

A Whole-Organisation Approach to Community Engagement

Community engagement works best when it is fully embedded in museum practice, rather than solely being viewed as the responsibility of one member of staff or a small number of staff.

Your museum, of course, might have staff roles that include more community engagement work than others - for example, a learning or curatorial role – but every role in a museum can include thinking and acting in a community-focused way.

This might include, for example:

- The Finance team putting in place procedures and processes that support community participants to get paid in an easy, accessible way.
- The Marketing team liaising with community groups and leaders to help promote the museum and its activities to local community audiences.
- Retail staff working with local makers to create products for a museum shop.

It is important for every member of staff and volunteers to understand how to create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for communities. A poor welcome or experience in a museum can be extremely damaging and put people off visiting for life, whereas a positive experience can be the start of developing a long-term relationship with a visitor or community group.

To support a whole-organisation approach to community engagement, you might do one or more of the following:

- Include ambitions around community engagement in your **museum's overall aims and/or its vision and/or mission.**
- **Advocate for community engagement work across the organisation.** If people have concerns about community engagement, listen to these concerns and find shared solutions. Talk openly and honestly about community engagement, why it matters, what you hope to achieve through engaging with communities, and how your community engagement aims align with your organisation's overall ambitions.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers undertake **training** in how to work and communicate effectively with communities, including Equality Diversity and Inclusion training.
- Include the requirement to work in community-focused ways in all **job descriptions**. Remember, changes to job descriptions must be agreed by employers and employees and must follow HR guidelines and adhere to your museum's HR policies. For more information, see this ACAS guide. Take advice from an HR professional should you wish to make changes.
- Put in place **peer-to-peer learning, training and/or mentoring** to support people with less experience in working with communities to develop their understanding.

Who is currently involved in community engagement work in my museum?

Who needs to be involved in the future? How could they support community engagement work?

What needs to be put in place to support this e.g. training, mentoring?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Ethics and Community Engagement

Before pursuing any forms of community engagement, you need to think about ethics. Why are you choosing to undertake community engagement work? Why are you choosing to take the approach you are taking? Is it for the right reasons? What is the benefit to the communities who take part and the museum you work for?

It is important to have these questions in your mind throughout the whole process; not to create uncertainty about working with communities but to reinforce certainty that you have the community's, or communities', best interests at heart. Regularly asking yourself these questions can help instil confidence that you are on the correct path.

Community engagement can be incredibly rewarding for all involved, but if done without a consideration for ethics, it has the potential to have an adverse effect on participants, staff, and museums. Having ethics at the forefront of your practice can help to prevent negative or damaging experiences for community participants and staff.

Image caption: Glasgow Women's Library, Museum of the Year finalist, 2018

Ethics of Care

The following points are designed to help you think about and address ethics of care for everyone involved, as you plan and pursue the community engagement work:

- Allow **time to recruit and network** with communities informally before embarking on the work with them. This helps build positive rapport by making people feel at ease and lays the foundations for a trusting relationship.

- Ensure you are aware of your **organisational policies** relating to the safeguarding of any staff, freelancers, volunteers, or project participants who are involved. Make sure these policies are up-to-date and reflect current best practice. Community Action Suffolk has [examples of safeguarding policies on their website](#).

- Assess the **capacity of staff, freelancers, volunteers, and community participants** while planning your work to ensure your project aligns with people's capacity. Keep in mind people's energy levels, potential burnouts, and emotional labour involved in carrying out community work. It is good practice to factor in recovery time after a session or interaction.

- Source the right **budget** – from your core budget, external funding, or both – to do this work in an ethical manner. Your budget could include, for example, staff time, freelance fees, compensation for community participants, travel expenses, room hire, refreshments, and materials. You might wish to fund additional staff posts or freelance roles that support staff and/or participant wellbeing, such as a Health and Wellbeing practitioner or Organisational Coach.

- When budgeting for and planning your project, think about **what you are offering the communities for their involvement.** Will people be paid for their time and how much will they be paid? Will you offer support in-kind, such as free access to sites, services or rooms? Will people receive any training? Will you cover people's travel and refreshments? The Compensation Framework in this toolkit provides more hints and tips.

- Set **clear boundaries with community participants** in the planning stage or when you start working with them. Create a shared contract or memorandum of understanding to set out what the museum and community group/participants will both offer and give to the project and each other.

- Plan in **time to think about, reflect on, and document the work you are doing** to continue to check that the process is working for everyone. You may need to change or slow down the process (in negotiation with community participants and staff), conduct debriefs, and keep minutes or notes from sessions and interactions.

- **Support colleagues to get a full understanding of the work** you are doing, why you're doing it, and what role(s) they will play in its delivery. Communicate clearly and regularly and share relevant documents – including project aims and objectives and a project time plan with milestones – to ensure everyone understands the project and where their work fits into the overall project.

- Create a list of **organisations and services you might need or want to signpost community participants to.** You might create this list in collaboration with community groups.

- Have a plan for **what's going to happen when your project comes to an end.** Will you continue to work with community partners or will your relationship come to an end? If the former, what will the relationship look like? If the latter, how will you end the relationship in a positive way? Communicating expectations clearly with partners is important. You might work together with partners to decide what will happen when the project ends.

Staff and Freelancers

Ethics of care must also include staff, freelancers, and volunteers who are working on or supporting the project.

- Put in place **appropriate staffing and resource** (e.g. staff time, pay) to avoid overload and potential burnout. Create realistic projects that are possible within the available time and resource. If you can't do everything you want to initially, think about how you can create a longer-term programme of community engagement work that enables you to meet all your ambitions over a longer period of time.

- Set r**ealistic and ethical freelance budgets.** Ensure freelance day rates are fair – remember, as well as paying for freelancers' specialist expertise, day rates are also covering holiday and sick pay, insurance, and other freelance costs. Never expect freelancers to work for free. If you are unsure what budget to set, seek advice from freelancers.

- Put in place **clear procurement and payment processes for freelancers.** Pay on time and never pay later than 30 days after receiving an invoice.

- Set **clear expectations about what freelancers will and won't be required to do** as part of the project. Make sure you agree terms and conditions and put a contract in place. Build good relationships with freelancers and communicate with them clearly and regularly.

- Consider offering **mentoring or peer support** to people working on a project to help them gain experience, seek advice, share any difficulties, and find solutions to issues. This could be a mentor or buddy from inside or outside your museum.

- Be aware of the **context and cultural climate** we are working in. Create an **internal and external communications plan** as part of the planning process, something you might do with your Marketing and Comms team if you have one, or a freelance communications specialist. Prepare an FAQ and information sheet for internal staff and volunteers, detailing exactly what the project is about and the key messages they should be aware of if, for example, they're asked questions by visitors. You might pre-prepare statements to utilise in press releases and external communications, including clearly articulating your project and its aims, along with your museum's position and commitment to the work. Make sure your community partners are included in your communications planning; you have a responsibility to both platform and protect partners.

- Provide **appropriate training** for those working on the project. This might include, for example, safeguarding, trauma-informed practice, mental health awareness, etc.

- Build in time for **reviewing and reflecting** on your practice and regularly check in on everyone involved in the process. You might combine this with team away days or time out of the museum.

- Those managing people involved in the work should continue regular one-to-one meetings and offer space for **wellbeing checks**. You might create Wellbeing Action Plans to support this process.

- Make sure all **staff are supported in a way that works for them.** You might put staff, volunteer and freelance access riders in place to help create inclusive working environments. Understand your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This includes making reasonable adjustments in place for disabled people in the workplace.

What do I need to consider and put in place for the work to be as ethical as possible?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Qualities and Skills for Community Engagement

Facilitating community engagement work that is both ethical and impactful requires a range of personal qualities and skills. You act as a conduit between the communities you are working with and the organisation you represent, managing the expectations, aims, objectives, process, outputs and outcomes of the work and the people invested in it.

Community engagement can be daunting when you first start out, but the more you do, the more proficient and confident you will become. During this process, you'll not only learn more about the diversity of the communities but also more about yourself. By regularly practising community engagement, you'll continue to develop proficiency and confidence.

You can also enhance your learning through research, training, peer-to-peer support, and mentoring. Investing in training to keep developing and honing your skills is very worthwhile.

Image caption: Tŷ Pawb, Wrexham, Museum of the Year finalist 2022, © Emli Bendixen/ Art Fund © Emli Bendixen/ Art Fund 2022

Qualities and Skills for Community Engagement

Here's a list of the qualities and skills that are required to facilitate community engagement work. Some of them are more specialist (e.g. facilitation skills) and others are more general (e.g. timekeeping) but all are integral to creating welcoming spaces and positive experiences and outcomes for all involved.

- Community engagement requires **care** and **empathy** for the communities you are engaging with. Keep **ethics** at the forefront of your mind as you plan and deliver the project. You might be working with audiences who are underserved by your organisation. Take time to understand everyone's needs and wants.

- **Communicate** clearly and **facilitate** the forums in which the conversations, discussions and creativity takes place. You need to be able to **hold the space** without overpowering it. You can find out more about 'holding the space' in the Incomplete Glossary and in this [online resource](#).

- **Actively listen** to the communities with whom you are working. Be present in the conversation. Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal interactions. Listen attentively to the speaker(s). Ask open-ended questions to encourage further responses. Paraphrase and reflect back what speaker(s) have said to check for clarity and enable them to reflect further. Listen to understand speakers' point of view without judgement.

- **Multitask** when required. For example, you might take minutes or notes to clarify, reflect, summarise and share while sessions are taking place. You could ask a colleague to support a session as an observer and note taker to support you to focus on facilitating. Alternatively, with written permission from participants, you could record the session.

- Good **timekeeping** is integral to both the flow and delivery of the community engagement, and the wellbeing of all those involved. Starting and finishing on time is an act of care, demonstrating you care about participants' time and other commitments. Take a flexible approach to sessions when you can. If you find tasks are taking longer than expected, change your approach or reduce the number of activities, rather than running over time.

- Project your **energy** and **enthusiasm** to fuel the work, while also pacing sessions at the right level for yourself and participants. Be mindful of your own energy levels; engagement work can quickly sap energy and needs to be paced appropriately to ensure you don't burn out.

- Be welcoming and friendly to build **authentic** community relationships, while remaining **professional** to maintain boundaries.

- Be comfortable with uncertainty. Community engagement work doesn't necessarily follow a set path and may include unexpected pathways and outcomes, particularly if you're using co-creation approaches. You need to be **adaptable** and **flexible** to meet the needs of everyone involved.

- Be **aware** of your own expertise and energy level limits. You might need to access others' expertise or signpost people to further resources. Notice your energy levels and make sure you take appropriate breaks and rest to ensure you don't become depleted.

Qualities: caring, empathetic, ethical, energetic, enthusiastic, authenticity, professionalism, adaptable, flexible, awareness.

Skills: communication, facilitation, listening, multitasking, timekeeping.

Facilitation Skills

Facilitation is a key element of community engagement work, whether you are facilitating a one-off focus group or workshop or a series of co-creation sessions.

Don't worry if you are new to this type of work. Facilitation is a craft that can be learned and developed. If you feel you need to develop or improve your skills, you could undertake training or get support from a colleague or someone in your network. The best way to improve your skills is to keep practising.

Here are some top tips for good facilitation:

- Determine the **purpose of, and desired outcomes** for, the workshop, meeting or session you are facilitating beforehand. For example, are you looking to help participants get to know each other, generate new ideas, solve problems, or make a collective decision? Find a workshop or session structure that will help the group think and work together effectively. This might include an open discussion, structured discussion, and/or exercises or games to help people share views, come up with ideas, and make decisions together. You can find ideas for facilitation exercises on the Seeds for Change website.

- Make sure **participants understand what their contributions will influence and what's out of scope**. For example, people participating in a consultation exercise might influence the content of exhibitions but won't be responsible for making the final decisions about content, and not all of their ideas might come to fruition.

- **Don't try to do too much** in one session. Think about what's reasonable to achieve in the time available.

- Consider **accessibility and inclusion**. Make sure sessions are as comfortable as possible for each participant. Give participants the opportunity to share any access needs with you before the session. Create an inclusive environment and provide a warm welcome. Consider including different forms of participation – for example, individual thinking, discussions in pairs and/or groups, visual stimulus, hands-on activities – to support diverse preferences and needs. See this online guide by the Disability and Philanthropy Forum for more information. To further create a safe, welcoming environment for all, consider utilising trauma-informed facilitation techniques.

- Utilise a **format that meets people's needs** – for example, participants might prefer in-person or online sessions, or a hybrid model.

- **Communicate clearly**. Make sure everyone understands what you are asking of them.

- **Set and manage expectations** so everyone knows what's expected of them and understands roles and responsibilities. If you're co-creating work, you might set these roles and responsibilities together with participants.

- Include a **starter activity** to help warm the group up and potentially get to know each other if required. Include a **closing activity** too – you might recap key points or ask for any last-minute questions.

- If you're working with a group over a period of time, work together to create a **group contract** during the first session, which sets out agreed behaviours that all members of the group will adhere to. The contract might include a group decision about how to address any comments or behaviours that others might find hurtful.

- For one-off sessions, such as focus groups, set out expectations at the start of the session – for example, what participants need to do to show they want to speak (e.g. raise a hand). Make it clear to participants that offensive and/or harmful comments and behaviours will not be tolerated.

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- Embrace **potential discomfort and uncertainty.** Workshops/sessions might not run in exactly the way you have planned – and often won't do! **Work flexibly** and proactively consider how you might make changes to the session if your initial timings go awry. Look for signs of engagement, energy and tiredness. You could check in with the group to see how they are feeling if you are not sure.

- You might find a group has **differing opinions**. Try to proactively consider any obstacles to collaborative decision making and agreement (i.e. what are the main things you think people might disagree on?) and prepare for how best to address them. Use active listening skills, questions, and exercises to help groups find consensus.

- If someone or a small number of people are **dominating discussions**, use facilitation exercises, such as those on the Seeds for Change website, to help others join in. You could also ask participants to do a writing or drawing activity and feed back individually, and/or ask participants to work in pairs to share ideas. If online, you could use breakout groups to ensure more people get a chance to speak. Don't be afraid to politely ask someone to summarise their contribution in order to create time to bring others into the conversation.

- Become **comfortable with moments of silence**. Silence often means people are thinking and formulating ideas and suggestions. Allow people time to respond to questions and give them time to process thoughts. Ask open questions to encourage people to think and explore their ideas.

- If people go **off topic**, you might remind them of the objectives of the session. Have a sheet of paper in the room or, if online, an online whiteboard – the 'car park' – where non-relevant issues that are raised can be captured and returned to if required. This helps people know you are listening to them but also helps keep workshops/sessions on track.

What skills do I already have?

What skills do I need to learn or develop?

How will I learn or develop these skills?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Collaborating with other Museums on Community Engagement Work

The Going Places partners are working in small networks to create exhibitions that will tour to each museum in the network. You might be doing a similar project or taking another approach that involves working in partnership with other museums.

Here's some tips about how to effectively work in partnership with museums and other organisations:

- Start by both sharing your **organisation's vision, missions, and objectives.** Consider what you have in common, what's important to each organisation, and what shared aims your project could help to meet.

- Share **individual and organisational strengths and weaknesses.** What can you learn from each other? Who should be responsible for each part of the project? Are there opportunities for peer-to-peer learning across organisations?

- Decide your **individual and joint 'red lines' –** what won't you do in this project?

- Understand **what needs to work to make the collaboration happen and set expectations for working together.** This might include, for example, agreeing how you will communicate, how often you will communicate, when and where you'll meet, roles and responsibilities, and shared project limitations and boundaries. Create a shared contract or memorandum of understanding that sets these out in writing.

- Apply the same rigour to working with **museum partners as you do to working with communities.** Create safe spaces for honest, open conversations and get to know each other by spending time building relationships, trust, and rapport.

- **Communicate clearly and regularly.** If issues arise, collaborate to tackle these together and find shared solutions.

- **Talk through difficulties in a timely manner** before they potentially become worse. If relationships become difficult or strained, proactively put things in place to tackle issues. For example, you might work with an external facilitator or coach to help you work through the issues or seek advice from a mentor or advisor.

- **Celebrate shared successes.** Consider how you'll celebrate success and thank staff, freelancers and volunteers – as well as community participants - who've been involved in the project.

- **Decide if and how you are going to keep the relationship going after a project has finished.** What might a long-term relationship look like? If you aren't going to work together again, how are you going to end the relationship well?

Image caption: Turner Contemporary, Family and Learning Workshop, © Turner Contemporary

Which, if any, partners would I like to collaborate with and why? How will I approach potential partners?

When partners are in place, how will I effectively work together to ensure good outcomes for everyone?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Funding

You might decide to apply to one or more funding body to help fund your community engagement work. We have listed several potential funders and included a link to The Heritage Funding Directory, which includes information about a wide range of trusts and foundations.

Here are a few things you need to consider when applying for funding:

- Many **funders welcome being contacted** by potential applicants. Take the opportunity to discuss your project ideas and application to make sure you're on the right track.

- Understand each **funder's priorities and grant criteria** and make sure your application meets these criteria.

- **Explain your project clearly** so the funder understands exactly what you'll be doing. Answer the questions: What?, Who?, Why?, Where?, How?, and When? It's really important to explain why your project is needed – what difference will it make to people, communities, and your organisation?; why is this important?; why does the project need to happen now?; what will be the consequence(s) if the project doesn't happen?

- Explain **how your project aligns with your organisation's overall aims and objectives.**

- Provide **evidence that your project is needed**. This might include audience data that shows your organisation has potential to build relationships with new audiences, contextual information (e.g. evidence of local community need), and letters of support from project partners.

- Include a **clear budget**. Break down costs so the funder understands exactly how their money will be invested. Get quotes and estimates to help you cost items. Make sure you only include items that are eligible.

- **Get someone to check through your application**; it's easy to miss something or include typos.

- **Include all the information required by the funder**, including any additional documents.

- Take note of **funding deadlines** and give yourself enough time to write and submit the application.

- If your application is **unsuccessful**, ask for feedback if the funder allows. If you follow this feedback and apply again, you might receive funding in the future.

- If you are **successful**, make sure you send back any required paperwork to the funder by the deadline. Make sure you understand and comply with the terms and conditions of the grant.

Potential Funders

- Art Fund: https://www.artfund.org/professional/get-funding

- Arts Council England: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-open-funds

- Association of Independent Museums: https://aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants/

- Museums Association: https://www.museumsassociation.org/funding/

- The National Lottery Community Fund: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes

- The National Lottery Heritage Fund: https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/what-we-fund

- The Heritage Alliance and the Architectural Heritage Fund manage The Heritage Funding Directory, a free guide to financial support for anyone undertaking UK related heritage projects: https://www.heritagefundingdirectoryuk.org/

Which funders might
I apply to?

What are the priorities
of each funder?

How does my proposed
project align with
these priorities?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Considering Compensation

Here we outline a set of guiding principles and a framework for our approach to compensation, which reflect the values, mission and aims of Going Places.

Values that underpin this compensation framework:

- Equity and fairness
- Transparency
- Valuing all forms of expertise
- Sustainability

It might be helpful to ask yourself the following questions when planning a community engagement activity and thinking about compensating participants:

- What **type of engagement** will people participate in?
- What is the **purpose of the engagement** taking place?
- What **role will participants have**?
- What **motivates them to take part**?
- What is **their level of involvement**; and how much time, energy, (participatory and emotional) labour, commitment and responsibility is required of the participant?
- **How are the decisions shared**, and to what extent are they shared?
- What is the **expertise of the participants** and how will you fully value and respect this? Everyone who participates in your project will bring expertise with them. Consider how you will ensure you fully understand the breadth of people's expertise and what skills and experience they might be willing to give to the project? For example, a participant might have design skills that you have been unaware of but that they would like to use. A skills audit and conversations with participants might be helpful here.
- What **type of relationship** is being developed?
- What **budget and resources** are available to you?
- **How will you make all of this transparent to everyone involved** (participants, staff and volunteers across the museums, even if not directly involved)?

Considering Compensation

Here's a list of different forms of remuneration you might consider for your project:

- A fee or honorarium (equivalent to at least Living Wage)
- Vouchers
- Credit schemes (e.g. https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/jobs/volunteering/lancashire-time-credits/; https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/volunteer-your-time-and-earn-time-credits)
- Covering expenses
- Providing refreshments / per diems
- Free / discounted room hire
- Free membership
- Free entry into exhibitions
- Free dedicated talks, tours, workshops, activities and / or events
- Free parking
- Survey prize draw
- Offer grants to community partners
- Training / Skills exchange / Work experience / Portfolio development
- Apprenticeships / Accredited courses / Certificate of participation / Reference for CV
- Keeping the output of the collaboration, including being given shared Intellectual Property rights
- Sharing authorship and ownership and full credits

When to compensate is not always a clear-cut decision, and there is no one size fits all model.

For example, a museum visitor might also be a participant in a drop-in activity, or a museum volunteer might support an engagement activity - in cases like these we would not expect to remunerate visitors and volunteers with payment, but we might offer other forms of compensation like refreshments and reimbursement of expenses respectively. We need to think about compensating a participant taking part in a consultation. This might be a monetary payment, but it also might be offering participants vouchers, free entry or membership, reimbursing expenses, offering incentives etc. If offering vouchers or payment, we suggest paying or giving vouchers to the value of more than the per hour Living Wage.

Where compensation is more clear-cut is when delivering co-creation projects. In longer term, in-depth projects, we often work with others who are getting paid for their time and expertise. For example, when we pay artists, it is important to pay reasonable rates. Please see 'a-n/AIR Paying Artists Guide'; Arts Council England's Supporting Practitioners; and a-n's 'Structurally F**cked: an inquiry into artists' pay and conditions in the public sector in response to the Artists Leaks data' for further guidance on paying artists and freelancers. Given this, we should ask ourselves why aren't we paying our co-creators and collaborators? Ideally, we should offer a fee or honorarium equivalent to Living Wage or more for their time, expertise and commitment. **Keep all this in mind when deciding whether or how you compensate people.**

Considering Compensation

Some additional things to consider:

- Where possible, **remuneration should be factored into budgets** in the planning stages and consideration to sustainability should be given.

- **Remuneration should be discussed transparently and in advance** with participants.

- Be mindful of any **potential issues or barriers.** For example, participants might be in receipt of state benefits that could be affected by any additional income. Mitigate this by working with participants in advance to understand what is feasible – you might ensure the payment is set at a level that doesn't impinge on their benefits or offer non-financial benefits instead. Other barriers might include participants not having a bank account or a registered address for invoicing.

- **Payment might not be applicable to some partners and collaborators**, for example for schools and educational institutions or other organisations where the work falls into the remit of their own work.

- Do your **organisational procurement processes** offer ways to pay co-creation participants – who might be classed as 'non-standard suppliers' easily and without unnecessary bureaucracy? If not, how might you work with your colleagues who are responsible for finances and procurement to ensure participants are paid easily and on time?

- Finally, a word of caution. As with any community engagement activity, issues of power play a complex role. Compensation is no different. As François Matarasso writes in his blog post [Who gets paid - and why?](#): 'In participatory art, when people may be contributing some of the most precious things they have – their own stories – paying them can actually disempower them. Being paid can make someone lose control over their own participation or even prevent them from withdrawing consent. Money can be a way of exploiting people too.' That being said, this should never be used as an excuse not to pay people. Instead, time and care needs to be taken to set up your project and deciding upon how participants should be compensated. It might be helpful to consider increasing participant safeguarding to ensure participants fully understand what they are getting involved in, that they give their informed consent to participate, and that they understand they can withdraw at any time and still receive payments for any activity they have participated in up until that date. An accessible memorandum of agreement / community contract between the museum and participants is helpful here.

Framework for Compensation

The following framework for compensation was developed for the Going Places project in collaboration with project partners. It is designed to help museums make decisions about compensating collaborators, participants, volunteers, and leaders/facilitators. You might wish to use this framework to make decisions about compensation in other projects too.

Thanks to Dana Andrews of Touring Exhibition Group (TEG) for sharing MAGNET's (Museum and Galleries Network for Exhibition Sharing) work in this area.

Participants

- Compensation for time and expertise OR incentives for participation
- Reimburse for expenses if consultation - but not for a one-off workshop

Collaborators / Co-creators

- Reimburse for expenses
- Compensation for time and expertise

Volunteers

- Reimburse volunteers in line with your organisation's volunteer policy

Leaders / Facilitators

- Formal contract and deliverables
- Reimburse for expenses
- Payment for time and expertise

Who?	What?	Compensation
Participants Co-creation or Participation • May be involved in a one-off session to contribute towards / create something	Delivering an activity that enables people to contribute towards a co-created piece, or create something. For example, workshop in which people each create part of a large artwork; or each create a print that will be displayed as part of an exhibition. Organisations either co-create the work with participants; or, if participation, organisations initiate, lead and control the work, with participants actively engaging and contributing to the creation and sharing of content, with opportunities to connect to each other.	The event may have been free to attend with materials and refreshments provided.
Participants Consultation • May be involved in a one-off consultation session, such as a focus group or interview, to share their views and feedback	Seeking feedback, views and opinions from stakeholders – often community members – to inform decision-making.	Compensation for time and expertise OR incentives for participation. If compensating for time and expertise: • For sessions e.g. focus groups, interviews: Financial compensation (per hour) – cash or a voucher • For a survey: Prize draw that can be won by one participant e.g. offering a voucher or an equivalent incentive, such as a behind the scenes tour or free parking. If providing incentives for participation: • Incentives e.g. museum / exhibition entry, free room hire, etc. If the event is in-person (e.g. in-person interview or focus group): • Reimburse for travel expenses, or provide equivalent compensation e.g. free cup of coffee in the café, free parking, etc.

Collaborators and co-creators Co-creation or participation • Working with an existing group who already regularly meet • Working with a school or college group who will be receiving school / college credits for participation	This may involve shared ownership of a project, or could include one-off sessions, or a longer term collaboration with a partner organisation with different participants involved in each session.	If the group are receiving credit from their schools / college for participation it may not be appropriate to compensate, but to cover travel and provide refreshments. Collaborate with the group you are working with to come to agreed arrangements.
Collaborators and co-creators Community co-creation • Individuals brought together by the museum	Shared ownership of a project (exhibition / display / resource / event etc.) with the community (this could be anything from one individual up to a large community group / or local organisation). The community are part of the decision-making process, and, alongside the museum, have responsibility for the outcomes of the project. Organisations give collaborators and co-creators support.	Must be compensated and have travel expenses covered. This is likely to be financial compensation but could also include: • Museum / Exhibition entry for collaborators and their families • Vouchers • Childcare costs for attending sessions • Free or discounted room hire • Free museum membership • Free event(s) e.g. talks, tours, workshops, activities • Free parking • Etc.

Collaboration with an organisation All types of community engagement • A formal group (e.g. Andy's Men's Club, knitting circle, school group, youth	The group might be, for example, co-creating an exhibition, or attending a participatory workshop to create a piece for an exhibition. What can you offer the organisation? You might compensate an organisation rather than individuals e.g. Andy's Men's Club, knitting circle, schools.	When collaborating with an organisation, you might compensate the organisation rather than each individual. Collaborate with the organisation you are working with to come to agreed arrangements. Consider what you can offer the organisation. This could be, for example, free room hire, free group museum membership, free workshop, etc. If the group are receiving credit from their schools / college for participation it may be appropriate not to compensate, but to cover travel and provide refreshments.
Volunteers All types of community engagement • Individuals who volunteer for your organisation and support development / delivery/ evaluation of activities		Compensate volunteers in line with your organisation's volunteer policy. This may include incentives for participation (e.g. refreshments) and / or reimbursement of travel expenses.
Leaders/Facilitators All types of community engagement • Individuals, including artists and freelancers, hired to develop and / or deliver and / or evaluate community engagement sessions		• Formal contract and deliverables • Reimburse for expenses (this may be included in an overall fee) • Payment for time and expertise • Advice on payment can be found here: Paying Artists Exhibition Payment Guide and Arts Council England Fair Pay. You should ensure artists and freelancers are compensated fairly for their time, including any development and evaluation time.

Who is participating in the project?

What will their participation look like?

How will I compensate the people who are participating?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:
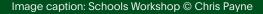
Approaches to Community Engagement

'Community engagement' is a broad term that can mean numerous things to people, as can different names for types of engagement.

Approaches to community engagement can be described as, for example, 'consultation', 'co-creation', 'participation', 'co-production', 'co-design', and 'hosting'. In some cases, museums use different names when describing very similar types of engagement. All these names are valid and it's important for you to understand and feel comfortable with the description(s) of community engagement used by your museum.

In the process of developing this toolkit, we worked with museum partners to create a Going Places model of community engagement, which defined terms for different approaches to community engagement that are being used in the Going Places project. The model was inspired by Chrissie Tiller's (2014) spectrum of participatory performing arts practice. Agreeing shared definitions for these terms was important for Going Places, as it meant all the museum partners had a shared language to use when planning and talking about their projects. We hope you find them useful too.

The community engagement approaches featured in our model are:

- Consultation
- Participation
- Co-creation
- Hosted

None of the approaches in the model are more valid or important than the other; all provide helpful ways to develop relationships with communities and support communities to participate in museums. When developing your project, choose the approach that works best for your organisation and communities.

Image caption: Schools Workshop © Chris Payne

	Consultation	Participation	Co-creation	Hosted
	Cultural and heritage organisations seek feedback, views and opinions from stakeholders, often local communities	Cultural and heritage organisations initiate, lead and control the work, but participants actively engage and contribute to the creation and sharing of content, with opportunities to connect to each other	Decision-making, responsibility and ownership of work is shared between collaborators and cultural and heritage organisations. Organisations give collaborators support, tools and resources to co-lead the work and achieve their shared goals	Cultural and heritage organisations turn over some of their facilities and/or resources to stakeholders so that they can use the museum to satisfy their own needs and desires
WHO is involved?	Facilitated by external consultants or internal staff with a range of stakeholders. These might include: existing audiences, target audiences, community groups, formal and informal educational groups and partners	Staff and participants. Other partners and organisations	Staff and collaborators. Other partners and organisations	Stakeholders and staff when requested. Other partners and organisations
HOW does the practice take place?	Organisations set the parameters and might target / invite specific stakeholders or the general public to participate in consultation. You might want to think about approaching a mix and diverse range of people. Communities might casually opt in or attend with the explicit intention to participate	Organisations control plans, processes and outputs. Participants might casually opt in or attend with the explicit intention to participate	Wholly collaborative process, where collaborators' goals and working styles are just as important as the organisation's Shared decision-making and ownership, with equal value given to collaborators' contributions	Organisations share resources, tools and space with stakeholders, such as community groups. Often processes and the work are driven purely by stakeholders, with ownership and outputs lying totally with them

HOW do we share power?	Power isn't shared in the consultation model, but community input is valued	Staff control the processes and final outcomes, but a degree of decision-making is shared with communities	Full co-creation is about challenging the usual power dynamics and aiming for equitable and mutually beneficial relationships	Participants control the work, whilst making sure they adhere to the organisation's rules
WHAT happens?	Focus groups, workshops, vox pops, surveys, and creative consultation e.g. to test, review, strengthen and shape content, programming and strategies	One-off or occasional workshops, activity sessions, meetings e.g. to support the creation of content	Regular meetings, planning and recruitment, workshops, activity sessions, debrief and evaluation sessions. Skills and expertise shared between collaborators and organisations	Stakeholders lead on activities with minimal involvement from organisations
WHY?	To have a better understanding of the needs and desires of stakeholders in relation to your organisation, to explore opportunities and barriers to visiting, to co-produce new ideas, and / or to feed into decision-making processes. To drive organisational change. To build audiences, relationships and a sense of community ownership. To honour stakeholders' contributions	To build relationships, audiences and partners. To develop participants' and the organisation's skills and creativity, and enhance knowledge and expertise. To improve health and wellbeing, and support a positive change in attitudes and behaviour. To support organisational change. To value participants' contributions	To generate more inclusive and accessible practice that is mutually beneficial for museums and collaborators. To develop, build and maintain meaningful relationships with collaborators and broaden audiences and partners. To share expertise, skills and develop a shared vision and sense of ownership. To enhance creativity and knowledge, to improve health and wellbeing, and support a positive change in attitudes and behaviour. To enhance and deepen knowledge and understanding of organisations (and their sites, collections and stories) and drive organisational change. To fully value and respect collaborators' contributions	To build relationships and develop a sense of community ownership of organisations. To support organisational change. To fully value stakeholders' contributions and agency. To share assets with communities where there aren't shared civic resources

WHERE?	Might take place in the museum or offsite	Often takes place in the museum and / or in community settings	Often takes place in the museum and / or in community settings	Often takes place in the museum
WHEN?	Often a one-off encounter	Might be a one-off encounter or taking place over a period of time	Over a period of time. This might be a long period of time, depending on the project	Might be a one-off encounter or a series of regular activity

Visitors viewing the Naples Collection gallery at Compton Verney © Zeinab Batchelor / Art Fund 2024

Community Engagement Your Way

There is no hierarchy when it comes to consultation, participation, co-creation, or hosting.

Each approach is valid and valuable, enabling you to develop relationships with communities and include community voices in the design of new content and services. Depending on the amount of time and available resources you have, and the audience(s) you're trying to engage with, you might decide to choose one approach, or you might deliver a combination of approaches for different audiences.

Whichever approach you take, there's no one or 'correct' way to carry out community engagement. For example, a co-creation project doesn't have to mean meeting with a group every week for a year; it can involve delivering a smaller number of workshops over a shorter period of time. It's very important to consider your capacity and the resources you have available to you and not overstretch. Overworked, burnt out staff should not be the consequence of undertaking community engagement. Plan an approach that works for your organisation and that meets your key objectives.

To help plan your community engagement project, consider the answers to these questions:

- **How much time is available?** Consultation, for example, can take less time than co-creation. If you have limited capacity but want to deliver a co-creation project because this suits the work you are doing, think about how you can create a project that aligns with your capacity. Similarly, make sure your project also aligns with the capacity of the individuals or groups with whom you are working.

- How much **staff and volunteer capacity** do you have available for this project? How does this project fit with people's other work responsibilities?

- What **budget** is available for this work?

- **Who are the audience(s) you want to engage with?** What might be their preferred approach(es)? If you are unsure which approach(es) to use, collaborate with communities you are trying to engage with to design an approach that works for everyone.

- **What will success look like for your project?** Success isn't about how many hours you've worked on the project; it's about the impact(s) the work has on communities and your museum. What do you need to do to reach the outcomes you want to reach?

Approaches

In this section, you can find more information about each approach featured in the Going Places community engagement model.

Image caption: Museums Northumberland, Digital Engagement, Respond and Reimagine © Courtesy Museums Northumberland

Consultation

What is consultation?

Consultation is when organisations **seek feedback, views and opinions from people** to help test, review, strengthen, and shape e.g. content, programmes, strategies, and services. This might include seeking views from existing audiences, target audiences, community groups, formal and informal educational groups, and partners.

Values: listening, collaboration, creativity, transparency, all forms of expertise valued, care and compassion, respect, honesty, fun.

Principles

Consultation is done **for** community members and partners, and the learning is primarily a one-way process, with staff setting the tone and parameters of the engagement. Organisations might invite specific community members or stakeholders to participate or do an open call out to recruit members of the desired audiences / communities. Organisations might decide to consult with a specific community or diverse communities, depending on the objectives of the consultation. Consultees might casually opt in (e.g. take part in a survey during a visit to a museum) or attend a consultation session with the explicit intention to participate (e.g. signing up for, and then attending, a focus group).

Consultation is often a one-off encounter; for example, a focus group, workshop, survey, creative session, or vox pop. Organisations might decide to include several consultation methods within a project to gather a wider range of views and opinions. Consultation sessions might take place inside the organisation or offsite in a community setting. Sessions might be facilitated by staff or external consultants.

Consultees can benefit from feeling an increased sense of belonging and ownership, a sense of enjoyment from taking part in a fun and interesting session, and pride from seeing ideas they generate in a session being enacted.

Consultation can help organisations engage with and build new audiences, gain a better understanding of the needs and desires of audiences and stakeholders, and remain relevant to audiences.

Image caption: Art Assembly workshop, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester © David Oates/ Art Fund 2022

Consultation

Consultation Might Look Like…

- Focus group with young people to shape the content of an exhibition or programme.

- Online survey for local communities to explore their perceptions and awareness of a museum.

- Creative session for families with creative activities (e.g. creative writing, drawing, playdoh modelling) that explore their ideas for a new gallery or family programme.

- Placing ideas for a new gallery design in a space in your museum and / or community setting and inviting people to comment.

Top Tips for Consultation

- Plan **research questions** that will enable you to find out the information you need. What do you need to know and why? What questions will help you get this information?

- **Don't ask leading questions.** For example, ask 'Tell me what you think about the museum', rather than, 'Why do you love the museum?'.

- Consider whether you need to ask **closed or open questions**, or a mixture of both. Closed questions only have specific answers, whereas open questions – like 'why' and 'how' questions – will enable you to explore opinions in more depth.

- There are **lots of ways in which you can consult with communities**. These include focus groups, in-person and online surveys, interviews, vox pops, workshops, and creative techniques (e.g. photography, drawing, creative writing). Plan a consultation approach that suits the community/communities you are consulting with. These toolkits from SHARE Museums East and Neighbourhood Planning provide ideas for different consultation methods.

- Deliver consultation sessions on **days and at times** that suit the community / communities you are working with.

- **Send out schedules in good time** to enable people to prepare for the session. If you are asking people to go to an in-person session, give clear instructions about the venue e.g. how to get there, parking, public transport, access, etc.

- **Make sure consultees understand what the project is about and have consented to take part** in the research. You can find examples of focus group consent forms online.

Image caption: Art Assembly workshop, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester © David Oates/ Art Fund 2022

Participation

What is participation?

Participation is a form of community engagement that involves community participants in the creation and sharing of content and supports them to connect with each other - for example creating content for exhibitions or displays, or other forms of activity. A critical element of participation is the **active engagement** and **involvement of participants**, whether that be through casually opting into activities (e.g. taking part in a drop-in workshop at a museum) or coming with the explicit intention to participate. Without their contributions, the work wouldn't exist in its full form. Although participant involvement is crucial, and a degree of decision-making is shared, the organisation initiates and directs the work - controlling the plans, processes, and outputs.

Values: cooperation, creativity, all forms of expertise valued, care and compassion, respect, honesty, fun, developing a sense of achievement.

Principles

Similarly to consultation, participation is done **for** community members and partners, and the learning is primarily a one-way process, with staff setting the tone and parameters of the engagement.

Participatory work might include communities having a one-off encounter with a cultural or heritage organisation or taking part in workshops taking place over a period of time. This might take place inside a museum or offsite in a community setting - for example a community centre or school.

Participation can have a wide range of benefits for individual community members, including - new skills and knowledge learnt, enhanced creativity and wellbeing, increased confidence through their contributions being valued, new social opportunities, and broadened horizons.

Similarly, participation can benefit organisations in multiple ways - for example, opportunities to participate can build new audiences, attract more repeat visits, and be the starting point for developing more meaningful relationships with community partners. Knowledge learnt from the engagement might influence the decisions an organisation makes and can be part of a process that supports organisations to become more relevant and responsive to community needs and desires.

Image caption: Visitors at the café in Compton Verney © Zeinab Batchelor / Art Fund 2024

Participation

Participation Might Look Like…

- Pupils from local schools creating work (e.g. art, photography, writing) that goes on display at a museum.

- Artist-led workshop in which participants create artwork that is displayed at the museum. This could be, for example, participants each creating their own individual piece or working together to create a collaborative artwork.

- Visitors being given the opportunity to put a choice of artworks on display. See the Edinburgh Printmakers case study for more inspiration.

- Community photography competition where entries to the competition are put on display at a museum.

Top Tips for Participation

- Decide **how participants will be involved with the project**. What will they be asked to create or contribute to? What is the purpose of the participation and what will the outputs be? Will different audiences / communities participate in different ways?

- **Tailor activities to the community / communities with whom you are working**. What sort of activities will they enjoy? What activities will encourage them to engage and participate?

- If participants are creating something, **decide what will happen to these outputs** in the short and long-term? Will they be accessioned into the collection? Will they be returned to participants? Will they be put on long-term display in the museum or online?

- Consider **whether you are going to recruit an external facilitator or creative practitioner** to lead or support the work. For example, you might recruit an artist to lead workshops in which participants create artwork to go in an exhibition.

Image caption: Visitors in the shop at Compton Verney © Zeinab Batchelor / Art Fund 2024

Participation

Case Study: Edinburgh Printmakers: Castle Mills Then & Now: Whose Gallery is it Anyway?

An excellent example of participation in action is the exhibition and event 'Castle Mills Then & Now: Whose Gallery is it Anyway?' at Edinburgh Printmakers. From April - June 2024, the gallery opened up its space to the public, inviting them to participate in a range of creative and curatorial activities. Participants could bring in or make their own artwork onsite (using any form or medium, such as painting, printmaking, textiles, drawing, sculpture and performance), they could also mount their work in the main gallery space and remove other pieces if they wished to. They describe this as a real-time, in-person interactive experience and exhibition, that encourages the public to 'continuously modif[y] the exhibition, it never remains exactly the same, prompting a reflection on printmaking and the visual arts that goes beyond a single curator's selection' (Edinburgh Printmakers 2024). Accompanying the exhibition event was a public programme of talks, and activities for community groups and schools. Find out more about the event exhibition here.

Image caption: A visitor hangs work in the gallery, part of the exhibition 'Whose Gallery is it Anyway?' Image courtesy of Edinburgh Printmakers. Photo: © Alan Dimmick

Co-creation

What is co-creation?

Co-creation is a form of community engagement that involves community participants in an entirely collaborative process, where the creation and sharing of content is built from the ground up - for example, content for exhibitions, displays, events, collecting, or other forms of activity. A critical element of co-creation is the **sharing of expertise, skills, and life experience, and the development of a shared vision and sense of ownership.** Co-creation challenges traditional power dynamics and aims for equitable relationships. Participant involvement from the start is integral as decision-making, responsibility and ownership of the work is shared between collaborators and cultural and heritage institutions.

Values: collaboration, creativity, reciprocity, honesty and transparency, respect, equality where all forms of expertise are valued, responsibility, care and compassion, social justice, developing a sense of belonging.

Principles

Co-creation is done **with** community members and partners, and the learning is a two-way process, with participants and staff collaboratively setting the tone and parameters of the engagement. Museums work with community members to produce, for example, exhibitions and displays, programmes, audio guides, podcasts, object labels, schools and other learning resources, websites, events, retail products, etc.

Co-creation work usually involves communities having meetings or workshops with a cultural or heritage organisation over a period of time. The regularity of the meetings / workshops and length of the project should ideally be designed in collaboration with community members and should align with everyone's available capacity and resources. Co-creation often takes place inside a museum or offsite in community settings.

Co-creation can have a wide range of benefits for individual community members and communities more broadly, including – developing new understanding, learning new skills and knowledge, enhanced creativity and wellbeing, increased confidence, new social and employment opportunities, challenge preconceived ideas, broadening horizons, stronger connections with the organisation, changing perceptions of the community and their place within it, supporting communities in their self-empowerment, and developing their agency.

Museums can benefit from co-creation in multiple ways. Co-creation provides opportunities for democratic ways of working and can build new audiences and increase a museum's appeal to previously underserved and minoritised communities. Co-creators with specific lived experiences to bring to the project can inform and shape the decisions a museum makes, helping transform their thinking and practice.

Image caption: Silk Mill project ideation session, 2017 Image courtesy of Derby Museums.
Photo: © Chris Seddon Photography

Co-creation

Co-creation Might Look Like…

- Working in collaboration with a community group to develop and create a new exhibition.

- Collaborating with local art or product design students to create new products for a museum shop.

- Collaborating with teachers to produce new schools resources.

- Working with young people to use the museum's collections to develop a new tour, game, or experience.

- Working with local families to create a new family programme.

Top Tips for Co-creation

- Work in collaboration with co-creators to **develop joint aims for the project and decide on joint ways of working**.

- **Leave a good amount of time to develop and deliver your project.** Develop realistic timelines that include time for joint decision making and iterative working.

- Take time to **build trust and rapport** and develop a shared contract / code of conduct that the museum and co-creators adhere to.

- Allocate time for **review and reflection** throughout the project.

- Create a **psychologically safe environment** in which everyone knows it's okay to take risks, express ideas or concerns, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety can be developed by collaborating to establish clear expectations, encouraging open communication, actively listening, making sure people feel supported, and showing open appreciation when people speak up.

- Consider how staff can **support co-creators to learn new skills or develop knowledge** they might use during the project (e.g. text writing, research, etc). Similarly, consider **how co-creators can be fully supported to share their skills and experience** with staff and each other.

- Decide if and how **copyright** will be shared with co-creators.

- Remember, there is no requirement to meet with co-creators a specific number of times or on a very regular (i.e. weekly) basis. **Consider your capacity and the capacity of your colleagues;** don't plan a project schedule that risks burning people out. Similarly, **consider the capacity of the co-creators** - how much time do they have to give to projects and when are they available? Design the co-creation process in collaboration with co-creators to ensure the programme works for everyone.

- If you are working with **external designers**, make it clear this is a co-creation project and that co-creators will (potentially) be involved in making decisions about design. If designers are required to attend co-creation sessions, include this in the design brief and include enough budget to allow for this time. Leave enough time for designers to work iteratively in response to decisions made by co-creators.

- Consider whether you will **continue to have a working relationship with co-creators once the project has ended**. If so, what will this look like? If not, how will you end the relationship well?

Case Study: The Museum of Making at Derby Silk Mill

The Museum of Making at Derby Silk Mill tells the city's 300-year history of making and innovation. It was developed to be a place of public pride, and was created in collaboration with Derby's communities.

The Museum of Making has an ethos of co-production and collaboration. Over 1,500 people have been involved in its development, including working with designers and architects, undertaking research, and supporting events. More information about the project and its impacts can be found here.

Hosted

What is hosted engagement?

Hosted projects involve the museum **handing over** almost full **control to communities**, groups or partners by **offering up** use of its f**acilities, spaces, tools** and/or **resources** and, on some occasions, providing expert guidance and support as well. This approach allows participants to use the organisation to satisfy their own needs and desires and might include - for example, a community group using one of the organisation's spaces for a meeting with no charge. Another more well-known example would be an organisation hosting craft and makers stalls. This approach can be particularly useful if an organisation is struggling financially, or with resources or capacity, as it still offers an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships through sharing often privileged resources with communities and partners. Find out more about the characteristics of a hosted participatory model in Nina Simon's Participatory Museum.

Values: cooperation, all forms of expertise valued, democratic, care and compassion, humility, respect, honesty, transparency, agency, belonging.

Principles

Hosted engagement is done **by** community groups and partners, with the organisation perhaps supporting the process (e.g. making connections with community groups and partners, supporting event logistics, etc.) but leaving nearly all control at the door, acting as a strong community ally and asset.

Processes are purely driven by the hosted participants, with minimal involvement from the museum. Participants initiate, lead, plan and deliver all aspects of the work, while following required rules (e.g. health and safety procedures, risk assessments, licensing rules, etc). Outputs are solely owned by participants. These types of engagement might be one-off encounters (e.g. an evening event at a museum that's developed and delivered by a community group) or a series of regular activities (e.g. hosting a knitting group every week and giving them regular use of a space). Hosted activities mainly take place within an organisation.

In contrast to some of the other models of community engagement, this approach is less focused on developing mutually-beneficial relationships, and more about how the organisation can use its assets and power to more fully benefit the community. There are a wide range of benefits for hosted participants, including feeling recognised and valued by a museum for their contributions and agency, alongside a number of more practical advantages (as previously discussed). Hosted participants might also benefit from additional staff support or expertise (for example, project management, health and safety, marketing, etc.) when requested. Although organisational benefits are not the driving force of this type of work, organisations can nevertheless develop stronger and more meaningful connections and partnerships with communities and groups, and benefit from more creative, innovative and less resource-intensive organisational offers.

Hosted

Hosted Engagement Might Look Like…

- Providing space for a community or social group to meet on a regular basis.

- 'Takeover' of a whole museum or space within a museum by a community group. This might involve a community group organising and hosting an event in the space.

- Makers' market in a museum space, organised by a local makers' collective.

- Providing space to a community group who wish to deliver a family workshop in the museum.

- Hosting a community-created exhibition in a museum space.

Top Tips for Hosted Engagement

- Factor in the **time and budget** required to support hosted engagement. Although this approach can take fewer resources and less capacity than other forms of engagement, you'll still need to create capacity and find the necessary budget to undertake this work.

- Consider whether you will **go directly to communities** to ask if they'd like to deliver an event / series of events / exhibition, etc.; do an open call out for community groups;

or a mixture of both. If you **do an open call out,** have a clear, accessible system that enable communities to express interest and apply to host an event / exhibition.

- **Clearly communicate any organisational policies and procedures** that need to be adhered to, as well as facilities and resources that will be available to communities who are delivering hosted activities.

- **Decide what support you are going to make available to communities.** For example, you might provide support with logistics, health and safety, planning, marketing, etc. Make sure everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities.

- Consider creating a **code of conduct** that ensures hosted events / exhibitions are inclusive and accessible, welcoming, and safe.

- You might want to consider how to **deepen relationships with hosted participants**. For example, if you host a regular meeting of a social group, what might you put in place to encourage participants to take part in other museum activities?

Image caption: Student Art Pass Photoshoot, Design Museum, 26 June 2024, © Hydar Dewachi / Art Fund 2024

Hosted

Case Study: CCA Glasgow: Open Source Programming

CCA in Glasgow is a small arts hub and gallery space with no permanent collection, which puts on a series of temporary exhibitions and a rich public programme each year. Since 2006 they have developed an innovative open source approach to their work, recognising Glasgow's rich culture, large artist community, established music scene, and audiences' interests in film, literature and performance, as well as an opportunity to reflect 'more cultural perspectives than our small team could achieve on its own' (CCA Glasgow 2024). Their approach includes an innovative citizen-led strand of public programming, where they share their resources and building with a range of artists, individuals and organisations to programme their own events, including programming with SQIFF (Scottish Queer International Film Festival) and Counterflows.

Over time CCA Glasgow has formalised their process of open source programming. Now, the gallery has dedicated staff to support the programme as well as providing technicians and front of house staff are available at cost, an almost self-sufficient model, with the gallery taking no profit. In many cases spaces are offered for free, with organisations that have additional funding charged, but at a subsidised rate. The artistic community can submit proposals to hold events, activities and workshops for the public in the space, which the gallery selects from and then forms the gallery's public programme. Find out more about [CCA Glasgow's open source programming here](#).

Photo: Tiu Makkonen

Which approach(es) work best for the work I want to do, my museum, and the community/communities I'm working with?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Evaluating Community Engagement

Evaluation of a community engagement project or programme should be built-in from the start. Decide on your evaluation approach when you're planning your project and evaluate it throughout.

Evaluation should measure the extent to which the work is meeting, and has met, its intended aims and objectives. What impacts has the work had? What difference has it made to people, communities, and your museum?

Consider who will carry out evaluation of your work. Will this be done by staff and/or volunteers, or by an external consultant? If an external consultant, make sure you budget appropriately for this work and aim to contract them at the beginning of the process, not the end. If co-creating a project, involve co-creators in the evaluation process.

The Going Places evaluation is underpinned by a number of evaluation principles, which may also be helpful in informing other community engagement projects. Consider:

- **Focusing evaluation activity on 'learning' rather than on 'assessment'**, or simply 'advocacy'. This applies to organisations and individuals involved.

- **Fostering** honesty between individuals and organisations, to encourage discussion about what doesn't work, as well as what does.

- **Being transparent with everyone involved** about what information you are collecting for the evaluation and why.

- **Collect the minimum viable amount of data** from participating organisations in order not to place too great a burden on them. **Only collecting information that is useful to inform your understanding of whether the activity is achieving its aims**, and to feed into best practice in the sector. Ensure your work is GDPR compliant.

- **Focusing on the quality of the information** collected to ensure findings are robust and useful.

- Support organisations to **develop their skills and capacity** in delivering evaluation.

- **Involving community partners in the evaluation process** and be open to a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives to challenge assumptions.

Evaluating Community Engagement

A number of evaluation methods can be used to evaluate community engagement projects. Methods being utilised in the Going Places project are:

- **Workshop logs:** To record information about participants e.g. number of participants, age, post code, contact details, consents, needs and allergies, emergency contact; and to track behaviours of the group session by session e.g. any previous visits to the museum / gallery and when, frequency of attendance, facilitator's observations during the session, outputs logged (e.g. photos of workshops, content created). Ensure your work is GDPR compliant and that you securely store any personal data and delete the data when its no longer required.

- **Participants' reflections:** Participants record their own starting point in the process, such as a written or recorded (voice or video) introduction, responding to set questions; for example, 'What do you hope to get out of this project?', 'What does this museum/gallery mean to you?, 'What are three things you'd like to develop in yourself during this project?'. At the end of the project, participants reflect on their original responses and explore their experiences, skills learned, or other changes as a result of taking part.

- **Longitudinal tracking:** Museums keep in touch with participants (with opt in consent) and consult with them over time to explore long-term impacts of projects on participants.

- **Youth or community panel:** A panel of participants, managed by the project evaluator, who support evaluation. This could include, for example, undertaking visitor interviews, producing reviews of co-created content, facilitating reflection sessions, and designing visitor feedback forms. Appropriate training and support should be provided.

- **Visitor numbers:** Counting numbers of participants involved in the project and the number of visitors who engage with work that's produced (e.g. number of visitors to a co-created exhibition).

- **Visitor survey:** To capture participant and visitor feedback, along with demographic information. Surveys could be delivered in-person and / or online.

- **Visitor feedback interactives in co-created exhibitions or displays:** Activities that enable visitors to provide feedback while engaging with a co-created exhibition. This could include activities such as voting in response to questions posed by the exhibition, feedback walls, or games.

- **Staff observations:** Staff or volunteers record their observations of participants and / or visitors; for example, which parts of a co-created exhibition are visitors dwelling in and what are visitor dwell times?

- **Failspace team reflection:** What degree of success or failure have you had in different parts of the project, including the processes put in place and the development of your practice?

Evaluating Community Engagement

You can find other evaluation methods and approaches here:

- Little Book of Evaluation Tools, University of Oxford: https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/Curiosity%20Carnival-%20Little%20book%20of%20evaluation%20tools-%20to%20share.pdf

- Measuring Socially Engaged Practice, Museums Association: https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/measuring-socially-engaged-practice/

- How to Co-create an Evaluation, Mark Robinson: https://www.culturehive.co.uk/CVIresources/how-to-co-create-an-evaluation/

- Failspace: https://failspaceproject.co.uk/

- The Centre for Cultural Value https://www.culturehive.co.uk/research-and-evaluation-practice/

Take time to **analyse the data you collect and gather insights from the data**.

- What is the **data telling you?**

- What **lessons can you learn for future practice?**

- If you're delivering a **longer-term project, collect and analyse data throughout the project** to help you reflect on your practice and consider whether you need to make any changes.

- Consider **analysing the data with other people** so you can each bring your own perspectives.

Think about where and how you will **disseminate the evaluation**.

- **During the project**, you might regularly talk through findings with co-creators, for example. You might also have to regularly report back to internal and external stakeholders and funders.

- At the **end of the project**, you might disseminate your findings in a number of ways – for example, you could write a **project evaluation report**, produce a **video**, create a **website**, and / or **talk at a conference**. Consider which dissemination methods best suit the people and organisations who will be reading / watching / listening to your evaluation. You might disseminate the evaluation in several ways, depending on the intended audience(s).

What outcomes do we hope to see as a result of this project?

What methods will we use to evaluate the project?

Who will lead and support the evaluation?

How will we create time for review and reflection? What will this look like?

How will we disseminate evaluation findings and to whom?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Strategic Planning

- What organisational aims does our project align to?

- What are our project's aims and objectives?

- How will we evaluate our project? How will we know we've reached our aims and objectives? (See Evaluation)

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Staff Resource and Working with Colleagues

- Who will be involved in delivering our project? Staff? Volunteers? Freelancers? Draw on everyone's expertise and make sure everyone involved in the project is on board and fully understands the project.

- What role(s) will each person take in delivering our project? How much staff and volunteer time is available for this work? How will this time be used? Does anyone need training to support them to carry out tasks?

- Do we need to set out specific agreements with colleagues in other departments to support this work? For example, do we need to work with a Collections Manager or Registrar to create loan agreements?; Do we need to work with the Finance team to create payment processes for community groups?

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Budget

Remember, your budget is finite; you'll need to make choices as to what to include. Cut anything that doesn't help you meet your objectives. Make sure you include enough budget to provide the capacity and resources you need to deliver the project.

- What budget is available for this work? Are we using core budget, external funding, or a mixture of both? Do we need to source more external funding to enable this work to happen?

- How will the budget be allocated? What do we need to include to achieve our project aims and objectives? How much will staffing cost? How much money, if any, is required to compensate participants?

- Who needs to be involved in shaping our budget? Who needs to sign off the budget?

- Which, if any, external funders will we apply to? What activities and funding are we applying for?

- How will we monitor and report on the budget during the project? Who will be responsible for these tasks?

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Audiences

- Which communities are we going to engage? Will we engage existing audiences, new audiences, or both? Why are we choosing to engage this community / these communities?

Community engagement approach

- Which approach(es) best suits the needs of the project, the museum, and the community / communities we're working with?

- What will our project look like? What methods and approach(es) fit within our capacity, budget, and timescales?

- Where will community engagement take place? Which locations best suit the project and the community / communities?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Marketing and Communications

- What key messages need to be communicated to audiences, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders? When do these messages need to be communicated?

- Who will be involved in communicating the project to internal and external stakeholders? Do they require training to support this task?

- What marketing and communications methods we will we use to reach participants and other audiences?

- How will we communicate each stage and / or activity of our project? How will we communicate project successes and to whom?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Plan

Policies and Procedures

- What policies and procedures does the museum have in place to support this work? e.g. Health and Safety, Safeguarding.

- Do we need to make any additions or adjustments to our existing policies and procedures? e.g. Do we need more streamlined processes to support co-creators to receive financial compensation?

- What other, if any, documentation do we need to put in place to support this project? e.g. Risk Assessments.

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Recruit

- How will we recruit participants and / or co-creators? Which channels will we use?

- Will we approach potential partners directly or do an open call out (or both)?

- What will be the recruitment process? How will we make sure it's as inclusive as possible? What recruitment methods are appropriate for our intended participants? See **CIPD's Inclusive Recruitment toolkit** for advice on inclusive recruitment.

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Deliver

- How will we gain appropriate consents from participants and / or co-creators?
- What will be the mechanism for participants and / or co-creators to leave the project / one-off session?
- What will our community engagement session(s) look like? What activities will we include? Where will activities be delivered? What, if any, facilitation techniques do we need to employ?
- How will we build trust and rapport with participants and / or co-creators?
- How will we keep track of decisions made by the group, or ideas generated by consultees?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Deliver

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

- How and how often will we communicate with participants and / or co-creators during the project?

- How and how often will we communicate about the project to internal stakeholders e.g. staff and volunteers; and to external stakeholders e.g. funders?

- What will we do if things go wrong or don't go as we'd planned? Could we change our approach? Could we reach out to mentors, advisors, or people in our networks for advice?

- How will we make sure we reach project milestones and stick to the agreed timelines?

Community Engagement Roadmap

Whatever form of community engagement you're doing, you need to consider similar issues. Answering the questions on these pages will help you develop and shape your community engagement project, whichever approach you decide to take.

Evaluate

- How will we make sure evaluation is built into our project from the start?

- What methods will we use to collect data? When will we collect data and from whom? Who will be responsible for this?

- When will we analyse the data we have collected? Who will be responsible for this?

- Will we build in time for review and reflection? What might this look like? How often will we review and reflect? Who will be involved in this?

- How will we disseminate the findings of our evaluation and to whom? Who will be responsible for creating dissemination materials e.g. reports, videos, etc.

- How will we use evaluation to shape our future practice?

Space to jot down ideas, make notes, or record thoughts to come back to later:

Incomplete Glossary

Within museums, galleries, and cultural and heritage organisations, the phrase 'community engagement' is widely used, but is not always fully understood, or can mean different things at different museums. Often, community engagement is used as an umbrella term for work that is considered participatory. Certain terms (e.g. co-production, co-design, co-creation) are also sometimes used interchangeably.

We've created this glossary to help define words and terms that you might encounter when planning and delivering your community engagement project. Having a broad understanding of the terminology can help you manage expectations, understand what types of roles and relationships are being developed, be clear about the level of involvement expected and resources needed for your community engagement work, and clarify the motivations and values that are underpinning your work.

We've called this an incomplete glossary recognising that language and terminology is always changing, adapting and evolving, and that it can sometimes be contradictory and complex. We hope the glossary will continue to be added to and altered over time to reflect evolving language and any changes to community engagement practice.
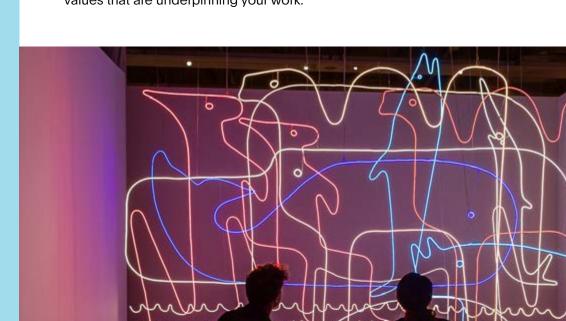
Image caption: Student Art Pass Photoshoot, Design Museum, 26 June 2024, © Hydar Dewachi / Art Fund 2024

Incomplete Glossary

Here we outline what we mean by the following terms:

Community Engagement: Includes a wide range of activities that, broadly speaking, involve communities in democratic and inclusive processes of shared decision-making to generate more meaningful relationships, shape more relevant content, and find solutions together with museums, galleries, and cultural and heritage organisations.

Community: A general term for a group of people with similar interests, commonalities, from a specific geographical location, and / or sharing an identity, culture or protected characteristic. It's important to remember that communities are always shifting, that people might identify with some communities more than others, or not feel part of a community at all, and that just because two people are part of a community doesn't mean they have anything else in common.

Underrepresented, Underserved, or Minoritised Communities: Groups of people who cultural and heritage organisations don't engage with as fully as other groups or may not engage with currently at all. This might include audiences, as well as staff and volunteers.

Existing Audiences: Groups of people who frequently visit your museum, gallery, or cultural / heritage organisation, and in general have no specific barriers to engagement.

Collaborator/s and Co-creator/s: Individuals or groups of people who are actively involved as co-leads in all stages of the work, from initiation and conceptualisation right through to delivery and evaluation. Their expertise, skills, knowledge and lived experience is fully valued and respected. They co-develop a shared vision and goal with museums and are joint authors and owners of the work. As a rule, we should offer collaborators and co-creators remuneration for their time and expertise - see the Going Places Compensation Framework for more details.

Creative Practitioner: A professional with a wide or specific skillset who uses and shares creativity with others. This includes, for example, artists, dancers, writers, illustrators, animators, photographers, filmmakers, musicians, storytellers, and designers.

Facilitator: A person who guides a group through a democratic process to accomplish their goals. They model the types of behaviours and values expected of the group and set out to generate a positive group dynamic for engagement through giving everyone the opportunity to contribute equally and fairly and explore together, encouraging everyone to take responsibility, and work in cooperation with honesty.

Incomplete Glossary

Here we outline what we mean by the following terms:

Participant/s: An individual or group of people who actively take part in a form of engagement and decision-making process, sharing their skills, knowledge and expertise. Participants are led by the organisation. Depending on the type of engagement, level of involvement, and investment in time and energy, you might offer compensation to participants – see the Going Places Framework for more details.

Stakeholder/s: An individual or group of people who have a stake in, are involved with, or have the potential to be, impacted by the activities of a museum, gallery, cultural or heritage organisation. Stakeholders are both internal and external to the organisation.

Volunteer/s: A person or group of people who offer their time and expertise for free.

Expertise: Here, we use the term expertise to refer to both the specialist knowledge and skills acquired through education and the expertise developed through lived experience. In community engagement work, there is mutual respect for all forms of expertise and an acknowledgement that lived experience is expertise in its own right.

Facilitation: An approach using a particular set of skills to effectively guide a group through a democratic and participatory process. In the context of museums, galleries, and cultural and heritage organisations, the facilitator (often a member of staff or freelancer) leads a group to accomplish their goals.

Holding the Space: Often part of a facilitation process, 'holding the space' means creating a safe space for others to be fully seen and heard without judgement. It involves deep listening, not jumping in with advice, and offering support with minimal interruption. When done right, it is a powerful tool that builds trust and empathy.

Consultation: A process where organisations seek feedback, views and opinions from a range of stakeholders in order to better understand and / or test out something (for example, how an organisation can better fulfil stakeholders' needs and desires), in order to make informed decisions which can be applied to work. Although not as collaborative as some other forms of community engagement, consultation can build new audiences, help with decision making, support the shaping of new content (e.g. a new gallery or exhibition), and generate a stronger sense of community ownership.

Participation: Where community participants actively engage in, and contribute to, the design, sharing, and / or creation of content with cultural and heritage organisations. There might not be a clear beginning, middle and end to the work. The organisation tends to initiate, set the parameters, and lead the work, but learns from the participants' knowledge, skills and expertise. Participation can help communities connect with each other, generate more relevant and responsive organisations, and support everyone involved to develop skills and creativity and enhance knowledge and expertise.

Incomplete Glossary

Here we outline what we mean by the following terms:

Collaboration: Where organisations and community collaborators work together deeply, challenging the status quo by sharing power, responsibility and decision-making, as well as authorship and ownership. Collaborators are directly involved in all stages of the work, from initiation and conceptualisation right through to delivery and evaluation. Even though lots is shared in collaboration, the direction and tone is generally set by the organisation. Collaboration does not necessarily always involve producing content or an output; it can be based purely on developing mutually-beneficial relationships.

Co-creation: Similar to collaboration but with an emphasis on the processes of making, co-creation is where authorship and ownership of a project is shared jointly with communities, and there is a shared responsibility for the outcomes of the work. Communities' goals and working styles are just as important as those of the organisation, and all involved are intentionally engaged and given time to achieve their goals. The organisation gives participants the tools and resources to co-lead the work and supports their activities.

Co-curation: Similar to collaboration but with a clear objective to collaboratively curate an exhibition or project. Co-curation is guided by communities and partners who steer the work's direction and inform its delivery. Again, decision-making is shared during the design and delivery stage but not necessarily in initiation and conceptualisation.

Co-production: Similar to collaboration but with an emphasis on producing something, co-production is where organisations and communities work together fully and democratically with a shared vision to decide and make content together. It involves a commitment to sharing power where the practitioners are facilitators and co-producers alongside a whole range of community members, partners, and groups. All involved have equal status, expertise is valued equally, decisions are jointly made and there is a focus on building mutually-beneficial outcomes. See the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries and National Museums Liverpool Framework for Co-Production for further ideas.

Hosted: Where an organisation hands over control to communities by offering up some of its facilities, space, tools and / or resources, with the option of providing expert guidance and support as well. In this approach the organisation acts a strong community ally and asset, offering up use of their organisations (e.g. spaces, expertise, resources) to satisfy the needs and desires of participants (for example, a community group or organisational partner has free use of meeting spaces, or an organisation hosting craft and makers stalls). This approach is particularly useful if an organisation is struggling with funding, resources or capacity, as it still offers an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with communities and partners. Find out more about the characteristics of a hosted participatory model in Nina Simon's Participatory Museum.

For definitions of other terms and phrases visit Libraries Connected 'Arts and Culture Terms and Definitions' and Tate's 'Art Terms' webpages.

Further Resources

We have included links to relevant resources and articles throughout the toolkit. Here, you'll find links to other resources you may find helpful when planning, developing and delivering your community engagement project.

Age Friendly Museums Network resources for working with older people: https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/age-friendly-museums-network

Association of Independent Museums resources, including success guides: https://aim-museums.co.uk/helping-organisations/resources/

Domenico Sergi Museums, Refugees and Communities (book): https://www.routledge.com/Museums-Refugees-and-Communities/Sergi/p/book/9780367763411?srsltid=AfmBOor14BDHfCLaJUOeHwCoRR55fhq2psXafidNApH9qZLljofTD-co

Engage resources and toolkits to support visual artists and gallery educators engage with a wide range of audiences: https://engage.org/resources/

François Matarasso A Restless Art (blog) https://arestlessart.com/

GEM resources to support museums work with a wide range of audiences: https://gem.org.uk/resource/

Kids in Museums resources on how to make museums more accessible and family friendly: https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/resources/

Kids in Museums guide to engaging children, young people and families with LGBTQ+ heritage: https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/resources/how-can-your-museum-engage-children-young-people-and-families-with-lgbtq-heritage/

Laura Crossley Evaluation and consultation: tools for the Inclusive Museum, Museologica Brunensia journal: https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/sites/default/files/pdf/137198.pdf

Local Authority Community Engagement case studies: https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/comms-hub-communications-support/new-10

Migration Museum toolkit for co-created community engagement projects: https://www.migrationmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Migration-Museum-Peoples-Tool-Kit_compressed.pdf

Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums: https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/ethics/code-of-ethics/

Museums Association Competency Framework: Engaging audiences and communities: https://www.museumsassociation.org/careers/competency-framework/engaging-audiences-and-communities/

Museums Association Power to the People: https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/power-to-the-people/

Naomi Alexander 'Let's Create' co-creative practice resource: https://www.naomi-alexander.com/lets-create-do-we-know-how-to

National Lottery Heritage Fund Good Practice Guidance: https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/good-practice-guidance

Further Resources

Of/By/For All resources to help connect museums with their communities: https://www.ofbyforall.org/

Paul Hamlyn Foundation/Dr. Bernadette Lynch, Whose Cake is it Anyway?: a collaborative investigation into engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK: http://ourmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Whose-cake-is-it-anyway-report.pdf

Sporting Heritage online toolkits https://www.sportingheritage.org.uk/toolkit-sitemap

The Past Is Now Experimental Approaches Towards Decolonising the Museum: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXLfdwdCj0I

Sarah Plumb An ethical framework for collaborating with communities, Research Centre for Museums and Galleries & Kettle's Yard: https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/open-house

Shape Arts resources to help improve access to culture for disabled people: https://www.shapearts.org.uk/pages/news/category/resources

SHARE Museums East Co-creating Community Projects: https://mdse.org.uk/resource-category/audiences/

Tate Participation in the Art Museum: https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/34/participation-art-museum-new-models-public-engagement-tate-exchange#:~:text=A%20generation%20of%20museum%20professionals,be%20polyvocal%2C%20inclusive%20and%20brave.

Touring Exhibitions Group resources to support your exhibitions programme: https://touringexhibitionsgroup.org.uk/research-resources/

University of Oxford Gardens, Libraries & Museums GLAM Public Engagement with Research Toolkit: https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/per-getting-started

All links featured in this toolkit are correct as of August 2024.

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Carmarthenshire Museums

Dales Countryside Museum, Yorkshire

Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh

Hartlepool Art Gallery

Inverness Museum & Art Gallery

Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum

Museums Worcestershire

The National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

OnFife

Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool

Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance

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Sunderland Culture – Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens

Tŷ Pawb, Wrexham

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