

Resources for community partners

When I'm thinking resources
that museums should make available
for community partners, the biggest one is time.

And it really is and it's investing in time.

But to museums, and I suppose
to the community partners as well,
that involves finance.

As part of our service level agreement
we get reimbursed costs
and that really shows the value that
the Our Museum project
is giving to us as an organisation.

It would have been really useful at the start
to have a bit more information
about how the museum made decisions already
and how things happen in the museum
and also what the limitations are
on community partners.

Case studies of successful projects,
I think, to be able to put into context
how community partners have been involved.

The community partner has to know
what is on offer, what are the resources
that are available for the project
and what is actually realistic
and what actually the community partner can put into this.

What resources does the community have
that can add to the archives
and museum's resources to make it actually work.

Be a list of what they can provide,
i.e. equipment and a list of what skills
they could provide, be it in-house...
to support the team

leading the community project.

I think something that might have been
very useful at the beginning
was some sort of orientation,
perhaps a bit of shadowing in the gallery
or perhaps a little bit of training or team-building
with the other people working there.

I think within our partnership
we've had opportunities to talk to each other
outside of perhaps formal meetings.

For example, there have been times
where there have been social occasions
but then there have also been occasions
where one's had an opportunity
to go along and learn perhaps a little bit
about some of the artefacts.

And that gives you a different dimension.

So, I think it's important to really get involved
with the whole concept of museums
and what they're attempting to do.

An element of finding out what really goes on.

So, some kind of informal off-the-record chat
with front-line staff as well.

I always like to find out what's going on behind the scenes.

Is there a gap between rhetoric and reality?

I think there is room for resources,
understanding the bureaucracy
around museums and how museums work.

I think the written resources
and reports and strategies and that kind of thing
are really helpful as a background.

But also whether there's any role
for almost like a buddying
with people who've done it before,
like a networking system in place
for new community partners
with people who've gone through it already.

You can't go in, cut and run
and hope that you've got it right.