

Shared ownership

Kerry, Theatre Royal Stratford East is very connected
with its community, as Open Stage,
your major participatory programme,
came to an end,
what was the legacy of that work?

Has there been an organisational shift
or new thinking?

We understand what the legacy is,
we understand the principle of the legacy
but what we're looking at is an organisation
which somehow proves that it is shared
and is owned by every stakeholder
within the organisation.

You take the John Lewis partnership model,
where all the staff own the organisation,
you've got that going on.

You've got your friends' scheme,
you know, traditional friends' scheme,
you've got co-operative, you've got co-creation
and you've got all your digital stuff.

You've got all those things going on,
which different people do in different sectors.

Not in theatre, theatre's rubbish at this.

But in other industries.

So what we're exploring are all those elements
and trying to find a way

in which to pull all that together
that it works within itself;
they all join up and they make sense with each other,
but it means whoever you are, whether you're a funder
or an audience member who comes twice a year
or a member of our youth theatre,
or a member of our singers
or a playwright or an actor.

All of you somehow can tangibly prove
you own a bit of the organisation.

It's yours.

You have some kind of stake in it.

And the kind of thing is,
the greater you give, the more you get out.

How practically can all of those people
have a voice in how the organisation runs?

How does that work on the ground?

Well, it kind of does and doesn't work,

but that's the legacy bit

that's what we're trying to work out,

how we answer that question

and how I answer that in a more robust way

but that's the journey we're on.

I mean, you know,

we have a very clear process

in which our young people

have ownership of the organisation.

It's very clear. There's four layers
of engagement with our young people
going right up to our youth committee,
who see me and the senior management team
and discuss and argue and debate
what we do and why we do it.

Right through to there being
a young person on our board.

So that's very specific.

People who come to the bar,
come to the bar, spend their money
and there's a transaction going on there
and if they like what they want,
they'll keep on coming back.

It's very specific there.

A playwright does what a playwright does,
we commission them and we
put their voice on our stage.

So everyone.

Our stakeholders are our stakeholders.

All of those people
have some kind of ownership
but how do you acknowledge that also
your playwright is also an audience member,
also goes into the bar?

How do you acknowledge that volunteer
also has four different kinds of stake

within the organisation

and how they cross fertilise each other?