

WEBVTT

00:00:02.080 --> 00:00:11.903

♪ (music) ♪

00:00:12.633 --> 00:00:15.810

<i>Interviewer</i> Theatre Royal

Stratford East ran Open Stage

00:00:15.810 --> 00:00:18.442

a participatory community

engagement programme

00:00:18.442 --> 00:00:21.582

that was about giving up

programming power to the audience

00:00:21.582 --> 00:00:23.293

for a six month period.

00:00:23.613 --> 00:00:26.625

It unexpectedly evolved

into a volunteer programme

00:00:26.625 --> 00:00:29.421

and it turned out

that those volunteer participants

00:00:29.421 --> 00:00:32.546

developed a very close relationship

with the organization.

00:00:32.686 --> 00:00:37.981

Kerry, can you tell us a bit more  
about how that came about?

00:00:37.981 --> 00:00:39.720

*Kerry Michael* One of the  
earlier things that we did

00:00:39.720 --> 00:00:43.565

was a lot of qualitative  
and quantitative research

00:00:43.565 --> 00:00:46.475

and one of the earlier things  
we discovered was

00:00:46.475 --> 00:00:48.549

our audience--

00:00:48.549 --> 00:00:53.471

the largest percentage wanted to have  
further engagement with us

00:00:53.471 --> 00:00:55.695

wanted to do more  
than just answer questions

00:00:55.695 --> 00:00:57.292

they wanted to get  
further inside the organization

00:00:57.292 --> 00:01:00.364

and that's where the volunteer thing  
came on board

00:01:00.364 --> 00:01:03.076

and then, what we were also able to do,  
was very quickly

00:01:03.076 --> 00:01:05.385

realise that there  
were a pool of people

00:01:05.385 --> 00:01:06.803

who wanted to constantly talk to us.

00:01:07.413 --> 00:01:10.583

So a whole volunteer scheme  
was set up

00:01:10.583 --> 00:01:14.330

and people registered interest

00:01:14.330 --> 00:01:18.502

and that kind of went into a pyramid

00:01:18.502 --> 00:01:21.601

where the more you engaged with us,  
the more we engaged with you

00:01:21.601 --> 00:01:25.238

and then this wasn't difficult

00:01:25.238 --> 00:01:28.385

but I can imagine this might have been  
perceived as remarkable

00:01:28.385 --> 00:01:31.651

to other people, our volunteers,  
those who wanted to come in

00:01:31.651 --> 00:01:33.181

always came into the building

00:01:33.181 --> 00:01:34.880

and they were always hanging out

00:01:34.880 --> 00:01:37.005

and sometimes it was structured--  
on a Tuesday night

00:01:37.005 --> 00:01:39.725

there would be a session  
on what marketing does

00:01:39.725 --> 00:01:44.682

or what finance do, or meet this author,  
or this is what Kerry does.

00:01:44.682 --> 00:01:48.147

We would have those sessions  
where they were fact finding sessions

00:01:48.147 --> 00:01:50.685

for the community to learn  
about us, and learn what we do

00:01:50.695 --> 00:01:55.237

but they would dogmatically  
champion the volunteers

00:01:55.247 --> 00:01:58.461

they were at lots of meetings

00:01:58.461 --> 00:02:02.439

but I would have volunteers  
in a programming meeting

00:02:02.439 --> 00:02:05.518

and there would be no problem with that

00:02:05.528 --> 00:02:07.516

and volunteers were sitting  
in the rehearsal process

00:02:07.516 --> 00:02:09.516

and there would be no problem with that

00:02:09.516 --> 00:02:14.536

and I think because our history,  
and the kind of organization we are

00:02:14.536 --> 00:02:17.046

we weren't precious about any of that

00:02:17.046 --> 00:02:19.196

but also I remember

having a full staff meeting

00:02:19.196 --> 00:02:21.206

and there were

eight volunteers there.

00:02:21.866 --> 00:02:24.036

The volunteers kind of became another

department

00:02:24.036 --> 00:02:25.150

within the organization

00:02:25.150 --> 00:02:28.443

and I suppose for some people

that would be quite difficult

00:02:28.443 --> 00:02:31.955

to have people who aren't employed

by an organization in a staff meeting

00:02:31.955 --> 00:02:38.924

who have no legal or qualified ownership

of the organization

00:02:38.924 --> 00:02:45.163

but I think we're the kind of organization

that, in principle

00:02:45.163 --> 00:02:50.095

understands that we like being open--  
that's part of our DNA

00:02:50.095 --> 00:02:52.855

so that wouldn't be a problem,  
having those people there.

00:02:52.864 --> 00:02:55.714

<i>Interviewer</i> Did that feel threatening  
to any of your staff?

00:02:56.064 --> 00:02:58.254

<i>Kerry</i> I genuinely  
don't think it did, no.

00:02:58.734 --> 00:03:01.709

I also think, you know

00:03:01.709 --> 00:03:05.592

the fact that our ushers  
would constantly live in the building

00:03:05.592 --> 00:03:08.395

our young people constantly living  
in the building.

00:03:08.395 --> 00:03:11.219

The regulars in the bar

are always here...

00:03:12.009 --> 00:03:15.308

Our audiences-- we know  
some of them really well.

00:03:15.308 --> 00:03:18.561

All those are things  
that have happened before Open Stage

00:03:18.561 --> 00:03:20.440

so we sort of just like having more --

00:03:20.440 --> 00:03:24.061

the family extended slightly larger.

00:03:24.061 --> 00:03:29.711

♪ (music) ♪