

## Beyond the programme: Sustaining relationships, learning and paying for participation

Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru - St Fagans National History Museum, is part of Amgueddfa Cymru- National Museum Wales. The Our Museum programme worked collaboratively with third-sector organisations to create and sustain a community of volunteers for St Fagans based on the needs of the volunteer.

The redevelopment of the volunteer programme was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of the Our *Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners*, a programme to facilitate a process of development and organisational change within museums and galleries committed to active partnership with their communities.

From the outset the Our Museum Programme focused on sustained organisational change rather than funding a specific project. The following extracts from Amgueddfa Cymru's Our Museum year 3 Annual Report and self-evaluation highlight their ideas to sustain the relationships and financial planning for continuation and growth.

### Generating income

The volunteer model is successful with individuals and groups and Amgueddfa Cymru offers a variety of volunteering opportunities. So attracting paying groups to the programme can be seen as the 'Robin Hood' model where similar services are charged to some e.g. corporate customers so that other participants can benefit at subsidised or low costs.

*The Corporate Volunteering programme...has been developed in partnership with [community partner] The Wallich, a homeless charity, based on their best practice programme and is now finalised. The programme draws a clear division between Community Volunteering and Corporate Volunteering; companies that volunteer as a team building opportunity will be subject to a charge that covers Amgueddfa Cymru's costs [Such as staff time, equipment and materials] and allows any additional monies to be reinvested into the volunteering programme creating further sustainability. Community partners wishing to bring groups of clients as a skills, capability and confidence building opportunity will not be subject to a charge.*

### Paying for participation

Generating income is one of several ways of sustaining participation. Another method is to embed the work into business as usual. This means that the costs get subsumed into various departmental budgets and those departments don't view it as a 'nice extra' but fundamental to delivering their corporate aims.

*There has been an underspend in 'Training'; this is because costs for training have now been embedded in other core budgets. In line with ensuring sustainability, some of the costs for training volunteers and their supervisors have been covered by the Volunteering Department.*

Resources may need to be re-aligned to be in line with the organisation's strategic direction towards participatory community engagement.

*Budget constraints and reductions have been challenging when looking to create a sustainable model that still allowed us to share resources with community partners, however, revision of the partnership agreement has achieved this. We have also re-allocated internal funding streams to create a core budget for community engagement work with a dedicated post holder to direct this work.*

## **Remuneration**

Amgueddfa Cymru have recognised from the start of the programme that remunerating for community partner time was essential. Their community partners often cite this as something the 'got right' and it has ensured that continuity of participation and buy-in from their respective organisations.

*Community partners have been able to use the financial resources gained via professional fees to fund work that may otherwise have not been undertaken. NewLink use funds to provide materials for their craft group. Diverse Cymru have been able to resource a community arts programme called 'Include Cardiff'. This is a 'Memory Jar' project that engages with people supported by the third sector across Cardiff, the idea for which came from Nina Simons presentation at a previous [Paul Hamlyn Foundation] Peer Review [learning and sharing event].*

## **Sharing partner assets**

Successful participation relies on the understanding and acknowledgement that each partner contributes. It is not the museum or gallery charitably 'giving' something to the often smaller community partners but a group of people bringing their assets and talents to the table to create something better than they could do alone. Amgueddfa Cymru recognises the time, talents and assets of all partners and formally sharing these increases the ongoing resource-pool every partner can draw on.

*Developing a sustainable way of working has been a key focus during our third year. The Community Engagement Team have revised the Service Level Agreement to achieve this. The now renamed Partnership Agreement focuses on creating a sustainable model for sharing resources. ...[Community partner] Diverse Cymru suggested that we consider an arrangement that allows time, knowledge and skills to be exchanged. This was unanimously agreed ... as it supports the idea that "it is important to recycle and keep money and resources in the public and third sector" (Nia Williams). The Museum and community partners evaluated available assets to formalise a 'Quid Pro Quo' arrangement to work alongside the existing financial remuneration. A core budget allowance has been allocated to continue to support the museum's work with community partners.*

## **New funding partnerships**

Partners are using the work as a basis for applying for funding to further disseminate the learning and inspire others. This might give partners access to funding streams unusual to their sector and to reach even wider audiences both professional and public.

*CPs are now seeing the impact that being part of the Community Engagement Team on their own working practices. Community Partner WCVA have put in a successful bid to Spirt 2012 to look at the development of Event Volunteering in Wales stating that “the plan for the bid was being influenced perhaps subconsciously, by the experience with the Museum”. Amgueddfa Cymru will be a partner to WCVA as part of this bid.*

Measuring the impact of successful partnerships requires more than evaluating the programme itself. Once again further partnerships can help with this.

*... we are discussing joint funding bids to support longitudinal studies regarding the anti-poverty and community engagement work at Amgueddfa Cymru, digital interpretation and co-curated displays as part of the St Fagans redevelopment. Nia Williams has met with staff from the Social Science Department at Cardiff University and Amgueddfa Cymru now has a Memorandum of Understanding with Cardiff University to support future partnership working.*