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Local to Global project overview

UNESCO designated sites are a bridge from local to global action. Across the UK's coasts, countryside, and cities is an extraordinary network of places and people working on important interconnected challenges related to environmental, economic, social and cultural diversity. Each UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Global Geopark and World Heritage Site is a central hub where openness and collaboration drive the innovation and creativity required to achieve a better quality of life on our planet for futures to come.

A resilient network of UK UNESCO designated sites, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has been developed by the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) through the Local to Global project. Informed by reports on the [National Value of UNESCO Designations to the UK](#) and [Sites For Sustainable Development: Realizing the Potential of UNESCO Designated Sites to Advance Agenda 2030](#), the project supports sites to fulfil their potential and play their part in achieving the [United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#).

[Local to Global](#) is convening UNESCO site coordinators and external consultants to generate a community of practice that promotes skills, confidence and capacity-building in audience development, stakeholder mapping and inclusion, fundraising and financial sustainability, and digital transformation. Best practice has been drawn from across the UNESCO network and beyond.

The Audience Agency is supporting the UK's UNESCO network with audience development and stakeholder mapping through this project. [The Audience Agency](#) is a mission-led charity providing knowledge, data and insight enabling cultural and heritage organisations to increase their relevance, reach and resilience. This toolkit is a guide, and set of resources and case studies, to support audience development planning, stakeholder mapping, and community engagement across UNESCO designated sites in the UK.

Interested to know more?

Please contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO at www.unesco.org.uk

How to use the toolkit

This toolkit is primarily aimed at those who work at UNESCO designated sites in the UK. While best practice has been drawn from across the UK UNESCO network, we think this toolkit will also be of interest to stakeholders in natural, cultural and built heritage sites across the UK and internationally, and other initiatives looking at partnership and place-based approaches.

The toolkit provides a range of practical approaches and examples for undertaking audience development and stakeholder mapping. Delve into each section for case studies, 'talking points', tools and resources, and hints and tips. Activities and suggestions are designed to provide a starting point and inspire new ways of working. They can be scaled up or down to suit different settings and available resources.

You can either work through the toolkit from start to finish, or dive straight into the sections you need.

What do we mean by “audiences”?

This is a catch all term to encompass all those engaging with UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, and World Heritage Sites in some way. This might include local residents, tourists, partner organisations and other stakeholders.



Case Studies



Talking Points



Tools & Resources



Hints & Tips

Abbreviations

ABCD Asset Based Community Development

CVS Council for Voluntary Services

EDI Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

GIS Geographic Information System

PEST Political, Economic, Social, Technological

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

SMART Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound

SWOT Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

UN United Nations

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UKNC United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO



Part 1: Audience Development

What is audience development?

Audience development is a process to increase, or change, for the better:

- the number of people engaging
- the diversity of audiences
- the depth/scope of people's engagement

At its heart, audience development is an organisation / partnership-wide approach to identifying and understanding what audiences want and need and responding to this as part of a two-way process.



Effective audience development planning

Effective audience development planning takes on board the following principles:

- Not a project or campaign - an on-going strategy for change
- Clear flow from mission and purpose
- Organisation-wide, integrated thinking and doing
- Based on real evidence of current and potential audience needs
- Audiences segmented with differentiated offer
- Users involved in development
- Supports efficient and targeted use of resources
- Plans for evaluation, review and adaptation

[Guide | Audience Development | The Audience Agency](#)



Setting audience goals

With limited resources and the availability of short-term funding, it's easy to go off on a tangent – but the most effective and sustainable audience development activity is rooted in the overall mission and vision of your site and helps you to achieve your aims in a sustainable way.

Setting clear, achievable and measurable audience goals is a great way to keep things focused. These might vary substantially and are likely to be a mix of:



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Consider the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) – which goals does your site aim to impact and how can your audience development activity support this?

If you want to learn how to integrate the goals, the Local Government Association commissioned the UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) in 2020 to create a guide for how councils might respond. The [guidance](#) sets out how local leaders can meaningfully implement the goals to catalyse change with local communities.



What do you already know, or not, about the people engaging with your site? Consider setting research-focused goals aiming to find out more about audiences and their needs to inform your future planning.



Case Study

Studley Royal Park including the Ruins of Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site: A blueprint for sustainable development

[Studley Royal Park including the Ruins of Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site](#) has innovatively integrated the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the future management of the site. This unique approach builds on the National Trust's [Skell Valley project](#) with Nidderdale National Landscape. This project used audience development principles to identify and collaborate with communities and partners along the 12-mile River Skell to help make the area sustainable for those who live, work, and visit the landscape.

This project and audience development work takes centre stage in their new forward-thinking [World Heritage Management Plan for 2023-2029](#).

Key priorities for the World Heritage Site and its audiences over the next decade are sustainability, community engagement, and cultural preservation.

Focusing on Nature and Climate (SDGs 13, 15):

At the heart of the Management Plan is a commitment to environmental sustainability. The team actively restores natural habitats, enhances wetlands, and improves flood resilience. By re-naturalising areas and nurturing local biodiversity, Fountains Abbey is making strides in tackling climate change and fostering life on land. Their efforts go beyond physical restoration - they're also running participation programmes such as wildlife monitoring with local groups to engage and inform visitors and local communities about the critical importance of these natural ecosystems.

Community at the Core (SDG 11):

The Management Plan doesn't just focus on nature; it's also about people. Embracing a people-centred approach, the Plan is all about inclusive community involvement with a focus on underrepresented visitor segments and addressing barriers to access such as low income. They're working closely with residents, local businesses, and cultural groups, ensuring everyone can shape the place's future. This way, they're building stronger, more connected communities while ensuring the benefits of the work are felt far and wide.



Preserving Culture and Learning (SDG 4):

Education and cultural preservation are also big on their agenda. The Skell Valley project includes a range of programmes and interpretive trails designed to connect visitors with Fountains Abbey's rich history. By welcoming schools and cultural institutions, they're making heritage education accessible and engaging, fostering a deeper appreciation for the site's cultural legacy.

Championing Inclusivity (SDG 10):

Inclusivity is another cornerstone of the plan. The team is dedicated to making Fountains Abbey accessible to everyone, working to identify and remove barriers that might prevent people from enjoying the site. This means creating accessible pathways and facilities, and continuously engaging with community groups to ensure the site welcomes visitors of all abilities.

The Skell Valley project at Fountains Abbey showcases a blend of sustainability, heritage, audience development and community engagement. It's not just about preserving the past, but also about building a future where nature and people thrive together. This project sets a high standard for how heritage sites can actively contribute to global sustainability goals, while enriching their local communities.

Read more: [The Skell Valley Project](#)

For a model of how to think about incorporating sustainable development with audience development and programmes, see [here](#).

Images: © National Trust

Analysis: understanding your situation and potential

With goals in mind, the next step is to find out about the real potential for audience development in the environment in which you're working.



An audience-focused SWOT analysis (see right) is a great place to start to assess your current situation.



Think about whose input might be useful in your SWOT analysis. Wider colleagues and partners for example may bring new and different perspectives! A workshop might be a good approach to complete it.

Internal factors

Strengths

Positive aspects and successful audience engagement now - things you have control over.

Weaknesses

Weak aspects related to audience engagement now - things you have control over and need to address.

Opportunities

Good, uncontrollable things related to audience engagement about the external environment as it is now or might be.

Threats

Bad, uncontrollable things about the external environment as it is now or might be.

External factors

A wide range of data is available to enable an increased understanding of opportunities within the population.

You're likely already aware of tourism data sources for your area via your regional destination management organisation, and nationally via [Visit Britain](#). These can enable an understanding of who is already visiting and wider tourism goals that your site could aim to support.

In understanding the local area, local authority published population data is useful, and 2021 Census data insights are available from the [Office for National Statistics](#).

The Audience Agency offer [Population Profile Reports](#) that draw on 2021 Census data and leisure and cultural engagement data to give a detailed breakdown of the population. You can also access the free [population mapping tool](#) to explore who lives in your area in terms of Audience Spectrum types (more on this next!)



Through a Population Profile Report the Antonine Wall team identified that there are significant older communities living in certain areas along the Wall. This data was used to inform a targeted 'heritage activities and walks' project (see Part 4).



Understanding audiences through segmentation

How do you break down and think about the people you engage or want to engage?

Using any data and information you've collected about audiences, and potential audiences, you can group people by distinct needs that you can respond to.

This can start with a hypothesis to which you plan to add evidence over time, layering information about their characteristics, needs, values and behaviour. Following the checklist on the right will help to ensure that your segments are fit for purpose.

Segmentation checklist

- Evidence**
Do you know enough about them?
- Big enough**
Are there enough of these people to make your activities worthwhile?
- Reachable**
Can you find and communicate with them?
- Homogeneous**
Do they share enough of the same characteristics to be targeted with the same message or offer?

Audience Spectrum segmentation

A segmentation of your audiences is not the same as a segmentation of the population like [Audience Spectrum](#) - though you can use it and tools like it to understand your own audience groups.



Audience Spectrum segments the UK population on the basis of their attitudes towards and engagement with arts, culture and heritage. It has been built using a very wide range of data and is highly geo-locatable, with each UK household having a segment assigned. A wide range of support resources are available to use the tool. You can:

- See who lives in your local area via the free [Audience Spectrum mapping tool](#) or via a Population Profile Report
- Explore free [pen portraits and motivation guides](#) detailing the characteristics and preferences of each group and how to reach and engage them
- [Request a profile](#) of your own audiences using postcode data collected via booking systems or surveys



The [National Library of Scotland](#) is using Audience Spectrum segmentation to drive culture change across the organisation, taking a more audience-focused approach to better reach and engage people across Scotland. Find out more [here](#).



Part 2: Stakeholder Mapping

What is stakeholder mapping?

Stakeholder mapping can help you to identify audiences you may wish to engage with. Visualising your audiences, and their current and potential engagement with your site, can help to prioritise resources and focus your activities.

Stakeholder mapping can be challenging for sites that span wide geographical areas and operate within complex partnership / governance models.

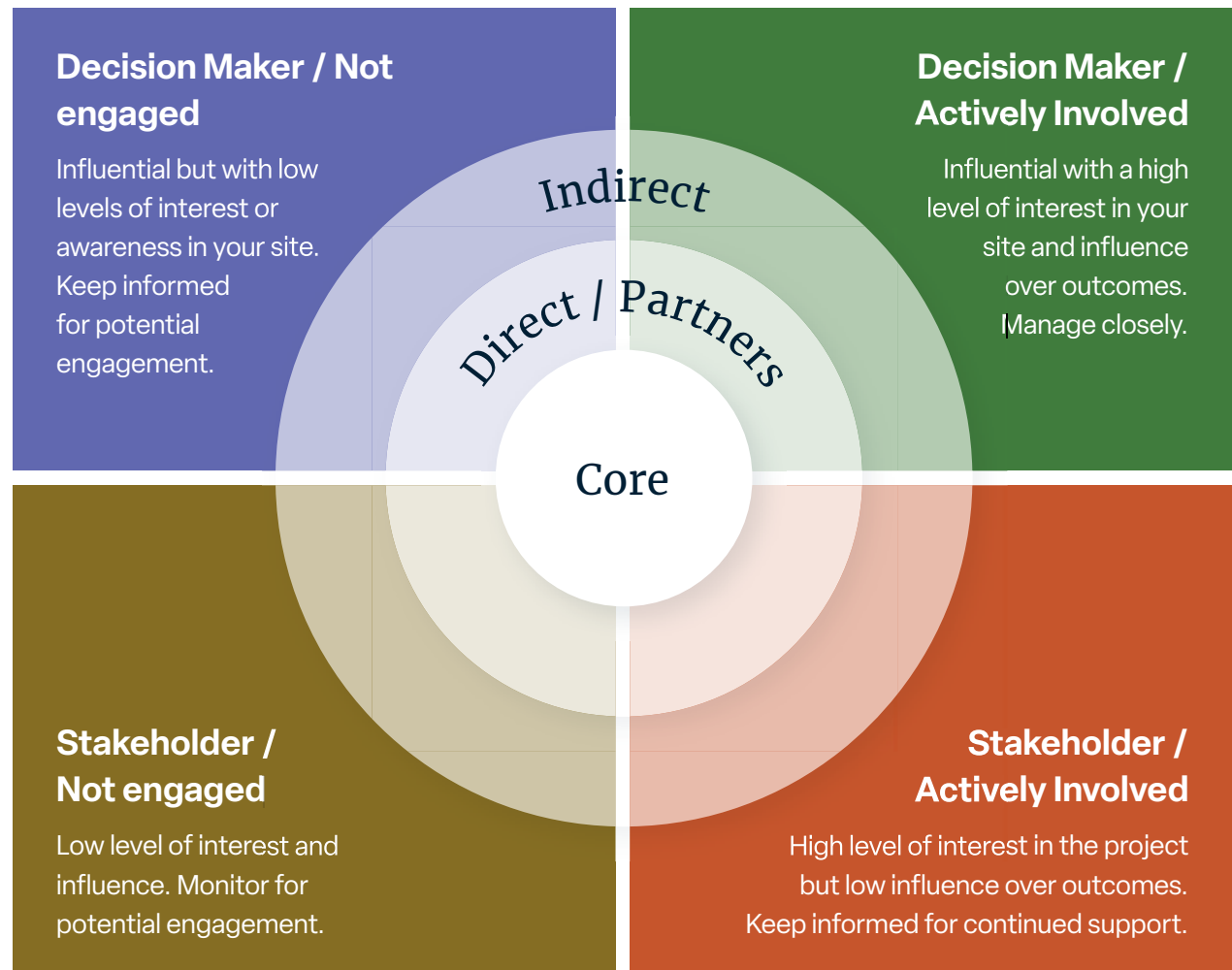
Revisiting your vision, mission, and audience goals can help to narrow and define your priority areas of focus.

The tools outlined on the following pages provide ideas to undertake stakeholder mapping.



Stakeholder mapping quadrant

A stakeholder mapping quadrant is a visual tool used to categorise stakeholders based on their level of interest in a project or initiative and their level of influence over its outcomes. The quadrant typically consists of four sections each representing a different combination of interest and influence.



Stakeholder mapping quadrant: key steps

Identify stakeholders

Compile a comprehensive list of all existing and potential stakeholders, including specific organisations, or types of organisations, within various sectors.

Categorisation

Classify stakeholders based on their organisational type and current level of involvement, perceptions, or influence in the context of your site.

Assess stakeholder roles

Evaluate the potential roles that stakeholders could or should play, aligning them with the overall ambition and objectives of your plans, whether in the short term (e.g. project-specific goals) or long term (e.g. strategic plan delivery).

Identify missing stakeholders

Identify any gaps in stakeholder representation, whether in terms of individual organisations, specific individuals, or types of organisations or sectors, and assess their significance.

Prioritisation

In conjunction with your strategy, prioritise stakeholder engagement based on their relevance, influence, and contribution potential.



Using the same principles, you can develop a database to record information about key groups. Attention to labelling and tabbing will allow you to filter and sort stakeholders based on the criteria.

Geographical stakeholder mapping

Geographical mapping follows a similar approach to asset mapping (see Asset Based Community Development in Part 3). By plotting stakeholders onto a tailored base map, you can visually illustrate how stakeholders are distributed in relation to your site.

This approach can provide insight into the geographic spread and density of stakeholder groups. This can help in considering geographical factors in relation to engagement, such as proximity to specific areas of activity, public transport etc.

Geographical mapping is a useful, interactive activity to deliver with stakeholder groups or steering groups. By collaboratively mapping out the local area, you can develop discussions around spaces and places, relationships, ideas and influence.

This can be delivered through digital interactive tools (see The Living Coast Case Study on the next page) or in person with physical maps. For a more creative approach, mark out a base map in the room with rope. Use props and sticky notes to physically build your base.



[The Edinburgh Culture & Communities Mapping Project](#) researches Edinburgh's cultural landscapes by asking questions about cultural equity, cultural identity, and the links between geography, sociodemographics, and culture. The project uses methods of cultural mapping and GIS to reflect on the city's cultural infrastructures and the spatial production of knowledge.



Image: © Edinburgh Culture & Communities Mapping Project



Case Study

The Living Coast Biosphere Reserve: Mapping cross-sector and inter-disciplinary networks

[The Living Coast](#) Biosphere has a small team. They prioritise delivering key, tangible and visible projects alongside facilitating knowledge-sharing, networking, and project development amongst partners.

Their role as a convenor brings together a range of cross-sector and interdisciplinary partners including local businesses, conservation organisations, energy companies and arts and cultural organisations which allows for the exchange of diverse skills and perspectives. Promoting regular in-person gatherings has been a powerful way of fostering collaboration between organisations.

The Biosphere worked with Professor Nicholas Gant from the University of Brighton who developed a geographic map of partners. Part of a collaborative

research project, [Community 21](#) offers a range of free, bespoke tools, including the Open Mapping Tool, which allows for mapping aspects of a project, network or community.

The tool has helped provide the site with a focal point that brings together the diverse range of partners.

Key Takeaways:

- **Whilst the process of mapping and the mapping tool have been useful to the site, staff point out that mapping is an ongoing process. As communities continue to evolve, the process (and Biosphere) remains agile and responsive.**
-

Read more: [The Living Coast](#)



Image: © Community 21



Case Study

English Riviera Global Geopark: Spirit of Place

[English Riviera](#) is on a journey with partners to help them better understand how to use and participate in the opportunities offered by the Global Geopark.

A [Spirit of Place](#), capturing the ethos of the Geopark, was created in a workshop with partners. This will form part of a toolkit being developed that will support partners in talking about, and engaging, with the Geopark through their work and connections, under a shared vision.

Read more: [English Riviera Global Geopark](#)





Part 3: Taking a People-Centred Approach

Principles of people-centred practice

People-centred practice is a broad term, involving a range of approaches, including user-centred design and asset based community development. These approaches prioritise the needs, preferences, and experiences of individuals. People-centred practice emphasises the importance of actively involving people in decision-making processes.

At their best, people-centred projects are flexible and emergent, often with open-ended outcomes. They may take longer to deliver than more traditionally managed projects. Fully people-centred practice is not appropriate for all institutions or projects. Understanding the focus of your project can help you design processes that embed participant voice in appropriate and meaningful ways.

- **Participant-centric:** Prioritise understanding individuals' priorities, respecting their autonomy, dignity, and agency, and ensuring their voices are acknowledged and valued
- **Inclusivity:** Embrace diverse lived experiences, ensuring approaches are inclusive, representative, and culturally sensitive

- **Experimental / Experiential:** Provide alternative avenues for people to engage, meeting them at their comfort level and honouring their preferences
- **Diversity of Perspectives:** Seek out and include a wide range of voices and viewpoints, avoiding the reinforcement of dominant perspectives
- **Respectful Discourse:** Treat all ideas and contributions with respect, fostering an environment where every voice is heard and valued
- **Transparency and Openness:** Ensure transparency about available options and possibilities, fostering trust and openness in interactions and decision-making processes



Case Study

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site: Centring the needs of local communities

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales became the UK's 33rd World Heritage Site in 2021. Famed for its towns, quarries and transport links that carve through the Eryri mountains towards the purpose-built ports ready to export product, people, and technology to the world.

- Social inclusion and community regeneration are central to the work of the site, to which there are six slate locations or component parts. Improving the lives of the surrounding communities, including residents, businesses and landowners, informs every aspect of the site's work. Bringing people on the site's journey is therefore essential to the practices of staff.
- Staff at the site are visible to communities. They attend and host events and have strong links within local networks. Co-creation and consultation with residents and landowners is embedded within the site's approach and communities are part of the site's governance structure.
- The site delivers a range of arts and leisure activities and projects for communities and schools centred around the slate landscape.
- Examples include the site delivering consultation in schools to understand the interests and needs of young people, and a public art installation where communities are being consulted in an ongoing way around the artwork and its location.
- Challenges for the site include balancing the concerns of local communities around tourism, protecting the landscape and preserving the Welsh language, while promoting the World Heritage Site and wanting to tell the stories of the communities.



Read more: [The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales](#)



Key Takeaways:

- **Comprehensive mailing lists and consistent communications is useful for maintaining links and engagement, including signposting to other opportunities.**
 - **A situated knowledge of the communities and their nuances is key to building connections and networks.**
 - **Engaging with people early on ensures their contribution is meaningful in shaping initiatives.**
 - **Ongoing feedback around how people's input is being used is essential.**
 - **Opportunities for 'behind the scenes' activities, and events held in interesting spaces encourages engagement, alongside more practical considerations i.e. time of day, travel etc.**
-

Audience journeys

How do your different audiences and potential audiences behave at the moment? What do they see and hear about you both on and offline? What do they think? What type of engagement would you like to move them towards in the future?

Undertaking a mapping exercise focused on each of your target groups can be really useful in understanding their engagement journey with your site. Key questions are set out in the diagram here and can be used as a guide to explore and plan sustainable audience engagement.

Starting	Engaging	Sustaining
How does this group engage with your site at the moment?	What are the points of initial communication or engagement with the group? Consider offline, online, partners etc.	What do they do next?
What might they see and hear about you now and from where?	What needs to happen to engage this group?	What do you need to do to keep them engaged?
What existing knowledge and preconceptions might they have?	What are the characteristics of an engagement with someone in this group?	How hard will this be and what are the main barriers to longer term engagement?
What are their barriers to engaging with you?	What are the impacts of this engagement - both for the site and the individual?	What does/could their engagement with you look like in the future? e.g. in 1, 2, 5+ years from now.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

An asset based community development approach focuses on identifying and mobilising the strengths, resources, and capabilities within individuals, communities, and organisations. Rather than focusing on needs and deficiencies, this approach seeks to harness existing assets to drive positive change and promote sustainable development.

By recognising and building upon the assets that already exist, such as skills, knowledge and relationships, individuals and communities are empowered to take ownership of their own development and create solutions that are tailored to their unique strengths and circumstances.

UNESCO sites manifest this approach in their very existence, drawing on existing natural and local assets, relationships and resources.

Asset mapping is a process used to identify the resources, strengths and capacities within a community through collecting, then cataloguing, the tangible and intangible assets available, including physical infrastructure, skills, relationships knowledge etc.



Croxteth Speaks by All Things Considered Theatre was a collaborative arts-based programme developed in Croxteth, Liverpool that examined the communities' perceptions of the area and recognised and celebrated the potential of the community and the individuals within it.



Little Homes, Big Dreams formed part of the programme. Sixty young people from the area worked with the team and an installation artist to explore their experiences and hopes for the local area. A large, interactive map of Croxteth acted as a tool for discussion around the young people's homes and their connectivity to the area. It illuminated how connected the young people were to one another and prompted them to think about sustainability and sense of place in a physical and social sense.

Image: © All Things Considered Theatre

User-centred design

User-centred design is an approach to developing activities and experiences that consider the needs and experiences of users at every stage. It involves understanding users' experiences, perspectives and behaviours, and then using that insight to inform the design process.

Research and observation is critical to the process. In addition to understanding useability, in-depth stakeholder research can reveal crucial insights into how people feel when they use or interact with a space, product or service. For example, feeling safe or comfortable.

The following examples detail ways in which services and initiatives have been developed through exploration into people's experiences and perceptions of spaces and places.



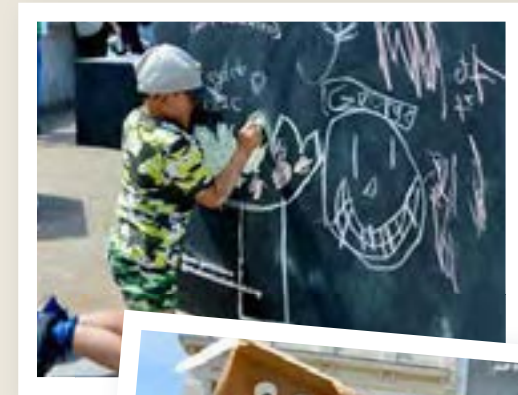
[Safer Parks for Women and Girls](#) is an initiative led by the University of Leeds, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Green Flag Awards (Keep Britain Tidy) and Make Space for Girls. Researchers recognised that in designing safer parks, the lived experiences of women and girls required specific consideration.

Consultation explored women and girls' perceptions of what makes a park feel safe or unsafe. The resulting guidance outlines key principles and practices for organisations to consider in order to make parks more accessible and inclusive.





In 2019, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council declared a climate emergency and set a goal for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030. As part of the Action Plan, the Council created a People's Jury, which brought together the skills and experiences of 26 residents. The Jury could be seen as a mini population of Blackburn with Darwen, mirroring local demographics in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, ward area and attitude towards climate change.



With the [National Festival of Making](#), the People's Jury developed a set of recommendations and an artistic commission to engage the wider public in conversations and collective action around climate change. Selected by the Jury, community arts organisation Get It Done worked with the group to develop a number of creative outcomes, including an online forum.



Part 4: Community Engagement

Terminology and language

Whilst it's necessary to segment particular groups and communities least served by your offer, consider the language that you're using both internally and externally to describe people. Terms such as 'marginalised', 'hard to reach' and 'excluded' suggest a problem or deficit on the part of that group or individual, when it's often that our activities are not relevant or inclusive to them.

We're all intersectional and nuanced in our identities and therefore it's important not to make assumptions. Keep abreast with EDI best practice and consult with groups you're working with around how they would like to be referred to.

Prepare news stories and press releases in collaboration with participants to ensure that they're happy with external messaging. Working with colleagues responsible for marketing for your site or developing comms for a project will ensure consistency around terms.



As described by [#BAMEover](#) and [UNLIMITED](#), language is evolving, and terms may change over time so it's important to adopt the mindset that we need to continually learn.



Building relationships

You may have identified broad, priority stakeholder groups that you would like to engage through a mapping exercise (as explored in Part 2).

Developing a network of local connections working in the vicinity of your target stakeholders will help you to develop and promote your offer. Start by exploring local community group listings, voluntary organisations and schools. If you're struggling to find relevant contacts, think through the services and everyday spaces that people interact with, such as GP Surgeries, Housing Associations, faith-based organisations, your borough's CVS (Council for Voluntary Services) and Local Offer (for children, young people and their families).

Building relationships with hyperlocal leaders within these settings who are known and trusted by your target communities will help you to develop links. Local leaders and connectors will have knowledge about the needs of particular groups. Clarity and transparency around values, language and shared purpose will be important.

Be prepared to meet people where they are, in every sense of the phrase. Attending local events and community fairs is a great way to build connections.

Ambassador or Community Champion schemes are a useful way to broaden your reach through equipping volunteers with the information and resources to help spread the word. Whilst these schemes require dedicated work in themselves, finding ambassadors / champions representative of particular communities can be a powerful way to build relationships with communities.

In order to encourage joined-up, place-based working between central government, local authorities and communities, the former Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published [guidance](#) as part of its Partnerships for People and Place programme.



Go for a walk in the local area at different times and take the temperature of who is accessing what. For example cafes and shops serving particular groups, well attended library events and community gatherings. Where are the places that people are gathering and at what times?

Nurturing relationships

Building and nurturing relationships is an ongoing practice. Whilst exciting projects and events provide momentum and opportunities for direct engagement, it's important to keep people informed on an ongoing basis to hold their interest and build their trust.

Thinking through project legacy from the outset is useful. Build in time to consult with the group about next steps and diarise a moment to reconnect with them post-project.

Creating a mailing list and newsletter or delivering informal coffee mornings or events with project participants at set intervals can help keep relationships warm and people feeling connected. This can also be a good way of getting people from different project groups to connect.

It's important to consider **what you have to give as well as to gain**. How can you make the relationship reciprocal, e.g. by showing up for other people's events or promoting their activities?





Case Study

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site: Aligning with local communities



The Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site team has taken a proactive approach to engaging with their local communities on their terms.

They have taken the time to read local plans for towns and villages along the Wall and have conversations with local communities and have used these, rather than site plans, as the starting point for integration and collaboration – responding directly to local needs.

A number of initiatives have taken place, using Hadrian's Wall to support the needs of local communities. These include collaboration with a village school in a small farming community. Teachers identified that children in the school tended to be quite sheltered – however they are on Hadrian's Wall, which attracts visitors from all over the world. The school partnered with the Wall on a project that explored where these visitors come from, focusing on aspects such as countries, languages, cultures and flags. The pupils then went on the train to visit Newcastle University, where they met international students, arranged via the University's International Studies Department.

Key Takeaways:

- **Take the time to understand community needs - think first about how you can help them to address these needs, and work from there.**

Read more: [Hadrian's Wall](#)

Invitations to connect



When was the last time you did something new? Have you attended an event or a class before on your own? How did it feel?

It can be daunting to do something new for the first time, particularly with people we don't know, in a space or place that's new to us.

When inviting a person or group to connect with your offer, it's useful to think through what your invitation looks like and in what ways you can make people feel comfortable and reassured.

The **following checklist** outlines the key factors to consider:

Key factors

- ✓ Ensure the invite and associated comms is relevant and accessible to who you want to engage.
- ✓ Where possible, identify access needs in advance so that you can make the necessary adjustments.
- ✓ Include information on what to expect ahead of the session or event.
- ✓ If relevant, be clear on what they should bring, wear and what you are able to provide, to remove any barriers.
- ✓ Be clear on the level of participation expected, e.g. 'you will work with Ed from our team to develop a mosaic as a group'.
- ✓ Provide clear directions on how to get to the space or meeting place, a contact number for on the day and a description of the person who will be there to greet them.

Inclusive practice

Inclusive practice is an approach to delivery that recognises diversity, to ensure equitable access. It aligns with the [Social Model of Disability](#) which considers people as being disabled by society's barriers, not by our differences.

Investing time into removing or minimising barriers to people's engagement ensures there are more equitable opportunities for people to participate. Seeking advice from partners and people with lived experience can help you to achieve a clearer understanding of key considerations for areas of your offer.

If you're interested in introducing more inclusive practices to your site, consider:

- Doing less, but doing it effectively
- Developing a timeline detailing smaller and longer-term changes to strands of your offer
- How you and your team can embed reflective practice and be more responsive to feedback
- Initiating links with a local organisation



[Miles without Stiles](#) is an initiative led by the Lake District National Park. Accessible walking routes suitable for people with limited mobility including wheelchair users, families with pushchairs, and people who are visually impaired, are illustrated via an interactive map. A guide detailing each of the graded routes provides information about the terrain, so people can decide on its suitability. Each route is monitored and maintained.



Image: © Lake District National Park



Case Study

The Antonine Wall World Heritage Site: Delivering inclusive heritage activities and walks with people aged 60+

The Antonine Wall World Heritage Site team engaged a group of 28 people aged 60+ living in locations along the Wall in West Dunbartonshire. The project aimed to encourage the use of the Wall as an outdoor venue for local walks and to facilitate social interactions and connections.

The project included three indoor creative workshops led by staff and artist Neil Thomson, and two guided walks suitable for all abilities. Staff considered the audience development plan produced by the Audience Agency which highlighted a large population of over 60s living close to the Antonine Wall.

The blend of indoor and outdoor sessions was chosen due to the time of year, and staff also believed that this would be more attractive to programme participants rather than being solely in the outdoors. The walks and workshops led to participants co-creating the [West Dunbartonshire Community Map of the Antonine Wall](#) which details shorter and longer routes and points of interest along the Wall.



Images: © Rediscovering the Antonine Wall



Staff developed links with Age Scotland, Action Old Kilpatrick, Duntocher Village Hall community and heritage groups, and Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels which was particularly useful for reaching out to the target audience and recruiting local participants. A sign-up sheet via Google Forms was used to collect access needs in advance. As a result of taking part, participants reported feeling more connected to people in the local area, and more connected to nature and local heritage.

As a result of the project, The Antonine Wall has published a community map and a blog post to share local heritage content and artwork provided by the group. The Antonine Wall is hoping to duplicate this project in the four other local authorities the wall runs through.

Key Takeaways:

- **Combining creative elements with outdoor activity enabled/led to the creation of a community map and public content about local heritage**
- **Whilst the project aimed to facilitate social connections, the team avoided using deficit language in comms such as ‘social isolation’**
- **Whilst the project was focused on Roman history, it was quickly realised that participants were keen to share their knowledge of local heritage beyond the Antonine Wall period. Therefore, allowing for flexibility and being led by participants’ interests is a useful takeaway**
- **Creating the map provided a focal point for the group**

Read more: [The Antonine Wall](#)

Image: © Rediscovering the Antonine Wall

Community consultation

With community and stakeholder engagement at the heart of UNESCO sites' activities and plans, consultation is a key part of how sites operate, function and meet their requirements.

These five prompts aim to refresh thinking into how to deliver consultation that targets specific communities, questions and challenges. It explores what, why, who, how - and critically - what next?

1. Identify and define your objectives

To make community consultation meaningful and mutually beneficial, think through the specific outputs, outcomes and timescales from the outset, both for your site and the people involved. Be as targeted and clear as possible. For example, are there particular questions around strands of activity that would benefit from a more targeted approach to consultation?

2. Consider who you need to speak to and the best way to engage with this group

Who do you need information from? What environments, formats or channels are the most appropriate to collect the information? Consider hybrid methods - digital surveys via providers such as SurveyMonkey and Google Forms can be useful mechanisms, particularly when promoted in targeted channels. In-person events can be a valuable way to build connections and engage with local groups underserved by your offer.

Open, drop-in style consultation and world café formats are a good way to engage a wide audience in several topics. Targeted focus groups can allow for more in-depth discussion into specific engagement strategies.

Consider any potential barriers to a group engaging in the consultation. What times of day might be most appropriate? What spaces are accessible and familiar to them?

What's the hook? What's in it for them? What will they get from attending the consultation event and what future benefits will they gain from engaging with you? Develop messaging that outlines these benefits. Food, drink, relevant speakers and creative activities can provide a hook. Remuneration for time and travel expenses can be useful to consider if holding focus groups.

3. Think through logistics and timings and develop a facilitation plan

Develop links with relevant local groups to promote the consultation and send reminders ahead of the date. Collecting sign-ups and booking details via an event booking platform such as Eventbrite is also a useful way to check numbers and send reminders.

Think through physical and practical access needs in the broadest sense. For example, language and interpretation, travelling to the venue, facilities, signage and seating. In developing your questions, consider the nature of the response you are looking for (i.e. open ended, closed). Depending on the format of the event or session, test your timings for each question. For drop-in sessions, consider how people will move around the space and provide question stations.

Creative and interactive methods can encourage greater engagement in some instances. Sticky dots, graffiti walls, washing lines and pin maps are playful ways for people to respond. Asking for creative responses to certain questions is also a great way to start a dialogue e.g. 'select a postcard or photograph that you feel best illustrates your connection to the site'.



4. Provide clear context and be responsive to the room

Consider who will facilitate, who will this group of people relate to? They need to be open, a good listener and able to process and reflect emerging themes back to the room in a succinct way.

Reminding people of the precise focus is useful at the start of any consultation. Be transparent and realistic about what their feedback will lead to developing.

Whether sequential in your questions or delivering an open, drop in style consultation, reading the room is key. Listen to quieter voices and be aware of bringing conversations back to the topic.

5. Develop and disseminate outputs with clear information about next steps

Establish how people would like to be contacted and ensure they are kept up to date. Sharing findings, next steps and ongoing updates will keep people engaged in the process.



Explore existing local events to engage captive audiences. What key questions might be relevant for that particular audience?



Case Study

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site: Community consultation

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site team shaped their management plan through consultation with local communities in spaces local to them. A range and scale of consultation events took place across the 15-mile-long site. These were focused on accessible locations frequented by communities, such as St Matthew's Church Hall in Darley Abbey, Cromford Social Club, and Strutts Community Centre in Belper, and included both specific consultation events and activities set up to catch passers-by. In response to visuals and information about the site, feedback was collected from communities to inform the management plan.

The site also consulted with local communities and partners online during the pandemic, to inform their [Spirit of Place](#) work, focused on each of their three key sites. The Spirit of Place for each is encapsulated in the opening paragraphs on each online page and forms an entry point to the site: [Visit Cromford - Derwent Valley Mills](#), [Visit Belper - Derwent Valley Mills](#), [Visit Darley Abbey - Derwent Valley Mills](#).

Key Takeaways:

- **This consultation aimed to get to the heart of what makes each place special as seen by local communities - enabling the creation of engaging and enticing narratives.**
-



Images: © Derwent Valley Mills



Case Study

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve : Interactive engagement

In partnership with Nith Life, the Stove Network, the University of Manchester, and the UK National Commission for UNESCO, the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve delivered a series of interactive engagement events and workshops to collaboratively envision and think creatively towards a more sustainable future for the local environment and surrounding communities.

Events used thematic learning tools and resources to unpack ideas and create discussion:

- Workshops were centred around the [RoundView](#) framework, a systems-based framework for sustainability learning, communication and visioning, developed through research at the University of Manchester. The RoundView offers a simple yet comprehensive way to explore both root cause, and potential solutions, to environmental and social issues.
- The workshops also utilised [Ketso](#), a workshop toolkit designed to support inclusive and creative collaborative thinking.

Read more: [Galloway and Southern Biosphere Reserve](#)

Key Takeaways:

- **The learning tools enabled core messages of sustainability to be embedded into workshop delivery. This was particularly useful for students in understanding cause and effect.**
 - **The value of ongoing engagement was emphasised, with the need for further opportunities to continue and extend the work.**
-



Images: © Matthew Rabagliati

Deepening community involvement in decision making

Shifting power imbalances through deepening community engagement in decision-making can foster a more inclusive, transparent, and effective governance system. Arnstein's [Ladder of Participation \(1969\)](#) offers a conceptual framework to describe different levels of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. Each rung of the ladder represents a different degree of participation and influence, ranging from non-participation to full citizen control.

The [Citizen Assemblies](#) model has gained prominence for its ability to enhance democratic participation and trust in public institutions. Citizen assemblies are gatherings of individuals who are representative of a population. These assemblies are tasked with deliberating on specific issues, proposing solutions, and making recommendations. By involving a diverse cross-section of society, assemblies ensure that a wide range of perspectives and experiences are considered.

See the 'User-Centred Design' section in Part 3 for an example of how this approach was used in Blackburn to explore sustainability. Further examples include [New Art Exchange](#), based in Nottingham, embedding an assembly into their leadership structure, [museums in Germany](#) using the model to increase their relevance, and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park appointing board members from black, disability and LGBTQ backgrounds.



Youth engagement is integral to the work of UNESCO designated sites. Explore ways to engage young people in decision making through the following resources that explore a range of theories and practical approaches:

[The Youth Engagement Toolkit](#), Canadian Commission for UNESCO

[The Youth Voice & Participation Handbook](#), Sound Connections

Co-creating with communities

Co-creation is a collaborative process that involves others in designing or producing a product or service. Co-creation can work on a sliding scale, depending on the depth to which participants are involved in decision making at stages within a project cycle.

At its most radical, co-creation could involve a group planning, fundraising and delivering a project for themselves, with you and your site supporting their activities, as opposed to leading the direction and being control of resources.

Co-creation is a brilliant way to collectively problem solve and draw on diverse opinions, skills and experiences, particularly where you lack the expertise or lived experience within your team. It is a 'many-voiced' approach which involves distilling many ideas into practice. Therefore, in its truest form, co-creation is time consuming as it relies on a slower, co-operative process for all decision makers involved.

The spectrum on the next page illustrates the potential depth of people's engagement in decision making processes and the potential impacts. It helps to consider the most appropriate level within which to engage participants in your offer, taking into consideration the time and resources you (and the group) have. For example, a UNESCO site is redesigning their education offer for schools. This could involve:

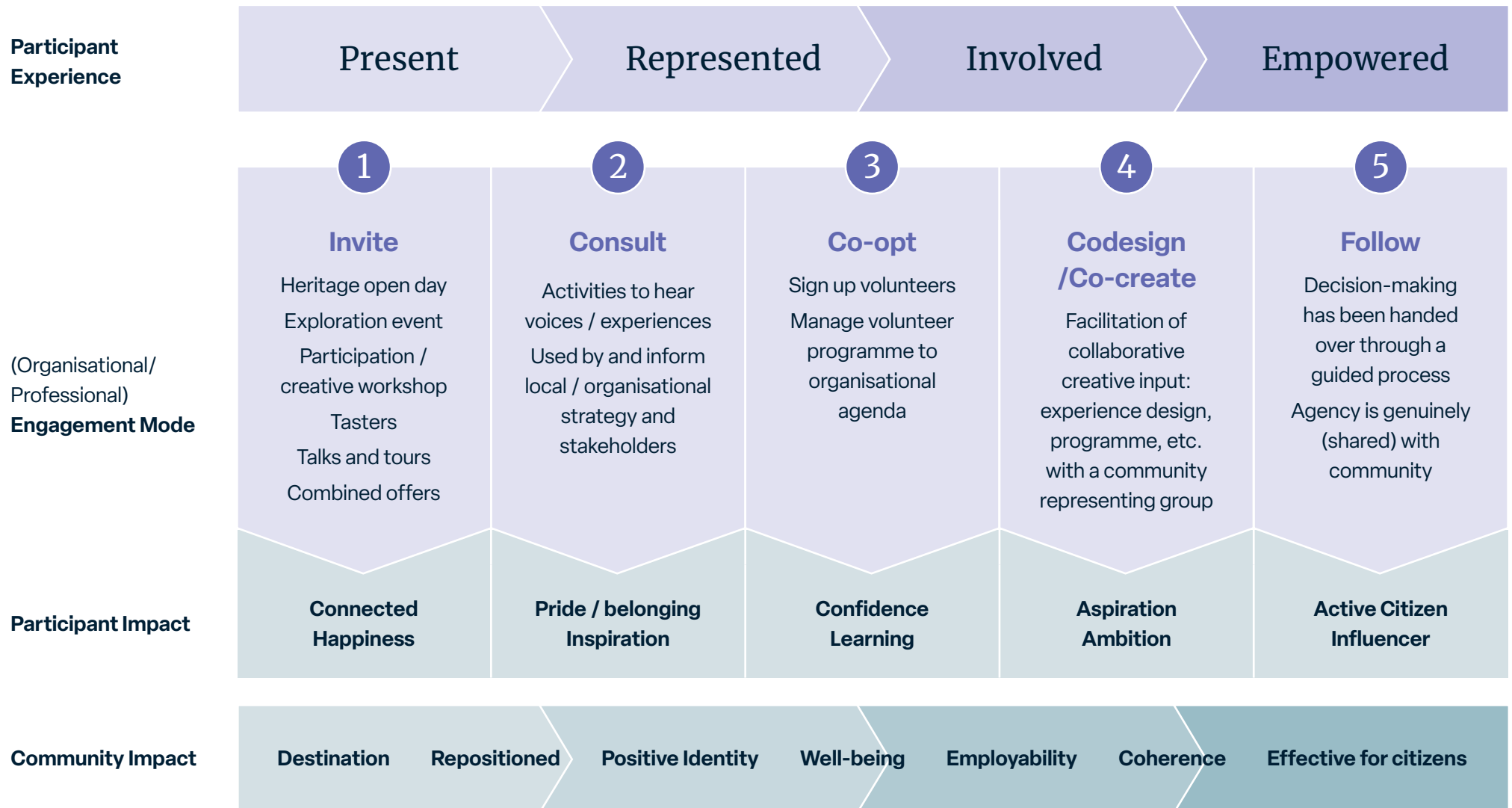
Invite: The site designing the programme and then inviting teachers to information sessions and/or sending them details with the aim of them booking.

Consult: The site developing an outline of the offer and consulting teachers about its appeal and suitability before reworking.

Co-design / Co-create: The site engaging a group of local teachers in supporting the design of the education offer from the outset.

The level and depth of involvement is greater within the 'Co-Design / Co-Create' model.

Often, 'Invite' and 'Consult' are entirely appropriate ways to initiate new connections and begin a dialogue with underserved groups in your community. Engagement can lead to co-creation if participants wish, when you've developed relationships and established collective skills and ways of working. A good place to start is by embedding pockets of co-creation into these modes of engagement. For example, asking groups to decide on the kinds of activities they'd like to take part in as part of your project or letting them lead in the development of project outputs. The key thing is to be transparent from the outset about where decisions sit.





Part 5: Messaging and Advocacy

Why do audiences want to engage with you?

A simple concept to think about are the reasons why people engage with your site and how to talk to them about it is 'Features vs Benefits'.

Features - What you know about it

Facts about your site – e.g. specific areas of the site, historical and natural features, facts about activities, content of events.

Benefits - Why people should engage

Reasons why people will want to engage – e.g. personal interest, social time, family time, relaxation, learning, academic, or to understand their own heritage.





Case Study

The Isle of Man Biosphere Reserve: Engaging politicians



The Isle of Man Biosphere is the only entire nation biosphere in the world. The team have crafted and refined their communications plan to ensure that key messaging is relevant, wide reaching and specific to the team's economic, social and environmental engagement goals.

The Biosphere delivers annual awards which recognise organisations and individuals working for a more sustainable Isle of Man. Their accessible partnership scheme and personal pledge scheme provide further ways for people to connect and take ownership of the biosphere's mission.

The team invited politicians and candidates to a series of workshops about UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, their benefits, and the specific goals on the Isle of Man. A high-level presentation and opportunity for questions equipped many elected members with an understanding of the Isle of Man Biosphere. With an understanding of the value of the biosphere, members have been able to advocate for the team on a number of levels.

Key Takeaways:

- **Don't assume any prior knowledge**
- **Steer away from intricacies, and explore the benefits**
- **Take-away packs summarising information can help with follow up**

Read more: [Biosphere Isle of Man](#)



Case Study

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site: Speaking the right 'language'

Through a process of space and time Hadrian's Wall has made a significant investment in learning the language of the sectors and communities they want to engage.

The site recognised that often people are speaking about similar things, but the language used across different sectors, spanning tourism, planning, economic, education and community, is different – resulting in communications being received as 'not for me.'

Through investing the time in conversation and listening, Hadrian's Wall has been able to understand needs and tailor the language used in their plans and communications to resonate with the people and partner stakeholders they want to reach and work with.

Key Takeaways:

- **Take the time to speak to the people and partners you want to engage and be prepared to speak their language in order to reach them.**

Read more: [Hadrian's Wall](#)





Part 6: Strategies and Action Planning

Strategic planning – the Ansoff Matrix

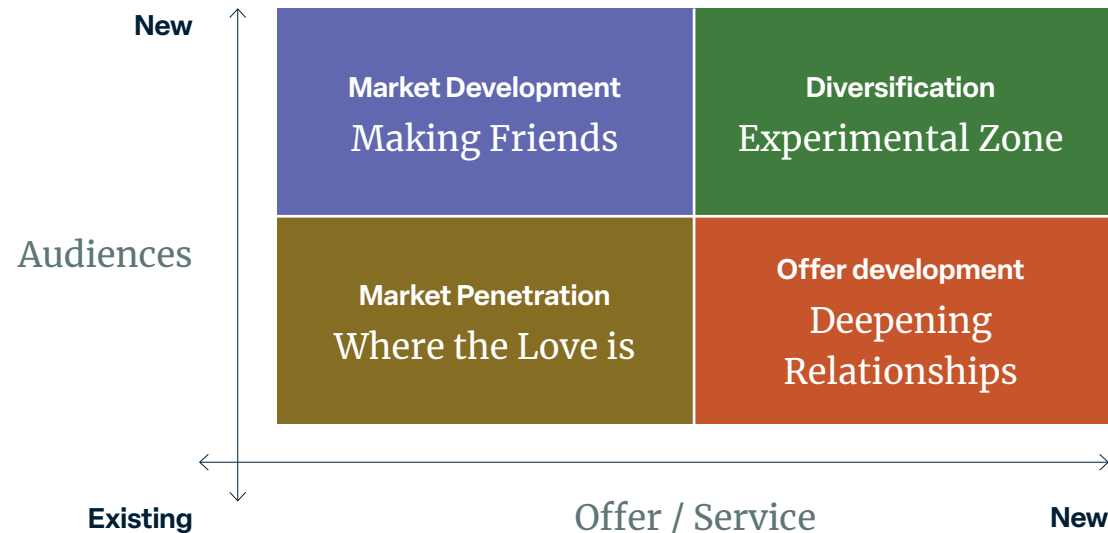


Strategies are the approaches you will take to achieve your audience goals.

The [Ansoff Matrix](#) was originally devised in 1957 by Igor Ansoff as a strategic business development tool and can be a very useful way to start to break down and map out complex audience development strategies into 'what you will do and for who'. Plotting strategies onto the matrix helps to ensure your approaches and resources are balanced across new and existing audiences and new and existing offers.

Market Development is presenting your current offer in a way that will attract new types of audience - focused on engaging more and different people with the work that you already do.

Market Penetration is concerned with further expansion of current audiences with current offers e.g. deepening loyalty, more frequent visits, increasing spend, volunteering.



Diversification is the development of new offers for new audiences. This is the riskiest area because it's all unknown and tends to be resource intensive - but it can be where rewarding development work happens.

Offer Development is about creating new offers or experiences for current audiences - encouraging existing audiences to do more and different things with you.



Beware of trying to do too many things at once. With new audiences in particular, being focused, starting small, and taking a long-term approach is usually more effective.



Case Study

English Riviera Global Geopark: Encouraging deeper visitor engagement



The English Riviera is exploring ways in which they can encourage visitors and the local community to the area to engage more deeply with the Global Geopark and appreciate its significance.

The first phase of their Marine Interpretation Project has launched at Fishcombe and Churston Cove. The project is being run in collaboration with [The Cove Discovery Project](#) and 365 Sea Swim and, through engaging interpretation and information, is encouraging an appreciation of the site and its significance through:

- A tailored information board about the specific site
- A film exploring [what's under the water at the site](#). This can be accessed via QR codes, including on tables at the site café
- Display of the [Seaside Code](#), encouraging visitors to respect and take care of the site
- Hands-on activities for schools and children's groups

Read more: [English Riviera Global Geopark](#)

Images: © The Cove Discovery Project

Action planning template



A simple action planning template can help to keep plans on track and assign resources, responsibilities, and timescales to activities to ensure they take place on time and in budget.



Try to keep your objectives SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed. This will help to keep things on track and enable you to measure success.



Part 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation



Monitoring and evaluation is a way of demonstrating the impact of your activities as a site and to identify and share learning.

A holistic approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation ensures that you're collecting robust and relevant data and measuring progress against your overall goals and objectives.

Evaluation should be purposeful - establish the purpose of the evaluation and intended audiences for your insights.

In partnership with the [Centre for Cultural Value](#), the Audience Agency collaboratively produced a set of Evaluation Principles.

The Principles help shape how to carry out evaluation. They are not designed as a step-by-step guide or to be evenly applied across all projects. Rather, they help ground and guide your evaluation practice, supporting you and your stakeholders to set priorities, engage the right people and use appropriate methods to understand the holistic impact of your work. Explore the Principles [here](#).

The framework overleaf provides a structure with which to plan and embed evaluation across multiple strands of your site action plan. Identifying indicators will enable you to measure outcomes and develop the necessary data collection methods and moments. **Be realistic and prioritise the essential.**

Project Strand	Outcomes	Indicators	Methodology	Timescale / Persons
Community 'walk and talk'	What are you trying to do? What is the change you are trying to achieve? Any mandatory funder outcomes?	How will you know the outcome has been achieved? What will success look like?	What evidence do you need? What data collection methods will you use to find this out?	When will this be collected and by who?
	Local residents engage in Walk and Talk sessions to explore site.	50 residents from BD9 postcode engage in project.	Monitoring / sign up form on first session.	21 May (Salma)
	Residents develop new social connections and feel inspired to be more active.	Residents report increased social connectivity and are inspired to be more active: i.e. 'I feel more connected as a result of taking part'	Paper survey on last session	2 June (John)

Data collection methods



Data for evaluation needs to be **valid** (measure what you need it to measure), **reliable** (accurate and trustworthy) and **available** (accessible and usable).

Quantitative data: Numbers, % change, comparison. It is representative and easily presentable.

Qualitative data: Narrative driven, participant oriented and open. It is more in-depth and engaging but requires greater analysis.

Think about the type of data you need to collect as this will determine the data collection methods that you use. Traditional methods such as paper/online surveys and interviews are often an efficient and reliable way to collect data using open (descriptive) and closed (single answer choice) questions.



Think about how you'll input, analyse, and store data. Factor in time for each of these steps.

Creative methods are often suitable in participatory contexts and can be more accessible and inclusive to those who might struggle to respond through traditional methods. Examples include:

- Drawing and storyboarding (suitable for capturing experiences of projects, timelines, responses to prompts)
- 'Walk and talk' interviews (suitable as an alternative to traditional face-to-face interviews. Good for exploring perceptions of space / place in situ)
- Physical methods (suitable for workshops where participants are comfortable with each other. 'Where do you Stand?' involves participants positioning themselves on a scale in response to survey questions)
- Poetry and creative writing (suitable for eliciting qualitative responses as part of a reflective activity)
- Blogs and video diaries (useful for generating marketing snapshots and content with groups as part of project)



Reflective practice

‘The capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning’
(Donald Schön 1983: 68).

Reflective practice is essential in the context of audience development, particularly when embarking on work with communities who are new to your organisation. Adopting a reflective practice approach enables you to grapple with assumptions about your work – moving the conversation from ‘what worked, what didn’t work?’ to ‘why did that work and how do I know, why didn’t that work, what do I need to know?’

Developing a culture of reflective practice enables teams to share and question their learning from a critical perspective and can lead to greater team self-awareness and improved problem solving. Carving time out of your schedule periodically can ensure key questions are addressed on an ongoing basis, driving forward the learning and any actions.

To deliver a reflective practice session, it’s important that you establish a ‘safe space’ for team members. Agree on a focused set of questions (up to three questions for an hour depending on team size) and share in note taking. Frame the discussion with these broader questions, which can be writ large on a wall.

- What is my positionality in relation to these views?
- As a fly on the wall, looking into this discussion, what narratives or assumptions are we privileging as a team over others?
- Whose perspectives are missing?



Padlet and Miro boards are useful digital apps for reflective practice, particularly for storing ‘in the moment’ reflections and as a way of collecting key questions and observations as a team.





Summary

Summary

We hope you've found this toolkit useful. Remember, audience development is a continuous process. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach, so tailor your strategies to fit your organisation's unique context and goals. Here is a summary of key points:

- **Get to know your community.** Take the time to understand the characteristics and needs of your community, meeting people where they are.
- **Engage early and often.** Engage your audiences early in the development of projects and initiatives and keep the conversation going with regular feedback.
- **Keep communication clear and consistent.** Build comprehensive mailing lists and keep your audiences and partners in the loop with regular updates.
- **Base your strategies on evidence.** Use data to shape your plans and be ready to adapt based on what you learn along the way.
- **Prioritise inclusivity and diversity.** Strive to engage a wide range of people, making sure your activities are accessible and inclusive for everyone.
- **Think long-term.** Align your audience development activities with your site's mission and vision, planning for sustainable engagement.



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For more information about please contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO www.unesco.org.uk

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