

## Appendix F

### Catherine Aldridge- Education Lead- Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project

#### Q1

Danielle Newman: For the sake of completeness could you please tell me your full name and the role that you played on the project?

Catherine Aldridge: My name is Catherine Aldridge and I was the Education lead for the Black Sea Map Project. Just to clarify we are focusing on that specifically yes?

#### Q2

DN: Yes, but a few of the questions ask more broadly about how you worked in public engagement before. Could you start by telling me what you think the aims and objectives of the Black Sea Map project are in terms the Education component.

CA: Ok so we laid out the aims and objectives for the programme which were, sorry I just need to re-engage my brain \*laughter\* they were all about giving young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and experience of STEM and in particular, having the chance to experience and develop their own skills and gain a broader picture of the careers that are possible STEM. So we had a wider aim beyond maritime archaeology specifically.

#### Q3

DN: Do you think that the challenges...

CA: \*laughter\* I feel like this is a bit of a test!

DN: I know, it's normally much more relaxed when you're face to face with someone but we're doing this over Skype. Sorry! Questions are just going to get more complicated. You were thinking about these aims and objectives did the challenge of the provision of access, so we're talking both physical and intellectual and cultural dictate how you designed the program?

CA: Yeah definitely. Whenever we are thinking about public engagement, we start with thinking about who we are working with and what aims we are trying to achieve. How to make the content and the skills accessible because ultimately our aim is to get people involved and thinking about how that is going to work. So that's implicit and explicit with our work and trying to think about where our audience are young people are at. Then going through a process of working with the research team to understand the project that they are engaging with and part of the aim, which I didn't mention, I think you should have a look at the state of aims online.

DN: I do that as well but it's always interesting to see what people say as the aims, and how people remember them.

CA: So what I didn't mention was the fact that it was all based on giving people a genuine and authentic experience. A taste of what working on a big maritime archaeology project would be like. So it is very much an iterative process. I'm thinking about the audience, the aims, and what the actual experience is and making it accessible on lots of different levels. So sometimes that's the practicalities of the project that makes some issues with access but it is all definitely considered.

#### Q4

DN: Were there any specific challenges with this project, just in terms of it being a maritime based project, that influenced how it was designed?

CA: Yeah definitely. I think the fact that we were taking people actually out to sea meant that it was more difficult to involve people with, for example, physical disabilities involved just because of the nature of the ship. I guess there were other things as well, we had to think through the experience and what's it is about and how to work with young people and how to prepare them and get them ready for that. To get them ready for the main part of their placement, either onboard or onshore. So with that in mind we really built in a training week and built in aspects of selecting the students so that we could really understand their background and what they may or may not have experienced in the past around working on the water or being seasick those sorts of things. And also we were limited to the part of the project which didn't involve diving, just because a scale of the practicalities that would have been involved with that and the level of skills and experiences that would have been needed. So obviously there was lots of health and safety involved with working on a ship. I think the other aspect is that maritime archaeology is something that most of the students wouldn't have known what was when they started. So we had to build into the program and awareness of what their project was all about and what maritime archaeologist actually do, as well as giving everyone an experience of all the different techniques and activities involved.

#### Q5

DN: What do you believe is the most effective way of changing the public's perception of what maritime archaeology is through engagement?

CA: Giving people direct experience of what's involved is obviously the richest way of doing that. It's not always possible, but it depends if you were think breadth or depth. So that would obviously be the depth but I think the other aspects are the stories that are involved and how is also possible to do activities that represent what's involved. I mean there could be anything from looking at Core samples or looking at ships that have been discovered and working out what we can find out about them. So I think that would give opportunities for more people to be involved, by using activities and doing them in places where people are already going. That's how you would go about getting the breadth.

## Q6

DN: How do you think that the messages that we delivered were perceived and received by the audience?

CA: Well I think our project has definitely had a broader aim beyond maritime archaeology specifically. I think we know through evaluation work we did that the approach was very well received and the scholars quoted it as being life-changing. It was definitely something about them developing as people well as being able to experience the research environment involved in maritime archaeology. It made a large impact on questions for them about their life choices and their thoughts about continuing on in higher education or in their careers. So in essence we could have been working in any field rather than maritime archaeology specifically but the thing about this project was really that we had a deeper long-term engagement with students over the course of the year. They were able to be involved in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go out on the ship and to work in labs in Southampton. It was all about making them realise and think about their place in the world and what they might go on to do. They were able to get to know and speak to so many people. Back to your previous question, that would be actually involving the people who were involved in the project and can show the techniques. It is really important to make it authentic and real wherever that's possible. And even though education people and people involved with engagement facilitate and help and spread the word more widely I think if you can have the people who are involved it's much more real.

## Q7

DN: What do you think of when you hear the term engagement models?

CA: \*laughter\* well I think of the range of different ways of engaging. So thinking about who the audience is and what the activities are and what your theory of changes is, thinking about the difference that you were trying to affect by doing the engagement. You have to think clearly about who needs to be involved and all the questions of who what where when how, those sort of things.

## Q8

DN: How do you use this theoretical models apply them to the design and delivery of projects that you work on?

CA: I think the most critical thing is to know what you were trying to achieve and why from the outset. Also who your audience is going to be. And then you design your activities and your models around trying to think through the best ways of achieving that. So that goes into how do you actually reach the people that you want to reach as well as what the activity itself actually is and all the things around doing that activity and finding out how you made the impact that you wanted to make.

## Q9

DN: How do practicalities, so things like target audiences and funding and staffing affect, the aims and delivery of programming do you feel?

CA: The funding is obviously a limiting factor because you have to pay for the things you're going to do. You have to think about how you're going to use what you have and build on the partnerships and find ways of making the money go as far as possible. You need to do some sound project planning to make sure whatever you're planning is actually realistic. I think people sometimes underestimate the amount of energy and effort required in connecting with an audience. Because I think often people in organisations are doing their things with their own aims and objectives, and while you might be able to help them reach some of their aims and objectives they will always be much wider and different to the ones you have. So it's not necessarily a given that the audience will just be there at the ready. One of the things is to encourage more people to think about the audience and developing the links with the audience, and thinking about the impact and how that's going to be achieved rather than the focus being purely on what the activity is. I think we need to be aware of all of those things. I think if you think carefully about all of those things and plan in a way that really involves people who have knowledge of the audience you're looking for you are far more likely to be successful. So's staffing is important because you need to think about what you're going to achieve and you need to make sure that you have people involved who will help you do that. Often I think that means working with people on a project by project basis and pulling them in, rather than necessarily having a core team of people who are doing everything for all projects.

## Q10

DN: Brilliant. How do you evaluate engagement initiatives?

CA: I think if you have the luxury of funding to be able to have someone independent that's very helpful because you can get a separate perspective beyond the project team. But the principle would remain the same I think if you were doing it internally or not, and I think it's important to think about evaluation as an ongoing process of improvement rather than something that's done at the end to measure a specific change. It's thinking about gathering and building on lessons learnt in a formative way when you are piloting activities and piloting approaches. So that's a key part of evaluation engagement, but then also looking at what's happened at the end. So I think there's things to think about in terms of Reach, so who have you reached how many people and where they are. It's important to think about the quality of your events and activities and understand why people are positive about them. The next thing is understanding if they had the impact that you expected and if people have valued the events and engagement. I think it's really important to think about not doing the evaluation in a box ticking way, but to really think about what your activities are trying to do and what outcomes you would like and then to design methodologies accordingly. You need to try and build that evaluation into the activities rather than it always being about a questionnaire at the end. There are loads of different methodologies you could use and it's about choosing the right one to be able to give you the information that you're looking for. trying to make it something that is interesting and enjoyable rather

than another questionnaire. What people have learned as a result and what they have drawn as conclusions can be as valid as having a number at the end saying 98% enjoyed the event.

#### Q11

DN: What do you think makes engagement successful?

CA: Well, whether people have engaged and whether they have gone away feeling positive about the experience. Positive or changed by the activity, but really each engagement project will have its own success criteria and I think it's whether the people you wanted to engage you engaged with and if the outcomes for them include the outcomes that you were trying to achieve. Those might be about learning or people having had a particular experience or things like general learning outcomes or general societal outcomes. You have to think quite carefully about what those are for your particular project.

#### Q12

DN: How do you believe that your background has help prepare you to deliver engagement programming?

CA: My background is that I studied and trained as a scientist, as a chemist actually. My area of engagement is all-around public engagement with science and STEM. I have an understanding of what the scientists and researchers are wanting to communicate in most cases. Even if it's not the specific subject knowledge, I have an understanding of the process and how that works. I worked a lot with schools and with young people, so I understand those audiences and how schools are structured. Having done a lot of Engagement projects and also having studied for a master's degree in science communication, I say my background is a mixture of theory and practice. I keep learning all the time from things that I'm doing.

#### Q13

DN: How do you think engagement programming has changed since you became involved in it?

CA: From a long time ago... I think it's definitely changed from a deficit model, which has been the traditional way of talking to people from a position that they are missing knowledge. It's now about working in partnership with people and thinking about where they are coming from but also things like thinking about engagement genuinely with the research. So people taking part and helping to inform the research. We've gone through public understanding of science, the idea that it is fill them up with science everything will be fine, to more of a dialogue or two-way discussion with people. I think, beyond that, our understanding is that engagement can be involving people in building their skills and actually involving them rather than them just hearing about it.

#### Q14

DN: Do you consider yourself a scientist or an educator?

CA: I think both, but I think predominantly the latter now.

#### Q15

DN: Do you think that your work is for the benefit of science or the public?

CA: Both. \*laughter\* I think that scientists learn huge amount by hearing what other people have to say, people who aren't experts in the field. There is an element of bringing on the next generation of people and there's an element of having an open opportunity for people to have a discussion with scientists. It's important that we have these discussions with people beyond the science field. This is how we generate new questions and how we promote our work. So it was all about creating a positive environment where research and funding exist to benefit science. In terms of the public, it's an enriching experience for people and there are opportunities to learn about new things and do something enjoyable. I think it's important to think about the benefits that everyone involved will have. I think a lot has to do with developing the skills of the scientists involved, particularly early career researchers.

#### Q16

DN: So we are onto our last set of questions which is really about blue sky thinking. So we could go back the very beginning when you got into the Black Sea Map Project and you could design the Education component in any way, without any concern about the mitigating issues what would you design?

CA: Gosh that's quite hard because you're usually working in those confines. I think the main part of the programme I would keep things the same. I think the opportunity that was missed when designing some experiences for a wider audience from the outset and thinking about how to resource and develop those alongside the main project, so that we would end up with legacy and broader dissemination been created as we went along. Just additional resources and materials and it would have been amazing to have wider engagement with the wider public as part of...well, alongside the expeditions. Trying to work those through retrospectively has been difficult. It would have been exciting for large numbers of people to be able to see discoveries happening live through social media or film or whatever. The other element is that is the lasting Legacy, so although I think we've made a huge impact the small number of people involved, the reach could have been much broader.

DN: Is there anything else that you want to add before we come to an end?

CA: No, I don't think so.