

Theme 7 Co-creating events

This section has meeting tools and ideas for groups working together to create EHD events.

The group dynamic is important when co-producing an event. These meeting tools can help make planning sessions more enjoyable, inclusive and effective.

7.1 Choosing an event idea

This tool has examples of how to meaningfully co-design the idea for an event.

Case Study

Preferences in the UK

With a little research, you might be able to find readily available information on access and inclusion in your country.

For example, in 2019 the National Trust for Scotland, one of the country's largest cultural and natural heritage charities, conducted in-depth interviews with over 1,000 respondents over the age of 16 living in Scotland.

These responses were then statistically weighted by sex, age, region in which they lived, whether they lived in an urban or rural area, their income, education level, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

The data is extremely interesting and can help us to plan better, more accessible cultural heritage events.

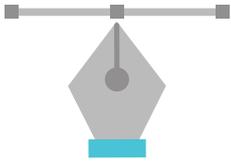
The study found that overall 46% of respondents were interested in History, but this interest is more heavily male (51% v 41% F) and white (47% v 34% BAME).

In comparison, only 24% overall said they were interested in architecture & built heritage, with the highest interest from middle and low income respondents.

Some of the cultural activities that respondents were most interested in were music (63%) and food/cuisine (52%).

Doors Open Days is thinking about how to add more music and food events to attract new audiences.

Tips



For co-creating an event idea



Of course, statistics don't tell us anything about what kind of heritage or event will interest people locally.

Creating events with partners and groups from under-represented communities can make heritage programmes more diverse.

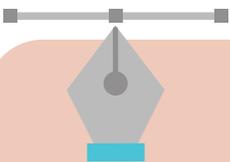


To start coming up with event ideas you could ask directly what everyone wants to do, or give some suggestions based on local heritage sites.



Listen to what people say they want, are concerned about, and need – and note these down, with their permission. Once there are a few event ideas to choose from, test each idea against the list of everyone's needs to find the best option

Tips



For setting up the space and activities



Keep time: time the activities before the day.

Tell participants how long there is for each part of the session, and write the times somewhere visible. Stick to the times.

Be clear:
say what each activity is and how to do it.

Write key points visibly.

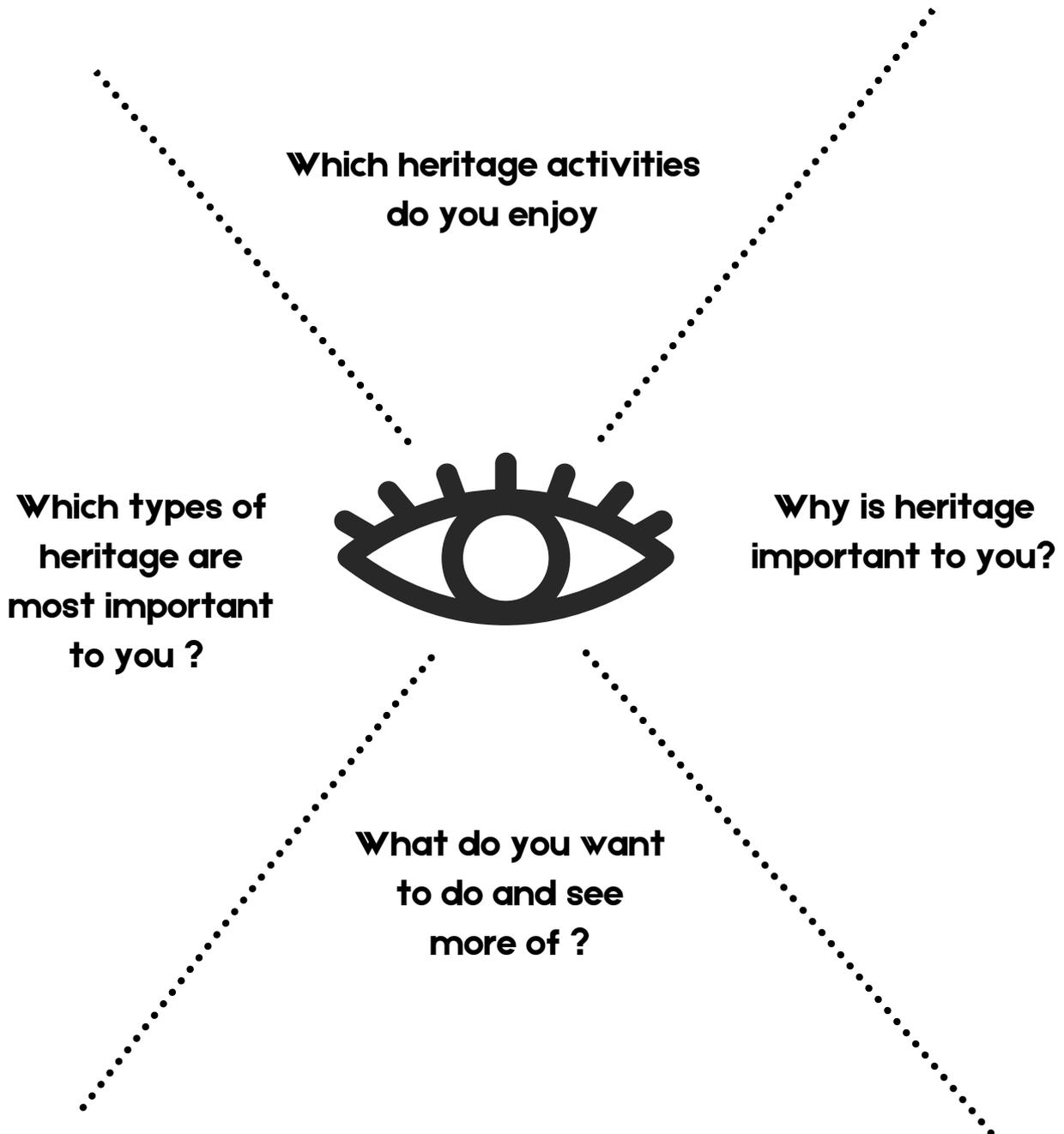


Event co-design worksheets



These worksheets can be used in groups to come up with event ideas and details.

Feel free to print this tool to use it. It's been designed in black and white!

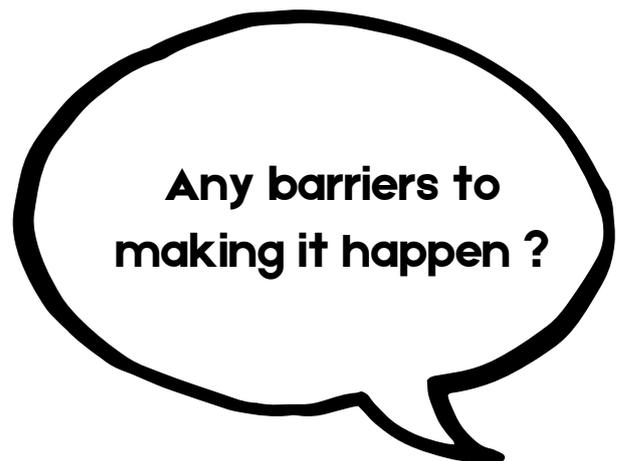
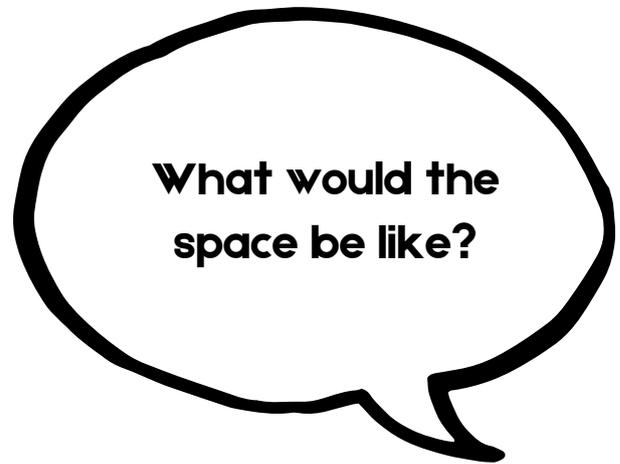
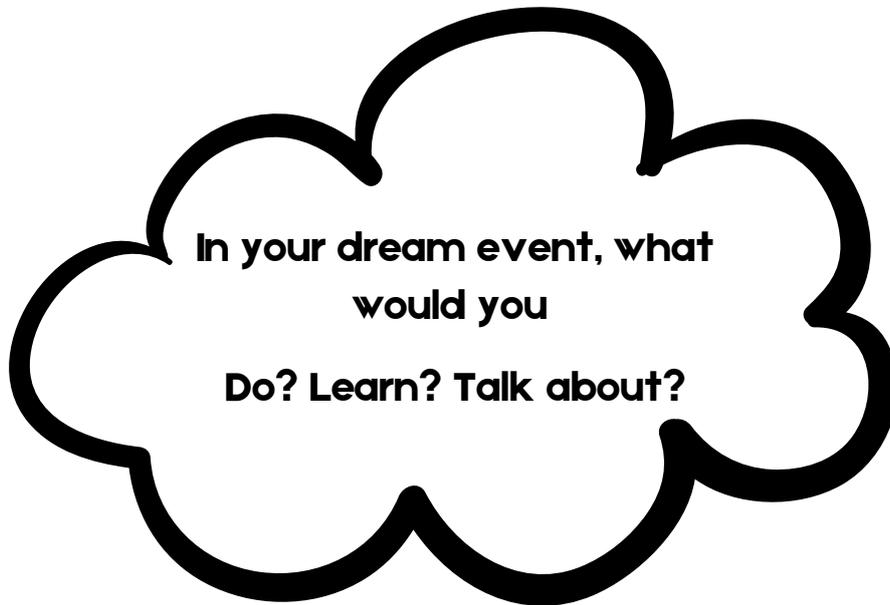


Event co-design worksheets



These worksheets can be used in groups to come up with event ideas and details.

Feel free to print this tool to use it. It's been designed in black and white!



Stories and games at the Prince Phillip Maritime Collection Centre

The Prince Phillip Maritime Collection Centre organised two days of free tours (19 in total) for Heritage Open Days.

These included specialist tours created by 8 local community groups, around the **Unsung Stories** theme 'people power'.

The community groups worked with the Centre to find items in the collection which tell a story representing their communities.

On the 21st September the groups also presented activities related to the objects they chose from the collection.

This led to the Caribbean Social Forum (who had chosen a set of dominoes as their item) organising a games without wires event.

This games event connected the different communities together through play, and supported the Forum to share their culture with 'outsiders'.

The tours included more opportunities for sharing cultural heritage.

A commissioned storyteller wrote a story informing the public around the area's history and the role of the collection, and a Mystery Story Store was specially designed and set up.

Every tour ended in the Mystery Story space, where visitors of all ages could share their own stories and feelings about the collection - in written or performed formats.



© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.



© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.



© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

7.2 Planning co-production meetings

Short tools for creating and facilitating inclusive agendas for co-planning meetings.



Welcoming

Welcoming people to the event is a chance to set an inclusive and positive tone.

- You could directly welcome everyone's diversity into the event, like in [Training for Change's 'diversity welcome' tool](#).
- Acknowledge the aims and values you're working to promote.
- Introduce yourself – you might share your name, a bit of background, and the gender pronouns you use.

For example: 'My name is ____ and I use 'she' and 'her' pronouns, so please say 'she' and 'her' when mentioning me'.



In some events you might want participants to introduce themselves too. You might choose to suggest people share their gender pronouns. However, don't insist everyone shares their pronouns, as this can cause extra stress for LGBTQ+ people.



Agreeing How to Behave

Example:

'We want to ask everyone to respect each other, and ask permission before taking a picture which includes another visitor. We suggest keeping phones on silent if possible. Please feel free to move around, take breaks and use the bathroom. Please let us (or a volunteer) know if you need any support or have a question!'



You could also support participants to create an agreement, based on what they need. Co-creating an agreement with participants can be more meaningful than asking people to follow rules you chose.

Ground rules are never neutral - they often reflect the needs of the mainstream (most included) members in a group, and can create barriers.



For example, a rule against interrupting or using phones might unequally make it harder for people from different cultural and language backgrounds, as well as neurodivergent people, to take part.

Norms and expectations about how to act vary a lot, and it is important to respect different ways of participating.



Buddy Pairs

You might want to use this so participants can support each other in smaller group events, by being friendly and helping each other understand any materials.

You can give the pairs an unfinished sentence as a prompt for thinking about peer support.

Each person reads and finishes both of the sentences a few times.

- I can help myself take part in this event by...
- My buddy can support me to take part in this event by...
- Or give the pairs a topic to discuss, i.e. 3 examples of heritage activities they both like.
- Or just ask them to learn each other's' names and talk about what they want to get out of the event.



Balancing Who Speaks

At the beginning of the meeting or event you can ask people to think about whether they usually talk a lot, or find it harder to talk and add to the conversation at events.



Invite people who are comfortable talking a lot to try to actively listen more, and invite people who talk less to use this event to speak more if they want to.



You could also go around in a circle to hear from everyone, allowing people to 'pass' and not speak if they want to.



Don't pressure people to speak if they don't want to.

If you notice that some people are taking up most of the talking time while others seem less engaged, you can also :

- Change the topic to something that everyone can add to, and go around the circle or split into smaller groups
- Mention any dynamics that you notice if appropriate: "I've noticed that the men in the group with English as their first language are doing most of the talking. Maybe we can try to shift the balance of who talks and listens most in this discussion?"



Warm Up Activities (online or offline)

- Reflection in a circle: give everyone a prompt question, like 'what's your favourite food you ate growing up?' Go in a circle, or pass to the next person by name.
- Checking in: everyone draws a face or a picture of weather (sunny, rainy, etc.) representing how they feel, and shares it with the group.
- Touch something in your environment which is: new, old, green, soft... Design a warm up: it should be fun and low-risk. Include questions, movement or social interaction to help visitors start engaging with the heritage site.

Tips

Facilitating interactive events



- Stick to the broad agenda timings – sometimes you'll need to make changes, but for participants' comfort do keep breaks and the finish time as planned.
- Pay attention to the people and dynamics in the space – does anyone seem less included? Does anyone want more support, and would 1:1 or small group support be best? Are visitors treating each other with respect?
- Think about how you value people's cultural knowledge in the space. You could show interest in everyone's experiences and connection to heritage, including those who know less about the site or are less confident communicating about it.
- Be flexible and if possible give options for how to engage. You might need to remind people that they're allowed to move around, take breaks, or do whatever else needed to take part in a way which works for them.

[Pictures credit : Chris Lacey](#)