

## **21. DCDP Case Study: V&A Museum of Design Dundee**

For the V&A Museum of Design, Dundee, Rank funding supports the employment of a full-time Communities Producer, Peter Nurick, as well as funding a proportion of activities and projects. Peter is responsible for the development and delivery of the local community engagement programme, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach groups and those living in areas of deprivation.

So far, the community talks programme has directly reached over 1,500 people, with even more people engaged through V&A Dundee's attendance at a series of community gala days and festivals across the city. The programme is predominantly targeted at those who will benefit most from the learning programmes and facilities that V&A Dundee offers for the local community before and after opening.

Talks have been held in all wards of the city to ensure that a wide variety of groups have been engaged with. The majority of the audiences have been older adults (55+) and there has also been a very positive response from Dundee's BAME community, with 94 people being spoken to and consulted from Dundee International Women's Centre, Bharatiya Ashram (Dudhope Multicultural Centre), Dundee Carers Centre and Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre.

The feedback from talks has been almost unanimously positive, with people saying they feel a greater involvement with the project and Dundee as a whole. Often, audiences feel empowered to have been asked their opinions on such a high-profile project. Others are keen to have their voices heard and put forward their opinions.

The V&A Dundee Community Garden Project has also been a huge success. Over two months, V&A Dundee worked with a core group of around 20 adults undertaking a series of seven in-depth workshops to co-design a brand new public space at the heart of the city's redeveloped waterfront. There is already significant interest in volunteering to help build the garden in Spring 2017.

The participants involved in the community garden co-design process have given the V&A team some very useful feedback on the project, commenting that they "feel more involved with Dundee than [they] ever have before" and that "being part of the group has helped re-energise [them]". This has highlighted that being part of a community co-design process can have a transformative effect on participants' overall health and wellbeing.

The V&A have gained a great deal of knowledge from undertaking this type of project which they see as an important way to continue working with local communities in the future. The retention rate of participants was also very high and participants expressed a desire for further involvement, highlighting the positive power of design on enriching the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Dundee.

Further involvement with the project will only strengthen this impact and lead to a greater sense of social, physical and emotional wellbeing from those who play a part in the ongoing construction and maintenance of this landmark garden on the waterfront. This confidence has been enhanced during a recent opportunity for four participants to meet Her Majesty, The Queen and tell her about their design for the garden.

Through this design project, the team were taking responsibility for their own wellbeing and many have now gone on to volunteer with other gardens across the city, take responsibility for their own allotment and even – for one – secure full time employment with a gardening charity.

The opportunity to showcase V&A Dundee Community Garden project at the first UNESCO Dundee Design Festival received a hugely positive response, with nearly 2000 people visiting the resulting exhibition and installation over the four- day festival.

The success of co-design process has been met with interest from community organisations across the city, including the palliative care unit at Roxburghe House, Kingsway Care Centre and Dundee Carers Centre. They all are keen to use co-design to improve their facilities and experience for the varied user groups they work with. This has led V&A Dundee to explore the possibility of including a community co-design strand in the core programme.

**Peter Nurick, V&A Museum of Design Dundee - Communities & Outreach  
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