Planning for Collaboration

Pick the right partner.

Both institutions must be ready to surrender institutional authority.

Participants may value something different from staff in the process and the outcome.

Everyone knows their existing (and desired) audiences clearly.

Audience diversification is slow, not fast. Plan for years, not weeks.

Identify the right funders open to outcomes that develop organically.

Develop measurable outcomes for all stakeholders before getting started.

Intended vs. Actual:
You may *think* a new educational program will appeal to new audiences.

Work Product

Social relationships develop between small groups of audience members through the process, not the programmatic outcomes.

Feed Them!
Go on Trips!
New relationships between strangers benefit from pleasurable, shared experiences, not just work!

Audiences value their time, so you must provide them with value for participating.

Stay flexible: Audiences will not develop programs like museum professionals and it's impossible to predict their questions and ideas.

Resources & Process

Bring interdisciplinary expertise from outside the museum.

But consider the content expertise of your audience too.

Use other experts, artists, historians and educators can teach participants how programs and audiences are developed.

Advisors can explain why an idea might not work from professional experience, so the museum doesn't have to be the one saying "no" to participant ideas.

Evaluation of Impact

Use pre and post surveys.

Ask the audience about their specific needs (e.g. language translation) and then provide for them.

Multiple methodologies required with multiple stakeholders.

Observe and evaluate the *impact of the process*, not just the tangible outcomes.

Timing: Report regularly. Waiting until the end does not allow for creative problem solving.

Need to adapt experts and methodologies as participants evolve their program ideas and have new questions.