



MUSEUMS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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MUSEUMS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

THE LEARNING MUSEUM NETWORK PROJECT REPORT NR. 4

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PREFACE

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Museums comprise a variety of institutions, cultural history and natural science collections as well as technology museums, art museums, history museums, they all present a vast diversity of areas of showcasing mankind in one way or another.

The museum landscape is varied, and so are the challenges that museums have to face. The changing society, getting older and changing its composition, means a fundamental rethinking for everyone. Museums must communicate their content to all parts of society, including or even especially focusing on disadvantaged groups, involving people of all origins and developing services for young and old.

New skills such as teamwork and tolerance, community involvement, communication techniques and creativity are expected not only from citizens, but also from museums. Demographic change and coexistence in an increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society confront museums with new target groups, activities and tasks.

What potential do museums have as places of cultural integration and dialogue?

Our opportunity in museums is that the language of art and cultural objects can and should be international and multilingual. Museum objects are waiting patiently for the interpretation of their viewers, regardless of whether they come from Turkey, from the U.S. or South Africa, whether they are young or old, educated or uneducated. Access is granted to anyone who seeks information on the origins and historical significance of objects in the collections. Our task is to encourage this interest.

A museum may focus on the ageing society with a project for dementia, set up programmes for refugee and immigrant families, organise tours with audio guides in different languages, or illustrate cultural practices, beliefs and customs issues or individual life in a neighbourhood museum. Whatever form they choose, museums have to promote our cultural memory and the potential of social cohesion, and of understanding between each other.

All of this is not only a question of the potential of museums, but also of their budgets. It is time to recognise the mediating role of museums, and to create the financial basis and conditions so that long lasting co-operation, for example between educational institutions and museums, will become the norm.

To face the new challenges of society, cultural integration and dialogue must be understood as a cross-sectional task, and museums have taken it up as one of their primary concerns for the future.



LEM – THE LEARNING MUSEUM

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Museums and intercultural dialogue is the one of seven reports which are published within the framework of the EU funded project LEM – The Learning Museum, which aims to create a permanent network of museums and cultural heritage organisations, to ensure that they can exploit their potential as learning places and play an active role with regard to lifelong learning in a knowledge based Europe.

The project is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig for the period 2010-2013 and can be regarded as the arrival point of a number of previous EU projects carried out between 2007-2010, which dealt with lifelong learning in museums (LLML and MuMAE), intercultural dialogue (MAP for ID) and volunteering (VoCH), all of which are documented in the LEM website.

In particular *MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue* – provided an important test bed to try out new ideas and launch 30 pilot projects in four European countries, aimed at developing and carrying out museum intercultural activities. The positive response of the international museum community to the challenge launched by *MAP for ID* and the long

lasting impact of its initiatives show how central the intercultural issue is for cultural institutions and how much they can contribute to an open, respectful and fruitful exchange among individuals.

LEM not only draws from the materials collected, the lessons learned and the contacts established by its forerunners, but moves one step further in the direction of establishing a permanent space for museum professionals and adult educators to meet, exchange experiences and good practices, learn from each other, therefore contributing to the creation of a European community of professionals interested in heritage education and lifelong learning in museums.

The network started with 23 partners from 17 European countries, plus one partner from the United States of America, the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Denver, taking advantage of the possibility opened in 2010 for the first time by the Lifelong Learning Programme, to involve third country organisations.

As a network, LEM aims in the first place to grow and acquire new associate members which, in March 2013, had almost tripled the founding institutions. A wide range of museums, heritage organisations, academies, institutes for learning and universities are now part of the network, representing 23 countries.

There are Ministries, Museum Associations and other umbrella organisations, individual museums, small and large, institutions active in the education field, all working on an equal level and engaged in sharing information, making it available to a wider public and learning from one another.

The philosophy of LEM indeed is that of considering museums not only as learning places, where educational activities are delivered, but as learning organisations themselves, learning from the public, the local community, other agencies and, of course, from other museums.

The idea of peer learning is core in LEM and, in order to fully support it, work has been divided into working groups, each led by a LEM partner.

The research subjects have been chosen by the working groups themselves:

- New trends in the museums in the 21st century
- Museums and the ageing population
- Audience research, learning styles and visitor relation management

- Museums as learning places- learning spaces in museums
- Museums and intercultural dialogue

Museums and intercultural dialogue is the outcome of LEM Working Group 5 and of the international conference *Intercultural Dialogue and Social Cohesion in museums* organised in Riga, Latvia on 27 April 2012.

In addition to collecting materials, sharing them on the website and eventually producing a report on the theme researched, working groups undertake study visits to each other or to third institutions, to come in contact with working practices of other colleagues throughout Europe.

This idea of learning by being directly exposed to other people's practices and experiencing different work environments represents an important added value to the project, not only with regard to the members of the working groups, but more widely, through the LEM mobility scheme which is open to partners and associate partners and consists of the possibility of spending some time working in another institution.

In fact some of the project partners, initially five, but increasingly more, have offered placements to other LEM members, for periods lasting from a few days to two weeks to three months. This results not only in the strengthening of ties within the network at personal, professional and institutional level, but allows individuals to actually learn by being exposed to different working situations.

Dissemination is another important aspect of LEM. International conferences, seminars and round tables are being organised regularly and attract a wide European audience. They are occasions for intensive networking and learning, offer plenty of social events and are combined with visits to local institutions to meet stakeholders. Where possible, they are also live streamed to reach an even wider public worldwide. A number of smaller dissemination events are also organised at local or national level.

Finally, the website is the digital platform where all the knowledge acquired by the project is kept and made available. It is a dynamic and interactive forum, first of all to receive and exchange materials about the subject area 'museums and lifelong learning' and secondly to provide information about the project. It is a virtual learning environment providing information on existing literature, projects and actors and is kept updated through continuous research, data analysis and provision of new information by an international editorial team and by the project partners. Everyone is invited



to send materials to be published on the LEM website, and participation is favoured through the use of web 2.0 tools. At the beginning of each month an electronic newsletter is sent out to all those who have subscribed to it.

The website therefore functions as a community-building tool for all those who are interested in the topics addressed by LEM. Through the networking activities of its partners and associates, the website and the dissemination events, LEM expects to reach the whole museum and heritage community and a large part of the adult education sector.

www.lemproject.eu



EVER CHANGING PLAYGROUND – INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN MUSEUMS

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During the first meeting of the Learning Museum project participants were asked to decide which themes associated with the concept of the learning museum would be of interest for them to focus on throughout the next three years of the fixed project time.

The Latvian National Museum of Art and the German Museums Association expressed an interest in looking at intercultural dialogue issues in museums and were keen to examine this topic from the perspective of different countries and museum practices represented in this networking project.

The two partners mentioned above took over the leadership of the working group *Museums and Intercultural Dialogue*, which attracted the interest of other project partners from museums in Austria, Germany, Italy, the UK and the US. As one of the working groups we were part of this network of museum professionals learning from each other at first hand.

Among the major discussion points of the working group were the political and historical contexts of different countries, which have a decisive impact on the way museums are addressing questions of intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Partners of the working group agreed that in order to

gain a better understanding of how and why museums deal with issues of intercultural dialogue, a comparative study of the political and social demands affecting museum practice would be necessary.

In the course of the LEM project (2010 - 2013), the working group has had an opportunity to visit numerous museums which engage in issues of intercultural dialogue on their study visits to Glasgow (April 2011) and Berlin (December 2011), Turin (February 2013) and attending Partner meetings in Cardiff (May 2011), Tampere (October 2011), Riga (April 2012), Östersund (October 2012) and Manchester (May 2013).

As well as drafting national reports describing the situation in the field of social integration in the project partner countries, it was decided that a comparative study which takes into account the political and social demands to which museums have to respond with regard to the intercultural dialogue issue would be further facilitated by an international conference. In order to meet this objective, on 27 April 2012 in parallel with a LEM partner meeting, a one-day conference on intercultural dialogue and social cohesion in museums was held in Riga. The conference programme was split into three parts and looked at: cultural policy perspective, museums' sector perspective and the 21st century challenges or side effects in addressing the question of social cohesion. A more detailed introduction to the questions the conference addressed and its outcomes will be found later in the text.

This publication is introduced by two essays - *The Power of Words and Vocabularies* written by Christina Kreps and *Thinking about intercultural learning - some starting points* by Diana Walters, which both reflect much of the working group's thinking behind the scenes over the three years.

Diana Walters, who played a role of working group's external facilitator during the Glasgow study visit, stressed *A key aspect of intercultural dialogue is connectivity between people from different cultures with a shared common interest. In other words, you are able to support each other by sharing and questioning assumptions and findings.*

Another starting point, as we all came from different cultural backgrounds, was discussion about the vocabulary we use and the understanding of its changing nature. You will find more about this in an essay by Christina Kreps.

In addition to essays and conference proceedings, the final report package of the working group on Intercultural Dialogue also includes a short movie reflecting on intercultural dialogue practice in museums in an informal and

playful way.

I think that Diana Walters' quote *A good place to start is to consider your own position*, is a perfect guiding principle for everyone dealing with intercultural dialogue issues. As a working group we started with brainstorming, agreeing on understanding about common but always changing vocabulary and proceeded to the conference, movie and this publication.

We hope you will enjoy the result!



THE POWER OF WORDS AND VOCABULARIES

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The Working Group on Intercultural Dialogue, as one of its activities over the past three years, compiled a working vocabulary of keywords as a means of facilitating communication within the group, and for establishing a foundation for better understanding and contributing to the discourse on intercultural dialogue. Although “the word is the essence of dialogue” (Freire 1970), this exercise extended beyond merely creating a list of words commonly found in the discourse on intercultural dialogue. It was hoped that the list would stimulate critical reflection on the origins, formations, and ideologies embedded in these words as artifacts of our times – artifacts that represent particular ways of thinking about and seeing social interactions and relationships at a particular historical moment. The goal of this work was to enable better informed and more effective practice.

Keywords, as the British sociologist Raymond Williams famously coined, signal “ways not only of discussing but at another level of seeing many of our central experiences... They are significant binding words in certain activities and their interpretations; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought” (1983:15). Changing ways of seeing, thinking, and experiencing our social worlds over time are reflected in our lexicon. But

Williams asserts that language does not simply reflect social and historical processes. Rather, "important social and historical processes can occur *within* language in ways that indicate how integral the problems of meanings and of relationships really are" (22). We need to be aware of how issues, problems and ideologies can be embedded inside vocabularies, and how new kinds of relationships and new ways of seeing existing relationships appear in language in a variety of ways. New terms are invented or old terms are adapted, altered, or transferred to other usages. Indeed, many of the terms on our list did not exist 20 or 30 years ago, or, if they did exist they have taken on radically different meanings. Some have emerged out of necessity or a desire to name and be able to talk about phenomena that are age-old, but are now being understood and experienced in new ways. Williams has shown us how an 'archaeology' of words, the excavation of their origins and analysis of their evolution over the decades, can reveal much about social transformations and dynamics over time.

Because keywords encapsulate historical moments, ideas, and values, the *zeitgeist* if you will, they are difficult if not impossible to define precisely or be given a stable definition. They are inherently contingent, ambiguous, and relational dependent on context for understanding. They can signify different things to different people at different points in time. The problem is not one of meaning but of meanings. For this reason, Williams encourages us to think of vocabularies as 'active' - active in the ways we analyze them; give and derive meaning from them as well as manipulate and control their meaning. Equally significant is how we can add or erase certain words from our vocabularies. In this regard, we are pressed to be aware of the power and authority invested in vocabularies and how they can be used to liberate just as much as they can be used to indoctrinate. "We find and make vocabularies to use and to change as we find necessary as we go making our own language and history" (Williams 1983:24-25).

Thinking of words and vocabularies and their meanings as adaptive, ever-changing and active acknowledges how they have power and agency. Linguistic scholars and social activists have long recognized that words have power and agency not only in how they are used verbally, but also in how they can empower people to take action for a cause. In the words of Paolo Freire, "to exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it" (1970: 69).

Such understandings of words and vocabularies are at the heart of intercultural dialogue as both a concept and practice. While understandings



of each element of the term, i.e., intercultural and dialogue, have been given different meanings at different times by their users, the term, currently, has come to represent an approach to facilitating communication among people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and as a means to ameliorate tensions that arise from encounters with cultural differences. In this context, dialogue refers to a certain kind of communication; communication that is focused, intentional conversation. Intercultural dialogue has the goal of increasing understanding, addressing problems, and questioning assumptions, stereotypes, and biases. It is about exploring and respecting differences more than about proving the correctness or legitimacy of one perspective or one side over another. Dialogue is as interested in the relationship among the participants as much as it is in the topic or theme being explored. Genuine dialogue presupposes an openness to modify deeply held beliefs, convictions, and values (Romney 2005).

Daniel Yankelovich in his book *The Magic of Dialogue* (1999) outlines three core requirements of dialogue - equality, empathetic listening, and surfacing assumptions. Briefly, equality means that all participants in a dialogue are considered and treated as equals. Listening with empathy is the ability of participants to respond with unreserved empathy to the views of others; and finally, surfacing assumptions is about bringing people's deep-rooted assumptions out into the open and considered with mutual respect "In dialogue, participants are encouraged to examine their own assumptions and those of other participants" (44). Yankelovich suggests that in practice, we should check to make sure all three essential features are present and learn how to introduce the missing ones.

Much of our contemporary understanding of dialogue has been inspired by the work of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). To Bakhtin, the goal of dialogue is 'responsive understanding'. All understanding is active, and in dialogue something must be done. For Bakhtin, dialogue is multi-voiced (or polyphony). Multiple voices and perspectives exist in nearly all situations, which need to be considered for real dialogue to take place. In Bakhtin's theory of 'dialogism', multiple voices and perspectives are not presented as either/or choices, but all are viewed as potentially correct. A variety of ideas are heard and considered. Therefore, dialogue can lead to multiple outcomes and possibilities for action (Romney 2005: 62).

Fundamental to the LEM project is the idea that museums are places where intercultural dialogue can take place and be encouraged. Museums

are also, as institutions of civil society and public culture, places that can engage in and promote civic dialogue. "Civic dialogue is dialogue in which people explore the dimensions of a civic or social issue, policy, or decision of consequence in their lives, communities, societies" (Romney 2005:59). Museums can be a focal point for the exploration of civic issues, the questions surrounding them, and multiple perspectives on them. They can bring together the voices of those who are often silenced or left out and offer a safe and supportive space conducive to reflection and discussion. Through dialogue participants can develop empathy for others' experiences, challenges, and their obstacles to fully participating in civil society.

What the Working Group has learned is that vocabulary lists should be seen as just a starting point for further thought, discussion, and elaboration for the definitions of words are not only ever changing but can also be limiting. While definitions can help create a common language to facilitate better communication, perhaps what is more important to consider is the *quality* and *character* of intercultural dialogue as well as how the terms of engagement are established and by whom?

One of the strongest criticisms of intercultural dialogue as practised in museums and other arts and cultural organizations is that it is grounded in Western or Eurocentric canons of dialogue and discourse (Korza, Bacon and Assaf 2005:52). Consequently, one of our greatest challenges in practising intercultural dialogue is to find a language that cuts across linguistic and cultural barriers and is multilingual and multicultural. This language may not be inscribed in particular words and phrases with specific meanings, but in people's stories because, as John O'Neal reminds us:

"In telling our stories we identify what is important to us. By listening to the stories of others, we find out what is important to them; and by listening and telling together, we have the possibility of creating a clearer sense of what our community is and what our collective priorities are... we can take those stories and craft our way to the future" (O'Neal, quoted in (Korza, Bacon and Assaf: 2005:5).

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THINKING ABOUT INTERCULTURAL LEARNING - SOME STARTING POINTS

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Working with intercultural groups and situations requires us to change. It is essentially a process, and although it is possible to identify some key characteristics, the effectiveness of any intercultural dialogue or activity will rely on the individuals involved; to some extent at least. Interculturalism should, in my view, be embraced as an opportunity for self reflection and personal growth. It is effectively an opportunity for an encounter, and like any good conversation, it is best when the journey is more important than the destination.

For several decades museums have been regarded as places where intercultural dialogue can take place. The literature of our profession is littered with case studies of successful projects and programmes, and there is no doubt that many organisations are engaging in this work with enthusiasm and commitment. But how much true self reflection is there? How much do we really engage in the evaluation processes that help us to identify, observe and understand what is really happening in our spheres of influence? How much do we truly listen? Is any change in practice or attitude embedded into future activity?

Photo: The Latvian National Museum of Art

A good place to start is to consider your own position. As a museum and heritage professional you are probably an excellent communicator and have a high level of competence in several areas of activity. But what value judgments underpin your own working practice? For example, ask yourself some simple questions like these below:

- How do you feel if someone is late for a meeting or doesn't meet deadlines?
- Do you feel uncomfortable when there is a long silence in a conversation or meeting?
- Do you think that silence means agreement or dissent?
- Are you nervous of change?
- How do you use your body to communicate, as well as your voice?
- How often do you use jargon and abbreviations in conversations with colleagues or visitors?

Asking questions like these can start a process whereby we begin to see our own behaviour as someone with a different perspective might, like that of someone from another cultural tradition. It might not be comfortable, but it can be very revealing. Most of the time we act and think within our own frames of reference, some of which we might not even be aware of. Intercultural working frequently takes us out of that comfort zone and into places where, maybe, we can't read the signals anymore.

In my work with internationalism and interculturalism I believe that museums can indeed be places where meaningful dialogue can take place, sometimes leading to significant change, but I also believe that this will only happen if we as a profession embrace this as an area of training and development. Empathy, that crucial response, may already exist, but on its own it is not enough.

Worldwork Ltd, an international consortium of trainers and professionals working with the business sector, has identified key competencies for engaging in successful internationalism. Many of these are transferable to the cultural and heritage sector. These are summarised in the table below:

OPENNESS	New thinking Welcoming to strangers Acceptance
FLEXIBILITY	Flexible behaviour Flexible judgement Learning Languages
PERSONAL AUTONOMY	Inner purpose Focus on goals
EMOTIONAL STRENGTH	Resilience Coping Spirit of adventure
LISTENING ORIENTATION	Active listening
TRANSPARENCY	Clarity of communication Exposing intentions
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE	Information gathering Valuing differences
INFLUENCING	Rapport Range of styles Sensitivity to context
SYNERGY	Creating new alternatives

Adapted from Concept 3.9 Worldwork's framework of international competencies, in 'Intercultural Interaction. A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication' 2009, Spencer-Oatey, H & Franklin, P, Palgrave, pp. 76-78

In my experience, meaningful intercultural dialogue takes a long time and is a skill that can, and should, be developed more in the museum and heritage world. Museums can become spaces where new narratives and understanding can emerge, and also where difficult questions can be explored. But this will only happen if the museum profession values, researches and trains these areas, and invests in a journey which can often lead to uncertain destinations. Interculturalism can foster diplomacy, creativity and understanding as well as strengthen the core activities of heritage and museums if we take it seriously and engage in it with enthusiasm and openness.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEARNING MUSEUM PROJECT MID-TERM EVALUATION CONFERENCE

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Given that society is constantly changing, museums must regularly assess whether they are fulfilling their task of serving society adequately. During the last decades the number of residents in Western European countries with an immigration background has increased steadily. Also the re-emergence of nation states across Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union has caused division of population along ethnic lines. This international conference was looking at recent developments in social justice museum movements across Europe, particularly concentrating on the museum's role in social cohesion. Given that the conference took place in Riga, it was deliberately drawing on examples of current Latvian cultural policy, where, for the first time since regaining independence, greater attention is being placed on possibilities offered by heritage institutions to address social cohesion and foster stronger civic society. The conference was examining museums' responsibilities and experiences in offering opportunities of cultural participation in Europe to people from all walks of life against the background of cultural integration policies of represented nation states.

- Are museums being considered as an asset for social cohesion in Europe?
- To what extent have museums and their collections have been

instrumental in fostering an open and unprejudiced society?

- How do museums and their representative organizations campaign for an active voice in national cultural policies, and how successful are they?
- How do museums cope with potentially controversial questions with ethnically diverse audiences?
- How do museums retain their academic independence under the pressure of political demands?

These are some of the questions that the Learning Museum project mid-term evaluation conference addressed by offering the floor to project participants from various European countries and some specially invited high-profile museum policy makers, researchers, managers and innovators.



CULTURAL POLICY AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE - SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

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WHAT IS CULTURAL POLICY?

All of us working with museums and heritage are to some extent influenced by cultural policy. It may be that as practitioners we feel that this is something a bit distant from our daily working lives, but understanding and engaging with it can guide us strategically and may help us understand why some decisions are made in the way they are. Cultural policy should reflect the values that underpin cultural life and combine purpose, objectives and means, all of which will affect the individual museum at different levels and in several ways.¹ In some places the lack of cultural policy is equally important and the challenge there is to be an actor in shaping its development.

Cultural policy will differ according to the context; for example, the political, social and economic situation and other factors such as artistic activity and professional capacity influence the health of creative life. Models of cultural policy have been developed and these can assist understanding, particularly about driving forces behind decision-making. Hillman-Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) developed five models that summarize the basic

Photo: The Latvian National Museum of Art

approaches from which most characteristics of cultural policy can be derived. Each of them (facilitator, architect, engineer, elite engineer and patron) has strengths and weaknesses. For example, the facilitator model aims to support diversity in cultural life that may assist goals around interculturalism, whereas the engineer approach is closely linked to political goals, and may mean that these questions are sidelined.²

Cultural policies exist at several levels, from local to international. At times this may create conflicts of interest and tension between different objectives; for example, a national museum may feel under pressure to develop a particular view of history whereas the staff might be interested in deconstructing narratives as a way of engaging minority groups in ways that may be considered undesirable or even subversive. Navigating these conflicting objectives can be tricky, and with political pressure and limited access to funding the museum might feel it is unable to take such risks. Museums in smaller regions often have extensive knowledge about their area and communities that is not recognized or valued by bureaucrats higher up the ladder.

THE RIGHT TO CULTURE

Regardless of the type of cultural policy that is dominant, a rights-based approach says that individuals have a right to culture. Article 27 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. Of course it is possible to interpret this in several ways but the underlying principle is that exclusion from cultural life could amount to a denial of a human right. Relatively little evidence exists on the role of culture as a tool for human rights, but from my experience of working in post-conflict countries I maintain that inclusive ‘bottom-up’ approaches have potential to create spaces for encounter and dialogue more easily than politically engineered interventions. Working with trust rather than reconciliation is often more realistic: there may be things which cannot easily be reconciled between peoples, but recognizing this and using it as a basis on which to build relationships can develop organizational and even personal trust and thereby create conditions for peaceful co-existence.

RIDING THE WHITE WATER

As part of my preparation for the conference in Riga I talked to colleagues



working in seven European countries: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Finland, Italy, Kosovo, Sweden and the UK. I had three main questions:

- what are the main roles of museums and heritage organizations at the current time?
- what are the main driving forces?
- what are the key issues regarding intercultural dialogue in museums, heritage and cultural policy?

Inevitably I got a range of responses, reflecting the different contexts, values and policies. For example, in answer to the first question, the northern European countries (Sweden, the UK) replied that a current role of museums and heritage was to promote integration of diverse and fluid populations, whereas in the southern countries it was more about reinforcing differences between groups and creating new identities. Several replies referred to the need for museums to survive as they were seen as a drain on scarce resources.

Responses to the second question, about main driving forces, showed that cultural heritage organisations across the continent of Europe are nervous and feel they are working in a time of uncertainty. As well as the obvious economic problems there was also a sense of a declining trust in all institutions, including cultural ones, and that museums were often felt to be irrelevant. This was aggravated by a lack of activity by museums themselves, which were seen to be passive, backward looking and risk-averse. Generally, there was felt to be a lack of knowledge and relevant research around the potential of heritage as a force for change. In terms of interculturalism there were concerns that diversity was often linked to fear of the 'other' and even to national security.

The third question about key issues for museums and interculturalism revealed more consensus, particularly around the need for partnerships to enable cultural heritage to play an active role in inclusion and participation. Creation of shared spaces and sensitively enhancing the preservation of languages and cultures were seen as the most sustainable approaches, although these are not by any means straightforward. Equally, diversity and interculturalism were felt to be in opposition to national identity, indicating that nationalism is still viewed within a narrow nation-state paradigm and questioning the viability of pan-Europeanism. Many felt that museums must avoid 'sensitive' areas to be able to survive. Finally, several respondents recognized that heritage could unite or divide and that some approaches to

'integration' of different groups could in fact enhance difference in ways that were divisive. Consequently, in many cases organizations and policy makers deliberately avoided this.

CONCLUSIONS

A more systematic piece of research is needed and the answers quoted above can only be taken as examples. What they illustrate is the complexity of cultural policy and interculturalism and the different ways that this is being experienced and interpreted. They also show some unease about the place of museums, actual and potential, as agents of change and social justice. What this leads to, in my view, is the absolute need for partnerships – alliances, advocates and ambassadors, and a deeper investigation of a rights-based approach to heritage. Museums cannot exist in isolation and in order to become relevant they need to organize and promote themselves as part of broader civil society. Museums and policy makers need each other; otherwise in a fast-changing world they may all too easily become marginalized.

NOTES

¹ Girard, A (1983) *Cultural development: experiences and policies*, p.171

² For a summary of the five main models, see http://epress.anu.edu.au/anzsog/revisioning/mobile_devices/apc.html



A SPLIT SOCIAL MEMORY AND MUSEUMS AS A RESOURCE FOR INTEGRATION

SARMĪTE ĒLERTE,
A FORMER MINISTER OF
CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
LATVIA

I will start with the claim that the job of museums is to make sure that the relevant nation has a healthy nervous system. If there are many blank pages in an individual memory and the person does not know what has happened to him and finds that his memories are torn up by contradictions, then we cannot speak of a harmonic person. In metaphoric terms, this can also be applied to nation. Social memory has a major influence on nations in terms of orientation toward the community's integrity and values. It helps people to understand the world and their place there in a broader context and in a longer dimension of time, also allowing them to reflect on the big issues of life in a sensible way.

You are museum professionals, and you know much better than I do how to find paths toward the hearts and minds of individuals. I will not try to offer advice in this regard. Instead, I will talk about the challenges which I see in the area of social memory in Latvia. I will look at why we have been focusing much attention on social memory since the basic conceptual document on national identity, the civil society and integration was adopted by Latvia's government in 2011.

Photo: The Latvian National Museum of Art

To be sure, I will also speak to the role of museums when it comes to the role of museums in the area of integration. I will start with two examples from my personal experience.

Imagine a humble farm in the countryside. It was home to the author and painter Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, and today it is a museum called 'Riekstiņi'. I remember that museum from my earliest childhood, and it and its environment helped to form my understanding of the Latvian proportion and the golden distribution of harmony among people, architecture and nature. This can be called a multimedia project – a homestead and a book in which the author describes his childhood and depicts it in drawings.

I can say that this museum established my measuring stick as to what is beautiful and harmonious and to the world to which I believe I belong.

The second example. The grave memorial of the first president of Latvia during the country's interwar period of independence, Jānis Čakste. During the Soviet occupation, tens and hundreds of thousands of families with children visited the graveyard on the date when the dead are commemorated to put down lit candles in honour of the president. There was always a sea of candlelight around the monument. This was a silent protest each year during which people announced that they remembered that they once had their own country – one which was taken away from them. The silent protest could not be prohibited, no matter how much the regime tried to limit it. During the Soviet era, trees were planted around the memorial, and no one was allowed to clean it up.

This was an annual manifestation of the nation's identity and the social memories which it had preserved so very carefully. Social memories were of enormous importance in the late 1980s in Central and Eastern Europe. The historian Tony Judd has written that "the memories flowed together into a powerful counter-current against Soviet history and destroyed it".

In Latvia, social memories in the late 1980s brought people together for a single purpose – to regain their own state. This created unprecedented civic participation and collaboration. Latvians made use of a narrow window of geopolitical opportunity and did manage to restore the independence of their country.

Historiography that is apolitical and based on true facts could only begin in the 1990s, when events from the past were reassessed in the area of social memory, valuating them in accordance with the value of a democratic



society. History is that which has happened. Social memory is the way in which to approach and evaluate the relevant events.

When it comes to social memory in Latvia, there is a great potential for a split therein because of the 20th century and particularly the Second World War, and the 50 years of occupation after the war was over. Those years had not been evaluated on the basis of true facts or of democratic values. More than 20 years have passed now since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but this process of rearranging memories is continuing.

In 2011 Latvia's government approved a series of basic concepts related to integration, and social memory was enshrined as one of the three most important areas of activity alongside efforts to develop a civil society and to strengthen its national and democratic identity. Previous integration programmes from the government had not included any targeted approach to social memory, thus ignoring its ability to split up or consolidate society. The new integration document does focus on social memory, and museums in particular have an important role to play in this regard.

Social memory is defined in the integration programme as follows: A universal understanding of history, events from the past, socio-political processes, and their interpretation. This understanding is based on individual memories, government policies, educational content, holidays, dates of commemoration, and so on.

A split social memory means a split society. A weak social memory means a weak sense of belonging. Social memory that is based on knowledge and ideas about the past has an influence on human behaviour in the present. Social memory sets out markers for values and strengthens a sense of belonging.

What are the main challenges in regard to social memory in Latvia? I would like to mention four of them.

First of all, the Second World War created two different, mutually exclusive and confrontational blocs of social memory in Latvia, and this carries with it the essential risk of a society with two communities that exist in parallel. During the 50 years which followed the war, some 750,000 people from all over the USSR settled in Latvia, thus constituting around 30% of the population. The Swedish diplomat Lars Freden has written that no country in Europe experienced such vast immigration during the 20th century, with the percentage in other European countries ranging between 5 and 10%.



Once the Soviet Union collapsed, many of these people suddenly woke up to find themselves in a completely different and independent country. This created tensions in society that were based on the traumatic belief among Russian speakers that they had “lost their motherland.” Such people felt insecure about their future in Latvia, but it is also true that Latvians were insecure about their ability to restore, preserve and develop the Latvian cultural arena. Of key importance in this traumatic process is the conflict in social memory, which is based on Soviet ideology about Latvia’s occupation, the country’s fate during World War II, and life under the Soviet regime. Russia continues to insist at the official level that the Red Army liberated Latvia from Nazi occupation, while Latvians believe that this ‘liberation’ actually meant a loss of independence and 50 years of Soviet occupation. To this very day Russia has not stepped back from the crimes of the Stalinist regime of the Soviet Union – crimes among which the occupation of the Baltic States must be numbered. Given the influence of Russian information in Latvia, different groups in society have different senses of belonging, and there are also confrontational dates of commemoration. The Soviet version of history holds that the development of Latvia began after the war, while the Latvian version counters that their country, in fact, fell behind the rest of Europe during that period. The social memory of immigrants begins with the 1950s, and one of the priorities for Russian foreign policy is to preserve and strengthen post-Soviet identity among Russian speakers in the former USSR. Latvia’s goal, in turn, is to ensure that this substantial group of people comes to feel a sense of belonging in Latvia. The truth is that the emergence of social memories which are in line with democratic values will require many more years.

The second challenge is that the presence of minority nationalities in overall social memory is fragmentary. Much work has been done in Latvia to study the Holocaust, the tragic fate of Jews during the Nazi era, and the participation of ethnic Latvians in these crimes. The Latvian Occupation Museum did excellent work in this regard in 2011, working in partnership with the Jewish Museum to present a joint exhibition about the Stalinist and Nazi occupations of Latvia. The problem is that the same approach has not been taken toward a powerful and emotional depiction of the destiny of the Roma community in Latvia. That community lost half of its members during the Second World War in Latvia. Historical memories in the country do not assign sufficient importance to the role and participation of minority representatives in the establishment and development of Latvia’s interwar

period of independence and in the restoration of that statehood in the 1990s. These blocs of memories exist in parallel, and insufficient use has been made of them to create a more common sense of belonging.

The third challenge is this: The people of Latvia have a weak sense of democracy or belonging to a civil community, because the age of Latvia's independent statehood has been very brief – 20 years between the two World Wars, and 20 years now since the 1990s. It was only in the latter half of the 19th century that Latvians understood themselves to be a unified cultural nation, and it was only during the early years of the 20th century that they thought about their own country. I have already mentioned the first president of independent Latvia, Jānis Čakste. At the beginning of the last century he wrote that Latvians must feel like a single nation, as opposed to people from Vidzeme, Kurzeme or Latgale. The sense of belonging to a nation as a cultural community is still much stronger than is the sense of belonging to the democratic Latvian nation state. The result of this is that the level of civic participation in Latvia has been low, and involvement on the institutions of democracy has been passive. A sense of belonging to one's country and democratic community is more open and focused on co-operation than is an identification related to a cultural nation or a minority group. Social memories about Latvia's brief periods of statehood do not lack individuals and events which, if discussed in greater detail, would strengthen this concept of a 'single nation' in the nation's identity.

The fourth challenge is that European identity is not sufficiently enshrined in Latvia's social memory. Surveys show that only 20% of Latvia's residents feel a sense of belonging to Europe, although there is a much more hopeful percentage among young people – 50% of them feel that sense. It is still popular in Latvia to use the concepts of 'them' and 'over there' when talking about Europe, as opposed to 'us' and 'over here'. It is also true that the knowledge of the average Latvian about the country's history in Europe prior to the 20th century is foggy at best.

Latvia's history is a part of European history and the history of Christianity. We see grand styles of art and directions of thought in the architecture of Rīga, in rural estates and mansions, in literature and in art. There is a wealth of materials which can mark out this element of social memory at the local and the national level. Memory-related institutions have every opportunity and a great deal of importance in expanding the understanding of national identity under a broader framework of culture, history, values and geopolitics.

Of equal importance is the role of Latvia's memory-related institutions in developing a unified memory, not one that is split up between the West and the East.

In conclusion, I would like to speak about the activities which will relate to these fundamental positions about integration, particularly in terms of those which will involve partnerships with museums:

1. The introduction of programmes related to integrated museum activities of a pedagogical nature at Latvian and minority schools, with co-ordinated use of the resources of memory-related institutions (museums, libraries, archives). Support for the development of methodological and audiovisual materials for effective teaching about events in the Second World War. A partnership with the Latvian Occupation Museum and other memory-related institutions – lectures and visits to the museum by schoolchildren so as to ensure the creation of social memory about Stalinist and Nazi crimes which is in line with democratic values, also facilitating debates and critical thinking.
2. Co-operation between the media and memory-related institutions to strengthen the European dimension in Latvia, focusing on Latvia's material and non-material cultural monuments – Latvia's uniqueness, excellence and presence in the European cultural space.
3. Examination of local history, collection of memories, regional research and the museum as a way of strengthening the sense of belonging of the local community, not forgetting about the involvement of local people who live abroad. Support for school activities in relation to 20th century and contemporary history. Joint activities for schoolchildren of various nationalities, as part of informal education processes at museums.
4. Updated topics based on the merger of resources from various memory-related institutions or information about such resources – "The Roma in Latvia," for instance. 'World War I: A New Europe and the Establishment of the Latvian State'; 'Latvian Statehood and Outstanding Latvians and Others in Its History'; 'Minority Nationalities and Latvia'; 'The History of Immigration in Latvia'; 'The Investment of Minority Nationalities in Latvia's Cultural Space.'
5. Partnerships between museums and specialists to design programmes for specific target audiences such as people from third countries. The focus could be on Latvia's Cultural Canon or on the history of the country's

occupations.

6. Support for the ability of memory-related institutions in Latvia to take part in the formation of joint social memory in Europe.

7. Facilitating the traditions of donations and philanthropy in Latvia.

Museums create public benefits. They bring together people, generations, eras, places and worlds. People who understand themselves to be part of a broader community and a link in the chain of generations can hope to treat themselves, others, the environment and the future in a more responsible way. Solidarity among memories strengthens communities and creates a sense of belonging during our age of globalisation. Memories bring people together for co-operation, joint activities and goals. That is a public benefit which museums help to create.

In addition to other important jobs, however, museums have another one: bring joy to people. That is what Latvia's museums do, and I hope from the bottom of my heart that you will continue to do so.



BEYOND INTEGRATION COURSES. WAYS TO FACE THE CHALLENGE OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN MUSEUMS IN GERMANY

DIETMAR OSSES,
WESTPHALIAN STATE MUSEUM
OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE
AND CULTURE – HANNOVER
COLLIERY
BOCHUM, GERMANY

Migration history, with a strict immigration policy in the past, the federal organized cultural policy and the ongoing demographical development has a great impact on the issue of cultural diversity for museums in Germany.

The 'National Plan on Integration' set up by the German government in 2007 focuses on German language skills, early childhood education, job training and equal opportunities for men and women as important steps to social integration of people with an immigration background. In contrast to the integration policy of Latvia, the issues of a shared social memory and a national cultural space do not play an important role. But apart from national-wide programmes, museums in Germany have applied programmes and implemented strategies over the past years to take on the challenges of a society where diversity is the norm.

STAGES OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Germany is geographically located at the centre of Europe and its population has been changed by emigration and immigration for centuries. In the 20th century the two World Wars sparked by Germany led to unprecedented shifts in the social and political makeup of Europe. Forced migration caused

millions of people to leave their home for a limited amount of time or for good. This increased the diversity of the population of the European countries to an unprecedented extent.

By the end of the Second World War there were more than 12 million people with a foreign passport as displaced persons within the borders of Germany – among them were prisoners of war, forced labourers and the victims of the policies of annihilation of the National Socialists. To this unimaginable number of people who were forced to emigrate through displacement and war, there has to be added those who became immigrants or national minorities without leaving their country due to the change of the borders after the war, such as the border between Poland and Germany. About 12.5 million people went to Western Germany as refugees from the eastern territories.¹

In 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in Western Germany. Against the background of the horrendous memories of the system of National Socialism, West Germany developed a constitution based on democratic values and strict separation of power.

For questions of immigration, cultural diversity and social cohesion a handful of laws and restrictions regulating German citizenship were of crucial importance. German citizenship is based on the principle of the bloodline, following the *ius sanguinis*. Citizenship depends on the citizenship of the parents, not on the country where one is born. In addition, the Constitution provided for one single citizenship only and prohibited double citizenship in most cases.

Thereby the Government of Germany stated: Germany is not a country of immigration.

For people living in the former German territories in the east, these conditions denoted: they and their offspring were still considered to be Germans by law. This ensured that they would be able to return to Germany at any time. Facing the development of the Cold War and the building up of the Iron Curtain in Europe this aspect became very important for Western Germany.

In contrast to many other European states, in the Federal Republic of Germany matters of cultural policy were placed in the hands of the individual states (Bundesländer) and did not become the responsibility of the national government. This federal system is still in place. Therefore both educational

and cultural policies are decided and funded on the regional level or the local level.

The territories of Eastern Germany were under the rule of the Soviet Union, which established a centralized socialist state. In 1949 the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded as an independent state. The government dissolved the former states in eastern Germany and replaced them by 15 new districts.

The state-controlled cultural sector was headed by the Ministry of Culture. The ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland) exercised a tight control of all parts of the society including all aspects of cultural life. Even the very important cultural activities organized by social and cultural associations or the worker unions, were all under state supervision.

1955-1973: WESTERN GERMANY'S RECRUITING AGREEMENTS FOR 'GUEST WORKERS'

In the mid-50s the Federal Republic of Germany encountered a phase of intense economic boom, the so-called economic miracle. The heavy industries – coal, steel and the like - located in the Ruhr area in North Rhine Westphalia provided the backbone of this development.

In a first step, the high and ever-increasing demand for workers could be satisfied by refugees from former eastern territories and by displaced persons. But by the mid-50s, the workforce available in Germany could not satisfy the demands of the growing industries and this threatened to hinder the economic boom.

Accordingly, the Western German government decided to sign a Recruiting Agreement with Italy in 1955. In the beginning the contracts issued within the framework of this agreement were limited to two years and were meant to recruit qualified workers. The right of residence was connected to these contracts.

In line with the temporary set-up of both contract and right of residents the term 'guest worker' was coined. Neither integration and inclusion policies nor special support structures were instigated due to the short-term nature of the residence in Germany. Permanent immigration was not intended.

But reality soon showed that only a very limited number of highly qualified



workers followed the offer made possible by the Recruiting Agreement. Instead more and more unskilled workers came to Germany, to work in the heavy industries or as farm workers. Industrial plants in particular were looking for cheap labour for short-term hire, according to the economic development. 'Guest workers' became the buffer for the expanding German economy.

Because of the continuing demand for workers, the German government signed further Recruiting Agreements: in 1960 with Spain and Greece, 1961 with Turkey, 1963 with Morocco, 1964 with Portugal, 1965 with Tunisia and finally in 1968 with the State of Yugoslavia. After the oil crisis and the worldwide economic crisis in 1973 the German government declared a ban on recruitment.

From 1955 to 1973 about 14 million people came to Germany as recruited foreign workers. About 11 million went back to their home countries. The others remained in Germany permanently. In the following years many of them brought their families to Germany. In consequence, the number of foreigners in Germany did not decrease as intended but increased, and the proportion of family members without work (wives, children) increased, too.²

In the GDR foreign workers and work migration in general were a rarity. In the context of 'mutual economic aid' just a few thousand workers were recruited from Poland starting in 1965, from Hungary starting in 1967 and Cuba starting in the late 1970s. Recruiting Agreements with Mozambique followed in 1979 and with Vietnam in 1980. The stay was limited to 4-5 years. The foreign 'contract workers' were housed in special dormitories and were kept segregated from the public. Federal programmes to further integration did not exist.

1973-2005: BAN ON RECRUITMENT, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND ETHNIC GERMAN IMMIGRANTS

Even though the migrant workers were supposed to stay in Germany for a short time only, the length of the stay of the 'guest workers' increased over the years. On the one hand many workers got used to the higher standard of living in Germany. On the other hand many industries profited from this trend as they could train the unskilled workers for more complicated tasks.

After the German government imposed a ban on recruitment, it expected a sharp decrease in the foreign population in Germany. This expectation



proved false. Quite the opposite happened. Many migrant workers, especially from Turkey, did not return to their home countries in fear of not being able to get another residence permit. For fear of further regulations they also brought their families from Turkey to Germany. This was possible, because for humanitarian reasons laws furthered reuniting families.

In the 1980s and 1990s many political refugees and ethnic German immigrants came to Germany.

After the beating down of the Solidarność movement and setting up the law of war in Poland in 1981, about 100,000 Poles came to Germany as political refugees and asylum seekers. According to the law, political asylum seekers have the right to stay in Germany until their status is cleared. But they do not get a permission to work and earn money during this time.

After the fall of the Soviet Union the number of asylum seekers skyrocketed. In the years 1989 to 1993 1.3 million people applied for political asylum. The German government kept to their general political position "Germany is no country of immigration"³ and restricted the regulations dealing with political asylum seekers in 1993. Under this new regulation foreigners who enter Germany from another country of the European Union do not qualify for political asylum any longer. This led to a sharp drop in application rates.

A second significant wave of immigration was made up of people who came to Germany as ethnic German Immigrants from Poland, Romania and States of the former Soviet Union. The law on displaced persons and refugees from 1953 that had its origins in the Cold War guaranteed people of German origin from Central Eastern Europe entrance to Germany, German citizenship and a number measures and programmes to help integrating into German society.⁴

Faced with the increasing political and economic crisis, from 1981 to the year 2000 about 4 million people emigrated from Eastern Europe states to Germany. In these days it was easy to convince the authorities that one had German routes: In most cases it was enough to have ancestors who lived in the former German areas, to have German ancestors or to confess to have been practising German culture in the past.

As an ethnic German immigrant one got free German language courses, help in finding housing and jobs, and the low payments to the social assurances were adjusted to the high level of the German social assurances.

THE GERMAN IMMIGRATION ACT OF 2005

The sharp increase of application rates by asylum seekers and ethnic German immigrants starting with the mid 80s on the one hand and xenophobic attacks or assaults on living quarters of foreigners just a few years after the German reunification on the other hand, sparked a vast and controversial debate on the topic of immigration to Germany.⁵ In the end, in January 2005 the first immigration act was passed.⁶ It regulates the conditions of immigration and the integration measures to be taken by the State. The act provides new possibilities for getting the German nationality and citizenship apart from the *ius sanguinis*. This law for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany lays the groundwork for a comprehensive immigration and integration policy.

Integration measures to be taken by the authorities include German language courses as well as culture classes, which are meant to inform immigrants about the political system of Germany, German history and German culture.⁷

POSITIONS ON INTEGRATION POLICY IN GERMANY

In 2006 the German government named the integration of people with an immigration background into German society as one of its main political goals. About 15 million people with a history of migration live in Germany. That is about 18% of the general population. But in some bigger cities the number it is up to 30%, and in some classes of elementary school there are more than 70% of pupils with immigration background due to the decline of the ethnic German population.

In public discussions it is repeatedly questioned what the term 'integration' is supposed to mean. Whereas conservative politicians consider multiculturalism to be a failed utopia that is partly responsible for a number of current social problems, left-leaning citizens and politicians fear that 'integration' might just be another term for forced assimilation.

In the summer of 2006 Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the first German summit on the topic of integration. She invited representatives from the federal government, federal states, cities, municipalities and from migrant organizations as well as experts from science, media, culture, the sports, economy, labor unions and religious communities to discuss and shape the main topics and strategies of integration policy. The results were integrated

into the National Plan on Integration, which the German government presented in 2007. At the centre of this plan stands the call for putting the topic on the national agenda, offering equal opportunities and equal participation in all sectors of public life, acceptance and tolerance according to the Constitution and the acceptance of social self-responsibility.

The integration policy's emphasis is put on enhancing German language abilities, early childhood education, job training and equal opportunities for men and women. To serve these needs, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was equipped with special funding to provide language courses and integration programmes.

But culture policies do not play a vital role in the National Plan on Integration. There are hopes put on the topics sports, music and visual arts. But museums are mentioned only in passing. The founding of a working group on museums, immigration, culture and integration and the investigation of already existing programmes for migrants was recommended - but that is about it.

From the point of view of the national government, museums seem not to be considered as an important asset for social cohesion and integration. What might be the reasons behind that? On the one hand, offering assistance in the area of language acquisition, education and job training has got the highest priority because of their proven disadvantages for migrants in the realm of education.

On the other hand, due to the federal cultural policy, only the two biggest national history museums and one exhibition centre for arts are run by the Federal Government. Because all other responsibilities in this area lie in the hands of the individual states, questions on museum policies also have to be decided on a State or local level. This assures a certain amount of independence of art and culture, but at the same time it can hinder a unified strategy. In addition, due to the current negative development of public finances, cities and local authorities have to act on a very limited budget: Because of a decrease in tax money and increase in expenditures many cities ran up a high level of debt. Many big cities in the Ruhr area in North Rhine Westphalia are so much in debt, that it is forbidden for them by law to spend any money in so-called 'voluntary cultural programmes'. But especially in this area, in cities with a high level of diversity, museums and museum activities on diversity and social cohesion are of special importance.

This accounts for the fact that many city museums can only act indirectly



in the area of immigration, diversity and social cohesion. While many museums lack the funds for exhibitions or the development of projects and programmes, the State-funded integration courses take their courses to the museum as part of a day trip or as part of the language education. Often the museums do not get assigned an active role, but merely act as junior partners or even just as the location of the activities of another cultural actor.

But museums could take the chance to make more out of the new audience. For a high percentage of the members of integration courses it will be the first visit to a museum in Germany, for some of them the first museum visit ever. Here museums can use the chance to show the new visitors that they are welcome and that the museum can matter to them.

WAYS TO FACE THE CHALLENGE OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN MUSEUMS IN GERMANY

Which kinds of strategies and possibilities have been developed by museums in Germany in the past couple of years to deal with the challenges posed by a diversified society?

At the end of the 1990s, against the background of a broad political debate about Germany as a country of immigration and new laws on immigration, the topic was also integrated into the work of museums in Germany. A number of exhibitions on immigration to and emigration from Germany were created. Most of them focused on migration as an anthropological and historical constant: migration as the norm.⁸

In 2005 after the new law on immigration passed after a long debate, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the topic 'History of Migration' dominated the most prominent museums of history in Germany. In substantial and comprehensive exhibitions three museums put the history of displaced persons and refugees in Germany on display and asked about their integration into society at that time. The exhibition curated by the controversial 'Zentrum gegen Vertreibung' (Centre against Displacement) dealt with an overview of 100 years of forced migration in Europe.⁹

The exhibition *Flucht, Vertreibung, Integration*¹⁰ (Flight, Displacement, Integration) created by the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Bonn took a look at the 1940s and 1950s. It focused on oral history interviews and memories of contemporary witnesses that were made accessible through listening points throughout the exhibition.



The exhibition *Aufbau West. Neubeginn zwischen Vertreibung und Wirtschaftswunder*¹¹ (Recreation West. A new beginning between displacement and economic miracle) by the Westphalian State Museum of Industrial Heritage and Culture took a biographical approach as well and focused on the importance of displaced persons and refugees in the rebuilding of Germany after the Second World War.

In the same year the Haus der Geschichte in Berlin presented an exhibition on migrations in Germany from 1500 to 2005.¹² And the co-operation between the Universities of Frankfurt and Zürich, the Kölnischer Kunstverein and the migrant organization DOMID showed an interdisciplinary art-focused approach to present the history of work migration in Germany since the 1950s.

In addition to these larger projects many city museums put smaller exhibitions on the history of migration on display, taking the anniversaries of the different Recruiting Agreements as a starting point.

Coming from a tradition of social and cultural history and focus on grass root history, some museums developed strategies to include people with a migration background in the development of exhibitions and museum's work. For example, the exhibition *Neapel, Bochum, Rimini*¹³ by the Westphalian State Museums of Industrial Heritage and Culture - Hannover Colliery, dealing with work migration from Italy and the glorification of Italy as a holiday destination that occurred at the same time in the 1950s and 1960s, is a case in point. The exhibition was based on close co-operation with the Italian community. Oral history interviews and objects lent by Italian immigrant workers were used to show the experience of Italian 'guest workers'. They were contrasted with objects and memories of German tourists who went to Italy for a holiday in this decade. So the exhibition managed to show two different aspects of history to create an intercultural dialogue.

Around 2005 the debate on how to do display the history of migration in museums and how to handle rapid changes in society gained momentum. These topics have been widely discussed until today. This debate was carried out by representatives from the area of museums, science and politics. It led to the foundation of an informal network of city museums and regional museums in 2009, aiming to share knowledge and experience.

With their own means and funds, the networks members organized

three conferences to share experience from museum work in the field of immigration and emigration history and cultural diversity in Germany. For increasing the dialogue and getting easier access to the experiences from exhibition projects the network gave an impulse to create a platform on the internet which was set up by the Westphalian State Museum of Industrial Heritage and Culture in 2010: www.migration-ausstellen.de.

Another idea of the network was to set up and increase co-operations of museums in the field of collecting objects dealing with immigration and cultural diversity. Three partners managed to get funding from the Bosch-Foundation to set up and run the website www.migrationsgeschichte.de. This portal is open for all museums to identify, present and discuss the meaning of new objects which were collected from the field of migration history and cultural diversity with different points of view. Museums can put their recently-collected objects and old exhibits now identified to be relevant to diversity issues in a database as a kind of constantly growing virtual collection. But the website is not only meant to be a platform for experts. For non-professional users the website provides background information on a low level as well as the opportunities to create a virtual exhibition with the exhibits of the database.

As an outcome of a museums' expert workshop organized by the German Museums Association (Deutscher Museumsbund) in December 2009,¹⁴ a memorandum was set up and signed by the boards of ICOM Germany, the German Museums Association, the German Federal Association Museum Educational Services (Bundesverband Museumspädagogik) and 30 experts and representatives of museums in Germany. The memorandum 'Museums – Migration – Culture – Integration' advocates installing a national interdisciplinary task force in a nationwide umbrella organization such as the German Museums Association. Its main tasks and objectives are to promote museums' mutual exchange of practical information on the issues of migration, integration and cultural diversity, to strengthen the dialogue with communities, associations and institutions that represent the interest of people with immigration background and to promote their co-operation with museums and participation in the museums' work. After assessing the extent to which museums have addressed the issues of migration, integration and cultural diversity in their previous work on collections, exhibitions, outreach and educational programmes the task force will collect best practice examples and develop recommendations for all sections of the museums' work and the training programmes for the museum personnel.

In 2010 the German Museums Association (Deutscher Museumsbund) founded the working group 'Migration' as such a task force, dealing with the issues of immigration and social diversity.¹⁵ For the last few months the working group has been working on the draft for a museum's manual on immigration and social diversity. Believing in museums as an asset for social cohesion in Europe and following the principles of participation and multicultural dialogue at the same time, the draft was given to migrant associations and experts to start a discussion process. The working group got the first comments and feedback during the annual meeting of the German Museum Association in May 2012. The process of participation and discussion will last up to one year to get a widely accepted manual. Therefore the draft is put on the internet to create a discussion forum.

What are the key issues of our draft? Within the broader topic of demographic change the working group sees great challenges that concern all areas of museum work: collections, permanent and temporary exhibitions, educational programmes, communication and staff. To be able to make a long-lasting and sustainable contribution to the debate on social cohesion, far-reaching processes of development and change are necessary. The guiding principles in reaching this goal are dialogue, participation and a multi-dimensional and multi-perspective approach.

An individual's look at the past and the present depends to a great degree on a person's cultural background and personal experience. The experiences with oral history interviews and contemporary witnesses have shown how widely the interpretation and analysis of things, events and cultural traditions can differ. For people with an immigration background, their past and their present are still strongly under-represented in museums in Germany - even though their artefacts, stories and interpretations are an important part of our society's cultural heritage.

Many museums do not yet know how to approach and integrate people with an immigration background into their work. Here an intercultural but also professional training of the museum staff is necessary. In contrast to the United Kingdom or the Netherlands, in Germany museums can hardly ever rely on community officers. Here support should be given to the necessary development of audience development and visitor (and non-visitor) studies.

Therefore the German Museums Association applied for project funding on a national level at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and at the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media. After getting the approval in



May the projects started in summer 2012. The project *The Whole World in the Museum* funded by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees aims on improving access to museums for three special target groups with migration background: adolescents, mothers with children and members of staff from bigger companies. The project *Cultural Diversity in Museums* funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, focuses on new intercultural perspectives on museum collections and on further education programmes for museum experts on the issue of migration, diversity and intercultural dialogue.

Apart from these new and outstanding nationwide projects which will bring a new approach to broad of the museums, some museums have integrated the issue of migration history and cultural diversity not only in their everyday work but plan to change their permanent exhibitions and collections due to this.

In the southern states of Germany, such as Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, two of the biggest cities are going to build up new permanent exhibitions about their history, developed in close co-operation with immigrant communities and the diverse population in an intense process of participation and museum street work - outside the walls of the museum.

This new way of involving the whole of society in all its diversity is made up by the 'historisches museum frankfurt'¹⁶ which will be re-opened in a new building in 2014 and the 'Stadtmuseum Stuttgart'¹⁷, a new museum to be opened in 2015. In contrast to this, in other regions of Germany a lot of museums are running short for money to do their regular everyday work.

But even with good ideas and relying on their own (and small) resources, museums can take a fresh look at their existing collections and can - together with their changing and diversified audience - pose new questions about artefacts and exhibitions. Together, they can develop new modes of presentations - and thereby contribute to the general dialogue, the enhancement of equal opportunities and participation and to the goal of social cohesion - beyond integration courses.

NOTES

¹ Klaus J. Bade / Pieter C. Emmer / Leo Lucassen / Jochen Oltmer (Ed.): *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, München 2008, pp 152-159; Jochen Oltmer: *Migration im 19. und 20.*

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² Bade et. al. 2010, pp 159-170; Ulrich Herbert: Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland. Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge, München 2001

³ Federal Ministry of the Interior (Ed.): Immigration Law and Policy, Berlin 2005: http://www.zuwanderung.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/Zuwanderungspolitik_und_Zuwanderungsrecht_en.html?nn=441658

⁴ Jochen Oltmer (Ed.): Migration steuern und verwalten. Deutschland vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, Göttingen 2003.

⁵ Rainer Münz / Wolfgang Seifert / Ralf Ulrich: Zuwanderung nach Deutschland. Strukturen, Wirkungen, Perspektiven, Frankfurt am Main / New York 1999; Hans-Martin Hinz (Ed.): Zuwanderungen - Auswanderungen. Integration und Desintegration nach 1945, Berlin 1999. With a view on the policy of remembrance and social memory: Jan Motte / Rainer Ohliger (Ed.): Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft. Migration zwischen historischer Rekonstruktion und Erinnerungspolitik, Essen 2004.

⁶ Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz): http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/ZUW/Anlagen/Zuwanderungsgesetz.pdf?__blob=publicationFile. For the further developments see: Federal Ministry of the Interior (Ed.): Migration and Integration - Residence law and policy on migration and integration in Germany 2011: http://www.zuwanderung.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/Migration_und_Integration_en.html?nn=441658

⁷ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Ed.): Concept for a nationwide integration course, Nürnberg 2005: http://www.zuwanderung.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/Integrationskurse_en.html?nn=441658

⁸Dietmar Osses: Migration und kulturelle Vielfalt: Eine Herausforderung für die Museen. In: Museumskunde 75, 2/2010, S. 36-40; Dietmar Osses: Perspektiven der Migrationsgeschichte in deutschen Ausstellungen und Museen. In: Regina Wonisch/ Thomas Hübel: Museum und Migration. Konzepte - Kontexte - Kontroversen, Bielefeld 2012

⁹Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen (Ed.): Erzwungene Wege. Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wiesbaden 2006. See also: <http://erzwungenewege.z-g-v.de>

¹⁰Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Hg.): Flucht, Vertreibung, Integration, Bielefeld 2005. See also: <http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/flucht-vertreibung/>

¹¹Dagmar Kift (Ed.): Aufbau West. Neubeginn zwischen Vertreibung und Wirtschaftswunder, Essen: Klartext 2005. See internet portal with further resources: http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Aufbau_West/austellung

¹²Rosemarie Beier-de Haan (Hg.): Zuwanderungsland Deutschland. Migration 1500-2005, Wolfratshausen 2005. See also: <http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/zuwanderungsland-deutschland/migrationen>

¹³Anke Asfur / Dietmar Osses (Ed.): Neapel – Bochum – Rimini. Arbeiten in Deutschland. Urlaub in Italien, Essen 2003

¹⁴Memorandum "Museums – Migration – Culture – Integration": http://www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/ak_migration/Dokumente/Memorandum_2010_English_Version.pdf

¹⁵http://www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/ak_migration/Dokumente/2012_05-06__Entwurf_Leitfaden-Migration_DMB_V101.pdf

¹⁶As a preparation for the new permanent exhibition the museum startet a line of participation projects called "city laboratory on tour". See <http://www.stadtlabor-unterwegs.de/>

¹⁷The museum's concept is based on a new transcultural view on the history of the city. See: <http://www.stuttgart.de/img/mdb/publ/17953/67561.pdf>



NEW PARADIGMS FOR INTERCULTURAL WORK IN MUSEUMS – OR INTERCULTURAL WORK AS A NEW PARADIGM FOR MUSEUM PRACTICE?

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I am afraid my presentation will be less ambitious than my role as keynote speaker suggests, and rather than introducing the museum sector's perspective as a whole, it will try and raise a few key issues which I think are becoming central for museums willing to engage in the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

The first of such issues is a certain ambiguity surrounding the very notion of 'intercultural work' in a museum.

As many of you may already know, I started to develop this area of research back in 2007, when I was involved in a study on national approaches to intercultural dialogue, carried out by the ERICarts Institute on behalf of the European Commission - DG for Education and Culture, and exploring different policy domains (culture, education, youth and sport) (ERICarts 2008).

As a team expert, my brief was to investigate the different understandings of intercultural dialogue and the resulting policy approaches to its promotion in museums across Europe. The aim of the overview was to provide an indicative selection of these different interpretations from a very specific

and deliberate perspective, i.e. the main ways in which interaction is (or is not) encouraged between different groups. In this context, issues such as leadership, or the development of policies to improve the diversity of museum staff and governing boards, were seen as crucial factors for enhancing the institution's intercultural competence, but were not the main focus of my research.

The key argument resulting from this survey, and reinforced by my subsequent involvement in other European research projects¹, was that in the museum sector 'intercultural dialogue' has been so far mainly understood more as a goal to be attained than as a process which is ingrained in a museum's practice and in how it actually promotes "multiple visions and interpretations" (Veini and Kistemaker 2003).

Very briefly, here is what emerged from an overview of the prevailing cultural policy approaches developed by museums in response to the growing diversity of European societies (Bodo 2008) – I am fully aware that these approaches mostly reflect a Western European perspective, but I hope nonetheless that my reflections will be useful to all of you:

- 'showcasing difference': a knowledge-oriented multiculturalism intended as an educational strategy to promote in autochthonous audiences a better understanding of 'other' cultures;
- 'heritage literacy': integration of new citizens within mainstream culture, to help them become more familiar with a country's history, language, values and traditions;
- promotion of cultural self-awareness in migrant communities through 'culturally specific programming'.

As you can see, very different responses, which reflect not only the ambiguity about the very notion of 'intercultural dialogue' I just referred to, but also the historical fact that most museums, far from being developed for the sake of cultural diversity or in order to enhance intercultural competence, were created to represent and validate national, local or group identities, and are now clearly at odds with a new political and social agenda.

These approaches also share some key features:

- they tend to be underlined by a static, essentialist notion of 'heritage', which is primarily seen as a 'closed' system, a received patrimony to safeguard and transmit;
- they generally target communities exclusively in relation to their own

cultures and collections, while cross-cultural interaction across all audiences is often avoided;

- even where interaction between different groups is encouraged, the main aim is to promote mutual knowledge and respect, rather than initiating new knowledge systems, relationships, interpretive communities.

Of course, I am not suggesting that the approaches I just outlined are to be discredited or abandoned, as they all have an important role to play – not least, supporting a multicultural base and helping individuals and groups maintaining a vital link with tradition.

What I rather wish to argue is that these approaches find a new legitimacy in so far as they are seen to be part of a *process* ultimately aimed at generating new, inclusive and shared meanings/narratives around museum collections.

The challenge, in other words, is to “work towards a more integrative model of diversity, rather than the current model with its tendency to reify difference and put people into discrete categories without interaction or overlap” (Young 2005). As Anna Maria Pecci further emphasises, “the potential role of museums as agents of social change lies in their contribution to the recognition as well as to the reflective deconstruction of the cultural identity of individuals and groups. But in order for this to be achieved, the museum’s areas of work must be conceived as *processes*, rather than as tightly defined ‘mechanical’ functions such as conservation, exhibition and education” (Pecci 2009).

On the issue of museum’s areas of work as rigidly distinctive functions we will briefly come back later on.

The ability of museums to rise to this challenge implies a honest, thorough investigation of what it really means to carry out intercultural work: is it about enhancing the ‘literacy’ of immigrant individuals and groups in a country’s history, art and culture (i.e. filling ‘cultural deficits’), compensating their past misrepresentation in museums and other heritage institutions, promoting their cultural self-awareness, or is it rather a bi-directional process which is dialogical and transformative on both sides (i.e. individuals belonging to ‘dominant’ culture and immigrant communities), and in which all are equal participants?

The need for conceptual clarifications and key methodological criteria intended to help museums to genuinely become ‘intercultural spaces’ was further stressed by a number of national and international conferences in



which I took part over the past few years.² These conferences confirmed the impression of ambiguity surrounding intercultural work, as well as a certain difficulty on the part of most museums to go beyond policies targeting individuals and groups according to their racial origin and ethnicity.

More specifically, the concept of ‘multiple identities’, which is so central to intercultural dialogue as it disengages individuals from the prevailing rationale of ‘cultural representation’, may well be widely accepted in theory, but in reality is very seldom placed at the heart of a museum’s work.

This quote from Andrew Dewdney, who was involved in the ‘Tate Encounters’ research project at Tate Britain, is quite revealing in that it raised more than an eyebrow during the V&A conference: “The policy of targeting individuals and groups according to BAME categories was adopted in order to produce positive cultural change..., but structurally, it reproduces racialised thinking. Whilst the intentions that lie behind targeting strategies reflect a democratic impulse – equality in access and participation – the outcomes and effects are limiting precisely because the category reproduces the division between BAME and everything that it is not. [...] There is no coming together here, no new mingling of cultures, nothing of the social and cultural body is transformed” (Dewdney 2010).³

This sort of stalemate is partly due to the over-simplistic assumption on the part of many museum professionals that a community will be automatically interested only in objects that are specifically and directly related to its cultural background. In museums, as well as in other cultural institutions, this has often led to “programming that assumes certain likes and dislikes or the prevalence of certain issues” (Khan 2010).

But in other cases, this failure to ingrain the concepts of ‘intercultural space’ or ‘multiple identities’ into museum practices is also due to a strong resistance on the part of communities themselves, or at least some of their ‘representatives’, against what they see as a ‘dilution’ of difference, or even worse as a denial of their claims for recognition and representation – a battle some of these groups have fought for decades, and rightly so.

So how can museums overcome this tendency to ‘simplify’ on the one hand, and win this resistance and scepticism on the other? How can they work on identity as “the start rather than the end of the conversation?” (Khan, 2010).

There is no simple answer to this question, but I would suggest that the notion of ‘participation’ underlying intercultural work is a good starting point



for addressing it. And we all know how ambiguous this term can be, just as much as 'intercultural dialogue'!

Of course, we are not talking about the sort of 'empowerment-lite' adopted by many museum institutions, but about a relationship where real reciprocity is fostered between the museum and its diverse audiences, by bringing into dialogue their different perspectives, experiences and knowledge bases, and providing everyone with genuine opportunities for self-representation and collaborative meaning-making.

Such a relationship cannot be initiated without a full awareness of what is at stake: not only the development of new approaches to the interpretation and mediation of collections, and more in general of new planning and operational paradigms (which in itself would already be a huge achievement), but most significantly the ability of the museum to avoid the risk of its own irrelevance in the eyes of the community, by facilitating new connections between people and objects, and reshaping heritage as a shared space of social interaction. Earlier on, I spoke about the traditional notion of heritage as a 'closed system'; here, heritage is constantly questioned and rediscovered by individuals who breathe new life into it. As museum mediator Rita Catarama observes, "heritage is not something separate from life" (Pecci 2009).

Very briefly, I would like to mention some experimental strands of practice which are informed by this notion of participation:⁴

- some museums are staking on the training and the active involvement of cultural mediators with an immigrant background⁵ in the planning of narrative trails, collaborative exhibitions etc., with a view to exploring a more dialogical, multi-vocal interpretation of collections;
- some institutions are actively engaging mixed groups in the development of new, shared narratives around collections through storytelling, theatre techniques and other mediation methodologies, starting from the premise that project participants can provide a significant contribution to the knowledge, understanding and interpretation of museum objects;
- others are exploring the symbolic 'adoption' of objects as a means of building new bridges, creating a new 'resonance', revealing unexpected links between artefacts and individuals. When participants are free to choose the objects with which they want to engage in a dialogue, without necessarily having to wear the 'uniform of culture', they have an opportunity to 'identify' with objects not only culturally, but also emotionally; in other words, they

have an opportunity to see them through the lenses not only of their own 'culture,' but also of their own personal experiences, whether lived or imaginative;

- other museums are promoting a gradual acquaintance between audiences and collections, by initiating a dialogue between museum objects and personal objects, and creating a shared heritage of stories and life experiences of individuals (not only project participants, but also museum staff, educators and mediators) with different cultural and social backgrounds;

- some museums are facilitating interaction with contemporary artists in order to develop new perspectives on the notions of heritage or identity, and to experiment with unconventional communication and relational methodologies, mediated through contemporary art languages.⁶

I am sure you will have noticed that all of these experimental strands of practice imply an in-depth reflection not only on methodological choices, but first and foremost on museum policy approaches: in other words, what kind of relationship (or dialogue) is a museum willing to establish with and between its audiences?

When talking about policy approaches, I usually refer to the models of access development and cultural democracy/inclusion, but today I will use a quote from Mark O'Neill, former Head of Glasgow Museums, who at the V&A conference talked about the 'welfare' and the 'social justice' model:

- the 'welfare model' is characterised by a dichotomy between 'core' and 'margins.' The 'core' is conservation, curatorship, permanent exhibitions – a sort of 'platonian' world, where nothing ever changes. The 'margins' are education, temporary exhibitions, outreach and community projects, where project ownership and the active involvement of participants are more easily tolerated, precisely because they do not threaten the authority and expertise of curators and 'scientific' staff;

- in the 'social justice model' the dichotomy is broken, communities are engaged as actors, creators, producers and decision-makers, and museums provide a precious resource for the renegotiation of identities.

In other words, the 'social justice model' is based on the recognition of the museum not only as a cultural space for interaction, but first and foremost as an institution encouraging participatory and cooperative planning – a place where knowledge is not only 'transmitted,' but co-produced. Not surprisingly, the most genuinely 'intercultural' projects are those which

are rooted in the museum's ability to listen and give voice to the needs, expectations, life experiences and knowledge systems of individuals and communities, rather than those driven by transitory political agendas.

There is another concluding remark I want to make on the experimental strands of practice I have just mentioned: although the projects originating from them involve different target groups, heritage institutions and working practices, they all grow out of a shared assumption: and this assumption is that rethinking cultural heritage from a participatory, dialogical, intercultural perspective is an important pursuit, one which holds the potential to impact all citizens – hence the title of my presentation. Museums as intercultural spaces can function not only to promote the cultural rights of migrant communities, but also to nurture in all individuals – whether 'natives' or 'migrants' – those attitudes, behaviours and skills that are ever more crucial in a world of increasing contact and interaction between culturally different groups.

In other words, an 'intercultural' project is not so much about transmitting content/notions about cultural differences, as about developing:

- cognitive mobility;
- a critical understanding of the surrounding reality;
- a critical understanding of one's own experience, ideas, emotions, desires, and an ability to share them with others;
- an open attitude towards diversity and 'otherness';
- the awareness of one's own multiple identities;
- the ability to question one's own points of view and to understand those of others;
- the ability to challenge prejudice and stereotypes;
- an openness to exchange and a cooperative attitude;
- an attitude towards tensions and frictions – where they occur – as an opportunity for individual and communal growth, rather than something to be shunned or concealed;
- and of course, last but not least, a sense of shared ownership of the museum and heritage.

To conclude with a quote from another museum mediator, Rosana Gornati, "the sharing of perspectives, knowledge bases, life experiences, has the potential to transfigure the atmosphere of the museum, a space which is often impersonal and unfavourable to the initiation of relationships between visitors, following a pre-established trail and quietly queuing alongside



glass cases. Stopping in front of an object to tell/listen to its story and share experiences – those of each individual and at the same time those of everybody – transforms the museum in an intimate place, one which encourages constructive exchanges, profound reflections, unexpected encounters” (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012).

NOTES

¹ In particular the project “MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue”, which took place from December 2007 to November 2009, and was funded by the European Commission as part of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme (www.mapforid.it).

² “From the Margins to the Core?” (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 24–26 March 2010); ‘Migration in museums – Narratives of Diversity in Europe’ (Berlin, 23–25 October 2008); European Intercultural Campus 2008, round table; Intercultural dialogue in metropolises – theory and practices; (Warsaw, 12–13 September 2008); ‘Museums and refugees. Keeping cultures’; (London, Museum in Docklands, 13–14 March 2008).

³ Most papers presented at the V&A conference ‘From the Margins to the Core?’ have been reworked and recently published in ‘Museums, Equality and Social Justice’ (Sandell and Nightingale 2012).

⁴ The strands of practice I outline here partly draw on a previous paper (Bodo 2012), and have been updated/integrated in the light of more recent intercultural projects promoted by Italian museums.

⁵ As the term ‘mediator’ is interpreted differently across the museum sector in Europe, it is worth clarifying that, in the Italian context, the expression ‘cultural/linguistic mediator’ is mainly used to describe professionals with an immigrant background acting as ‘bridges’ with their respective communities in sectors such as formal education and the healthcare system. Only recently has this profession started to be developed in a museum/heritage context.

⁶ To learn more about experimental practices in Italian museums, see the website ‘Patrimonio e Intercultura’, www.ismu.org/patrimonioeintercultura (English version available).

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THE SOCIAL ROLE OF MUSEUMS

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Creating a cultural organisation that avoids appealing only to a narrow elite is a major task that can take years to complete. There are many pitfalls, and a host of pressures that militate against achieving this. It is a particular challenge in museums because museums are often passive and insular, and frequently they are characterised by regressive practices and attitudes that prevent them from fulfilling an active role in society.

Over the past 20 years in Tyne and Wear and in Liverpool, two areas in the UK that suffer multiple socio-economic deprivation, in seeking to create museums that fulfil their social role and work for social justice I have encountered prejudice, ignorance, hostility and wilful opposition. On the other hand, I have also had the benefit of working with supportive colleagues, politicians, trustees, civil servants and others.

Right now in National Museums Liverpool (NML), as we are confronted by a very damaging squeeze on public finances, we are showing what can be achieved over a period of time. We are an organisation that has changed many practices and attitudes that prevented us from moving forward in a way that includes rather than excludes; that hindered us in responding to

Photo: National Museums Liverpool

public need in return for our public funding; that put us at risk of irrelevance and indifference.

The notion of a museum being active in seeking to fulfil a social justice agenda remains a radical one. This is despite the very real progress that has been made in recent years in terms of the museum profession's growing acceptance of a number of fundamental principles relating to our role in society.

The need to define the museum's social role lies at the heart of the management challenge in creating museums that seek to achieve wide relevance and public value: what we have to embed is a corporate commitment to a particular set of roles, different from those that museums played for most of the 20th century.

This means the engagement of the whole organisation, most urgently and critically at leadership and governance levels, where the new commitment can be achieved fairly rapidly, even if it takes longer to persuade everyone else to sign up.

Before looking at leadership, a few words about Liverpool, and the context in which NML works. By UK standards, Liverpool is a poor city. This is what we say in the Strategy Statement in our Strategic Plan:

"National Museums Liverpool operates in a city which remains the most deprived in the UK.

Employment rates, educational attainment and skills levels are well below the national average; the welfare bill per capita is the highest in the UK. As the whole country suffers the consequences of a deep recession and severe cuts in public expenditure, fragile cities like Liverpool are threatened anew by terrible and profound social consequences.

This is a hugely challenging environment for NML. Locally, people are at risk of suffering from social tensions, lack of social cohesion, anti-social behaviour, loss of confidence and aspiration, pressure on families and relationships, high stress levels.

NML carries a very great responsibility in terms of delivering first class museums that, as part of a wider pattern of cultural and educational provision, can enhance well being, confidence and social connectedness. In a period of recession and public spending cuts this responsibility grows even greater, and NML can help mitigate the social consequences of adverse economic conditions."

It is important to us at NML, therefore, that our museums attract a high proportion of people from lower income groups. This implies that we are providing a service that is reflective of our local population, and is therefore of value to them – otherwise they wouldn't use it!

LEADERSHIP

Without effective leadership, no museum can hope to change into one that is accessible and democratic, with a broad appeal and a broad impact. Happily, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find examples of museum leaders who are anti-democratic, who abide openly by the traditional code that museums are the preserve of an educated elite. This kind of attitude tends no longer to be tolerated by politicians who are intimidated by the vested interests that attach themselves to museums; or even by politicians who in their nature are themselves anti-democratic.

There are still, though, examples in most countries, especially in museums that cater primarily for a tourist market, where the desire for tourist income can take precedence over the niceties of social justice.

And, there are still museums run by people who are genuine throwbacks to an era when the needs of the public were subordinate to the capriciousness of the museum director. I have visited a number of different countries around the world, and have found a worrying constant: many younger museum people clearly want to modernise, but they do not carry the authority to do so, and they believe they being are held back by their directors. This tends to be a generational issue, and as time goes by, finding this kind of old-fashioned leadership will become more difficult.

Leadership, of course, is not solely about directors. Other members of a museum's senior team may have a strong influence on the museum's values and principles. I have encountered dysfunctional senior teams where a commitment to access and democracy was a low priority. Equally, it may be that it is the combined strength of purpose of the senior team that brings about change, reform and modernisation.

It is also true, though, that sometimes it takes dictatorial behaviour to begin the process of change. Anyone who has studied leadership knows about the scope for dictatorial or 'heroic' leadership on the one hand, and consensus on the other. My view is that strong, determined leadership at the outset of a museum change process is likely to be needed, but once the change





process is under way, then the style of leadership can evolve into something more involving and consensual.

Not long ago, speaking to an audience of museum professionals in Lithuania, I likened this evolution to shifting from personal control by Stalin to control by the Politburo, and eventually to collectivism, which seemed to strike a chord... In any event, we should not underestimate the capacity for elements within the museum to resist democratisation, and therefore underestimate the need for determined, perhaps uncompromising leadership, to see through the process.

In circumstances where the museum leadership is in favour of a democratic role, then it needs to lead by example and behaviour, and it needs to articulate the role very clearly – this will most usually be effected through the device of the Strategic Plan, which in turn will carry the museum's mission and statement of values.

MISSION, VALUES, VISION

I want to emphasise the central role of these elements of a cultural organisation's make-up, especially where change is being introduced.

At NML, mission, values and vision are essential devices not only for helping transmit a new sense of purpose and a new way of doing things, both internally and externally; but for involving different staff and governing bodies in the process of re-envisioning the organisations. A great deal of effort has been expended in drafting, redrafting and refining these documents, over a period of years. The documents evolved as time passed, as the museum service generated bigger and more diverse audiences, thus confirming the legitimacy of what we were doing, reinforcing our confidence and commitment, and confounding sceptics and critics.

At NML in 2003 managers described the existing Mission Statement as "uninspiring and pompous", among other things, and, crucially, criticised it for being "more about things than people".

The latest text (2013) of our mission and values at NML reads:

"Our mission

To change lives by enabling millions of people, from all backgrounds, to engage with our world-class museums.

Our values

- *We believe that museums are fundamentally educational in purpose.*
- *We believe that museums are places for ideas and dialogue that use collections to inspire people.*
- *We are a democratic museum service and we believe in the concept of social justice: we are funded by the whole of the public and in return we strive to provide an excellent service to the whole of the public.*
- *We believe in the power of museums to help promote good and active citizenship, and to act as agents of social change.”*

This text is supported by a Strategy Statement (see extract above) that explores the socio-economic context in which NML works, pointing out that the Liverpool area is the most deprived in the UK, and stressing the responsibility of NML to deliver first class museums in order to “help mitigate the social consequences of adverse economic conditions”. It is important that the Strategy Statement uses language that motivates staff and trustees, and effectively convinces them that our mission and values are genuine and worthy of passionate, unconditional support.

GOVERNANCE

The support of the governors of a museum is essential in managing for social justice. If the governors waiver, the entire process can be undermined.

In the 1990s I worked at Tyne & Wear Museums, a local authority museum service where the staff had the growing, enthusiastic support of our elected councillors, who comprised the TWM Joint Museums Committee, our governing body. Most of the members of this committee were Labour (socialist, left wing) councillors, who were politically predisposed towards opportunity for cultural activity being available to everyone in the local community. As the majority political group, they were the ones the museum staff had to have onside in our drive to be socially inclusive.

This we had achieved, though when a group of far left wing Newcastle councillors began to exert influence over our Committee in the mid-1990s, we had to persuade them all over again of TWM’s commitment to social justice, so ingrained was their belief that the cultural sector at large was run by elitists who had no interest in the needs or wishes of the majority of the population, and who were unaware that the world is full of social tensions, inequality of opportunity and poverty.

It is worth remembering that at the time we had a Conservative (right wing) government, and one that appeared to have little commitment to social inclusion or social justice. In TWM and elsewhere in the local authority museum sector, a socially active strategy was generated entirely without central government encouragement. Contrary to what some commentators have written, museums working for social justice predated the election of a Labour government in 1997.

This is important, because now that we have seen the demise of the New Labour movement in the UK, and the election of a Conservative-led Coalition government, there is no reason to suppose that those museums with a genuine commitment to social justice will lose motivation (though they will lose momentum as budget cuts restrict our capacity to pursue socially inclusive programming – this is certainly the case in Liverpool).

The real risk is that museums which have merely been paying lip service to social justice while the political climate was favourable, will go back to their bad old, socially regressive ways, especially when the museum sector is facing the reality of severe cuts in our budgets. This could be manifested in a number of ways, such as the abandonment of education and outreach programming, the end of the targeting of excluded and marginalised groups, the recruitment of trustees and directors with elitist views, or the hiking of admission fees. We have already seen signs of this kind of reaction, including the targeted withdrawal of funding for socially progressive schemes, and the dropping of performance measures that relate to social inclusion for government-funded museums.

At NML, in the early days of my tenure as Director, my priority was to revitalise the organisation. NML in 2001 was in need of modernisation and refreshment. Audiences were low and in decline, and were not diverse. We had to recognise this as a major failing, and do something about it. This meant introducing an enormous raft of changes.

Up to a point, this was accepted by the trustees, but only up to a point. After a honeymoon period for me as the new Director, there grew a lack of congruence between senior management and trustees, which went through two phases.

The first phase was when the trustee body that was in place when I became Director seemed to become nervous about a reform programme. In a fashion that is quite common, while the trustees had signed up to an explicit



programme of reform in appointing me, some of them became sensitive about the way in which the implementation of reform could be interpreted as they not having done their job previously. There is quite a complex psychology in play here, but it will be familiar to many people who have introduced reform and modernisation, in any context.

Nonetheless, the programme of reform proceeded, through the sheer determination of the senior staff, and with the support of some trustees, though not as quickly as they or I would have liked.

The second phase was when relations between senior management and the trustee body deteriorated still further, to the point where the senior team (known as the Executive Team) discussed how we could best manage the organisation in the face of a trustee body, aspects of the behaviour of which we found intolerable.

I have no doubt that underlying the strained relationship between staff and trustees were fundamental differences over the degree to which NML should act as an agent for social justice. Some of our trustees (though by no means all) were disinterested in building diverse audiences, and considered our efforts to popularise the museum service as rather beneath them. What they seemed to want instead was a traditional, elitist museum service that was not relevant to the majority of the population.

Today we have a tremendously supportive Chairman and Board. They are every bit as committed as the staff in pursuing a social justice agenda. This removes any fear of failure, which is so inhibiting when management is trying to reinvent an organisation. It provides a source of encouragement and validation, which is what you have to have from your governors if you are to effect all the actions necessary to bring about sustainable change.

ORGANISATIONAL PERSONALITY AND CHANGE

Herein lies the essence of managing a museum for social justice. What has to be created is an organisational culture, or personality, that actively nourishes the social justice agenda. This involves a great deal of analysis, some of which can be painful.

At NML in 2001-2, we undertook a series of sessions, involving staff and trustees, to create a personality profile of the organisation. This did not make happy reading. We concluded that we were...

slow-moving, fragmented, bureaucratic, risk averse, traditional, derivative, old

The sun never set
on the children
of Africa

The sun never
sets on the
children of Africa

Our village once was small but
strangers come and spread us
all over the world. Now our
village is vast and our presence
extends to the four corners of
the globe. The sun never sets
on the children of Africa.

fashioned, paranoid, hierarchical, isolated within Liverpool; with low levels of trust, no shared vision, divided loyalties, power obsessions, a blame culture, no team culture, an anti-management culture.

Whereas we wanted to be...

Exciting, lively, humorous, welcoming, quirky, daring, colourful, extrovert, eccentric, wicked, generous, glamorous, risqué, inspirational, beautiful, amazing...and popular.

The great thing was that we knew we had problems, and that there was a will to resolve them. The sobering thing is that not everyone could quite find it within themselves to do anything about it.

At a 'visioning workshop' in February 2003, a group of about 30 senior NML managers concluded that the organisation was still "fragmented, bureaucratic, hypocritical, old fashioned, unfocused, hierarchical, secretive, inflexible, territorial, frustrating, tribal, paranoid and boring".

We undertook a 'characterisation' exercise, and imagined that if NML was a person, how would we describe ourselves? Among the responses: "risk averse, comfortable, old fashioned, past our best", "safe and respected, but boring and unambitious", "respectable, principled and educated, but stuffy and staid, with high ideals that are never realised, and *a bit embittered*".

In a meeting of about 20 senior NML managers in March 2011, we revisited the 'characterisation' exercise of seven years earlier. The results were encouraging: we now are "someone heading in the right direction, strong-willed, raw edged, maturing, with an increasing profile...and a bit annoying".

These newer characterisations are clearly a big improvement on what we had in 2003, and they indicate a change in attitude at NML. The risk aversion, lack of ambition, stuffiness and bitterness of 2003 have been replaced by other attributes, ones that have enabled NML to pursue a social justice agenda. This has led to audiences diversifying and growing by several hundred percent: in 2001 we attracted 700,000 visitors; ten years later, in 2011 we attracted 3.2 million; in 2012 this audience had grown again, to 3.4 million.

It is worth mentioning here that we have developed other behaviours that have enabled the pursuit of social justice: we have encouraged respect for all disciplines and functions within NML: there are no elites. We have encouraged supportive management styles. We have introduced free

admission to everything we do.

We have integrated ourselves as far as possible with communities and interest groups in and around Liverpool that share our belief in social justice. We have invested in training and development of staff to help ensure they do not indulge in discriminatory behaviour. We have shown zero tolerance to behaviour such as racism, or discrimination against people with disabilities. We have given high priority to the development of the International Slavery Museum, which in many ways is the embodiment of the museum playing a social role.

STAFF STRUCTURES

I am no great believer in there being a single, ideal organisational structure for museums – circumstances differ too much for there to be a uniform solution to the age-old problem of structure – but there are certain constants needed for museums to be able to manage for social justice, and it is possible to create staff structures to help do this.

At TWM in 1990 and at NML in 2001, there were peculiarities embedded within the staff structures that helped prevent either museum service from achieving its proper role. In both services, for example, we needed to channel resources into the education function, to give that function a prominent place within the structure, and to charge our education staff with leading on social inclusion and diversity initiatives.

In both services we needed to create inclusion-minded marketing, and again to give the function sufficient seniority and encouragement within our structures to be able to operate effectively: at NML in 2001 our marketing staff were line-managed by an accountant, for example, as part of a melange of 'central services.' This was not a sign that marketing was regarded as a creative, dynamic focus within NML, crucial to the achievement of social justice.

Because of the importance of a varied exhibition programme to cater for the diversity of demand among the public, both services needed an empowered exhibitions function, free from the crippling bureaucracy that plagues many museums, and which can easily prevent an alignment of programme and policy. At NML in particular, the bureaucracy surrounding the initiation of exhibitions in 2001 was of mythical proportions.

The point is, there needs to be an organisational mindset which embraces

the principle that meeting public needs and expectations is the core purpose of museums. The way that museums are structured is a powerful indicator of this mindset. Structures which indicate that functions such as education, marketing and exhibitions are less important than mainstream collections management functions are likely to be found only in museums that do not take the achievement of social justice too seriously.

FINANCES

Like organisational structures, the organisation and allocation of finances need to reflect priorities. If a museum is determined to work to a social justice agenda, this will almost certainly mean moving money out of some budget headings in order to increase others. There will always be resistance to this from staff whose budgets are left diminished. Furthermore, restructuring budgets always carries with it risk, because it means allocating resources to areas of work that have not yet justified the new investment.

But there is no alternative. Over time, the results will ease the pain, as increasing budgets for education and community work and marketing results in bigger, more diverse audiences. Clear policy and determined leadership are required to effect changes like this.

PROGRAMMING

Programming to achieve social justice is varied and accessible, with the needs of the family paramount. There must always be room for experimentation and programming for niche audiences, but managing for social justice means prioritising the needs of the many over the needs of the few, and it means taking our educational responsibilities very seriously.

Our overriding aim is to communicate, not to confuse. Our core audience is the general public, not our peers, not art critics, not academics, not politicians, not vested interests. It takes a certain kind of humility to sign up to this aim, and humility has not always been in great supply in the museum profession.

It is only by implementing a range of programmes and over a period of time that a museum will be able to make a genuine impact. It is no use doing one-off events or one-off projects. Working towards social justice takes time and effort, which is why it requires commitment, determination and belief.

For example, a huge impact was had at NML's Walker Art Gallery, which we used routinely to describe as a 'child-free zone', when we opened *Big Art for*



Little Artists, a children's art activity area. The Walker's audience changed remarkably. A gallery in the new Museum of Liverpool – *Little Liverpool* – is designed to ensure that the very young feel as welcome in the museum as older people.

It does not all have to be about children, of course. At the International Slavery Museum we deal with some extremely serious adult issues, though this has not prevented the museum from becoming visited by large numbers of young people. We deal with issues such as human trafficking, domestic slavery, apartheid, racism and other human rights abuses. This has led NML into all sorts of uncharted territory for a museum service, including active campaigning against human rights abuses. We have even created a *Campaign Zone*, to encourage visitors to take up human rights causes. In many ways, our work at ISM is focussed entirely upon fighting for social justice, but it has required an approach that has broken many museum taboos.

We have, through ISM, created an international network of museums that fight for human rights, the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM), which has linked together Holocaust museums, genocide museums and a host of others. Most of these museums exist to create social justice, and the creation of a global network serves to validate the work they do.

This leads me to touch upon the 'stories or objects' debate. The point is, the FIHRM network is made up of museums that have real collections. It is just that they choose to use them in non-traditional ways, and not rely completely on what they have in their collections. In so doing they help break the notion that museums can only, or should only, communicate through their collections – an idea that I find so absurd that I am always amazed whenever I hear it. It is like listening to someone insisting that the Earth is flat.

There are two more notions I want to mention in connection with programming for social justice. One is that the modern museum is more likely to involve the public in creating museum content than its traditional predecessor, and this is itself a socially inclusive device that helps bring about social justice. This is, of course, most likely to be found in the social history museum.

Second is the need for museum content to be in a constant state of change and renewal. Gone are the days when a museum could relax after a capital



programme of works has delivered new displays that need not change for another generation. The modern museum has to work much harder to cover more ground, so that it may maximise the opportunities for attracting a diverse audience.

RESEARCH AND PROMOTION

The museum has to know its audience and its target audience, so it can identify needs, and so that it can make contact.

For promotion to be effective, the museum must put serious effort into learning the socio-economic detail of its catchment area - market research is terrifically important: how else would we at NML know that the three most popular newspapers among our existing visitors are the *Daily Mail*, the *Mirror* and the *Liverpool Echo*? Or that our existing visitors listen mostly to *Radio 4*, *Radio 2* and *Radio Merseyside*? Or that "National Museums Liverpool operates in a city which remains the most deprived in the UK. Employment rates, educational attainment and skills levels are well below the national average; the welfare bill per capita is the highest in the UK"?

How a museum promotes itself to audiences is a key part of managing for social justice. This includes the language of press releases and publications, print styles, the placing of advertising and editorial, an attitude that is respectful of local media, and sceptical of much of the national media.

THE GLOBAL SECTOR

There is a global dimension to managing for social justice. Many of the worries that some of us have about museums in the UK remaining socially exclusive are shared in other countries, some more than others. I have found that in countries like Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the USA, and some north European countries, there is a growing awareness of the value of museums as agents for social justice.

What is common to all countries, though, is a grip on the sector held by people who think in traditional terms, whose energies are devoted to museum process rather than outcomes.

There are international agencies working to change this. One of these is INTERCOM, the ICOM international committee for management, and another is the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM).

INTERCOM held its annual meeting in 2009 in the Mexican city of Torreon.

A gathering of 150 delegates from more than 20 nations, mostly young people working in museums, decided to make a public declaration about the responsibility of museums to promote human rights:

"INTERCOM Declaration of Museum Responsibility to Promote Human Rights: INTERCOM believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of museums, wherever possible, to be active in promoting diversity and human rights, respect and equality for people of all origins, beliefs and background."

This is a remarkable statement that advocates a totally new role for museums, one which not only brings with it a host of responsibilities, but which flies in the face of the prevailing belief that museums should remain 'neutral' in their work.

FIHRM is an affiliation of museums from around the world that share a belief that museums which operate within the sphere of human rights will be more effective if they work together. There is a surprising number of museums of this type, ranging from small institutions in developing countries to large national museums in Western Europe, North America and Australasia. At FIHRM's inaugural conference, held in Liverpool in September 2010, I said this:

The Federation will enable museums which deal with sensitive and thought provoking subjects such as transatlantic slavery, the Holocaust and human rights issues to work together and share new thinking and initiatives in a supportive environment.

The Federation is about sharing and working together, but it is also about being proactive – looking at the ways institutions challenge contemporary forms of racism, discrimination and human rights abuses. We believe that these issues are best confronted collectively rather than individually.

I think this gets to the core of managing for social justice - it is through collaborative working that museums will make progress.

MOTIVATION

Finally, a brief word about motivation. Working towards social justice is a long term commitment. It requires determination and bloody-mindedness, and it needs to be driven by passion, by a belief that everyone deserves equal access to what we do in museums. Not just because government or anyone else tells us that this is what we should do, but because *it's the right thing to do*.



THE BARBARIAN MUSEUM

PAUL SPIES,
DIRECTOR OF AMSTERDAM
MUSEUM
NETHERLANDS

After I became director of the Amsterdam Historical Museum four years ago, the staff and I started to rethink the whole concept of the museum, in general (what is a city museum for?) and in specific (what has the Amsterdam Historical Museum to add?). After a few intensive meetings and a lot of consultation from outside we singled out the following issues:

- the audience is changing: the well-informed baby-boomers (people born between 1945 and 1965) that fill our museums today are gradually being followed by a younger group with less historical knowledge or interest;
- also, the behaviour of that new audience is different: whereas for the baby-boomers a visit of several hours is common (they 'study'), the younger generations stay a considerably shorter time (they snack and zap);
- our museum is anyhow too demanding: it was established in 1975 by and for the generation of baby-boomers and so consists mainly of a very long historical timeline, crammed with objects and information. Together with the architectural situation (the museum is housed in the former city orphanage, a huge and very complicated 17th-century building complex) which makes a visit to the Amsterdam Historical Museum time-consuming and somewhat exhausting (there was no short cut half way!);

- it is not only the younger generation of visitors who are in need of a tailor made presentation, also our other core group, tourists, who have the same interest in 'time management': At least half of our visitors come from abroad, visiting Amsterdam on a city break holiday of two days, on average.. For this short amount of time they have in Amsterdam the choice is between many great museums and numerous other 'must-see' attractions. This means that there is little time left for a museum on city history, although many of them are interested to understand a little bit more about our spectacular city.

Just after we had thought out our new approach, which resulted in the concept of a new department, entitled 'Amsterdam DNA', the Dutch translation of Alessandro Baricco's *The Barbarians* came out. In this book the Italian philosopher looks for ways to 'save' content and culture from the superficiality of the younger generations ("Those barbarians!", high-culture admirers sometimes complain, thus his book title). He sums up various fields of high and low culture and describes how during these last decades everything has come within reach for everybody: from drinking wine, which used to be something for the elite, to travelling around the world, which was also exceptional, but in the meantime is regarded to be something perfectly normal for anyone who has just got their grammar school degree. And because everything is on offer and within reach, people also tend to do everything. But the amount of available time we have does not expand to the same volume, so we simply do everything in a shorter way: we surf only the surface (internet is in Baricco's view the best symbol for this new consumerism). Baricco states that we, the cultural people, have to face up to this new challenge: instead of complaining that our audiences are not interested in our subjects anymore we should adapt our products in such a way that they are fitting for 'the barbarians'. This means: start by making your product less time-consuming and more superficial. With that you will attract more audiences that will 'like' (as social media says) you and from thereon, Baricco states, you have the opportunity to bind some of them to you as real 'fans', for instance by showing them something extra, either within the museum itself, or through other ways, such as social media.

So in a way Baricco came up with a perfect theoretical background for our new approach, the department 'Amsterdam DNA', in which we give an overview of Amsterdam's history in only 45 minutes. In the year and a half since this presentation has been opened, we have experienced what we expected. The audience widely embraces the concept: many visitors leave

after this department in a hurry to see some more of the city they just came to understand a lot better thanks to DNA. But many go a little further into the museum, curious to know more about certain periods or aspects that are on display in the departments beyond DNA.

In fact, we have turned into a bit of a 'barbarian' museum, but without losing our value to people that want more content. In the meantime we gave the museum a more 'barbarian' name: Amsterdam Museum.

MORE THAN WORTH IT: THE FIVE VALUES OF MUSEUMS

Only loosely attached to this subject of popularising is the other subject I was asked to talk about, which is on 'the social significance of museums'. The forming of a working group on this subject within the Dutch Museum Association was caused by a declaration that was formulated quite spontaneously during the Dutch Museum Congress in Middelburg in 2009:

Dutch museums will proactively interact with political leaders and the public in order to develop plans and programmes to support social initiatives and projects, based on our core responsibilities and with respect for our authenticity. In so doing, the museum sector expects to establish a reciprocal relationship with the public and political parties; in other words, it expects that politicians think along with shared initiatives and create the conditions necessary to facilitate these initiatives.

Having thus issued a 'democratic' letter of intent, the question was how we were going to take this 'proactive' action. First we had to establish what our 'core responsibilities and authenticity' might be. For this we formed a working committee that analysed the most important community tasks and goals of museums in general. Long lists of functions were boiled down to five main 'values' of museums for society:

- Collection value
- Connecting value
- Educational value
- Experience value
- Economic value

COLLECTION VALUE

Museums are treasure chests containing objects and documents of national, international, regional and local relevance. Museums manage and exhibit



objects and the stories behind them, which is a core responsibility with major social significance. The items contained in museums are important to us all. They embody our shared history and our identity, this value – the collection value – is at the heart of all the other social values.

Museums exhibit objects and tell stories. By combining objects in a certain way and choosing a specific approach, museums comment on the times we live in, showing social relationships and placing them in context. Alternatively, they can show the background to a specific cultural or scientific trend or development.

CONNECTING VALUE

Museum collections represent a rich blend of generations, cultures, religions, sciences and opinions, thus presenting an image of society – in the past, present and future. This encourages people to keep an open-minded and curious attitude.

By literally bringing culture closer to home, differences between population groups become smaller. Museums provide an ideal platform for discussing current affairs and placing them in context. Using their collections as background, they can invite discussion of events in the community, the city and the world at large, as well as encourage debate on social and political issues.

Exhibitions and the use of new media further enhance this debate. This role as a platform also appeals to new audiences: people who do not ordinarily visit museums but who are interested in the issue being discussed will be drawn to the museum.

Furthermore, museums have extensive experience in managing and training volunteers, thereby helping them to gain new skills and work experience. Volunteer work allows senior citizens to remain active in their communities, while the long-term unemployed can use volunteer work to help them re-enter the job market.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Museums are a learning environment for all. You always learn something new by visiting a museum. It is a perfect environment for learning, both for younger people to learn about culture and for older people, as part of life-long learning. Visiting a museum means learning, whether it is consciously



or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally.

A museum offers different kinds of learning. Museums offer people the opportunity to learn informally, something they can do on a voluntary basis. People cite 'improving general knowledge' and the 'informal learning experience' as major reasons to visit a museum. They describe this learning experience as gathering information and acquiring knowledge, and regard it as a useful way to spend their leisure time. For children, informal learning, alongside regular education is important in developing their world view and self-image, along with their personalities, identities and social awareness.

Experimentation and creativity contribute to scientific development and innovation. Museums show what role experiments and creativity have played over the centuries, and what results this has produced. In addition, museums also stimulate experimentation and creativity by challenging their visitors and inspiring them with activities (some of them interactive) and new forms of presentation.

EXPERIENCE VALUE

Museums are opportunities for enjoyment, experience and adventure. They provide the tranquillity and freedom to reflect and think critically, as well as being an ideal environment for personal development and fulfilment. However, museums are also enjoyable places to visit: to relax, to enjoy beautiful objects and fascinating stories – even to experience happiness.

Visiting museums is fun: a museum environment is pleasurable and relaxing, inspires and challenges you, makes you think or makes you laugh. If a museum includes a café or restaurant a museum visit can be a social, fun activity. Visiting a museum with friends or family and discussing what you saw is a bonding experience. When asked to describe what value art and culture have for them, many people use words like 'relaxation' and 'beauty'.

Museums offer adventure and entertainment. Increasingly, museums use their buildings and collections for adventures and entertainment. Museums undergo temporary transformations, as during local 'Museum Nights'. Using their collections as background, museums offer exciting or festive entertainment on those occasions.

ECONOMIC VALUE

Museums have economic strength and touristic attraction. Just think

of the large numbers of tourists that museums attract, the jobs they create directly and indirectly, the capital represented by the thousands of volunteers, museums' appeal to businesses and to families with high levels of education, and the cachet and character a museum and its building can give a city or region. Tourists who visit museums tend to spend more money during their visit than tourists who don't.

Museums play a direct and indirect role in employment. Museums make environments feel better for businesses and families, as well as increasing the number of jobs. They provide work to many professionals and a large number of volunteers.

Museums improve the quality of the living environment. They increasingly play a role in developing the area around the building, as well as having an impact on the planning decisions made in that area. The presence of museums generates quality and revenue and attracts people, as well as contributing to a region's revitalisation. Museums and their cafés and restaurants attract large numbers of visitors and make the community a livelier place. The arrival of a museum often guarantees better infrastructure and improved public transport services.

On the basis of these values we produced a publication, *More than worth it* (also available in English and online at the Dutch Museum Association), which we distributed to museums and stakeholders. This campaign coincided with the discussions on cut-backs on subsidies that started everywhere in Holland. The publication supplied museum staffs with a clear overview of the value of museums. For instance, whenever a local authority or politician was questioning the relevance of the local museum, the museum management could fall back on the definitions of the museum's values as described in the publication. This information was highly appreciated by museum managers in their discussions with their subsidy suppliers.

Since then we are also training museum staff in lobbying and negotiating with authorities. The five values are repeatedly published and told about at numerous occasions, organised by the Dutch Museum Association. Hopefully, in this way *More than worth it* will help the museum field in establishing a stronger position within society and politics.



AN ETHICAL EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

JANICE LANE,
SENIOR MUSEUMS MANAGER AT
GLASGOW MUSEUMS

VICTORIA HOLLOWES,
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
MANAGER FOR GLASGOW ARTS
GREAT BRITAIN

This conference is exploring questions around museums' role in society. It is asking, what is the civic role of museums in promoting social cohesion and social justice?

THE SOCIAL QUESTION

The questions around museums' role in society are not new questions for cultural institutions – particularly in the UK. In fact these are a modern extension of UK museums' long established commitment to 'the people's education'.

This commitment was a fundamental element of the British Victorian civic museum movement of the 19th century – and still shapes how museums identify their role in British society today. Many British museums were established with a political mandate to educate and 'improve' the masses to be better, more productive citizens.

Today, we still are working to prove that museums are central to 'changing people's lives' – in fact as a core purpose of the museums – and it certainly

has underpinned the philosophy of Glasgow Museums for well over a quarter of a century. However, one of the most debated and important shifts in this thinking is a move from the 20th century's paternalistic approach of 'doing good' FOR the community, to a learning museum - that is a museum acting as a social agent working collaboratively WITH the community.

Today, we want to share our experience of working with the rich diversity of communities in Glasgow. I will give an overview of the political and geographical context we work in and how our museums have endeavoured to include people and learning in their programming and development.

The city's political environment shapes the philosophy and purpose of Glasgow Museums as an organisation. I will illustrate this with some examples of our work.

Victoria will then give an overview of her work embedding the city's social justice agenda into Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art. She will talk about a specific experience which affected the organisation - and ourselves as individuals. This significant controversy highlighted the need for further development on how we organise ourselves institutionally and most importantly how we behave as staff and how we conduct ourselves in our daily work internally is as important as how we conduct ourselves externally with communities and stakeholders.

GLASGOW LIFE AND GLASGOW MUSEUMS

Glasgow Museums has engaged with these questions of the role of museum and contemporary economic and social issues for well over 25 years. The organisation's commitment to its social role and to its role as a centre for learning and participation is driven by its relationship with the city council. Glasgow Museums is a publicly funded organisation and it operates in a highly politicised context. It is part of a larger parent organisation called Glasgow Life which manages the major cultural assets and services of the city.

Formally a department under the direct control of the city council, Glasgow Life became an arm's length charitable company in 2007. It is a large organisation with nearly 3000 employees. As a Museums service we have to work within the complex framework of Glasgow Life, which in turn has to negotiate its relationship with the city council. The City Council remains our main stakeholder and funder. As a result of these relationships, all our

museum services are measured against their impact and contribution to the City's strategic objectives of learning, health, employability, social and economic development.

GLASGOW THE CITY

Glasgow is a city of 600,000 people and is situated on the West Coast of Scotland. It is the fourth largest city in UK and largest in Scotland.

Glasgow has been reinventing itself over the last 30 years in an attempt to reverse the devastating social impacts of the major industrial and economic decline it experienced since the 1960s and 1970s. The decline in Glasgow was amongst the most extreme anywhere, so that by the 1980s it was one of the poorest, most unhealthy and derelict cities in Europe.

Despite the last decade of investment, a third of the population continues to live in poverty with little hope or aspiration. In 2008 a World Health Organisation report found life expectancy for men in Glasgow's East End as low as 54 years of age, compared with a Glasgow wide average of 71 years and a Scottish-wide average of 75 years. It still has the lowest life expectancy in the UK today.

Glasgow has also experienced rapid change in its population over the last 12 years. This is largely as a result of the Council's strategic decision to become a City for Dispersal for UK asylum seekers and refugees in 2001. It is now home to the most ethnically diverse population in Scotland.

So, it is transforming from an industrial base to an international city of culture, attractive enough to be successful in its bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Museum and galleries have been playing a significant role as Glasgow undergoes this major change in identity.

THE ROLE OF GLASGOW MUSEUMS

Glasgow Museums is a product of the city's aspirations and challenges. The process of renewal through culture began with Museums in 1983 with the opening of The Burrell Collection. Since then, Glasgow has continued to build on its cultural assets, refurbishing old and creating new museums to serve local people and attract tourists. Part of Glasgow's current success as a tourist destination lies in the appeal of its museums and its collections. For example, the Gallery of Modern Art is now the most visited modern art gallery in Scotland with over half a million visits annually.



The latest attraction is the new Riverside Museum: Scotland's Museum of Transport and Technology. Designed by Zaha Hadid, the building forms part of the city's regeneration strategy for the River Clyde and has attracted over one million visits in its first year. It was developed with audiences – including communities in decisions about its design and most importantly about the content of the stories within the museum. It maintains this relationship with its visitors – encouraging discussion and participation about the current displays as well as future changes.

Since the 1990s, Glasgow Museums has set out to define its relationship with the changing life of the city. The organisation has articulated a commitment to create museums as 'safe' civic spaces which offer a forum where participants can contribute to and shape the issues being stimulated by programmes and exhibitions. A key part of this process is building relationships and partnerships over the long term – often over many years.

A good example of long-term relationship building is St Mungo Museum. Since its opening in 1993, St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art has actively fostered and supported interfaith dialogue.

The museum was controversial when it opened, due to its multi-faith approach. However, it now enjoys the support of the major faiths across the city. It has sustained a national reputation for interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Over the last 10 years it has initiated some of our most interesting partnership links, tackling controversial and difficult issues such as sectarianism and faith and sexuality – as well as more cultural issues around death, love and hate.

In November 2011, St Mungo Museum was the host venue for Scottish Interfaith Week, demonstrating the recognition it has with the Government. The Scottish Deputy First Minister gave a keynote address at the opening event. The theme of the week was 'Belief in Dialogue' and promoted the Scottish Government's agenda for building positive relations among religious and belief communities and individuals.

Choosing St Mungo Museum as the venue for this national event reinforced its significance as a place for intercultural and interfaith dialogue in the city and in Scotland.

CURIOUS

We are currently working on a project exploring cultural diversity at

St Mungo's. This is called *Curious*. *Curious* is allowing us to build on our relationships with different communities and our experience of fostering discussion around culture and faith to promote dialogue and to explore the diversity of the city. It has resulted in a community co-produced exhibition developed over two years. It involved nearly 100 people in the selection and interpretation of the objects for the exhibition. To date there have been over 5,000 participants in the project and over 66,000 visits to the exhibition.

As part of *Curious*, we also developed a cultural awareness learning programme, designed to increase cultural understanding through the individual's awareness of their own identity or identities. The Learning Programme has been taken up by workers in the cultural and sporting sectors, staff and students of further education colleges, ESOL students (English for Speakers of Other Languages), hotel staff, National Health Service workers, hospital patients, community groups and volunteers. A number of colleges are now interested in partnership and legacy work around the learning programme, particularly with ESOL students. The Learning programme inspired one group of staff and students to create their own intercultural event at The City of Glasgow College, the largest further education provider in the city. They estimate 1,000 of their students attended their event, which encouraged isolated ESOL students to mix with students from across the college.

This type of project has the museum and its collections at its heart - and the learning programme is a dynamic method of engagement with ethical exchange of ideas at its core. It has brought a large number of people into the museum and more importantly involved them in both creating and participating in a series of events and programmes. Many of the participants had never been before, many are new to the city and many now bring friends and family. They have adopted the museum as a meeting place. Some have established their own events in the museum – for example one group now hold a monthly Language Café at the museum. The Museum has become a place for participation and exchange.

THE OPEN MUSEUM

We continue to extend the 'arena for cultural participation' for the museums well beyond their four walls through the Open Museum, our outreach service, now in its 22nd year of operation. The Open Museum (OM) was set up to take objects to people in their communities in order to engage with

people who traditionally wouldn't or couldn't visit museums. As a result, the OM reaches more diverse and excluded communities than the main museum venues. It plays an active role in developing community agency and capacity building through its partnership with local voluntary and community organisations.

An example of the impact of years of on-going dialogue is Open Museum's work with the Central Mosque in Glasgow. Over the last 10 years we have worked with many men and women and used our collections to explore their stories and interests. These have been displayed at the Mosque and other venues. One of those stories will soon be moving to the Riverside Museum as a new display there, and will highlight the role of the Asian community in Glasgow's transport history. At first, as a museum service we had struggled to find this story within our collections when we were preparing the content for the Riverside Museum. The work of the Open Museum with this community has improved our collections and knowledge as well as raising the representation of Glasgow's well-established Asian communities. The Open Museum builds interdisciplinary partnerships and networks to ensure a wider and sustainable impact and influence for its work in order to contribute to the city's social and equality agendas.

We are held accountable as to how we deliver on equalities under the terms of the UK's Equalities Act. We have many positive examples of long-term relationships and broadening representation of Glasgow's different communities and histories. However, when dealing with more complex histories across, for example, gender and sexuality we are being challenged in our commitment to equalities. It is with this context that I will pass on to Victoria, who will explore how the work at the Gallery of Modern Art was shaped by this political agenda. How we as an organisation responded to complex and challenging responses to a major exhibition and events programme.

CONTEMPORARY ART AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Despite the social and economic context that Janice has highlighted, Glasgow is called the Second City of Visual Art outside of London and boasts a number of recent Turner Prize winners and nominees, a vibrant visual art festival in Glasgow International and a commitment from the city to an engaged arts practice. Situated in the heart of the city, the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) is a complex and interesting space with all the ethics of a

museum culture, combined with its status as a contemporary art venue.

Many art galleries and museums show art that addresses contemporary issues, and most have education or access programmes which seek to establish links with disengaged audiences. Far fewer however seek to develop working practices that place engagement with isolated or vulnerable communities, on issues that are important to them, at the heart of planning the gallery's public programme. From 2001 - 2009 GoMA developed a distinctive programme which expressed Glasgow's commitment to artistic quality, to public engagement and to social justice and equality. In total there were four programmes working with a range of International and Glasgow based artists as part of this structure, and all had the same strap-line – Contemporary art and human rights:

- In 2003 *Sanctuary* looked at issues of asylum seekers and refugees for which GoMA was shortlisted for the Gulbenkian Museum of the Year Award.
- In 2005 *Rule of Thumb* explored the issue of violence against women, for which the lead-in project elbowroom won an engage Scotland Award.
- In 2007 *Blind Faith* focused on sectarianism in Glasgow and Scotland, placing it within the wider context of identity, neighbourhood and nation.
- Finally in 2009 *sh[OUT]* explored Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex human rights, art and culture.

While artistic intervention is often thought of as anarchic, radical or organic, these developments at GoMA came out of key policy decisions made in 2001 by Glasgow City Council, which was struggling to cope with social unrest caused by the city's contract to house up to 10,000 asylum seekers.

There was some trepidation at GoMA about undertaking this work. However, the success of the first programme, *Sanctuary*, led to a commitment to undertake the following programmes on a similar scale. It is also crucial to note that although policy was the initial driver behind the programmes, the commitment, integrity and collaborative approach the gallery took was very much developed intuitively by GoMA staff, and the reflective practice they adopted in their work.

These programmes were large scale, approximately two years in duration and involved a complex network of external partners to achieve. They combined exhibitions, outreach projects, schools programmes, informal workshops, seminars and artist residencies and helped shape GoMA's



current identity, profile and collection development.

To see if we were using a model that met with the programme's aims, for *Rule of Thumb* we commissioned an independent evaluation. The executive summary points were:

- *That Rule of Thumb exceeded expectations in using contemporary art to explore social justice issues*

adding weight to the ongoing corporate policy work around violence against women.

- *That Rule of Thumb engaged and attracted a wider constituency to GoMA* including both local residents, and tourists – some of whom cited the quality of the programme as a reason for choosing Glasgow as their preferred city-break destination.

- *That Rule of Thumb worked effectively with local partners* who had been impressed with the sensitivity of GoMA staff and artists, and reported that in all cases expectations had been effectively managed.

- *That significant effort was made to reach the hardest to reach* The impact on participants had been significant and a range of positive outcomes were reported.

- *And that Rule of Thumb had contributed to the re-defining of GoMA* That its commitment to contemporary art and its social justice programme of work made it "unique".

And it was feedback like this that continued to bolster the confidence of our parent organisation – Glasgow Life – and the City Council to see GoMA's social justice programmes as a key strand of the equalities work for the city. As Janice has indicated, GoMA exists in a complex hierarchy. When I refer to 'the organisation' I mean Glasgow Life. If I am referring to GoMA itself, I will simply say 'GoMA'.

I am going to turn in more detail now to the fourth of our social justice programmes: *sh[OUT]* – in 2009. Like the previous three programmes, it featured a range of elements, but unlike the previous three, it gave rise to major controversies. And from that experience, a particular group of participants in *sh[OUT]* expressed very strong negative emotions about the impact of the programme for them: they used words like damage, panic, shell-shock, drained, angry, trauma, pain, fear, betrayal.

Clearly, this is not in line with earlier feedback and, you may think, surprising,



given that in the previous programmes we were able to demonstrate an award winning skill set for working with vulnerable communities and participants. So, what went wrong for these participants? And who were they? Well, they were staff – staff from across Glasgow Life and representatives from the programme’s external partners.

Relatively little is known about the social and political effects of museums’ increasing engagement with human rights and intercultural dialogue, although like this conference, there is a growing interest in how museums address social issues in shifting political and economic landscapes. But even less is understood about how museum staffs negotiate the associated ethical dilemmas. It is what we have learnt about this that I will discuss.

First some background to the *sh[OUT]* controversy. The outreach projects for *sh[OUT]* explored issues brought forward by the programme’s advisory group, one of which was the subject of faith. Artist Anthony Schrag worked with various groups and individuals from different religions to explore the relationship between faith and sexuality. Members of the Metropolitan Community Church developed a work which invited people who felt excluded from the Bible to write themselves back into it, as a way of expressing the marginalization of LGBTI people from some Christian communities, and was featured as part of the *sh[OUT]* programme within a display entitled *Made in God’s Image*.

There had already been some media criticism for aspects of *sh[OUT]* and its portrayal of LGBTI identities and lifestyles. The Bible piece from *Made in God’s Image* fuelled the media’s sensationalist approach, leading to a number of complaints being received by Glasgow Life and Glasgow City Council. Whilst *Made in God’s Image* was initially defended by Glasgow Life, the negative publicity spiralled dramatically into a cycle of complaints and high profile political pressure from Council and Church leaders. The Directorate undertook a forensic re-examination of the remaining programme, resulting in adjustments to elements that were still to be delivered. This led to further outcry from the LGBTI communities in response to what they perceived to be an unfavourable hierarchy in terms of equalities, and from artists who accused Glasgow Life of blatant censorship.

We approach social justice as an integral part of the overall GoMA programme. Building partnerships with organisations in the field, we aim to run these programmes with integrity and sensitivity by always prioritising the needs of participants. So, what happens then, if we understand that

staff members within Glasgow Life and its external partners were in fact also 'participants'? How does a large organisation cope with conflict and what is the impact on those internal staff and stakeholders – the individuals – who have emotionally and professionally invested in it? Are we really honest about these experiences? Possibly, if they are generally viewed as having gone well, as we saw with the earlier programmes. But what if they are complex and messy and not readily understood in a consensual way? For an organization that in its various parts has historically prided itself on strong community engagement and its sensitive handling of difficult subjects, how did this equip it to address itself as a vulnerable community?

After a period of absence due to maternity leave I was curious to know how this experience was shaping the organization now. Was Glasgow Life in the right place to move on? Or was it limiting its potential to deliver intercultural dialogue because it prioritised its reputation over its social agenda? And what can the organisation learn if the individuals within it don't share their experiences? These questions led me to undertake a series of interviews with individual staff members from GoMA, Glasgow Museums, Glasgow Life and our external partner organisations.

Throughout the interviews staff fell distinctly into two groups in terms of their polarized perceptions, that I describe as: Practitioners (deliverers, partners, support officers) and the Directorate (directors at the very top of the Glasgow Life structure).

There was an air of private pain that had never been openly discussed. In fact, it was so traumatic that even now those involved still can't quite agree on what happened. But one of the most prominent findings as I mentioned earlier, was that everyone talked about strong emotions and feelings, describing a personal impact as well as a professional one, often in terms of a 'private' conflict that couldn't be shared with colleagues or managers, indicating a lack of trust in these relationships. What is surprising about this, is that the ability to build relationships and trust is central to GoMA's social justice work, but the *sh[OUT]* experience showed a gap where Glasgow Life forgets to care for itself, or, put another way, for the group of employees and partners associated with the programme.

As one practitioner put it:

"I think sometimes the way I work, with my team and the communities, it's very different to that of the organisation; it's like two different worlds, the way that they work and the way that they treat people and include people."

This practitioner succinctly describes the gap in alignment between external and internal methodologies, implying a working reality of 'out there' versus 'in here'. So, as an organisation, how do we move to an understanding that 'out there' IS 'in here'?

Whilst solidarity had been expressed between Directorate and Practitioners at earlier media criticism of *sh[OUT]*, the level at which things escalated part way through the *Made in God's Image* exhibition led to a very different perspective of that relationship. The Directorate were essentially perceived by Practitioners to have removed all information and discussion from the delivery team and advisory group members – the other 'participants' – keeping it behind closed doors at the organisation's headquarters. What many saw as a 'shutting down' of the conversation as a result of the public conflict, led to the breakdown of relationships giving rise to the private conflict. This is despite the fact that the Bible work was never actually withdrawn from public display and continued to be defended by the Directors.

The differences in perceptions can be seen in these three quotes:

The first from an external partner:

"From an external position I couldn't see who was making these decisions. I just knew that my relationship was with GoMA, and suddenly it was being swept under the carpet and everybody was being very cagey about what they could say about what was happening or not."

This quote from a Practitioner:

"The conflict got located somewhere else, GoMA was frozen, completely disempowered, it did feel very one way."

And finally from one of the Directors:

"I'm sure they didn't trust what the directorate were actually doing, that we were actually loyal to what was being done in terms of the subject and what had been done curatorially, but actually didn't trust. I mean, there must have been something, you know, about whether we all trusted each other."

The most immediate effect of the betrayal of trust is in the emotional impact on the person 'betrayed'. As this practitioner illustrates: *"I think both my professional and personal values were betrayed by the company. Because the work that we do, to build up trust, you have to invest something of yourself. So your values are inextricably linked to your work personally, so I can't really separate them, they're part of my commitments that I've brought to museums*



from other parts of my professional and personal life, so both of those were betrayed."

The other side is that the impetus for Directorate behind the perceived betrayal is emotional safety and survival: *"The context you're working in is 'oh my god there's another complaint, oh my god I've got another 20 complaints today, oh my goodness when is this going to stop', so what happens is it becomes about how soon we can stop this rather than actually how we can use this as part of the process."*

So the practitioners and their work are not the target as such, but have become the collateral damage. This psychological conflict, which is perceived but not articulated, can be further explored through the theory of the psychological contract concerned with the 'social and emotional aspects of the exchange', and characterised by respect, compassion, trust, empathy and fairness – all elements that echo our work in intercultural dialogue.

Because psychological contracts represent how people interpret promises and commitments, different groups will have different views of the same situation. In the case of *sh[OUT]* this led to a stretching and weakening of trust in the relationship when the media controversy began. The subsequent lack of communication started a vicious circle when conflicting perspectives began to fill the information vacuum.

Of course many of these perceptions will be inaccurate, as illustrated on reflection by this practitioner: *"It became problematic when they started making decisions at Directorate level which were made perhaps without fully understanding the processes in outreach work and the way it functions. I say that, but I can't actually think of a decision that was made, but it felt like that."* And so there was a perception of conflict due to a lack of clarity of response and interaction with each other, with both groups trying to protect their – very different – external relationships. At its worst, this translated itself as the organisation was renegeing on its commitment.

Perhaps now more than ever we recognise change and uncertainty as the constants we work with on a daily basis, but an open flow of information – internally as well as externally – and an honest approach gives people the opportunity to absorb, respond and contribute to a challenging situation. Summarising the views of many practitioners, this participant concedes: *"I think I could have accepted it if it had been dealt with in a completely different way, those complex political issues should never have been buried. There should*



have been an honesty about it."

Community methodology can show us the potential to nurture individuals and their relationships, whilst debating and exploring. Here another quote from a practitioner: *"I just remember working with the group and it was the most respectful open group and although their personal politics were very, very different, the way they actually included all those voices was just such a contrast with the way that differences were dealt with at that opposite extreme, that corporate level."* If we could apply this methodology internally then the act of reciprocity could become a compelling vehicle to generate an alternative, trusting structure within Glasgow Life itself.

So how do we move towards these ethical approaches if not through self-reflection? Reflection is a critical part of community methodology and learning, and has been a central process to evolving and improving GoMA's practice with participants over many years. We make space for it through supported sessions, feedback walls, research groups, collaborative films and public displays. However, internal reflection was something that interviewees universally acknowledged they found little or no time for, despite everyone recognizing its importance (and its absence). And so what was missing was any acknowledgement of, or learning from, the emotional experiences. Instead, it was the traditional business processes that dominated, as we can see in these three quotes:

"We were trying to solve the problems technically and I don't think we did enough."
- Director

"I think it seems that at a senior level it's not a gut response, it's 'this is the process we followed'."
- Director

"And so it became very much a process-led understanding of the situation and I think that does kind of end up missing the point, there was no feedback or opportunity to discuss options about how we were dealing with that."
- Practitioner

Richard Sandell argues that for museums to address their role in social justice they have to renegotiate their relationship with society. I would add to that the need to renegotiate their role with their own organisation and governance structures. We have the skills, but we must practice trust and debate within the workplace, as part of a broader set of processes – to be able to create "an ethical exchange".

Returning to *sh[OUT]*, what of its attempts to build support for more progressive human rights and intercultural dialogue? As one external partner said: “*The fact that there was conflict shows you were touching a live issue, that you were part of a really important debate and that is still something to be proud of. The important things are the difficult bits, and these are the bits that make a difference that move things on.*”

As Robert Janes wrote about GoMA in his book *Museums in a Troubled World*: ‘The gallery’s remarkable journey into the realm of social justice has joined the best in contemporary art practice with social change and the creation of more compassionate communities... GoMA had a choice, as all art galleries do, to pay attention and act. It did; many do not.’

Museums have immense power curatorially, they can uphold (for some) a negative status quo, or they can help people reconsider the options, reconsider what society means, who is part of society, what shape it should have. Whether we view this socially or, organisationally, between us we can choose whether to reinforce the status quo, or to open up other possibilities.

I will now hand back to Janice, who will finish with a summary of how this learning is taking us forward in a new action research project.

OUR MUSEUM – A SOCIAL AGENT

So despite the range of work Glasgow Museums has developed we know we have much more to learn in order to improve our internal relationships - and improve our corporate integrity - so we can confidently extend community agency in all areas of our work. This must include aligning internal and external working practices.

We have been working with a major funder, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, to explore these issues over the last two years and as a result are now participating in a unique three-year initiative called *Our Museum*.

This initiative involves eight other museums and galleries from across the UK. The aim of the *Our Museum* programme is to facilitate a process of organisational change within museums and galleries that are committed to active partnership with their communities.

This initiative will give us the opportunity to explore how we tackle some of the difficult questions raised, for example, by *sh[OUT]*. Even though *sh[OUT]* happened over two years ago, it has taken us this long to start

understanding the real impacts and the implications for future work. Especially, when we look at this alongside other current community engaged activity like the examples I have described earlier.

Through the *Our Museum* programme, we are putting in place a robust process of reflection for all staff alongside action learning on live museum projects. The aim is to create a forum where we can challenge ourselves and ask the really difficult questions we often ignore. In effect, we will be actively creating a safe space for ourselves within the organisation, rather than assuming that this already exists. Often in our organisations we only know what is missing when things go wrong.

This process will include bringing in external 'Change Agents' who can act as Critical Friends and contribute knowledge from other disciplines such as Community Development or Industry.

We will also explore how we scale up community engagement across more of the museums' work and how we involve our communities in wider participation and crucially, decisions about their museums and collections.

This is an exciting opportunity as we are genuinely uncertain what organisational change and this scaling up of community engagement will look like in practice. Through this three-year initiative we aim to get better at sharing knowledge and skills across the organisation as a whole – including Glasgow Life. We aim to develop deeper networks and greater understanding of community engagement as a key tool in the museum's role as social agent.



JASPER VISSER,
 INNOVATOR AND DIGITAL
 STRATEGIST
 NETHERLANDS

Without any doubt, the rise of digital media over the past decades has changed our world. Technology-wise, up until a couple of years ago nobody owned a smartphone and mobile Internet usage was measured in megabytes, rather than today's exabytes¹. As late as early 2006, nobody was on Twitter. The changes to our world, however, have not been limited to new media and technology. People with a company smartphone have discovered what it means to have a distorted work/life balance (resulting in Volkswagen shutting off the email function of their employees' smartphones after working hours late 2011²). Politicians on Twitter have learned to be responsive to their electorate (at least, some of them). And also, somewhere in this shifting landscape museums have sought and fought to stay relevant in the digital revolution and even benefit from it.

To a large extent museums and other heritage and cultural institutions have embraced the new media tools at hand. A recent survey of some 1,244 arts organisations from across the United States by Pew Internet³ shows that 99% have a website, 97% have some sort of social media presence, 81% use online video to disseminate their content and a large percentage use mobile

Figure 1:
 Google recently started including the factual information of many search queries on their search result pages, keeping people on their website for longer

apps to provide content (24%), sell tickets (15%) or even train and educate employees (5%). These numbers are likely to be representative for most cultural and heritage institutions, at least in the Western world.

What many organisations are struggling with, however, is to embrace the other changes that have accompanied the digital revolution. In my experience working with organisations all over the (Western) world it is difficult for museums to (re)define and claim their position in an ever more digital world. In this paper, as in my presentation in Riga, I will try to offer some suggestions for role of museums in the digital age and give some guidelines to claim a meaningful position both online and in the physical world.

MUSEUMS AS CONTENT PRODUCERS AND STORY TELLERS

Digital media such as social networks, mobile apps, augmented reality, etc. are to a large extent about making a connection between content and people. Museums have been making such connections with their exhibitions, catalogues, lectures, educational materials, etc. since well before the internet lost its upper-case I. In the digital arena, most major players are good at either producing content, or getting it to the right people. Google Search is especially good at the latter, while Wikipedia is better at the first⁴. Together they make sure that for most simple questions you have the answer within one click. Google is even confident enough about Wikipedia's content to have started including it immediately in their search results, enriched with information from their other services, so that you do not have to leave their (for-profit) website any more (see Figure 1). Similarly, forward-thinking institutions such as the Walker Art Center⁵ in Minneapolis combine the producer and distributor role on their websites, presenting their own content in combination with 'art news from elsewhere'. In a keynote presentation at the 2012 MuseumNext conference in Barcelona, Robin Dowden and Nate Solas showed how this approach increased their (digital) audience⁶ and turned their website into a destination for art enthusiasts.

The challenge for most museums is to transform their existing content into high-quality digital content that reaches out to and engages people. In a popular talk on the website TED in 2012 Kevin Allocca, a YouTube trend manager, explains succinctly what are, in his experience, the conditions for such digital content and its dissemination: "Tastemakers, creative participating communities, complete unexpectedness; these are characteristics of a new kind of media and a new kind of culture."⁷ Of these three conditions, complete unexpectedness has to do with the production of content, whereas

tastemakers and creative participating communities have to do with the content's distribution.

Unexpectedness is the easiest of the three for museums: our collections, research, exhibitions, tours, etc. all are - to some extent - unexpected. Museums usually don't preserve and present ordinary, meaningless stuff without some sort of story. On the contrary, sometimes museum content is even more unexpected than the curators or artists involved realise. Brooklyn Museum allows visitors to add their own tags (mini-descriptions) to their online collection, which in some cases shows just how unexpected the content is (see Figure 2). At other times, however, we might have to spin our content to become unexpected, as the Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam did when they claimed that without the naval history they present, there would have been no Facebook⁸.

Tastemakers and creative participating communities are trickier to get right. Tastemakers are people who have a significant influence on other people online. They can be celebrities but do not have to be. A tastemaker in the world of museum innovation, for instance, is museum director and former consultant Nina Simon who keeps the Museum 2.0 blog. When she mentioned a project I have been involved in - the National Vending Machine - on her blog⁹, it gained an international following, whereas previously it had only been relevant to passers-by. In the case of the National Vending Machine, this increased the reach of our project as well as the number of people helping us make the project better.

Creative participatory communities, finally, are places where people come together, online or in the real world, to share, discuss, rate, remix, interact, co-create. Most social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are based around creative participatory communities. Most museum websites are not (yet), with the possible exception of highly participatory websites such as the Rijksstudio¹⁰, where people come together to remix the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. If content is part of a creative participatory community, the content is more likely to be used in a digital context: linked to, shared on social networks, etc. This means the content does not also reach more people, but also that it becomes part of the digital realm. A collection put on Wikipedia (under Wikipedia's obligatory open licences) might reach much more people than a collection put online in a proprietary online collection database. To involve people with the aforementioned National Vending Machine - a project about material culture - we went to places where ordinary people deal with material culture: shopping malls, outlet centres

and even Amsterdam's famous Queen's Day flea market. Involvement of the audience with the project at these events was significantly higher than in the traditional museum setting¹¹.

About two years ago I ran a pilot project in which I combined Allocca's three conditions (without having heard about them before, obviously). Using the niche platform Foursquare, where people share their location to receive locally relevant information, I told historical stories related to locations in the Netherlands. Rather than telling this story at the actual location, I used nearby train stations as a platform. Much more people visit train stations (where they also have to kill time and thus use their smartphones) than historical sites, greatly increasing the reach of both the locations and the stories. I also made sure the historical story was linked to a contemporary fact, giving the story an unexpected twist. Finally, as Foursquare is a niche platform that at the time was mostly used by tastemakers, they started sharing their experiences with the project as a best practice on their own blog, giving the pilot an even wider reach¹².

When you want to make a connection between your content and audience, look for the unexpected angle to your content, pro-actively involve and facilitate tastemakers and present yourself where people are already actively engaged with ideas and tasks similar to the ones you would like them to be involved in.

MUSEUMS AS CURATORS OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES

In his book *The Long Tail*, former Wired editor-in-chief Chris Anderson makes a compelling case for the large number of things that do not happen in the 'head' or most popular part of any distribution¹³. For example, when given the opportunity and a virtually unlimited audience, many more books of the 99.99% not in the average top-10 dominated book store will be sold than that of the 0.01% (both numbers are made-up statistics) on regular display, although the number of sales per book in the latter case will be considerably higher. Physical bookstores have finite space, unfortunately, so they are limited to selling books that sell often and in great quantities. The internet has infinite space and can sell all the others - hence the success of Amazon.

When it comes to finding a meaningful and relevant place in the digital revolution, in the past decade most museums seem to have been focused on the long tail. (As opposed to the physical realm, where blockbuster exhibitions clearly aim at the head of our audience distribution.) If only enough of a

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Figure 2:
Visitors can add their own tags (mini-descriptions) to the online collection of the Brooklyn Museum, greatly enhancing the accessibility, such as in this case of 'pregnant men'.

collection is digitised and put online, if only enough apps are produced with enough content and if only enough tweets are sent, more people will interact with the museum. I sincerely doubt this is the right approach. If I Google 'Rembrandt van Rijn' on a computer in Amsterdam, only the Rijksmuseum and the Mauritshuis are in the top-10 results (number 8 and 10, respectively). The Rembrandthuis, where the painter lived and which is literally around the corner from where I conducted the experiment, does not even show up in the first 50 results. It is the same for almost everything. Others win in the competition for number one positions in Google and get all the traffic. What works well for Amazon does not necessarily work for museums.

A recent article in the UK edition of *Wired*¹⁴ refers to a study done by John Gantz and David Reinsel with the appropriate name *Extracting Value from Chaos*¹⁵. The authors observe that now the amount of information in the world is more than doubling every two years, the new obsession is to parse meaning from this data. Data-scientist, a person who can find meaning in large numbers of raw information, is quickly becoming the digital world's hottest profession. To me, the job of these people sounds a lot like the job of

most exposition makers and curators in museums: tell a story using the huge collection and available knowledge at hand, or in other words: finding the head in the long tail.

Anita Elberse, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, has frequently opposed the idea of the long tail for most of the entertainment and cultural industries¹⁶ and come up with some interesting findings. For instance, in her research it seems most consumption of culture still appears in the head. Only experienced and 'heavy users' venture into the tail of most content distributions. Or, as she said in a recent interview in the Dutch newspaper *NRC* and I paraphrase, most people really only care about Lady Gaga¹⁷.

I believe this is an opportunity for museums: the unique subject knowledge of museum researchers, curators and other professionals allows them to select the 'head' of any given topic and make meaningful links to its long tail, thereby introducing inexpert visitors to the collection and knowledge at hand. It is not impossible to link from Lady Gaga to - for instance - 'obscure' classical music¹⁸. Nor is it impossible to interest people in culture, art and heritage starting from the head of the distribution. An excellent example of such an approach is the Facebook page of the Saatchi Gallery in London¹⁹. Using the world's most famous and popular art, they have built a platform where they can occasionally introduce a general public to more niche, 'long tail', art and culture.

Museums should not compete on the long-tail. With digital media, museums should compete for the head of the distribution. Museums can be the data-analysts of culture, art and heritage, and offer the general audience much-needed value in the chaos, not only online, but with apps and other technology also in the physical world.

FIVE WAYS TO DIGITAL WELL-BEING

The enlightening 2011 paper *The Happy Museum, re-imagining museums for a changing world*²⁰ explores the role museums can play to limit consumption, make people happier and generally contribute to their well-being. One of the ways the authors propose to do so is by focusing on the New Economics Foundation's *Five Ways to Well-being*²¹ namely: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning and give. To anyone working with social media, these words sound familiar, as they are - more or less - also the key to making meaningful connections online and via digital media. And, of course, why should not the

rules that help you build a Facebook fanpage or grow your Twitter following apply to other areas where we're working with people as well? After all, the world is not invented by social media gurus.

The world has changed because of the digital revolution though, and I think the five ways to well-being may have become more important for museums to connect with their audience in general, in a world where every brand is starting to take such an approach. The audience has expectations now which they may not have had some years ago.

For instance, 'take notice'. When I use a social network to approach an organisation (directly by addressing them, or indirectly by mentioning them) I expect them to respond within a couple of hours, as my favourite brands such as the Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) have made their policy. With some exceptions, most museums only respond after days (quite inconvenient if the question was "Are you open today?"), if at all. Or 'connect', which means to build a relationship. The best organisations in the digital age address me by name and give me the feeling they know me and care about me. Most museums, even after having taken a tour or visited them repeatedly, treat me anonymously as a stranger, online and in gallery.

Overall, the digital revolution has made the relationship between institutions and individuals more equal. With international campaigns such as *Ask a Curator*²² on Twitter the general audience has been empowered to connect directly with museums on a personal level. Now, they expect this also when there is no campaign going on, just like they can with their favourite brands. Plus, they expect the same treatment in-gallery as online. As senior managers of the Royal Dutch Airlines have repeatedly mentioned²³, their successes online with campaigns such as *KLM Surprise* (where they surprised passengers at the airport with tailored presents) and *Meet & Seat* (which helps you select a seat based on the social media profiles of your fellow passengers) have changed their entire organisation towards a 'social business', even the people who never do 'social media'. Ever more, museum visitors will expect similar behaviour from museums, and the New Economics Foundation's *Five Ways to Well-being* give valuable guidelines to museums wishing to be more like that, overall.

THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

I started this paper by mentioning how I see many organisations struggling to make the opportunities of the digital age part of their organisation, rather

than isolated projects on the fringes where an intern keeps a successful Twitter feed or an external agency builds an award winning mobile app. Fortunately, I also see organisations tackling the challenges, and their experience inspired the three main ideas about museum in the digital age I addressed in this paper: Understand that you are both a content producer and a story teller, focus on the accessible 'head' of your collection and work to be meaningful to all people and build a 'social business' rather than a social media presence.

What should immediately become apparent from this suggestion is that digital media is not something to be addressed by the digital media manager in isolation. Rather, digital media thinking should influence an organisation at every level. In all cases where museums really seem to succeed in the digital age, there is broad management and executive support, a suitable organisational vision and both the urgency and excitement to really make it work. Digital media's biggest side-effect is that it gives museums a platform to experiment with being more social and open to the audience. My last give-away therefore is to urge museums to work on the suggestions given in this paper in teams from across the organisation, involving everybody, and first of all try to make digital media's social side-effect felt in the organisation itself.

NOTES

¹ An exabyte is a billion gigabytes, or a 1 with a staggering 18 zeros worth of raw data. One exabyte contains more information than all books ever written with a margin comfortably wide to state this as a certainty. More on mobile data usage thanks to Cisco: http://www.cisco.com/en/US/solutions/collateral/ns341/ns525/ns537/ns705/ns827/white_paper_c11-520862.html

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-16314901>

³ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Arts-and-technology.aspx>

⁴ A third category might be the websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn that connect people with people, usually around content.

⁵ <http://www.walkerart.org/>

⁶ <http://vimeo.com/44162636>

⁷ TED. "Kevin Allocca: Why videos go viral". http://www.ted.com/talks/kevin_allocca_why_videos_go_viral.html

⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7ZizDguxJA>

⁹ <http://museumtwo.blogspot.nl/2010/09/guest-post-one-museums-experiment-with.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio>

¹¹ See Visser, Jasper, and Dennis Tap, "The Community as the Centrepiece of a Collection: Building a Community of Objects with the National Vending Machine." In J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds). *Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings*. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics. Published March 31, 2011. http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2011/papers/the_community_as_the_centerpiece

¹² More background on the project: <http://themuseumofthefuture.com/2011/01/13/using-foursquare-to-make-historical-contents-locally-available-and-reach-new-audiences/>

¹³ Anderson, Chris. *The Long Tail, Revised and Updated Edition: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*. New York: Hyperion, 2008.

¹⁴ <http://www.wired.co.uk/magazine/archive/2012/08/features/the-exabyte-revolution>

¹⁵ <http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/idc-extracting-value-from-chaos-ar.pdf>

¹⁶ See <http://hbr.org/2008/07/should-you-invest-in-the-long-tail/ar/1> and the response of Chris Anderson at http://www.longtail.com/the_long_tail/2008/06/excellent-hbr-p.html

¹⁷ http://archieff.nrc.nl/index.php/2012/Okttober/20/ECONOMIE/NH_NL03_002/Waarom+Lady+Gaga+geliefder+is+dan+Indierock/check=Y

¹⁸ See, for instance, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=650r-bU7TNM>

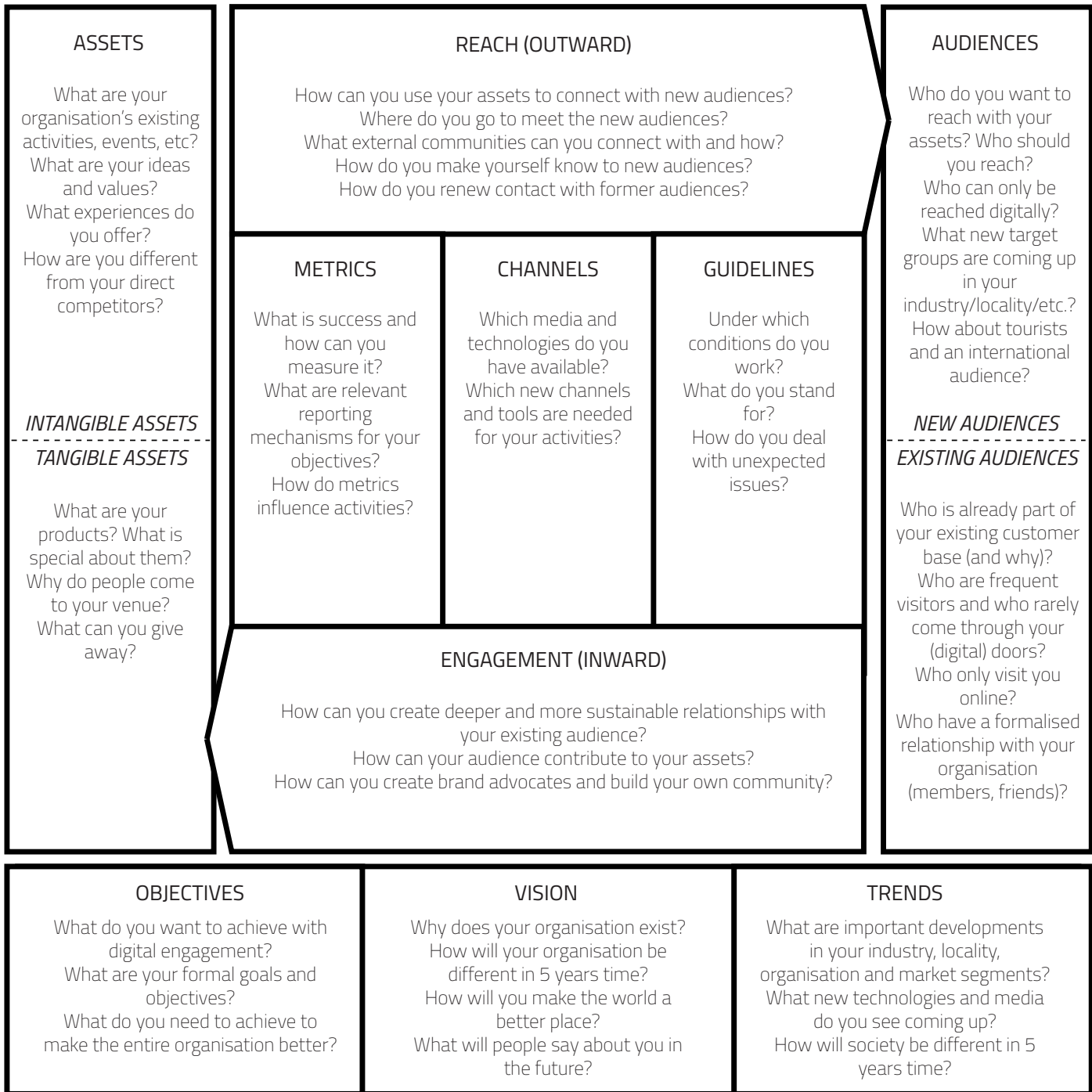
¹⁹ <http://www.facebook.com/saatchigalleryofficial>

²⁰ http://www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/The_Happy_Museum_report_web.pdf

²¹ <http://neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>

²² <http://www.askacurator.com/home.html>

²³ See for instance <http://www.marketingfacts.nl/berichten/thecase12-klm-van-social-media-naar-social-business1>



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DIGITAL ACTIVITIES WITH THE DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

JASPER VISSER,
INNOVATOR AND DIGITAL
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Sometimes it seems digital engagement is a game of chance. Surprisingly bad videos get millions of views on YouTube while carefully produced museum content fails to catch on with the wider audience. And to be honest, as always a bit of luck never hurts. Yet, digital engagement is not a game of luck. Successful digital engagement is often the product of a carefully planned strategy. To support the creation of such strategies, Jim Richardson and Jasper Visser developed the Digital Engagement Framework, which was first launched in May 2012 at the annual MuseumNext conference in Barcelona and is shown here in its first major revision based on the feedback of organisations who worked with it.

The Digital Engagement Framework ('DEF') helps organisations structure their thinking about digital engagement. The framework can be used as a roadmap to develop campaigns and activities that work in the context of their organisation and reach and engage people online, via social media or even via innovative technologies.

The DEF consists of four distinct parts that are closely linked.

The 'why' part of the framework forms the basis, which looks at the wider context of digital engagement strategy. What is the organisational vision and how does this relate to digital media and technology? Which contemporary trends influence the digital activities of an organisation? The 'why' questions are often part of a wider discussion within the organisation and preferably answered by a wide cross-section of the organisation.

On the top left of the DEF are the assets, or the things an organisation can use as input for its digital activities. We make a distinction between the things you *do or are* (intangible assets) and the things you *have* (tangible assets). Both are equally powerful in digital strategies.

Opposite the assets on the top right are the organisation's audiences. We

distinguish between existing audiences and new audiences. A good understanding of the different target audiences and their digital behaviour is key in developing successful digital activities.

At the heart of the Digital Engagement Framework are the digital activities an organisation will undertake; the 'what' part of the framework. Every organisation should make a distinction between activities that reach out to new audiences and activities that engage existing audiences. Designing these activities requires creativity, but by looking at the relationship between specific assets and specific target groups, the outline of each activity quickly becomes clear. The activities are made concrete by thinking about metrics, channels and guidelines.

A completely filled Digital Engagement Framework provides a good overview of the digital potential of an organisation.

Answering all the questions posed by the Digital Engagement Framework takes time and creativity and uses a lot of post-its. We've helped organisations in doing this with intensive two-day workshops and longer processes, but there have also been organisations that have used creative solutions and online tools to get a good sense of their digital potential.

After the process of 'filling the framework' the puzzle of translating it into an operational digital strategy begins. In this process organisations make choices between activities and try to mix and match them so each major channel is used to its maximum potential, each target group is reached and engaged and all objectives are reached.

The great strength of the Digital Engagement Framework is the wide community of organisations who've already used it in their quest for digital engagement. It is easy to find ideas and support for the framework via Twitter or Google, and if that doesn't help the email addresses of the designers of the framework usually offer support. In addition to the already available free workbook and many blogposts, 2013 will see the launch of a more detailed book full of case studies and examples of best practice and the launch of an online support community for digital engagement. In addition to the existing programme of workshops and master classes we're looking into the options of starting a programme of webinars to help organisations all over the world think more strategically about digital engagement. After all, although you sometimes need a bit of luck, successful digital engagement is a game of thoughtful strategy.

www.digitalengagementframework.com



CONCLUSIONS

JULIA PAGEL,
PROJECT MANAGER
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We have seen a vast range of different approaches of national policies and museums dealing with a diverse society, with migration and a constantly changing society. How museums discuss or show the changes in the demographic landscape of Europe through their collections does – first of all – depend on their national, social and historical preconditions.

Taking a deeper look at the diverse European landscape, we first of all see that each country deals with a very specific situation, whether it be significant changes in demographics in countries that were former colonizers – UK or the Netherlands, just to name two - or a totally different picture painted in the most recent EU member states such as Latvia.

How do we deal with ‘guest workers’ from Turkey and Morocco who were invited to come and work in Germany in the 60’s and 70’s, to the Netherlands, France, or Belgium? How do we represent minorities within our borders that were previously under socialism/communism more or less ignored? What about ethnic minority groups that have ‘always’ lived there?

The debates about representation, about engagement and collections of museums and in their representations are still happening: in some countries

the discussions have a long history, while other countries have only recently started to look at these challenges. Does the increased attention have results? How much is actually happening? Is the whole spectrum of society actually being engaged?

What role can and should museums play in the debate on cultural diversity? Are museums taking the lead, or are they following way behind? Do museums actually feel a kind of responsibility in this?

There is only one thing that all museums, no matter what country they are located in and what challenges they have to face, share: they have to deal with the uncertainties that a diverse society produces. That means that they have to learn to live in a constantly changing society, to adapt to ever-changing parameters, to stay vigilant and find their own approaches to stay meaningful for all people. This report shows that many museums throughout Europe are on a good way and that there is much to learn from each other!

CONTRIBUTORS



SIMONA BODO is an independent researcher with a particular interest in the social agency of museums and their role in the promotion of intercultural dialogue. She acts as an advisor to public and private institutions on these issues (e.g. Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities; Brera Picture Gallery; Istituto per i Beni Culturali of the Emilia Romagna Region; Fondazione ISMU - Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity), and has taken part in a number of international research projects commissioned by the European Union and the Council of Europe.

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Before arriving in Liverpool, David was director of the multi-award-winning

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VICTORIA HOLLOWS is the Contemporary Arts and Museum Manager for Glasgow Life, a post that includes the management of Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), the most visited contemporary art gallery in Scotland. She has made significant developments over the past decade to integrate GoMA's exhibition, education and collecting activities with values of social justice.

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JASPER VISSER is a media and communications strategist, workshop facilitator. He helps organisations rethink and redesign their relationship with people, media & communication strategies and value creation in the digital age. He has worked on a wide variety of projects, most notably the Museum of National History in the Netherlands. In recent years he has worked with organisations such as the Qatar Museum Authority, the State Library of New South Wales, ArtEZ Institute of Arts and the former royal palace Paleis Het Loo. He is the founder of Inspired by Coffee, an agency for innovation and change, cofounder of the start-up CultScape and blogger at De Gulle Ekster.

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National Gallery of Ireland (IE)

www.nationalgallery.ie

Chester Beatty Library (IE)

www.cbl.ie

City of Turin Cultural Heritage Department (IT)

www.comune.torino.it/museiscuola/

Amitié srl (IT)

www.amitie.it

Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum (LT)

www.rmda.lt

Latvian National Museum of Art (LV)

www.lnmm.lv

European Museum Academy (NL)

www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu

Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum (NO)

www.sverresborg.no

National Network of Romanian Museums (RO)

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www.du.edu/anthro/museum.htm

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