

**NEMO European
Museum Conference**

**Tartu
Estonia**

**Museums
2030 –
Sharing
recipes
for a better
future**

**7–10
November
2019**



Network of European
Museum Organisations

Museums 2030 – Sharing recipes for a better future

**NEMO
European Museum Conference
Estonia, Tartu, 2019**

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Foreword

David Vuillaume

*NEMO Chair,
Network of European Museum Organisations*

During the 27th annual conference of NEMO, the Network of European Museum Organisations, more than 200 delegates from 39 countries in Europe gathered in Tartu to discuss how museums can work for a better future, a better society and a better planet.

When I look at museums, I actually see that they are climate killers too: air conditioning, for example, is required almost everywhere for the professional conservation of collections, the exhibition of objects and the comfort of visitors. But I want rather to consider the museum as a learning, creative and engaged institution. ‘Learning’ means ready to change, ready to act. ‘Creative’ means ready to look for new solutions, for the right technologies,

to rethink our management methods. ‘Engaged’ means to act with others, to disseminate and to motivate their visitors and other stakeholders to go in the same direction, to share the same goals.

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be summarised as being made up of ‘five Ps’: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The first three relate to the three dimensions of sustainability (social, environmental, economic), while peace and partnership enable and support sustainability. Museums and museum organisations can bring the SDGs forward. I can say with full confidence that the museum community that works to achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development already exists. However, the museum community is facing different challenges.

Not all museums are aware of the fact that they can be agents of change. Some of them are even acting as if their role were to prevent change. These museums are part of the diversity of the museum sector, but it is not possible to achieve the SDGs without a motivation to change the present situation.

However, the motivation for change is not enough. There is indeed a big threat in commitment. The threat is that the commitment itself becomes more rewarding than the action and the impact of the action. A positive feeling to be ready to do something good is crucial but it is only the first step.

When we want to change something, it means that something went wrong. If we want to radically change something, it usually means that we are in a crisis. A positive energy for change is just the other side of a negative perception of the world linked with feelings like fear, despair, hopelessness.

We are the winners of globalisation in rich societies and we are at the same time afraid of the future because our authorities, our society, our parents were not able in the last 30 years to significantly change the global rules of economy, where the destruction of

natural resources and the exploitation of humankind still play an essential role worldwide.

Despite these challenges, museums have a huge potential and are in a privileged position to contribute to a better future, a better society and a better climate. Because our action range is limited, we have to focus on specific goals without forgetting the big SDG picture.

Even the smallest change and contribution can help, even the smallest museum can contribute. It’s all about being conscious about it. We can act directly, for example by paying the workforce adequately, by providing spaces for encounter, dialogue and interaction. We can support others in achieving the SDG targets with our exhibitions and other communication measures. And we can change internally, within our organisations, by measuring and correcting our internal working processes.

This publication aims to inspire museums and other cultural institutions to step up and dare to take action. We want to show that the museum community is an excellent key player in achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to make sure that museums are recognised and supported by EU policy-makers for their work contributing to a sustainable future.

Introduction

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – “A plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”

Mercedes Giovinazzo
Director, Interarts Foundation

Between 2013 and 2015, a global civil society mobilisation of international cultural organisations and networks lobbied to include culture in the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs: the #culture2015goal campaign, with the title *The Future We Want Includes Culture*, published a series of high-quality documents and deployed a set of high-level actions. Unfortunately, with culture directly mentioned only in the preamble of the agenda, the result has been disappointing: among the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, culture is mentioned directly only in target 11.4 and, indirectly, in targets

2.5, 4.7, 8.3, 8.9, 12.b, 16.4 and 16.10. At the occasion of the recent 2019 UN SDGs Summit, a new #culture2030goal was launched with the release of the report, *Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, which analyses the first four years of the agenda and its SDGs from the perspective of culture. Focusing on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by state parties to the UN, the report explains the developments of policy in the global conversation on culture and provides key recommendations for the decade 2020-30.

Against this background, it is of utmost importance that the European

cultural sector not only acknowledges the existence of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs but that it also works to actively address their content. Indeed, in spite of the minor and tangential mention of culture, the agenda provides an extremely interesting and relevant reference for the cultural sector with a normative, operational and symbolic value.

International normative instruments set the frame as to how, according to a value position, an issue should be addressed. Most of them are non-binding and have a 'declarative' nature: their signatory parties commit to transposing the indications therein to their national legislations and/or to deploy related policies and programmes. For these instruments to be of relevance within the international arena, they must have a strong and structured monitoring mechanism and a consequent and systematic budgetary allocation. A relevant example is the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which established the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.

The 2030 Agenda is an international normative instrument that sets a frame and establishes objectives to be achieved by its signatory parties. It has a declarative purpose and intention; it also sets the frame for

voluntary action in terms of legislation, policy-making or operational programmes. Its monitoring mechanism is relatively fragile insofar as its main purpose is to evaluate the action undertaken and it does not foresee retributory countermeasures. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the 2030 Agenda has an undeniable normative value.

Achieving the objectives set forth in a normative instrument is possible through specific national legislation and policies as well as operational programmes. As an example, the EU's Creative Europe programme to support the cultural and creative sectors finds its justification in a legal basis without which the programme could not exist. Since culture is not specifically foreseen in the 2030 Agenda, the possibility to deploy operational programmes to support it is practically non-existent. A normative instrument inspires action; not mentioning culture specifically entails that both the issuing organisation and the signatory parties will not consider it as relevant. Indeed, the drafting of normative instruments is a painstaking process that aims to ensure common ground for understanding and commitment by all those involved. With culture mainstreamed throughout the agenda, it is obvious

that the signatory parties are free to decide whether to address it or not through legislation, policy and/or programmes. The consequences of this lack of explicit references to culture in the 2030 Agenda and SDGs are underlined in the report *Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, which stresses that "the cultural dimension of sustainable development lags significantly behind (between one eighth to one fifth of) the other three recognised dimensions (the social, economic and environmental)".

On the contrary, the symbolic value and power of the 2030 Agenda as regards culture is not only undeniable but also significant. Indeed, the agenda offers a solid basis on which to raise awareness and inform both cultural stakeholders and the general public as to the challenges that the world currently faces. It is also an extremely useful tool by which to leverage interest for legislative, policy and operational action both at national and international levels. It is closely related to the concept of citizenship, which enables the exercise of civil and political rights but also of social, economic and cultural rights. In this sense, the 2030 Agenda is a formidable tool that provides for 'constitutional praxis': understood as

the structured setting within which to exercise action, it offers a relevant framework for, on the one hand, active citizenship and, on the other, the mobilisation of cultural civil society to actively engage in its deployment and development, in view of a future strengthened and concrete positioning of culture.

Transforming our world with museums

Henry McGhie

Consultant and founder of Curating Tomorrow

What kind of future do we want: for ourselves, for others, for those who come after us, and for nature? What roles can museums play in creating these futures? No doubt we will each have different answers, and that is partly fine, but it is also really problematic. We can only do so much on our own (and that is certainly worth doing), but to make a real difference we need to collaborate, with other museum workers, with museum networks, with other sectors and with potential partners to build our individual and collective capacities to imagine, design, shape and grow the future we want. So how can we create these better

futures? Finding a shared blueprint, language and set of objectives will help us go further, faster, together.

Fortunately, such a shared blueprint exists in the shape of the 2030 Agenda, presented in the document *Transforming Our World*. The agenda was agreed upon by the members of the United Nations in September 2015 and came into effect in January 2016. The agenda runs until 2030 and is achieved through the pursuit of 17 SDGs, which are themselves made up of 169 targets. The goals and targets were developed through an extensive process involving a wide

range of stakeholders. That means the ‘United Nations SDGs’ (as you sometimes hear them referred to) are really everyone’s SDGs. Whether you think of them as a recipe, a roadmap, a blueprint, or a template, they are an amazing opportunity for all sectors and indeed every single one of us to collaborate to help put the world on a path to a sustainable future.

The 2030 Agenda and SDGs came from a realisation that we can’t tackle the world’s problems one by one: the challenges are interconnected, and in tackling one problem, we have to ensure we’re not creating other problems and just moving the problem from one place to another. The vision of the 2030 Agenda is tremendous and highly ambitious. If you haven’t already done so, I recommend you read this vision. The SDGs are about supporting people’s individual and collective human rights and environmental rights, as they underpin peace and justice. They are about reducing inequality, ensuring long-term social and environmental sustainability and, importantly, they aim to “leave no-one behind”, to create a future where people flourish in harmony with nature. They have been set out as an invitation to all sectors to collaborate to create this better future, and I like to think that we also have to ensure that we leave no sector behind. The SDGs are built around

the balance of the ‘5 Ps’: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Sustainability enhances the balance of these dimensions, enhancing positive impacts and steadily reducing negative ones. The SDGs are relevant to museums and museum networks, as museums are closely associated with human and environmental rights (notably the rights to cultural participation and lifelong education).

I suggest that museums can support the SDGs, and use them as a template for their activity to support a better future, by working on the following six-step plan and seven key activities¹.

Firstly, understand the SDGs to be an integrated set of 17 goals and 169 targets. They can’t be cherry-picked: you have to consider the whole agenda, to work to support the considerations of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. You should also check out the full title of each goal, rather than the short name that appears on the better known icons.

Secondly, decide what position or positions you are going to take with the SDG agenda, whether as a leader, follower, resource provider, partner or whatever else.

¹ NEMO webinar, *Using the Sustainable Development Goals in Museums*, available at <https://bit.ly/McGhieWebinar>

Thirdly, consider how you and your work currently support (and impede) each of the 17 goals, and identify which goals connect most with your work. This will vary for different roles and for different kinds of museums.

For example, an educator will have a particularly strong link to Goal 4 (Quality education), and if someone works in an aquarium they will have a clear link to Goal 14 (Life in water).

Fourthly, I suggest the following seven key activities as a very impactful way for museums to contribute to the SDGs. The list applies to individuals, institutions, networks and the entire sector. The list identifies where museums can make a difference, and is mapped against the SDGs and targets. It is not intended to be used as a list for museums to justify how they presently make a difference, but as a roadmap to enhancing their contributions to the SDGs. As with the SDGs themselves, the seven activities should be considered alongside one another, and developed in harmony (and not in opposition, or at the expense of other activities):

- 01** Protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, both within museums and more generally.
- 02** Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs
- 03** Enable cultural participation for all
- 04** Support sustainable tourism
- 05** Enable research in support of the SDGs
- 06** Direct internal leadership, management and operations towards the SDGs
- 07** Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs.

Fifthly, develop an action plan to enhance positive contributions to the SDGs and reduce negative impacts, working towards your vision and goals. Build this into your planning, monitoring, reporting and communications.

Sixthly, review and renew your action plan regularly and repeat this six-step process. Enjoy it and celebrate

it. Don't wait; start now if you haven't already started. The future needs you.

The SDGs need museums, and museum workers, as they play a crucial part in protecting and safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, and supporting a wide range of educational, cultural and research activities. On the other hand, museums need the SDGs: they will help them have a clear purpose in society, build better and stronger partnerships, and ultimately make a bigger and better difference for the world.

NEMO's members represent more than 30,000 museums in 43 countries. Imagine the difference they – we – could make if we each and all took up the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda as our collective roadmap to a better future. That is also surely the way that museums will have the most secure future, and when 2030 comes, we will be able to say that we did what we could with the opportunities and resources available to us.

This article is based on a freely available guide, *Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals: a how-to guide for museums, galleries, the cultural sector and their partners*, available at bit.ly/2ZdSFUR.

Museums and ... Sustainable cities and communities

Introduction: Sustainable cities, their cultural dimension and the role of museums

Jordi Baltà Portolés

Advisor,

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Committee on Culture

The SDGs recognise the importance of cities and local settlements in Goal 11, which addresses the increasing urbanisation of the world and the need to make cities and towns more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It is also in Target 11.4, where possibly the most substantive and explicit reference to cultural aspects in the SDGs is made, by establishing a commitment to strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage.

But beyond SDG 11, we refer to the ‘localisation’ of the SDGs to stress that many of the SDGs need to be implemented at the local level. It is

estimated that over 65% of the SDG targets are closely related to the delivery of basic services by local and regional governments – the figure is even higher in more decentralised countries. Therefore, in order to make the SDGs successful, it is necessary to strengthen the competences and resources of local and regional governments and establish multi-level strategies and mechanisms that recognise the specific role of local and regional authorities. And because the SDGs are universal, they also apply to all stakeholders, including local cultural actors such as museums.

In addition to the specific references to cultural aspects made in a few targets and goals, we believe that cultural aspects can contribute to the achievement of all the SDGs. The UCLG Committee on Culture fosters the integration of cultural aspects in all approaches to sustainable development, placing emphasis on cultural rights as a basis for local cultural policies. Last year UCLG published *Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action*², which explains why culture matters in each of the 17 SDGs, providing examples and guidance for making this effective locally. We could argue that there are three main ways to understand this connection:

01
Because the SDGs are universal, they need to be adapted to national and local specificities, translating the global language into specific challenges, stories and activities. In this context, museums can play a role by fostering participatory activities that enhance ownership of relevant policies and programmes (SDG 16), as well as by operating as knowledge centres, collecting and disseminating information on local histories and needs.

02
In many areas of the SDGs, cultural knowledge and resources can operate as enablers to achieve the global goals. These are areas where, although cultural aspects are not explicitly formulated, they could provide resources and activities that contribute to making progress, for example by organising community events that foster wellbeing, creating employment, attracting tourism, or collecting and disseminating knowledge around natural resources and their sustainable use. (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, etc.)

03
Cultural practices convey forms of expression, creativity and identity-building that relate to the core of human dignity, embodying a people-centred sustainable development with culture in a substantive part. In this respect, museums and other cultural institutions should be seen as basic services (in line with a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to poverty and exclusion – see SDG 1). Museums can also contribute to inclusive education and learning (SDG 4), guarantee equal access and participation for women and girls and make sure their stories and heritage are made visible (SDG 5), and foster inclusion (SDG 10), among others.

The SDGs are our current framework, but this is not the agenda we would have wanted. We believe the next decade, the ‘implementation decade’, should serve both to demonstrate that culture matters for the achievement of the SDGs, and to call for better, more comprehensive future agendas. In particular, we see the following as key measures:

- Raise awareness of how museums contribute to SDGs through case studies, publications, events, etc.
- Strengthen cross-sector partnerships and networks in our cities and towns, reinforcing the place of culture in sustainable development.
- Ensure cultural actors take part in sustainable development planning and monitoring exercises.
- Advocate for future agendas that give culture a more visible place –for example, via the global #culture2030goal campaign.

In this chapter, Tiina Merisalo and Matthew and Jessica Turtle highlight the role of museums in contributing to sustainable and inclusive cities and communities in their contributions.

² Available here: http://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culturesdgs_web_en.pdf

Sustainable cities and communities – Museums as places for equity and wellbeing

Tiina Merisalo

Director, Helsinki City Museum

Museums all over the globe seem to have only begun waking up to climate change in the last few years, as has the majority of humankind. Conferences and seminars around these issues have been many, especially this year, when voices have been louder and the feeling of emergency stronger.

What can we do? How should we act to make change happen, to have an impact in building a better world for all?

Museums are working in line with many of the SDGs. They have collective impact, for example, by contributing to education, raising awareness through their exhibitions, events or opening up their collections, organising

opportunities to participate or volunteer – sometimes they just don't even recognise it themselves. We have a shared need to recognise what we can do and do better.

Helsinki has ambitious goals

Helsinki City Museum is owned by the City of Helsinki and is closely connected with the community values, goals and actions that the growing city has decided to adopt. As we know, cities are playing an increasingly important role around the world as vanguards of sustainable development.

Helsinki has an ambitious vision to become the most functional city in the world. The city strategy states: “Functionality is based on equality, non-discrimination, strong social cohesion and open, inclusive ways of operating. Everyone feels safe in Helsinki. A functional city is based on trust. Safety and a sense of mutual trust and togetherness are a competitive edge for the city. The city is for everyone. The city is built together.”

Helsinki aims to become carbon neutral by the year 2035. Action is being taken every day in all parts of the city to meet this goal – for instance, by reducing traffic emissions and developing public transport – but until now, there has been less discussion of a socially and culturally sustainable city and the effect this can have on wellbeing.

But it is precisely here that museums, libraries and cultural services have their place. As open, easily accessible, mostly free spaces that foster information, knowledge, experiences, arts, creativity and perspective from the past through to the present towards the future, they can create opportunities to build a more sustainable society, more resilient cities, and to promote dialogue, equality, equity and wellbeing. One great example of this is Helsinki's new central library, Oodi, which is

created in participation with citizens and offers a free, democratic space and access not only to books and the world of literature and learning, but also to sewing machines, 3D printers, music studios, meeting rooms, etc. Since opening in December 2018, it has already attracted three million visitors. Libraries in Finland have always been a trusted, valued and heavily used public service. The city museum, with free spaces and services for different audiences, is fostering the same democratic values mentioned above.

How culture and museums can have an impact on sustainable development in cities

Diminishing our own carbon footprint is of course one of the first measures on our path towards a more sustainable museum. This calls for staff education and many small changes in our daily life. Museums can also take actions that are more connected to their contents and role as a knowledge and memory organisation. They can have an impact on sustainable development by, for example:

- developing open, accessible places, spaces and services that encourage dialogue and encounters

- strengthening democratic rights to cultural heritage, knowledge and information and ensuring their accessibility
- producing contents which promote diversity, multiple voices
- sharing opportunities to participate for all
- supporting active citizenship
- collaborating with diverse actors and communities in the cultural ecosystem.

The great transformation of Helsinki City Museum from 2013-16 offered us an opportunity to reassess and rethink our mission, vision, services, roles and ways of doing our work and to create a completely new museum.

During the renewal process, four central roles in which we are acting were recognised. Firstly the museum is and has traditionally been the promoter of Helsinki knowledge and understanding through its collections, exhibitions and events, publications and education. The museum also aspires to be a Helsinki experience. The third role, museum as a social hub and place for encounters, has become more essential over the last five years. The fourth role, museum as a platform

and enabler, is a growing position strongly connected with an understanding that the museum does not need to work alone, and that we can make it possible for people or different communities to use the museum and cultural heritage for their own aspirations and initiatives. This means sharing and opening up our data and knowledge resources for free, and making our spaces an easily accessible and open resource for all. The discussion of changing roles is ongoing and needs to be practiced and challenged every day. In this era of emergency, should we take even more an activist role in building up resilience in our community, as fosterers of democracy and keepers of civil society or as fighters for sustainability?

We have embedded a participatory approach in our planning and projects. And for us, participation is a way to involve and engage Helsinkians. It enhances the feeling of belonging and commitment to work for a better city. It adds empowerment to the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Creating the museum as a place for meaningful life and encounters does not happen overnight. It takes time to create trust and build up the brand and reputation of an inviting and inclusive museum.

The 4th floor as test lab for contents

The 4th floor space in our flagship museum is our own test lab, where we try to deliver thought- and emotion-provoking contents and apply methods of participation. A somewhat hidden agenda is that this space also is used to build up empathy skills. Various exhibition projects like *Helsexinki* or *Fear* have been experiments into this.

The next two projects in 2019-20 are following the sustainable museum agenda: *Helsinki hobo* and *Urban cultivation/urban food*.

Helsinki hobo presents Johan Knut Harju (1910–1976) who was a self-taught writer and folklore collector, but also a homeless alcoholic whose life's work was to record life on the streets of Helsinki. His notebooks will be opened to the public for the first time in an exhibition. Key concepts and questions to be discussed through the exhibition are homelessness, life on the streets, survival on the edge of society, diversity, destigmatising and multiple identities. We are enhancing diversity by giving voice to people not often heard or seen in museums, presenting city history from a new perspective and presenting unseen materials, a collection of 20,000 pages from Harju's notebooks. At the core of this project

is collaboration with a team of experts outside the museum and with street guides from the Hima & Strada project, a group of experienced experts on homelessness.

What is the role of a 21st century museum?

Matthew and Jessica Turtle
Co-founders, Museum of Homelessness

Museums and galleries have always reflected and interpreted social, political and economic changes. An increasingly complex and globalised world is causing museum practitioners to reconsider the relevance and purpose of museums and how they best reflect and serve the communities they are a part of.

In 2015 the Museum of Homelessness (MoH) was established and in its four-year journey, MoH has developed into a community-driven social justice museum that tackles homelessness and housing inequality by amplifying the voices of its community through research, events,

workshops, campaigns and exhibitions, with support from a broad network of arts, academic, policy and medical professionals. As well as this, we provide direct support – bursaries, mentoring, training and practical support – to our community members. Together we collect and share the art, history and culture of homelessness and housing inequality to change society for the better. Together we find hope in deeply divided and difficult times.

We want to introduce two examples of our work with partners and allies that have played a role in direct campaigning and led to changes at local

and national level. The backdrop for this work has been a dramatic rise in different forms of exclusion and inequality in the UK in the last nine years. Official figures show the number of people sleeping on the streets has risen by 165% in nine years whilst the percentage of people applying to be housed across the UK has risen by 44%. Just recently, the UK's Office for National Statistics recorded the highest figures for people who have died whilst homeless ever. These changes exist as part of broader cuts by the UK government on funding for social care, health services and benefits. Meanwhile the era-defining 'Brexit' vote has sharply polarised different communities, leading to bitter divisions, rising hate crime, economic uncertainty and political instability throughout the UK.

Our first example took place in March 2018 during the 'Beast from the East' spell of intense cold weather in the UK. During this month, a coalition of street outreach groups and volunteers, led by Streets Kitchen, legally squatted in Sofia House, a prominent commercial building on Great Portland Street in central London. Taking matters into their own hands, the action got nearly 200 of London's most marginalised people off the streets within days, a development that surprised local

authorities and large service providers in London because these were people they had been unable to reach. MoH was part of this coalition and present in the space, contributing volunteer shifts and playing a leading role in a public protest outside Downing Street that sought to draw attention to the tragedy of people who die whilst homeless. At this protest, we used photocopies of items from our archive – newspaper clippings and posters – that show past injustices, as part of our first placard exhibition. Sofia House existed for just a few weeks before the groups were peacefully evicted but its impact was vast. It brought renewed attention to the work of grassroots groups and their innate ability to connect with people who would otherwise be suspicious of the larger mainstream services. It also brought greater collaboration between these groups and local government. The following year, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, committed £600,000 for better winter provision for homelessness in the city. He has also made frequent calls for large empty commercial properties to be made available by businesses.

Another example is our more recent campaigning work around the Dying Homeless Project, a UK-wide campaign originally created by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism in response

to the growing crisis of people dying homeless in the UK. The bureau did this when they realised that no one authority recorded the names or stories of people who die homeless. The bureau ran the project between October 2017 and March 2019 and we have inherited it. The project aims to honour and remember people through an online memorial whilst seeking to bring about change for the better. In the time we have been holding the project, we have been asked to give evidence to members of parliament, and the National Records Office of Scotland has made a commitment to record statistics around homeless deaths for the very first time. This follows on from the Office for National Statistics for England and Wales, which agreed last year to do the same off the back of the work of the bureau.

These examples illustrate how a museum, no matter what size it is, can play a role in fostering democratic participation and action. They involve collaborating with groups and people who work far outside the museum field, yet demonstrate how important and powerful a museum can be in representing communities and promoting a just world. These are important things to hold onto as we enter a new and uncertain decade.

Museums and ... Peace, justice, strong institutions

Introduction: How can and should museums play a role in an increasingly unbalanced, politically challenged age?

Maria Vlachou

Executive Director, Acesso Cultura

The recent – and ongoing - discussion regarding the proposal for a new museum definition has fully exposed the rift within the museum world. And that, in principle, is a good thing. It will oblige us to look at what we are doing and how and why we are doing it, considering the changes taking place in our societies and, inevitably, within the field.

François Mairesse, who resigned from the International Council of Museums (ICOM) committee tasked with rewriting the definition, called it “a statement of fashionable values, much too complicated and partly aberrant”. Luís Raposo, President

of ICOM Europe, reporting on the Kyoto General Assembly in a Portuguese newspaper, stated that it is a confrontation “between a purely instrumental and aspirational vision of museums, which essentially diminishes them by assimilating them to any other institution or cultural project animated by the motivations and principles of social democracy, and another, which, although not rejecting such principles, seeks to concentrate on what distinguishes museums, makes them unique and, therefore, magnifies them in their irreducible originality”. Raposo considers that the first perspective is best suited to what he calls

“activists of all just causes”; the second, to museum professionals.

Should we consider peace and justice – just to state two words that form part of this chapter’s title – “fashionable values”? And should people, colleagues of ours, who have been actively defending these and other values through their work no matter what the museum definition is, not be acknowledged as the museum professionals that they are, but rather as “activists of all causes”?

Although I was myself very critical of the proposal for a new museum definition, my criticism was mainly to do with the form, not the content. Actually, for a long time I – just as many other museum professionals around the world – have embraced many of the principles and values stated in the proposal, because this is precisely the way we interpret the current museum definition, namely where it refers to an “institution in the service of society and its development... for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”.

Another issue that has clearly emerged in this discussion – and that I personally tend to focus on a lot – is whether we are just full of words. In their mission statements (when they exist) and other texts and presentations, the majority of museums and cultural organisations say that they exist to defend and promote freedom of

expression, dialogue, critical thinking and social cohesion. Is this what we actually do, though, in practice? Or rather, despite what the museum definition might state, are we here to collect, research and simply exhibit objects? Making no effort whatsoever to actually use these objects as a practical tool, to make them meaningful and relevant for people of different backgrounds? Do museums really wish to connect to their societies and do they take a stand in practice, publicly, when certain values are being ignored and attacked? And if they do, or say that they do, are people aware of that? Do people have this perception of museums?

To give just a couple of examples, the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile has been actively involved in the huge demonstrations currently taking place in the country, and it has been very vocal. In Lebanon, a number of leading cultural organisations collectively committed to Open Strike and made provisions in order to allow their staff and members to join the protests. “Arts and culture are integral part of every society,” they stated, and this is what I mean when I question whether museums really wish to connect to their societies: how vocal are they, and not just within their walls, about

what is going on around them? Was there any reaction, for instance, from European cultural organisations, and the many European migration museums, in particular, regarding the recent vote in the European Parliament against improving the search and rescue of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean? What happened to the European values we are so proud of? To the international conventions we have signed? How can we keep silent when those who are supposed to defend them – because this is what the EU was built upon – blatantly disregard them?

In this chapter, Keiu Telve of the Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom in Estonia and Višnja Kisić of the University of Belgrade share their thoughts on the role museums may be playing in normalising the systemic violence around them; and how they may be able to help raise awareness regarding a number of issues to activate people’s sense of citizenship.

Inspiring people to protect their freedom – The role of museums in building inclusive societies

Keiu Telve

Executive Director, Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom

The Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom recounts the story of the Estonian people from occupation to independence and inspires people to stand up for their freedom. We educate, engage, and encourage Estonian people and visitors to reflect on recent history, feel the fragile nature of freedom and stand up for liberty and justice.

The museum was opened in 2003 by Olga Kistler-Ritso, a foreign Estonian who had to flee the country in 1945 when the Soviet Union occupied Estonia. When the country restored its independence almost a half century later, Olga wanted to make a gift to

Estonia to educate people to reflect about its recent history. She decided to establish a museum that remembers the past and helps to protect freedom today. Our museum sees the freedom and lack of freedom during the occupations as two sides of the same coin. Our exhibitions have been developed to foster understanding about Estonia's complex recent history. Along with the historical background, we are opening up people's memories and their life stories, and showing how there were no easy choices under the inhuman regimes of the Nazi and Soviet occupations. We are not looking for victims or someone to blame – rather we try to

create and support understanding of how people and societies survived crimes against humanity and what we can do to prevent history repeating itself.

Two of our four key values are 'inclusive discussion' and 'vibrant opinions'. We initiate discussion to bring people together. We are open to different perspectives and create opportunities for people to exchange their opinions and encourage them to carry on the ideals of liberty. At the same time, we stand for freedom of expression, opinion, religion, mobility, enterprise, and all other forms of freedom. We remember how these freedoms have been repressed in the past and ensure that they are rebuilt and reimagined in the present.

The most important tool for us to carry out our mission is our permanent exhibition, *Freedom without Borders*, which opened in 2018. It consists of five topics: crimes against humanity; Estonians in the free world; life in Soviet Estonia; the restoration of independence; and freedom. We acknowledge that the topic of freedom is not unique to Estonians. This story does not belong to us and, on a wider scale, it is a story of humanity and inhumanity all around the world and how one country managed to survive this and build an independent state in the 1990s. It is also about

how we must, on a daily basis, continuously and consciously nurture freedom in a free society. It is important that we are honest about history and ask uncomfortable questions about collaboration and compromise. When we talk about Soviet times, we encourage museum guests to take the position of people living in that era and to see how there were no easy answers. For instance, should a young girl from a religious family join the Communist youth league, Komsomol, and get access to education and career opportunities, even though she has to betray her beliefs and family? The visitors read these life stories with great interest and reflect on what they would do in a similar position. Their empathy, ability to reflect and compassion grows towards the people who lived through this era. They understand better how privileged we are nowadays to be living in a free society.

Through temporary exhibitions and museum programmes, we are able to mediate between different groups in Estonian society. We ask questions about the events of the 1990s, using storytelling methods that allow people to speak about what they felt and believed in when Estonia restored its independence. Vladimir is one of the people who tells his story. He was living and working in Narva, and like many

other people from Russian-speaking communities, he believed that the Estonian state would protect the interests of minorities. Unfortunately, Estonian citizenship was only given to those who could prove their Estonian origins. Even today there are 80,000 people with an ‘alien’s passport’, which is issued to a person with undefined citizenship. We are also supporting integration and collaboration between Estonian- and Russian-speaking youth. One integration project is *Ten Decades of the History of Estonia*. It brought together Estonian- and Russian-speaking youngsters for a four-day-long programme. They had the opportunity to create an exhibition showing different perspectives on the history of Estonia and how, in many cases, groups remember and interpret history differently.

Our experiences show that bringing people together, creating a safe space for ideas and encouraging conversation can change stereotypes and support the formation of inclusive societies. These are only a couple of examples that show how using historical perspectives can help us reflect on today’s societies. We see that daily work in our museum supports democracy and the growth of civil society.

Museums for radical interconnectedness

Višnja Kisić

Researcher, University of Belgrade

The invitation to talk at NEMO’s conference in 2019 about museums and the SDG of *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* came about because of my research and work on heritage, politics and conflicts, including heritage-led peacebuilding in south-east Europe and the post-Yugoslav region. However, talking about peace and justice in contrast to violent armed conflicts and wars can easily mask the depth and breadth of violence and injustices of the world we live in – parking it in a particular place, community and time. This poem takes a different stance; it starts from an argument that in order to tackle the

injustice and violence implicit in museums, we need to work to unearth, reflect on, reconnect with, feel and address the cycles of violence that we are all implicated in and share in today’s neoliberal, global capitalist world. This violence stems from deeply rooted hierarchies of power and worth through which we dissect, define, collect, exhibit and enact the world we live in – hierarchies relying on anthropocentrism, patriarchy, colonialism, eurocentrism and global capitalism. These hierarchies and the practices that enact them are not just well documented, but are also perpetuated by museums. This poem

is thus a call for museums to go beyond the SDGs and other policy-defined frameworks in building a peaceful and fair world without violence. For museums that build

such a world, we need honesty, critical thinking on historic, structural, ecological, symbolic and emotional violence, deep affection, dedication and radical interconnectedness.

When 39 dead Vietnamese bodies are found frozen in a lorry in Essex, a British family whose homes are kept tidy by poorly paid immigrant labour is implicated in violence.

When an Afro-Colombian family loses its son, because he refuses to be silent on cocaine trafficking as a guard at a small airport in Colombian Pacific in Nuqui, European and US elites, who can pay \$80,000 for something, that is worth only \$2,000 when it leaves Colombia, are implicated in violence.

When landscapes of dead fish and birds, stomachs packed with plastics, populate beaches, our warm take-away coffee moments, children's toys, and fresh bottled waters are implicated in death and violence.

When those 40% of undocumented Children born in Sub-Saharan Africa End up in deadly mines For the precious metals in our phones, Phone users are implicated in violence.

When 36% of the world lives below the poverty line, And 26 richest persons own the same as 50% of the poorest humans Governments of "developed" countries Are implicated in that violence.

When a raped teenage girl in San Salvador Ends up in jail, For abortion is illegalised based on Catholic faith Catholic missionaries are implicated in that violence.

When humans with no homes, Freeze, starve and die on the streets of London, all those who own second and third apartments are implicated in the violence.

When humans drown in Mediterranean waters escaping violence, hunger and death, not only EU governments, police and military, but EU creative forces and votes are implicated in that violence.

When rivers, forests and all that is living is poisoned by mercury from gold extraction, banks full of gold, golden weddings and adorations are implicated in the violence.

When products of lesser quality are made for Eastern Europeans, Western Europeans are implicated in that violence.

By being proper,
ignorant consumers
of citizenship in the “peaceful, democratic, developed world”,
We are mass killers.

In our privilege
We are implicated in the violence of the web of life.

But none of us is guilty
or could be charged of atrocities.

In a world ordered by the
integrated global capitalism,
grown on all past and current forms of patriarchy,
coloniality,
racism,
speciesism,
rationalism,
Enlightenment
and civilising rituals,
We are implicated in everyday, eco-systemic violence
That connects us to oppression
through our privilege and ignorance.

Violence
in our hierarchies of value,
our economies of worth,
our landscapes of care,
practiced on ourselves
and all those deemed outside.
All the disposables.

Disposable bodies,
Objects, landfills,
Dreams.
Disposable futures.

Homicide
Pesticide
Genocide
Ecocide.

For not to see that,
we have created networks of disciplines,
borders,
separations,
domains,
properties,
passports,
and concepts
So that we can live blind of
Radical interconnectedness.

In our separated disciplines,
In our “universal”, national and thematic museums,
In our ordered collections,
In our “common European heritage”,
Epistemic, eco-systemic, structural, and symbolic webs of violence
Get neutralised, disconnected and ignored.

In our museums,
violence is always somewhere out there.
In the blood of our ancestors.
In arms of our neighbours,
In times and places other than ours.
In sites of atrocities, in slavery museums,
In World Wars, in other past wars, occupations and armed conflicts,
in Middle East, Northern Ireland and the Balkans.

To address violence beyond armed conflicts,
Guilt is not an option.
For there is no innocent existence.
Just networks of care
and networks of separation that shape our worlds.
Sorrow, grief and unease are a good place to begin
Choosing to see,
Choosing to ask and to feel
emotionally, bodily and mentally
politics of existence
and presences of all those who are present in their absence.

This act is not about personal guilt and personal choice
But about professional ethics and institutional responsibility.
It is not about the food in a museum cafeteria or its energy consumption,
But about epistemic injustice on which its collections, buildings and practices
are made.
It is not about the power to change the world,
But about daring to contribute to other worlds possible.
Worlds of anti-violence, interconnectedness and care.

Daring to try and experiment.
No best practice and ready-made recipes.
But honest attempts.
Mining the Museum
The Fall of the First European Wall
Museum of Homelessness
Museum of Abortion and Contraception
Museo Casa Memoria
Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos
History that does not Exist.

Dismantling oppression,
Daring to care
Daring to learn
Daring to ask
Daring to connect.
Daring to choose radical interconnectedness,
Life, solidarity and openness,
In place of ignorance, tolerance, violence.

Choosing to be more
Than SDGs, than strategies and policies,
For more just, peaceful, vibrant worlds.

European museum projects that dare to take a stand

Introduction

Rebecca Thonander
Communications Officer,
NEMO

The main goal of NEMO's European Museum Conference was to inspire each other and the museum community to take action and do our part for a better future. To question what is happening in the world and in the local community can be difficult, but it is an important part of creating a better tomorrow. Therefore, NEMO invited museums to submit their brave projects to the European Project Slam of Courageous Museum Projects. Four museums were selected to present their projects at the conference: the National Liberation Museum Maribor (Slovenia), the Regional Museum of Skåne (Sweden), Hungarian Open Air Museum – Museum Education and Methodology Centre (Hungary) and the Museum of West Bohemia in Pilsen (Czech Republic).

The projects that were selected to be presented at the conference all inspired us with their courageousness. Just as with the SDGs, it is important to put commitment into action if you want to change even just a little bit in the world.

It takes a lot of courage for a museum to take a stand, both on an organisational as well as on a personal level. You might find a project to be important, but you also have to convince your colleagues to participate in order to implement it. You are possibly putting the reputation of your museum at risk and you can never know how the local community and audience, or funders, will react. There's also the risk that the project will not work out at all and you have to be ready for critique. But when you succeed you can really pat yourself on the back and feel accomplished for making a change and for inspiring people.

In the 2019 edition of the European Project Slam, all four museums made the most of their role as trusted institutions and active agents of change. All projects have in their own way taken a stand by creating awareness on a difficult topic that is bound to not please everyone or create unease – staff, visitors, the general community, and politicians. Two projects empowered people in difficult situations. The other two projects made parallels to the past by highlighting problematic developments in the present.

A museum with attitude

Aleksandra Berberih-Slana
Director, the National Liberation Museum, Slovenia

The National Liberation Museum is situated in Slovenia, a country squeezed between Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Italy. Slovenia has everything – the Alps, the sea, endless vineyards and bears – and we are sceptical about sharing them with anybody. It is a small country, independent since 1991.

The museum's hometown is Maribor, a city in northeastern Slovenia. A small but a very beautiful city, it was a European Capital of Culture in 2012. We were all proud of that. Unfortunately, it was also the only European Capital of Culture that



Third Maribor Uprising, 2012

ended with a special 'police and tear gas entertainment programme' during the so-called Maribor Uprising. People of Maribor know what they want and if they don't like someone or something, they show it. Our then-mayor had to resign and the prime minister (with his government) followed him shortly.

Maribor is a nice city, with kind people and the oldest vine in the world. But it has its darker side. As if people forgot what happened to us during WWI and WWII, when many of our ancestors had to leave their homes and lost everything. Hundreds of people were resettled or sent to concentration camps during the second world war. War and its consequences are something we are familiar with.

Nevertheless, in 2015, when the media was full of terrifying and sad images of migrants and refugees, panic and fear started to spread around the country. Ignorance from not knowing what was going on, or who the people crossing our country were and why they were there, was followed by fear. Organisations and individuals rushed to help, but there were also those who were not friendly and understanding. A feeling of discomfort was in the air.

Our museum's pride is our educational department. We cooperate with schools on a daily basis. Principals and teachers contacted us, concerned about the rise in fear, hatred and

prejudice, not only among kids but teachers as well. It was time for action.

We came up with different ideas and all our colleagues were very supportive. Since we always talk about human rights and use our collections as proof of what happens when someone takes these rights from people, we did it again. We used our objects, documents, photos, stories and our knowledge to make a change for a better future and to put a mirror in front of us, the whole community. We wanted all of us to see our reflections, to realise who we are, what we think and do, and how our actions influence the world around us.

Our first initiative was *Museum for Peace*, an interactive project that has reached more than 3,500 children so far. The European Commission in Slovenia chose it as project of the year and financed it in the year 2018. The whole idea of this initiative is to raise children who think objectively, talk reasonably and act responsibly. The pupils learn to overcome prejudices and get to know non-violent possible solutions for conflicts, which are placed in contrast to violent problem-solving in history.

Another project was called *Fences in our Heads*. All prejudice and stereotypes come from within us, as does fear and hatred. We have invited refugees and migrants from different

periods, countries and with different stories. People could meet them, get to know them, talk to them.

We invited Faila Pašič Bišič, who was born into a Muslim migrant family in Slovenia. Faila's ceaseless work with migrants and refugees has resulted in her receiving a lot of public recognition, and she has received many different accolades. She was awarded the Face of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, as well as the Dobrotnica Humanist of the Year Award – both in 2007 – and many others. Other guests were Samira Kentrič, an author and artist, and Maisa Al Hafes, a Syrian refugee.

We are a museum after all, so we also prepared some exhibitions. Since the media showed those terrifying pictures of crowds crossing our country en masse, we opened a photo exhibition, *Refugees, People*, to talk about the personal tragedies of human beings.

But we wanted to do more. Most of all, we wanted us to stop being hypocritical. Our city is a city of migrants and refugees and it has been throughout its history. At the moment, the inhabitants of our city are people born in 107 different countries. We all know someone who is a refugee or a migrant. We are their friends and family members. We go out with them,

buy their food, eat at their restaurants, meet them everywhere. So do we believe migrants and refugees are a threat to our way of living? Do we acknowledge them as an equal part of our society? We expressed our ideas and beliefs in the *Maribor's Mosaic* exhibiton.

Our museum has changed a lot. We have become a relevant partner to organisations and individuals that work with migrants and refugees. We have opened our museum to them. Since October 2019, we have had a migrant employee at our museum.

Some of us have been receiving threats because of what we do, but we never forget that “evil thrives when the good do nothing”. After all we are resilient. We live in a city that still feels the consequences of the second world war; where just months ago, thousands of people were evacuated because two bombs were found. Can we then turn away when others need help?



Maribor's Mosaic Exhibition, 2017

Taking a stand against violence

Anna Hansen
Director, Regional Museum of Skåne, Sweden

In spring 2019, the Regional Museum of Skåne decided to work with violence as a theme. In particular, we focused on domestic violence and hate crime – violent crime committed because of someone's faith, skin colour, sexual orientation or ethnicity. These crimes are often not talked about and sometimes not even reported. Often the victim is in a vulnerable position and doesn't trust society. It was important to the museum to work with this theme, in order to raise awareness of these crimes and acknowledge they exist and are serious, and that we all need to take action and support the victims. By talking about these crimes, we hoped to empower victims to report hate crime and make people living in abusive relationships aware of their options.

The Police Museum in Stockholm had produced an exhibition about hate crime that we hosted at our museum. It was opened by a trans woman who gave a speech about the experiences she'd had. In connection with this exhibition, we also arranged

several activities and lectures. We started by having seminars where a special group within the police focusing on hate crime led discussions for people working in the municipality, such as firefighters, police officers and people working in social care. People came from all over the region and two seminars were fully booked. These were important seminars to make people who encounter these crimes in their professional life more aware of the judicial system and how hate crime is really defined.

On International Women's Day in March we put on a lecture by solicitor Ulrika Rogland. She has worked as a judge and prosecutor and has vast experience of crimes against children, domestic violence and sexual violence. She is very concerned about victims' safety and often takes part in debates to try to influence legislation and increase knowledge. Her lecture was completely full and we even had to turn people away because there were not enough seats. This showed us that there is huge interest in the topic, and a need for people to increase their knowledge and get together to discuss these matters in a safe environment.

By chance there was also huge interest in domestic violence in the media at that time. In March 2019, a documentary about the Swedish



A number of self-defence courses were arranged at the museum in order to empower people, in particular those in vulnerable positions

singer Josefin Nilsson, who died a few years earlier, was broadcast on TV. The documentary had a powerful impact on people and was much discussed across Sweden and in the media. The reason for this was the story it told about how she had lived with a man who had abused her for several years. This debate revealed an eminent need in society to get together to show that this was intolerable behaviour and to share sadness. At the museum we worked quickly, and about a week after the debate started, we held a demonstration against domestic violence. It was held at lunchtime to enable people to participate, while still ensuring that it was easy for us to arrange. We did this together with the municipality and different women's aid organisations, as well as the Swedish church. This cooperation was essential for spreading the word

about what was going on, as well as for finding the right format and people to do it. It was important to us to give people the tools to handle situations like this, to let them know where to turn.

Another event in our programme was self-defence training. We ran two courses, one aimed at younger people and one aimed at adults. The idea was that if you are in danger of becoming a victim of any kind of violence you should be able to defend yourself.

In the end, it was quite a successful programme of activities combined with an exhibition. But we could not have done this without collaboration. Some organisations reached out to us and wanted to cooperate. They came up with ideas and did a great job when it came to spreading the word about the activities. They did not know from the start that we had a specific theme in mind, but some ideas simply connected with our theme, which made the programme richer. In other cases, we reached out to them. In all our activity programmes for any exhibition, we try to collaborate with different partners. This means that over time we build up a network of connections, which makes it much easier when you need specific partners. So together with some other organisations, we took a clear stand

against violence, participated in an important discussion in society and, hopefully, enabled the people who took part to get better informed.

The Accessible Museum programme

Magdolna Nagy

Director of the Museum Education and Methodology Centre, Hungarian Open Air Museum, Hungary

Our vision was to develop a system that can help museum professionals to find a way to collaborate with public education to enhance the competencies and skills of underprivileged children.

The *Accessible Museum* programme is a complex methodology development. In the first phase, we conducted quantitative and qualitative research and reviewed similar programmes in different European countries. In 2017, we organised an international conference, *Museums as institutions of social empowerment*, in order to explore best practices among foreign museums and build personal contacts with them.

The year-long development procedure included regular meetings of museum professionals, as well as integrating the expertise of sociologists, non-governmental organisations and social workers. In parallel, five museums developed (in collaboration with universities and teachers) model programmes for enhancing the competencies of different groups of underprivileged children. The methodology development culminated in the publication of a book, *Chance with Museums*, which provides practical assistance to museum educators working with groups living with social disadvantages, like children of Roma heritage, and those living with mental or physical impairment, such as comprehension obstacles, physical disabilities, blindness and visual impairment. The book is also used as a handout for the training course, *Chance with Museums*.

The *CultureBonus* programme was launched in November 2018 in the eighth and 11th poorest regions of the EU, with the participation of 35 museums and 6,000 students from 40 schools. The respective children were transported to the museum education programmes or, in some cases, the education session would take place in the classroom in the form of a 'museum-in-a-suitcase'.

The fee of the sessions and the cost of transport were covered by the programme. At the beginning of the project, we organised eight kick-off meetings in centrally located museums of targeted regions, where the teachers could meet the 35 museums and build personal contacts with their staff.



Magdolna Nagy speaking about the CultureBonus programme at NEMO's conference

Geographical obstacles are a constant issue, as travel costs represent an unsolvable problem for many schools when they are not financially supported by a project. That is why we encouraged teachers to engage and cooperate with local museums, but nevertheless, many of them chose the furthest possible destinations: those children travelled a minimum six or seven hours a day for a two-hour long museum programme.

Almost 90% of the teachers were first-time visitors of the museum. Some of them hadn't even heard about

The Generation of Liberty

**Denisa Brejchova and
Marketa Formanova**

*Museum educators, West Bohemian
Museum Pilsen, Czech Republic*

I would like to start this contribution with a short historical summary: after the Second World War, the communist regime, under the leadership of the Soviet Union, took power all over Eastern Europe and remained in most countries for 40 years. Czechoslovakia was one of the countries that experienced a long period of communist totalitarianism. Five basic features of this regime were:

- The official ideology of Marxism-Leninism that everyone had to accept. People were systematically influenced through school education, official culture and many propaganda campaigns.
- Only one political party with one leader.
- Monopoly of army, which resulted in the massive militarisation of society. Each man at the age of 18 had to join the army for two years. This so-called homeland service

was accompanied by poor living conditions and bullying of soldiers.

- Information monopoly and censorship of media, personal and official mail correspondence, books or films.
- Physical and psychological control of society through the state police. The number of victims is estimated at two million people (let me remind you that the total population of Czechoslovakia was around 12 million inhabitants). Everyone who disagreed with the leading role of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia was persecuted, as were the representatives of subcultures. Tens of thousands of people went into exile.

Another consequence was the worsening economic situation. Czechoslovakia, which was the ninth richest country in the world after the First World War, became a devastated state.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, all communist regimes in Europe gradually collapsed. A turning point in Czechoslovakia was the brutal suppression of the student demonstration on 17th November 1989 in Prague. It resulted in the so-called Velvet Revolution and the Communist Party

finally gave up its leading role. Right after these events, the first democratic president of the Czechoslovak Republic was elected: Václav Havel – playwright, writer and tireless fighter against the communist regime.

And what is the situation in our country 30 years after the Velvet Revolution? We have never experienced such a long period of peace and time of prosperity. But... we now have a president who agrees with contemporary totalitarian leaders. Our state is led by a prime minister who is suspected of several crimes and who controls all important businesses and media in our republic. The effects of the 40-year period of totalitarianism are still felt.

That's why we have prepared in our museum the educational programme, *Generation of Liberty*, for primary and secondary school children. Our aim is to lead children to critical thinking, to understand the historical context and to show them that totalitarianism is still an everyday reality for many people in the world.

What does the programme look like? Before visiting our museum, teachers receive methodology for school preparation. At the museum we introduce the personality of Václav Havel in the various roles of his life. As a child, as a dissident fighting against totalitarianism, as a political

prisoner, as a leader of the Velvet Revolution, as a president who, even in the role of supreme statesman and politician, never stopped defending human rights, and finally Václav Havel as a citizen seeking to build a civil society that is free, that has rights but also duties.

Subsequently, we acquaint students with the everyday reality of life under communism and explain censorship, which would mean, for example, that that they could never read a book about Harry Potter, because it would be forbidden as English (or western) literature. They learn that people secretly made copies of forbidden texts on typewriters. They find out for themselves how difficult this was.

We were particularly interested in how children today perceive freedom and what they think of it. We ask them to try to write their attitude to freedom on typewriters.

Each participant is absolutely free to express their own statement. Our only condition is that they sign their statements with their full name, because freedom must always be associated with responsibility. From those pages, which children make during the programme, we will collaborate with students from the West Bohemian University in Pilsen to make an artistically bound book of messages from the 'generation of liberty'. This book will

be handed over to the Václav Havel Library in Prague in spring next year.

And why did we do it? We would like to try to compel teachers to include the topic of communism and totalitarianism in their lessons at school and give children the opportunity to reflect. We want to inspire young people to think about what freedom is and how easily it can be lost.

Putting theory into practice

The best way to predict the future is to design it

Sevra Davis

Head of Learning, Design Museum, United Kingdom

This workshop explored how the circular economy and circular design principles can be taught and learned in a museum context. The workshop emphasised not only the need for museums to take a leading role in exploring how we can create a more sustainable future through the circular economy, but also why learning through ‘doing’ is so fundamental to the success of the circular economy and circular design. The workshop took as its starting point not the justification for why a circular economy is needed, but how we will get there. Specifically, the workshop explored the following:

- The need to move to a circular economy
- The role of design
- The principles of design thinking and design for behaviour change
- The role of museums in cultivating behaviour change

Key questions and main points

- The question is not whether or not a circular economy is possible, but how we will work together to achieve it.
- Design thinking and design for behaviour change are powerful tools in the move toward a circular economy and a sustainable future, but how they are deployed will be very important in their success.
- Museums are well-placed to help steward the journey toward a more sustainable future, not only through their ability to bring people together and deliver innovative formal and informal learning programmes, but also because they have an opportunity to take a stand and not be neutral when it comes to addressing the climate emergency.

- The United Nations SDGs provide a very useful and universal framework for designing and delivering museum learning programmes.
- Design for circularity and social impact must be more mainstream in all dialogues and it does not need to address every aspect to be successful.
- Learning programmes at museums and outside them are most successful when they are connected to what people care more about.

- *Design Ventura*: a free, design and enterprise challenge for secondary school students, supported by industry professionals that asks young people to design a solution to an everyday problem. The programme emphasises that the final products should not only be made of sustainable materials but may also encourage a more sustainable lifestyle more generally. The programme differs from other design competitions for young people in that the product is actually made and sold in the Design Museum shop and young people see first-hand the manufacturing process, so begin to understand how materials are used.

- *The Great Competition*: a design competition for higher education students explicitly focused on encouraging new ways of thinking about sustainable manufacturing and how students of different disciplines can collaborate to stimulate new thinking about the circular economy.

Best practice examples



The atrium of the Design Museum, London

The workshop used two first-hand examples of design education programmes run by the Design Museum to demonstrate how learning about circular design can be put into practice:

How to get your audiences involved – SDGs and action oriented exhibitions

Friso Visser

Deputy Director/Head of Education, Museon, the Netherlands

In the workshop, participants got to rush through the SDGs and brainstormed in small groups about how to introduce a specific SDG in an exhibition or museum, and how to activate the public. In a very short time, participants came up with examples of possible solutions to present the SDGs in such a way that the public is called to action (in a hands-on way, rather than merely being informed). All outcomes were shared among the participants, leading to an animated discussion of what would be feasible in terms of audiences and what not. In the second round of discussions, participants got a wider perspective by looking at another SDG. Examples of applying the SDGs combined with and based on heritage collections, and how this will enhance the visitor experience by introducing these (through storytelling), were discussed and presented by all participants. In the end, the group gave evidence of a wide variety of options of introducing the SDGs within a museum setting and involving a large audience.



Participants discuss how to apply the Sustainable Development Goals to cultural heritage collections

Best practice

Museon's *ONE PLANET* exhibition was presented as an example of how the SDGs can be introduced to the public. The key to a peaceful, just and secure world is a fair distribution of food, water and energy, and the acceptance of differences in cultural identity. The *ONE PLANET* exhibition is about challenges and new social science advances in this area. The United Nations' 17 SDGs provide the starting point for the exhibition. *ONE PLANET* challenges visitors to reflect on current issues

and offers inspiration in the quest for solutions. *ONE PLANET* lets you discover the world, think up solutions and be a hero on your planet.

Museon used the 17 SDGs as the starting point for the exhibition³. Themes include: overfishing, water pollution, energy, refugees, climate change and discrimination. The goals are addressed in 17 displays, using text, pictures, interactivity and items from the collection. Each theme is a challenge facing the whole world, but the display links it to the Netherlands, so that visitors can compare the situation 'here' and 'there'.

³ A video on how the exhibition incorporates the SDGs is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-eYmwENvII>

Discover your SDG superpower

Henry McGhie

Consultant and founder of *Curating Tomorrow*, United Kingdom

The idea for this workshop came from thinking about how we can move from the ordinary to the extraordinary and achieve what seems impossible at first. In order to empower others to play their part in the SDGs, we also have to empower ourselves. Empowerment can be outlined as understanding the difference you can make, having the motivation to do it (caring about something), and having the skills and the opportunity to make that difference. Watching the *X-Men* films, the idea for this workshop was born: individuals can become aware that they each have different superpowers; some use them

for good, some less so; some achieve more together as a team than on their own. All we need to do to contribute to the SDGs is apply ourselves – our talents, skills, motivation, energy, ideas, resources and opportunities – to their achievement.

Method

The workshop uses the model of the 'Hero's Journey', a narrative form that is very widely used in films and books. Basically, the hero goes from their known world to the unknown where they face a series of challenges. They overcome the challenges and return to their own world, transformed in the process. In the workshop, participants explored which SDG was most closely linked to: 1. their own work; 2. their institution; and 3. which SDG they cared about. Then, they were asked to imagine it is 2030: the SDGs have been achieved, and they played a part in making that happen. They were invited to forget normal conditions and constraints, and to magic up tools



The workshop by Henry McGhie encouraged people to discuss their potential to act according to the SDGs in their professional environment

and powers that could overcome blocking challenges: SDG laser guns, shields against negativity, magnets that bring people together, unicorns that can blend policies, or whatever else.

Key questions/points

- The participants wrote the outline of a story that tells us – and them – how they did it.
- What does your desired 2030 look like? Where, when, who is in it?
- What part could your combination of superpowers play in creating that future?
- What would be your first steps to create that future, using your superpowers?
- When would you put your individual skills and superpowers to best use?
- What would the ordeal be: the problems, how you could overcome them with your superpowers, enemies, helpers and partners?
- How could you amplify your impact: raising ambition, scaling up, moving further and faster?

- How would you be changed in the process?

Participants used this story as the basis for a personal plan that they took back to their workplace. As a follow-up activity, participants worked as a group to overcome a challenge they could address together. The idea of this is that we can achieve more together than we can alone. The point of the workshop is very similar to how we use museums more generally: as consequence-free places to test out ideas.

Conclusion

Workshops such as this are important, as they help apply what people have learnt at conferences to their own situation. The superpower idea is powerful as it helps extend people's sense of what is possible, to begin to build people's confidence that the future does not in any way have to be the same as the present. However, to make the future different from the present does require a bit of planning, focusing on what we can do (and ignoring what we can't). That is how we will imagine, design and build better futures together. All power to you and all power to all of us together!

Systems thinking in process – Sustainability in progress

Susanne Zils and Alice Anna Klaassen
Consultants, State Council of the non-governmental museums in Bavaria,
Germany

Museums work like complex systems while exploring objects and trends, curating relevant contents and programmes, designing and producing exhibitions, and operating the museum as a public space. All the processes within this dynamic complex use human, ecological and economic resources. For the purpose of sustainable action within the institution and implementing the 2030 Agenda as “a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”, museums have to realise a systemic approach.

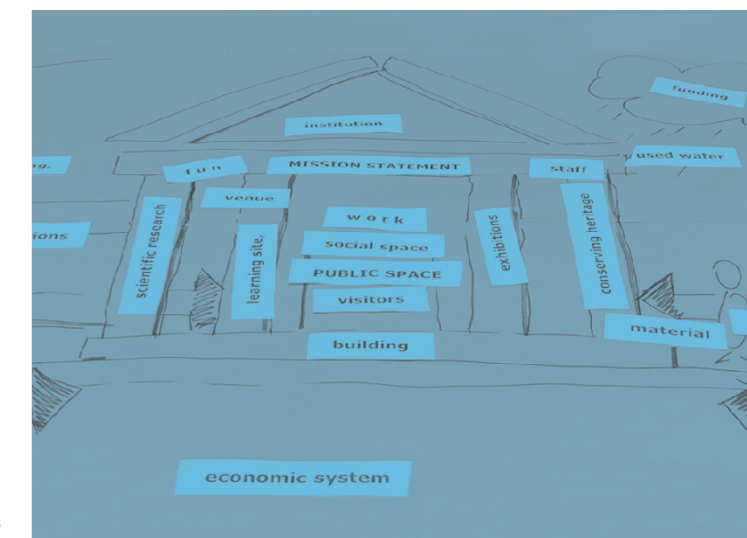
needed, and which tools can be helpful in the process of transformation?

Main points / best practice

Experts agree that systems thinking is one key competence required in order to deal with complexity, as it allows us to recognise, understand and analyse relationships within and outside a system. Furthermore, it gives us great help in dealing with uncertainty. The participants captured a museum as a system by visualising the

Key questions

Practicing routine manners in museums causes effects. Which effect is caused by which action or resource input? How can museums be safe resources and still fulfill their mission? How can museums leave the paths of linear thinking and start to change a running but not yet sustainable system? Which competence is



The circle of system thinking

interconnected functions of a museum, as well as considering the input and outcome of museum work in a graph. Offering a holistic view, the picture was complemented by showing driving change factors outside the museum. Furthermore, the workshop discussed how a flow diagram of the production process can be used to allow insights of the necessary efforts in terms of money, material or staff.

To make these concepts less abstract, some case studies were presented regarding the greenhouse gas emission equivalents of temporary exhibitions. Estimations based on empirical data for shipping and packaging materials, as well as a detailed look at the number of printed catalogues that are produced in the end – often only for stocking – appalled everyone. An example of a causal loop diagram (CLD) was developed step by step in order to show how such a tool can explain the behaviour of a system. Participants then accepted the challenge to create CLDs by connecting the causes and symptoms of problems themselves.

Conclusion

Systems thinking offers tools to build models of the institution and its exchange with the environment as well as to visualise processes within the museum. Participants agreed that developing visual diagrams together can enrich discussions where leverage points are to be identified and change triggered in order to meet the requirements of sustainability.

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Authors

Jordi Baltà Portolés, Aleksandra Berberih-Slana, Denisa Brejchova, Sevra Davis, Markéta Formanová, Mercedes Giovinazzo Marín, Anna Hansen, Alice Anna Klaassen, Henry McGhie, Višnja Kisić, Tiina Merisalo, Magdolna Nagy, Keiu Telve, Rebecca Thonander, Jess Turtle, Matt Turtle, Friso Visser, Maria Vlachou, David Vuillaume, Susanne Zils

Editor

NEMO-The Network of European Museum Organisations
Taubenstraße 1
10117 Berlin
Germany

Edited by

Mareen Maaß, Julia Pagel,
Geraldine Kendall Adams

Graphic design

Studio Pandan

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Published: March 2020

With support from

