INTEGRATING A MULTICULTURAL EUROPE

MUSEUMS AS SOCIAL ARENAS

A MANUAL BY

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TOOLKIT N°2
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EmEE
EuroVision
Museums
Exhibiting
Europe

Culture

CONTENT

The International Council of Museums' (ICOM) definition of, 'museum' which is held throughout the world, obliges museums to act in the service of society. Besides its mandate to preserve the material and immaterial cultural heritage, this, above all, includes the historical and cultural mediacy of the past.

In contrast to other educational institutions, museums are uniquely characterized by processing and promoting information, knowledge as well as insight through historical, cultural and natural-history objects and collections. Especially since the objects, in addition to their material value, become sign bearers through interpretation and presentation, they have potential for far-reaching meaning. They are supposed to help stimulate discussion, allow the evaluation of historical and societal developments and reflect important topics of the past on a higher level of abstraction. Ultimately, the museums and therewith also cultural policy want to achieve the strengthening of identities in this way and improve the people's understanding of the present so as to be able to shape the future.

Museums today want to work inclusively in order to reach a broad audience; they want to be a forum for societal dialogues so as to meet different experiences and perspectives; they want to be places of enlightenment and reconciliation. Their work is supposed to have sustainable effects and thereby embed societal values among the population.

However, do museums manage to reach people in a technologically and socially rapidly changing world? Are the exhibition topics, exhibition designs and ways of mediacy on offer already everywhere developed in a way which brings about the desired success?

Museums and their staff seek the dialogue among each other – in our increasingly globalised world also internationally; they need support, suggestions, and exchange.

Thankfully, the European Union provides programmes for the international dialogue of museums and universities so that applications can be developed that are meant to help the cultural institutions to be able to carry out their societal task.

The project 'EuroVision – Museums Exhibiting Europe' is a milestone in this development; the Toolkits are of valuable assistance on the way to meet the challenges of educational policy in the 21st century.

Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz, Berlin
President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM)

THE EMEE PROJECT

This manual was developed in the scope of the internationally oriented project EuroVision – Museums Exhibiting Europe (EMEE). The project, which runs for four years and is funded by the Culture Programme of the European Union, was initiated by the Chair of History Didactics of Augsburg University. It is implemented by eight interdisciplinary project partners from seven European countries.[1] The aim of the project is to advance the modernization of museums by re-interpreting museum objects and topics from a trans-regional European perspective as well as by innovative mediating approaches. Thereby, especially national and regional museums shall be encouraged to try out new ideas and concepts through which a timely orientation of the institution 'museum' in today's intercultural, heterogeneous society can be furthered.

1. Project members: Augsburg University, Germany (Coordinator); ATELIER BRÜCKNER, Germany; National Museum of History, Bulgaria; University Paris-Est Créteil, France; Roma Tre University, Italy; National Museum of Archaeology, Portugal; National Museum of Contemporary History, Slovenia; Kunstverein monochrom, Austria.

THE CONCEPT OF CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

The basic concept of the EMEE project exists of three aspired Changes of Perspectives: the first Change of Perspective refers to the new interpretation of museum objects from a trans-regional European perspective. Objects shall no longer be presented in one-dimensional contexts of meaning, but perceived in a differentiated way through multi-perspectively conveying several levels of meaning that are demonstrated in a parallel way. The second Change of Perspective refers to a change in the relation between museum experts and visitors.

In reflecting on the museum's traditional role as scientifically interpreting authority and in inviting visitors to participate by means of different approaches old patterns of thought can be overcome and new, contemporary forms of museum work can be developed. From a trans-regional European perspective this can, for instance, mean that visitors with a migration background can contribute their view on objects. By expanding the scope of interpretation the objects can at the same time become more interesting to a wider circle of visitors. The suggested activities in line with the 'bridging-the-gap' approach (bridge cultural and social divides) can thus also contribute to audience development. The third Change of Perspective aspires the broadening of the view by internationalization: only in an internationally comparative perspective new, changed interpretations of objects become possible. Moreover, establishing international networks facilitates cooperation between museums of different countries.

THE FIVE EMEE TOOLKITS

So as to process the concept Change of Perspective for practical implementation, especially the first and the second Change of Perspective, five so-called EMEE Toolkits were developed in the scope of the project. These application-oriented manuals aim at mediating between theory and practice and offer all interested museums instructions for innovative and creative concepts by which the modernization and internationalization of museum work can be advanced. The five manuals thereby thematically focus on different topics as the following overview shows:

TOOLKIT 1: MAKING EUROPE VISIBLE

— The Toolkit deals with the re-interpretation of objects showing ways to re-interpret collections with a trans-regional and multi-perspective approach.

TOOLKIT 2: INTEGRATING MULTICULTURAL EUROPE (SOCIAL ARENA)

— The Toolkit provides an idea of the museum as a public, non-commercial space that offers possibilities for people to meet, to discuss and to get in touch with the cultural heritage.
— It shows how these enhanced functions of museums can be used for presenting and discussing trans-regional and European topics especially regarding current issues and present-day problems. In that way, it contributes to integrating multicultural Europe.

TOOLKIT 3: BRIDGING-THE-GAP (ACTIVATION, PARTICIPATION AND ROLE MODIFICATION)

— The Toolkit deals with the development of different levels of the participation and activation of the visitor (for example hands-on, minds-on, user-generated exhibitions, guided tours conceptualized in the form of a dialogue, participation of different focus groups in the museum work, etc.).
— It develops programmes to encourage non-visitor groups to get to know the museum's world.
— It provides best practice examples with a focus on trans-regional/ European topics.

**TOOLKIT 4: SYNAESTHETIC TRANSLATION OF PERSPEC-
TIVES. SCENOGRAPHY – A SKETCHBOOK**

— The Toolkit is about scenography and its potential
for a synaesthetic translation of perspectives.
— The first part introduces the basic parameters
and tools of Scenography as well as some strat-
egies of staging museum objects.
— The second part is more practical in nature. It
presents scenographic design concepts for stag-
ing trans-regional museum objects in a Europe-
an context. They are visualized by sketches and
show how to apply the parameters, tools and
strategies to generate a Change of Perspective.

TOOLKIT 5: SOCIAL WEB AND INTERACTION

— The Toolkit shows that the social web can be
used not only for public relations but also for in-
teraction (museum with visitors, museum with
non-visitors, visitors among themselves, muse-
um with other institutions).
— With this Toolkit, visitors and other interested
persons will be given a possibility to get involved

with the museum's topics, to discuss, to ex-
change ideas, to reflect on exhibitions, etc.
— It offers ideas how to integrate the possibilities
of web 2.0 in exhibitions in order to promote
more visitor participation.

The EMEE Toolkits also present best practice exa-
mples for the various topics and therefore partial-
ly refer to the preceding Mapping Process, which
was carried out in the first phase of the project.[2] In
future project steps the ideas and concepts of the
EMEE Toolkits will be tested by practical implemen-
tation in various formats such as workshops and
practice modules which will be accompanied by an
evaluation process. Moreover, so-called Exemplary
Units, which will be published on the EMEE web-
site in the further course of the project, provide ad-
ditional suggestions for the implementation of the
contents of the five EMEE Toolkits.

The EMEE Team

2. EMEE – Museums Exhibiting Europe. Mapping Process, http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe. de/mappingprocess/, Accessed 20 December 2015.

INTRODUCTION

MUSEUMS AS SOCIAL ARENAS

Europe is a unity of many different cultures, customs and traditions, which need to live together in harmony. The free movement of labour is a fundamental right and contributes, along with other factors, to the human and cultural diversity of Europe. This diversity creates cultural wealth, but it also poses many challenges for harmonious living. In this regard, museums have a marvellous potential to help and empower people, countries and the EU to find new ways of maintaining harmony. The Toolkit manual is a result of the EMEE project (EuroVision – Museums Exhibiting Europe), which can contribute a great deal of help, especially because of its international partner structure and goals, which help museums to become institutions that matter – at the regional, national and, above all, at the transnational levels.

Throughout the Toolkit, we have tangled with a very common and very persistent view of museums – how they are instantly related to or equalized with the past, not merely among the public, but also among museum experts. How about if we try and link them to the present? How about trying to see the best from the past for the present? How to connect them to the needs and wishes of today's visitors?

Identifying with the past actually enables the feeling of being stuck and being forgotten institutions, lost and helpless when it comes to coping with necessary changes. But if we start looking at museums as Social Arenas, then we can see them as a bridge between the gaps of time – between past and present; and also as bridges between societies.

Fig. 1: Summer night in a museum, MG+ Modern Art Gallery, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Dejan Habicht

As it has been outlined so many times and in so many ways, museums need to find a connection with the present time to be more important and current. The clearest, but not necessarily the easiest way, seems to be opening the museums to the public as spaces of open dialogue and democratic debate, which may be driven from the far forgotten past and yet are now so contemporary.

Certainly you have noticed museums are no longer what they were a decade ago. And not just a decade – a year ago. They go along with the changes in society – forced, although not always willing, to change. Changes are all over the planet and on every continent. Where are those changes heading? In short: towards opening the borders. Towards opening all the doors, windows, and even the crevices for people to enter – inclusion. Museums also need to open up for all kinds of audiences and people, or especially for those who do not enter with the purpose of looking at the displayed artefacts. Museums have a chance to be perceived by people and groups of people as their own. So the goal is not merely to integrate and include societies in these institutions, but also to integrate the

institutions into society – for the institutions to be accepted – to tune in with society.

In this regard we have come up with some suggestions on various topics, which may help European (and other) museums and galleries to start bridging the society and the time gaps in order to become the institutions which matter today, open to the community and helping to make changes in the world.

EMEE GLOSSARY

Throughout the manual, we have used a wide spectrum of terms. Since all of them have a fertile basis for different meanings, here are the most frequently used terms with the meanings we understood them by:

— COP stands for Change of Perspective, which EMEE is trying to enable on at least three levels: COP 1 is a Change of Perspective on the field of the European re-interpretation of objects and object groups that reveal the complex diversity of historical meanings.COP 2 deals with a

Change of Perspective between the museum experts and the visitors.COP 3 enables a Change of Perspective in the process of international cooperation.
— MAPPING PROCESS represents the overview of the groundwork done in the field of research as well as the critical analysis of best practice examples, in particular with regard to the three COPs. As such it offers an insight into the trends that characterize the present European museums.
— SOCIAL ARENA is a term we borrowed from Richard Handler, who understood museums as Social Arenas of ongoing, organized activities in which many people from different backgrounds 'continuously and routinely interact to produce, exchange, and consume messages' (Handler 1997: 9). To this we have added the importance of the encounter of people who in everyday life do not meet and interact with each other; but the meetings in the museum can cause a social change in many fields. And that is where the strength of the museum lies.
— NON-VISITORS is group of people that is very tricky to define – it is why we have used the

self-definition of the people who consider themselves as the ones who do not visit your museum or museums overall.
— PARTICIPATORY is a long ongoing trend found not merely in museums, but in all sectors of human life. The participatory approach is extremely valuable when trying to give voice and visibility to all people equally. In the museum world it means an engagement which allows the visitors to become active (co)creators of their experiences or even of the exhibitions. There are many levels of participation – which of them to follow should be decided by the museum.

We will be referring to *museums*, but this does not mean these principles cannot be applied to other institutions as well.

WHO IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

Museums as Social Arenas is a Toolkit meant for everyday use by museum professionals and museum enthusiasts. With that consideration in mind, it was written by the people who face the same

challenges and demands on a daily basis as many other museum personnel around Europe. It is meant to be a quick first aid kit to consult when you are lost and overwhelmed by challenges, or when the 'inspiration and will' battery to cope with changes is low.

The manual has been designed as a Toolkit that can be consulted for specific solutions when problems arise or simply read from cover to cover. It assumes museums have realized the need for change in order to become places that matter in today's society. We see potential in museums as spaces of social buzz and happenings, spaces of continuous democratic social interactions. In short – the Toolkit tries to back up all the museum personnel who are tackling society's demands to open up the museum spaces as social spaces for a vast variety of people.

PROGRAMME TO FOLLOW
EuroVision – Museums Exhibiting Europe (EMEE) – One Object – Many Visions – EuroVision.
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de

The aim of the EMEE-project is to make museums more accessible in multiple ways: with an innovative and interdisciplinary approach developed by history didactics, the project wants to re-interpret museum objects and put them into a broader context of national and transnational history. Visitors shall face objects not only on a regionally and nationally determined level of meaning, but discover transnational and European perspectives using new means of presentation, performances and possibilities for participation.

The Toolkit manual serves as a guideline for being used in everyday museum work. It is divided in two sections: in the first part, you will find a scientific overview of the topic with an explanation of the experiences with the concept of a Social Arena and how to apply this experience to work in museums. Specifically, it deals with the role of heritage in connection with society, for a new understanding of its role in opening up museums to more communities. At the end of the first part, the manual explains how to develop new strategies, activities and measures to begin and develop a Social Arena type of work. From research to the implementation of new strategies, it shows how every museum can change its mission and become a place of

interaction, debate and involvement, a productive area where people can contest and redefine themselves. The second part presents good practices and opportunities on how museums can open their programmes to the wider civil society. For a better understanding on how to deal with the different demands and needs we have split the manual's practical part into two sections: vulnerable groups and learning groups. The two sections are not a divided unit – they both depict society as a constantly changing mosaic of roles, in which individuals and communities constantly have to (re)interpret themselves in different circumstances. The chapter 'Vulnerable groups as visitors to the museum' explores the topic of the Social Arena in its core statement: inclusiveness. By presenting different solutions for diverse vulnerable groups it opens the interpretative and representative space of the museum to the voices of the people who were and still are marginalised. At the same time, through examples of best practices, it shows how to implement good ideas in museum work. The learning groups section explains the role of the Social Arena within the context of the 'Europeanization' of museums. It provides suggestions on how to expand informal

learning opportunities and how to open museums to different age groups. Since museums are attempting to forge ways of connecting to the groups of 'non-visitors' (such as young adults), they need to find new ways of becoming accepted – by reinterpreting themselves as fun, open, accessible places for all age groups. The last part of this section presents a selection of best practice examples, which have a connection to the European dimension of the EMEE project. By using the examples of the Mapping Process activity we prepared a list of interesting topics to be used when preparing exhibitions or when creating special events in your museums.

At the same time, we would like to encourage you to think in such a manner and to start thinking about suitable topics for your museum in order to enrich them with new visitors, debates, opening the places for new challenges and social opportunities.

At the end of the manual, for help on how to start, we have included an overview of the current scientific literature and websites about Social Arenas.

MUSEUMS AS SOCIAL ARENAS – SETTING THE SCENE

MUSEUMS AND (RE)INTERPRETATIONS OF EUROPEAN HERITAGE – CREATING NEW SOCIAL PLACE(S)

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the most important element in the functioning of a museum are its visitors – regardless of whether an exhibition is primarily intended as a display of items as an expression of cultural richness, achievement or either intellectual or scientific enlightenment and no matter the degree of didactic intent present in the creation of the exhibition. Visitors are active participants, and the experience that a museum provides must involve them, draw them in, spark an emotional response and address them, be it positively or negatively. It should also help understand and give meaning to the society that surrounds us. For the modern museum, active communication with its surroundings has become essential. The museum takes on the roles of a critical observer of contemporary society and a guardian of cultural heritage. Museums are becoming more open, exhibitions more attractive and welcoming to a wider variety of visitors, gradually casting off their outdated reputations as elitist and hermetic institutions. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly more important for museums to offer a multifaceted, inclusive comprehension of national heritage – museums are generators of historic, collective and individual memories. In the interest of creating an inclusive environment for every possible kind of visitor, museums have to take the stand for underprivileged and underrepresented groups and minorities, becoming active players on the field of social change,

Fig. 2: Summer night in a museum – children's workshop in front of the museum, National Museum of Contemporary History. Ljubljana, 2013. Photo: Urška Purg

a space where diversity is embraced, promoting social and human rights, dialogue, becoming a facilitator for new ideas and social initiatives. As defined by Janes, museums have great potential for eliciting provocative and effective participation from the community (Janes 2011: 64-66). Considering all this, it is hard to continue seeing museums as archaic, static dusty old institutions. The opposite, in fact, seems more appropriate – because of the ever-increasing trend of social activity, museums are better understood by their tendency to move towards active participation, in the vein of the so-called *participatory museum*. And so, when we talk about contemporary museum practices, it is not so much working *for* the visitor, but rather, working *with* them, cooperating, co-creating. These days, museums offer their visitors and clients numerous possibilities of participation and involvement, in contrast to the rigid, two-dimensional and controlled tour through an exhibition created without considering the needs, wants and interests of potential visitors that was so common in the past.

By adopting the participatory principle, it becomes easier for museums to establish connections between the visitors, heritage, new ideas and the fostering of critical thinking and creativity. Museums exist to help people achieve their identity goals, particularly to understand themselves and the society they come from and aid them in dismantling the taboos concerning other communities and the barriers between them.

While galleries are centred on visual experience, museums are primarily narrative-producing institutions (Karp 1992: 2). The objects that embody select images from our shared past are a medium for the reproduction of dominant narratives. The role of interpretation of heritage intertwines with political and media discourse, which set the trends of the collective interpretation of the national narrative and its tradition by evaluating various periods of history. What the degree of inclusiveness is and how it is reflected in the availability of cultural production is up for debate. But how does visual narration figure in a specific society, if we look at it from the perspective of the cultural consumer? The modern approach to the proper comprehension of the past and its multiple interpretations has caused a re-evaluation and re-interpretation of objects under new standards, showcasing their multiple historical meanings and developing a more subjective way of looking at history and heritage that includes the stories of groups and individuals that were once overlooked or even, due to their marginality, completely excluded.

Ivan Karp defines visitors as individuals who, upon entering the museum, bring their culture and values with them. They do not respond passively to the exhibits – they interpret the experience through the matrix of their personal experience and the knowledge that they gained through participation in a certain society. They will interpret the museum exhibition through their prior experiences, cultural learned beliefs, perpetual skills and membership (Karp 1992: 3). With this in mind, the following questions must be posed: should we present a multifaceted, multi-dimensional and ambiguous myriad of interpretations to counterbalance the unambiguous, traditional views on the history and culture of Europe? Can this need for a trans-national, non-national evaluation of the past engender a new kind of comprehension of museum exhibitions? A new way of teaching history and understanding the past as part of a collective (European) heritage? Can museums create socially open spaces (arenas) that facilitate the identification and activation of those segments of the populace that have been excluded from the dominant narration? What caused (activated) the trend of inclusion?

Summer night in the museum, National Museum of
Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2012.
Photo: Sarah Bervar

WHY SHOULD MUSEUMS INCLUDE
THE SOCIAL ARENA CONCEPT?

There is a lot of questioning going on about the role and necessity of
museums today. There are even firm suggestions of museums being
in crisis (Kirshenblatt – Gimblet 1998, Gilmore and Rentschler 2002,
Kotler, Kotler and Kotler 2008, Simon 2010, Lin 2011). Museums need
to compete with the offers of other leisure time activities, whether
they like it or not; whether they want to play this game or not –
they're already on the playing field. Museums need to open up for all
kinds of audiences and people, including those who do not enter to
see the displayed artefacts. Not to worry – museums will never lose
a certain percentage of the traditional role they have successfully pla-
yed for so long and in some countries still do. All they need is to add
new meanings and values. 'The specificities of cultural practices pose
a basic challenge, especially for those museums with an explicit pu-
blic mission, to act as forums for a multicultural exchange, rather than
fortresses of the status quo' (Coffee 2008: 262).

Some museums and libraries have already managed to find that
lovely middle ground of being the institutions they are titled for and
including social value on top of everything.

MUSEUM TO DISCOVER
The Lightbox, Woking, UK
An institution where the light never shuts off.
http://www.thelightbox.org.uk/

We understand that we cannot turn museums and galleries into Disneyland. But how about Social Arenas? Oh, yes we can. And we should!

Why, one may ask? Because only then will these institutions matter. And we believe museums need to matter. And museums *can* matter as public spaces, with great emphasis on the *public*. As such they can offer another role in the public's perception. What good does it do if we have massive institutions with massive depots and absolutely none or very low interest for them from the audiences? For what purpose do they exist then?

One may ask what the European cultural project has to do with this. The first reason is to empower museums to grow stronger and connect with each other. In this way, museums can take part in creating social harmony. We can derive the necessary insight for synchronising with society from the following statement: 'no museum is an island' (Coffee 2008: 261). Concisely said, 'Europeanization' can be of great help, since it is presented 'as a cultural practice in which museums, citizens, objects, EU funding programmes, and the current reformulation of the museal collecting policy where all equally participate and present themselves as participants' (Krankenhagen 2013: 266).

MUSEUMS AS SOCIAL ARENAS

But now one may ask – what do we mean by Social Arena?

Social Arena somehow captures a handful of various meanings. From a very sociological point of view, a Social Arena is a place or space in which people manoeuvre and struggle in pursuit of desirable resources and, it is constituted by the relational differences in the position of social agents, the boundaries of a field are demarcated by where its effects end (Jenkins 1992). Besides that 'A Social Arena is a metaphor to describe the symbolic location of political actions that influence collective decisions or policies' (Kitschelt and Renn 1992: 181). But what we are trying to do is capture the meaning of the phrase Social Arena in relation to the museums.

The father of the museum term Social Arena is Richard Handler, who stated that museums are first of all Social Arenas, instead of being the 'repository for objects' (Handler 1993: 33). In this manner he understands museums as places 'in which many people of differing backgrounds continuously and routinely interact to produce, exchange, and consume messages' (Handler 1997: 9). This sounds highly contemporary. In fact, Nina Simon stated that it is extremely important that the museum becomes an institution which provides the experience of establishing the connections among the unknown visitors and the interactions between them (Simon 2010: 67-98).

We will understand museums as Social Arenas in such a way 'of ongoing, organized activities' (Handler 1997: 9) and adding a few points, which mirror today's society. In this matter we will focus on the part where Handler describes such a museum as 'an institution in which social relationships are oriented in terms of a collection of objects which are made meaningful by those relationships' (Handler 1993: 33). In this direction, the term 'contact zone' was also translated into the museum language by James Clifford (Clifford 1997: 192), borrowed by Mary Pratt (Onciul 2013: 83). His understanding of museums as contact zones is unbelievably close to Handler's Social Arena. The concept of a contact zone assumes that if the contact is to be lasting, it has to include powerful continuity and connection. The contact between different cultures can happen after the exhibition and outside the museum, but it has to happen and it has to continue (Clifford 1997). Further on, contact zone was extended to 'dialogic contact zone' (Witcomb 2003; Bennett 2006) and even

redefined into 'engagement zones' (Onicul 2013). Anyhow, the proposal aims to develop a change in the perspectives of the partakers, which might be hard to measure, but can happen even through a single exhibition.

How can the understanding of Social Arena bring any good into empowering these institutions while going through changes? Well it can, if we manage to identify each other in the meanings of symbolic space, where people can pursue desirable resources. And this is exactly the purpose of this manual – to open doors to the possibilities of implementing the Social Arena in your own museum, or any other similar institution. Besides, these institutions all have the possibility to become a Social Arena – a wanted and desirable space of safety, tolerance and neutrality – an inclusive borderless space that offers equality, democracy, equal opportunities, dealing with difficult or avoided topics and subjects, dialogue and discussions where interaction can happen directly, as well as social transactions. In this relation, the Social Arena goes hand in hand with the ethics (Marstine 2011a). The Social Arena can lead the museums towards cultural dialogue – and not only a dialogue, but rather a *polylogue*

– as a combination of many different dialogues – so that people may, ultimately, perceive these institutions as their own.

So the goal is not merely to integrate and include society in the museums, but also to integrate the museums into society – for them to become accepted. 'Museum use is also a cultural practice. It is shaped by the social relationship of the user, as well as those of the museum, and defined by whom it includes and excludes' (Coffee 2008: 262).

In the following, we will try and capture some examples of how museums can include some percentage of that Social Arena spirit into their everyday work, without hurting too much. Well, we do need to admit – every time the topic of change is brought up, we make the immediate connection to the damage, pain and trouble it will bring along with it. Since we believe there is no doubt about the necessity of change, we will propose change implementation with as low a level of those ugly side effects as possible.

Fig. 4: European project: City Europe, Museum of Architecture and Design. Ljubljana, 2013. Photo: Tanja Vergales

NEW MUSEUM CHALLENGES –
AN EXTERNAL VIEW

Museum expert Nina Simon wrote a book about the development and creation of new museum environments in the 21st Century. Her pithy blog *museumtwo.blogspot.com* is one of the most popular among museum enthusiasts and acclaimed as an example on how to manage museums today. For the purpose of the manual we have asked her to explain her views on the situation in Europe, what certain outlined topics represent to her and how to develop social potential in museums today.[3] Her perspective is of special value for Europe, since she represents that view from the outside, built upon the experiences of working in the USA and in Europe.

Sometimes it really does not take much to let people from all around know that they are welcome at your place as they are, with their culture, their tradition, their backgrounds and their habits.

MUSEUM TO DISCOVER
MAH Santa Cruz, USA
http://www.santacruzmah.org

PROGRAMME TO FOLLOW
Museum Camp 2014: Social Impact Assessment
http://www.santacruzmah.org/museumcamp2014 /what-is-social-impact-assessment/

ABOUT MUSEUMS

'There are many kinds of museums for many kinds of purposes. So I think what a museum is to me is really about the diversity because I guess I don't personally feel that museums should be only one way. I feel that any museum should be focused on what's our particular mission, who the community that we're trying to serve is, and let's be as open as possible to the ways that we can fulfil that mission and serve that community'.

'One part is the mission and one part is the community. And your community might be a community of researchers and it might be a community of artists – I mean you can define what community means for an institution in many different ways, so it's not necessarily the people who live in the neighbourhood around you'.

'Most of the time I like the private non-profit version because I feel very accountable to the people who walk in the door. Because the people who walk in the door as visitors are the people who help fund what we do'.

3. The interview with Nina Simon was done on November 22nd 2013

Fig. 5: Intergenerational workshop during the Jože Barši exhibition, MG+ Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Lucija Cvjetković

'In the US I think it is ingrained that everybody assumes museums are there for the visitors. And then it's a question of what kind of visitor experiences they are for. Some of the people who don't like our museum now feel like it is too populist – you know, why are they letting all of these kinds of people in, why are they doing these activities that don't seem very serious and that kind of thing.'

ABOUT THE SOCIAL ARENA

'People who do not like the change of museums toward a more open functioning] are not exactly against museums as Social Arenas, they are for them for a very particular kind of Social Arena – they want them to be a place where you go and quietly look and think about it. Which is a kind of Social Arena. You know, they don't want museums to be close to the public, and also – in being populist we are anti-elitist and I think, well, I wouldn't call anybody an elitist, but I think there are some people that like the idea that they belong to a special club, that the museum is a special club that they are part of. This is a very tiny percentage of people and for the most

part museum visits have just hugely increased, I mean we have more than doubled our attendance'.

'In my community we are 30% Latino, people who are of Mexican descent and there is not as much of a tradition of museum going when you are a child or in the school and things like that. And I know that this has been a big thing, particularly in Scandinavia, where there are so many immigrants and trying to think about what are the different kinds of traditions and expectations about what museums are for, who they are for and how do you invite in the people who don't feel the museum is necessarily their place.'

ABOUT THE SOCIAL BRIDGING

'Social bridging – it is really about bringing together people who are from different walks of life. So I feel like there are so many places in this world where you are just with people who are like you, people who are from your church, people who like to go to the museum, people who are of a certain age and a certain race. And what I've learned about social bridging or, as some people, psychologists,

call it, intergroup contact, is that it happens when you have people from different groups and they are brought together. And we're really interested in this because in America generally – there's so much news and so many articles about how much more divided we are becoming as a society, the gap between rich and poor is growing, different races, all that kind of stuff, and we see it in our own town, and so I am very interested that a museum can be a place where the objects and the art and the ideas can be a kind of bridge for people who otherwise don't interact with each other.'

ABOUT THE POP-UP MUSEUM

'Museums can absolutely have a task of developing identity or national identity. When I came to the MAH, one of the things that I really focused on was – that we want to make this museum not just a good museum, we want to make the museum one of the five things when you ask people what are the places that really are what Santa Cruz is about. We want to be that identity place and I think you're right that you have to look around and say

ok whose identities are we reflecting and who are we not. And one of the projects we've been doing on is this project Pop-up museum, where we go to different communities; we can do it in the church or community centre or really a library or anywhere. And people bring their own objects and make labels for them and they share stories around these objects; then everybody takes them back home and for us it has been really powerful. We just did one on African-American history and in Santa Cruz – this is small town, 60,000 people, there are only a few hundred African-American people in Santa Cruz and so they had this Pop-up museum where 20 or 30 of them shared their objects and stories which was really incredible and made a really big impact on a community that doesn't really have a very public voice in the area.'

Museums absolutely need to dedicate more time and attention towards social activities and offers. Museums have become socially responsible institutions, but this does not necessarily mean they need to become like social service centres, since we agree that this is not their purpose. The link between the museums as heritage institutions must be neither forgotten nor lost. It is exactly the heritage that the social function of museums can derive from. This is something museums should keep in mind when searching for the means of being socially relevant in society. Our aim is to propose that museums become Social Arenas because of the heritage – instead of despite the heritage. Heritage is the wealth and that extra value a museum can offer in comparison with social centres. It is a social bridge towards acceptance and education; it can be an important institution in providing a social (cultural) commitment.

We guess that everybody thought that 'Museums as Social Arenas' meant something like: 'Social Arenas are what many Museums are not, but should be,' or 'would like to be.' The negative on the left (Old & Dusty), the positive on the right (Contemporary & Fresh): the words are clearly orientated; the only thing that is unclear is how to move from one side to the other.

This entry point legitimizes a doubt: what if museums were not necessary for the good health of Social Arenas? Why should museums be changed to fit the needs of Social renas, if these needs could be satisfied (and, perhaps, better satisfied) by other parts of society? Why should we spend massive amounts of resources in making museums the places where contemporary, trendy issues are debated,

when the same activities may take place within other, already existing and/ or cheaper spaces? An answer to this obvious, but not trivial, question implies a reflection on the social role of museums.

In short, we think that heritage, considered as a social institution, is the only direct link between museums and society. This could sound more rhetoric than reasonable, if we do not rediscover the social roots of heritage: we will try to show that 'heritage' as 'the sum of things out there' is only the visible side of a specific social activity by which things are put in common and shared. Our main thesis is that nurturing this 'vocation to put in common' is the only authentic way for museums to be Social Arenas.

ABOUT HERITAGE AND ITS SOCIAL LIFE

Our wish would be for one community to 'mirror' itself in the museum and in what it preserves and exposes.

It is impossible to understand the social role of museums without a previous understanding of the relationships between museums and heritage. Museums are built around heritage, in a sense that,

at least sometimes, is not only symbolic. In the case of eco-museums, for example, the 'museum' disappears as a separated space: it is not a box full of things anymore – it becomes a name by which a part of a territory is recognized as an element of one 'cultural heritage.' Usually, this renaming is an answer to a social demand. In the ideal typical eco-museum, the people come before the things: it happens that one community considers these rituals, that machine, those objects as relevant traces of its identity and for this very reason, something which transcends private interests. All that 'becomes heritage' only under the pressure of what it is not an exaggeration to call a social movement. In this sense, an eco-museum necessarily is, at least at the time of its birth, an active and participated in Social Arena. In the most glorious cases, one community 'mirrors' itself in the museum and in what it preserves and exposes. These museums are authentic Social Arenas. Considered from this point of view, the gap between (Old & Dusty) museums and (Contemporary & Fresh) Social Arenas makes no sense, for (at least some) museums are the outcome of a movement prompted by a contemporary and fresh Social Arena.

It might be that eco-museums as forms of lived-in and participated-in heritage are only a recent and irrelevant exception. On the contrary, we think that these experiences help us to grasp the authentic meaning of heritage. It might be true that public opinion does not play the same major role in the case of archaeological relics or art collections. In these cases, the 'becoming a heritage' of a ruin or of a portrait depends much more directly on the judgment of relevant experts. Still, different origins and paths may lead to a similar final outcome: once they are recognized as an element of cultural heritage, ruins and portraits, just like rituals, are excluded from the range of solely marketable goods, as something provided with public relevance and worth to be passed on to future generations.

In fact, though heritage is usually conceived as something which has always been 'already there'– a sort of untouchable treasure, independent from what we, the contemporaries may think and feel, – it is important to underline that every heritage has both a birthplace and a birth date, and that every heritage may, so to speak, die. Just think about current debates about disposal: in times of cuts, heritage can appear more as a burden than as a treasure, and deaccessioning can be envisaged. Moreover, 'deaccessioning works from collections seems like only a recent issue, but it has always happened' (Ven de Werdt 2011: 432). The debate is problematic, but we may highlight one point: what once became heritage is always exposed to the risk of losing its status.

In other words, heritage has a human face, and both 'becoming a heritage' and 'remaining a heritage' are circumstances that are well rooted in societal life. Let us see then, what happens when the relationships between heritage and its social roots collapse.

DESPITE HERITAGE?

If a museum is not (or no more) recognized by a community as a place where something essential is preserved, a search for alternative ways of being socially relevant begins.

Museums may have to fight in order to legitimize their own relevance for the community. If a museum is not (or no more) recognized by a community as a place where something essential is preserved, a search for alternative ways of being socially relevant begins: in this sense, laboratories, venues for cultural and commercial events, and other services may become crucial resources. In particular, if museums are considered as places whose main concern is debating about social exclusion or

race relationships, we could say that museums become Social Arenas *despite* heritage.

It is the moment to go back to the radical doubt we began with: are museums really necessary for the good health of Social Arenas? If we only need places and cultural activities with some social appeal – why museums? We think that a decisive answer to this question requires an updated justification of the social relevance of heritage.

The *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration* in Paris strongly believes in the importance of heritage. Since 2008, this institution has aimed at contributing to the recognition of the role played by immigrants in the history of France. The *Cité* is articulated in a multimedia library, an auditorium and a museum. This is an interesting situation: the museum is part of the larger strategy by which an institution tries to become a clearly focused Social Arena. The museum has been conceived *despite* the absence of a collection, *but* this 'lack of heritage' became a way to engage people and to create living relationships with existing communities. In other words, the *Cité* decided to enlarge the boundaries of national history through the inclusion of material traces and memories coming from

the immigrants themselves. The results are remarkable: the first section of the permanent exhibition tells the stories of a number of immigrants who temporarily offered to the museum some personal objects: an accordion, a dress, some photographs, etc. In another section of the *Cité* one may visit the 'gallery of gifts,' i.e. the objects and the memories left by individual visitors.

The new, virtual dimension of contemporary museums may open up similar horizons. For example, *Europeana*, the European digital library, promoted the constitution of a wide digital collection of materials related to World War I: books, newspapers, trench journals, maps, music sheets, children's literature, photographs, posters, pamphlets, propaganda leaflets, original art, religious works, medals, and coins. This campaign was not directed at national libraries or other memory institutions alone. Since 'the memory of the war, its events and consequences, its victims and victors, remains very much alive today,'[4] the project also included family history roadshows. These collection days have been attended by thousands of ordinary people who want to have the memorabilia digitalised and tell the stories of their families during wartime. But one may also add his/ her story to *Europeana 1914-1918* using the online collection form on their website: the donor has to type in some information about his/ her contribution, saying what it is (a postcard sent from XX, a diary, etc.) and add any story that he/ she wants to share (i.e., about the person pictured in the photograph, what he/ she knows about the object, how he/ she got it, etc.). One may then attach a digital version of the object, for example a scanned or photographed copy of the

4. This and the next information were taken from the website Europeana, http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu, Accessed 20 December 2015.

picture, diary, uniform, or any other object. Once the contribution has been submitted it will be reviewed by an expert and, if accepted, will become available for others.

Gifts, donations, temporary loans, and digital contributions: the inclination to give and put in common converge with the most authentic meaning of heritage as the engagement to preserve something we have inherited and we recognize as a gift from the past. As Jean Davallon says: 'Once we recognize that we are heirs of someone, who gave value to the object, we declare that we are in debt with it and that […] we feel we should pass it on to the future generation' (Davallon 2006: 160).

SOCIAL ROOTS OF HERITAGE

Museums can be seen as ancient, huge, and not commercial social networks.

When we say that museums should become a Social Arena through heritage, and not despite of heritage, we are not thinking of heritage as a collection of things – buildings, statues, paintings, photos, films etc. The point is neither defending the social

value of some sets or kinds of objects nor supporting the creation of new collections. The cases of the *Cité de l'Immigration* and the *Europeana Collection* 1914-1918 are important not just for gathering new materials, but for the fact that they foster the ancient (but still alive and well!) popular vocation to preserve, put in common, and share what is considered important, paradigmatic, and vital. In this sense, gifts from the past and gifts from the present converge.

From this point of view, museums can be seen as ancient, huge, and not commercial social networks. Museums are in touch with all contemporary practices based on the logic of gift, as open source software, Wikipedia, etc. If we look at our heritage as just an open source of a different and peculiar kind, museums appear as the arenas where very old, but at the same time very contemporary social trends might be cultivated – the attitude to put things in common.

Nurturing the social roots of their inherited and new heritages should be the museums' main strategy to become unique Social Arenas.

MUSEUM TO DISCOVER
Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration,
Paris, France
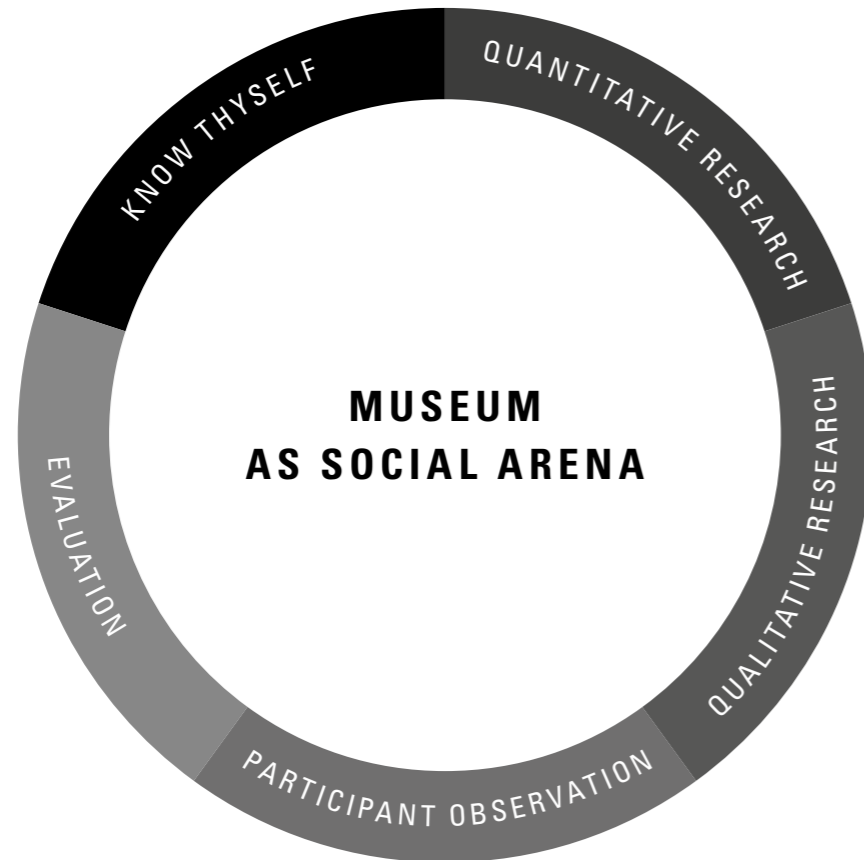*http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/*

PROGRAMME TO FOLLOW
Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration,
Paris, France
http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/la-cite/le-projet-de-la-cite

Europeana
http://www.europeana.eu/

WHAT DOES SOCIETY EXPECT FROM MUSEUMS?

Museums are trying so hard to be places that matter in our society, but then – why not ask society what it wants and expects? Why is it so many times the case that museums assume that their presented topic of an exhibition is in interest of society? We propose a very simple, but perhaps somewhat time consuming idea – go and ask them. Get to know the people who are already coming to your museum, as well as the ones your museum has not touched until now. It might bring in a new perspective and a change of work. Perhaps they will help you challenge the definitions of what museums are and help you to start sharing ideas and good practices on how to open your museum to the needs of society.

Usually people – our potential visitors – are looking for new stories, entertainment, and experiencing the era.

How to get started? We will take you through the practical steps on how to approach your research in order to obtain an idea of people's opinions about museums. Practical tips on how to tackle the research on the spot are connected through the next topics:

— *Identifying and refreshing your values, mission and visions in order to
'know thyself'*
SWOT analysis
— *Audience research*
Knowing your visitors and non-visitors
— *Keep it SMART*

Fig. 7: Social Arena circle – research flow.

**MUSEUM
AS SOCIAL ARENA**

KNOW THYSELF

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

EVALUATION

KNOW THYSELF

GET TO KNOW YOURSELF THROUGH SWOT ANALYSIS

In this chapter we will touch very lightly on the art of strategic planning. Although you have most probably been using these tools already, a quick skim through this chapter might be helpful before diving into a new project.

For everything we do, there are three big questions that arise in our minds 'What do we do [as a curator, project leader, and museum?', 'Who do we do it for?' and finally 'How do we do this and do it well?' The answers to these questions are, in the end, very simple; you just need to know yourself [your museum] and the society you live in. Easy, right?

As the ancient Greeks knew, 'know thyself' is the start of the journey. Most surely your museum has a Mission and a Vision statement and you are (most probably) in accordance with them. However, there must be something more than those carefully chosen words, sometimes resonating so coldly professional that they sound foreign to your heart. And there is. There are your values, the values of your colleagues, the values on which those two statements should be written. And as value systems chan-

ge, so should the Vision and Mission statements. Do you remember when those were written? Is it time to change them a little or do you feel they still represent your organisation and people working in it?

Most probably you will start with a SWOT analysis. It is a very handy tool to assess your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

This is your first stage and at the same time, the beginning of Social Arena. Invite the whole working collective and make a workshop out of it. If you work in a big museum with many employees, you might find it easier to break down the groups into smaller units, such as different departments for example. However, be aware that this might influence the nature of the information you receive in the analysis.

… AND NOW TURN THE KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

What is this SWOT analysis all about and how do you tackle it? You can use this analysis when preparing a project, when you are evaluating an organisation or even yourself. There are two by two factors

you need to keep in mind. The first two are the Helpful and Harmful factors, and the other two the Internal and External ones. So when you think of your project, organisation or personal Strengths and Weaknesses you focus on what you think and believe those are. While when you are thinking of Opportunities and Threats you should focus on your surroundings that will or could have an influence on yourself, your project or organisation on which you do not have any influence.

So for example, let's say you are evaluating your museum; your Strength might be that you have willing staff to take up a new Social Arena project, however, you do not have the space that you could use for it. That would be your Weakness. You read in newspapers polemics about a certain problem which you were thinking of addressing in your museum – this could be an Opportunity as the society seems to be engaged in it already. The Threat might be a lack of public funding.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

Knowing your audiences and the ones who are not part of this group yet is of an extreme value. Knowing your audiences will give you an opportunity to reach out to them with more certainty and you'll be richer for the knowledge on how to work in the future.

Here we are guiding you through the steps that were made in a real museum during the EMEE project, to show you how implementing

changes can result in favour of the relevancy of the museum – by relying on the people.

The steps we took were the following:

— Scanning the surrounding community with the help of questionnaires
— Interviews with the outstanding people from the questionnaires
— Forming focus groups with whom a museum visit and review was made
— Creating enriched special days in the museum

In our research we tried to look at the museum from three different perspectives: one from the perspective of the employees, the second one from the visitors and the third from the general public, so non-visitors. We were also interested in how these perspectives were intertwined, how they complemented and contradicted each other. We decided to tackle the 'problem' with three different methodologies; questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, in order to get as rounded an idea as possible of the situation we were in. There are many theories as to why people do one thing or another, a lot of guessing was done by the employees of the museums, and

in the end it was hard to decide which theory to follow, which hunch to go on. We are proposing a different solution – ask the audiences! You need to know where and how they interact with museums and what their wishes, demands and fears are and how to accommodate them in your museum.

The key to finding out what works for your audiences lies in the research.

FIRST STEP – QUESTIONNAIRES

The quantitative research of the audiences can give you valuable insight into your work and can frame the next step of your research. Along the way you can use the results to double-check if you are still heading in the right direction. You can find many examples on visitor research websites, but you should look for the one suitable for your purposes.

IDEA:
Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2005)
http://visitors.org.uk/

Keep in mind that you should be careful what kind of division of respondents you construct in order to analyse the questionnaires. Sometimes the preconceived notions of influence of gender, age, education are not as valid as anticipated. It is surely easier to analyse when you divide the respondents into specific groups, but sometimes they don't share as many qualities as one might hope. Get to know the computer program that you use in the analysis of your data before you construct questionnaires, because it will be easier to get the results you are looking for.

TIP:
Big museum days are appropriate to hand out questionnaires where you will get responses on your current exhibitions from a wider group of audiences and non-audiences. You should also consider preparing a rich programme on these special days that would include a presentation of your future exhibitions, so that you will remind the audiences (regardless of whether they are from a group of visitors or non-visitors) that your museum can offer them a good time.

UPGRADE TO QUALITATIVE

Quantitative research can lead us to a fast but also brief insight into what visitor and non-visitor values and their problems are. The information

gathered with quantitative research should be used as a frame for a more detailed and in-depth qualitative research analysis. Try to include the same individuals at all levels of your research so that you can estimate their responses better and build a relationship in the end.

FOCUS GROUPS TO SWEEP YOU OFF YOUR FEET

'Most of the research done in museums is conducted after the fact – after the visit has occurred – and in this sense remains a study of a completed text, a past response (although, clearly, visitors tailor their account of their responses according to the interview or survey situation in which they find themselves)' (Handler 1997: 9), so, in other words, invite people to your museum to see how they conduct themselves in the museum and learn how they see you.

Focus groups can be of great help here! Maybe you will have only one group, maybe you will have more, yet surely you will choose a focus group which will help you best to see the view you need to understand the most. When you know who to include in

this group, make sure you know exactly what you want to find out. A poorly prepared programme for this part of the research could turn out to be frustrating for you and the participants. Do you need to understand why an exhibition is not as attractive as you had hoped? Maybe you want to know how certain themes or objects make the participants feel or how to build a comfortable environment for the visitors? You should be focused, but at the same time open to suggestions and different points of view.

BE PERSONAL AND PERSONALISED

Fig. 8: Children exploring the permanent exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Visitors may point out that they want a personal experience; they want to be able to get additional information about the exhibition and the era on display from an informed guide. They emphasized that they are missing social history and are not just looking for dry facts or information that is available in every textbook.

Interaction with a guide would also offer an additional perspective to the exhibition, help reinterpret the objects, and relate to the objects not only as reminders of the things that happened in the past, but as reminders that people were the ones that experienced the past. It is a way to address the audiences in a new manner, which does not mean you are endangering the integrity of the museum or 'dumbing down' (Kelly 2007). 'Different ways in which people learn should guide the development of museums' learning programmes and resources and the way in which they collect, display and interpret objects. Successful learning initiatives actively engage learners, supporting them in making their own meanings and developing their understanding' (Bellamy, Burghes and Oppenheim 2009: 14). To paraphrase 'museums are expected not simply to teach a single truth, but to present many, often competing, points of view' (Stampe 2007: 17) and at the same time entertain its visitors.

KEEP IN MIND DIVERSE AUDIENCES

The reactions of your focus group(s) can be of help when you are deciding which changes you need to implement to cater to a variety of audiences. Arrange your museum in such a way that people with different backgrounds can relate to the story you are portraying. This means exhibitions need to be appropriate for diverse audiences at the same time. People have very different expectations from the museums, and this is valuable information for the museums.

EDUCATION IS NOT THE SAME AS LEARNING

Research shows that museums inspire children to learn, and to acquire skills and knowledge, that they enjoy their visits, and find museums exciting and good places to learn differently (Bellamy, Burghes and Oppenheim 2009: 13). Visitors are not only looking for information; they are interested in new stories. They want to be entertained, they want to experience an era, and they want to feel what people had to go through at one point of history or another.

It sounds like the only key to success is changing temporary exhibitions[5] often and visitors will be storming through your gates. Is it really enough? Temporary exhibitions provide a welcome change of pace, an opportunity to look at something obscure and specific, or something well-known through a specific point of view, but they're hardly enough by themselves. They are simply one of the many elements that comprise your museum.[6] Only a broader understanding will make your museum as a whole a more successful, more entertaining and attractive institution.

Being an educator is not sufficient enough anymore. Try working on a more complete approach by offering learning in the broadest sense of the word.

THE KEY TO A POWERFUL EXHIBITION LIES IN TEAMWORK

Visitors do not only judge an exhibition by its content; but also how it is designed. And it is not enough if it only looks pretty. Pretty helps, but design should complement the information, and for that to happen all the parties in the museum should work together. It is not enough for the collection curators to think about the exhibition, they need to talk to the education department to see how they can reach their audiences best through the content. They should include a designer, who understands the space, the motion of the visits and needs of the visitors to keep the exhibition easy to navigate and understand. And if possible, why not include the outreach department, and through it, your audience? It needs to be a collective endeavour; otherwise visitors will notice that the exhibition is a patch work. The museum staff should all work as a single organism because in the end, they all share a single goal: to bring the content the museum is presenting as close as possible to the visitors and opening up the museum to a broader audience.

5.   Falk and Dierking (1992: 19); Camarero and Garido (2009: 864); Gilmore and Rentschler (2002: 754); Wittlin (2004: 53); West and Chesebrough (2007: 141); and many more have made great discussions on the field of the positive power of the temporary exhibitions.

6.   As Falk has outlined a fact that cannot be ignored is that people who are looking for experiences are attracted to museums by the entire offer – as much the temporary, as the permanent exhibitions, food, gifts and to have a good time (2009: 199). It is exactly why the temporary exhibitions in museums are not to dominate, supplement or exceed the rest.

1, 2, 3 – ACTION!

So you have your Values identified, your SWOT analysis ready, visitor and non-visitor research completed and a draft of your new project in front of you. When planning a project keep it SMART. Skim through it again, and this time, keep this in mind as you are reading through; is it Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-related? You can make your objectives even SMARTER, by adding Evaluate and Re-evaluate to the project.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL ARENA STARTS IN YOUR COLLECTIVE

The analysis of the audiences you have conducted so far is an important practice for the analysis that brings you to the implementation of the Social Arena. In a way, the proposed research will help you evaluate your own methodology and results up to this point, and prepare you to take the next step. Do not look at the audience's research only as practice, but keep in mind that every potential visitor is a potential participant in your museum. When you discover who your visitors and potential visitors are, you can move to the next level – the implementation of the newly acquired knowledge into the developing Social Arena.

Museum staff play a crucial role in implementing the personal visitors' experience.

Most visitors are looking for their own personal experience of a museum, and one way of giving it to them is to increase the role that the employees play[7]. When deciding future actions as an institution, first you need to evaluate where you stand. There are different workshops you could do to get to know the personal and professional values of your colleagues and how to rework them into a Vision and Mission statement.[8]

When you have gathered a multitude of information you need to translate what you have learned to the museum's daily practices. But before you get started with the next step you have to implement the 'know thyself' policy we were talking about before. It is important to know your personal values and the values of your colleagues to create meaningful and excellent work. You will be able to communicate and work better, plus you will know who might be interested in certain kinds of work or projects. We have different arrays of skills, qualities and knowledge, and by working for the same goals we can put them into better use.

It is not enough to understand the points of view of each other, but to figure out how to transform these into practice. What are the topics or groups that employees want to work with? Who is willing to put in the additional effort? And so on.

If you try to force people to do something they do not support, the project is doomed to fail from the start. You are arising from yourself, your strengths and weaknesses. The talks that occurred inside the museum walls up to this point are already part of the process which leads to a more sustainable future. Now the time has come to make contact with the community.

GET TO KNOW THE 'PROBLEM'

Think specifically – what is the problem that the community around you has? What are they looking for? Is there a group of people that could benefit from your involvement? Is there a problem you can help with? How can you interact? There are two options; do you want to tackle a problem that you noticed or work with a specific group? A group can have more than one problem and a problem can be shared among diverse groups, so you need to focus on one aspect and work with that. Which approach to take and which problem to deal with is a decision that should come from inside the working collective. No matter if you

7. The importance of the museum's staff contributions is a well-digested topic by many experts: Hooper Greenhill (1993: 210); Gilmore and Rentschler (2002: 750); Mensch (2004: 7); Kotler, Kotler and Kolter (2008); Simon (2010); Bandelli and Konjin (2011: 165).

8. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2005).

have decided to follow a problem or a group of people, your approach from now on is going to be the same. You do not have to do all the work on your own, reach out to organizations that have a background in social oriented work; they can help you at the beginning of your project.

When you established contact, you need to know what the community wishes to accomplish by collaborating with your institution. How they see the partnership, what they would like to get out of it, their perceptions, and what they expect from you.

When facing a new community project, do not be afraid to rely on the connections you have made during the research.

ACTIVE ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Do not treat participants as passive consumers of your product; they need to have an active role in the process. They need to be given the power; they are not a tool for you to get what you want. 'Pay attention to the processes of knowledge-production and to the ways that these intersect with the workings of power' (Stampe 2007: 16). The goal of the process you partake in is collaboration and dialogue. In this process, museums should not be in the position of knowledge or authority,[9] but should encourage a different perspective on objects, themes, problems and

how this nurtures the role of the museum as an open space for dialogue and getting to know each other. The museum thus becomes 'a theoretical thoroughfare for understanding broad, social processes of representation, of identity formation, and of the establishment, reproduction, and disruption of social inequalities' (Erikson 1999: 556).

CHOOSE A TOPIC THAT REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY!

A problem that most societies are facing at this moment is the increase in unemployment. Every day we hear how the numbers are growing, how different sectors of the population are being affected. The unemployed are a very specific group, since they are very diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, education, political views, but they share a common life situation. It is not the role or the aim of museums to solve the problem of unemployment, but to give them an option to share their situations, to give them an opportunity to be active, because many unemployed are suffering from a lack of connections with society in general and are unable to form new social ties. Museums can help with this.

Since the unemployed are such a diverse group you might be lucky enough to encounter individuals with different skill sets that can enrich the end product of the process. Is there a factory close by that is closing down after it had been doing well for decades? How do the workers, who had dedicated years of their life to this factory, feel? How does closing down the factory affect them? By collaborating with the community you can create an exhibition that will, through the personal stories of the workers, put into context the work that they did and how the social values of work has changed in your society. At the same time you can try to connect the stories on a wider level and look at what is

Fig. 9: Children's summer workshops, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013. Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Fig. 10: Overseas combatants, exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014. Photo: Sašo Kovačič

9. There are many experts who strongly support the fall of the authoritarian approach in the museums, which needs to be replaced with a democratic one when talking about the relation between the museum staff and the audiences (Mensch (2004: 8); Simon (2010); Marstine (2011b: 12); Bandelli and Konijn (2011: 172)).

happening with the European heritage of the industrial boom.

Unemployment is a common issue that can be explored and presented in a museum from various perspectives.

THE END GAME

The implementation of social orientated policies in museums will take a while, but do not get discouraged; the progress started with the first conversation that took place between the museum employees about it. So it is a process, and it is a long process at that, and the important part is that you do not decide what the end result should be at the very beginning. Projects might be as diverse as the individuals in the groups that agree to become involved in your museum. Every individual should have a voice in what they expect to come out of this process.

It is not important if at the end of this long process you do not end with a specific museum installation. It is enough if the participants are richer because of the new knowledge gained and the positive experiences or if a group of individuals was able to work through their problems in the safe space you provided. The last result is harder to evaluate, which does not make it any less important. The museum is there to give to the community what they need and not the other way around. It is not the obligation of the participants to produce an end result that will enrich your collection.

EVALUATE

Regardless of how you approach your research; who your target audience is, or any other aspect of your research, the evaluation of your work should be a constant at all stages. When you are talking with the employees and the audiences, and while working on the museum as a place of Social Arena; when it comes to the community you are working with, do not forget to include them in the evaluation, otherwise it will not count for much. Evaluation can take up a lot of your time, but it will give you a clear overview of the project and make it possible for you to adjust the project as you go along.

Evaluate – it is what gives you a chance to grow as a museum.

KEEP IN MIND:
Be prepared that the research may hold some surprises for you, or open up completely new points of view from what you had perceived or anticipated. Keep an open mind as these are those first bricks that start building up the new dialogues which nurture the Social Arena.

TO TOP IT ALL OFF

When talking about visitor research it is easy enough to reach the conclusion that it is all about the number of people who visit your museum. This should not be your only goal (we are not saying it is not important, but you should not put all your focus on it), but also the quality of the experience of those visitors and the impact they have on society and its needs.

NOTHING HAPPENS OVER NIGHT

The enthusiasm at the beginning of the research can easily mislead you to think that once you have the results everything is done. When it comes to museums acting as Social Arenas you can be overzealous and you want to speed up the process. Unfortunately it does not work like this in 'real life'. Do not expect changes over night! The Social Arena

and changing the perception of the museum is a process which will only bring results in the long run.

So why do it, if it is really such a long and hard process? It is worth doing because it will save you a lot of time, effort and resources in the long run. Information that you will gather during your research can help you update existing exhibitions or plan future temporary ones. Information is your best weapon in the fight to keep your museum alive and valuable to the community.

BE BOLD AND MEMORABLE

The key to develop audiences is not only to convince people to visit your museum; but you need to convince them to keep coming back. A memorable experience, with a promise of novelties in the near future is a way to get the audiences to come back.

A cultural offer with the enriched daily offer of the museum and the theme of the exhibition are a step closer to the personal experience that people want.
It is with the attractive and trendy temporary exhibitions that you can send your voice further into society. But this is not enough for the museum to become a Social Arena – it is simply one step in that direction.

DAZZLE YOUR AUDIENCES

If anything, remember this; people want to know and understand the world around them, they want to be fascinated by it, they want to find a piece of their roots in the stories of others, and they need to connect. You and your museum know so many beautiful stories; you know details and information that would bring awe to every listener's eyes. Work with those; entwine the passion of what you do into the project you are starting. Astonish the participants, surprise them, guide them to understanding and nurture the love and passion they are starting to grow. It means building a relationship. And in the end, that is what we, museologists, want: for people to respect and care for our museum, collections, and stories.

THE AUDIENCE – WORKING WITH DIFFERENT GROUPS: CASE STUDIES AND GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The audience in the museums represents a vast variety of people and groups of people. The following text reaches visitors and non-visitors as a whole. Despite the holistic approach it gives emphasis to the three particular groups which stand out when speaking of the high and unused potential which museums seem to overlook:

— People with a migratory background represent a vast section of the citizens within Europe, who offer a great deal of knowledge and wealth, who can enrich and contribute to the multicultural society as a whole, but only if we learn how to accept it. The museums can be the carriers of this acceptation and transnational knowledge story.
— Minorities are usually the groups of people whose voices are often unheard. With the use of a democratic and ethical approach museums can find space and time for these groups of people to find their voices in the legal spaces of identity and again help society to grow richer and more transnational – together.
— Young people who are the carriers of the European story for the future, people in their most productive years with dreams and their life in front of them, and people who are more and more under a great pressure of uncertainty regarding their future. For them especially, the museums could offer a space as a Social Arena, where they could grow and work on their potential. Work on their potential represents a building block for the common future.

Fig. 11: Summer night in a museum, MG+ Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2012. Photo: Matija Pavlovec

»I want to highlight the principle that what is good for a subordi-
nate group is also good for the groups and individuals who are situated in
more favourable positions. […] The reverse is not true«

(La Rivière-Zijdel 2008: 32).

Fig. 12: Experiencing the first so called computers:
abakus workshop. National Museum of Contem-
porary History, Ljubljana 2012.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

This quote should be our guiding line when we are thinking about our
museum as a Social Arena and thus accessible to vulnerable groups,
or better yet, to everybody.

Museums as Social Arenas should be flexible open spaces for
all the people who desire to be more active in the discourses of mu-
seums and heritage as in the field of changing the mentality of people
through museum exhibitions and events. But it happens much too of-
ten that we forget there is a vast group of people who face different
barriers while approaching the museum's physical or social space. To
really be as inclusive as the Social Arena concept demands from mu-
seums, we need to be aligning ourselves with the most basic con-
ditions by taking the vulnerable groups into account. This leads to an
infinitely long list of challenges, which we can never cope with com-
pletely and which may ultimately represent a source of frustration for
the museum staff. To prevent possible frustrations and to replace them
by working with great vigour, we will take a walk through the concepts
of the vulnerable groups and how a museum can work side by side
with people from these groups and produce a fascinating experience

for all.

When we talk about vulnerable groups[10] we have to keep in mind that a vulnerable group is a heterogeneous group of individuals with specific individual needs, habits, norms, values and other distinctive features.

We often enumerate a list of different sub-groups of people that have a common denominator: social exclusion.

We can enlist:

— people with physical disabilities (not only users of wheelchairs, but in general people who face problems with walking or handling things, people with balance problems while standing and others);
— people with problems in sensory perception (blind and partially sighted people, deaf-blind, deaf people and people with hearing loss);
— people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems as well as people with other forms of (invisible) disabilities: Dyslexia, Alzheimer's patients, patients with Parkinson's disease, allergic persons and many others;
— elderly people/ seniors;

— women;
— children;
— ethnic groups and minorities;
— migrants;
— LGBTQ people;
— unemployed people.

Nevertheless these groups are never homogeneous, but rather heterogeneous. Social categories such as gender, disability, ethnicity, etc. could overlap and intersect: therefore, different societies through geographical space and time have generated social inequalities.

WHERE DO MUSEUMS PLAY A ROLE IN THIS?

We cannot pretend there has not been a lot already said about the accessibility of museums. At least most European museums have devoted a fair amount of their energies towards the accessibility of their physical space or at least have declared in their annual or decennial plans that one of the priorities should be the accessibility of museums' exponents and exhibitions. Regardless of that, a lot

of things yet remain undone. In the European Union a gap still exists between the states regarding their commitment towards overcoming the barriers that present obstacles to people from vulnerable groups towards their full participation in the social space.

The museum is thus not only considered a physical space in which museum objects are stored, but a social space in which people work and, most importantly, where people meet. *The museum should be considered a social space of reciprocal exchange and transaction of cultural and social goods, stories, relations, a space of encounters, reflections, (re)conceptualisation of social practices and creation of socio-cultural meaning.* Besides being the authority of the museum narration, museum employees should give support to all kinds of social interchange. This is not just to create narratives about the Others for the Others, but support the Others to create the narratives about themselves and for all.

In theory this sounds great. But, how can this be achieved?

By preparing museums to become Social Arenas that include individuals from vulnerable groups, we have decided to start right at the beginning and to offer some basic steps:
— make sure the museum is physically accessible to all people,
— place reliable information about the accessibility to your museum on the website or even on the museum's front doors,
— train your staff well,
— establish a focus group,
— offer an engaging social experience,

10. The authors of the manual have a critical view on the term 'vulnerable groups' as it could imply the hidden discourse of social power and inequality. In any case, the authors hope that political mechanisms in the current European Union want to use this term to designate positive discrimination with the aim of improving and empowering people from the social margins.

— give voice to different people.

Most of the European Union countries have already ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* – the core document for the rights of people with disabilities on the international level. In Article 30 of the *CRPD*, related to participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport, it declares that the state parties (the states that ratified the *CRPD*) should 'recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life' and thus should take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities 'enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance'.

http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are many ways to realize these ideas in practice. We think *the first one is to make sure that your museum is physically accessible for different people from vulnerable groups, especially for people with disabilities or handicaps* (such as elderly people/ seniors or somebody who has a temporary handicap – such as a fractured leg). With accessibility we mean the accessibility of the building, the entrance, toilet facilities, exhibition space, the administrative offices, and the places in the museums where visitors usually go. A simple internet search for terms such as *'accessibility of museums'* or *'access to museums'* will give you some valuable links regarding the accessibility of the building and the accessibility of the exhibitions. Some countries or organisations have already developed good and reliable systems of evaluation of the built environment, based on questionnaires with the basic norms of built issues (standards for the built environment) – such as door width, equipment of the sanitary facilities, steps and path labelling – which is also visualised with simple symbols and vignettes in different colours.

The first step is to provide physical accessibility to the museum. You can find a handful of good practices of accessibility of the built environment on the internet.

TIP:
We highly recommend *The Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design*, as it gives a lot of detailed information about access to museum exhibitions for different groups of people with disabilities.
http://www.si.edu/accessibility/sgaed

Fig. 13: BIO - Biennieal of design: Kick off workshops, Museum of architecture and design, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Tanja Vregales

Fig. 14: Children's workshop: experiencing the old games, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Urška Purg

IDEAS:

Museums are in the interest of the tourist industry, especially the accessible tourist industry.

For more information see:

UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organization) – Accessible Tourism:

http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/accessible-tourism

ENAT – European Network of Accessible Tourism:

http://www.accessibletourism.org/.

ENAT also provide some links about the access to historical buildings or museums:

Improving the accessibility of historic buildings and places (2011)

http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/publications/heritagepublica-tions/builtheritagepolicypublications/access%20-%20 improving%20the%20accessibility%20of%20historic%20 buildings%20and%20places%20(2011).pdf

Guidelines to ensure accessibility to museums and exhibitions for the blind and partially sighted (2011)

http://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/muse-ums-and-exhibitions-accessible-for-visually-impaired---guidelines-20111.pdf

TIP:

Gain success through virtual access!

You can also invite people to join your museum through a virtual tour of the museum. The assumption or fear that once people see the virtual exhibition, they will not visit the actual one seems to be unfounded. As we will show hereinafter, people get information mostly through visual material, but on the other hand, their experiences and knowledge are built on a much more intensive and active level and engage all the senses. So we can think about the virtual tour of the museum as a stimulation of curiosity. On the other hand, the virtual tour provides the people that could not visit the museum for various reasons, with an insight and some basic information about the museum's exhibition. However, this kind of tour is not accessible for people with sight impairments. For blind and partially sighted people, we recommend a verbal/ sound description of the museum's space and all the possible obstacles (see Vocaleyes, an organisation in the UK that provide audio descriptions.

http://www.vocaleyes.co.uk/

GOOD EXAMPLES:

Louvre, Paris, France

http://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne

Smithsonian Natural History Museum, Washington, D.C., USA

http://www.mnh.si.edu/vtp/2-mobile/

National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, Slovenia

http://www.muzej-nz.si/sprehod/virtualtour.html

http://fototekamnzs.com/bxfbs/pretekle-razatave/fotografske-podobe-iz-zivl-jenja-gluhih-in-naglusnih-v-ljubljani/

In collaboration with the television of deaf Tipk TV the exhibition was also filmed and explained by the same student in slovene sign language

http://www.tipk.si/oddaje/tipkove-minute/tipkove-minute-15-oddaja

PROJECT TO FOLLOW:

The Vlog Project, Withney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

It presents a good example of accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing visitors and museum educators:

http://whitney.org/Education/Access/Vlogs

LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT YOU ARE ACCESSIBLE!

Place information about the accessibility of your museum on the website or even on the front door of the museum. Make sure the information is reliable, correct and updated!

If your museum has already done this kind of evaluation, let people know about it; be it on your official museum website or display it somewhere at the entrance. It is really important for people with disabilities to have all the information about the physical accessibility of your museum as they will tend to take more time to examine and prepare before the museum visit. What is also important is the reliability of the information: information must be correct and updated! If you are not sure about the reliability of your museum's information, it is a good idea to check the built environment and the facility with some of the users or a focus group. There is nothing more inconvenient for a wheelchair user than planning a visit to the museum after carefully studying the website, where it was written that the museum was accessible whereas at the site discovering that there is a one centimetre gap at the front doors means that the person cannot enter.

Such inconveniences could sometimes partially avoided merely by having well trained staff.

GOOD EXAMPLES:
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/d/disability-and-access/

Louvre, Paris, France
http://www.louvre.fr/accessibilite

IDEA:
— Put down your Accessibility Statement!
— Do you have an accessible museum?
— Do you have a commitment towards accessibility?
— Do you plan something accessible in your museum? Put it down and publish it on your web page, Facebook page, Twitter etc.
— Say that you are ACCESSIBLE! Tell people that you are working on it! This also means that you are the coolest museum in your social environment: You work to be accessible for everyone!

GOOD EXAMPLE:
From the British Museum, London, UK
https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_this_site/accessibility.aspx

Fig. 15: Permanent exhibition – focus group visit, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Urša Valič

Fig. 16: Museum staff at the opening of the temporary exhibition: 'We never imagined such a war', National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Accessibility:
We have just added a lot of BSL videos to our site, both translations of our highlight objects, and a really exciting school project with Frank Barnes (Barnes, Mercer, Shakespeare 1999). Go to British Sign Language for more information. We also have 20 recordings of audio descriptions of objects in our ground floor galleries.

Future developments:
'We are working on developing options for users to select different default background colours and larger text sizes. We are also going to add a section on orientation information for screen reader users, and as we add more multimedia on the site we will have a further section on playing Flash Movies using different assistive technologies.'

WELL TRAINED STAFF

Train the museum staff! Do not leave your training and relations with people from vulnerable groups up to chance.
Everybody, from the director to the technical staff (cleaners included) in the museum should be *trained on the specific needs of people with disabilities as well as trained to service, host and accompany a person with a disability and a person from a different socio-cultural background.* This means that from the parking, on through the visit and the museum's shop or café, we have to think not only about the built environment, but also about the people who the visitor would meet. This is why the museum staff need to be trained to fulfil each visitor's needs. Sometimes, even just a nice and warm and spontaneous '*hello and welcome*' is a starting point. Never forget first to ask the person 'Can I help?', then ask the visitor 'How can I help?'.

In most cases, *there is no one that has never had an experience with a person with a disability or a person from another socio-cultural environment; so the training could mean just a reflection of individual experiences. However, never leave the work with people with disabilities or people from different socio-cultural backgrounds up to chance or coincidence.* Rather, we propose you should hire an expert in this field to lead the conversation and the training. We also highly recommend educating at least one member of your staff who will lead the training of your staff. This person (or more people) could also be the contact person(s) of your museum for visitors with specific needs and always at the disposal of your visitors for planning the visit and in many cases could even assist the person throughout the visit. This could also be a new opportunity for an employee profile, even though some museums have this role already partially covered by a *cultural mediator*. In any case, it is good to establish a focus group to help training and preparing the museum exhibitions or events.

GOOD EXAMPLE:
Barry Ginley, V&A Museum, London, UK, Disability and Access Officer tells his story on the internet page:
http://www.vam.ac.uk/users/node/5932
'*In November 2002, I was appointed as Disability and Access Officer at the Victoria & Albert Museum. This was a new area of work, as my previous experience had been providing a consultancy service to the Royal National Institute of the Blind and several property service companies. The role is varied, dealing with all aspects of the Museum's work, including developing policies and strategy, design of galleries, staff training, and managing talks programmes.*'

MORE ABOUT HIS WORK:
http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3761/3276

PROJECT TO FOLLOW:

Accessibility of cultural heritage to vulnerable groups. *www.dostopnost.eu*

A project founded with European Social Founds with the priority goals of training people, for museum work, from various vulnerable groups and the development and implementation of new inclusive approaches.

ESTABLISH A FOCUS GROUP

Through focus groups you can establish a permanent bond between the museum and its social environment. This experience is a reciprocal one.

Nina Levent and Joan Muyskens Pursley wrote '*Focus groups provide museum educators with first-person accounts and poignant stories of visitor experiences that become very powerful tools for raising awareness within a museum team about different kinds of visitor experiences*' (Levent and Muyskens Pursley 2013).

You can *establish a focus group* through the social connections that you have already established during your work. Invite individuals that are inter-ested in museums that could be your cultural and group mediators. You can contact some organisations of people with disabilities or people with various socio-cultural backgrounds (national and ethnic minorities or groups, migrant, LGBT) or search for the organisations and individuals in your own (museum) environment and through that *try to establish a permanent bond between the museum and its social environment*. When you are about to establish a focus group it is better to target the group and focus either on specific needs or problems and work on that, as some questions and results may not be compatible with rites of other group. To illustrate: people who are blind or have poor eyesight may face different needs than people who are deaf or have difficulties with hearing. If you have a problem finding an appropriate organisation - some international European networks or national boards of organisation might be very helpful.

IDEA:

On the website of the *European Disability Forum*, you can find a list of national boards of organisations of people with disabilities and as well as some other international organizations. *www.edf-feph.org*

The work with the focus group could be different:

1. you can start with a simple and free guided tour through the exhibition;
2. give touch & hear tours;
3. offer a tour with a sign language interpreter;
4. offer a multisensory experience tour;
5. you can have a round table debate about the interests, problems, experiences with and within the museum;
6. you can have lectures;
7. you can use your imagination and have performative and participatory workshops. The options are practically endless.

Everything is possible. Just have in mind that *this experience is a reciprocal one:* first you want these people to give you as much of their feedback in such a way that you can improve your service and work, the second, but no less important, is *to give an engaging social experience* (Levent and Muyskens Pursley 2013) to those who for various reasons find themselves on the fringes of society and are often neglected as visitors to a museum.

Levent and Muyskens Pursley wrote about the positive sides of collaboration between a museum and a focus group of blind people and people with low vision:

'*We urge any museum that is creating accessible programmes to engage in dialogue with current and future visitors with disabilities. As we know from the dozens of focus groups we have conducted over the past years, people who are blind or have low vision can play key roles in shaping the programmes that serve them, they can be active and thoughtful participants in the process of designing those programmes. It is equally important for blind visitors and future visitors to gain a sense of ownership about the museum's collection, an understanding of the museum's mission, and an appreciation of its content. When blind and low vision patrons become regular visitors to the museum, they become museum advocates and promote this and other museums within their local disability community*' (2013).

GOOD EXAMPLES:
Typhlological museums
Typhlology: what a complicated word! It is a compounded word from the ancient Greek tyflos, that means blind, and logos, knowledge, science etc. Typhlology means the science about blindness and blind or partially sighted people. Typhlological museums are in fact museums in which the history and

everyday life of blind people is presented in a manner that is accessible to blind people. Because of the possibility of touching the objects or reproductions or pictures presented in relief[11] we also call them TACTILE museums. We suggest you visit this kind of museum at least once with your museum team, as it can be useful to you to understand the methodology of working with blind and partially sighted people.

11. Or tactile pictures.

EXAMPLES:
Tiflološki muzej, Zagreb, Croatia
http://www.tifloloskimuzej.hr/

Museo tiflologico ONCE, Madrid, Spain
http://museo.once.es/

Museo tattile Omero, Ancona, Italy
http://www.museoomero.it/

AN ENGAGING SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

It is the engaging social experience that helps us to build a more sustainable, permanent and long-lasting relation between the museum and its visitors.

Maybe the most difficult and engaging, but at the same time the most creative part is to give an engaging social experience to your

Fig. 17: Sunday DIY Shadow theatre workshop, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Natalija Lapajne

visitors. What does this mean? On one hand, this has a lot to do with your *creativity of the representation of a museum collection.* How do we present our collections to our visitors? Most of the collections and museum objects are presented through visual and verbal material: pictures and words are usually the core 'tools' with which we present the museum objects. We often forget that *people acquire their knowledge in a much more active and complex manner, engaging all the senses: sight, hear, taste, smell and touch.* Do we use all of them when we are thinking about the transmission of knowledge through the museum representation? We also have to bear in mind that *people experience an exhibition with the whole body,* so it is good to pay attention to the bodily practices and non-verbal (and also non-visual) communication at the exhibition.[12]

IDEA:
Multisensory experience

In order to give a different experience to your staff and visitors, try to experiment with different performative and unusual museum practices through which you encourage your visitors and staff to think, feel and act differently.

TIPS:
— use music, dance and other performative practices from the theatre;
— use practices from contemporary art and design;
— use food and cooking;
— use modern technology;
— use a bandage to cover people's eyes to limit their sight, or headphones to isolate sound (Note that losing sight or hearing could be a traumatic experience, be careful not to exaggerate it. Do not think that with this you can fully show and understand the life of blind and deaf people – remember, living an experience of blindness or of deafness (or both) is a much broader thing. Also include social behaviour on an everyday level! This is just a tool to isolate some of the senses and show a different dimension of understanding the world);
— go crazy and use your imagination!

GOOD EXAMPLES:
'Werkzeug Wahrnehmung'/ 'Perception as a Tool' at the 6th Berlin Biennale (2010):
http://vimeo.com/20432859 or
http://werkzeug-wahrnehmung.blogspot.com/

Fig. 18: Two seniors revisiting their past. National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014. Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Fig. 19: Abakus workshop, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014. Photo: Sašo Kovačič

12. This means that is also important to pay attention to what seems on the surface to be banal things such as the rest points, water supplies, temperature and air condition, as well as more engaging ones such as the placement of the object in a room and the relation between the space, the person and the object – for example if there is a possibility of hands-on experience.

'Co-operate': Bringing Culture Closer to EveryoneTraining future collaborators in galleries and museums. They mostly deal with blind people, but others are not excluded.
http://www.co-operateskuc.com/presentation/

On the other hand, this engaging social experience also has to deal with *the interpretation of a museum collection and the authoritarian voice* in a museum. A museum programme for vulnerable groups is often created by the museum curators or educators with the goal of transmitting the knowledge achieved through a scientific methodology and theory. Less usual is the transmission of technical or social knowledge (such as social principles and values) through personal experience. However, these programmes are based on the input of the museum employee as a professional and thus an authoritative figure vis-a-vis the audience – the visitor. *While the performative (cf. Paul 1973) and participatory (cf. Simon 2010) methods transform the visitor's experience with valuable and important knowledge that on one hand destabilizes the authority of narration and on the other empowers the visitor. In practice, this means that the museum becomes an open space, and museum staff as-*

sist visitors (in this case, people from vulnerable groups), who are regarded in this conception more as partners, in active inclusion in all phases of museum work (from the conception of exhibitions to other programmes as well). In this manner, it is possible to build a more sustainable, permanent and long-lasting relationship between the museum and its visitors, especially the ones that were often silenced throughout history. *Try to understand the visitor as an active partner in the museum. For more information see Toolkit 3 manual: Bridging the gap.*

GOOD EXAMPLE:
Regional museum Koper/ Capodistria, Slovenia
The Slovene case of cooperation between a museum and the nearest centre where people with learning disabilities spend most of their day (Varstveno delovni center Koper) was in two projects: *Between the start and the goal (Med startom in ciljem*, 2010) and *Getting to know the Bronze Age in Istria (Spoznavanje bronaste dobe v Istri*, 2011). People with learning disabilities were engaged and assisted by the museum workers from the very beginning in the conception of the exhibition, then in the setting up of the exhibition, the promotion of the exhibition and

the conception of the accompanying programme and its implementation as well. Rather than inclusion in the museum, the author Brigita Jenko speaks about the inclusive museum, a museum in the service of society that engages its visitors as partners from the very beginning, to the results of the museum exhibition and the accompanying programme (Jenko 2013).

GOOD EXAMPLE:
Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia
http://www.etno-muzej.si/en

Collaboration with an organisation of homeless people (*Kralji ulice* – literally *Kings of the Street*) – exhibition *Life on the Street: Homelessness in Slovenia* (2010) – the creation of an exhibition about the life of homeless people in Slovenia. Homeless people were engaged in the preparation process (ethnographic research and providing/ gathering materials for the exhibition) and also in the preparation of the opening ceremony. Admission was free, so that other people from disadvantaged social and economic environments could visit the exhibition.

In collaboration with the organisation of people with disabilities or handicapped YHD, the museum organised an exhibition of portraits of people with disabilities and their assistants with the title *Personal Assistance is Our Existence* (2013). The exhibition was accompanied by multisensory workshops.

GOOD EXAMPLE:

FHXB Museum, Berlin, Germany

New Accessions – Migration Stories in Berlin, Coll-
ections

*http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/
uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P1_New-ac-
cessions-Migration-stories_1.pdf*

**ETHNIC GROUPS, MIGRATIONS AND A VAST CORPS OF
GLOBALIZATION PROCESSES**

When we are speaking about History Museums,
we often speak just about the National History, in
which we focus on the assumptions that, first, the
Nation is something homogenous, and second, that
something like a Nation exists in the real, physical
world. Therefore, we follow mostly what is consid-
ered the genesis of a majoritarian (in a sense of
power) Nation. In this view, different groups, and
particularly other ethnic groups that co-constructed
the National History as minorities and immigrants,
are most of the time marginalised or even absent
from museum representations.

One of the ethnic groups and a minority that
is mostly (and still) marginalised all over Europe
is the Roma/ Sinti/ Gypsy[13] community. The relati-
on towards the Roma community is an ambivalent
one: we tend to romanticise Roma people as good
musicians and bohemians, but on the other hand
people tend to negatively depict them as thieves
and smugglers, for example. The Roma communi-
ty according to *Amnesty International* report (https://
www.amnesty.org/en/search/?q=roma) still faces
problems such as segregation, displacement, in-
formal settlements, persecution etc. However, the-
re is little or no dialogue about the processes that
lead to this situation and on how these views were
constructed throughout history. We rarely speak
in our museums about the history of social exclu-
sion. For example about the Roma persecution in
Europe, such as the genocide of the Roma popu-
lation during World War II (ex. Genocide of Euro-
pean Roma (Gypsies), 1939-1945 in the *Holocaust
Encyclopaedia: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.
php?ModuleId=10005219).*

GOOD EXAMPLES:

Gothenburg City Museum, Sweden – Rom san – We are Roma – meet
the people behind the myth (2014) – an exhibition where Roma peo-
ple can talk about their everyday lives.

http://www.timecase.org/case/rom-san-we-are-roma
http://www.varromskahistoria.se/

Slovene ethnographic museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia – Day of the Roma
People (from 2008 on each year) – festival of Roma Culture (Romano
Chon): each year the museum gives place to a vast programme with
different creative activities that promote Roma culture proposed by
the members of the Roma communities in Slovenia. The Slovene eth-
nographic museum offers many different possibilities to the members
of the Roma community to represent themselves – ex. from 2014
Copy confirms the original exhibition:

http://www.etno-muzej.si/en/gostujoce-razstave/copy-confirms-the-original

However, the Roma community in some European countries have or-
ganised and presented their histories or in collaboration with Roma
intellectuals, researchers and NGOs have established their museums.

EXAMPLES:

Museums of Romani culture, Brno, Czech Republic

http://www.rommuz.cz/

13. We want to highlight that the Roma commu-
nity is not homogeneous but heterogeneous and
formed by different groups and different denomi-
nations (here we follow different forms
of self-determination).

Museum of Roma culture, Beograd, Serbia
http://www.romamuseum.rs/

The other marginalised group are the migrants. When talking about migrants, we often think about the people that move from poor, so-called third world countries, which are highly homogenised and stereotyped through the western-centric view on contemporary migration from continents like Asia and Africa. However, the concept of migrations could be wide and contextual, mostly a relational one, and could also be quite complex. There is a vast corps of literature on migration, but let us just briefly delineate some concerns that can help us rethink and redefine our views on migrations:

1. What do we mean by immigrant? Are the children of the immigrants still considered immigrants? What about the people who are situated in the country and consider it home and refer to themselves as citizens of other ethnicity? Immigrant concepts also relate concepts of home to citizenship and nationality.
2. Migrations are not just a modern phenomenon: if the archaeological hypotheses of the history of the human race are true, then migrations are as old as the first human beings. From the very start of our existence, we follow migrations in different forms and shapes: pilgrimages, wartime migrations, the migrations with animals and for food (as ex. transhumance shepherds), the migrations in the era of discoveries, migrations in the industrialisation era, migrations in the time of capitalism, migrations in the time of globalisation, virtual migrations, etc.
3. Migrations are not always just from the periphery to the centre (the centre of capital, power, wealth), but also vice versa. These relations between the centre and the periphery are flexible. However, we have to think about the migrations from the big powerful centres to other centres (ex. from London to Shanghai) or from what is considered a periphery to another periphery (as ex. local migrations), or between the continent and the country – of which the best example is the European Union, with its job market and its mobility programmes.
4. What about the cultural forms that are taken from other socio-cultural environments – like yoga, kebabs, oriental dances, sushi, pizza and others that were adopted in the second half of the 20th century, but were not present to such an extent before in some localities? This might be helpful when rethinking the concept of authenticity.

The above points are mainly pleasant and acceptable. But we should think about non-acceptable things, also: racism and fascism, the hate and violence experienced by people, being considered foreigners or immigrants in one country, either by individuals or by the government / country.

Migrations are not just migrations of people in flesh and blood. Human presence can also be followed through the migrations of goods, technology, finances, ideas, images etc. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai thinks about the socio-cultural processes of the global world and globalisation as a disjuncture that could be analysed through different dimensions of global cultural flows *(ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes)* – the fluid and irregular perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situation of different sorts of actors that create imagined worlds (as an extension of Benedict Anderson's concept imagined communities (Appadurai 2002: 50).

Only from this viewpoint do the globalised migrations make sense. The presentation of migrations is usually often limited to specific ethnic groups and their cultural representations and not contextualised and interpreted within the complexity of globalisation processes. However, migrations are in fact one of the most important questions in the European Union that European Museums must address more in the future, along with the issue of the growing elderly population and the young adults.

EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW:

In 2012, the Slovene ethnographic museum in collaboration with *Oloop Design* created an exhibition of examples of knitting with the help of the immigrant women from Bosnia, FYROM, Serbia, Kosovo that live in Slovenia (Jesenice). With the title *Razkrite Roke/ Disclosed Hands* the aim of the project of *Oloop* was to empower immigrant women through making their knowledge and traditions of knitting important for contemporary design in order to give them more possibilities of finding work and employment.

http://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/vitrinske-razstave-obiskovalcev/oloop-razkrite-roke

GOOD EXAMPLE:

Museum of the History of Migrations, Paris, France – the permanent exhibition *Repères* is a cross-work of different disciplines and it represents the history migrations related to French history from the 19th century onwards through testimonies, archive documents, photographs and art works.

http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/

GIVE A VOICE TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

When we change or transform the visitors into *active museum partners, we empower them to speak from themselves and for themselves.*

The idea behind this is to open the interpretative and representative space of the museum to the voices of the people who had been marginalised throughout history and constructed as the Others. What is missing in European museums is often that silenced part of the history of a large section of society – women, children, and people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ, and the list goes on.

Through the transformation of the museum into an open social space and through the engagement of different groups of people in participatory and performative practices we can create an engaging social experience for the museum workers and the visitors, building a long-lasting bond between the museum and the social environment, and last but not least, creating a responsible society for a better and sustainable future FOR ALL!

We encourage you to follow the idea of independent living, the core idea of many organizations dealing with vulnerable groups that could be summarized in the motto of the EDF: ' Nothing about us without us!'

KEY POINTS:

1. Make your museum accessible and let everyone know that you are accessible.
2. Train your staff.
3. Invite organisations and individuals as cultural mediators to cooperate.
4. Create focus groups.
5. Make from your visitors partners in the exhibition process and events creators.
6. Be creative in museum interpretation and representation and give to visitors-partners an engaging social experience!

It is important to emphasize the educational role of museums. They are primarily seen as didactic and educational institutions that encourage people to develop their imagination and offer opportunities for a meaningful educational *experience*. The exhibited museum collections are invaluable sources of education. They facilitate informal learning for people of all age groups, ethnic backgrounds and levels of interest – they are informal places of learning where children and adults can step outside the systems of learning they are usually subjected to.

Research has shown that museum visitors search for something more than just learning, activity or recreation. No matter what the type of museum visited is; everyone is looking for an experience, which is simply informal education. For this reason we think that museums are exceptional places designed for learning. They are, intentionally or not, places of intergenerational interaction, exchange of knowledge, views on the past (and present), and places of discovery about our society.

As Shari Tisham pointed out, museums embody ideas about how people learn by offering opportunities for active learning and personal agency. Active learning means that they need to be engaged with a learning experience, while the term personal agency considers the ways in which learners take charge of their own learning experiences. As museums broaden their missions and search for new constituencies, learning is becoming a fresh and central concern for institutions as a whole, from curators to designers to directors

Fig. 20: Sunday DIY architecture workshop, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Natalija Lapajne

Fig. 21: Museum has been taken over. The new director has prepared a sweet surprise for her co-workers. National Liberation Museum, Maribor, 2013.
Photo: Mediaspeed

(Tishman 2009). Museums are more and more aware of how their role as learning institutions has become important.

Do you want to base your next exhibition on interaction? In the year 2013, the Museum of Contemporary Art hosted a temporary retrospective of the Slovenia artist Jože Barši. The exhibition was designed to allow space and place for social interaction at different levels, so this transformed the exhibition into an open Social Arena, where different groups could participate as well as the general public. The artist himself was conducting a seminar for interested individuals, who then transferred the received knowledge to the general public in the form of guided tours. The exhibition also gave place to groups who wanted to carry out their activities inside the museum. The groups were diverse, from women knitting slippers, to a therapist that was offering psychoanalysis to the audiences. Visitors were regularly coming back.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P7_Joze-Barsi-retrospective-exhibition.pdf

Everyone that works in and with museums realizes the necessity of active education and interaction with visitors. The question on everyone's mind is how to develop programmes that would connect, enthuse and allow active participation for the visitors? Much has already been written about programmes and the development of educating in museums. For the purposes of this chapter, we will highlight some cases of good practice in museums. Due to the large amount of literature on this subject we will limit ourselves to presenting just a selection of experiences and links that concern themselves with deepening the understanding of museums as Social Arenas.

SCHOOLING GROUPS AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM

Museums should strive to appeal to visitors and non-visitors in their entire diversification. The young are a large section of the audience who are many times overlooked or not approached in the best way. In general, school groups visit museums in the largest numbers, but the question is; do we have a programme which suits their needs? Do we speak in an appropriate manner for their understanding? On the other hand, young people, especially young adults, get overlooked or they are labelled as a difficult group to reach and thus museums prefer to focus on groups which are 'easier' to work with or where the results are more immediate. But these groups are our future, which is why we need to invest more energy in them.

SCHOOLING GROUPS

Say *'Please touch!' as often as you can* and don't say *'Ssshhhush!'* are two dogmas of the Kids in Museum Manifesto. The Manifesto website works as a manual for anyone interested in developing new topics and interactions between young visitors to museums. It is described as a practical tool, made for encouraging and supporting museums, galleries and historical houses as open places for children, young people and families. Their goal? To make the visits more enjoyable and to encourage more families to visit museums. The most popular project is the *Takeover day,* an annual day on which museums, galleries and historic homes invite young people in and give them a meaningful role. Children make decisions and get involved in the life of the museum and they are encouraged to be active in museum management.

TAKEOVER DAY ORGANISED IN THE UK.
On the *International Museum Day* in 2013 a group of schoolchildren took over a Museum for a day. Participating children took over various segments of museum profiles; there were curators responsible for an exhibition which was prepared and inaugurated on the day, a conservation team was making sure the objects for the said exhibition were handled with the right amount of care and using the right methods, a PR representative was communicating

and promoting the event on various media throughout the day and the museum director took care that the museum was running smoothly while holding a press conference, answering e-mails and having meetings. These were not the only children in the position of museum workers, as many were conducting guided tours through the exhibition and a bunch of them organised and executed workshops for younger children, while a welcome desk greeted each of the visitors and handed over the tickets. All in all, these children took over the museum altogether.

This kind of project gives the participants the feeling of ownership. Through their involvement and work, through direct experiencing and engagement they connect with the object (museum) and maybe even more importantly, they bring fresh ideas and different viewpoints to the institution.
Find more: *http://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/manifesto/*

HOW TO START?[14]
If your museum already works with a local school, talk to the contact teacher

A member of staff or volunteer may have personal links with a local school or group through their children, grandchildren or being a governor. To find more information follow the link:
http://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/resources/

You can also follow the case study:
http://www.keepandshare.com/doc/6281098/kim-casestudy2-td2012-falmouth-art-gallery-pdf-46k?da=y

MUSEUM TO FOLLOW:
ZOOM Children's Museum, Vienna, Austria
http://www.kindermuseum.at/en/_1

Of course we agree that it is impossible to undermine or overlook the importance of the museum as a learning institution. But it is also impossible to overlook the necessity for this to be done through a more entertaining, democratic and participating way. Edutainment[15] seems to be the concept, which already solves a bit of this dilemma, which proposes the educative elements to be enriched or mediated by the entertaining ones.

But in the case of focusing on the learning groups of audiences, merely edutainment will not do. Especially when focusing on the schooling groups – how can a museum make sure to provide and offer exciting and entertaining learning experiences which would contri-

Fig. 22: Children's summer workshops: snakes, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Urška Purg

Fig. 23: At the entrance - family friendly, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana 2014.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

14. Museums Galleries Scotland, Supporting Scotland's Museums, http://www.keepandshare.com/doc/6422272/kim-td-factsheet-01-2013-scot-draft-indd-pdf-116k?da=y, Accessed 20 December 2015.

15. See Goldblatt (2005: 9)

bute an enormous share towards the development of a future audience – the audience, which would experience the museums as a place we would like them to be.

This may mean we should start thinking beyond guided tours, which do not always work, and rely heavily on the capability of the guide. So the first and reasonable thing would be to train very good and flexible guides with a feeling for the people and the capability of providing humour and interest.

But apart from that, schools should already be offered more than merely guided tours, when trying to learn all the things that could not have been achieved during the lessons. Children and the school population are our most valuable future audience. When offering them a pleasant experience – even with the school – they will come back, instead of ditching the museums after concluding the official schooling system. It is what we give them today that will count tomorrow. So why not offer them more chances to explore on their own? Why not allow them to choose the objects and then tell them something about them? All this in an edutainment kind of way.

The same rules as we have for the non-visitors and vulnerable groups should also be appropriate for the school children. Museums cannot afford to merely move the classroom experience into the museum and bend under the school pressure to fill the heads of the children with the necessary knowledge. For them, museums should be the places to connect and look deeper into already known and obtained knowledge from a new perspective. The museums should give space to the debate and learning how to augment their thoughts through the media of objects. Museums need to become places of experiences for the schooling population, places for learning without the schooling impression of doing so. By redefining the guided tours with more elements of exploration and discovery – when children and young visitors can feel they are stirring their experience - museums can offer a great deal of empowerment and invest the most in the future. This can also be reached by proposing workshops in the museums, when children are the active members and not only the receivers.

The international exhibition about Anne Frank, coordinated by Anne Frank House, is specifically aimed at the young between 11 and 18 (school aged groups). It offers a platform to reach and discuss topics such as human rights, discrimination and tolerance. The material is prepared, as are the labels and some scenographic proposals, but the young need to incorporate these tools into their exhibition space, be it in a school or some other organisation.

Fig. 24: GOTO1982 exhibition about the development of the computer science, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Fig. 25: Seminar of popular Yugoslavian music, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

However, the beauty of this project is in the power that is given to these youngsters. Those interested get trained to guide through the exhibition, to be able to address difficult topics, they are encouraged to reflect on the messages of the exhibition and question their own views and views of the society they live in regarding those topics. Yet the training also gives them the tools to be able to confront these topics and deal with them, even more so to introduce them to their public and lead a discussion on them.

In many communities this project has led to follow-up activities just as interesting as the project itself. For example, in 2002, a partner organisation, Anne Frank Trust UK brought the exhibition to prisons. Volunteer prisoners were trained to guide their fellow inmates through the exhibition. Through guiding they developed many skills which they were able to use later at their reintegration into society, while all of them learnt about World War II and were involved in debates on discrimination, exclusion and racism.

Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, Netherlands
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P7_Anne-Frank_1.pdf

YOUNG PEOPLE

Their common characteristics are that in the majority of instances they are no longer obliged to be actively involved in the schooling system and thus this relates to non-obligatory museum visiting. Young people are digital natives, meaning they use the World Wide Web on a daily basis – it represents the tool they use first when they have a need for information and they are adept at using various technological gadgets. These factors shape their perception of the world and the difference in the perception between young people and adults is almost tangible.

In designing and developing new strategies on how to create Social Arenas in museums we need to have in mind that the group that includes youngsters is showing a sharp decline in the number of museum visits. As the research project *Lifelong Learning Museum* (LLM)[16] shows, they are likely to be the least represented age group in the museum, since they believe that the museums are not places for them. They see them as places for younger and older visitors and feel that they are intellectually or socially excluded by what these institutions offer. In the future we need to think about new opportunities on how to engage these young people to become active participants.

In order to open the museums we also need to ask ourselves on what topics we would like to engage young people and what kind of education strategies

Fig. 26: Doors open day – visit of the museum photo library, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014.
Photo: Sarah Bervar

16. Gibbs, Sani and Thompson (2007) http://online.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/l/libri/pdf/LifelongLearninginMuseums.pdf

we will use in order to ensure sustainability and new opportunities. Inside the LLM manual, good practices are shown as:

— Creating a youth-friendly organisational culture: strong management, involving the staff to collaborate, involve staff from across the organisation in training and planning to challenge the current practice and develop a shared mission.
— Tackling barriers to young people's participation in museums: Identify the barriers during the planning stage and work towards solving them.
— Build a legacy and a strategy for sustainability in the planning process, and be ready for new opportunities that occur during the project stage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:
Gibbs, Sani and Thompson (2007: 63- 67)
http://online.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/I/libri/pdf/LifelongLearninginMuseums.pdf

Another great project on how to encourage young people to become more active in museums is described in the publication *Learning to Live:*

Museums, Young People and Education, which brings together a collection of essays addressing key questions about the role of museums for young peoples' wellbeing and learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:
Bellamy and Oppenheim (2009)
http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/media/documents/publications/learning_to_live.pdf

What about the adult audience? The already mentioned LLM handbook offers many good examples to museum practitioners on how to work with diverse adult audiences. The manual especially shows opportunities on how to develop ideas and good practices with adults in museums – learning about a wider and more qualified access to cultural heritage and how to create a friendly environment.

IDEAS TO DEVELOP:
Share your memories' projects
(like Archives of Memory; Oral History projects) –The participants are invited to share their personal memories and other forms of testimony: photographs, souvenirs, video and audio recordings, letters, and personal items. All memorabilia and items are afterwards registered, indexed, and digitized to be later included in the virtual museum data base.

PROGRAMME TO FOLLOW:
House of Memories, Liverpool, England
http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/

Living Memories, England
http://www.heritage-learning.com/what-we-do/community/reminiscence/

'The greying of Europe' has been used as a metaphor to describe the fact that the percentage of Europe's elderly population in relation to its workforce is steadily increasing. In the years to come, the EU-member states must all face the challenges of ageing populations, to develop strategies and find new ways of structuring society, economically and socially.

The *Learning Museum Network* project (LEM) works on establishing a permanent network and web space for museums and adult educators to participate in the learning society and in a knowledge-based Europe. It is apparent that museums in the 21st century can play an active role in a lifelong learning society by integrating collections, spaces and learning programmes into a newly joined framework that connects formal and informal learning providers, increasing access to a cultural life and fostering social cohesion, innovation and creativity. LEM therefore aims to create a permanent network of museums and cultural heritage organizations and address the challenges of the EU 2020 Strategy and to play an active role with regard to lifelong learning.

PROJECT TO FOLLOW:
http://ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/en/the-institute/european-projects-1/lem/the-learning-museum

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL ARENA CONCEPT

Social Arena is a very rewarding concept, which allows museums a large amount of freedom and imagination, when thinking on how to implement it. Social Arena programmes can be made in relation to the happening:

— inside the museum
— outside the museum

The approach you will take will depend on the goals of your project. It should reflect the way you want to tackle the challenge which you are trying to overcome with the Social Arena. The approach you choose should be the one that answers best to the needs of the community.

If you have a clear idea what your goals are, it will be easier to choose the approach as well. Of course, it could be beneficial to make a mix of the two; it all depends on your public, on the project goals and the message you are trying to get across.

Museums are powerful places and they present a perfect platform for your programmes. Here are some ideas on the things you can do in a museum, to ignite your imagination.

Fig. 27: Documenting the co-workers shoes, Take-over day, National Liberation Museum, Maribor, 2013.
Photo: Laura Pintarič.

IN THE MUSEUM

Inside the museum the Social Arena can be implemented to include a variety of things, not only the exhibitions. The implementation of the Social Arena concept can relate to:

— permanent exhibitions of the museum
— temporary exhibitions created by the museum
— hosting temporary exhibitions
— museum collections

PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS AND THE SOCIAL ARENA

Permanent exhibitions are those solid and permanent factors of the museum, deriving from the museum collections, by which the museum can build its recognition. For this reason it is important to implement the Social Arena concept on this level.

Besides the use of real objects, museums can choose a monthly topic in relation to the permanent exhibition and prepare museum meets. Such meets can consist of storytelling evenings or events, lectures, talk shows, movie nights,

concerts, and many more. You can offer a set of workshops. Connect the workshops to the artefacts in your collection, with the items that are visible in displays. To make this workshop more special you can offer 'item handling' or a visit to the depot.

Do not be afraid of more entertaining and commercial events, which may still represent your institution in all its glory. Organize sleep-over events for children and for adults, birthday parties, Saturday breakfast in a museum... Let your imagination be the limit.

Fig. 28: Permanent exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2014. Photo: Sarah Bervar

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS CREATED BY THE MUSEUM

Temporary exhibitions are useful tools when trying to relate to more current topics and the present time. This is also a well-used tool to promote and popularize the museum. It is also a much more rewarding opportunity to include the public in the preparation of the exhibition itself, if not already in the selection of the exhibition topic. This is the easiest way, how to open the museum for the broadest public audience. And also to include the most sensitive parts of society, which are usually overlooked or ignored. Including the society and the public in the creation of the exhibition (on a level that still allows you to be sovereign and where you set the frame) can create programmes that are highly relevant and related to the social and political challenges of today. It is possible to motivate the young unemployed adults for instance, for them to get the opportunity to be active and creative. In such a manner it can really serve as a tool for empowerment for a

Fig. 29: Lectures and film projection on World War I, National Museum of Contemporary History, 2013. Photo: Sarah Bervar

variety of groups, also the minorities and immigrants. If the cooperation and participation of the society is too big a task for you at the moment, merely touching the topics of the vulnerable groups is already a step towards their inclusion. This can also create a space for dialogue and debate, which may transform into an eye-opening experience.

Then again, when making temporary exhibitions, do not forget to spice them up with additional programmes.

HOSTING TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Sometimes connecting with other museums or exhibition makers is the right way towards implanting museums as Social Arenas. There are many museums preparing travelling exhibitions, or exhibitions which may easily be transported. Whenever there is a chance and the right time for a hosting an exhibition, do not overlook it. Also connecting to other institutions may help you open up and encourage the public to 'speak up'.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AS A SOURCE

Museums can take advantage of all of the richness of the heritage that they take care of. It does not have to be any kind of exhibition in the role as the source for the events, the collections and the museum's mission will also do as a base. Since all museums are unable to show all the richness of the heritage they keep and guard, it is rather sensible to use the normally unseen objects to encourage the public. This can be done by choosing the item of the month – include the public and ask them what they would like to see in a special place in the museum each month. The communication can be done in person, or by using the advantages of the social networks. The chosen object can serve as a door-opener to the discussion by relating museum evenings or meetings to the main topic of the object.

In relation to the collections you can think of any kind of event or happening – which will occur only once, or on regular and continuous occasions. You can organize everything we proposed in *About Heritage and its Social Life* and as such you can connect with societies and organizations when planning special events. This gives you an opportunity to include refugees from outside Europe at the borders of Europe, unemployed, young adults and the rest of the vulnerable groups. You can touch the sensitive topics, such as the growing social inequality, the global financial crisis and its local victims, religious conflicts and stereotypes, nationalistic and right-wing movements in Europe, war and conflict in Europe, demographic change, minorities and underprivileged people – in relation to the heritage.

This kind of action can also be implemented when visiting schools, kindergartens, special centres and societies. Here are some ideas on the things you can do in a museum, to ignite your imagination.

— Workshops (creative, art, research…): keep in mind different learning styles (audio, kinaesthetic, visual) and adopt the workshops to cater for various types. Workshops can be dedicated to children as much as to the adult public.
— Museums evenings (open lectures on relevant themes, which promote discussion)
— Open depot visits with a relevant theme as the fil rouge of the visit
— Social space: a place where people can use for creative work, discussion…
— Birthday parties

OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

Museums can do a lot of things outside the physical borders of their institutions. Crossing spatial borders can help museums to get closer to society and get the reputation of authenticity. You can create events without the need to create an exhibition in the most crowded streets. You can organize excursions – on your own, or in cooperation with some other organizations or societies. Or you can organize a Pop-up museum; or a museum in a box – a portable box with 'treasures'; or even events, such as 'museum occupies the school'.

POP-UP MUSEUM

The Pop-up museums are the future of social 'make it on your own' exhibitions. This is a remarkable 'invention' that can function not only as an extended hand of your own museum but a step closer to specific groups of people. It enables the museums to reach the audiences and step into the lives of people that could not be reached otherwise. Such museums can appear anywhere: in front of a mu-

seum, in local bars, on the street corners, on the wharfs, in the city centre, deserted shops, and shopping centres – anywhere where the imagination and a touch of creativity can take you. They can cover an enormous mass of different topics and are a well-known means of including minorities or immigrants by the U.S. museums, who have also prepared simple instructions of how to start a Pop-up museum. But this does not mean you need to stick to such an example. You can shape and tailor the Pop-up museum to your own abilities and assets. But they can really work for you and help you create an impression of openness and hospitality among the audiences reached in such manner.

The Pop-up museum can be carefully directed at certain target groups that the museum wishes to attract. It can easily be performed with minorities, immigrants and it has also proved to be a successful way of including such groups of people.

DO YOU WANT TO START RIGHT NOW?
A short and clear manual on how to deal with the Pop-up museum has been created by the *MAH Santa Cruz*, USA (Grant 2013).
http://popupmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Pop-Up-Museum.pdf

Fig. 30: Pop-up museum in the Ljubljana city centre, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Urša Valič

Fig. 31: 'Speed dating' between students and museum curators, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana 2015.
Photo: Gilberto Mazzoli

MUSEUM IN A BOX (A PORTABLE BOX WITH 'TREASURES')

A museum in a box can be a small scale project, also a museum in a suitcase – where the museum representatives choose a museum wonder suitcase, filled with some extremely rich objects on stories, and wander around with it. This is mostly useful when it comes to bringing the museum closer to kindergartens and schools.

A second option can be a museum in a box as a large scale project, where you can hire a container and equip it with desirable content – it can be a small exhibition, or it can be equipped just with a camera and a chair – the content depends on your goals. This box can be a portable museum which can be continuous content work, upgraded by the visitors. The most important thing is the fact that it is placed outside the museum on a spot with a lot of people passing by, or on a spot with a special meaning.

MUSEUM OCCUPIES THE SCHOOL

Sometimes working in a museum can also mean dealing with a bit of cooperation with the schools. In this way we take a step further in school-engagement projects, as besides children occupying the museum, the museum can take the school into a specific historical era. This means that you, with the help of the school staff (and a few children volunteers), can conjure a setting where pupils meet with a historical period on set. The school-curriculum of the day is adjusted to the museum theme (be it the industrial era or prehistoric time, sports or technology) and is presented to the children in such a sense. The teachers re-act accordingly to the historical period or theme and conjure up a special and magical day for pupils – they speak in an appropriate archaic language for example, the snack or lunch is prepared as a typical meal of the time, and so on.

It is such a connection that can lead to wonderful projects, such as the Museum occupies the school. This is an opportunity which definitely takes care of the edutainment and the desirable 'wow' effect. You can propose having *A day back into the*

past as the *National Liberation Museum Maribor* did, when they managed to organize a Back in time event for the children, together with two schools.

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152495800536654.1073741842.43612586653&type=3

You can cover any topic you like which derives from the museum collections. These kinds of events help towards the recognition of the museum as well as introducing the museum to the young generations in a completely new way. It also demands a bit of role playing and imagination, which ignites the interest of children and the youth.

PROPOSALS OF SOCIAL ARENA IMPLEMENTATION: TOPIC PROPOSALS

In the search for the means for the museums to start implementing the Social Arena concept into their everyday work, we have prepared a list of various and very broad topics. These topics can be used when preparing exhibitions, or when thinking about the special events in the museums – or even outside the borders of the museum, when it moves to the streets, parks or to the places in the city where people congregate. These topics can serve as a cue for discussions, for forums or as a suggestion for implementation in the exhibitions – temporary or even permanent ones. Here are only

a few examples, but new themes can be added. We would like to encourage you to think in such a manner and search for the topics which may help you open up to the public and include groups of people who usually do not visit museums.

FASHION

At first glance this has almost nothing to do with museums. But take a second look. Fashion is all around us and always present. Despite the fact it gives us the impression of not being important, it is always there. As everyone has an opinion about fashion – be it fondness, dislike or indifference – it is a topic which museums can easily use when trying to create an environment where opinions are met or clashed. Without undermining the values and seriousness of fashion, this subjective topic could be used in a museum to tackle the invisible problems attached to fashion. With this beautiful topic we can embark on – at first glance – more difficult topics such as human rights. At the same time, fashion is a very popular subject, extremely well covered by journals and the media in general.

Fashion is a deeply rewarding topic, which offers a possibility of connections between the past and the present, which can be extremely useful for history or archaeological museums in search of ways of becoming more relevant. If nothing else, we can follow the historical fashion process and its evolution and compare it to today. But at the same time, this process can easily be applied in science museums or museums of art. The impact of the presented or discussed will be even stronger when relevant people in fashion are included in any part of the process.

It can be used to invite people who usually do not come to museums – particularly young adults.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
Younger people may seem like a difficult group of people to attract. They can be a challenging, particularly because of the demands they have towards museums. They need to be particularly interested in the topic to decide to visit a museum and the place needs to be welcoming, loose and relaxed. Fashion is certainly one of those topics. Not only will a quality exhibition highlight a new perspective on the museum as an institution for them, but it will also open for them a new possible space to go to. Fashion is an extremely important topic for the younger generation, who dedicate a lot of time and effort to their appearance (if we are honest, we realize that we all do), trends and what is 'in'. Such exhibitions may even help them find their own style, or even better – understand the style of someone else, which seems

Fig. 32: M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark, Helsingør, 2013.
Photo: Uwe Brückner

Fig. 33: DIY workshop, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Natalija Lapajne

distant or even weird to them. The same also applies the other way around, of course.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
Fashion is a rewarding topic because it can open the issues of clothes production, child labour, and ecology. It can highlight the contrasts we are in on a daily basis – obsession about appearance versus indifference, a sense of belonging versus being distinct, elite versus popular. The European dimension in museums can be focused on the comparison with other countries and the relation towards fashion and production. This is also a very important topic, since it offers a connection between the young generation and the museums. It can cover the actual issues of young people's job seeking, green production, up to the more delicate topics of human rights. This can be a catalyst for the younger generation to start thinking and participating in important subjects.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
Artist/ Rebel/ Dandy: Men of Fashion: Costume and Textiles, RISD Museum, Providence, USA

http://risdmuseum.org/art_design/exhibitions/artist_re-bel_dandy_men_of_fashion

World of Jean Paul Gaultier, Kunsthal, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
http://www.kunsthal.nl/en-22-718-The-Fashion-World-of-Jean-Paul-Gaultier.html

S.H.O.E.S. Head Over Heels, Kunsthal, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
http://www.kunsthal.nl/en-22-732-SHOES.html

Marimekko, Kunsthal, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
http://www.kunsthal.nl/en-22-736-marimekko.html

MUSIC AND MOVIES (MUSIC ERA)

Remember the golden sixties? The grunge era? Exhibitions on celebrities or famous groups, such as Nirvana, or David Bowie can be attractive and interesting trigger points to open spaces for various debates: the history of fame, problems that famous people need to cope with, the effort and work behind the famous person, all the social areas that celebrities come from (art, pop culture, science...), what is going on with our society today, how their music has affected everyday life. The questions which can be channelled through this topic, seem to be offering themselves: fans and groupies – a question of dedication, devotion and admiration; hidden dreams of being a celebrity; the question of privacy and one's intimate life; immortality; values of society. Either way, the topic of famous people is appealing, no matter where the fame comes from. The same goes for this topic as for the popular musical act – it '... appeals to all sectors of society, and is an important part of creating a sense of community and belonging among diverse groups of individuals' (Friesinger 2013: 2).

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
The topic itself is popular and current – qualities which attract a wide variety of people with extra emphasis on the younger population – young adults, or to immigrants, where music or movies can serve as a medium for life stories. As previously said, young adults may seem a rather challenging group of people for museums to approach. The reason may lie in the generation gap, but nonetheless – what will help the museums when trying to get closer to the youngsters are the topics and events which share something in common with their interests and lifestyle.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
Music and movies are a well of ideas, which is unlikely to dry up. When referring to one or both mediums, museums can apply and react to the current problems and happenings around us. As already mentioned, these can be fulfilled by touching the life and work of the people who matter in society and who can trigger the people to speak up and participate. It is especially interesting how such exhibitions can create a potential intergenerational atmosphere as a contact zone, which can be used later on by the museum to overcome the generation gap with the youngsters or help towards understanding the immigrants' stories. By addressing the younger population and immigrants, among all the other population, this is a valuable topic, which cannot be undermined.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
David Bowie is, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/david-bowie-is/about-the-exhibition/

ABBA the Museum, Stockholm, Sweden
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P8_ABBA-the-Museum_11.pdf

Star Wars: Identities, Quebec, Canada
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P8_Star-Wars_1.pdf

FAITH, FORTUNE, AND LUCK (FORTUNE TELLING AND CHARMS)

Humans have a tendency to believe in something – if not practicing our own religion, we at least believe in horoscopes, or random objects which bring us luck. We need to believe in something, since nothing is certain. Besides that, we also have a desire, or at least we all share a bit of curiosity about what the future will bring and we search for answers in the most diverse places and the most varied ways. Although faith can be a difficult topic, all three topics are chests full of opportunities for museums to implement in a way that suits them. Lucky items alone can draw out the conversations about what is luck for individuals and when are we happy; what do we believe in and why; how we perceive others who do not share our beliefs or thoughts. Once again, these topics easily connect with all the people we can think of. The topics are of such quality that they enable museums to have the possibility of bringing people of every possible description together into one place and create a space for intercultural meeting, which can be extended to long-term debate meetings, workshops, events or even lectures.

The topics of fortune luck and faith can be – all together or individually – used to give a voice to minorities or immigrants.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
Minorities are usually groups of people who are – together with immigrants – often overlooked when it comes to the museum narratives. Therefore such topics can be of great value for the museums to give the opportunity to these groups for their voices to be heard.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
The question of belief and faith is deeply connected to the European expansion. Try to use this topic in a broader way and perhaps place emphasis on the connection between the European historical past and the contemporary situation. The topic can be implemented in a way of preparing exhibitions, or merely special museum themed nights or events, where these topics are exposed. A marvellous idea, which goes hand in hand with this, is practising a Pop-up museum.
Such a topic is of high value, since it has the potential to open the doors to the overlooked groups of people, such as minorities and it allows them to give value to what they believe in.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
A Matter of Faith, Stapferhaus, Lenzburg, Switzerland
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P1_Stapferhaus-Lenzburg_1.pdf

Threads of Feeling, Foundling Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, USA
http://www.history.org/history/institute/Images/ThreadsofFeeling.pdf

HUMAN RIGHTS

The topic can be displayed and presented broadly or extremely narrowly. But either way, it is something that connects us all and can open or trigger debates on very trendy and contemporary issues in society which arise from history, art, ethnography or anthropology. Human rights are those basic things that belong to every single individual on this planet, but are so often violated because of this or that reason. Museums can help by supporting human rights and can point out and speak up when violations occur – either through an autonomous exhibition, or by including just a shred of this large topic.

Despite the fact that human rights are a topic that concerns everyone, special emphasis can be placed on those groups of people or individuals whose rights are routinely ignored.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
This topic can refer to anyone and is highly adjustable.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
This topic is of great European importance, since it has been the foundation from the French revolution on. Besides this, the European Union is grounded on a respect for human rights. It gives good grounds for comparing today's situation and old Europe. Besides the comparison between the past and the present, it also offers opportunities for the international perspectives on the topic. The question of human rights is something that can be translated into any kind of implementation in society. It reveals the standards and demands; as well as revealing the violations that continue to occur.
Human rights are an important issue in the European Union, and elsewhere in the world. It is far the most transnational topic, based on the similarities (and differences) in its development not only in the European countries but also globally.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
Anne Frank – a History for Today (travelling exhibition), Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, Netherlands
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P7_Anne-Frank_1.pdf

CHILDHOOD

This is a topic all people in the world share. This topic can be applied in various museums and can attract various groups of people. Childhood opens up a world of debates, problems and issues that are just waiting to be discussed, presented, implemented and shared. Childhood does not only prompt nostalgic feelings of the past, with carefree feelings of warmth attached to it; it can also open the chambers of difficult and dark memories. It can propose the revelation of the differences between citizens and communities, the question of upbringing, children's lives around the globe, love, leisure time and playing – subjects which connect and/ or help people to open up.

Childhood as the theme for an exhibition or as implementations in other museum spheres is a good basis for families to come. It can also serve as a demonstration of the differences and similarities between people from different cultures, such as the minorities or immigrants.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
The topic is suitable for children, families, vulnerable groups, for all races and nationalities and can serve as a flexible tool for meeting and learning between the groups.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
It offers a reference to the issues of change in the meaning of childhood over time, which can easily be traced by comparison between the past and present and between different European regions. Since everyone shares and relates to their period of childhood, these memories have a strong emotional factor and trends in museology are leaning towards addressing visitors' emotions.
Childhood is a suitable topic which can be used to implement the important issues, such as human life, upbringing, generational and/ or geographical differences and similarities, and changes in how we perceive children.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
V&A Museum of Childhood, London, UK
http://www.museumofchildhood.org.uk/

STEREOTYPES AND TABOOS

If people have a tendency to believe in something, we also have a tendency to create opinions and to crave for something. With this combination of topics, or by exposing one of them, we touch our soft spots. But it is better to touch and highlight the sensitive subjects, (even though the responses may also be negative); than to ignore them and pretend they do not exist. Here we can capture the questions of what people want for themselves;

what is acceptable and where; what is pretty/ beautiful and what are we willing to do to achieve it; how we differ from others, and why. The topics open up the question of subjectivity and objectivity; of taste; us versus them; trends in society; thankfully they also lend themselves to some more pleasant subjects.

In most cases, museums do not have to take sides or judge anything. They only need point out these systems from the background and ask questions – let the people give the answers. Museums can serve as moderators and encourage or establish a contact between those who at first glance appear to be incompatible groups of people.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
When highlighting such subjects we usually deal with the people who are classified into vulnerable groups. A little sensibility and feeling for people can be very useful. It is important not to turn a deaf ear when touching either the sensitive subjects or people from such groups. Making connections with established and well accepted organisations who work in these fields may be of great help. Do not hesitate to contact them – this is one of the rea-

sons why they exist. They can make those first contacts, if you are heading into unknown territory, much easier for you.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
The topic opens the door to all the things we are afraid of, or we are avoiding – but they still attract us enough to make judgements on them.

By implementing such ideas, museums can help to break the stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions, which can lead to fear and segregation – also through the comparison between other countries. Europe shares a difficult history of war, which produced a lot of still commonly held stereotypes. This is also a topic which enables the transnational aspect and the implementation of European citizenship – as a form, which exceeds the national one.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
Bin ich schön? (Am I beautiful?),
Museum for Communication Berlin, Germany
http://www.mfk-berlin.de/bin-ich-schoen/

Museum for Contraception and Abortion, Vienna, Austria
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ EMEE_Mapping-Process_P8_Museum-for-Contraception-and-Abortion_1. pdf

Fig. 34: How to approach to the delicate topics – by letting the people talk, Permanent exhibition. WW2, National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

Fig. 37: Pupils discovering the museum treasures in depot while getting to know the curators work. National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, 2015.
Photo: Urška Purg

Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne, Germany
http://www.atelier-brueckner.com/en/projects/museums/
rautenstrauch-joest-museum-cologne.html
*http://www1.wdr.de/themen/kultur/rautenstrauch_joest_*
schnuetgen100.html

FOOD

This opens the door to every possible topic, especially since it is quite trendy to be a good cook nowadays. Just think of bread, and what it represents to people. That alone could be a matter for research, an exhibition or even a large intercultural project. The same goes for coffee. People perceive food in so many ways and there are constant on-going discussions as to what good, quality or even super food is, and what is bad for people. Food can be used to translate the languages and habits of different people and as a tool for intercultural connections. Food can connect immigrants, young and old people, people with prejudices, or fears... since food is usually a topic on the safe side and yet it opens up huge numbers of options.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
Food can be used as a tool for introducing the immigrants in your community, or even region.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
Do not be afraid to connect with associations and to even organize events where people from different backgrounds can cook, or bring their specialities and create a pleasant atmosphere for a lovely chit chat, which may stir the emotions, but in a good sense. Every participant of such an event is introduced as an equal contributor and as a person with skills and knowledge. By using food as a medium, new acquaintances and views can be made. Food is proof of our multinational and multicultural background. It can be used as a promoter of transnationality and equality since there are far more similarities than differences in the regional European cuisine. For more explanations or ideas, please follow the example below.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
A Taste of Europe exhibition, European project
http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/
uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P7_A-Taste-
of-Europe_1.pdf

TECHNOLOGY

Accept it, this is the future, whether we like it or not. We all live in a world which follows the unpredictability and rapid development of technology and we all use it (at least up to a certain point) or have a desire or reluctance to use it. In this sense we can connect history with the present and future and capture a wide variety of groups of people – some because of their love for technology, others because of their hate towards it. Technology can be used within the exhibitions – and is already around the museums; but our proposal aims more in the direction of making exhibitions about technology, or implementing the topic into the museum's extra activities, apart from the exhibitions. In this way people from both viewpoints can meet and get an insight into the other's practices and opinions. Also creating many intergenerational workshops is possible, when talking about technology – where people (usually the younger ones) can share their knowledge and enthusiasm for technology with the ones who have difficulty adapting to this, but are full of other knowledge, which needs to be shared. The topic itself can open new topics and subjects of discussion, such as life before technology; living with or without technology – the pro's and con's; mass production and human labour; artificial intelligence – fears and enthusiasm; how do things work – a close look towards understanding the devices we use; consumption; the question of wealth and poverty. Once more, this topic is appropriate for attracting young adults, who use technology on an everyday basis and have been born into the technology boom era – they are the children of a technological time – and our descendants will be even more so.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
If the topic is presented, implemented or used in an interesting way, people will attend, participate, share and learn.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE
EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:

First of all, technology can function as a medium of
bonding with its vast potential. But besides that,
technology can help us show how we perceive
the world today and how life differs from the way
of living even a decade ago. It can also reveal the
differences between each other and even more im-
portant – the similarities, which may be seen in the
everyday use of technology.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:

Inside the Mobile Phone, Post & Tele Museum,
Copenhagen, Denmark
http://vimeo.com/79314783

Exploratorium (hands-on-science museum),
San Francisco, USA
*http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/
uploads/2014/07/EMEE_Mapping-Process_P8_Explorato-
rium-San-Francisco_11.pdf*

Herman Potocnik Noordung, 100 monumental
influences, Cultural Centre of European Space T
echnologies (KSEVT), Vitanje, Slovenia
*http://www.museums-exhibiting-europe.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/
EMEE_Mapping-Process_P8_Herman-Potocnik-Noordnung-100-Monumen-
tal-influences.pdf*

Fig. 36: Jaša: The Lovest, art project, 2010-2012,
MG+ Modern Art Gallery, Ljubljana, 2010.
Photo: Dejan Habicht

ART

Art seems to be the most flexible and expressive language for dealing
with many sensitive groups of people. We all have come upon some
amazing art projects which integrate or include people who are usual-
ly forgotten, overlooked or in the way.

Art can be used as a topic or as a medium as it allows people
to express in their own ways and through this it allows a fair share of
subjectivity. Many times it evokes changes, criticizes and puts social
opinion on trial.

Art is also a way for many groups of people to express them-
selves and can be included in many other museums which do not
usually prepare exhibitions or events with artistic content – but can
be used as the completion of a statement. The concept of art can pro-
duce fresh debates about other cultures and groups, where minori-
ties can also be included and can find a way to present themselves.

Fig. 37: GOTO1982 exhibition: development of
computer science and the curious young adults.
National Museum of Contemporary History.
Ljubljana, 2013.
Photo: Sašo Kovačič

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
Art can easily be used by all the groups – vulnerable and school groups, but it seems to be of the highest importance for cooperation with immigrants, Roma people, homeless, unemployed, women, children and people with disabilities. Besides this it enables a fruitful base for the participatory approach.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
Art is a useful language for addressing the more sensitive topics, since it allows subjectivity in a harmless way. It can be used as a tool when addressing immigrants, gender, nationality, or other sometimes sensitive issues. It exposes as well as helps to overcome the boundaries of our understanding of the world.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
On Destination Donegal Exhibition, Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal, Ireland (Purkis 2013).
https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/purkis.pdf

INDUSTRY

At the moment we live in the Post-Fordist on-going capitalist time, which brings a lot of changes in the social order. The once blooming employment structures are changing, vanishing and rearranging, causing society to change along with them. The economic boom which happened after World War II caused the growth of industry, a better life and shaped the working class. The changes in the social order especially concerning the class of working people, who are disappearing because of the economic crisis or because of industry shifting to the third world countries.

GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC:
In this case the working class population can have the greatest benefit from dealing with the industry topic and can cause a change in the commonly held views on this population by the rest of society. It can offer added value and empowerment besides nostalgic emotions, which can be transferred to the generations which do not share the same importance to this. At the same time, people from the previous existing working class can work closely on

the exhibitions or such events and can even be the co-creators in the museums.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOPICS AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT:
Industry is a topic which opens the questions about the social value of the European economy; it offers the strength which lies in the oral history; and collecting the material about this shift in industry that is current and serious.

By focusing or giving value to the vanishing industry we can help by softening the transition and offering a conclusion or continuity in a certain point for the people from the vanishing class.

FOR EXAMPLE VISIT:
State Museum of Textile and Industry, Augsburg, Germany
http://www.atelier-brueckner.com/en/projects/museums/tim-i-state-museum-of-textile-and-industry-augsburg.html

Museums are living forms, which enable them to be of a great importance in today's society. This enables them to matter. But to reach this step, museums need to adapt and breathe with the ever-changing society. Flexibility, inclusivity and trans-nationality are virtues museums need to live with.

In the beginning we played with the idea of linking museums to the present and trying to see the best in the past for the present. How about broadening this and the idea into using the past for the present and for a bright future? All this can be achieved by tuning in with society and allowing the people to find their space in museums on the grounds of heritage.

Therefore we have taken an in-depth view on one of the options, roles, which museums today could adopt – the Social Arena. The Social Arena is a concept which allows museums to earn an important position in society, based on the cultural heritage they collect and keep. The concept encourages museums to open up and think about all the people – visitors and non-visitors. It encourages museums to think about the overlooked groups of people, who are usually under-represented, such as younger people, immigrants, minorities and peo-

ple with disabilities – whose stories and narratives are missing in the main perspective. Therefore the first step lies in an overview of the situation, research and self-evaluation. It also encourages museums to deal with very contemporary topics and ideas, which can serve as a bridge to fill the existing gaps.

In short – the Social Arena Toolkit is a proposal for museums on which course to steer and how to become relevant institutions in today's society.

In order not to get lost out there, our EMEE team has prepared a whole Toolkit package, consisting of five different, but highly related Toolkit manuals, which may serve as a whole to fulfil the contemporary needs of today's museums who strive for new roles. The EMEE project works precisely on the development of tools, workshops and interdisciplinary approaches for a Change of Perspective in national and regional museums.

This Toolkit, one out of five, was intended to set and propose the strategies on how to cope with today's demands. It places a set of tools – a structure, which in its flexibility can be used and applied in many various ways. The framework is here; all it needs is content, which only you – museum experts and staff in collaboration with society, can provide.

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COORDINATOR OF THE EMEE PROJECT (2012-2016):
Prof. Dr. Susanne Popp, Chair of History Didactics
Susanne Schilling M.A., project leader
Augsburg University
Universitätsstraße 10, 86159 Augsburg, Germany
www.museums-exhibiting-europe.eu

PROJECT PARTNER:
ATELIER BRÜCKNER GmbH, Germany
National Museum of History, Bulgaria
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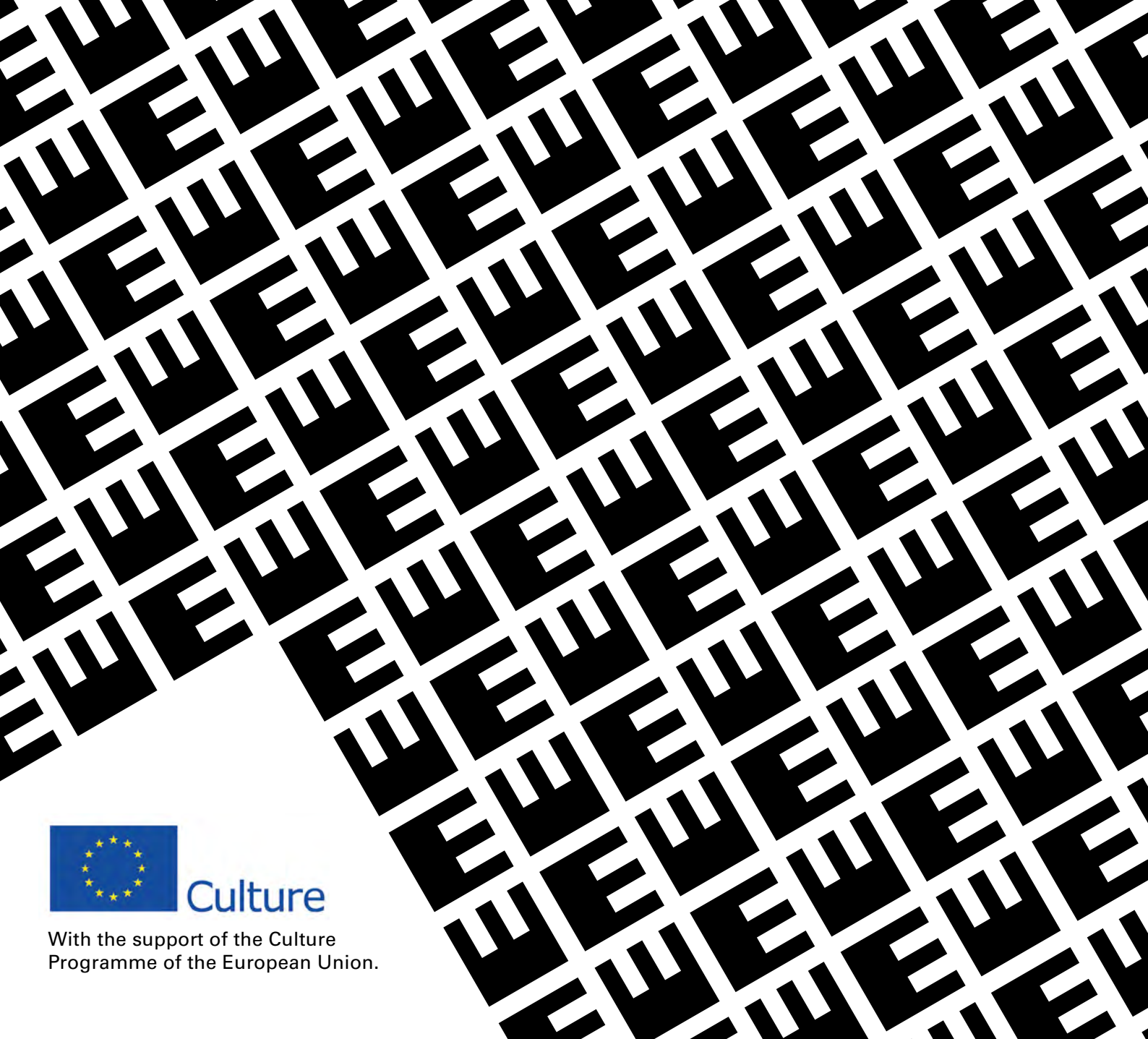**FINAL ARTWORK:** National Museum of Contemporary History and Kerstin Halm, monochrom

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