

Museums & communities - rethinking museums



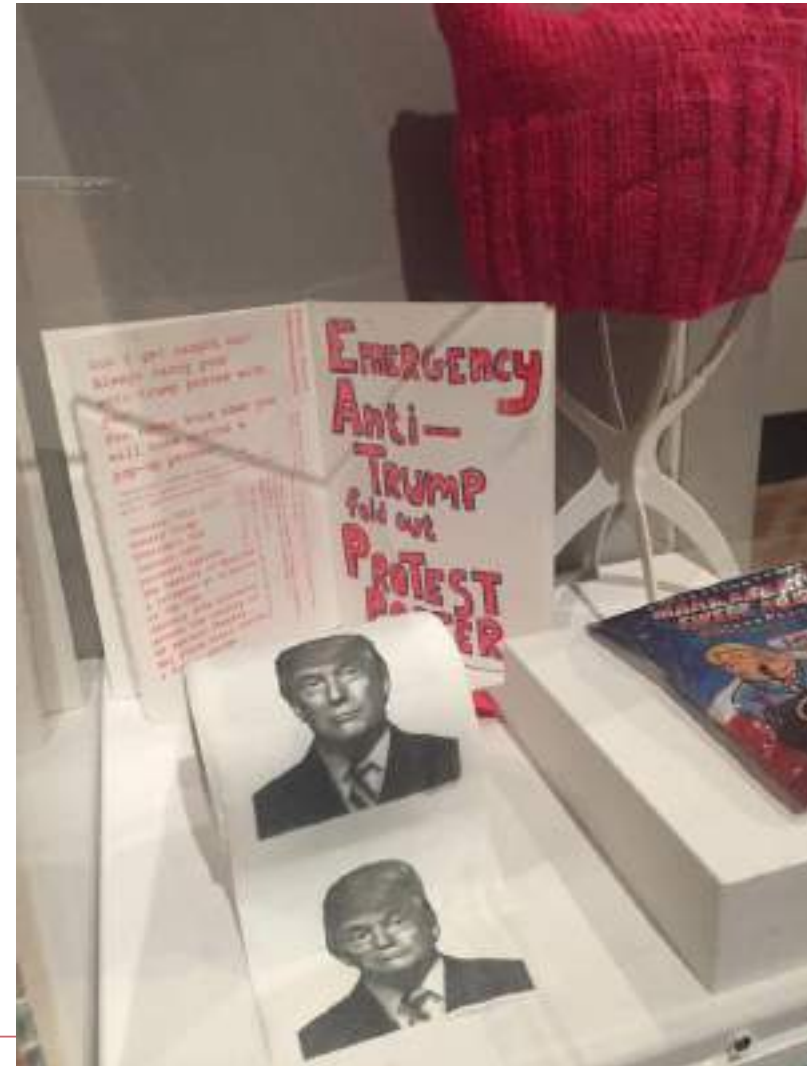
Challenging



Asking awkward questions



Funding change



Supporting workforce change





“In the midst of the darkness and brutality of war, museums and art galleries have seized all the available opportunities for spreading the light of learning and culture. Their amazing development during the past 20 years has been tremendously accelerated not retarded as was first anticipated by war conditions.”

Dr F S Wallis, director of Bristol City Museum & honorary editor of Museums Journal 1945

What's the problem?



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- **Mission:** Inspiring Museums to Change Lives
- **Vision:** Inclusive, participatory and sustainable museums at the heart of their communities
- **Values:** Inclusivity, diversity and equality

- **Cultural recovery with museums at its heart**
- Museums can bring people back into towns cities and rebuild community confidence
- Museums can support community recovery and wellbeing
- Museums can help us understand the events of the past year and help us plan for future

- **Cultural rights and cultural democracy**
- **Social Justice**
- **Activism**
- **Community participation**
- **Collections**
- **Research and evaluation**
- **Partnership**
- **Workforce**



Code of Ethics for Museums

MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

Climate crisis

- This issue is even more critical especially after COP 26
- We will support museums to act practically and with our communities to ensure the focus doesn't go away
- Museums are uniquely positioned to have conversations at a local, regional and national level - we can use our collections and spaces to facilitate that discussion

We don't have to take it laying down



Taking a stand



Taking a knee



Subversive



In your face



Amusing & creative



Ask the big questions



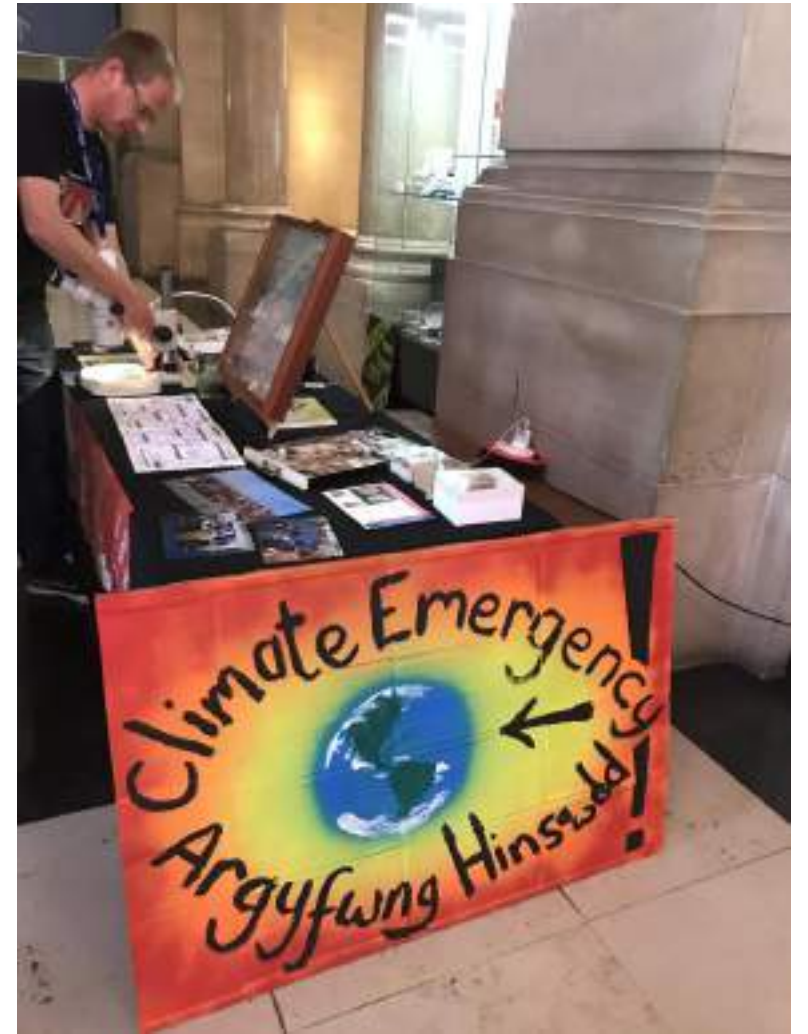
Steal the good ideas



Protest in museums



Collections for change



Museum activism





MEASURING SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE: A TOOLKIT FOR MUSEUMS

MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

Esmée
Fairbairn
Collections
Fund

MUSEUMS
CHANGE
LIVES

What does community participation look like in museums?

There are different levels of community participation from those institutions that are beginning to explore relationships with community partners to those that have established deep and meaningful interactions, but whatever level you are operating at there are key principles and qualities that apply.

Principles:

- doing with, rather than doing to or for
- community involvement in decision-making on projects and wider strategy
- a sense of ownership from both the community and the museum
- change for everyone involved - including the museum
- a holistic approach that permeates throughout the museum
- part of the core work and strategic aims and objectives of the museum
- a people-centred approach
- giving voice to those outside the museum
- providing mutual benefit for the museum and the community.

Qualities:

- reflective thinking and practice
- learning processes
- organisations and individuals being open to change
- embracing risk and failure
- progressive and developmental
- involvement
- equality.





Mission, values and vision
(how embedded is it?)

Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
References to participation/ community engagement in mission statement	Mission statement promotes participation/community engagement	Mission statement promotes participation/community engagement and the mission is actively used to guide the work of the whole organisation	Mission statement actively promotes participation/community engagement and is understood and used by staff and trustees to deliver and champion the work Community partners have an active say in creating and reviewing the mission statement
Organisation values contain reference to participation/ community engagement	Values encapsulate the principles of participatory practice such as equality, fairness, openness and inclusion	Values encapsulate the principles of participatory practice and are actively promoted and guide the work of the museum	Values encapsulate the principles of participatory practice and the museum is a values-led organisation Organisation takes a proactive approach to championing participatory practice and sharing what works and supporting the wider sector

Image: Amgueddfa Genedlaethol y Glannau - National Waterfront Museum, Swansea
Power to the People: a self-assessment framework for participatory practice



Leadership and governance (are those in charge championing it?)

Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
<p>Passive commitment to participation/community engagement from the leadership of the museum</p>	<p>Individual leaders are aware of and make the case for participation/community engagement in the museum</p>	<p>Leadership team champions participation/community engagement throughout the museum</p>	<p>Leaders demonstrate active commitment to participation/community engagement and vocally champion it internally and externally</p> <p>Leaders attend internal and external events with community partners to jointly make the case for the value of participation/community engagement</p> <p>Leaders speak at sector and international events to share best practice and promote the value of participation/community engagement</p>
<p>Trustees are aware of participation/ community engagement work in museums</p>	<p>Trustees understand the case for and importance of participation/ community engagement work</p>	<p>Trustees champion participation/ community engagement work in the museum</p> <p>Trustees receive training in participation/ community engagement work</p> <p>Information about participation/ community engagement work is included in the trustee induction pack</p>	<p>Trustees champion participation/ community engagement work in the museum and externally</p> <p>Trustees attend internal and external meetings and events with community partners</p> <p>Community partners are represented on the board</p>



Commitment to action
(is it written into policies and enacted?)

Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
Project funding is sought in order to deliver participation/community engagement programmes	Core budget is set aside for participation/ community engagement work	Participation/ community engagement work is embedded in business and strategic plans and budgeted for across the organisation	Participation/ community engagement work is embedded in business and strategic plans and budgeted for and the work is used to advocate to stakeholders and funders
Participation/ community engagement work is carried out on a project basis with ad hoc community partners	Participation/ community engagement work is planned and embedded with long-term partners	Participation/ community engagement work is embedded and runs throughout the organisation	The museum builds sustained and lasting relationships with community partners

Engagement and decision making (who has a say in which areas)



Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
Participation/community engagement work is planned by staff and others working in engagement	Management/leadership team, trustees and staff are involved in planning participation/community engagement	Management/leadership team, trustees and staff are involved in planning participation/community engagement as part of overall strategic planning	Management/leadership team, trustees, staff and community partners are involved in planning participation/community engagement as part of overall strategic planning
Community partners are consulted on pre-determined programmes and activities	Mechanisms are in place for community partners to have a say in decision-making related to exhibitions and other time-limited projects Community partners are supported to engage with the museum	Mechanisms are in place for community partners to have a say in decision-making related to the museum's work across departmental areas	Mechanisms are in place for community partners to have a say in decision-making at the highest level in the organisation including strategic and business plans e.g. community partners on the board of trustees
Community partners are engaged on a project by project basis		Community partners have a long-term relationship with the museum and staff	Participation in the museum is viewed as a shared endeavour, everyone has a role to play, and there is clarity about roles and expectations, mutual respect and recognition with good mechanisms for reviewing progress Community partners have a long-term relationship with the museum and work on both core and time-limited plans

Workforce and professional development (are we confident and capable?)

Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
<p>Understanding: Staff, contractors and consultants know about participatory practice/ community engagement through internal communications and meetings.</p>	<p>Staff, contractors and consultants understand the case for participatory practice/ community engagement and there is shared language and understanding with community partners and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Staff, volunteers and trustees are able to articulate the case for participatory practice/ community engagement and there is shared language and understanding with community partners and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Staff, volunteers and trustees champion participatory practice/ community engagement both inside and outside the museum.</p>
<p>Training and development: Staff training and professional development programmes make reference to participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>	<p>Staff training and professional development programmes have modules and training related to participatory practice/ community engagement available for all staff, contractors and consultants.</p>	<p>All staff including front of house, volunteers and trustees are given the opportunity to take part in training and/ or professional development related to participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>	<p>Trustees and leadership lead and take part in training in and/ or professional development related to participatory practice/ community engagement. Community partners deliver training for staff on what participatory practice/ community engagement means from their perspective.</p>
<p>Recruitment: Recruitment materials for community and other related posts reference participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>	<p>Recruitment materials for all posts reference participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>	<p>Experience of and qualifications in participatory practice/ community engagement have equal status with other museum experience or qualifications.</p>	<p>Experience of and qualifications in participatory practice/ community engagement have equal status with other museum experience or qualifications and community partners are represented on recruitment panels and take part in the whole recruitment process including shortlisting and interviews. Recruitment processes take into account that candidates have different learning styles, qualifications and skills base.</p>
<p>Job descriptions and person specifications for community and other related posts have relevant criteria and require the skills, knowledge and training necessary to undertake participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>	<p>Job descriptions and person specifications for posts across the organisation have relevant criteria and require the skills, knowledge and training necessary to undertake participatory practice/ community engagement.</p>		<p>All members of staff, including leadership, trustees, and volunteers, have participatory practice/ community engagement in their job description. Community partners help to draw up job descriptions and person specifications.</p>



Evaluation and evidence of change (are we learning from what we do?)

Starting off	Making progress	Best practice	Leading and championing
<p>Goals and key performance indicators (KPIs):</p> <p>Goals and KPIs for participatory practice/ community engagement work are set on a project basis</p> <p>Qualitative methods for evaluation of projects are in place</p>	<p>Goals and KPIs for participatory practice/ community engagement work are set in line with the strategic plan for the whole organisation</p>	<p>Goals and KPIs for participatory practice/ community engagement work are measured against baseline data and monitored regularly throughout the organisation</p> <p>Senior leadership is accountable against KPIs and qualitative measures</p>	<p>Goals and KPIs are measured and monitored with full scrutiny and reporting at leadership and trustee level and are shared with community partners</p> <p>Community partners have a role in setting organisational goals, KPIs and qualitative measures</p>
<p>Staff are introduced to reflective* practice and why it is important</p> <p><i>*thinking about your work experiences to improve the way you work</i></p>	<p>Reflective practice is used to evaluate the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work</p>	<p>Reflective practice is used with staff and community partners to evaluate the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work</p>	<p>Reflective practice is used collectively with staff and community partners across the organisation to evaluate the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work and all other areas of the museum's work</p>
<p>Internal evaluation/measures used to understand the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work</p>	<p>External evaluation/measures used to understand the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work</p>	<p>External evaluation is used to understand the experience and success of participatory practice/ community engagement work</p>	<p>Insightful challenge from experienced independent evaluators/critical friends supports staff and community partners to understand what works well and areas for development</p>
		<p>Questions and challenge from staff are encouraged</p>	<p>Questions and challenge from staff and community partners are encouraged and collectively reflected on</p> <p>Evaluation is used to create change and develop practice</p>

Hand over control



On the streets



Co-production



Inclusion



Lived experience



Decolonising museums is an ethical commitment. Here we outline principles to support decolonising practice. Using these alongside existing frameworks, such as our [Code of Ethics](#) and Culture&'s [Black Lives Matter Charter](#), can offer direction and support. These principles apply to everyone working in and with museums, at all levels.

We encourage you to use these principles individually and with your colleagues, considering what they mean for your work.

01. [Challenge neutrality](#)

Museums are not neutral and never have been. The notion of neutrality maintains power and silences the experiences and histories of many. To challenge neutrality is to recognise that colonial values and biases are embedded in many museums. Challenging neutrality can ensure museums mean more, for more people.

02. [Acknowledge power and privilege](#)

Challenge structural inequalities and all forms of intolerance, discrimination and marginalisation.

03. [Build relationships](#)

Grow sustainable, meaningful and equitable relationships with those who are underrepresented and misrepresented within museums.

04. [Value all forms of knowledge and expertise equally](#)

Build knowledge through the exchange of ideas, and value it as you would institutional knowledge. Narratives have multiple perspectives and are not fixed.

05. [Be brave](#)

Sometimes ethical practice may not align with traditional 'best practice' standards. Be ready to challenge norms and encourage taking risks within your institution.

06. [Be accountable](#)

Be transparent about museum practices. Admit the challenges involved, invite and be open to scrutiny, take responsibility and commit to learning and growth.

07. [Do the work](#)

Decolonisation is active, long-term work, which requires sustained action and resourcing. Go beyond the thinking to the doing.

08. [Take care](#)

Care for yourself and all those who are part of this work.

09. [Be creative](#)

Doing the same things will get the same results. Work differently, be imaginative and inspired in creating meaningful change.

10. [Aim for justice](#)

Remember who you are doing this for and why. Work with them to achieve justice on their terms.