



**Final report Activity 1 – Needs of the target audience**

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**QUIOSQ**  
Heritage Projects



**SCHOOL LIFE  
AND EDUCATION  
MUSEUM**  
NATIONAL CENTRE OF RESEARCH  
& PRESERVATION OF SCHOOL MATERIAL



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## Introduction

Museums are generally perceived to have a high threshold for many people, but this is not true to the same extent for school museums. The collections on display in these kinds of museums are recognizable to everyone because most of us went to school.

In collaboration between the Dutch National Museum of Education, the Greek National Centre for Research and Preservation of School Material (EKEDISY) and Quiosq, also a company from the Netherlands in the Cultural heritage sector, project WINSOME was developed.

This project is an Erasmus+ project, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport and is grouped under the small-scale partnerships in adult education. End date of this project will be June, 2024.

Aim of this project is to develop an educational program, focused on groups of adult migrants. The newcomers, as we call them, will be welcomed in the participating museums and will be introduced to the exhibitions and the subject of education as it is and was practised in the countries that they now live in. They can look for similarities and differences because most people have had some sort of schooling in their home country.

Our aims with this project are to make them feel welcome in their new country, to teach them something about education and to help them integrate and meet new people. In this way the project contributes to the EU's "2021-2027 Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion". This plan promotes inclusion for all and it recognizes the important contribution of migrants to the EU and addresses the barriers that can prevent people with a migrant background from becoming part of European society.

To get a deeper knowledge this first activity focused on getting to know the target group: what are their needs and characteristics? To get this information we undertook the following activities:

- a literature study;
- We held interviews with groups of migrants to get to know them better;
- We gathered best practices from around the world and tried to disseminate do's and don'ts for our educational program;
- Last but not least we described the processes in Greece and the Netherlands that migrants have to go through by entering the country.

The next chapters will describe the results of our activities.

## Newcomers

### Newcomers – who are they?

The main aim of the Winsome project is to find a way to make migrants feel more welcome and included in society while visiting school museums. But who are those migrants and what are their needs? A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another place, most likely in order to find work or better living conditions. An immigrant is someone who comes to live permanently in another country. Migration says nothing about a free choice of leaving one's country of birth. Refugees are for example forced to leave their homes due to war, prosecution, or natural disaster.

After the kick-off meeting in Athens, all partners have decided to focus on welcoming **newcomers**. We define newcomers as: **people who were forced to flee their own country due to war, prosecution, or natural disaster**.

### Reflection and tips

If museums want to do something for refugees, the most important criterion is this: the refugee as a homogeneity does not exist. In fact, what someone has experienced says nothing about their self-identifications. Who are you organising something for? Who is it interesting for? With the Diversity & Inclusion Code and a revised museum definition, emphasising the societal role of museums, organising activities for those who have recently fled war, persecution, or natural disasters becomes an interesting approach to enhance diversity and inclusion.

How relevant is organising activities for refugees in museums? Since the migration crisis of 2015, numerous initiatives have emerged in which museums have presented refugee stories, aiming to foster empathy and understanding among the public while providing a platform for those with refugee experiences and creating recognition for people in similar situations. As a cherry on top, the Friends Lottery, in collaboration with VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (Refugee Work), allocated a sum of 125 million euros in 2022 for the initiative 'Welkom in het museum' (Welcome to the Museum), granting refugees and asylum seekers free admission. "We see that many refugees in the reception centers are seeking positive inspiration beyond the AZC or emergency shelter. Museum visits can offer new insights and further assist refugees on their journey in the Netherlands. Therefore, VluchtelingenWerk Nederland wholeheartedly supports this initiative," says Mirjam Huisman, director of VluchtelingenWerk. However, practical examples vary in their effectiveness in catering to the target audience. A notable example is the 'Aleppo' exhibition (2018) at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, where former residents of Aleppo, who had fled due to the war, acted as hosts and hostesses, sharing their personal stories. Nevertheless, questions arose about the representativeness of the story due to the initial design, which was determined by Dutch museum staff without direct involvement of the individuals concerned. Thus, it questions to what extent current practical examples strengthen the 'welcome' in the host country. To explore this, here are four tips for museums.

**Tip 1: Be cautious with naming and labeling**

Strengthening a sense of welcome begins with addressing a target audience. In this regard, 'framing' is an important concept. 'Framing' is a process in which reality is constructed by attributing meaning to it through classifications, categories, and labels. In the title of this article, the term 'refugees' has been used to indicate the target audience. However, 'the refugee' doesn't actually exist, as this label doesn't convey anything about individuals' self-identifications.

**Tip 2: 'Words Matter'**

In the 19th century, museums emerged massively as national institutions with the aim of promoting a sense of unity. This often involved a strong preference for one's own nation, which led to a biased view of other populations and even the objectification of these groups. In line with this tendency is the choice of the term 'West Asian cultures' instead of 'Middle East'. The latter term is based on a Eurocentric perspective that considers Europe as the 'central' point. However, a country that positions itself as superior to other cultures undermines the welcoming feeling.

Searching 'Middle East exhibition' on Google immediately yields current results from museums still using this term. A solution to this language dilemma is provided in the publication 'Words Matter' by the National Museum of World Cultures from the Netherlands, a guide for ongoing language refinement.

**Tip 3: Prevent Stigmas by Staying Specific and Relevant**

As previously mentioned, words play a crucial role. However, concealing certain words or information can also lead to the stigmatisation of communities, a phenomenon often observed in the representation of cultures from regions like West Asia. This is why Islam is frequently portrayed as an inactive religion in museums, as contemporary approaches to the faith are omitted. Additionally, it is not desirable to portray all Muslims as a single community. The Quran has various translations that are interpreted differently. Moreover, political preferences and individual interests of Muslims can cast an entirely different perspective on how they experience their faith. Avoiding generalisations and accurately specifying whose perspective is being highlighted is, therefore, a wiser approach.

**Tip 4: Embrace the Multivocality of Heritage**

Individuals who have fled war, persecution, or natural disasters not only desire to integrate into their host country but also wish to preserve their own culture, values, and traditions. Creating a multivocal character for heritage objects, meaning that a single object can convey multiple stories, allows for recognition and identification. The Multaka project, which can be found in the best practice research of this report, demonstrated that shifting the focus from historical context to emphasising individual interpretations was more effective in making museum visits more comprehensible for the target audience. The "with, for, and by" approach can be a useful strategy for museums to give heritage a versatile character, allowing the target audience not only to honour their own heritage but also to expand their social network. This, in turn, can enhance their process of integration into the host country. There are already numerous tools available to encourage multivocality in museums, including the Heritage Education Multiperspectivity Matrix (HEM). This is an excellent example of a useful

instrument that helps museums gain insight into areas where multivocality can be integrated within educational programs.

In short, by making more conscious choices in naming which identifications are represented within a common agreement, by facilitating the honouring of the target group's own culture, values, and traditions, and by focusing on commonalities in cultural differences rather than the museum collection, museums can more effectively engage recent refugees from war, persecution, or natural disasters and enhance their sense of welcome and acceptance in the host country.

## The process of entering the Netherlands or Greece

### Asylum seekers - European process

As the project has been defined to target newcomers it is necessary to get a better understanding of the process asylum seekers must face. People who seek asylum ask their host country for protection as their own country is no longer safe. In Europe there are some general established rules that ensure the safety of people in danger seeking protection. Every European country is obliged to house those who seek asylum and will grant residence once the asylum seeker has been examined by authorities. However, asylum seekers are not always refugees by definition. If the life circumstances are determined to be non-life threatening, the asylum seeker must leave their host country. These guidelines are described in the Geneva Convention on refugees, a series of international treaties concluded in Geneva between 1864 and 1949, with the intention to ameliorate the effects of war on soldiers and civilians.

Asylum procedures can take up to months, depending on the type of asylum. Though every European country ought to provide protection for those who are in need, the procedures might slightly differ as each country has its own system. As the Winsome project contains two Dutch partners and one Greek partner, there will be a description of both countries of the procedure asylum seekers arriving in these countries will have to follow in order to gain more insightful knowledge on the circumstances of the target group of this project.

### The Netherlands

Asylum seekers are received after arrival in the Netherlands at the Ter Apel or Schiphol application centre. Here they report to the AVIM (The Aliens, Identification, and Human Trafficking Unit Police), where after they are interviewed by the IND (Immigration and Naturalization Service) to determine their identity, nationality and travel route. Right after the interview the asylum seekers receive accommodation at the central reception centre of the COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers). The asylum application process can be divided into five steps.

1. The first step is explained above: signup and registration.
2. The second step for asylum seekers is the registration interview, attended by an independent interpreter. The asylum seekers are being questioned about the reason for seeking protection by the IND.
3. Hereafter the third step follows: rest and preparation time. Asylum seekers are given the opportunity to meet their lawyer and receive information about living in the Netherlands. During this period, they are accommodated in a COA location, where they are provided with medical care and pocket money for food and clothing.
4. Step four is the general asylum procedure, where the IND, RvR (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand) and an independent lawyer will process the application together along with the asylum seeker.
5. In the final step the IND determines whether the asylum seeker may stay or must return to the country of origin.

As mentioned, the endurance of the procedure depends on the type of asylum. The procedure mentioned above is the most common for people who are not

born in a European country. There is also a simplified asylum procedure for those who come from a safe country, a European country or if you already have protection in a European country. This procedure is generally much faster. There is the Dublin procedure where a different European country must decide on the asylum application. This procedure is applicable for those who have entered Europe illegally via a different country if the asylum seeker applied for asylum in a different country or if another country gave the asylum seeker a Schengen visum. Usually, this procedure takes longer.

You will find a further explanation of the above described procedure here:

[How to apply for asylum?](#)

## Greece

People who enter the country without going through proper legal procedures, including third-country citizens and stateless individuals, can fall into various categories such as refugees, economic migrants, vulnerable individuals, families, minors, and unaccompanied minors. Upon their arrival, a reception and identification process takes place, consisting of four stages:

1. They arrive at a reception centre or mobile unit, where they are informed about their rights and obligations during the reception phase.
2. Registration and medical examinations are conducted to verify their identity, nationality, and undergo necessary medical tests.
3. They are then referred to the international protection procedure.
4. Further steps are taken for their referral and relocation.

During the reception and identification procedures, newcomers are accommodated in Reception and Identification Centres or other facilities. They are given access to the asylum application process (international protection), which is free of charge and unrestricted. Applicants seek protection from deportation based on a well-founded fear of persecution. An interview is conducted to determine the reasons for leaving their country of residence and why they cannot or choose not to return. Finally, a decision is made on granting refugee or subsidiary protection status, or rejecting their application.

Temporary accommodation facilities (up to 30 days) provide services such as housing, meals, education on rights and responsibilities in the host country, psychosocial support, medical care, personal hygiene items, clothing, and footwear. Additionally, Greek language classes and access to education and skill development programs are offered.

You will find a further explanation of the above described procedure here:

[Ministry of Migration and Asylum](#)



## Needs and characteristics of the target group

To get to know our target groups better each museum partner interviewed a group of newcomers and asked them to share their experiences with us.

Topics that were discussed:

- What were/are their experiences with museums and/or cultural heritage places?
- What makes them feel welcome when visiting a public place like a museum?
- What are their practical needs and wants when visiting a museum?

In this chapter we give a brief summary of the experiences. In the annexes you can find the full reports.

In total we interviewed ten adults (5 men, 5 women), between 19 and 40 years old. They were all able to communicate in English (the Greek interviewees) or Dutch (they all understood Dutch, but not all of them were fluent in Dutch).

### Experiences with museums and cultural heritage places

From the ten interviewees six of them visited museums or cultural heritage places more or less regularly in their home country. Most of them did that during school trips and since they were mandatory, not all of them had good memories. Especially the interviewees in Greece mentioned that it became more and more difficult to visit museums because of safety concerns, limited finances and the overall instability in their home country.

In their new home country all of the Dutch interviewees (who already live longer in the Netherlands) have visited a museum or cultural heritage place but none of the Greek interviewees. They only have been in the country for a period ranging from 3 to 12 months and are residing in a refugee camp within Greece.

The Dutch interviewees all have children and they plan their trips with them in mind, therefore they also like to visit outdoor places like the (petting) zoo or a park. The Greek interviewees did not have the opportunity to visit a cultural place in Greece as their main focus is on adapting to their new environment. But if they were to visit a museum or cultural site their main goal would be to learn about the local culture and history.

### What makes you feel welcome? Or not?

Maybe unsurprisingly all of the interviewees feel welcome if they are welcomed by nice, warm and inclusive staff members. It is important for them to be seen and feel respected. Language is an important aspect of feeling welcome, although the interviewees did not expect to be greeted in their own language and saw the visit to the museum as a good opportunity to learn the language. Other factors that were mentioned to make them feel welcome: exhibits that reflect

cultural diversity, the availability of multilingual information, the presence of safe spaces and clear signage.

Not feeling welcome in a museum or a cultural heritage place has also a lot to do with the people who work in places like this. Irritated staff members who don't want to make the effort to make them feel welcome, speak too fast or continue to speak in their own language. Also insensitivity towards their cultural practices, traditions or religious beliefs can create a sense of discomfort and feeling unwelcome.

### Practical aspects

We also asked our interviewees which practical aspects are important to them; what makes them participate in a program that we want to make?

Important:

- that there are (also) programs that they can do with their children or family;
- that they can participate in interactive exhibitions, games, workshops etc.;
- that someone helps them with finding the activities;
- that activities are for free or a small fee;
- that activities are in their 'new' language since they want to learn the language (by audio tours of multilingual museum guides);
- that the activities make it possible to meet new people;
- that the museum guide has experience with newcomers/people who don't speak the language and also make use of signing, pointing etc.;

## The best practices - a short summary

In the annexes of this report you will find a description of fifteen best practices, gathered from around the world, but with the centre of gravity in the Netherlands and Greece. By collecting and researching these best practices we tried to find tips, tricks, do's and don'ts for the educational program that Winsome wants to develop.

### General description - similarities and differences

Most of the best practices focus on projects or initiatives that are carried out by one or more museums. But also universities, municipalities and/or community centres organised projects for newcomers in their country. The best practices are a mix of 'ongoing' activities or working methods and short term projects.

The nature of the project or activity has a great variety. Of course, since a lot of best practices come from museums, most of them focus on (temporary) exhibitions, combined with one or more educational programs in the museum, or outside, in the city or in other museums. There are also a number of best practices that focus on involving newcomers in museums as a museum guide, either in their own language or in the language of their new country. Another category of best practices focus on a collaboration with newcomers in workshops or other more creative activities to make something that can be exhibited in a museum or is an intervention in a museum. Also there are a couple of projects (especially from Greece) that take place in refugee centres. Last but not least there is a best practice that is also a university research project, a shop and atelier and a place that is now also a museum but started as an initiative to collect personal stories from people who have a connection with Rotterdam.

When we look at the subject of the best practices we see roughly three types:

- exhibitions and projects that have migrants, migration and/or the refugee crisis in Europe as a subject;
- activities (in museums or elsewhere) that have not directly something to do with migration but are a starting point for activities with and for newcomers, to teach them (a language or historical or cultural background on their new country), to offer them a nice time, or to empower them;
- best practises that connect the knowledge of newcomers (either their historical, personal or language knowledge) with (an existing exhibition in) a museum.

The number of people that were or are involved in these best practices vary from small groups of maximum 12 persons to thousands of people over the years.

What is the impact that these best practices have? First of all the projects make it very clear that getting to know each other, newcomers and inhabitants, and getting to know each other's world, background, history and story, is key in

developing more compassion towards each other and thus contributes to a better, more peaceful world. Apart from that, 'empowering' is a theme that recurs in a lot of the best practices. On the more practical side we see a lot of new connections between cultural organisations and organisations that concern themselves with refugees and their needs. Last but not least these best practices make cultural organisations look at their own organisation and exhibitions and stimulate them to make them more inclusive and diverse.

## Do's and don'ts

Studying the best practices is a way of preparing ourselves for making our own educational program. What should we do? What shouldn't we do?

The do's and don'ts:

### **Do's:**

#### *Practical:*

- photography as a medium for visual storytelling is powerful
- start with real stories → authentic, personal, storytelling
- start with objects people are familiar with (from home, school etc.)
- incorporate active elements as drama techniques
- make room in the program for personal experiences, trauma and engagement
- think about working together with translators, but also stimulate them to practise their 'new' language;
- engage refugees in the program/museum/activities by discussions, guiding activities etc. Treat them as specialists in their own field.

#### *Organisation of the program:*

- be flexible and adapt to different circumstances, adjust and redesign pedagogical approach to create a supportive and enriched environment

#### *Connection and relations:*

- focus on bringing together refugees and non refugees and make them understand what binds them;
- forge collaboration with support groups and refugees organisations (UNHCR)
- seek for long term collaborations to be able to offer refugees on a continuing base a chance to get familiar with the Greek/Dutch society
- long term projects make it possible for the participants to get to know each other and build up meaningful relations.

#### *And don't forget:*

- sometimes just providing a space to PLAY and be relaxed is enough for children/ families/ newcomers;
- emphasis museums/cultural organisations as a 'contact zone'

- relatively 'simple' projects ('Relabeling') can be very powerful and yet tackle multiple subjects that have to do with migration;
- start with a question from within the communities of newcomers, not with our own idea of what they need.

**Don'ts:**

- do not involve staff that is not trained to cater the needs of newcomers;
- do not label newcomers as refugees, they are new to a country for different reasons, therefore name them newcomers;
- don't take the participation of refugees for granted. Pay them for work that they do.

## Annexes

## Results interviews The Netherlands

Interviews conducted by Juultje Slotema on June 1st and 20th 2023

### Characteristics:

- 5 adults (30 – 40 years old)
- Good understanding of Dutch, different levels of speaking Dutch
- 4 women, 1 man

On two separate occasions talks were organised with people from diverse backgrounds to gain some insights about their wants, needs and interests while visiting a cultural site. The talks were structured through a series of questions which form the framework of this summary.

Although from different backgrounds the needs and wishes of the interviewees mostly overlap.

### Prior experience:

- Do/did you visit museums or other cultural heritage places in your country of origin?
- How often?
- Where did you go/ what kind of places?
- What subjects are you interested in?
- Did you visit a museum/ c.h. place in your new country? Which one?
- If so, what are the differences between them?
- What is your main goal when visiting a museum/ c.h. place (if visited) learn something new, new experience, for fun, meeting new people etc. etc.

Four out of five interviewees visited museums and cultural sites in their country of origin. All visits took place during school trips, mostly during the winters. Since the visits were mandatory not all interviewees had fun memories regarding the school trips. These experiences did not encourage them to visit museums in their spare time.

Regarding museum visits in their new country, the Netherlands, all interviewees have visited a museum at least once. Some more often than others. All have children and so museum visits are always planned with the interests of them in mind.

The interviewees do not have a lot of free time off from work or other tasks that have to be done. So all are mindful with the free time they do have. Not all like to visit museums in these rare moments off. Not all of the children like to visit museums. Three out of five interviewees mentioned their children mostly like to run. Museums or other cultural sites are most of the time not the right places to

do so, so they prefer to visit outdoor places like the zoo, the petting zoo, or parks.

### **Welcome:**

- What makes you feel welcome when you visit a public place like a museum?
- Is it important to recognize things from your home country? If so, what is that?
- What makes you feel not welcome?

Maybe unsurprisingly, all interviewees feel welcome when greeted by nice, warm and patient museum staff or volunteers. It is important for them to feel seen, respected and treated equally to other visitors. Language is an important aspect of feeling welcome. None of the interviewees expect to be greeted in their own language. All are eager to learn and better their understanding of the Dutch language. More important is the speed at which information is verbally communicated. All prefer staff that take their time and are patient while explaining things that the interviewees might not understand.

One interviewee mentioned the importance of signage in museums. Visitors that are still learning the language might be nervous or scared to ask staff questions. Signs directing to the toilets, wardrobe, café would help as well as signs stating entrance fees and available activities.

Staff can make the interviewees feel welcome but also unwelcome. Irritated staff members make them feel unwanted and nervous. Talking too fast to understand, being impatient or not feeling respected can make them feel unwelcome.

### **Practical**

- What makes you decide to participate in a project like we are preparing? With what can we convince people to participate?
- Would you like to visit a museum in a group or alone? If in a group, what kind of group and how many people in the group?
- How would you cope with the language barrier if there is one? Suggestions?
- Would you be prepared to pay for a visit? How much?
- What would you like to do/experience in a museum? A guided tour, an individual tour, an audio guide, a game, a group discussion, making things (craft) etc. etc.

Since all interviewees mostly visit with their children activities such as workshops and crafts are preferred. One interviewee has five children, ranging from 8 to 12 years old. Therefore keeping an eye on all the children can be hard or even impossible. She prefers activities where she can sit the children down and let them focus on one specific task or craft.



Two of the interviewees regularly organise activities for fellow community members. One of them mentioned she has thought about organising meetings for mothers in which they can share experiences but also fun activities in the area. Three of the interviewees find it difficult to discover new activities on their own. Not only related to museums but also other cultural activities. Help with finding the activities or advertising the activities in places already visited by the target group would be appreciated.

All interviewees are aware of the different cards and initiatives to visit cultural sites for a reduced price or for free. Extra charges for activities are difficult for the group. Two of the interviewees don't mind paying something extra for an activity as long as they know what they are paying for. A voluntary contribution would be a solution for them. For three of the interviewees paying extra for an activity would be impossible, especially for the interviewees with multiple children.

As mentioned before, all interviewees prefer activities in Dutch, since they are eager to learn. All children are able to speak Dutch and could possibly translate when things are hard to understand. A trained museum educator, or even someone who understands the language difficulties the interviewees might be experiencing, guiding the activity would be appreciated.

## Results interviews Greece

Interviews conducted by Thanos Fourgatsiotis and Rafaela Ntana in May 2023.

### **Characteristics:**

- 5 Adults (19-30 years old)
- Good level of English
- 4 men/1 woman

We had the opportunity to talk with five individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Our aim was to gather insights and understand their perspectives on visiting museums and cultural heritage places, as well as their preferences and needs in such environments. Through a series of questions, we explored their past experiences with museums in their home countries, their expectations when visiting museums in a new country, and what factors make them feel welcome or unwelcome in public spaces. Additionally, we analysed the practical aspects of museum visits, including their motivations to participate in programs, preferences for group or individual visits, and desired activities within museums.

The participants mentioned key themes related to their interactions with museums and cultural heritage places. We present a summary of their responses to provide a deeper understanding of their perspectives, needs, and aspirations when engaging with cultural institutions.

### **Experience with museums/cultural heritage places:**

- Do/did you visit museums or other cultural heritage places in your country of origin?
- How often?
- Where did you go/ what kind of places?
- What subjects are you interested in?
- Did you visit a museum/c.h. place in your new country? Which one?
- If so, what are the differences between them?
- What is your main goal when visiting a museum/ c.h. place (if visited)? Learn something new, new experience, for fun, meeting new people etc. etc.

Two out of the five interviewees had the chance to visit various museums and cultural sites in their countries over the years, despite facing difficulties. They made an effort to appreciate and learn about their history and heritage by visiting museums in big cities and archaeological sites. These visits usually took place during school trips or family outings. However, due to the ongoing conflict and subsequent displacement, they were not able to visit as frequently. Safety concerns, limited finances, and the overall instability in their home country made it challenging for them to continue exploring and appreciating their cultural heritage.

On the other hand, the remaining three individuals did not visit museums or cultural sites often. They only went on school field trips or special occasions, but it wasn't something they actively sought out or did regularly. They had only been to a few museums and historical sites as part of educational excursions, such as landmarks or historic monuments.

Regarding their interests, they vary, ranging from history, languages, and archaeology to music, arts and crafts, and cultural traditions and folklore.

None of them had the opportunity to visit any museums or cultural sites in their new country, as their main focus is on adapting to their new environment, learning the language, and addressing immediate needs. Additionally, they mentioned that their financial resources are very limited, making it difficult to allocate funds for museum visits.

If they were to visit a museum or cultural site, their main goal would be to learn about the local culture and history. They hope to find inspiration and connect with stories of resilience and heritage. Moreover, they would like to meet new people who can share their own stories and insights. Through a museum visit, they aim to expand their knowledge and understanding of Greek history and culture.

#### **Welcome:**

- What makes you feel welcome when you visit a public place like a museum?
- Is it important to recognize things from your home country? If so, what is that?
- What makes you feel not welcome?

All of the interviewees believe that feeling welcome in a museum or public space is strongly influenced by the warm and inclusive greetings from the staff and volunteers. Such gestures make them feel valued and respected. Two of them also mentioned additional factors that contribute to their sense of welcome, such as exhibits that reflect the cultural diversity of visitors, the availability of multilingual information and translations, and the presence of safe spaces. They also highlighted the importance of cultural events organised by museums, showcasing the traditions and music of their home country, as a way to make them feel welcome.

On the other hand, all of the interviewees expressed that they do not feel welcome when they encounter language barriers, such as a lack of translations or encountering hostile attitudes and negative assumptions. Insensitivity towards their cultural practices, traditions, or religious beliefs can also create a sense of discomfort.

It is important for them to see things from their home country represented in the museum, such as artefacts like traditional clothing or artworks, as well as cultural practices like music, food, and crafts. Some of them also mentioned that historical references that evoke a sense of nostalgia and connection to their roots are significant.

**Practical:**

- What makes you decide to participate in a project like we are preparing? With what can we convince people to participate?
- Would you like to visit a museum in a group or alone? If in a group, what kind of group and how many people in the group?
- How would you cope with the language barrier if there is one? Suggestions?
- Would you be prepared to pay for a visit? How much?
- What would you like to do/experience in a museum? A guided tour, an individual tour, an audio guide, a game, a group discussion, making things (craft), etc. etc.

Regarding the practical aspect, there was a common agreement among the interviewees that they would participate in museum programs if they could benefit from them and improve their language skills. Three out of the five interviewees mentioned that connecting with other people through these programs would also persuade them to participate. For this reason, they would prefer being part of a group rather than going alone, as it would provide an opportunity to chat and form connections with other visitors. Most of them would feel comfortable in a group composed of fellow newcomers, but they also believed that including local residents in the group would contribute to a more enriching experience. Ideally, the group size would be around 8 to 12 individuals to promote group cohesion.

Regarding communication, non-verbal gestures like pointing, nodding, or using simple hand signals were seen as crucial ways to overcome language barriers. However, they would feel much more at ease if there were multilingual guides or audio guides available to enhance their understanding.

While they cannot afford full-price tickets for museums and cultural venues, as their priorities are different, they would appreciate some form of reduced or discounted ticket options for newcomers. This would encourage their participation and ensure access to cultural experiences. Some interviewees also suggested specific days or times during the week for free admission, which would greatly support their engagement with museums.

Different opinions were expressed regarding their preferences for museum activities. Guided tours were something that everyone recommended, but they showed greater enthusiasm for engaging in activities like interactive exhibitions, games, or workshops on various topics. These interactive elements would make the museum visit more immersive and enjoyable.

## Best practice: Verhalenhuis Belvédère, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

### Title

Verhalenhuis Belvédère, a place built from stories.

### Abstract

Located in the neighbourhood Katendrecht in Rotterdam a different type of museum has been formed. One that revolves around people and their stories, not around objects. A museum that doesn't always create exhibitions to showcase these stories. One that knows how to work with communities and is not afraid to travel beyond its own four walls to seek out new connections and partnerships. Since 2008 Verhalenhuis Belvédère (Storyhouse Belvédère) knows how to connect with visitors, the neighbourhood, the city and beyond from all different backgrounds and layers of society.

### Background

In its earlier beginnings the Storyhouse had not yet found a location to call its home. Created by three individuals its goal was to facilitate and create connections as an open invitation to get to know 'others'. A project was set up in which different groups and communities from the south of Rotterdam were photographed. The project sought out these groups in the easiest way possible, simply by ringing doorbells and by travelling from house to house, to neighbourhood centers, clubs and foundations. All were captured in around 150 group portraits. Meanwhile stories were collected and shared. Connections were made, groups were listened to and put on a pedestal. They made this part of Rotterdam special and their stories are worth collecting. It all came together in an open-air photo exhibition and a book sharing all the portraits, stories and important information about each group.

From this project on, other initiatives were stated. Different forms of storytelling were used. Cooks from different parts of the world made dinner for large groups while telling stories about their lives, a small shack transformed into a mobile recording studio to record stories from all around the city or working with Bulgarian construction workers to renovate a building but also to collect and preserve their story and their heritage. All ways in which the Storyhouse works towards its mission: connecting people and their stories with each other and the city of Rotterdam.

### Description

Personal stories are always the starting point for the Storyhouse. Every third month they organise a different exhibition about the people of Rotterdam and always with people from Rotterdam. This can be one person or a group. Personal objects like personal objects and stories are collected. Connections are made between these objects and objects from different museums or heritage sites. Partnerships are sought out, with residents, museums, clubs and institutions. These parties are the ones that add value to the Storyhouse. The goal is not to be a traditional museum but to create a space where people can come and go, to offer space for communities to create.

Around 20.000 people a year visit the physical Storyhouse in Katendrecht. Through partnerships with other institutions more and more people are reached. In the city as well as far beyond inspiration is taken from the way in which the Storyhouse is designed.

### **Impact (usability for WINSOME)**

The impact of the Storyhouse is far greater than a traditional museum could ever be. It was created from a need to collect stories, not objects. A physical exhibition space was not immediately needed but grew organically with the creation of different projects. People from the community are offered a space to create, share their story and organize events freely. The organization does not create a new exhibition and then decides to involve different communities as a sort of afterthought. Communities come to them with a need and projects or exhibitions grow from that need. It is truly of, by for all.

### **Relevance/usability**

What we can learn from this example is mainly how we approach our target audience. Do we design a program from a need expressed by the target audience or from a need expressed by us? Should we offer a space, free of our own rules and intentions, for them to organise activities or events on their own? Or do we truly work together to create something both parties might not realize it was exactly what they needed.

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### **Keywords**

Rotterdam, Katendrecht, participation, OF/BY/FOR ALL, storytelling

## Best practice: BELvue museum, Brussels, Belgium

<b>Title</b>
Two homes, one museum
<b>Abstract</b>
In a partnership between the Belgium museum BELvue and the Federatie voor Mondiale en Democratische Organisaties (FMDO) a guided tour has been created through the museum by guides with a diverse immigration background. The tour: 2 (t)huizen, 1 museum (two homes, one museum) doesn't focus on the museum but on the stories the guides have experienced and how they relate them to the objects on display in the museum.
<b>Background</b>
<p>As the museum about Belgium and its history BELvue presents their country through seven different themes; democracy, prosperity, solidarity, pluralism, migration, language and Europe. The museum strives to be a place that facilitates new encounters and the exchanging of thoughts or experiences about democracy. This is done through the organisation of different activities, guided tours and educational programs.</p> <p>One of those programs is 2(t)huizen, 1 museum. The museum created the program in partnership with FMDO. This organisation focuses on connecting and empowering people with a diverse immigration background. During the program visitors discover the museum through a guided tour given by someone with an immigration background. They tell their own life story based on the different themes of the museum. Six museum guides have been trained by FMDO to share their story and experiences. They tell these stories in Dutch, a second language for the guides.</p>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The program has been running for more than two years and usually consists of two parts which can be booked separately. First, a guided walk through the city followed by a visit to BELvue. Both tours consist of stories about the experiences and knowledge of the guide's live in their home country. Prior to the program guides were trained by FMDO. Some of them had previously been working as guides in their home country, most of them had not.</p> <p>A group consisting of six guides is currently active. All of the guides work as volunteers and are paid a small fee.</p> <p>The tours are still popular with organisations and groups like schools or associations. Usually with the aim to meet, interact and learn from people with different cultural backgrounds. Still, there are periods of times in which less tours are booked. During these times FDMO organises test tours with their guides. This is how the organisation tries to keep connected with the guides and hopes to minimize losing guides. The number of available guides keeps getting smaller which makes it more and more difficult to facilitate all reservations.</p>
<b>Impact (usability for WINSOME)</b>
The program gives the guides the change to express themselves and to tell their story. They connect their own experiences and past challenges to the history and

<p><b>Title</b></p> <p>issues of the city they now live in but also to the Belgium society overall. There is no mandatory story written by the museum or FMDO they have to tell. They create their own tour. Participants of the tours could book different guides and get a different story and perspective each time.</p> <p>The guides develop new skills thanks to the training of FMDO. Skills they can use in different aspects of their life. The tours also give the guides the opportunity to keep practising the Dutch language. For both the guide as for the participants the tours provide a valuable change to meet and interact with people from different social and cultural backgrounds as well as, hopefully, see things from a different perspective.</p>
<p><b>Relevance/usability</b></p> <p>Something to learn from the 2 (t)huizen, 1 museum program is the collaboration aspect of it. Valuable partnerships are formed between BELvue and FMDO, between FMDO and the guides and between the guides and participants.</p> <p>Another strong aspect of the program is that it focusses on lived experiences and the sharing of stories. The guides share their own personal story, not a story composed by the museum or FMDO. Their story adds to the story told by the museum and creates further relevance for its existence.</p>
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<p><b>Keywords</b></p> <p>Guided tours, Belgium, immigration</p>



## Best practice: Children's Museum, Thessaloniki, Greece

<b>Title</b>
Our long journey. Yesterday, where did I come from?... Now where am I... Tomorrow where do I want to go? Children's Museum of Thessaloniki
<b>Abstract</b>
The Children's Museum of Thessaloniki, established in 1997, overcame a devastating fire in 2009 to become an independent institution focused on providing an enriching environment for children. Collaborating with UNHCR, the museum developed a program titled "Our Great Journey," aiming to foster connections and understanding among refugee and non-refugee children. Through engaging activities and games, the program facilitated a sense of comfort, acceptance, and friendship. The museum's success demonstrated the significance of thoughtful design and inclusive approaches, accommodating diverse backgrounds and celebrating linguistic diversity. These efforts showcased the power of play and education in forging connections and promoting empathy.
<b>Background</b>
Established in 1997, the Children's Museum of Thessaloniki found its home in the Toumba Cultural Centre, Thessaloniki. Unfortunately, in 2009, a devastating fire destroyed the building along with all the museum's belongings. Undeterred, the museum's dedicated team embarked on a new beginning, transforming it into an independent and autonomous institution. Founded by a group of educators, scholars, museum professionals, and cultural enthusiasts, its primary goal is to provide children with an environment that fosters creativity, skill development, knowledge acquisition, empathy, and appreciation for diversity. Through active participation in activities and educational programs, the museum aims to introduce children to various cultural forms, encourage an appreciation for heritage and contemporary art, and facilitate personal and social growth through the arts. While its exhibits primarily cater to children aged 4-12, the museum's appeal extends to visitors of all ages. Built upon contemporary theories and pedagogical methods, the museum's activities are unified by the universal language of play, which serves as a means of communication for people worldwide. The museum unveiled its first permanent exhibition in 2012, followed by the opening of a second permanent exhibition a year later.
<b>Description</b>
The Children's Museum of Thessaloniki collaborated with UNHCR to develop an educational program aimed at providing a joyful experience for both refugee and non-refugee children. <i>Titled Our Great Journey: Yesterday, Where Did I Come From... Now, Where Am I... Tomorrow, Where Do I Want to Go?</i> , the program had several objectives. It sought to create a welcoming and inclusive environment within the museum, introduce children to the historical landmarks of Thessaloniki (including Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern sites), and foster their understanding of European countries and Greece through engaging games.
<b>Impact</b>
Through their involvement in the collaborative project, both the children and caregivers discovered that there are numerous shared experiences that bring us

together rather than set us apart. The museum facilitated this understanding through informal education, recreational activities, and informative sessions for the children, as well as introductory activities for the adults. As a result, a significant first connection was forged between refugee children and adults and their counterparts from the local host communities. Notably, it was observed that the project's group games, conducted in Greek or Arabic, and the various activities fostered a sense of comfort, acceptance, and friendship among both refugee and local children.

### **Relevance/usability**

The carefully curated educational exercises played a vital role in fostering interaction and establishing meaningful connections between refugee children and their local peers. The program's success highlighted the importance of thoughtful selection and design, demonstrating that similar positive outcomes can be achieved. Moreover, the program was tailored to accommodate the diverse backgrounds of the participants, taking into consideration their varying levels of familiarity with the topics covered. It also embraced and celebrated the linguistic diversity of the children and their parents, recognizing and appreciating the richness that different languages bring to the overall experience.

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### **Keywords**

Games, Connections, Inclusion, Museum

## Best practice: National & Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Greece

<b>Title</b>
Museums travel with the children of refugees, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens
<b>Abstract</b>
The Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Athens conducted a pedagogical intervention at the Elaionas refugee shelter, aiming to address the unique needs of the refugee population. The intervention unfolded in three phases, adapting to the changing circumstances and accommodating the transient nature of the shelter's population. Collaborations with various museums facilitated cultural exchange, bridging the gap between newcomers and the local society. The initiative engaged children creatively, preparing them for integration into schools through connections established with other children and exposure to Greek culture. Flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration were key elements in the successful design and implementation of the program.
<b>Background</b>
<p>Established in the academic year 1987-1988, the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Athens is dedicated to cultivating a new generation of scholars and professionals who possess a critical understanding of social and educational realities. The department's primary objective is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to actively engage in educational and social research and make meaningful contributions to diverse educational institutions. To achieve this goal, the curriculum incorporates a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon the insights and perspectives of various disciplines to inform educational theory and practice.</p> <p>One area of focus within the department is art education, where students explore not only the practical applications of music, painting, and theatre as pedagogical tools but also delve into their theoretical and historical dimensions. By examining the broader context of artistic disciplines, students develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural significance and explore how they can be effectively integrated into educational settings. This holistic approach encourages students to view art not only as a means of instruction but also as a powerful medium for personal expression, cultural exploration, and social transformation.</p>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The Department of Early Childhood Education and Education of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens carried out a solidarity initiative in the form of a pedagogical intervention at the Elaionas open refugee shelter from November 2015 to June 2017. The intervention unfolded in three distinct phases, each presenting unique challenges and objectives.</p> <p>During the initial phase, the refugee population at the shelter experienced constant turnover, with families and children regularly arriving and departing as the borders remained open. The fluid nature of the population made it difficult to predict the number of participants and which children would be present at any given time.</p> <p>In the second phase, the context of the intervention underwent significant changes. The shelter's population increased substantially, accommodating approximately</p>

2,300 individuals compared to the initial 800. Although the presence of children remained transient, the longer-term stay necessitated a reevaluation of the intervention's objectives and required ongoing adaptability and pedagogical flexibility.

In the third phase, an important development took place as a group of 35 children was selected to be relocated from Elaionas to the 132nd school of Athens as part of the Open Schools initiative of the Municipality of Athens. Accompanied by students, this move marked an attempt to provide the children with a different educational environment and opportunities beyond the shelter's confines.

Throughout the entire intervention, the Department of Early Childhood Education and Education demonstrated its commitment to addressing the unique needs of the refugee population at Elaionas. By continuously adjusting and redesigning the pedagogical approach, they aimed to create a supportive and enriching educational experience for the children, offering them a sense of stability, connection, and hope amidst challenging circumstances.

## **Impact**

The participation of children in the project encompassed a wide age range, spanning from 3 to 15 years old. Within the Elaionas shelter, approximately 30 to 50 children were involved at a given time, while outside Elaionas, the age range extended from 6 to 15 years old. This undertaking was ambitious and posed various challenges. However, the collaboration between the University, future teachers, and museum educators fostered a fruitful environment for exchange and interaction, holding promise for the future. Additionally, the project served as a bridge between the local community and the refugees, as it introduced cultural aspects of Greece through museum activities.

The initiative effectively engaged the children, providing them with creative outlets and sustaining their involvement during their time in Greece. Furthermore, they had the opportunity to participate in educational programs organised by museums in Athens, such as the Byzantine Museum, Benaki Museum, Museum of Ceramics, and Museum of Folk Art. As a result, many refugee children who eventually left the camp had already established connections with other children and were to some extent prepared for integration into schools.

## **Relevance/usability**

The successful design of such programs necessitates designers to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability throughout the planning and implementation phases. Given the dynamic nature of the circumstances surrounding refugee populations, the ability to adjust and respond effectively becomes paramount. Furthermore, the collaboration with diverse museums in the city not only provided valuable resources but also created meaningful opportunities for cultural exchange. By exposing the participants to various aspects of Greek culture, the programs played a crucial role in bridging the gap between newcomers and the local society. This engagement fostered mutual understanding, appreciation, and integration, cultivating a sense of belonging and shared experiences.

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## **Keywords**

Museum partnerships, Flexibility, Mobility

## Best practice: Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia Thrace, Thessaloniki, Greece

<b>Title</b>
What would you take with you? Uprooting   Borders, Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia Thrace
<b>Abstract</b>
The Folklife & Ethnological Museum of Macedonia & Thrace in Thessaloniki, established in 1957, houses a collection of folklore material from northern Greece. Its purpose is to research, preserve, and promote traditional culture through exhibitions, publications, educational programs, and events. In 2016, the museum held an exhibition on the refugee crisis, drawing parallels with the city's history of migration. The exhibition received positive feedback from newcomers, fostering cultural connections and providing a reprieve from camp life. Challenges included translation difficulties and storytelling mediated by translators. Overall, the experience demonstrated the potential for museums to contribute to the well-being of newcomers and foster understanding between host communities and displaced individuals.
<b>Background</b>
Located in Thessaloniki, the Folklife & Ethnological Museum of Macedonia & Thrace resides in a 20th-century mansion and was established in 1957. Originally, the museum's collection consisted of folklore material from northern Greece gathered by the Society for Macedonian Studies (Μακεδονική Φιλεκπαιδευτική Αδελφότητα) under the direction of Ioannis Taris. Over the years, the museum expanded its holdings to include a vast array of objects representing the rural communities of Macedonia. In 1970, the museum relocated to a new building and embraced innovative museological concepts. With a collection of 20,000 items, the museum's permanent exhibitions showcase water-powered machines as cultural contributors and traditional costumes from Macedonia and Thrace up until 1960. The museum's core mission revolves around the ethnological and ethnographic research and study of traditional culture in Northern Greece, collaborating with domestic and international institutions. Its aims encompass familiarising the public with traditional culture, preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, maintaining collective memory, and facilitating the understanding and interpretation of the past within a contemporary context. In addition to exhibitions and publications, the museum engages in various activities such as guided tours, educational programs, workshops for children and adults conducted by artists, craftsmen, and storytellers. It caters to all age groups and offers educational materials, events, competitions, and scientific meetings for teachers and parents.
<b>Description</b>
In 2016, the Museum organised a temporary exhibition titled <i>What would you take with you? Uprooting   Borders</i> , held in collaboration with the UNHCR. This exhibition shed light on the contemporary refugee crisis by drawing inspiration from the refugee experiences of our ancestors and the historical context of Greece. It served as the debut solo exhibition of Maria Belivani, featuring poignant watercolor portraits, maps, letters written in languages such as Pontian, Armenian, Landin, and Turkish, plaster sculptures representing refugees' belongings, a compelling sound

installation, and a thought-provoking question posed to the audience: If you were forced to leave your home today, what would you take with you?

The exhibition aimed to create a connection between Thessaloniki's identity, shaped by the dramatic migration and displacement of various communities in the 20th century, including Asia Minor and Pontian Greeks, Armenians, Muslims affected by population exchanges, and Jews who tragically perished in Nazi camps during World War II. By examining this troubled past, the exhibition explored the psychological and cultural impact of uprooting individuals from their homes, documenting their imprint on the historical trajectory of the city.

## **Impact**

The exhibition attracted visits from refugees, with two distinct cases. In the first case, families from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan participated in a tour of the permanent exhibitions, followed by a workshop where they discussed their experiences. The second case involved mainly Kurdish refugees from Northern Syria and was part of a program focused on oral tradition, fairy tales, myths, and storytelling as means to create connections and foster relationships between cultures and languages. Activities were organized both in the refugee camp and in museums and schools within the city. During the museum visit, participants enjoyed storytelling sessions with translations and narrations related to traditional costumes. The museum reported positive outcomes from the four visits:

1. Visitors showed a strong appreciation for common cultural elements and displayed familiarity with specific objects such as pre-industrial agricultural tools, traditional clothing, and sewing machines.
2. The visits provided an opportunity for participants, especially women, to share their personal stories and discuss their lives and activities in their home countries with the psychologists present during the workshop.
3. Participants expressed satisfaction, as the visits offered a chance for the entire family to have an official outing, and the workshop in the museum's courtyard provided a much-needed break from the challenges of daily life in the refugee camp.
4. Difficulties primarily centered around translation issues, as finding available translators was not always feasible, resulting in cancelled visits. The use of translators also diminished the magic and immediacy of the storytelling experience.
5. Over time, concerns and reactions from both museum staff and visitors to the courtyard refreshment room subsided, indicating that these visits helped alleviate fear and fostered a greater understanding of the unknown and different.

This experience highlighted the potential for mutually beneficial relationships to develop. Museums can contribute to improving living conditions for refugees within the host country, serving as places of respite and tension relief. Simultaneously, refugees themselves can be encouraged to understand and engage with the host communities, fostering a sense of mutual understanding and integration.

## **Relevance/usability**

Do's:

Engagement and participation: The exhibition should go beyond passive observation and strive to actively involve visitors. By incorporating interactive elements like workshops, storytelling sessions, and platforms for sharing personal stories, the exhibition can empower visitors and facilitate meaningful dialogue. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and inclusivity, making the experience more enriching and memorable.

**Don'ts:**

Lack of staff training: It is crucial to provide comprehensive training to museum staff to ensure they possess the necessary empathy and knowledge to understand the experiences of newcomers. Equipped with this understanding, staff members can create a welcoming and supportive environment for visitors. They should be prepared to address any challenges or questions that may arise, fostering a sense of trust and ensuring that visitors feel valued and respected during their museum visit. Well-trained staff play a vital role in enhancing the overall visitor experience and facilitating positive interactions.

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**Keywords**

Museum, Storytelling, Collective memory



# Best practice: Museum of Photography, Thessaloniki, Greece

<b>Title</b>
Building Bridges, Thessaloniki Museum of Photography
<b>Abstract</b>
The Greek Museum of Photography, established in 1987, is a cultural institution dedicated to the study, promotion, and education of photography. Located in Thessaloniki since 2001, it houses a vast collection of photographic objects spanning over a century. In 2016, the museum organised the exhibition <i>An Other Life: Human Flows / Unknown Odysseys</i> , featuring works by photojournalists and personal photographs of refugees. Complementing the exhibition, educational programs were implemented, incorporating real refugee testimonies and employing Educational Drama techniques. These initiatives attracted thousands of visitors, fostering understanding, empathy, and ongoing engagement, while utilising photography as a powerful medium for visual storytelling.
<b>Background</b>
Established through private initiative in 1987, the Greek Museum of Photography assumed its current form under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture in 1997. Since 2001, it has been located on the first floor of Warehouse A in the Port of Thessaloniki, providing a dedicated space for the study, promotion, and appreciation of the art of photography. The museum's overarching mission is to cultivate aesthetic sensibilities and educate the general public about photography and its historical and contemporary manifestations. Its extensive archives and collection encompass approximately 90,000 photographic objects spanning the period from 1890 to 2015. In addition to preserving and expanding its collections, the museum is committed to establishing an organised archive and hosting the Thessaloniki Photobiennale, reinforcing its role as a hub for photographic exploration and cultural exchange.
<b>Description</b>
In 2016, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography launched a temporary exhibition titled <i>An Other Life: Human Flows / Unknown Odysseys</i> . This exhibition showcased the captivating work of 26 photographers, primarily photojournalists, who captured the poignant journeys of individuals embarking on a new life in Europe after leaving their homelands. With over 160 powerful photographs on display, the exhibition also incorporated personal images taken by two refugees themselves, adding a deeply personal dimension to the narrative. Complementing the exhibition, the museum designed three distinct educational programs tailored to different age groups. These programs aimed to delve into the complexities of the refugee experience and explore the evolving identity of the modern refugee. The educational approach centered on real-life refugee testimonies, employing techniques from Educational Drama such as image theatre, improvisations, and psychometric circles. One of the museum's educational initiatives, <i>How do you see it?</i> , was implemented in October 2016 within its premises. This program, spanning 20 hours, catered specifically to thirteen underage refugees aged 14 to 18 from Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These individuals were residing at the Transitional Shelter for Asylum Seeking Minors in Sindos. The program, conducted over three sessions, provided a

supportive and engaging environment for the participants to share their perspectives, thoughts, and experiences.

## Impact

The exhibition attracted a significant number of visitors, including 5,350 primary and secondary school students who participated in educational activities and guided tours. This initiative provided an avenue for students to express their individual perspectives and concerns, fostering open discussions and the exchange of diverse opinions. Additionally, refugee minors had the opportunity to learn about the history and daily life of Thessaloniki, establishing connections with the city's culture and mindset. The tour, which included refugee neighbourhoods in the Upper City, facilitated a deeper understanding and appreciation of shared elements.

Furthermore, the students actively engaged in the art of photography, and their selected photographs were included in personalised commemorative albums created for each participant.

An important outcome of the program was the continued engagement of refugee minors with the museum. They continued to visit the museum regularly and actively participated in its ongoing activities, demonstrating a sustained interest and involvement in the museum's offerings.

## Relevance/usability

The use of photography as a medium enabled the creation of a visual storytelling platform that effectively engaged the participants and made the experience of exploring the city's history more memorable and captivating. By basing the program on real stories, testimonies, and photographs of refugees, the museum provided an authentic and meaningful experience, fostering a humanised understanding of the refugee crisis and promoting empathy and connection.

Furthermore, the incorporation of Educational Drama techniques allowed the participants to delve into complex topics in a dynamic and interactive manner. This approach facilitated a deeper exploration and comprehension of the subject matter, encouraging active engagement and personal reflection. The combination of photography, authentic narratives, and interactive techniques enriched the program, creating a powerful and immersive experience that left a lasting impact on the participants.

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## Keywords

Photography, Drama techniques, Personal stories, Local history

## Best practice: the Multaka project, Berlin, Germany

<b>Title</b>
The Multaka project
<b>Abstract</b>
The Multaka project was initiated in 2015 and supports newcomers from Arabic countries to help them integrate into German society. This project was carried out by four museums in Berlin that housed Arabic tours given by Arabic newcomers, making this a perfect example of a sustainable 'by, with and for refugees' project.
<b>Background</b>
<p>In 2015 there was a European migrant crisis due to the war in Syria. Many of them fled across Europe and were stranded in Germany. That same year some refugees opted for work in the Syrian Heritage Archive of the Museum of Islamic Art. The request inspired the director to take action and engage Arabic speakers as guides in their museums to also prevent Islamophobia, a phenomenon that was strongly present in German society as Europe coped with terroristic attempts by Islamic people that same year. The four museums affiliated to this project were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the German Historical Museum</li><li>• the Bode Museum</li><li>• the Museum of the Ancient Near East</li><li>• the Museum of Islamic Art</li></ul>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The Multaka project was initiated to promote a 'welcome culture' for people that fled from the war in Syria. Arabic speaking guides showed these newcomers in the German society around in either one or more of the four museums, whereafter these people were given a chance to guide other Arabic speaking newcomers in one of the museums. Guides varied from age, education, professional experience, religion, resident status or reason for coming to Germany. Twice a week all four museums housed these Arabic tours. Therefore, this project was 'with, by and for' Arabic speaking people that wished to integrate more in German society. The name Multaka is Arabic for meeting point.</p> <p>The project aimed to generate a different perspective on the museum collections than the ones produced by curators or heritage 'experts. Using a more personal approach to help newcomers feel included and have more belonging towards German society.</p>
<b>Impact</b>
As the project evolved, it became clear that naming and labelling people as migrant or refugee was not contributing to them feeling welcome, as they did not choose to flee their own country. Therefore 'newcomers' was used to describe the target group of this project. This alone gave a much broader perspective on how to approach people in similar situations. As the guides focused more on their interpretation of the collection, rather than outlining the historical context, they acted as mediators between the objects and visitors. This way the project was able to show how cultures

from the Middle East are represented and valued and creates better understanding among the public for this topic. In addition, the 'by, for, with' method ensures sustainability as there is a continuity and variability of people contributing to the tours. Not only does this give the newcomers more empowerment, but it also gives them ownership of narrating the Middle- East culture in a German society.

The combination of participants showed that the demand for Arabic-language tours in museums was much greater than assumed and enables the power of language to create more interest and a broader understanding within the heritage sector. Much of the collections were generated from Arabic countries, that not only raised questions of rightful belonging but also on how to interpret these collections throughout the perspectives of the so-called newcomers.

The outcome of this project has been described and has been published in joint ethnographic research about doing diversity in museums and heritage. Throughout publicity, the four museums wanted to convey the message that museums should be seen as contact zones. Meaning there is a center and a periphery between where artefacts are kept and the place where they are collected. And that both places give a different perspective and outcome on how heritage is valued.

### **Relevance/usability**

In terms of terminology the Multaka project showed that the use of 'newcomer' is more appreciated and contributes to a welcome feeling. The 'by- with and for' method can be used in the Winsome project to ensure a sustainable approach that also feels more personal as the project aims to welcome human beings that have been displaced. Seeing school museum as contact zones creates a more dimensional perspective on the objects and not only helps the target group feel more included, but also

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#### **Keywords**

Museums; Anthropology; Diversity; Cultural Management

## Best practice: Refugees as global guides, Pennsylvania, USA

### Title

**Refugees as global guides in Pennsylvania**

### Abstract

At the University of Pennsylvania (US), the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology recognizes the wealth of knowledge that refugees possess regarding their home countries. Since 2018, the museum has taken an innovative approach by employing a select group of refugees as 'global guides'. These knowledgeable individuals serve as invaluable resources, offering contextual explanations and insights into the exhibits showcased in the museum's recently renovated Middle East Gallery. With their personal experiences and connections to the objects on display, these tour guides seamlessly bridge the gap between the museum's collection and their own rich cultural backgrounds.

### Background

Nestled within the University City neighbourhood of Philadelphia, the Penn Museum, formerly known as The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, stands as a prominent institution dedicated to archaeology and anthropology. Situated on the University of Pennsylvania's campus, this renowned museum is home to an extensive collection of over 1.3 million artefacts. Notably, it boasts one of the world's most comprehensive assemblages of art from the Middle East and its neighbouring regions.

In an endeavour to enrich visitors' experiences and foster a sense of cultural inclusivity, the museum has implemented a practice of employing guides hailing from the very countries of origin represented within the collections. These guides bring a unique depth to the explanations, drawing upon their specific knowledge and personal connections. This thoughtful approach not only enhances visitors' understanding of the artefacts but also contributes to the well-being of newcomers, as they are engaged in a manner that acknowledges and values their expertise.

### Description

The recently reopened Middle East gallery at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology showcases remarkable artefacts, including the burial garments of Queen Puabi from around 2550 BCE, consisting of an impressive gold headdress and beaded shirt. The case is best described by experiences of those involved. Moumena Saradar, a Syrian refugee who arrived in Philadelphia in 2016, serves as one of the museum's tour guides. In addition to her work as a medical interpreter during the week, she dedicates her weekends to guiding visitors through the gallery.

Saradar underwent extensive training to deliver detailed historical tours and engage with visitors' inquiries. Her personal experiences and cultural background enable her to establish connections between the ancient artefacts and present-day cultures. During her tours, Saradar emphasises the significance of gold jewellery in Syrian weddings, sharing images of bustling jewellery shops in Damascus, where locals still cherish this tradition.

The museum's education programs manager, Kevin Schott, recognizes the unique value that Saradar and other guides bring to the museum experience. While local docents may lack firsthand knowledge, these guides infuse their personal stories and memories into their tours, creating an enriching and immersive encounter for visitors.

Another guide, Hadi Jasim, spent summers as a child near the ruins of the ancient city of Ur in southern Iraq, the origin of many objects displayed in the gallery. Reflecting on his childhood, he recalls playing soccer and imagining the lives of the people who built the structures. Jasim later worked as an interpreter for the US-led coalition forces and the UN in Iraq before immigrating to the United States. Now employed in food service at a local hospital, he finds solace and nostalgia in his role as a museum guide, relishing the opportunity to revisit his memories through the clay tablets and carvings on display.

Both Jasim and Saradar have encountered questions from visitors about the appropriateness of these antiquities being housed in a Western museum. Saradar addresses this by explaining the century-old excavation of these objects by university archaeologists in cooperation with local governments. Jasim expresses deep concern over the damage inflicted upon Iraqi historic sites during the war and by ISIS and looters. However, he finds comfort in the preservation of some of his heritage in close proximity, which allows him to feel a sense of belonging and familiarity.

## **Impact**

The tour guides undergo specialised training to deliver comprehensive museum tours, offering valuable information and addressing visitors' inquiries. They are encouraged to infuse their tours with a personal touch, sharing their own memories and interpretations of the objects. One such remarkable guide is Moumena Saradar, who, along with her family, sought refuge in 2016, fleeing the conflict in Syria. During her tours, Moumena stops by the burial garments of Queen Puabi, dating back to around 2550 BC. She provides context to the intricate gold headdress by discussing how, in Syria, people still save up for gold jewellery to adorn themselves during weddings.

Kevin Schott, the museum's education programs manager, highlights the unique contributions these guides offer that local docents may not possess. He notes, "During almost every tour, someone will ask, 'What about today? Do people still engage in these practices? Is this place still relevant?'" Kevin explains that as a non-expert, he is unable to provide definitive answers. However, the refugee guides, with their firsthand experiences and deep connections to their respective cultures, can offer insights that resonate with visitors in a profoundly meaningful way

## **Relevance/usability**

As the museum looks to expand its global galleries, more guides from abroad will join their ranks, further enriching the visitor experience and promoting cultural understanding. It is interesting to Winsome that the newcomers are not treated as a marginalised or challenged group, but as specialists in scientific and geographical background.

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Bob Crezee, Quiosq (NL)

## Keywords

Guides; Connections; Explainers; Refugees; Involvement

## Best practice: Relabeling in Leicester, UK

<b>Title</b>
<b>Relabeling in Leicester</b>
<b>Abstract</b>
<p>In the year 2018, a remarkable event unfolded at the New Walk Museum in Leicester, UK. Two captivating museum takeovers were orchestrated, wherein refugees and asylum seekers played a pivotal role in reimagining the labels of the museum's permanent collection, if only for a temporary period. The driving force behind these transformative endeavors consisted primarily of the refugees and asylum seekers who frequented creative writing classes hosted by City of Sanctuary. Assisting them were a devoted creative writing instructor and the esteemed Outreach Officer from the New Walk Museum. Through their collective efforts, the once-lifeless and detached objects found a newfound vitality as engrossing stories were interwoven with them. The profound impact of these narratives was deeply cherished by both the intended audience and fellow museum-goers.</p>
<b>Background</b>
<p>Situated on New Walk in Leicester, England, the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, now known as The Leicester Museum &amp; Art Gallery since 2020, stands in close proximity to the city center. As one of the pioneering public museums in the United Kingdom, it opened its doors in 1849. This esteemed institution showcases an array of captivating exhibits spanning the realms of science, history, and art, encompassing both international treasures and local gems.</p> <p>During a meeting focused on the planning of Refugee Week events in Leicester, an intriguing proposition was presented to a group of immigrants. They were asked if they wished to engage with the objects housed within the New Walk Museum. It quickly became apparent that many among them had never experienced the museum firsthand. Upon their initial visit, the World Arts gallery emerged as a focal point, showcasing an assortment of objects from various corners of the globe, including some originating from their own native lands. A surge of curiosity swept through the group, provoking a spectrum of emotions ranging from excitement to deep sentiment. In that transformative moment, they found themselves in direct contact with artifacts that had previously felt distant and unfamiliar.</p>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The process of crafting the labels unfolded as follows: each individual selected an object from the museum's collection. The refugees took the reins in composing the labels, with no external editing, but they received guidance from an experienced writing teacher. The teacher aided them in transforming their oral narratives into written words and sentences, addressing any English language challenges along the way. Given the varying proficiency levels in English within the group, all participants were encouraged to contribute, and translators occasionally lent their support. Subsequent editing of the labels did not take place. As a result of these collaborative writing sessions, the first edition comprised fifteen labels, and the second edition included an additional ten.</p> <p>The stories shared by the refugees were deeply personal in nature. Cloud from Zimbabwe recounted his emotional connection to a spoon that evoked memories of his mother's cooking, even requesting to have his mother's photograph displayed</p>



alongside the label. Rosemary from Nigeria expressed disagreement with the interpretation of a textile from her country of origin and penned a fresh perspective on the object. Four men from Eritrea reflected on their arduous journey through the Sudanese desert and wistfully contemplated the use of a Chinese horse within their narratives.

By distorting stories through storytelling, a powerful act was unleashed. The men and women who authored these labels enriched the museum's diverse collection by infusing it with their unique knowledge and experiences. They deftly disrupted the gallery space in a positive and indispensable manner, breathing new life into the artifacts and imbuing them with fresh significance. Their voices reverberated through the institution, effectively transforming it into a museum of the 21st century.

In the same year, a second edition of the relabeling project coincided with the Journeys Festival International, a celebration of the contributions made by refugee artists. This iteration showcased 25 labels within the museum, accompanied by five panels that explored the project's essence and questioned the role of museums in the modern era. Additionally, one panel showcased a poignant poem on the refugee experience, collaboratively composed by the group during a previous creative writing course.

## **Impact**

The endeavors undertaken served as a catalyst for a profound discourse on the role of museums as institutions and the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, and marginalized communities in the modern era. Several project participants were present at the museum on both occasions, engaging in informal conversations within the halls, sharing insights about their respective labels. The impact of the experience on the participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with one individual remarking that it was life-changing to see their labels proudly displayed within the museum. Another participant expressed awe at the unexpected opportunity of being present in a museum, a notion that had previously seemed unimaginable.

The response from the public has been equally uplifting, with a multitude of visitors commending this initiative as a brilliant means of keeping museums connected to the community. A visitor lauded the powerful and engaging nature of the labels, acknowledging their ability to establish connections between the exhibited objects and contemporary lives. Another visitor expressed a desire for institutions to recognize the inherent value and potential of such projects, emphasizing that they should not be fleeting endeavours, but rather sustained and integrated into museum practices

## **Relevance/usability**

Alongside the numerous positive responses, there were also valid concerns raised by the audience regarding the co-production aspect of the project. One individual inquired, "Were the participants compensated for their involvement?" and further questioned, "How were they supported throughout this process? What benefits did they receive in return?" These questions shed light on the inherent limitations of museum collaborations with marginalised communities. While these two acquisitions of new labels provided an exceptional opportunity for interaction between the participants and the museum's objects, enabling them to share their stories with the public, the transient nature of these events prompts a crucial question: What comes next?

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**Keywords**

Relabeling; Takeover; Refugees; Involvement; Storytelling

## Best practice: SMAK, Gent, Belgium

<b>Title</b>
SMAK's Chocolate Workshops
<b>Abstract</b>
The Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK) in Gent organized chocolate-making workshops in 2017 for people who fled due to war. The outcome was part of an exhibition, which was intended to be seen as a form of art. The objectives of this project were to tackle multiple social issues by connecting them in one workshop.
<b>Background</b>
Since 2015 Europe has dealt with a migrant issue due to the war in Syria. Like many other European countries, Belgium had to come up with a plan to house those who sought asylum. In the following years, Belgium became more creative in housing people in need as more institutions opened their facilities. In 2016 SMAK took an active role starting a project with Swiss artist Christoph Büchel. The artist lined an exhibition hall with mattresses, backpacks, clothes, and personal items, to create the perception of asylum seekers sleeping in the museum. The installation was not foreseen with an explanation note, as the aim of this project was to make people aware of the fact that human beings must sleep on the ground, whilst there are millions worth of artwork hanging in a museum. In 2017 SMAK housed a group of twelve asylum seekers for three months in the museum in response to a large exhibition by Christoph Büchel. These people came from a ship stranded in the harbour of Gent. SMAK organized multiple workshops for them to make them more acquainted with colonial aspects, including a workshop on chocolate-making. The workshops aimed to outline the effects of our colonial history on the current situation of refugees.
<b>Description</b>
<p>From July until August 2017, the museum held chocolate-making workshops, divided into three phases. Not only the twelve asylum seekers that SMAK housed were taking part in these workshops, but also anyone who was interested could attend. This allowed people to connect with each other from different cultures and get a better understanding of one's situation. Together with professional chocolatiers, participants became acquainted with aspects of Belgium's colonial past, which can still be seen in the cocoa industry today. It was necessary to explain to the refugees what the artist's intention was, while they came from a world where contemporary modern art is experienced as very alienating and have little to do with art in general.</p> <p>On the 25th of July, there was an introduction on how to process chocolate tackling the preparation, tempering, and pouring of the chocolate into moulds. The entrants started this workshop with the production of chocolate bon bon's shaped like bullets. Within this series of workshops, participants ought to make weapons out of chocolate to stimulate a conversation about war and their experience with it. On the 1st of August, there was a workshop for further production of bullets and the start of making moulds for the weapons. On the 2nd of August, contestants were able to finish their moulds and pour the chocolate into the desired shape. Lastly, the bullets were filled with praline filling.</p>

## Impact

The workshops created new relations between the participants and the museum staff and contributed to a more diverse and multi-perspective view on different cultures and people. Within these workshops the entrants were able to share their own stories and connect them to the history of Belgium to enhance a better understanding in one's culture. It was interesting for participants to learn how the chocolate was made and at the same time the weapons made gave an opportunity to talk about their own experience. For some it was even a whole processing process that they had been through, given their trauma's due to the war. They were able to literally bite off their bad experiences into the chocolate.

The workshops tackled three issues:

1. The colonial history of Belgium and how the superior policy of, among others, Belgium on the colonized countries still has an effect on our society today, such as on the refugee flow;
2. The current debate about fleeing because of war and its impact on people with a flight story;
3. The alienation of conceptual modern contemporary art for people from the Middle East.

The museum had gained more relations with organisations who are related to asylum seekers that are sustainable by nature for future projects. To give an example, there have been fundraising campaigns for Ukrainians, who are currently still under siege by Russia, in collaboration with refugee work in Ghent. Everyday goods such as toothpaste or soap are scarce in Ukraine due to the war. The SMAK opened itself up as a collection point for people who wanted to donate something. During such collections, Ukrainians are not specifically targeted, to prevent people from donating just because someone is from a certain country. We constantly try to keep a finger on the pulse of people to keep all refugee issues equally relevant.

## Relevance/usability

As the winsome project targets people whom fled due to war, prosecution or natural disasters, it is interesting to see how workshops can tackle multiple layers of societal debates and simultaneously take part in the process of trauma and seeking connection for further social integration.

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## Keywords

Workshops; Refugee; Processing trauma; Multi perspective

## Best practice: Sprekend Erfgoed, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands

<b>Title</b>
<b>Speaking heritage</b>
<b>Abstract</b>
<p>In 2022 the organisation Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland (Heritagecenter South-Holland) launched a new pilot program called Sprekend erfgoed (Speaking heritage). The program's aim was to lower the threshold for museum visits for a specific target audience, new Dutch citizens and low literate people. These two groups, often in museums underrepresented, may experience more obstacles when visiting a museum than more experienced visitors.</p>
<b>Background</b>
<p>Starting as a pilot Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland connected four museums in the south of the Netherlands with local language trainers. These language trainers provide lessons and classes to learn the Dutch language. New Dutch citizens and low literate people come together in these (mandatory) integration classes. To learn the new language but also, indirectly, to share new experiences and obstacles that come with learning a foreign language.</p>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The four participating museums were Museum Vlaardingen, the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities, the National Dredging Museum and the National Museum of Education. Together the local language trainers and the museums created a special program for the target group to fit their needs while taking into account the difficulties or obstacles the participants might encounter. The language trainer knows the participants and knows their capabilities. The museum knows its collection and how to create engaging educational programs. The result were three to four lessons (each with a duration of one and a half to two hours long) per museum.</p> <p>The main goal was to connect the participants with their local museums. Help them with the first steps toward museum visits.</p>
<b>Impact (usability for WINSOME)</b>
<p>The project offered an opportunity for the participating museums to learn from and with the target audience. The language trainers experienced the added value of museum visits in their language program as well as the many possibilities a local museum has to offer. Through the collaboration new connections and relations were formed.</p> <p>The program offered the target group a chance to discover a cultural site near them. The museum visits became accessible for them due to how the program was setup. They were integrated in their regular language classes and were during their normal 'school hours'. The participants visited the same museum three to four times, during which they were greeted by the same person working in the museum and their own language trainer. This made the participants more familiar with the museum and feel</p>

more at home. During the one and a half to two hours the participants could practice their Dutch in a more informal setting. Enough time was set aside to talk about the museums collection but also, and maybe more important, about their own experiences with the subject of the museums collection.

During the evaluation of the pilot program all partners were enthusiastic and many wanted to continue with the program. To facilitate this Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland applied for and received a subsidy for Sprekend erfgoed from the Cultural Participation Fund and Fonds 1818. The subsidy makes it possible to not only continue but also to expand the program from four participating museums to twenty.

### **Relevance/usability**

A strong aspect of the Sprekend erfgoed project was the partnership between Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland, the language trainers and the participating museums. They all brought their different expertise's and experiences to create a new program specific for a new audience. Thanks to the program consisting of three or four different visits to the museum it was possible to build a bond between the participants of the language course and the museum worker. Familiarity, trust and a real sense of being welcomed turned out to be the most important aspects of the visits. To see their own language trainer, someone they already knew and trusted, made it easier to form this connection.

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### **Keywords**

Participation, museum, partnership, WINSOME, Netherlands, educational program

## Best practice: Stad en taal, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

<b>Title</b>
New city, new culture, new language
<b>Abstract</b>
<p>Getting to know a new country, city and language can be difficult. How do you make a new country feel like home? How do you get acquainted with a new culture? Part of this process can be facilitated through (mandatory) integration courses. The municipality of Amsterdam decided in 2006 to add something extra to the existing integration course for new residents of the city.</p> <p>With the project Stad en Taal (City and Language) the municipality of Amsterdam hopes that newcomers do not only learn the new languages but also get acquainted with the art and culture of the city and make it their new home.</p>
<b>Background</b>
<p>The project started at the Amsterdams Historisch Museum (now the Amsterdam Museum), the Stedelijk Museum and The Resistance Museum. Both developed an educational program consisting of three lessons. The first lesson would be given by the integration course teacher and served as an introduction to the museum the group would be visiting in the second lesson. The third lesson takes more of an evaluation form in which they talked about their experiences and newly learned words.</p> <p>The project Stad en Taal is still ongoing and has grown from two, to seven participation museums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Amsterdam Museum</li><li>- Foam</li><li>- Rijksmuseum</li><li>- Stedelijk Museum</li><li>- Tropenmuseum</li><li>- The Resistance Museum</li><li>- The National Maritime Museum</li></ul> <p>Each museum developed their own program. One of the participating museums is the Tropenmuseum. The Tropenmuseum houses objects that tell human stories about different topics from Africa to West and Southeast Asia, from New Guinea to Latin America</p> <p>With their program <i>Mooi Meegenomen</i> the museum focuses on the personal stories of the participants. They are asked to bring an object with them to the museum that means something to them. One of the goals of the program is to empower participants and help them develop self-awareness and self-confidence.</p>

## **Description**

In the first lesson, given by their own teacher, everyone brings an object that is special to them. Participants are only allowed to bring one object and the object can't be too heavy or too big, since it has to be brought to the museum in the second lesson.

During the first lesson participants tell the group why they chose this object. This can be an emotional story or a more practical story, something the participants use every day. How old is the object? Is it heavy or light? But also; what makes this object special to you? What are your favourite memories of/ with this object?

In the second lesson, taking place in the museum, the group is welcomed by a museum guide. The lesson begins in the museum's café for some tea and coffee. During the drinks participants introduce themselves and their object. This creates a way for the participants and the museum guide to get to know each other and for the guide to adjust their tour to the interests of the group. During the guided tour museum objects are shown but participants are also encouraged to share their own stories and thoughts.

The third and final lesson is meant to reflect on the museum visit. Together with their teacher participants discuss their experience, newly learned words and what they remembered from the museum visit overall.

## **Impact (usability for WINSOME)**

Although all programs are different, all have one thing in common. The goal is always to encourage the participants to speak as much as possible. The programs focus less on transferring information and more on empowering participants through conversation, being critical and voicing your own opinion. The group visit, organised by their teacher, can feel safer than an individual visit. Hopefully participants are encouraged to visit the same or another museum after this experience.

The programs offer plenty opportunities to practice the Dutch language in a more informal setting and encourage participants to participate.

Thanks to the municipality of Amsterdam and their funding of the project Stad en Taal museums were motivated to participate in the project and to develop a special program for this target group. Although initiated in 2006, the program is still going strong and is still expanding. With the most recent addition of The National Maritime Museum in 2023.

## **Relevance/usability**

By initiating the project Stad en Taal the municipality of Amsterdam shows it wishes to encourage newcomers to participate actively in the art and culture the city has to offer. The program Stad en Taal offers newcomers to do so in the safety of their own integration course group. The design of the educational programs, and in this case the program designed by the Tropenmuseum, offers participants not only an opportunity to visit a museum but also to participate and practice language skills in a meaningful way. Participants are encouraged to share their story through an object that has meaning to them. The starting point of the program is not the museum and its collection but the participants themselves. An important takeaway for the Winsome project is to focus on how we, as museums, can facilitate in creating opportunities to practice the Dutch language in a fun and different way. How do we



encourage participants to share their stories and see the value in those stories? How can we empower and help them to make this place feel a bit more like home.

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## Keywords

Municipality of Amsterdam, newcomers, educational program

## Best practice: Stichting De Vrolijkheid, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

<b>Title</b>
The Van Gogh project: "Van Gogh and I"
<b>Abstract</b>
Stichting de Vrolijkheid, translated as Foundation the Joy, has created a series of workshops for youths who are staying in asylum centres, to make a collage in the style of Van Gogh. For this project, they also paid a visit to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and were given the opportunity by the museum to exhibit their works during the annual Museum Night of Amsterdam.
<b>Background</b>
Stichting de Vrolijkheid currently has 67 locations across the Netherlands, where they organize activities for children, teenagers, young people and families staying in asylum centres. The workshops that the foundation provides vary in form and duration, depending on the resources available near the locations of the asylum centres. Each facility has its own project leaders who initiate different projects among the asylum centres nearby. The organization has multiplied over 20 years, starting from a small budget and one classroom. The foundation aims to provide a nice time for newcomers who had to flee their homes due to war, prosecution, and natural disasters.
<b>Description</b>
A group of youths, aged between 15 and 25 years old from the asylum centre in Gilze, located in the Van Gogh Natural Park, attended the so-called project "Van Gogh and I" by Stichting de Vrolijkheid. During this project participants were invited by the Van Gogh Museum to gain inspiration by the famous Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. During their visit, the attendees were given a tour of the museum and learned about the life of the painter and came acquainted with his work. After the workshop, the participants were given lessons on how to make collages. Within two months the attendees were expected to finish a collage in the style of Van Gogh to exhibit in the Van Gogh Museum during the annual Museum Night in Amsterdam. Inspired by the life and work of Van Gogh participants were ought to choose one work of art, series or aspect that touched them to incorporate in their self-portraits. As starting point of their work, the participants chose a colour, feeling, face or story as a focal point. The workshops were executed under the guidance of artist Nikki Nordman.
<b>Impact</b>
The supervisors of this project noticed a significant difference in the first collage attendees made versus their final product in which they incorporated the lessons learned by artist Nikki Nordman. The project contained high elements of creativity and resulted in more empowerment among newcomers as they gained more knowledge about Dutch history and were given a spotlight in the museum to present their artistic visions. This way newcomers are given the opportunity to create and explore a sense of belonging in their host country. Within two months participants and supervisors created a strong bond and therefore new relations contributing to a

multi-perspective view on the world. The museum visit appeared to be a nice activity to be in a different environment to be amazed and inspired. Though the tour was a bit too difficult to follow due to the language barrier of some attendees, all participants were able to pick something that caught their attention as focal point of their self-portraits.

### **Relevance/usability**

As the winsome project wishes to find a way to make newcomers feel more welcome in their host country, this best practice shows that a spotlight in a museum to display visions or artistic creations of newcomers, contribute to gain a sense of belonging. The best practice also shows that a series of workshops embody more meaningful new relations as the attendees are given time to get to know each other.

### **References**

### **Contact information**

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### **Keywords**

Sense of belonging; Creativity; Workshops; Newcomers; Youth

## Best practice: Museum of the city of Volos, Volos, Greece

<b>Title</b>
The Museum of the City of Volos for the Refugees
<b>Abstract</b>
The Museum of the City of Volos, Greece's sole contemporary City Museum, is housed in a converted tobacco warehouse. Through its exhibitions and research projects, the museum actively engages with the local community and academic institutions. Its first major exhibition, "Volos-Nea Ionia: so close, so far," commemorates the 90-year anniversary of a refugee settlement, highlighting the shared experiences of diverse individuals. The museum also fosters inclusivity by organizing regular visits for young refugees to other museums, facilitating cultural exchange and dialogue. These initiatives promote community-building, integration, and empowerment, enriching the museum experience for refugees and the wider community.
<b>Background</b>
The Museum of the City of Volos stands as Greece's inaugural and only contemporary City Museum so far. Its premises are located within a former tobacco warehouse, constructed around 1920. The ground floor accommodates areas dedicated to temporary exhibitions, events, a shop, and a reading room. Notably, the temporary exhibition space preserves remnants of water distribution and transport pipelines dating back to the Middle Byzantine period (6th-7th century AD). In December 2014, the museum celebrated the opening of its first major temporary exhibition titled <i>Volos-Nea Ionia: so close, so far</i> . The museum has garnered research interest from academic institutions such as the University of Thessaly and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Collaboratively, they have undertaken an extensive research project aiming to design and produce digital interactive exhibits for the museum's permanent exhibition.
<b>Description</b>
The exhibition commemorates the 90-year anniversary of the refugee settlement in Nea Ionia and explores the impact of the large influx of refugees on the city. It focuses on the journeys of diverse individuals who met and coexisted in a shared space, making it the central theme of the exhibition. This exhibition also reflects the contemporary museum's commitment to inclusivity, reaching out to all communities in the area, including the present-day refugees residing in the city. Additionally, every year, another museum within the Volos Municipality Museum Network is chosen for a visit, and during these organized tours, young refugees are accompanied by teachers who also serve as interpreters.
<b>Impact</b>
The museum has established regular and well-organized visits for underage refugees living in nearby facilities. These visits encompass a selection of five different museums within the Volos Municipality Museum Network, offering the refugees a wide range of cultural experiences. Engaging in discussions during these visits has proven highly valuable, as it enables the refugees to recognize both the similarities and differences between their own culture and traditions and those of the host country. A strong partnership has been developed with the support team aiding

Syrian refugee families, resulting in recurrent visits by young refugees to other temporary exhibitions hosted by the museum. These visits serve as an opportunity for students from refugee education reception facilities to share their personal life stories through oral testimonies, listen to the experiences of others in the city, and, most importantly, connect with the history, cultural ambiance, and essence of their new home, regardless of its temporary or permanent nature.

### **Relevance/usability**

Forging collaborations with support groups and refugee organizations enhances the effectiveness of these initiatives and facilitates a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The exhibition, centering on the history and consequences of refugee settlement in the city, directly relates to the experiences of the target audience. This deliberate thematic choice fosters a deep and meaningful connection, while the regular visits by refugees exemplify a steadfast dedication to continuous engagement and interaction. Through consistent programming, a sense of community is nurtured, promoting a shared understanding and a supportive environment for all involved. This collaborative effort and sustained involvement not only enrich the museum experience for refugees but also contribute to their integration and empowerment within the local community.

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### **Keywords**

Community-building, Museum Network, Inclusivity

## Best practice: Wereldwijven ateliers, Dordrecht, the Netherlands

<b>Title</b>
<b>Wereldwijven ateliers</b>
<b>Abstract</b>
<p>More than 80 women from 27 different backgrounds come together in Wereldwijven ateliers to practice their language skills, their work skills and to expand their social network. Together they design and make beautiful products for their own shop and for designers with which they work together.</p> <p>Women empowerment and feeling more at ease in Dutch society, combining development of skills and language learning are key elements of this best practice. The combination of these elements are attractive to keep in mind by developing an education program for Winsome. It would be nice to use the educational program as a starting point for a long term relationship with the participants of a program.</p>
<b>Background</b>
<p>Wereldwijven ateliers was founded in 2011 by Jolanda Branderhorst and is located in the historical center of Dordrecht. There are two studios (for embroidery and sewing) as well as a shop from which the products are sold. The idea with which Wereldwijven was started was to provide a safe place for women from different backgrounds who are relatively new in the Netherlands and are not (yet) familiar with the country, the language and the customs.</p> <p>The target group are women who are living in the Drechtsteden, who are vulnerable, find it difficult to find a paid job in the Netherlands, because they don't speak the language, have never been to school (thus have no formal education) or have no working experience.</p> <p>The mission of Wereldwijven Ateliers is to provide a safe place for everybody, the ability to expand one's skills and work experience, to learn the Dutch language and by sharing one's personal stories to connect with others.</p> <p>By now the organization consists of a creative and commercial manager, a studio coordinator and a language coach. More than 80 women work together in Wereldwijven ateliers of which around 40% are volunteers and 60% are women who work through the social service department of their municipality in a so-called 'participation job'. (A participation job is for people who receive a payment from the municipality and is volunteer work for people who cannot do paid work.)</p>
<b>Description</b>
<p>The work that Wereldwijven does is a continuing process and no short term project. The women are able to learn the Dutch language and to make themselves useful by using techniques that they are familiar with or are willing to learn (embroidery and/or sewing). They get to know each other, empower each other, learn the language and customs and in that way become stronger and more confident to stand their ground in Dutch society.</p> <p>In two studios the participating women can work on their skills. When they don't have any experience they start in the embroidery atelier. They learn a couple of easy embroidery stitches with which they embroider cushions and other textiles. If they are ambitious or more experienced they can continue working in the sewing atelier</p>

in which the textiles are sewn together into beautiful products. During their work in de ateliers they learn the language. There is a language coach who teaches Dutch during their work, and they have an agreement to speak Dutch with each other and with the Dutch volunteers that also work in the atelier.

The heritage value lies in the fact that these women use and preserve creative embroidery techniques from their own country and teach these techniques to other women. The finished products find their way to the Dutch people through the shop in which they are sold.

## Impact

This project is more or less the organization. The collaboration with women from different backgrounds who work together is an essential element of the strength of Wereld Wijven, both in the products they make (relatively 'easy' embroidery on interior products) as in the organization itself (basically organized as a volunteer organization with minimal paid support) and the partners they work with (who find it important to work with socially involved companies).

They publish an annual report every year with their results: [Publicaties – Wereldwijven ateliers](#)

## Relevance/usability

This is not a traditional case for the Winsome project. Do's: work together with institutions, invest in long term relationships, combine 'fun' with learning and empowerment, provide a safe environment and start with small steps. Since it is an ongoing process that has developed over time it is by now a pretty solid looking organization in which we cannot easily find 'don't's'.

## References

Website [Wereldwijven ateliers](#)

Policy plan Wereldwijven [Beleidsplan 2021-2024 \(shopify.com\)](#)

Wereldwijven on [Facebook](#)

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[Instagram-foto's en -video's](#)

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## Keywords

Inclusivity, women empowerment, language learning, win/win, working with the hands.

## Colophon

Text: National Museum of Education, EKEDISY and Quiosk

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