



Network of European  
Museum Organisations



# **Museums, migration and cultural diversity**

## Recommendations for museum work





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## Imprint

### **Museums, migration and cultural diversity Recommendations for museum work**

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## Foreword by NEMO

We all know that migration is not a new phenomenon and has always been part of humanity. But we are now facing – at least in Europe – a situation that has no precedent in history. Millions of refugees have come to Europe in the last few years in order to find a new life. Many of them will stay.

Member States are struggling to find ways to deal with a changing society, to adapt to and accommodate a new and notably more diverse society. On the EU level, the topic of migration and refugees is high on the political agenda: We see new instruments being developed, new funding schemes and regulations being worked on. This is a moment – a momentum – when culture can prove how valuable it can be to society. Culture, cultural heritage and in particular museums can offer flexibility and individual, tailored answers to the challenges of integrating migrants and refugees in society. In fact, they can do this much better than many political instruments do. Museums offer a personal, cultural approach to new communities; they support dialogue between cultures and help with understanding one's place in the world.

The good news is that this is nothing new for museums. For decades museums have worked with marginalised communities and minorities. One of their core tasks is to help people find a place where they belong in the world and society through their collections. There is a range of already existing best practice models from the museum sector that focus on work with migrant groups and help to facilitate dialogue between cultures. But not every museum in Europe operates at the same level. There are national and regional differences, different communities and museums work with different financial and human resources and have different responsibilities to fulfill.

It is NEMO's task and goal to strengthen museums in Europe through the exchange of information and expertise. This present publication aims to make museums aware of their potential in the context of a diverse society that is undergoing a process of change and to support them in finding a constructive approach to working with a range of different communities, migrants, refugees and minorities. The publication was originally produced by the "Migration" working group of the German Museums Association in 2014 for the German museum community. However, its findings and guidelines are transferable to the European level and to different types of museums. This is why NEMO decided to adapt and publish this practical guide in English: to inspire museums all over Europe to find a multi-perspective and multicultural approach to their work and their collections in order to contribute to a healthy and diverse society.

David Vuillaume  
Chair

Julia Pagel  
Secretary General

## 1. Introduction

Our society today is shaped by people with a wide variety of lifestyles and backgrounds. Recognising this diversity as the norm is a task that we face in our social interactions on a daily basis and in the long term. In a society with a high level of immigration as in Germany, cultural diversity leads to new perspectives and new directions in museum work. This follows from the definition of museums set out by the International Council of Museums, which describes them as non-profit institutions „in the service of society and its development“.<sup>1</sup> These guidelines aim to show museums in Germany what approaches they can take to playing an active part in addressing this social challenge.

Engaging with the issue of migration runs in parallel to the efforts that many museums are making to become more open and to develop new ways of working with and for the public. Museums have the potential “to explain society as a society in transition, in motion, in perpetual transformation, as a society characterised by cultures in the plural and thus by continuous encounters with otherness, by continuous experiences of contact and contrast.”<sup>2</sup> The experiences and needs of people with and without immigrant backgrounds should play a bigger role in museums and exhibitions in the future.

The trend is moving towards participative museums that encourage involvement from all social groups and that understand integration as a two-way process. A change of perspective will allow people to see the museum in a new light, and the museum to see the world in a new light. Active involvement from visitors will ideally facilitate a new understanding of the past and the present, culture and the environment, and much more besides.

The “museum for all” might well remain a utopian dream, but the “museum for as many as possible” should become a reality. In order to achieve this goal, new strategies for museum work are needed for museums of all categories and sizes.

### 1.1 Migration is part of human history

Migration is not just happening now, in the globalised modern world. Rather, it has been a feature of every era since the first people left Africa and spread across the world. Migration has thus been the norm throughout history.

Migration leads to a temporary or permanent change in the place where individuals or groups live. Immigration and emigration can take many different forms, including cross-border migration, migration within a single territory and circular migration. The reasons for migration are as diverse as the forms the movements can take. For centuries,

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1 ICOM – The International Council of Museums: ICOM Switzerland, ICOM Germany, ICOM Austria ICOM (Ed.) Ethische Richtlinien für Museen (Code of Ethics for Museums), German Translation, 2006, Berlin/Wien/Zürich 2010, p. 29.

2 Korff, Gottfried: “Fragen zur Migrationsmusealisierung”. In: Henriette Hampe (Ed.): Migration und Museum. Münster 2005, p. 13.

factors such as the availability of natural resources, work, prosperity, settlement, family, religion and cultural needs have been motivating people to leave their homes. In these cases, migration can be a conscious part of a person's life plans. However, political persecution, wars, dictatorships, revolutions, discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds, natural disasters and poverty are triggers for forced migration that are still relevant today. Furthermore, the boundaries between voluntary and involuntary migration are often fluid.

Since the beginning of the modern era, the emergence of nation states, territories and religious conflicts have encouraged a sense of the familiar and the foreign, and of borders and violations thereof. However, the industrial and post-industrial societies of our globalised world are also characterised by a high degree of mobility, which has given migration a new importance.

## **1.2 Aim and structure of the guidelines**

The theme of cultural diversity and the challenge of museum work for a pluralistic society call for new points of view and new narratives. This applies to every category of museum: natural history museums, art museums, museums of technology, ethnological museums, museums of history, regional museums, city museums, local heritage museums, children's museums, open-air museums, etc. The actual form that this new perspective takes can differ depending on the type of museum.

These guidelines contain recommendations on what strategies might look like in the specific context of the core museum tasks collecting (including conservation and research), exhibiting and outreach. They describe smaller measures that can be implemented at a reasonable cost, as well as extensive changes that affect the whole museum and require longer-term processes. The range of tasks will vary according to the capabilities, resources and goals of the individual museums. The guidelines also touch on other aspects that are important for museum funding bodies and patrons, and for policymakers and culture enthusiasts. In line with the structure of the Bunte Reihe, a series of guidelines and recommendations published by the German Museums Association, the present guidelines are not an academic treatment of the subject. Rather, they are intended as a practical support for everyone who works for and with museums.

The glossary in the appendix explains important keywords and how they are used in these guidelines. The bibliography is designed to encourage readers to delve deeper into the subject matter.

If museums begin to see the challenges of social plurality and engagement with the topic of migration as tasks that traverse all areas of their work, they will have achieved the first goal of these guidelines.

## 2. A new perspective on collections

A museum's foundation is its collection, and the nature of the collection characterizes each museum. The topics of migration and cultural diversity do not just have an important role to play in cultural history museums and archaeological museums. They are relevant to every kind of museum.

For instance, aspects of global technology transfer could be of interest in museums that focus on the history of technology.

For art museums, migration and cultural diversity could be relevant in terms of questions related to style and the sociology of art, and as a social phenomenon explored by artists.

Migration is also a principle of nature. Scientific collections can show the many changes to biodiversity caused by human influence – in particular changes to the habitats, existence and geographic ranges of different species. A critical reflection on the history of the collection and the consideration of cultural aspects could provide numerous points of departure for natural history museums.

### 2.1 Re-examining and re-exploring existing collections

Migration and cultural diversity are not yet explicit topics within the existing collections of all museums. However, the collections can and should be re-examined and re-explored from this perspective. Museum employees can do this, though it should be in collaboration with external specialists and special interest groups.

When looking through and re-assessing the existing collection, it is important to avoid relying on handed-down knowledge; instead, staff should deliberately expose the objects to different questions. This is the only way to establish how certain orders and rationales came about in the display, and how historical contexts and (pre-)interpretations influenced the archive and collections. It should be kept in mind that a fair number of collections originated within the context of colonialist and racist views, and have been influenced by them. The original contexts of the collections should be reconstructed and then deconstructed so as to open up new perspectives and create scope for displaying them.

German national history is the frame of reference in most cultural history museums in Germany, irrespective of their local or regional focus. Despite the aim of achieving culture for all, this aspect has yet to change fundamentally. The mind of Germany's immigration society continues to lack shared memories and awareness for transnational contexts in the past and the present.

For decades, people's everyday lives have been poly-local and transcultural. Repeatedly reminding oneself of this is the key to avoiding any implicit continuation of the dichotomy between "us" and "them" when documenting objects linked to migration. The aim is to narrate a history of migration and cultural diversity that is integrated into the history of society as a whole.



## 2.2 Collecting new exhibits

In addition to re-examining and re-exploring existing collections, museums should also actively collect new exhibits linked to migration and cultural diversity. There are various ways of doing this.

### Collecting with associations and organisations

Special interest groups, associations and organisations of people with migrant backgrounds differ in terms of their regional roots, religious beliefs, political orientation and national, cultural and social interests. When it comes to collecting exhibits about migration history or histories, they can be key initial points of contact for links to people, for stories, for mementos and for information about private collections that might already exist. The organisations should be made aware of the museum's activities and be invited to help develop its collections.

### Collections in public offices and agencies

Municipal and state archives are important potential sources for texts about migration history. They usually document the official, administrative perspective. Company archives can also contain documents or diagrams that show how the company has changed as a result of labour migration.

Beyond the archives and official records, other public authorities and agencies (e.g. hospitals, social services departments and refugee commissions) are often sources of written material and even three-dimensional objects. However, details about the specific history of these objects or about to whom they should be ascribed are often undocumented or impossible to research.

### Collecting in public spaces

Museums can supplement their collections by running activities in relevant public places. Specific occasions, such as intercultural weeks, anniversaries of labour recruitment agreements, seasonal and religious festivals, and thematic events (family, music, corporate), can also make it easier to communicate the motivation for the collection activities. These types of initiative are a good opportunity for making initial contact with interested parties and for using this as a basis for establishing a dialogue.

Collecting in a particular locality or part of town is another way of accessing people's life stories, photographs and objects in a neighbourhood context. This strategy reaches immigrants and those without an immigrant background from different social milieus. Engaging with a specific place makes it easier to develop more than one perspective on a topic. This can also be achieved via joint projects with schools.

Dialogue-based collaboration with contemporary witnesses can open up access to objects and their meanings that have so far not been represented in the museum's collection. Temporary loans for exhibitions are an opportunity for lenders and museums alike to explore the layers of meaning attached to the exhibits and to strengthen mutual



understanding and trust. The visible appreciation of an object's history that comes with its exhibition can inspire lenders to allow their mementos to remain permanently in the museum's collection as part of a shared cultural heritage.

## 2.3 Questions and input

### Origins of the museum's collection

Every museum should have a collection plan that is set out in writing and updated regularly.<sup>3</sup> Given that museum collections might have come about for many different reasons and might have different origins, it is a good idea to look at the development one's own collection more closely:

- How did the museum's collection come about?
- Did a specific collection profile exist from the outset (regional, national, scientific or thematic – e.g. technical and industrial history, commercial history, everyday culture)?
- What questions or interests were in focus (key topics)?
- When and how was the collection profile altered?
- Have the collection profile developed and/or changed over time?  
Have new topics been added?

### Catalogue of questions for objects

In order to guarantee the consistency and quality of a collection, it is generally advisable to develop an in-house catalogue of questions that can be used to query and assess possible additions to the collection. This catalogue of questions should be expanded to ensure that the topics of migration and cultural diversity are incorporated into the collection.

- What questions have been asked of the objects so far?
- What frames of reference were used for interpreting the objects (e.g. local, regional or national frameworks, a scientific system, socio-political issues)?
- Were questions related to migration and cultural diversity taken into consideration during the scientific exploration of the collection?

### Examining and re-evaluating the existing collection

Existing collections should be deliberately subjected to different questions to those asked in the past. This approach reveals how certain orders and rationales came about in the interpretation of the objects. It also shows that objects are always ambiguous in their statements and must be read against the backdrop of historical contexts and (pre-)interpretations.

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3 see German Museums Association in cooperation with ICOM Germany (Ed.): Standards für Museen. Kassel/Berlin 2006; German Museums Association (Ed.): Nachhaltiges Sammeln. Ein Leitfaden zum Sammeln und Abgeben von Museumsgut. Berlin/Leipzig 2011.

- What questions appear significant today in terms of society's cultural diversity? Can these questions be applied to all areas of the collection? Are they relevant to all areas?
- How can the object be read or interpreted from the perspective of migration and cultural diversity?

#### Skills for exploring objects via new questions

- Do the museum employees have the skills necessary to ascertain key testimonial qualities of an object – e.g. knowledge of the language, the history and the (every-day) culture of the country of origin and knowledge of the object's context of use?
- Could people with specialist knowledge, such as members of self-organised migrant groups, be brought in as consultants?
- Could contemporary witnesses contribute their experiences and skills?

### 3. Exhibiting migration and cultural diversity

Exhibitions are places of social representation and cultural dialogue. Engaging with the exhibits encourages the formation of individual opinions and can trigger conversations between visitors, thereby helping to develop an understanding of similarities and differences. Exhibitions can make visible the history and presence of people with and without migrant backgrounds. They provide a space for illustrating reciprocal processes and the significance of migration in history. This creates multiple points of reference and opportunities for identification.

While permanent exhibitions show a representative cross-section of the museum's collections, temporary exhibitions focus on specific topics, such as current research. They can also be used to experiment with different exhibition approaches or formats.

The long-term goal is to duly incorporate migration history and cultural diversity into the permanent exhibitions as intersecting topics and to increasingly bring multi-perspective approaches to the temporary exhibitions.

#### 3.1 Incorporating contemporary witnesses and family history

All categories of museum can use approaches that focus on biographical history, everyday history and art to encourage people with and without migrant backgrounds to participate in conceptualising and designing exhibitions and accompanying events. Through this collaboration, traditional attributions of meaning can be questioned, new questions developed and new perspectives adopted.

Presenting autobiographical recollections in exhibitions gives people the chance to tell their own stories in their own voices. It can open up new perspectives and close systematic gaps in the heritage. Autobiographical recollections can communicate subjective points of view and insights into experiences, attitudes and impressions. These can also be expressed via artistic approaches.

Everyday objects and documents often acquire significance for migration history through the personal stories attached to them. The object's personal significance and broader historical context create the various layers of meaning and thus ultimately the object's relevance to individuals and the public as a whole.

### **3.2 Temporary exhibitions**

Temporary exhibitions are especially well suited to addressing current topics and trying out different forms of collaboration, exhibiting and outreach. They can also be used to gradually explore the history of migration and cultural diversity within the museum's region, its category or its thematic focus.

Anniversaries and jubilees provide opportunities for linking the past with the present. They attract increased public attention and can open up possibilities for acquiring financial and other means of support. Exhibitions on migration history and cultural diversity can serve as an example to the public and can stimulate collaborations with new partners.

In line with the idea of participation, general topics can also be examined with regard to their different aspects in a diverse society. For instance, subjects such as "love", "family" and "work" can be investigated and presented in terms of their different meanings and significance. Similarities and differences often do not correspond to reputed national or ethnic attributes. They provide opportunities for discussions and new insights, and thereby make the diversity in society visible. Exhibitions can highlight trends, question causes and mechanisms, and point out the changing, malleable nature of circumstances.

Temporary exhibitions can be used to trial loans. Lenders can see how the museum approaches the loan and its meaning in the exhibition, and what effect this approach has on them and the visitors to the exhibition. On the other hand, the museum can test out the meaning and interpretation of the loan. On the basis of these experiences, both parties can develop ideas for continuing the collaboration or for making the loan a permanent part of the collection.

Presenting temporary exhibitions in locations outside the museum can inspire visitor groups that the museum has not yet reached to get involved in museum work and collaborations. It can also bring the topics of migration history and cultural diversity to the public's attention in new ways.

### **3.3 Permanent exhibitions**

Permanent exhibitions are subject to lengthy innovation cycles. Partial or complete changes often have a very long planning phase and require significant financial input. To ensure that museums can better represent migration history and cultural diversity, we recommend that they also make changes to their permanent exhibitions. First steps towards developing the exhibitions in this way can be taken via different routes and without spending a great deal of money.

Without having to completely overhaul the exhibition, targeted interventions (e.g. changing the way the exhibits are arranged, including additional exhibits or using artistic devices) can introduce new aspects into existing permanent exhibitions.

In keeping with the goal of encouraging participation, viewing and discussing the exhibition with people from different cultural backgrounds and with different perspectives can shed light on new layers of meaning, on flaws and on desired additions.

Expanding the exhibition labels, adding comments or using digital media and different lighting can make these aspects visible and create new connections. Additional aspects and meanings often emerge through new constellations and by adding or removing exhibits. Media in different language versions and/or in-depth commentaries can help with this.

Ideally, museums will systematically develop their permanent exhibitions over the long term so that a common thread can emerge from the individually revised sections.

### 3.4 Questions and input

#### Concept, target groups and aims

- What is the basic conceptual orientation of the exhibition?
- Does it focus on the process of migration or on the development of a society with a high level of immigration?
- Is the aim to show the past and the present of a specific group?
- Which historical era is relevant for demonstrating the chosen aspects?
- Does the exhibition aim to show a general topic from different perspectives in relation to specific social groups?
- Are transcultural connections relevant to the exhibition's core narrative?
- Which target groups can be reached with which focus?
- How can target groups be included in developing the exhibition concept?

#### Dialogue and participation

- What common goals unite the partners in the collaboration?
- How extensive should the participation be?
- How can collaboration be incorporated into the conceptualization phase?
- Should contemporary witnesses be interviewed?
- Can objects and their layers of meaning be jointly examined and explored through dialogue?
- Is there a desire for discussions about the type of presentation and the design?
- How will the participatory process be steered? Are the various expectations, aims and decision-making pathways clear?

#### Attracting cooperation partners

- Which groups of people, multipliers, special interest groups, associations and organisations are relevant to the selected topics and target groups?  
What interests do they represent?

- What are the most suitable communication channels? Personal contact, personal networks, announcements, notices at meeting points, multipliers, professional settings, leisure activities, social networks, new media?
- Which reliable contact partners with sufficient time and linguistic/intercultural skills can the museum provide?
- Should the collaborations continue beyond the exhibition? If so, to what extent?

### Staging the exhibition

- How can the exhibition present multiple perspectives and different interpretations?
- Does the exhibition shed light on or address different cultural contexts and possible interpretations?
- How are the objects contextualised? What is the relationship between individual objects, personal histories and history in general?
- Do the selected objects and the way they are presented touch on cultural or religious taboos? Was this a conscious and deliberate choice?
- What language is used for the texts, media and accompanying materials?

## 4. New opportunities for outreach work

In terms of museums opening up interculturally, outreach work has an extremely important role to play. This is especially true in the case of communicating new content, promoting intercultural skills for handling long-standing social diversity and attracting new target groups.

Outreach work creates a dialogue between the audience and the museum, incorporating visitor interests into museum work. Outreach must be closely linked to the areas of collecting, research and exhibiting.

Museums should always orient their outreach work towards the target groups. The definition of the groups should be guided by the social milieus and migration should not play a prominent role. As the Sinus studies<sup>14</sup> show, the use of culture and media among people with migrant backgrounds matches that of the rest of the population. It is linked to education and milieu. Thus, service development and target group communication should initially be oriented towards people's surroundings and their affinity for museums. For some target groups, intercultural issues will be the main focus, while for others it will be an interest in migration history, the culture of the country of origin or the history and culture of the place of residence, the region or Germany.

Using the milieus defined in the Sinus study as a guide can help to develop ideas and concepts for targeted audience development, especially with respect to people who do not tend to visit museums.

#### **4.1 Inspiring interest in migration history and cultural diversity**

In the area of education and outreach, greater public interest in migration history and cultural diversity can be achieved through themed activities and by introducing specific focus areas in the general education programme. In order to be effective, outreach work requires appropriate points of reference in exhibitions and collections. Instead of narrowly focussing on labour migration to western Germany during the past few decades, the topic of migration should be placed in a wider context. Issues relating to inclusion and diversity can then be addressed in nearly all exhibitions in the areas of history, art, nature and technology.

#### **4.2 Promoting intercultural dialogue**

The task of outreach is to initiate an engaging dialogue between people in which everyone is treated as equals. Their contribution of cultural expertise – e.g. special knowledge about objects and their context, linguistic aspects, and knowledge about certain techniques or rituals – enriches the museum experience for everyone. By moving away from traditional guided tours to dialogue-based forms of outreach, this intercultural approach can become an elementary part of the educational methods employed by museums. This requires an open-minded attitude and flexibility. Rather than focusing on communicating specific content, the emphasis is on facilitating a dialogue between visitors with their individual expectations and what is being presented in the museum.

To enable people to participate in the everyday cultural life of a city or community, co-operation projects need to be developed that enable a concrete form of collaboration. Museums have to actively approach potential cooperation partners, for example autonomous migrant organisations, charities, other social interest groups, associations and schools. In practical terms, this means developing initiatives outside of the museum as well.

#### **4.3 A productive approach to social diversity**

Many visitor groups, particularly school classes, are culturally diverse. For outreach work, a special level of sensitivity and intercultural skills are required to draw attention to different points of view and engage visitors in a dialogue. This especially applies to historical, cultural historical and ethnological museums, as they are often dominated by national perspectives by virtue of the way they have developed over time. Social diversity also means linguistic diversity. Museums are ideal places for trying out and encouraging multilingualism. Every museum can enable creative access via language and can overcome language hierarchies.

Re-interpreting existing exhibitions from the perspective of migration and cultural diversity is also a suitable approach for museums of all categories. It can be implemented through outreach initiatives such as guided tours or workshops. In fact, it is a basic tool for outreach work. The necessary information must be provided to put the objects into context.

#### 4.4 Addressing new target groups

Museum exhibitions and collections do not sufficiently reach all sections of the population, irrespective of whether a migration background applies or not. Museums must therefore open themselves up more widely to the whole of society. They can do this by reflecting social diversity in their exhibitions to a greater extent, developing new concepts for special target groups and eliminating barriers. Potential approaches range from projects within the framework of language and integration courses to events on transculturality and globalisation.

A key task in addressing new visitor groups that have made very little use of museum services in the past is to find effective forms of communication. This involves using relevant communication channels to make the target groups aware of what museums have to offer.

Outreach should also be based on the principles of audience development: supply and demand are mutually influential – the museum develops its visitors and the visitors also develop the museum. A similar trend can be seen in communication in the digital age, where users are used to getting involved and contributing actively. These resources can also enrich museums – not only in the virtual world but also in the real world. They present a major opportunity for the future development of museums, as they combine authenticity and dialogue.

#### 4.5 Developing intercultural skills

In the area of outreach, the expertise of museum educators is especially important because they have direct contact with the audience. Apart from professional skills, this also requires a high level of intercultural skills, meaning that regular training sessions are necessary. It is also desirable for the mix of permanent employees and freelancers to reflect the level of diversity in their respective society.

#### 4.6 Questions and input

##### Inspiring interest: Cultural diversity as a key question

- What points of reference do exhibitions and collections offer?
- What event formats (guided tours, workshops, etc.) can be developed?
- Which objects enable the permanent exhibition to be re-interpreted from the perspective of migration?

##### Intercultural dialogue

- With which partners can initiatives for intercultural dialogue be developed?
- What common project goal unites the partners?
- What points of reference are there for this in the exhibitions?
- Who are the initiatives aimed at and how are they communicated to the target groups?
- How can the different skills and knowledge be jointly used?
- How can the results be transferred to daily work?



### Initiatives aimed target groups

- Who is the initiative aimed at?
- Which organisations, e.g. associations, educational institutions or similar, can help to jointly develop the initiative?
- What partners can be found for developing, communicating and implementing the initiative?
- How will the initiative be financed?
- How will feedback be incorporated into further development?
- What structural links will remain in place after the project has finished?

### Continuing professional development in museums

- How are outreach workers trained in intercultural skills and for which audiences?
- How can the proportion of outreach workers with a migration background be increased?
- What partners outside the museum can support these processes?
- Which museum employees are specifically assigned to this area?
- Which long-term audience development strategies can be realistically developed?
- How will the implementation of these strategies be evaluated?

### Language and integration courses as museum partners

- Who conducts these courses and which cooperation partners can help to develop them?
- What are the institutional guidelines of the partners? What scope is there for the museum?
- What organisational prerequisites (time, premises, technology) need to be clarified?
- What abilities must participants have?
- What longer-term connections can be established with the project?
- What follow-up projects can be developed?

## 5. Recommendations

When a museum incorporates the topics of migration and cultural diversity into its collection, exhibition and outreach work, this has an impact on the museum as a whole. It becomes more open to society and can thus attract new visitors. The following recommendations are designed to facilitate this process.

### 5.1 Intensify visitor research

Museums that are serious about focusing on visitors need to invest more in visitor research. This is an aspect whose importance is still not valued as highly as it should be in the German museum landscape.

How can museums use the insights gained from milieu research for the purposes of audience development? Depending on the available financial resources, the necessary basis can be established through targeted surveys, discussions with experts, or online

platforms. What expectations do potential visitors have with regard to the museum? What interests connect them with the museum? What prevents people from visiting the museum? How can museums increase their attractiveness for which target groups? At the same time, an active dialogue with the (potential) audience can also be used to raise the museum's public profile.

A higher level of reception research should also be conducted with regard to the way in which content is structurally presented in permanent and temporary exhibitions, and with regard to the comprehensibility of the accompanying text. The same goes for the evaluation of medium-term projects, initiatives and programmes.

Without these empirical foundations, it is difficult to ensure that human and financial resources are used in a more targeted and effective manner.

## **5.2 New communication channels**

An important task in addressing new target groups that have previously made little use of the museum's exhibitions or outreach initiatives is to find appropriate forms of communication. Traditional communication channels such as daily newspapers, local media, flyers and posters are only effective here to a limited degree.

In each case the "right" communication channels, in other words the most suitable methods of communicating, need to be exploited in order to make the target groups aware of the museum's initiatives. These communication channels vary according to the target group and should be as specific as they are diverse and age-appropriate: for example, internet radio and television, target group-specific and multilingual press, digital and analogue social networks. Digital social media open up new opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.

## **5.3 Active contact initiation**

In a society with a high level of immigration, the involvement of people with and without a migration background is an essential factor for successful museum work, however this is not yet the norm. A first step is to find suitable partners in the community, which in principle exist in every city and every context.

The recommended method here is field outreach work. With the help of multipliers, targeted invitations to the museum and visits to organisations, meeting places and events of potential partners, it is possible to overcome information deficits and access barriers while also building up trust.

## **5.4 Participation and training**

Museums rely on individuals, associations and organisers as advisors and collaborators in order to document and present migration history. Without people and their experiences, it is not possible to ask new questions about existing collections or develop new perspectives.

Training on both sides is necessary to ensure positive collaboration with new partners. Training in intercultural skills is key for all museum employees – from the security guards to the management. Actively considering cultural similarities and differences as well as reflecting on our own stereotypical ideas, clichés and prejudices form an important basis for working together, enabling us to strengthen our empathy, tolerance and understanding of roles. It is the task of the museum management teams to organise suitable training in this area.

During the process of collaboration, the cooperation partners receive specialist museum training. Insights into the standards and mechanisms of museum work as well as the agreement of shared rules play a key role in the joint working process. Offers to provide special “behind the scenes” insights can cultivate an existing interest in the work of the museum.

### **5.5 Additional expertise**

Depending on the origin or situation of the cooperation or interview partner, it is helpful and sometimes even essential to acquire language skills or the support of a “cultural translator”. Not only do language skills make it easier to communicate with the people, they are also indispensable for de-coding certain objects.

Knowledge about the history and cultures of the country of origin, and knowledge about the current political situation are likewise just as important.

In order to be able to ask meaningful questions when discussing different perspectives and to put information and objects into the correct contexts, museums either need staff with relevant knowledge or reliable individuals who can provide the necessary information.

In the medium to long term, museums should therefore strive to ensure that the composition of their workforce reflects the diversity of society.

### **5.6 Appointed contacts**

Contact with new partners should be actively maintained in order to establish a basis of trust. The continuity of staff is of great importance here and the task should not be performed by external contract workers or temporary staff. Rather, it should be handled by individuals acting as clearly defined points of contact, comparable with the community officer role which has been established at certain British museums. As the workload for addressing the topic should not be underestimated, especially during the initial phase, a commitment is necessary within the institution and, where applicable, also from the funding body.

Museums should promote participation among all social groups. To do this, access needs to be simplified and opened up to everyone. A new perception and reception of culture needs to be developed in order to foster exchange between museums and visitors, to better recognise the needs of visitors and to approach new visitor groups in a targeted fashion. This process also requires the development of intercultural skills – in both the workforce and the museum visitors.

## Glossary

The topic of migration is currently being discussed in the context of numerous political, social and cultural interests. As a term, it is sometimes ambiguous and is not without controversy. To prevent misunderstandings, a glossary has been included with these recommendations.

### Assimilation

Complete adoption of the culture in the host country and relinquishment of one's original identity. In the light of cultural pluralisation in the age of globalisation, the assimilation model is criticised as being outdated. Cf. hybridity, integration, interculturality, transculturality.

### Audience Development

Strategic development in order to attract new audiences to cultural institutions. Approaches from cultural marketing, cultural PR, art outreach, etc. are employed in order to develop, communicate and disseminate cultural initiatives for different target groups.

### Communities

Social networks of people from the same culture of origin. They are based on shared values and practices, and have been established for a relatively long period of time. Within communities a common cultural identity can be maintained through structures such as sporting and cultural associations or religious groups.

### Diversity

Variety and differences in life concepts. The concept of diversity involves accepting and respecting differences of all kinds, for example with regard to cultural and ethnic backgrounds, sexuality, beliefs and lifestyles.

### Hybridity

Result of hybridisation (the process of forming new identities through blending). It refers to a combination of identities that extends beyond the original identities. Due to widespread travel and mobility in the age of globalisation, cultures cannot be solely defined on the basis of geographical territory. Nevertheless, the local connection remains important. The analytical usefulness of the term "hybridity", which stems from genetics, is criticised for the assumption that previously pure cultural identities have been blended by globalisation. The cultural theorist Homi Bhabha describes hybridity as the "third space", which does not constitute a fixed identity but rather a process of identification and a discursive negotiation. Cf. interculturality, transculturality.

### Inclusion

Equal rights to social and cultural participation for all groups of the population. Individuals and their different characteristics are accepted, without the expectation that

they should adapt to an alleged norm. Cultural and physical diversity are viewed as a self-evident fact of today's society. The task for everyone is therefore to enable barrier-free access to social participation.

### Integration

Process that is based on commonly held values and leads to equal participation in society including all rights and duties, without the obligation to give up one's ethnic, cultural or religious identity. Cf. assimilation.

### Interculturality

The relationship or interaction between one's own culture and foreign cultures, i. e. their mutual influence in the form of acquiring, blending and overlapping. Boundaries between cultures are continuously being relativised and redrawn. According to the concept of interculturality, intercultural dialogue between two or more cultures in society is characterised by mutual understanding and respect, which results in mutual influence. Cf. hybridity, transculturality.

### Intercultural skills

The ability to communicate between different cultures. At the level of personal communication, the emphasis is on expressing and understanding emotions and value systems (e.g. physical distance, intonation, gestures and facial expressions, gestures of politeness). At the collective level, it refers to communication within and between (sub-) cultures, e.g. with reference to territories, migration and processes of discursively constructing cultures and nations. It is often linked with the aim of overcoming prejudices and ethnocentrism, mediating in conflict situations or productively using conflicts for innovation and criticism. Cf. interculturality.

### Cultural diversity

The term describes the existence of different cultural groups within a society. Diversity simultaneously refers to differences and variety, group membership on the basis of language, behavioural norms, values, life goals, thinking styles and world-views. In their political declarations, both UNESCO and the EU speak out in favour of preserving cultural diversity and promoting cultural dynamism and development.

### Migration

Migration leads to a temporary or permanent change in the place where individuals or groups live.

### Forms of migration

Forms of migration include cross-border migration, migration within a single territory (internal migration), immigration, emigration, circular migration and re-migration. A model has been developed based on the different forms of migration. It identifies five types of migrants, which are not mutually exclusive: The classic ideal type is either an "immigrant" (from the perspective of the host society) or "emigrant" (from the

perspective of the country of origin) who takes up permanent residence in the host society. When migrants later return to their country of origin, they are described as "return migrants". In particular "recurrent migrants" maintain connections with their country of origin, leaving their country only occasionally or for seasonal periods of less than a year. "Diaspora migrants" also maintain a connection with their country of origin, but instead of being economically motivated they are motivated by religious or political reasons or by organisations. "Transmigrants" migrate for economic reasons, e.g. as managers or specialists. They might spend a long, indefinite period of time moving from place to place and have multidirectional relationships. New plural social structures or spaces are therefore formed, i.e. participation in different social systems is spread between multiple locations.

### Reasons for migration

Reasons for migration range from voluntary to involuntary and the boundaries can be fluid. A person's reasons can be influenced by a variety of factors in the country of origin and destination as well as by personal factors (e.g. economic, political, religious, environmental, familial).

### Multiculturalism

The joint or co-existence of different cultures within a society. The concept views the different cultures as internally homogenous and externally delimited. It is based on the assumption that different cultures do not merge together but rather co-exist alongside each other. According to this model, migrants can maintain their original identity in private while forming another public identity at the political institutional level. Cf. interculturality, transculturality.

### Participation

Social participation. With reference to museums, the American museologist Nina Simon outlines the concept of the "participatory museum" in which museum professionals, participants and the public are involved in a framed and supported form of exchange. Depending on the relationship that the institution has with its participants and the public, who exactly is involved in participation and how much control is given to them, she defines different degrees of participation: contributory, collaborative, co-creative and hosted participation. Museums can progress through the following stages in a flexible way: 1. Visitors consume content; 2. Visitors interact with the content; 3. Visitors relate their own interests to those of the institution's wider audience; 4. Contact is established with specific other visitors and museum employees who share similar interests and activities; 5. The institution is seen as a social venue with enriching potential for engagement.

### Social milieu

The Sinus studies conducted by the market and social research company Sinus Sociovision have identified target groups in Germany based on demographic characteristics (education, occupation, income) and everyday life worlds (life views, way of life).

According to the basic orientation of their values (tradition, modernisation / individualisation, new orientation) and social situation (lower-middle class / lower class, middle-middle class, upper class / upper-middle class), these target groups can be classified under the following types: Traditional milieu, New Middle Class milieu, Precarious milieu, Escapist milieu, Adaptive-Pragmatist milieu, Socio-ecological milieu, Established Conservative milieu, Liberal Intellectual milieu, High Achiever milieu, Movers and Shakers milieu.

### Social associations

Welfare organisations such as Caritas, Diakonisches Werk, Arbeiterwohlfahrt that are mandated by the state to provide life guidance for people with a migration background and to support their integration.

### Transculturality

Concept of cultural identity in modern societies (cf. hybridity). It is assumed that today's cultures are made up of various cultural identities and have cross-border contours. The term refers both to crossing borders and to overcoming or eliminating them. In the view of philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, transcultural societies differ from intercultural societies in that cultures in the former no longer discriminate between own and other. The prefix "trans" indicates the concept of being transversal, as the cultural determinants cut through the cultures. It also reflects the idea of "moving beyond", in the sense of modern cultures becoming different to their earlier forms. Depending on one's perspective, increased mobility, flexibility and indeterminacy can be perceived as representing an increased risk or as opening up new freedoms. Overcoming boundaries can either primarily focus on understanding multiple cultures or on finding or establishing a critical impetus that traverses multiple cultures. Cf. hybridity, interculturality



## Further Reading

- Map for ID Group (Simona Bodo, Kirsten Gibbs, Margherita Sani) (2009): *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue: selected practices from Europe*
- Lisa Chandler (2009): *'Journey without maps': unsettling curatorship in cross-cultural contexts*
- LEM (The Learning Museum) Working Group (2013): *Museums and intercultural dialogue*
- MeLa Project (Christopher Whitehead, Susannah Eckersley, Rhiannon Mason) (August 2012): *Placing Migration in European Museums: Theoretical, Contextual and Methodological Foundations*
- MeLa Project (Luca Basso Peressut and Clelia Pozzi) (March 2012): *Museums in an age of migration*
- François Matarasso (2013): *Bread and Salt. Stories of Artists and Migration*
- Politecnico di Milano (Luca Basso Peressut, Francesca Lanzani and Gennaro Postiglione) (February 2013): *European Museums in the 21st century. Setting the framework*
- More Europe Initiative (2014): *Engaging the World: towards Global Cultural Citizenship*
- Eurocities, KEA and ERRIN (2014/2015): *Culture for Cities and Regions. Catalogue of practices*
- Julien Dorra (2015): *Building an open community: a new opportunity for scholarly projects*
- NEMO (last updated March 2016): *Collection of initiatives of museums in Europe in connection to migrants and refugees*
- NEMO (2016): *"Revisiting the educational value of museums: Connecting to Audiences"*
- MAPSI (2016): *Managing Art Projects with Societal Impact. Study Book for Students, Stakeholders and Researchers.*

## Appendix

The guidelines were developed on the basis of intensive dialogue between experts from museums, self-organised migrant groups and other social Institutions. These individuals are listed here together with the institutions in which they were employed at the time of their collaboration.

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**Museums, migration and cultural diversity**  
Recommendations for museum work