



histórias para pensar

non-profit for culture and society, about people, museums, heritage & the arts

LEONARDO DA VINCI TRANSFER OF INNOVATION PROJECT

Under the Lifelong Learning Programme



Museum Mediators Europe

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Mid-term Progress Report

October 17, 2013



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1. Main goals of the project and general features

According to the European Commission Study on “*The Impact of Culture on Creativity*” (2009):

«The impact and value of culture-based creativity on the economy is huge, it inspires people to learn.»

Even though culture-based creativity plays a pivotal role in the European society in many different dimensions (an increasing share of economic activity; the undisputed social impact, with huge touristic, identity and territorial cohesion value; as a social inclusion agent), the role of the Museum Mediators is still undervalued. It is still not recognised that the relation with Museum and Heritage visitors represents the threshold for institutional survival.

Museum Mediators/Educators are typically highly qualified professionals with an unstable and intermittent relation with the employer, developing very different projects each time. They come from the most diversified academic fields, however most of them have little or none communicational and educational training that is indispensable for their daily activities.

This reality motivated the creation of the current project. Our main goal is to create training and professional guidelines for Museum Mediators/Educators that represent the institutional and professional needs of Museums' mediation professionals in the participating European countries, such as: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Estonia, and Finland. This common ground will enable the comparability of very specific data about the Museum Educational Services and the upward development of a professional and certified system where professionals can evolve through a career standard and, also, create networks and mobility projects across the EU.

With the common training framework, created by Mapa das Ideias and tested in the Portuguese and European reality, museum and heritage education professionals can develop their skills within the field of communication, education and management developed specifically for the museum and cultural heritage settings and can also discuss a diversity of issues, such as intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

The project also promotes the empowerment of Museum Mediators as a professional and training group, stimulates mobility and the creation of a network and a think tank that involves the project partners and, later on, other countries of the European Union.

1.1 Participants

The Museum Mediators Europe project consortium consists of 5 core and 2 associated partners.

Core partners:

- (1) Mapa das Ideias is a Portuguese private-owned company founded in 1999. Its expertise in museum and cultural communication has led to the creation and development of mediation projects and tools, crossing different institutions and scientific fields. www.mapadasideias.pt
- (2) ECCOM is an Italian organization founded in 1995 with the main goal of promoting an interdisciplinary approach to cultural management. With a team of economists, archaeologists, art historians, experts in training and cultural communication it carries out analysis and research works for both public and private institutions and undertakes projects on management and organization of cultural activities. www.eccom.it
- (3) University of Barcelona in Spain is the biggest public institution of higher education in Catalonia, catering to the needs of the greatest number of students and delivering the broader and most comprehensive offering in higher educational courses. Among different research and course offers the University offers a demanding portfolio in the culture and arts sector in the area of organization management, the design of cultural projects, art systems and artistic project design.
- (4) Eesti Rahva Muuseum is the Estonian National Museum, an ethnography museum with 100 years old, which will open its new building in 2015. This poses the museum a wide range of challenges. For the Estonian National Museum the most important target is to expand the museum scope in society, by enlarging the participation of different communities and cultural groups of Estonia to museum activities. New models of collaboration have been recently used in the Estonian National Museum (such as open curatorship exhibitions for young people, collection campaigns and oral history projects for the minority groups, documentation of everyday life etc.) to increase the active participation of people and communities in content creation. www.erm.ee
- (5) Helinä Rautavaaran Museo in Finland is a museum that will make you to explore non-European cultures. The museum is named after Helinä Rautavaara (1928-1998), who collected the objects on display at the museum. The museum is maintained by the Helinä Rautavaara Ethnographic Museum Foundation. The

foundation seeks to advance knowledge on non-European cultures. The museum specializes particularly in cross-cultural interaction and related phenomena. www.helinamuseo.fi

Associated partners:

- (1) ICOM-Portugal. Rosário Azevedo, head of educational services of Museu Gulbenkian, member of ICOM-Portugal board and representative of CECA (Committee for Education and Cultural Action) in Portugal. www.icom-portugal.org
- (2) Instituto Politécnico de Tomar. Sílverio Figueiredo, archaeologist and paleontologist. Besides his lecturing career at the Polytechnical Institute of Tomar, he is the founder of a Center of Archaeology and Paleontology devoted to Scientific Research and Communication. IPT was involved because one of the goals of the Project is to create VET courses and an Erasmus Mundus Master in 2014. www.ipt.pt

1.2 Meeting timetable and planning

# of Meeting	City	Goal	Organised by	Participants	Dates of Meeting	# of Days
1	Lisbon	Kick-off meeting	Mapa das Ideias	All	18.11.2012 – 21.11.2012	4 days
2	Rome	Technical meeting about Needs Assessment	ECCOM	ECCOM, University of Barcelona, Mapa das Ideias	14.01.2013 – 16.01.2013	3 days
3	Barcelona	Training Needs Assessment Database Analysis	University of Barcelona	University of Barcelona, ECCOM, Mapa das Ideias	25.03.2013 – 26.03.2013	2 days
4	Lisbon	Creation of Course Grid	Mapa das Ideias	All	18.05.2013 – 22.05.2013	4 days
5	Lisbon	Conference	Mapa das Ideias	All	May 2014	4 days
6	Rome	Transfer Validation	All	All	July 2014	5 days

1.3 Main activities undertaken and results achieved so far

1st meeting: Lisbon, 18-21 November, 2012

During this kick-off meeting all the chronograms were discussed and the next meetings were planned. The activity plan was discussed and the tasks were distributed to all the participants of the consortium. (For more information, please check the document in annex with the minutes of this meeting: lisbonmeeting_report_nov12.doc.)

One of the main obstacles that the consortium partners had to continuously overcome was the use of the same terminology such as “museum/cultural mediator” (and the similarities/differences with the term “museum educator”), or “ethnographic research”. All these concepts were discussed in order to find a definition that made sense in the different geographical and cultural settings. Finally ethnographic research was agreed as a methodology that comes from anthropology and it means to do in-depth sustained research within a community for several time using methods such as observations, interviews and field notes. This is one of the reasons the consortium partners developed the concept of creating a fieldwork note book, a kind of graphic diary with content, where the trainees can register their findings and thoughts/reflections from their work with the community/audience/public.

2nd meeting: Rome, 14-16 January, 2013

The participants of this meeting agreed on the criteria research goals together with the methodological strategy to collect the data (a survey was set into motion) and the literature review of the topic. Further tasks were distributed to the consortium participants. It was also agreed on that beside of the survey, each partner will have to proceed with the interviews and the production of case-studies in video.

Once the interviews and surveys are done and completed, each partner will send a summary file with all the relevant data and findings they analyzed to the Project Coordinator, Mapa das Ideias. All the surveys followed the same internal structure (around 5 A4 pages) which included the topics as follows: history and evolution; legislative framework (including job description and standards); experiences and training offer available. The rationale was to produce an accurate picture of what was going on in the field of museum mediation within the national framework of each country of the consortium. A national general overview documented through the surveys and also in video. These set of case studies will allow the consortium team to identify the common trends and training needs as accurate as possible.

All national surveys were applied in the national languages of the countries involved in the consortium: EE; ES; FI; IT and PT. All were uploaded to the internet by Mapa das

Ideias and made available to the partners until the 1st of February 2013, using the platform www.surveymonkey.com

Each participating country has disseminated the survey according to its specific context: in some cases it occurred through the Ministry of Culture, in some others through universities or Museum Professionals Associations. One of the main issues of the survey was the diversity of the targeted museums in terms of legal status - local, regional, national, public, private – and in terms of typology of collections, in order to collect as many diverse data as possible.

In-depth interviews targeted to key people within the profession, who could provide a picture of museum mediation in terms of its history, definition and actions were also carried out.

These surveys were applied quite carefully to a wide range of people, involving not only professionals in the field, but also museum mediators already on the field, trainers, practitioners' and museum directors. In order to achieve this, a set of three different interviews were developed and applied: one addressed to museums and museum educational department directors; the second to museum mediators; and the third one addressed to trainers/professors. The number of interviews varied between 3 and 5 for each category.

Both the survey and the interviews were designed by using themes as question markers, such as “Museum Type and Position”, “Museum Mediation”, “Visitor studies”, “Policy”, and “Profile”. The interview themes were the followings:

- a) For museum directors/curators: Education and Job training, Activities, Audiences, Professional Acknowledgement, Working condition.
- b) For museum mediators: Museum Mission, Activities, Mediation, Job title requirements.
- c) For trainers/professors: Museum Mediation in the partners' countries, Training context, Professional Profile, Competence, Knowledge and Skills.

In addition to these tools, each country selected five case studies, which were merged together with the other sources/documentation.

Each partner sorted out its own data and the results were analyzed according to two main principles: specific countries' issues and transversal common issues. The objective was to create the theoretical basis for the training courses, which will have a common part as well as a specific one based on the national contexts.

3rd meeting: Barcelona, 25-26 March, 2013

The main task during this meeting was to develop the comparative analysis of the different survey results and the five case studies presented by each partner. It was also

discussed and agreed on to use and include quotations from the survey participants whenever it made sense: giving the participants or the interviewees an active voice on the process (and only on this occasion these quotes would be translated from the national languages to English). The partners also decided to include the United Kingdom and France in the Report on Museum Mediation in Europe, as the significant experience of these two additional countries in the field would support the comprehensive picture of the document. Interviews conducted by the Portuguese, Spanish and Italian partners were shared and discussed during the meeting.

At this stage of the project, it was again the proper time to address the fracturing questions around a common definition and to choose the terminology to use (and explain why): the definition of “mediation”/“education” and “museum mediation”/“museum education” it was not easy and it took a matured work to achieve a shared common understanding.

“In order to analyze the concept of museum mediation, the working group decided to start from a common understanding of the word “mediation”, considering that its meaning varies a lot in different countries within the EU and also that it is commonly associated with different activities in the political and social sectors. In fact, from an etymological point of view, the word “mediation” has two main meanings:

*1) Intercession (the act of mediating): it comes from the Latin word *medius* “in the middle” and it was originally applied to Christ, who in Christian theology “mediates” between God and man; and*

*2) An attempt to reconcile disputed matters arising between different subjects: it comes from the Latin verb *mediare* “to intervene, mediate” meaning “one who intervenes between two disputing parties”.*

The working group agrees on considering the first meaning as the one most suitable, when talking about museum mediation: in this particular case – as it happens in cultural mediation broadly speaking – the mediator acts as a bridge, in a linking and connecting process which might also imply the reconciliation of disputed matters but not as its main feature.”¹

4th meeting: Lisbon, 18-22 May, 2013

During this meeting the first results of the survey were presented and discussed. A set of video testimonials from Spain, Estonia and Italy were also shared. Two other important template documents were developed and shared: a checklist with all the

¹ Quotation from the work-in-progress, with the preliminary results from the national surveys applied and the research methodology used.

tasks to execute in order to prepare the training courses and a set of general guidelines for the lecturers of the training.

Work-in-progress

Until now quite a few tasks were already completed or are in progress, such as the Museum Mediation Report of the Survey. This report contains the findings of the research carried out by the project partners in order to assess the training needs perceived by museum professionals and by trainers. The report itself will be used to design the training courses for museum mediators to be held in the partners' countries; it will be also included in the technical publication and uploaded to the project's website.

A specific survey for the selection for future trainees was developed and distributed to all consortium partners so that they could also apply the same set of criteria while selecting the candidates of the museum mediators training. The logistical materials of the training were also developed and will be sent to all the consortium partners until the end of November.

Another work-in-progress is the Museum Mediators in Europe Course Handbook, a compilation of the entire course sessions with articles, bibliography per topic, links for other resources and lesson plans.

In Portugal the same survey for future trainees was developed accordingly to the selection criteria established. Fieldwork note book, a kind of graphic diary with content, was also created and sent to the trainees. The Portuguese case studies video testimonials were also produced and the scientific articles were translated into English. A set of video interviews were carried out to key placed people (from the Portuguese Museology Association, ICOM-PT), and a selection of their articles were also translated to English.

1.4 Dissemination activities carried out

On the 22th of June 2013 the team presented the main features of the project "Museum Mediators Europe – training and professional guidelines for Museum Mediators/Educators in the European Union" in a conference named Museums, education and their professionals (*Museus, educação e os seus profissionais*) which took place at the National Museum of Archaeology in Lisbon, Portugal.

There were also two mobility activities that had not been previewed in the initial application but the team participated actively in the Sixth International Conference on the Inclusive Museum in Denmark, Copenhagen between the 22nd and the 24th of April



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2013 and more recently in closing conference of the LEM (The Learning Museum Network Project) conference which took place in Italy, Bologna between the 18th and the 21st September 2013.

1.5 Final remarks and recommendations

The Mid-Term Report provides an overview of the Museum Mediators Europe project Transfer of Innovation progress; presenting the main processes and activities. The Project Work Packages are all on schedule and other Work Packages are being carefully planned within the timeframe.

The project leader took all the steps in order to create the project communication identity and platforms (www.pbworks.com and www.surveymonkey.com), the website (www.museummediators.com), the project official logo and the Youtube dedicated channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/MuseumMediatorsEU?feature=watch>).

All the necessary contracts were also sent to the consortium partners, the trainers and the trainees.

Information about financial requirements has been provided through scheduled one-to-one meetings and according to the needs and doubts of each partner; offering clarification and guidance on any financial queries that the partners have in an excellent example of good practice and a very pragmatic approach. It has been noted from Partner feedbacks that the Agendas tend to be very full, for each Partner Meeting. Conversely, Partners report that all the items discussed during the Meetings are important and relevant at the particular stage of the Project.

The Project Coordinators are also to be commended for their regular communication with all the partners in between the Partner Meetings, and for their support provided to the Partners responsible for the different surveys. They have also been successful in achieving the balance of taking a formalized and structured approach to the management of the Project; whilst at the same time facilitating a relaxed environment during the Partner Meetings, in such a way that all Partners feel able to contribute and participate accordingly.

The two Portuguese associated partners have been present in the meetings held in Lisbon (so far) which allow them the opportunity to participate in a transnational exchange of ideas and share experiences. All partners are quite satisfied with the different templates produced as well as with the quantity and quality of the materials prepared and distributed beforehand the meetings. The use of video testimonials and interviews has been considered as most effective, allowing internal and external communication in an easy and agreeable way.

There are quite a few differences (and also some similarities) of course reflecting the different context within each country. The challenges and constraints encountered during the application of the national surveys and interviews also made it easier to make comparisons between the Southern countries and those in Scandinavia.

Nonetheless this will be further analyzed in the following months. All the data provided for the Good Practice Report, will continued to be collated, analyzed and produced, it will provide all partners the opportunity to reflect on the training course pilots and to consider what worked well, and where they came across challenges and constraints. Furthermore the project coordinators are aware of the importance to capture the different processes and methods used by the partners to deliver their pilot training courses.

Internal monitoring (as a financial report, and as a partner activity report) is also in progress.

Finally I would also like to mention that the External Evaluator participated actively since the first day in the development of the project.

He was present at the kick-off-meeting in November 2012 (where he also conducted the first interviews with the consortium members²) and he represented the Portuguese partner at the Rome meeting in January 2013 where the Technical questions and the Needs Assessment were discussed. He followed with close attention the preparation of the Survey and he uploaded it on the internet, following the instructions of the partners. He was also present in the 4th meeting organised in May 2013, where the results of the Survey were presented and other materials were prepared till that date. He also participated in the dissemination of the project as he presented it in the Education Services Meeting at the National Archaeological Museum in June 2013 in Lisbon. He also assisted the selection of the trainees for the Portuguese Pilot course in accordance with the criteria defined by the partners.

He wrote and edited the present Mid-Term Report.

² All the interviews are available on the project's website: www.museummediators.eu