

Museums and Community Engagement

Dina Adel Mohamed

Heritage studies, faculty of tourism and hotels management. Helwan university

Abstract

Most of the world's museums have adopted a new approach based on permanent cooperation between museums and the surrounding community which led to the creation of a successful interactive working environment as museums were originally established by people and for the sake of people. This approach has become prevalent among the various museums of the world, but the fundamental point was how to successfully and effectively involve community. A key requirement for sustainability is to improve the social, cultural and economic life of these communities, without sustainable human communities, tourism development processes can not be sustainable. Its aim is to explain the role of museums in involving the community in its policies and programs. The paper utilizes the accessible scientific resources that are related to this topic and proposes some recommendations that help implementing that concept effectively in museum's strategies and policies with mentioning some of the successful experiences and their approaches.

Keywords: sustainability, sake, sustainable development.

Introduction:

The current studies address the concept of community engagement as a positive concept that helps to achieve democracy, but community engagement in itself has more forms and each of its forms has advantages and challenges. Also each museum has its own policy and programs that determine the form of this community participation which varies between providing job opportunities inside the museum, providing financial loans, engaging the surrounding community in making museum paintings, and changing the museum practices and spirit¹. These elements can be seen as the tangible manifestations of the exchanges between members in the sharing area. What's more, what it produces relies on the communitarian approach utilized, the members in question, the manner in which the cycle unfurls, and the setting wherein it happens. Community engagement can take place through two ways, (a) For the museum to start activating the first steps in an attempt to move nearer to the community and involve them in museum's activities, or (b) the local people to take the initiative by displaying their exhibits inside the museum or displaying some of their performing arts. The best example of those museums is (Kenya National Museums) that have succeeded in doing many activities and programs through which the community can participate in them, starting from employment in museums to creating programs that enable members of society to participate in archaeological excavations. In order to help them economically, some programs aimed at preserving and maintaining buildings were implemented and involving them in these programs in an attempt to eradicate the poverty that society suffers from.

¹ Bryony Onciul(2013), Community Engagement, Curatorial Practice, And Museum Ethos In Alberta, Canada, Museums And Communities: Curators, Collections And Collaboration, 2013, 79.

With the interest of discussions and studies on this topic, this interest dates back to 1980, when it was declared to be one of the most effective strategies for achieving political and cultural balance alongside with the social and economic balance. Demands have become greatly increased to make museums a suitable place for community participation by listening to public opinions and adopting methods that improve dialogue processes, reject hegemony and accept the idea of social engagement. In an attempt by the museum to achieve a balance between the voice of the state and the voice of society to achieve the principle of social inclusion, One of the most important specializations of museums has become how to engage the community in its policies and programs unlike (Kenya National Museums) which have succeeded effectively and successfully in engaging the community, some museums have been slow to take quick reactions to these new transformations². As Susan Ashley mentioned how museums in Canada have politics of engagement and social participation, Where she indicated that social participation in the museum exhibits came late in Canadian museums, as evidenced by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. When the subway was presented, different views of the local community were heard on how to represent Canadian identity in an attempt to engagement instead of the dominant policy of the state's authority.³

Research Methodology:

This paper utilizes the accessible scientific resources that are related to that topic by reviewing literature reviews that are concerned with community engagement issues in tourism sector.

The Terms Museum, community and Engagement:

The term ``museum`` is frequently connected with the idea of a neutral spot in which cultural and historical facts can be learned. It is the place that expresses the community's identity, culture and history as Sharon Macdonald mentions `` any museum or exhibition is, in effect, a statement or position. It is a theory: a suggested way of seeing the world``. It is the place that influences people's understanding and perception of the world around them, The museum enables them to distinguish between different cultures and identities, who are insiders and outcasts, also, whose points of view or forms of history ought to be perceived as legitimate, The museum is also a reflection of the community that created it. Therefore , museums are challenged landscapes and basic central purposes of multifaceted political debates.⁴

The definitions of the word `community`` have varied in many literature books, the word `community` has no comprehensive definition because its interpretation varies according to the context. Cultural heritage has been defined as ` a function in the life of the community ` in world heritage convention of 1972, and that the entire international community is responsible for protecting this heritage.

² Jacob Mhando Nyangila (2006), Museums And Community Involvement: A Case Study Of Community Collaborative Initiatives-National Museums Of Kenya, Intercom, 2006, 3.

³ Fiona Mclean(2005), Museums And National Identity, Museums And Society 1, no. 3 (2005): 1-4, doi:issn 1479-8360, 1.

⁴ Bryony Onciul(2013), Community Engagement, Curatorial Practice, And Museum Ethos In Alberta, Canada, Museums And Communities: Curators, Collections And Collaboration, 2013, 81.

The word `community` can be analyzed as the closest word `stakeholders` an English word that can barely converted into some other language, which include senior management, public and private sector, local residents, investors, nearby communities, governmental and non governmental organizations.⁵

The word `community` was defined in merriam webster dictionary as `people with common interests living in particular area`. Or `` a body of persons having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests`. But the word `community` in itself is still ambiguous, a `community` is most usually established by individuals` geological vicinity to an object of interest and their mutual promise to a characterized objective or item.⁶

Heritage community has been defined in faro convention as `` a community that consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations`⁷

community engagement is a process of interactive communication through which citizens are allowed to participate in the formation of policies and the availability of providing various types of public services, regularly with the last duty lying with the chosen government. It is an ideal process where the government`s work is linked to the work of the society in achieving all the desired goals, many measures can be taken to mediate this process. Community engagement is a process of collective participation with a group of people rather than a single individual, in order to sort out these participatory processes, the diverse dynamics of societies and their conflicting objectives and diverse issues must be properly integrated.⁸ Public participation is a process involving a group of people, especially those who are directly affected by decision-making processes. Public participation was defined by the world bank as `` a process by which people...especially disadvantaged people...can influence over policy formulation design alternatives, investment.⁹ In the charter of burra, participation in article 12 was defined as ``conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has special associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place`¹⁰ As for 1972 convention and the problems occurred concerning paragraph (14) which did not states for the engagementof local communities in the nomination process, several meetings were held to change this paragraph, which represented a radical and comprehensive change in the world heritage convention. As the first decade of this convention did not interested in the engagementof local communities in the conservation and nomination processes, but after this paragraph has been changed, community participation became a major and fundamental in cultural heritage conservation processes and the term (partners in the management of the site) was first introduced after modifying this paragraph as follows

⁵ chan pui yu (2016), Community Participation In Heritage Management: A Case In Macao, Doctoral Dissertation (colombia university, 2016),10.

⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁷ Heritage, Culture, Faro society), and Council Europe (2005),Convention On The Value Of Cultural Heritage For Society (Faro Convention, 2005)". *Culture And Cultural Heritage*, 2021. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>.

⁸ Jim Cavaye (2004),Governance And Community Engagement: The Australian Experience, Participatory Governance: Planning, Conflict Mediation And Public Decision Making In Civil Society, 2004, 3.

⁹ Bhuvan Bhatnagar & Aubrey C Williams(1992), Participatory Development And The World Bank, 1992.

¹⁰ Icomos Australia(1999), Burra Charter, 1999, <http://www.icomos.org/australia/Burra.htm>[accessed 12 jan2021].

14. Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the state party in the maintenance of the site¹¹

All this international concern reflects the importance of community participation in the processes of preserving and safeguarding cultural heritage and it confirms that successful conservation of heritage must be done with engaging the local communities and without the omission or exclusion of the local communities.

The Difference between `Eco Museums` and `Traditional Museums`:

To differentiate between traditional and ecomuseums, two simplified equations were worked out by Hugues de Varine :

Traditional museum= building+ legacy+ assortments+ master staff+ public guests;and

Ecomuseum = domain+ legacy+ memory+ populace.

These two equations simply explain the difference between these two types of museums. What is admirable in ecomuseums is that it uses participatory methods with the local community on an ongoing basis and depend on that in their policies and programs as follows:

An ecomuseum is started and controlled by nearby communities, it ought to take into consideration public engagement in all decisions made and activities designed in a vote based way, it ought to invigorate joint possession and the executives, with contribution from neighborhood networks, scholarly counsels, nearby organizations, neighborhood specialists and government structures, an ecomuseum is probably going to empower coordinated effort with neighborhood craftspeople, specialists, authors, entertainers and artists, It often incorporates into its activities the various voluntary actions of different stakeholders, Focuses on building identities and a sense of belonging to the place, the ecomuseum strives to achieve sustainable development and utilization of assets, it can carry advantages to local residents, for instance, a feeling of pride, revival and additionally financial pay.¹²

Every local area characterized as world legacy should have the option to (a) secure its basic and more significant ID attributes, consequently guaranteeing the progression of its representative creation and sociocultural elements, join more 'contemporary' values` and has the ability to integrate with the globalized society(specifically in the tourism market). Therefore, the development of heritage is in dire need of policies and procedures concerned with the human side, whose main goal is not only to work to entertain societies, but to find more effective solutions to link those societies with the places in which they live and social practices in different environments to protect the feeling of having a place which is a certain method to ensure social equilibrium and an ideal way to achieve economic development. There are actually successful and distinctive community experiences, some of which refer to social creation and improvement, While some other experiences refer to the preservation of traditions, what distinguishes them and unites them is that they started by the local community and were developed by the local community also who have been trained enough on how to preserve their heritage, whether tangible or intangible, and how to manage it.

¹¹ Albert Marie-Theres et al.(2012),Community Development Through World Heritage, (UNESCO-WorldHeritage Centre, 2012).

¹² Corsane Gerard, From 'Outreach' To 'Inreach': How Ecomuseum Principles Encourage Community Participation In Museum Processes communication And Exploration: Papers Of International Ecomuseum Forum,, 2006,109.

Many examples of those experiences can be cited, but some experiences from Latin America will be highlighted such as Santa Cruz Ecomuseum which located in Rio de Janeiro which was established in the early nineties after several meetings and studies conducted in cooperation with the people of the local community, delegates of the city government, teachers of the school of museology and trained professionals has created in the past ten years a solid institutional and informal organization, both at inward and outer levels, All these partners helped to provide advice and guidance for this unique experience, until a successful inventory was drawn up with the participation of these partners for the local cultural heritage with the help of specialists in museology studies, and another successful experience, the local communities in the city of Salvador (Bahia) made a comprehensive inventory of the sites that are used for traditional rituals with the participation of experts.¹³

All these experiences confirm that the concept of community engagement is no longer theoretical, but has been implemented on the ground in several experiments that have proven successful and effective.

Recommendations For Activating Community Engagement:

In the sustainable development strategy for museums, the different roles of museums were divided into several sections as follows:

(a) The cultural and educational role of museums: Museums should work on increasing the community's awareness of the cultural aspect by creating a set of activities that target all segments of society, in addition to raising their educational level through the implementation of some educational activities.

(b) As for the social role, it is necessary to conduct many different workshops aimed at reviving traditional crafts with the participation of the local community in those workshops and civil society organization.

(c) The economic role of museums: museums must work to improve the standard of living of the local community and open new fields of work for them by involving them in many different workshops and cooperating with ministries and other bodies to help them sell their products resulting from the workshops, which will lead to improving their financial situation.

(d) The environmental role of museums: Museums have an important role in educating society about the importance of preserving the environment, especially if that environment is a natural heritage environment and everything that represents natural history by holding many training courses to increase environmental awareness and how to protect natural environments and avoid environmental pollution and ways to combat it.¹⁴

The term community participation has been referred to targeting groups who do not visit museums or use them at all, and those who do not have the ability to visit them. The social inclusion agenda has made some requirements from the museum's sectors to try to reach to the largest possible numbers of participants as much as possible, according to that a set of programs and activities should be allocated to target those groups. Museum employees have

¹³ Ibid, 87.

¹⁴Mansour, Ahmed. "Elmatahef laysat llard faqt.nansher estratiyat qetaa elmatahef` fi elasar, 2019. <https://www.youm7.com/story/2018/12/4/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%81-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D9%81%D9%82%D8%B7-%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%81-%D8%A8%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A2%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1/4054191>

an important role in activating community participation in giving an inviting, comprehensive and safe climate for members, and above all, a space wherein members feel they won't be judged, these are important for the psycho-social for community engagement meetings, which are supported by a huge number of customary caring acts, for example, setting aside some effort to share cups of tea, becoming more acquainted with every member's name for being neighborly and agreeable, a further component of the act of care in museums is staff's endeavors to make social spaces, for

Conclusion

Modern and contemporary developments have forced museums to transcend from their traditional functions and common parochial practices to cooperative policies and programs on a large scale, by working continuously and sustainably with local communities. These practices are not limited to consultation and discussion sessions, but rather in the application of more policies and programs to integrate communities into comprehensive programs that reflect the importance of engaging these communities as essential partners in development processes. In this paper it had been proven that community engagement is no longer a theoretical concept that is difficult to apply, but it has been successfully activated in some countries and it is possible to follow such successful experiences, as Some museums have successfully engaged the community in several programs, such as the national museums of Kenya and other museums.

المتاحف والمشاركة المجتمعية

المستخلص

اعتمدت معظم متاحف العالم نهجًا جديدًا يعتمد على التعاون الدائم بين المتاحف والمجتمع المحيط مما أدى إلى إنشاء بيئة عمل تفاعلية ناجحة حيث تم إنشاء المتاحف في الأصل من قبل الناس ومن أجل الناس. أصبح هذا النهج سائدًا بين المتاحف المختلفة في العالم، لكن النقطة الأساسية كانت كيفية إشراك المجتمع بنجاح وفعالية. من المتطلبات الرئيسية للاستدامة تحسين الحياة الاجتماعية والثقافية والاقتصادية لهذه المجتمعات، بدون مجتمعات بشرية مستدامة، لا يمكن أن تكون عمليات التنمية السياحية مستدامة. تهدف إلى شرح دور المتاحف في إشراك المجتمع في سياساتها وبرامجها. ستستخدم الورقة الموارد العلمية التي يمكن الوصول إليها والمرتبطة بهذا الموضوع وتقتراح بعض التوصيات التي تساعد في تطبيق هذا المفهوم بشكل فعال في استراتيجيات وسياسات المتاحف مع ذكر بعض التجارب الناجحة ونهجها.

الكلمات الدالة: الاستدامة، مصلحة، التنمية المستدامة.

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