

Toolkit for Teen Engagement

A project inspired by the *Learning, Engagement, Museums* Conference, hosted by Museum Education Centre Armenia, Manchester Art Gallery and the British Museum

Held at the Cafesjian Centre for the Arts and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
24 - 28 October 2016



Teen Council of Museums

Toolkit Introduction

In October 2016 colleagues from the [British Museum](#), [Manchester Art Gallery](#) and the Museum Education Centre in Armenia hosted the [Learning, Engagement, Museums Conference](#), held at the [Cafesjian Centre for the Arts](#) in Yerevan, Armenia.

Museum professionals from UK Museums, Armenian institutes, and International Training Programme (ITP) Fellows from institutes in Egypt, India, Lebanon and Turkey took part in the workshop. Four project frameworks were created under the following categories:

- Family Learning
- Older Audiences
- Teen Engagement
- New audiences

These projects were created by groups of international museum professionals and will be implemented by museum educators from across Armenian institutions in Yerevan. This toolkit will be an essential resource for each group, providing guidelines and points for discussion for colleagues who are working in different countries but are invested in one project.

The ***Teen Council of Museums*** Project group consisted of:

Ani Avagyan - National Gallery of Armenia, Armenia
Mikayel Badalyan - Erebuni Historical-Archaeological Museum Reserve, Armenia
Nathalie El Alam - Beirut National Museum, Lebanon
Rebecca Horton - The British Museum, UK
Liana Karapetyan - Aram Khachaturian Museum, Armenia
Astghik Marabyan - Cafesjian Center for the Arts, Armenia
Andrea Martin - The Collection, Lincolnshire, UK
Marine Mkrtychyan - Russian Art Museum, Armenia



The group brief was to create a project which would engage teenagers. The location of the workshop and the Armenian presence in the group largely informed this toolkit. Early in the conference it became apparent that living in a post-soviet country continues to inform decisions and discussions within the museum and heritage sector in Armenia. Whereas object collecting flourished during Soviet rule, Education Departments within museums and art galleries, and changing attitudes towards the purpose of museums are work in progress. A noticeable contextual difference between museum educators from different countries was their relationship with local schools and the national curriculum.

With this in mind the project was informed by ideas such as the changing attitudes of both teenagers towards museums and art galleries and of those working within the cultural sector. 'Breaking down barriers' was a popular concept. Teenagers were described as an important target audience; an audience who could easily lose interest as they become more independent from their parents, and who will ultimately shape the future role of Armenian museums and art galleries.

Providing teenagers with access to as many museums, art galleries and heritage sites as possible became an important part of this project. Making teenagers feel welcome and comfortable in such grand and often stringent rule based buildings with strictly embedded processes and procedures enables museum educators to look at how to start 'breaking down barriers'. Treating teenagers as young adults shaped the creation of a 'council'; a project to enable teenagers to start forming and expressing their own opinions in a professional environment, whilst pursuing their interests.

Armenian Context - Setting the scene in Armenia

Think about how your context affects your line of work?

There are approximately 120 museums in Armenia, around half of which are in the capital, Yerevan. Although Armenia's museums are concentrated within the capital city, a large amount of the country's registered material and non-material heritage can be found in the surrounding 10 provinces. Most of the museums in Armenia are non-commercial state organisations run by various ministries and governmental bodies of the Republic of Armenia. A small number of private museums are under the authority of different foundations and non-governmental organisations. Generally museums in Armenia work towards gaining a balance of advocacy and investment from governmental and private bodies to centralise the support of culture whilst involving Armenian citizens and businesses in their heritage.

As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it a very specific cultural policy, in recent decades new legislation has emerged on cultural and intangible heritage and policy. This policy is more in-keeping with the interests of the independent state. Discussing Armenian cultural values and creating a precise policy for the citizens of the country is a current topic and a very important point of discussion for museum and heritage professionals in Armenia.

Specific policies regulating the work of museums and the cultural sector in Armenia is a developing area; over-riding goals for new policies within the sector include maintaining and replenishing Armenian cultural heritage, and developing and promoting heritage through a variety of institutions, museums being one of them.

More information can be found via the following links:

Compendium

<http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries-quick-facts.php?pcid=1030>

Regional Co-operation for Cultural Heritage Development

<http://rcchd.icomos.org/?l=E&m=4-4&JID=2&AID=13>

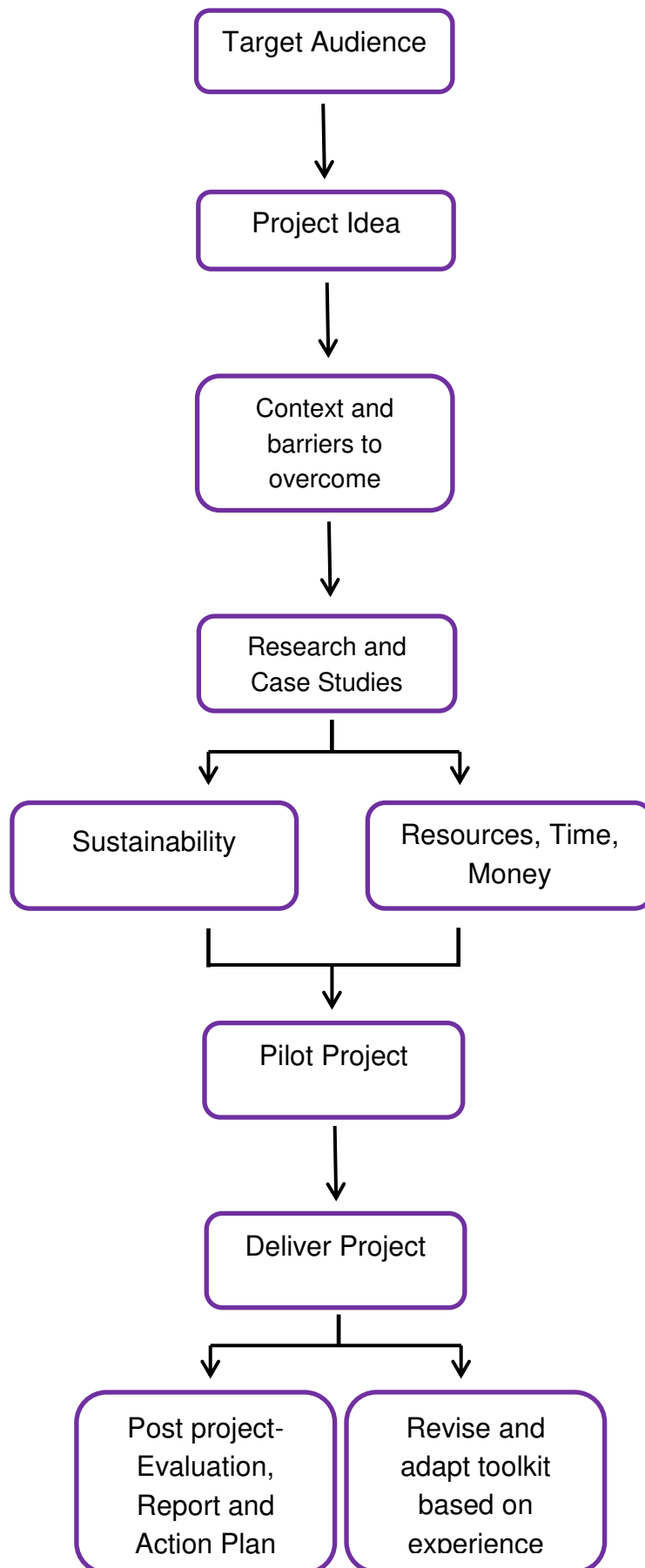
Ministry of Culture for Republic of Armenia

http://mincult.am/history_and_culture_monuments_protection_agency.html

Contents:

1. **Flowchart of ideas**
2. **What is the project?**
3. **Your target audience**
 - 3.1 Who are the group you are referring to?
 - 3.2 Engaging your target audience
4. **Research**
 - 4.1 Who has worked with a similar audience before?
5. **Barriers**
 - 5.1 Physical/ Environmental
 - 5.2 Sensory
 - 5.3 Intellectual
 - 5.4 Cultural
 - 5.5 Attitudinal
 - 5.6 Financial
 - 5.7 Technological
 - 5.8 Other?
6. **Resources**
 - 6.1 People
 - 6.2 Time
 - 6.3 Money
7. **Sustainability**
 - 7.1 Outcomes
 - 7.2 Legacy
8. **Evaluation and Analysis**
 - 8.1 Evaluation
 - 8.2 Analysis
9. **Report**
10. **Checklist**

1. Flowchart of ideas process



2. What is the project?

Project scope

Create a project outline that briefly explains your plans.

To establish a teen council of museum, to create an audience of teenagers who will be engaged actively in the museum and heritage sector.

The council will comprise of 15, 13 -16 year olds from schools across Yerevan.

To organise a series of meetings, visits and activities in 8 museums of different profiles across a 4 month period, in consultation with the teen council of museums.

To organise 2 activities when council members can invite a +1

Activities could include and are not limited

- Behind the scenes tours
- Evaluating exhibitions
- Feeding into and giving opinions about decisions being made in museums and art galleries
- Lectures
- Hands on projects- independent work and in a group

To maintain each generation in the transitory phases from childhood to young adult, as a presence in museums.

The activities of the council will ensure teenagers develop:

- Confidence in life skills - decision making, working together...
- A community of future young adults
- Professional Orientation
- Health and Well-being
- A perspective of the world

3. Your target audience

3.1 Who are the group you are referring to?

13 -16 year olds from schools across Yerevan

What are the interests and needs of the target group?

The idea of creating a *Teen Council of Museums* is an attempt to identify the needs and interests of young people by bringing their voice to museums. At the same time, other than specific interests inherent to Armenian teen community, general needs include, but are not limited to, interactivity, social networking, digital technologies, empowerment. Before having an accurate answer about the needs and interests of the target audience, more thorough research needs to be conducted.

What are the benefits of targeting this group?

- Why are you working with teenagers?

To maintain each generation in the transitory phase from childhood to young adult, as a presence in museums.

- Why now?

Individual efforts and programmes to engage teenagers in arts activities are organised by local museums regularly. The initiative to create a *Teen Council of Museums* is a development in teen engagement practice from “programmes for teens” to “programmes with teens for other fellow teens” and, is an attempt to empower their voice in museums, preparing them as future museum visitors, staff, supporters and donors.

- What do you hope to achieve?

To establish a teen council of museums, to create an audience of teenagers who will be engaged actively in the museum and heritage sector.

3.2 Engaging your target audience

What will the museums’ relationship be with this audience?

The *Teen Council of Museums* will select teenagers to be a part of a council via a competitive application process. The council members will be selected with enough time before the programme of events officially starts to allow members to have a preliminary meeting to discuss what they would like to get out of the council. This means that the members will be involved in the development of the project. Museum professionals must manage expectations making it clear what ideas have been agreed upon and what can be delivered, as opposed to what ideas were discussed but are not realistic and will not be delivered during the council’s term.

The council has been created to help teenagers learn, but also to give them a voice, increase their confidence and provide them with professional orientation. As an outcome although the

museum professionals hold overall control they must not treat teenagers like children and dictate to them.

How might this be difficult and what will you do to counteract these difficulties?

- To make the outcomes of each meeting and activity explicitly clear
- To create an environment where your audience feel comfortable asking and answering questions
- The need to be completely honest when activities do not go to plan

What can your institution offer them?

- Cafesjian Centre for the Arts

‘Having received final approval for the project by the CCA Board, the Centre will implement a participatory model of engagement, encouraging teens’ active involvement in program development, ensuring direct relationship with museum professionals and arts community, fostering their visual literacy through interactive arts programming, supporting development of leadership and decision-making, as well as networking skills.’

Astghik Marabyan - [Cafesjian Center for the Arts](#)

- The National Gallery of Armenia

‘The National Gallery will contribute to this important project by providing the time and professional knowledge of the Education Department personnel. The Department will assist project members with developing, implementing and evaluating the project. The Museum can also be a space for various activities throughout the project.’

Ani Avagyan - [National Gallery of Armenia](#)

Getting them on board - where are your target audience and who will benefit from the project the most?

13 -16 year olds will be in full time education.

Museum staff will need to contact teachers during term time to promote the programme proactively during class time.

This programme will be most beneficial to a mixture of teenagers:

1. Teenagers who are interested in Museums and Art Galleries and want to know more
2. Teenagers who do not usually feel welcome in Museums and Art Galleries
3. Teenagers who are not usually exposed to these opportunities

Keep aside a certain number of spaces for teenagers who would normally struggle to be accepted into such projects or ensure they have the opportunity to put their name forward e.g. poor socio-economic background. Ensure that a spectrum of individuals are selected by putting more effort into targeting schools which usually struggle to get pupils to participate, and make an effort to maintain their presence throughout the programme.

How will you approach your target group?

Via schools during term time, this could involve

- Visiting schools - can this be an opportunity to develop good working relationships with schools in Armenia? Visit schools where pupils will need encouragement to apply and build their confidence during these visits.
- Posters to put up in schools

- Email teachers

Teenagers will be selected to join the council via an open application process. An application form needs to be written and criteria for acceptance agreed upon. A transparent selection system and constructive feedback to those not selected will be an additional learning output.

How will you maintain your audience's interest?

Successful applicants will need to be chosen with enough time to allow teen council members to decide how the council should work. If teenagers have been involved in the decision making process and their ideas have been taken on board, the programme will be more relevant and interesting to them.

How might maintaining this audience's interest in your project be difficult and what will you do to counteract these difficulties?

An intense programming of encounters with arts community members and interactive arts activities in the Cafesjian Centre for the Arts and partner museums will be developed. To ensure the council feels like a social group that people want to return to, members of the council will also have the chance to invite a +1 (a friend) to some Council events.

4. Research

4.1 Who has worked with a similar group before?

Can you ask experienced colleagues for hints and tips? What can you learn from previous attempts?

Case Studies

The programme, **Lincoln Summer School**, presented by Andrea Martin has been a great inspirational source for the group. Also, individual research on the theme has been very useful, in particular study of similar initiatives by other museums: Whitney Museum of American Art, Walker Art Center, MoMA, Telfair Museums, which all run Teen Council programmes.

Useful documents-

Access for all Toolkit, The Council of Museums, Archives and Libraries

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081209011037/http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//A/access_mla_tk_pdf_5670.pdf

British Youth Council

<http://www.byc.org.uk/programmes>

Embedding a youth friendly culture in galleries, Engage

http://www.engage.org/downloads/3503506_en-vision.pdf

Go With The Flow: 10 Ways to Easily Engage Teenagers, Understanding Teenagers

<http://understandingteenagers.com.au/blog/go-with-the-flow-10-ways-to-easily-engage-teenagers/>

Making Connections Toolkits, Engage

<http://www.engage.org/toolkits>

Social Inclusion in Small Museums, The Council of Museums, Archives and Libraries

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081209011037/http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//L/lat325_v2_pdf_5681.pdf

Teens in Museums- a collaboration with Mar Dixon, Milwaukee Art Museum, Museum Teen Summit, Smithsonian EdLab and Museum of London Youth Panel

<http://www.mardixon.com/teensinmuseums/2012/09/>

Watch this space (successful relationships between museums and schools), Engage

http://www.engage.org/downloads/1163220A68_engage_WatchThisSpace_Toolkit_final_v2.pdf

Working with Artists and Galleries, Engage

http://www.engage.org/downloads/MGM_Working_with_Artists_Toolkit.pdf

5. Barriers (Challenges and Risks)

5.1 Physical/ Environmental

The museum is an imposing building which people are apprehensive to go into.

5.2 Sensory

'Be quiet'

'Do not touch'

'No photos'

5.3 Intellectual

To give teenagers the confidence to be inquisitive

To promote the idea that museums are places to come to learn

5.4 Cultural

To eliminate the idea that a museum is imposing and restrictive

5.5 Financial

The need to target a spectrum of schools from different socio-economic backgrounds and to ensure applications are received from a spectrum of schools

To ensure that teen council members reflect the teenagers who have had different life experiences and who come from the entire radius of Yerevan

To enable teenagers to join in regardless of their socio-economic background

5.6 Attitudinal

To break stereotypes that teenagers have about museums

To challenge assumptions which museum staff have about behaviour in a museum / art gallery

To develop good working relationships between museums and schools

5.7 Technological

Link to technologies that teenagers use and that will promote the project and associated activities – are there external partners that could be brought in to work alongside or as part of an activity?

5.8 Other?

Working with teenagers ground rules

Outcomes

When working with teenagers it is important to have clear outcomes for each session and a time frame to have an activity completed by. It is important to stick to these outcomes to maintain interest and engagement during sessions and throughout the entire programme.

Honesty

Be honest about problems and explain why plans have not gone the way they were intended to.

6. Resources

6.1 People

Although the work load during the programme will be distributed across multiple museum professionals in various museums, it was decided during the workshop that a leader and a core team should lead the programme.

As the programme aims to include visits to and expertise from 8 museum and heritage sites, it was felt that three colleagues from three different museums should make up a core team of organisers. Each member could have different connections to increase the accessibility of working with partners. Each member should also have different expertise to increase the variety of skills which make up the team, and to ultimately make the task easier to organise.

Within the team there should be a leader who will be the point of contact for interested parties and responsible for ensuring deadlines are met and other similar tasks. Once the core team is formed these tasks can be fully discussed, outlined and understood.

6.2 Time

It was felt by members of the workshop from Armenian institutions that planning and making open calls to schools too far in advance would be detrimental to the success of the project. Within an Armenian context projects move fast and if advertised too many months in advance, would be forgotten when the time came.

As a result a timeframe with a 12 month turn around for this project, from planning to completion, has been created. Reports and evaluations would be written up, in January after the first programme comes to an end.

Planning-
Jan / Feb

Preparation-
March / May

Implementation-

- Marketing – April - August
- Open Call to schools- May- June
- Applicants notified - End of June
- Programme starts - September
- Programme ends - December
- Christmas Party - December

6.3 Money

Costs-

- Food and drink
 1. Bi-monthly sessions
 2. Christmas Party
- Activity materials
- Entry fees to museums and heritage sites

Income-

- Foundations
- Fundraising
- In-kind support
- Attempt to work with institutions outside of the museum and heritage sector, but who also work with same target audience

Sourcing the funding-

AREG: Funds and Charitable Organisations

<http://areg.biz/ca/?lng=am&cid=26&o=0>

Beeline Armenia

<https://beeline.am/am/?lang=hy>

British Council in Armenia

<http://www.britishcouncil.am/en>

Creative Europe

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/>

Culture and Creativity: EU- Eastern Partnership Programme

<https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en/opportunities>

Embassy: International Organisations in Armenia (links)

<http://www.embassy.am/international-organizations-in-armenia>

Gagik Tsarukyan Charity Foundation

<http://tsarukyanfound.am/eng/>

Ministry of Defence

<http://www.mil.am/>

Ministry of Culture for Republic of Armenia

<http://www.mincult.am/>

Ministry of Education and Science

<http://www.edu.am/>

Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

<http://www.msy.am/>

Open Society Foundations

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/offices-foundations/open-society-foundations-armenia>

Pyunik Human Resources Development Foundation

<http://himnadram.am/en/>

State Urban Development Committee

<http://minurban.am/am/>

vhs: DVV International
<http://www.dvv-international.am/>

VivaCell-MTS
<http://mts.am/en/company>

Yerevan Municipality: Embassies
<https://www.yerevan.am/en/embassies/>

Youth Foundation of Armenia
<http://heh.am/?lang=en>

7 Sustainability

7.1 Outcomes

Teen Council members become more confident and develop life skills; they can network in a professional environment and have the ability to debate, negotiate and collaborate

To present teens with a certificate

To adapt to the needs of each teen council

To enlarge the collaborative group of museums

To give past teen council members +1 access to museums

To hold events for past teen council members of all years- to invite past teen council members to new exhibition openings / private viewings and concerts

7.2 Legacy

Evaluations and lessons learnt phase

Maintain relationships with past teen council members

To create a network of teen friends of museums

To create a social platform for teenagers in museums and the heritage world

To create a webpage where past teen council members can look at up and coming opportunities e.g. Internships

To update and enhance toolkit

8 Evaluation and Analysis

8.1 Evaluation

To send out a survey to teen council members and colleagues who worked on the teen council
To send out the survey during the final week on the council pilot programme and to ask for the survey to be filled in within a 2 week deadline, to ensure all surveys are completed while the programme is fresh in people's memory

Include a section where council members and colleagues can write about their experience, this is a good way of collecting quotes about what the project has done for people

8.2 Analysis

To look at the feedback in the evaluation forms

To decide what worked and what could be improved the following year

To make your project sustainable

9 Report

To write a report detailing what you did, why and what the outcomes were

Include quotes from the evaluation survey, it is important and sometimes more interesting to hear from the participants of your project

Ask colleagues to contribute to the report, explaining their role in the project

Ensure that completing the report is a priority

10 Checklist

Project Preparation

- Project scope created
- Aims and objectives of project understood, including legacy and sustainability
- How will the project be funded?
Initiate appropriate conversations internally and externally
- Research and learn from projects targeting similar audiences
Use web links provided also
- Research how best to advertise opportunities, to enable as many people as possible to access the opportunity
- Team structure decided and members aware of responsibilities
- Set dates in advance for regular meetings with colleagues
- Create a timescale and set deadlines for preparation and implementation of project
- Identify risks and challenges
- Opportunity advertised
- Participants selected
- Applicants informed of decisions
- Appropriate information sent out to participants
- Organise a meeting before project begins to start informal chat with participants about what they want from the project and to 'break the ice'
- Evaluation survey written

During Project

- Measure success and make notes throughout project
- Take pictures throughout project

Evaluations distributed

Post Project

Evaluations returned

Evaluation Meeting

Analysis of evaluations and lesson learnt

Write Report- think about output, outcomes and legacy

Publish Report and distribute to all departments in participating institutions

Update and enhance the toolkit

Focus on sustainability- maintain contact with colleagues and participants

