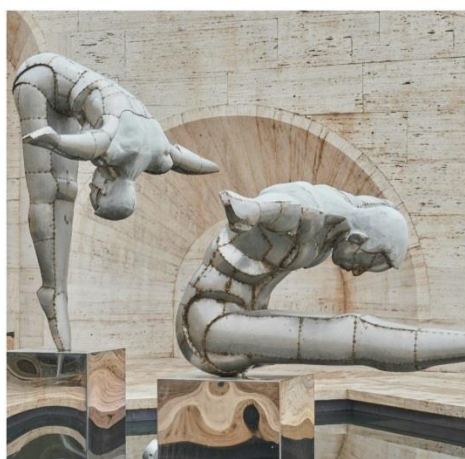# Toolkit  for working with Older Audiences

**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

# Building Memories
## 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 **Building Memories** project was created by-

Elaine Addington, Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, UK
Mushegh Alaverdyan, Berdzor Regional Museum
Shubha Banerji, President House Museum, India
Ani Grigoryan, National Museum Institute of Armenian Architecture after Alexandr Tamayan
Sona Khechikyan, Avetik Isahakyan House-Museum, Armenia
Marianna Manucharyan, Armenian State Pedagogical University History Museum
Suren Manukyan, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute
Claire Messenger, The British Museum, UK
Hayk Mkrtchyan, Museum Education Centre, Armenia

The group brief was to create a project which would involve working with older audiences. Feelings of isolation are common amongst retired members of society and so the group believed that finding a topic which could unite community members should be central to their project. Armenian participants explained that when people in Armenia come to the end of their working lives, they can often feel that their meaningful life is over, that they have no more of benefit to give. The working group had a strong conviction that this was not true, and sought to design a project that would empower older people.

The project was a result of discussions about the importance of maintaining a sense of community and how talking about memories can facilitate this. For this reason it was felt that sharing memories could be a useful means of uniting community members. Questions raised during the discussion included: how can these memories be shared more widely and who has the right to share these memories? How can memories bring communities together?

Colleagues from Armenian institutions felt that for their project to be truly meaningful and sustainable, it had to be cross generational; a sharing of histories between older and younger people within a particular community. Encouraging these kinds of discussions will maintain and enhance oral tradition within Armenia, a strong tradition which the cultural sector in Armenia is keen to sustain. Under Soviet rule the landscape of Yerevan changed as old and historically significant buildings were knocked down and new ones were constructed. It was felt older members of communities could help to emphasise how much has changed in such a short period of time to younger community members, thus helping them to establish what it means to be Armenian during a time of change and development.

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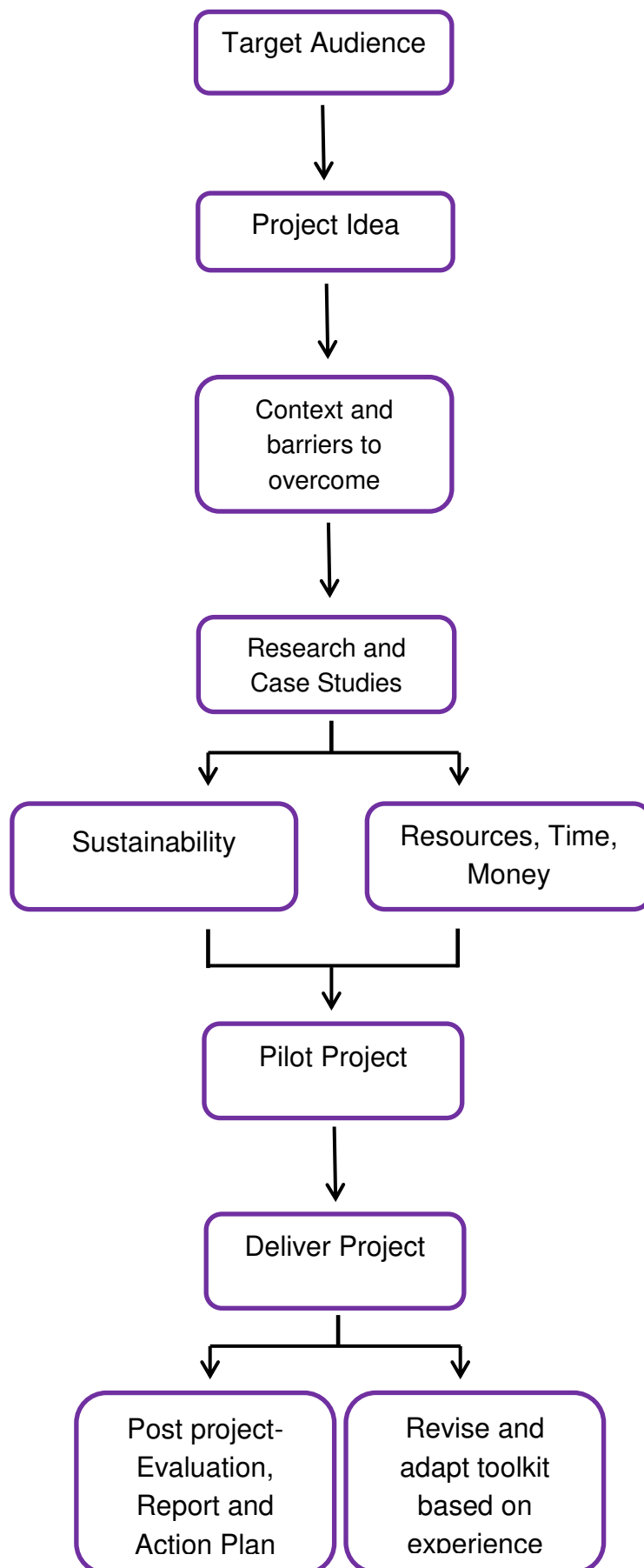http://rcchd.icomos.org.ge/?l=E&m=4-4&JID=2&AID=13

Ministry of Culture for Republic of Armenia
http://mincult.am/hiistory_and_culture_monuments_protection_agency.html

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Deliver Project

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Post project- Evaluation, Report and Action Plan | Revise and adapt toolkit based on experience

# 2. What is the project?

## Project scope

*Create a project outline that briefly explains your plans.*

A programme to allow older audiences to engage with younger audiences. To select a neighborhood and invite people from the neighborhood / connected to the neighborhood to take part in the project.

For older audiences to give personal accounts of their history to younger audiences who have learnt about the history of Armenia in class / from a text book.  For younger audiences to engage with history on a personal level by listening to stories about local and recent history, the architecture of Yerevan and family objects as focal points.

For participants to be encouraged to ask questions such as-
  - What challenges have residents faced over the decades?
  - Who built our homes?
  - Who lived in our neighborhood previously?
  - Are there amenities in the local area? Who owns them? How long have they been there?
  - What was there before?

Participants could include:
  - Home owners
  - Landlords
  - Renters
  - Previous tenants
  - Builders (of house / flat / shop)
  - Shop Owners
  - Local authorities

To organise an annual event to include meetings and workshops where:
  - Histories will be shared
  - New collections will be developed
  - Museum object documentation will be updated
  - Lectures will be given
  - In the first year, an exhibition will be developed, influenced by the discussions between two generations and the changing landscape of Yerevan.
  - To establish an 'Ambassadors of Heritage' scheme,  made up of community based ambassadors for architecture within local neighbourhoods

2017, when the project will be launched, marks two anniversaries:
  1. 50 years since the Armenian Genocide Memorial was opened
  2. 80 years since the Stalin Purge years when many heritage buildings were destroyed and Armenia experienced industrial development

# 3. Your target audience

### 3.1 Who are the group you are referring to?

Retired (60+) audiences and younger audiences.

## What are the interests and needs of the target group?

Armenia has faced many changes and challenges during the last 25 years of independence. The first generations of Armenians with a living memory of only an independent Republic of Armenia are now adults and have a different mentality and lifestyle to those who remember Soviet rule. This dichotomy has affected Armenians' approach to their social life and the meaning of their culture and history. *Building Memories* will be a unique platform for generations with different outlooks within one community to speak about past and present and to understand each other's differences to build a better future.

The target audience of the group will be the older generation, whose voice needs to be heard, because they are a group who has witnessed decades of rapid change.

## What are the benefits of targeting this group?

- Why are you working with older audiences?

To dispel feelings of exclusion and of being under-valued by providing older audiences with new skills and a sense of purpose
To facilitate conversation between different groups within the same community for social cohesion
New information can be gained
To accurately document and exhibit recent history

- Why now?

Now is a time when the differences between younger and older generations seem at their greatest, and therefore a time when discussion needs to take place the most.

Although this project will start in Armenia, the issues it deals with are familiar and world-wide. The ideas for the project grew out of a group of international museum professionals, including support from the British Museum. As a result the project will have one content but can be multilingual to reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible.

- What do you hope to achieve?

To dispel feelings of exclusion within the older generation by facilitating discussion between different generations; programme participants will be from the same community to instil a sense of social cohesion and awareness of Armenian history and tradition. To create an exhibition, with the help of older audiences, that will reach out and appeal to older audiences.

### 3.2 **Engaging your target audience**

**What will the museums relationship be with this audience?**

*Building Memories* asks older audiences to share personal stories and show personal objects; museum professionals will need to listen and their work will need to be guided by the stories and objects presented.

**How might engaging your target audience be difficult and what will you do to counteract these difficulties?**

The relationship between younger and older audiences could be difficult; mutual respect and recognition should be given to both audiences when they share personal stories and experiences.

**What can your institution offer them?**

- The Museum of the Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan- 'This institution contains lots of material about the University buildings in Yerevan, the older and more established buildings within the capital.  A survey conducted last year by the museum found that employees and students of the university would be interested to see an exhibition based on this theme. The Museum wants to create this exhibition to celebrate the anniversary of the University and believes the development of the exhibition would work well with the objectives of *Building Memories*.'
>> Ani Grigoryan, National Museum Institute of Armenian Architecture after Alexandr Tamayan

- The Avetik Isahakyan House-Museum-
'The House-Museum has its own interesting architectural history; a building designed by architect Pertchanoush Msrian in line with the poet Isahakyan's requests and similar in appearance to an Armenia chapel. It is felt this building would be an excellent place to facilitate discussion about architecture and construction between architects, construction workers, national museum-institute of architecture and the local community.'
>> Sona Khechikyan, Avetik Isahakyan House-Museum

- The Museum Education Centre-
'The Centre supports the project by providing members of the group with access to a board of specialists from museum, education and heritage sectors, providing advocacy, curatorship, access to museum collections, possible collaborations with other institutions and much more. As one of the key organisers of the Learning, Engagement and Museums, the Museum Education Centre will provide its official web page to promote the project.'
>> Hayk Mkrtchyan, Museum Education Centre

**Getting them on board - where are your target audience and what members of society within this target audience will benefit from the project the most?**

Project participants will be found via local community based organisations. It must be noted however that a main aim of the project is to include older members of society who feel distant

or removed from life in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Armenia. These members of society may be more difficult to (a) find and (b) be encouraged to participate. This should be a priority to explore as the project gets underway.

## How will you approach your target group?

Project participants will be recruited via relationships that will be built with leaders of local community based organisations.

## How will you maintain your audience's interest?

Outcomes for the project will be identified early on in the planning process, the programme will include many aspects of skills development for participants, such as research, oral history gathering, writing text and exhibition design. The gaining of these new skills will be celebrated at the end of the project.

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

The project team will present a very basic outline of the project to interested groups, the plan being that groups who are recruited will fully influence the framework and project outcomes, as such the project will be co-produced by the project group and participants, a new direction in professional practice for some of the partner organisations.

# 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? Are there any Case Studies who could refer to?*

Useful documents-

*All our Stories,* Heritage Lottery Fund
https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/all-our-stories-heritage-lottery-fund-launches-new-funding
https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/all-our-stories
file:///C:/Users/rhorton/Downloads/30%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20AOS%20programme%20-%20ITT.pdf

Community Archives and Heritage Group
http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/content/about/history-and-purpose

*Health and Wellbeing,* Beamish Museum
http://www.beamish.org.uk/health-wellbeing/

*House of Memories*, National Museums Liverpool
http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/

How can reminiscence engage audiences? Museums East
http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/how-can-reminiscence-engage-audiences/

*Museums and Communities,* Viv Golding
https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/viewFile/12846/19345
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Museums-Communities-Curators-Collections-Collaboration/dp/0857851314

Museums Change Lives Case Studies. Museum Association
https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives/case-studies/ideas-and-people

People's Collection, Beamish Museum
http://collections.beamish.org.uk/
(work in progress)

*Shared Experience*, The British Museum
https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/community_collaborations/sessions_and_previews/shared_experience.aspx
https://www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/older_adults_advice.pdf

*The Promise,* Jewish Museum
http://jewishmuseum.org.uk/whats-on?item=822
http://www.ctholocaust.co.za/

*Walking Tours,* Jewish Museum
http://jewishmuseum.org.uk/whats-on?item=811

# 5. Barriers (Challenges and Risks)

- ## 5.1 Physical / Environmental
  The museum is an imposing building which people are apprehensive to go into
  Can older audiences access the museum with ease?

- ## 5.2 Sensory
  To maintain that objects are an important part of the project - seeing and handling objects as well as listening to stories

- ## 5.3 Intellectual
  Documenting personal stories which conflict with each other
  Being clear about what is fact and what is personal / an interpretation when documenting

- ## 5.4 Cultural
  Speaking with both older audiences and younger audiences from different parts of Armenia to expand the cultural outreach of the project
  How will you choose who should be a part of the project?
  How will you ensure the pool of people selected represent different socio- economic, cultural and intellectual backgrounds to maximise your findings

- ## 5.5 Attitudinal
  To encourage older audiences to tell their stories
  For older audiences to feel comfortable communicating personal stories to younger audiences
  To ensure younger audiences do not feel 'preached' at or lectured

- ## 5.6 Financial
  Additional funding would need to be sought for transport and refreshments for the group members

- ## 5.7 Technological
  To ensure new information is documented
  To standardise a documentation system that will clearly categorise facts from personal stories

- ## 5.8 Other?
  Honesty
  As the programme will be co-created, should there be any problems, be honest and explain why plans have not gone the way they should have done to participants

# 6. Resources

## 6.1 People

- Staff from participating museums
- Students from participating institutions,
- Students from Institute of Archaeology,
- Academics
- Volunteers
- Department of Protection Heritage, Ministry of Culture
- ICOM
- Trade Union Associations
- Youth Groups
- The media

## 6.2 Time

### Planning-

This project is a new direction, and as such needs a good amount of time for a group leader to be established; for ground work to be done and relationships to be built with community organisations before the project commences.  As such the project needs at least twelve months from planning to implementation.

### Preparation-

- Selecting a community to work with
- Building good relationships with community members

### Implementation-

- Holding workshops and activities where older audiences can tell their stories, younger audiences can take part and museum staff can seek out useful information
- Archives are updated
- New objects, relevant to project, are acquired
- Participants influence development of an exhibition
- An 'Ambassadors of Heritage' scheme is established

## 6.3 Money

### Income and Costs-

The project planning group agreed that the project could easily sit within their core programming, and as such would be funded in the same way as their annual programmes. Additional funding would need to be sought for transport and refreshments for the groups, but there was a good chance that some of the groups identified may have transport available to them already.

### 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

To instil a feeling of community cohesion; older and younger audiences feel valued by each other
Participants will have a greater understanding of their surroundings
To develop new relationships
For younger audiences to learn about recent history from older audiences; to bring history, that younger audiences may have been taught in school, to life with personal stories
To share information via oral traditions, an important tradition to uphold in Armenia
Exhibition influenced by two generations
Archives enriched and new objects acquired
To create community based ambassadors for architecture within local neighbourhoods
To generate public enquiries via media

## 7.2  Legacy

Evaluations and lessons learnt phase
An 'Ambassadors of Heritage' scheme established
Awareness raised to stop the destruction of built heritage
To make the project into an annual event
To carry out the project outside of Yerevan, and internationally
Community cohesion
An updated and enhanced toolkit

# 8  Evaluation and Analysis

### 8.1  Evaluation

To send out a survey to participants and colleagues who worked on the project during the final week of the programme

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 participants 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

<u>Project Preparation</u>

☐ 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

<u>During Project</u>

☐ 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 toolkit

- [ ] Focus on sustainability- maintain contact with colleagues and participants