

10 STEPS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE:

A Guide to Engaging in Successful and Dynamic Museum Social Work

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Abstract

Today's museums are eager to become a more relevant force in the struggle for social justice through the use of their programming and decision-making. Unfortunately, implementing these socially oriented programs for the first time can often be complex and confusing, even treacherous. The lack of a comprehensive manual to museum social work, one that details best practices and recommends specific approaches from experienced professionals, is a disservice to the field and to these institutions. This guide aspires to fill that role. It will direct museum professionals and other stakeholders to the most important qualities of successful museum social work and deliver ten achievable steps for making it work at their own institutions. This guide will also describe the two categories of museum social work – conversational and provisional – explain their importance, and suggest the best methods for implementing both.

Key Words

Social work

Provisional

Conversational

Shared authority

Introduction

Socially oriented programming and decision-making is widespread in today's museum world. Many museums are eager to be more relevant and make an impact on the struggle for social justice through the use of their programs, such as exhibits, public events, and workshops, as well as with their internal processes, assessments, and decisions. Other museums are engaging in similar museum social work actions without the explicit intent to promote positive social change. In fact, any actions undertaken by a museum staff that advance social justice and improve lives – intentionally or unintentionally – can be classified as museum social work. Unfortunately, implementing such socially oriented changes – with an undersized or inexperienced staff or at an institution that hasn't been

previously involved with social work – can often be complex and confusing, even treacherous.

A simple Internet search yields thousands of examples of museums hosting social justice events or exhibits, from gardening retreats focused on wellness for veterans to courses for the blind to learn about, create, and exhibit art.^{1 2} Many programs utilize the museum and its assets to raise awareness about particular social issues, while others are more outreach focused, making museum resources accessible to otherwise marginalized groups. Throughout all of these examples of museum social work, not a single consolidated, step-by-step guide can be found for those wishing to follow suit at their own institution.³ Museums are not disclosing their processes or insights with other museum professionals in an accessible format, nor are they evaluating their own social justice programs rigorously.⁴ As a result, many museums remain ignorant to the true process of social work.⁵

This is a disservice to the field of museum social work and the institutions working within it, for, without shared knowledge, growth of the discipline will be stunted. Future museum professionals will be disconnected from the wisdom of current authorities who have already experimented with museum social work in creative and successful ways.

¹ Green, Alicia, "Veterans Grow at the Chicago Botanic Garden," My Chicago Botanic Garden, November 11, 2014, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://my.chicagobotanic.org/education/therapy/veterans-grow-at-the-chicago-botanic-garden/>.

² Carter-Birken, Pamela, "Creative Connections – Art Museums Reach Out to Persons with Disabilities," *Social Work Today* 9 (2009): 16.

³ Silverman, Lois H., *The Social Work of Museums* (London: Routledge, 2010), 151.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stocks, Zachary A., "Activist Social Work in Small Museums: A Community-level Exploration" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2014), 13.

Museums in different parts of the world will be forced to craft wildly disparate – and often deficient – responses to similar social issues rather than collaborating and streamlining.⁶

Implicit within this narrative is the assertion that museums are already engaging in successful museum social work and that doing so is of value to both museums and their respective communities. The International Council of Museums adopted a definition of the museum that calls it an “institution in the service of society and its development” and the American Alliance of Museums has stated that museums were founded on the desire for social interaction, connection, and engagement.^{7 8} Silverman asserts that “museums have *always* been institutions of social service,” and this view is increasingly becoming the standard.⁹ In regards to the value of museum social work, Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale cite several of the negative impacts of the societal inequality and deprivation that can be countered with museum social work: low social mobility, high crime, a poor economy, and the deterioration of the mental and physical welfare of all citizens in the community.¹⁰

Therefore, with museum experts and international organizations having established that museum social work is fundamental, this paper will not reiterate the justification of the worth of museum social work. As noted in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, that feat

⁶ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 1.

⁷ International Council of Museums, “Museum Definition,” International Council of Museums, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>.

⁸ American Alliance of Museums, “2015 AAM Annual Meeting Theme,” American Alliance of Museums, accessed April 7, 2015, <http://www.aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting/2015-annual-meeting-theme>.

⁹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 13.

¹⁰ Nightingale, Eithne and Richard Sandell, “Introduction,” in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (London: Routledge, 2012), 2.

has already been accomplished through years of empirical research on the topic.¹¹ Instead, with gratitude to those who laid the foundation, this paper sets off from a place where museum social work has already been confirmed as relevant, nonpareil, and foundational to the success of museums around the world and directs the conversation toward how to do museum social work well.

Over the last several years, museums have been critiqued for not being fully effectual agents of social change.¹² However, rather than give up on this important work, museums need to broaden their foundational knowledge about museum social work – knowledge that already exists in scattered and often lengthy sources – elevating the potential for highly successful museum social work.¹³

A resource that details the best practices in museum social work, recommending specific qualities and innovative approaches from leaders in the field, is a necessary step toward building meaningfully upon the existing foundation of museum social work. Museum scholar Lois Silverman called this step “critical work for the future”.¹⁴ This paper aspires to fill that role by contributing to a synthesized, museum-wide understanding of the collective outcomes museum social work efforts have had thus far, as well as bridging the gap to the impacts they can reasonably hope to have in the future.^{15 16}

Because institutional actions are rarely categorized as traditional social work, museum social work will be separated from professional social work in this paper.¹⁷

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² Ibid., 8.

¹³ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 152.

¹⁴ Ibid., 142 and 151.

¹⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹⁶ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., 5.

Herein, the term *museum social work* will be used to refer to any actions undertaken by a museum staff for the purpose of promoting positive social change toward the objective of social justice and improved lives.¹⁸ The change is accomplished at individual, community, and/or societal levels through the unique resources available exclusively to museums.^{19 20} By acting upon inequalities both inside and outside their own domain, “museums can contribute towards more just, equitable and fair societies.”²¹

Similarly, social work is defined by the International Federation of Social Workers as “a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance their well-being.”²² The National Association of Social Workers adds to that definition by saying that professional social workers help “individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating social conditions favorable to this goal.”²³

The overlap between professional social work and museum social work is clear. However, while museums use similar methods to achieve many of the same goals lauded by professional social workers, Silverman reminds us that the two fields represent “distinct professions, each guided by its own ethics and values, body of knowledge, and competencies.”²⁴ This is good news for museums. While professional social workers are encouraged to work with museums and other institutions to promote social change,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sandell, Richard, “Social Inclusion, the Museum and the Dynamics of Sectoral Change,” *Museums and Society* 1 (2003): 45.

²⁰ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, i.

²¹ Nightingale and Sandell, “Introduction,” 3.

²² Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 5.

²³ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 13.

²⁴ Ibid., 147.

museums themselves remain unfettered by the guidelines of professional social work, giving them the freedom to innovate and utilize their distinctive experiences and resources to affect social change.²⁵ This collaborative model also fits with more contemporary definitions of social work as a complex field that draws on diverse community resources and coalitions to work together toward social justice.²⁶

This paper intends to make two contributions to the field of museum social work. The first, as mentioned previously, is to present the museum community with a concise and comprehensible set of recommendations for implementing museum social work. Drawing from case studies of museum social work programs and the wealth of advice from authorities on museums, social work, community building, and other relevant fields, this ten-step guide will direct museum professionals and stakeholders to the most important qualities and approaches of successful museum social work around the globe and deliver advice for making it work at their own institutions.

Unlike other available resources on the topic, this guide is both wide-ranging and succinct. In that way, it will serve the emerging museum professionals who have the desire to implement socially oriented programming but don't have the time to read through half a dozen books and a stack of journals to comb out a few useful tips for getting started. This should prove especially practical for museums with limited staffing and/or inexperienced staff or leadership. For all museums, though, the objective is to close the gap between a museum's current and potential impacts on its community.

²⁵ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 5.

²⁶ Ibid., 5-6.

The second way in which this paper aims to contribute to the field is by introducing a new system of classification for museum social work. The current terminology used for types of museum social work is borrowed from a variety of disciplines with no real consensus on usage or definitions.^{27 28 29} New terms have been introduced over the years, but they either overlap too closely with borrowed terms, present superficial divisions, or are simply unclear.^{30 31 32}

The proposed system of classification divides all museum social work activities into one of two distinct categories: conversational or provisional. The two types achieve differing immediate outcomes through their specific ways of engaging with a social issue. By establishing and unambiguously describing these two types of museum social work, this paper will grant museum professionals greater awareness of the implications and drawbacks of the socially oriented activities they offer, the ability to plan for their events or exhibits based on the outcomes and audiences they seek, and an understanding of the need for both conversational and provisional museum social work – and how to accomplish an effective amalgam of the two. A detailed explanation of the two categories is provided in #1 of the following section.

²⁷ "Community Engagement Scholars Program: Direct, Indirect, Research, and Advocacy Engagement," University of Minnesota Center for Community-Engaged Learning, accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/cesp/programdetails/engagement_types.html.

²⁸ "Three Kinds of Service Activities: Direct, Indirect, and Advocacy," Cesar E. Chavez Foundation, accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.cesarchavezfoundation.org/pdf/model_3KindsOfService.pdf.

²⁹ "Organizing vs. Advocacy," Cycle and Recycle, March 22, 2012, accessed December 01, 2015, <http://meredithbegin.blogspot.com/2012/03/organizing-vs-advocacy.html>.

³⁰ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 141.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

³² Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 26.

As the Museums Association proudly asserts, there is no doubt that museums can change lives.³³ Moreover, through their impact on individual members of society, museums have the power to change the entire world.³⁴ ³⁵ This paper aims to amplify those faculties by enabling more museums to successfully engage their communities in positive social change. The following section details ten steps for museums to take as they plan museum social work programming and progress toward inclusivity, equality, and social justice.

10 Steps to Successful and Dynamic Museum Social Work

The following ten steps or objectives are intended to guide both new and experienced museum professionals in the conceptualization, organization, and refinement of museum social work programming. Although several of the steps can and should be tackled simultaneously, users will find that they are organized here in a logical, sequential order that enhances ease of use as well as museum success.

Addressed in the following order, the ten steps to successful and dynamic museum social work are: (1) balance conversational and provisional elements, (2) build lasting relationships, (3) get everyone on board, (4) work for and alongside the need group, (5) design a museum-personalized response, (6) take risks, (7) instill a sense of place, (8) be transparent, (9) evaluate impact, and (10) make a commitment to the problem and to the community. These ten objectives are the result of a comprehensive search through more

³³ "Museums Change Lives: The MA's Vision for the Impact of Museums," Museums Association, accessed January 25, 2016, <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives>, 3.

³⁴ Merritt, Elizabeth, "Save Museums, Save the World?" Center for the Future of Museums, March 1, 2010, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2010/03/im-cynic-when-it-comes-to-slogans-and.html>.

³⁵ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, xi.

than one hundred books, journal articles, websites, blog posts, and other resources pertaining to successful museum social work, as well as email correspondence with a few international leaders in the field. The most commonly occurring themes were selected and synthesized into functional units that were then assembled into this step-by-step guide.

Throughout this section, the phrase *need group* is applied frequently, and comprehending its significance is requisite for understanding the entire methodology outlined here. Rather than implying a uniform “neediness,” the term is meant to indicate members of a social minority, persons who are experiencing risk because of some particular social injustice.³⁶ These groups are inherently fluid, as any person or relationship may be subject to circumstances of risk at any point.³⁷ They are also innumerable: racial, ethnic, or gender minorities; people with mental or physical disabilities; victims of sexual violence or domestic abuse; people experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, mental illness, addiction, or unemployment; refugees; ex-convicts; and more. Any one of these need groups could be represented by and targeted to benefit from a given museum social work action.³⁸

In professional social work, a member of one of these groups might be referred to as a client, patient, customer, consumer, service user, or expert by experience; some scholars suggest fabricating a new designation altogether.³⁹ Museum social work also suffers from a

³⁶ Ibid., 142.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Nightingale, Eithne and Chandan Mahal, “The Heart of the Matter: Integrating Equality and Diversity into the Policy and Practice of Museums and Galleries,” in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale, 23.

³⁹ McLaughlin, Hugh, “What’s in a Name: ‘Client’, ‘Patient’, ‘Customer’, ‘Consumer’, ‘Expert by Experience’, ‘Service User’—What’s Next?” *British Journal of Social Work* 39 (2009): 1114.

divergent and inadequate lexicon in this regard, and even the professional social work terms are incompatible with museum social work because of the dissimilar ways the two fields engage groups of people. While a more standardized term for the field is advised, *need group* is an intuitive and impartial designation that implies no value judgment and will suffice for the purposes of this paper.

Lastly, it is important for museum professionals to remember that the processes involved in designing valuable and innovative museum social work necessarily continue over a number of years, constantly involving new audiences, serving additional needs, and making a greater impact on the museum's community. These ten steps should be revisited frequently during that time to ensure that the museum hasn't lost sight of its objectives or fallen away from the most effective practices for achieving them.

(1) Balance Conversational and Provisional Elements

In order to understand much of the discussion found in the other nine steps, it is important to first recognize the types of museum social work that will be referenced or described there. Therefore, the first step is to understand the typology of current museum social work that can be utilized by museum staff members later in the process when faced with designing a museum social work action to address a particular need.

The field of museum social work is in desperate need of a new system of classification. There are no universally recognized categories, and current terminology is unclear and inadequate, with no consensus on definitions. The system proposed in this paper divides all museum social work into two clear, conjunctive, and equally valuable types. The formation of these categories benefits the entire field, from museum scholars needing well defined terminology to museum staff looking to better understand the

implications of the types of programs they've directed in the past or discover how best to achieve their social change objectives in the future. A new set of terms defined specifically in terms of museum social work eliminates confusion from the currently recycled vocabulary and puts a uniquely museum stamp on the field of social justice.

One existing classification of museum social work was proposed by Silverman in her book, *The Social Work of Museums*. She outlines numerous "museum interventions," – values demonstration, mobilization, advocacy, social action, and activism/activist service – with indistinct divisions and uncertain meanings.⁴⁰ For instance, Silverman defines advocacy as speaking out for specific groups of people (example: economic empowerment of women) while activism is pursuing certain social objectives for social change (example: endorsing national apology for historical trauma).⁴¹ However, Glenn Jacobs, a professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, uses the terms advocacy and activism as synonyms.⁴² Yet another source portrays activism as a process through which advocacy is achieved.⁴³ Fred Wilson and other museum professionals shy away from the term activism altogether, saying it can become a static and didactic agenda that drowns creativity.^{44 45}

⁴⁰ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 146.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jacobs, Glenn, "Service versus Advocacy? A Comparison of Two Latino Community-Based Organizations in Chelsea, Massachusetts," *Trotter Review* 19 (2010): 101.

⁴³ Stonesifer, Patty and Sandy Stonesifer, "All for ONE: Should I Give to Charities That Raise Awareness, or Only to Charities That Take Direct Action?" *Slate*, February 04, 2009, accessed December 01, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/life/my_goodness/2009/02/all_for_one.html.

⁴⁴ Marstine, Janet, "Museologically Speaking: An Interview with Fred Wilson," in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (London: Routledge, 2012), 41.

⁴⁵ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 37.

Another example of imprecise vocabulary is with *direct* social service and *indirect* social service. This distinction sometimes refers to the difference between working *with* need groups (teaching underprivileged students) or *for* need groups (building a playground or fundraising).⁴⁶ At other times, direct social service is defined as work aimed at clients themselves while indirect services include administration and other organizational operations. Still other scholars' definitions directly contradict these first two assessments.⁴⁷ Examining related fields, such as community engagement and organizing, generates added confusion, because similar terms – direct engagement, indirect engagement, advocacy, advocacy service, direct service, and direct action – convey slightly different meanings.^{48 49}

The other problem with today's classification of museum social work is that it devalues certain categories. For example, one commentator exalts activist service over social action, explaining that social action can counter the effects of social injustice but only activist service works to actually solve the problem.⁵⁰ However, in *The Social Work of Museums*, Silverman's primary focus was on individual visitors and their personal needs rather than on community- or societal-level social work. Her narrow focus may partly explain a bias toward what she calls activist service, whereas at the societal level, activist service may be

⁴⁶"Three Kinds of Service Activities: Direct, Indirect, and Advocacy," Cesar E. Chavez Foundation, accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.cesarchavezfoundation.org/pdf/model_3KindsOfService.pdf.

⁴⁷ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 26.

⁴⁸ "Community Engagement Scholars Program: Direct, Indirect, Research, and Advocacy Engagement," University of Minnesota Center for Community-Engaged Learning, accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/cesp/programdetails/engagement_types.html.

⁴⁹ "Organizing vs. Advocacy," Cycle and Recycle, March 22, 2012, accessed December 01, 2015, <http://meredithbegin.blogspot.com/2012/03/organizing-vs-advocacy.html>.

⁵⁰ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 2.

less realistic, especially for small museums. In any case, all types of museum social work should be lauded for their representation of a variety of efforts toward positive social change.

Paquet Kinsley observed that, at least in regards to homelessness, museums have largely treated the need group and their social injustice as a topic to be explored rather than a group of people to work with and engage.⁵¹ While not uncommon, this tactic is both depersonalizing and unsuccessful.⁵² Even promoting typical museum programs directly to need groups will not attract them without an aspect of *provisional museum social work*.⁵³

Provisional museum social work is defined as a short-term response to the symptoms of social injustice that focuses on need group participation (while remaining inclusive). It is the type of social work that immediately comes to mind for many people: free or reduced entry for low-income visitors, arts camps for underrepresented or underprivileged kids, educational or therapeutic workshops for adults in specific need groups, the dispersal of food or school supplies, and more. Provisional museum social work offers something – whether enrichment, physical goods, or an outlet for peers to share their experiences – that serves an immediate need. As a result, it has a greater instantaneous impact on the need group.⁵⁴ Not only does provisional museum social work stabilize need groups by meeting their most pressing needs, it has also been shown to

⁵¹ Paquet Kinsley, Rose, "Engaging with Homeless Adults in Museums: Considerations for Where to Begin," *Museums & Social Issues* 8 (2013): 75.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵³ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

empower those need groups, equipping them to better serve and advocate for themselves in the future.⁵⁵

Conversational museum social work, on the other hand, is a long-term response to the root causes of social injustice that focuses on inclusive participation. This critical component of social justice engages need groups and the general public to encourage thought, dialogue, and action on key social issues in the community.⁵⁶ Its objectives are to educate, empower, and equip the audience to affect social change. Also, while provisional museum social work can be managed for the long term, conversational museum social work is generally more suited to sustainable social change efforts.

Conversational museum social work achieves different objectives than provisional museum social work, but it has equivalent inherent value.⁵⁷ An article from Slate.com reads, "An informed, concerned, mobilized constituency is often a prerequisite to great social change."⁵⁸ While the "big picture" for conversational museum social work is positive social change, other objectives are equally as important and often work to sustain the entire process.⁵⁹ Further impacts of conversational museum social work include growing

⁵⁵ "Breaking the Wall Between Funding Direct Services and Advocacy," National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, fall 2011, accessed November 30, 2015, http://ncrp.org/files/rp-articles/ResponsivePhilanthropy_Fall11_BreakingTheWall.pdf, 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Stonesifer and Stonesifer, "All for ONE."

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Coffman, Julia, "What's Different About Evaluating Advocacy and Policy Change?" Harvard Family Research Project, spring 2007, accessed December 01, 2015, <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/advocacy-and-policy-change/what-s-different-about-evaluating-advocacy-and-policy-change>.

participants into advocates, fostering relationships amongst a diverse audience, and receiving insight about exhibit or program design.^{60 61}

Consider this illustration: A segment of a community is experiencing devastating food insecurity, and a community museum decides to get involved. In order to ensure long-term, sustainable, and meaningful change, the museum must educate the entire community about the issue and teach the people how to advocate for the food insecure. However, those food insecure community members also need to be fed, because, if they starve or are forced to leave the community before any social or policy change is made, the change won't have made a difference in their lives. What should the museum do?

The answer is both.⁶² Conversational and provisional museum social work are not mutually exclusive.⁶³ In fact, when employed together, the two types are complementary.⁶⁴ The most impactful and sustainable museum social work entails both conversational and provisional elements, and an increasing number of museums and non-profits are combining the two with great success.^{65 66 67 68 69} This coordination of methods brings

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Duclos-Orsello, Elizabeth, "Shared Authority: The Key to Museum Education as Social Change," *Journal of Museum Education* 38 (2013): 126.

⁶² Merritt, Elizabeth, "Unaccompanied Children at our Borders: Can Museums Help?" July 22, 2014, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2014/07/unaccompanied-children-at-our-borders.html>.

⁶³ "Breaking the Wall," 6.

⁶⁴ Jacobs, "Service versus Advocacy?" 104.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁶ "Breaking the Wall," 7.

⁶⁷ Carter-Birken, "Creative Connections – Art Museums Reach Out to Persons with Disabilities," 16.

⁶⁸ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 95.

⁶⁹ To read about a parallel movement toward social services impacting social change, refer to "Social Service and Social Change: A Process Guide" at <http://www.buildingmovement.org/pdf/ProcessGuide.pdf> and other documents from the Building Movement Project.

together a multifaceted audience, taking people from isolation into community, and tends to encourage reciprocity, where individuals who have been provided with some kind of enrichment aspire to give back with further service or advocacy.^{70 71 72} In another correspondence with Nina Simon, she wrote, "It's impossible to successfully and authentically provide provisional services without active dialogue and shared learning to develop the best, most relevant, most useful services." The opposite is true, as well. It would be insincere and ineffective to engage in conversational museum social work without also serving the community in some provisional way.

(2) Build Lasting Relationships

Prior experience often encourages people to solve a problem by first identifying and describing the problem. Research on museum social work, however, recommends a surprisingly different approach and one that is mentioned in nearly every resource. The first and most important step any museum should take toward becoming an agent of positive social change is to initiate relationships with a variety of people and groups, including community members, other cultural organizations or businesses, civic leaders, and professional social workers.⁷³

Silverman calls human relationships the "greatest treasures of culture" and praises them for augmenting the social functioning of society.^{74 75} Likewise, Dr. Felton Earls, a Harvard professor of public health who conducted a fifteen-year study on the health of

⁷⁰ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 34.

⁷¹ Jacobs, "Service versus Advocacy?" 102.

⁷² Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 81.

⁷³ Nightingale and Mahal, "The Heart," 36.

⁷⁴ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 155.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

communities, found that the most important factor impacting community members' health and well-being was *collective efficacy*: "the capacity of people to act together on matters of common interest."⁷⁶ The benefits of this capacity translate to organizations and their partners when they are working together to affect positive social change.

As this suggests, relationships between museums and other entities should be viewed as partnerships for social justice. They must also be lasting; they should both precede and outlast any correlated museum social work.⁷⁷ Lasting relationships enhance the capabilities of all partners to fulfill their own objectives, and they are a predictor of the most effective museum social work projects.^{78 79} In fact, the emphasized value and ease of development of long-term relationships is what divides professional social work's ability to serve communities from the sometimes less effective attempts of museum social work.^{80 81} These relationships lead naturally to partnership, which promises any museum social work program a higher chance of success.⁸² Learning how to build lasting relationships with the following groups of people and what to do next are the first steps toward engaging audiences for positive social change. Always remember, while there are costs to building

⁷⁶ Borrup, Tom, "5 Ways Arts Projects Can Improve Struggling Communities," Project for Public Spaces, accessed November 30, 2015, <http://www.pps.org/reference/artsprojects/>.

⁷⁷ Longoni, Mario and Ryan Lugalía-Hollon, "Engaging Chicago's Communities in Climate Action," *Museums & Social Issues* 7(2012): 193.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 147.

⁸⁰ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 22.

⁸¹ Ibid., 13.

⁸² Stocks, Zachary A., "4 Steps for Successful Museum Social Work." The Inluseum, October 20, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://inluseum.com/2014/10/20/4-steps-for-successful-museum-social-work/>.

lasting relationships and working alongside communities to address social injustice, the potential benefits are greater.⁸³

(2a) Relationships with the public

The group that is most central to a museum's work is its current audience.⁸⁴ However, when preparing to engage in museum social work, connections should be expanded to include all potential audiences that represent members of a variety of need groups present in the community. Rose Paquet Kinsley wrote a helpful guide to building relationships with homeless adults which easily translates to any need group. First, museum staff members should learn about the need group and its unique obstacles, and, if possible, receive training to help them develop awareness of the prejudices and behaviors they bring into any relationship or social work action. Staff members should then participate in activities alongside members of the need group, taking care to remember that they are engaging *with* the need group, not simply serving them. Museum staff should consult with interested members of the need group before organizing further activities (more on this later). Outreach activities are the most attractive options for many need groups, who say that they take the museum staff out of their comfort zone, which puts others at ease.⁸⁵ An example of this type of outreach includes the Women on the Rise! program at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami that works to inspire young girls being served by social justice organizations in the area by leaving the museum building to present female-created art, offer hands-on projects, and even arrange meetings

⁸³ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 125.

⁸⁴ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 148.

⁸⁵ Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 82.

with important woman artists.⁸⁶ Lastly, the most successful relationships with any need group are ongoing in nature.⁸⁷ That is, intentional communication and shared learning should be constant, preceding museum social work actions and continuing after such actions have culminated.

(2b) Relationships with other organizations and businesses

Local social welfare, government, and health agencies and public and private organizations, institutions, and businesses can all make ideal collaborative partners for museums.⁸⁸ These could be school districts, state or county agencies/departments, libraries, grocery stores, art centers or galleries, mentoring organizations, and more. Partners with compatible social justice goals can help museums, which are primarily cultural institutions, appropriately prioritize social work.⁸⁹ They can be an opportunity for museum staff to connect with community members outside the confines of the museum and ensure continued relevancy.⁹⁰ Service organizations, in particular, have already done much of the work in establishing relationships with specific need groups and have obtained the resources for serving them, both of which can be valuable to museums.⁹¹ In fact, Paquet Kinsley says that “social inclusion has been proven likelier and more successful when carried out in partnership with organizations already serving the ‘target population.’”⁹² In return, museum social work can advocate for the value of a social service organization,

⁸⁶ “Outreach Programs,” Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, accessed April 8, 2016, <http://mocanomi.org/outreach-programs/>.

⁸⁷ Paquet Kinsley, “Engaging with Homeless Adults in Museums: Considerations for Where to Begin,” 82.

⁸⁸ “Museums Change Lives,” 15.

⁸⁹ Longoni and Lugalia-Hollon, “Engaging Chicago’s Communities,” 203.

⁹⁰ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 20.

⁹¹ Paquet Kinsley, “Engaging with Homeless Adults,” 82.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 85.

while also providing an additional medium and supplementary resources through which to engage and expand the portion of a need group that the organization is currently serving. In spite of these demonstrated mutual benefits, museums are rarely sought out by businesses or social agencies.^{93 94} Museums often need to be active in seeking out opportunities to connect.

When looking for relationship-building opportunities, museums should pursue like-minded organizations that will hold them accountable to their social work objectives.⁹⁵ Local organizations, rather than national ones, will be especially focused on countering the social issues impacting the community.⁹⁶ Museums should labor to understand the skills, knowledge, and also limitations of potential partners and seek out those organizations doing complementary work, leveraging the reciprocal benefits as a selling point when necessary.^{97 98} In a personal correspondence with Nina Simon, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, she echoed this sentiment. "We learn about [collaborators'] needs and assets, discuss honestly where our respective needs and assets intersect, and then work together to develop projects and partnerships that make a difference to everyone." Finally, even businesses and organizations are not immune to feeling "dropped" at the end of a museum social work action, so relationships with these entities should also be maintained.⁹⁹

⁹³ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 14-15.

⁹⁴ Longoni and Lugalia-Hollon, "Engaging Chicago's Communities," 193.

⁹⁵ Lefebvre, Sam, "Food Served with a Side of Social Justice," East Bay Express, April 15, 2015, accessed November 09, 2015, <http://www.eastbayexpress.com/oakland/food-served-with-a-side-of-social-justice/Content?oid=4247620>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 121.

⁹⁸ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

⁹⁹ Nightingale and Mahal, "The Heart," 24.

(2c) Relationships with professionals and experts in social work and other fields

While only a few institutions can have one on staff, every museum can benefit from a relationship with a full-time professional social worker, even if in an informal or purely advisory capacity.^{100 101} Increasing numbers of museums are working alongside professional social workers, taking advantage of their experiences, deferring to their expertise, and employing their community reach.¹⁰² Professional social workers have more familiarity and rapport with members of need groups and can help foster a smooth transition for clients and a partnering museum into their new relationship.¹⁰³ Professional social workers can also be a part of planning museum social work actions, whether that means devising activities, advocating for the need group and their specific concerns, or helping to spread the word through their own connections. Silverman encourages these types of regular, explicit, and sustained collaboration for mutual benefit and, most importantly, for more significant positive social change.¹⁰⁴

Outside of professional social workers, professionals and nonprofessional experts in other fields have much to offer museums by adding new dimensions to museum social work.¹⁰⁵ Medical personnel, artists, therapists, university faculty, policymakers, grassroots activists, and other social justice advocates are just a few examples of potential partners in museum social work.^{106 107} Representatives of each of these fields may already be regularly

¹⁰⁰ Marstine, "Museologically Speaking," 39.

¹⁰¹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 93.

¹⁰² Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 19.

¹⁰³ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 143.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁰⁷ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

visiting – or even members of – a given museum; the museum may need to simply create an opportunity for a more personal and lasting relationship to be built.

(2d) Assist others in building relationships

The next step for a museum that has begun to build relationships with the general public, organizations and businesses, and various professionals is to connect those groups of people to one another to amplify collective impact.¹⁰⁸ Having built relationships with a variety of groups of people allows a museum to more effectively bring those people together and foster healthy, beneficial relationships between them.¹⁰⁹ Museums should offer rewarding social opportunities where a diverse group of people can relax, have fun, and create together.^{110 111} Singles, couple, or family events, dialogue initiatives, and religious diversity programs are all examples of ways that museums can offer comfortable and engaging programs to promote relationship building within their community.¹¹²

(2e) Listen to the community

Word-of-mouth is the primary way museums are made aware of social problems within the community, which is why it is so vital for museums to maintain positive relationships and personal communication with community members.^{113 114} One executive director tells her staff to “go to the street, ask the community.”¹¹⁵ Professional social workers use this same method, integrating into the community to identify needs.¹¹⁶ For

¹⁰⁸ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 146.

¹⁰⁹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 140.

¹¹⁰ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 52.

¹¹¹ Paquet Kinsley, “Engaging with Homeless Adults,” 81.

¹¹² Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 140.

¹¹³ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 32.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹⁵ Jacobs, “Service versus Advocacy?” 82.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

museums, the general public and any associated need groups should be heavily involved in identifying social issues and working together with the museum to respond to them.^{117 118} An added benefit of this system is the way it assembles diverse groups of people, working together to build up their community.¹¹⁹ Effective listening can be achieved by reaching out directly to friends and partners of the museum or by assembling focus groups. Frequent, informal communication increases a museum's capacity for identifying repressed social issues within the community. Museums should ask open-ended questions and never underestimate the ability of their partners to identify problems and supply responses that the museum had not considered.

Another reason a museum should listen to its community and partners is to identify issues within the museum itself or tactics that could enhance the museum's effectiveness and relevance. In return, museums can assist their partners in identifying innovative ways to utilize the museum and its resources in their own fields.¹²⁰

(3) Get Everyone on Board

For museums that are not already deeply engaged in issues of social justice, the decision to become an agent of positive social change in its community – whether made at the staff, leadership, or governance level – should not be made flippantly. The decision and the reasoning behind it need to be clear to everyone at the institution. Not only that, the entire institution needs to be committed to the museum's role in the community.¹²¹ Every

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁸ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

¹¹⁹ "5 Ways."

¹²⁰ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 127.

¹²¹ Fleming, David, "Museums for Social Justice: Managing Organisational Change," in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (London: Routledge, 2012), 72.

staff and board member should internalize the museum's social change objectives, taking them into consideration at every turn.¹²² This means supporting the museum's goal to affect social change in general and working together to find a specific, agreeable response.

There is some disagreement over whether or not the change needs to be officially documented, but some record or mechanism to ensure the museum's perseverance is certainly not advised against.¹²³ This could be accomplished through a strategic plan, as a part of a museum's annual goals and/or budget, or through edits to the mission statement. This is not to say that a mission statement will necessarily need to be rewritten, as many are broad enough to allow for appropriate museum social work actions without modification. All representatives of a museum, regardless of their position within the hierarchy, exert influence on the institution's values and must work together to ensure the success of their efforts toward social justice.^{124 125}

(3a) Staff

The largest obstacle most museum staff need to overcome is the belief that they are unqualified to plan, implement, or direct museum social work.¹²⁶ Their training and experience may not have exposed them to museum social work; therefore, they may believe that museums are not intended to address issues of social justice.¹²⁷ However, if staff do not consider themselves agents of positive social change, the community will not value their contributions and their efforts are less likely to succeed.¹²⁸ Museum staff

¹²² Nightingale and Mahal, "The Heart," 14.

¹²³ Ibid., 16-17.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁵ Fleming, "Museums for Social Justice," 73.

¹²⁶ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 15.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18.

members can make great contributions toward social justice when they take ownership of that role.¹²⁹

(3b) Leadership

Effective leadership is one of the strongest factors in propelling institutional change.¹³⁰ Museum leaders have several important functions in the process of undertaking museum social work: ensuring consistency with and commitment to objectives, as well as evaluating progress toward them; managing the proper allocation of resources; engaging the entire institution; and assisting staff in taking ownership of projects, identifying obstacles within the organization, and addressing issues that arise.^{131 132}

The commitment to positive social change can be achieved and spread most rapidly at the leadership level.¹³³ However, the nature of museum leadership, whether it is authoritarian or collaborative, is also an important factor. David Fleming, director of National Museums Liverpool and president of the board of the Museums Association, suggests that strong direction is best at the inception of any major change, but, if it suits the institution, the leadership can become more collective once the change is underway.¹³⁴

(3c) Governing body

Fleming also writes, “The support of the governors of a museum is essential in managing for social justice; if the governors waver, the entire process can be undermined.”¹³⁵ He goes on to explain that a governing body’s support of social objectives

¹²⁹ Nightingale and Mahal, “The Heart,” 24.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³³ Fleming, “Museums for Social Justice,” 73.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

eliminates anxiety, allowing leadership and staff members to commit and take risks for positive social change.¹³⁶ The governing body of a museum is another unit where the commitment to positive social change can be achieved fairly quickly as long as the group itself values and desires the change enough to endorse it with material resources and a supportive mission/vision statement.^{137 138}

(4) Work for and Alongside the Need Group

It is imperative that museums demonstrate a clear commitment to the welfare of the general public through relationship-building, as mentioned above, but, when an institution begins to engage in museum social work, those persons making up community-identified need groups should be prioritized in several specific ways: respect, safety, and comfort; shared authority; and access concerns.¹³⁹ Museums can accomplish this by exhibiting compassion, asking advice, and providing access to activities that are usually prohibitive or inaccessible to the need group.¹⁴⁰

(4a) Respect, safety, and comfort

Ideally, a museum should function as a safe space for people who are experiencing social injustice.¹⁴¹ It is important that museums recognize this role and foster a respectful, safe, and comfortable environment.¹⁴² The most substantial hurdle for new visitors is the feeling of being unwelcome or embarrassed at the museum.¹⁴³ This is especially true for

¹³⁶ Ibid., 77.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 73.

¹³⁸ Marstine, "Museologically Speaking," 39.

¹³⁹ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 4.

¹⁴⁰ Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 80.

¹⁴¹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 92.

¹⁴² Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 80.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 85.

people experiencing social injustice, who have “ordinary needs expressed with extraordinary intensity.”¹⁴⁴ Treating members of any need group as “real” people is a simple step toward making them feel respected by the institution.¹⁴⁵ Museums can further promote feelings of respect, safety, and comfort by preparing need groups for visits with workshops or pre-visit materials, contextualizing exhibits with supplementary activities, and being aware of and even avoiding any content with the potential for re-traumatization. Also, museums should arrange for the same staff member to work consistently with a need group, both inside and outside the museum, and, of course, be careful to never appear condescending or distrustful toward the members of any need group, for instance, by following them around the gallery.¹⁴⁶ The Shelter Program at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan is a weekly program that provides at-risk families with lunch; social, educational, and counseling support; recreational activities; and modeling of nonviolent child discipline techniques. All museums should work to embody the environment observed by one participant in the program: “I see my son laughing and singing and being free at the Museum – he’s not like that at the Shelter.”¹⁴⁷

(4b) Shared authority

In the 1990’s, disability activists wielded the phrase, “Nothing about us without us,” championing the participation rights of disabled persons in policy changes.¹⁴⁸ In museums today, this translates to all need groups and their rights to fully participate in research, exhibit making, educational programming, and museum social work that is done for or

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 85-86.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 80.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 81-82.

¹⁴⁷ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 93.

¹⁴⁸ Nightingale and Mahal, “The Heart,” 23.

about them. It goes further than traditional collaboration by treating need groups as both creators and consumers of knowledge, which in turn deepens others' appreciation for the museum.^{149 150 151} Echoing the stance of philosopher Jacques Rancière's "equality of intelligences," shared authority is the heart of public service and effective museum social work.¹⁵²

The Museums Association suggests several ways to achieve shared authority: "bring more voices into interpretation and devolve power. Encourage people to contribute to decision making about what to do, what to display and what issues to address."¹⁵³ In order to inspire successful co-creation, museums must divest themselves of some authority and privilege and begin to consider themselves (and the members of the need group) neither educators nor learners but both at once.¹⁵⁴

The benefits of shared authority are being substantiated through research, exposing the notable psychological boost and empowerment that occurs within members of the need group when they are included, their capacities are affirmed, and they realize that they are not merely clients being served.^{155 156 157} There is demonstrated value for museums, as well, in the knowledge they are able to construct about their audiences and social

¹⁴⁹ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 122.

¹⁵⁰ "Museums Change Lives," 4.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵² Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 124-25

¹⁵³ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

¹⁵⁴ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 122-23.

¹⁵⁵ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 93.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁵⁷ Kretzman, John and John McKnight, "Introduction," in *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Evanston: ACTA Publications, 1993), 2.

objectives while working closely with a need group, leading to the greater success of subsequent museum social work.^{158 159}

Approaches to shared authority in museum social work include employing members of the need group as educators, tour guides, storytellers, visible consultants, discussion facilitators, activity leaders, and any other role that will put their wisdom and experiences at the center of the dialogue about their need group and the positive social change the museum is attempting to affect. For example, Intercultural Tour Guides at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London represent a variety of faiths so that they can promote interfaith understanding and draw attention to the wider social implications of many of the museum's collection items.¹⁶⁰ At the Colleton Museum and Farmer's Market in Walterboro, South Carolina, community members are able to rent the museum's commercial kitchen to produce food products that they can sell at the farmer's market. Those kitchen users are then invited to serve as instructors for other community members who wish to expand their knowledge and income through the use of the museum kitchen.¹⁶¹

(4c) Access Concerns

The last elements to consider in working for and alongside a need group are any access concerns inherent to that particular group. These may involve timing of events, transportation, cost, and accessibility of the building and content.^{162 163} Museums should take these factors into account and have solutions prepared for dealing with them.

¹⁵⁸ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 148.

¹⁵⁹ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 123.

¹⁶⁰ Nightingale and Mahal, "The Heart," 29.

¹⁶¹ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 33-34.

¹⁶² Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 80.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 82.

Consulting directly with the need group can help the museum avoid insensitive, poorly attended, or otherwise unsuccessful events that might damage their relationship with the need group.¹⁶⁴

(5) Design a Museum-Personalized Response

As described in the introduction, museum social work is distinct – guided by its own values, domain, resources, and constraints – from professional social work or other social services that are offered in businesses, parks, homes, or libraries.¹⁶⁵ Museums should embrace that fact and affect positive social change in distinctive ways, exploiting their unique resources and drawing on their specific, dedicated audiences.¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷ Simon suggests that this will result in bolder and more innovative museum social work.¹⁶⁸

Personalizing a response to a social issue requires museums to look at what cultural institutions in general have to offer as well as searching internally for useful resources. Collections-based activities are especially suited to certain museum social work, so it can be worthwhile to ask the question, “How could our [art/history/natural science] collection be a part of addressing this issue?”¹⁶⁹ ¹⁷⁰ “Our Global Kitchen: Food, Nature, Culture” is a temporary exhibit from the American Museum of Natural History that uses objects to explore the intricacies of our world’s food system, from famine and hunger to obesity and waste. The exhibited collections include one week’s groceries for families around the world

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 147.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Simon, Nina, “Seeking Clarity about the Complementary Nature of Social Work and the Arts,” *Museum 2.0*, April 17, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2013/04/seeking-clarity-about-complementary.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 35.

¹⁷⁰ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 146.

and a sculpture containing the amount of food waste a U.S. family of four generates every year.¹⁷¹ Museums should take advantage of their collections' portability and flexibility by offering up objects for use in museum social work programs and presenting the items in ways most visitors haven't been able to experience them before.¹⁷²

Some art museums are taking a different approach to the accessibility of their collections. The Prado Museum in Madrid is one of many museums to offer an experience that enables blind and visually impaired visitors to experience art by feeling it. "Touching the Prado" was one of the first exhibits to offer 3-D printed copies of artworks that incorporate original color and specially adapted texture, ideal for those with only partial impairment, and the museum also provides opaque glasses for non-vision-impaired patrons to experience the exhibit as it was designed.¹⁷³ Dozens of museums around the world have similar programs, and, at several museums in the U.S., visually impaired visitors are even permitted to touch original works of art.¹⁷⁴ All of these exhibits are examples of museums using their unique faculties to personalize efforts toward social justice.

(6) Take Risks

¹⁷¹ "Museum of Science Presents Our Global Kitchen: Food, Nature, Culture Opening December 22," Museum of Science, December 18, 2013, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.mos.org/node/2119922>.

¹⁷² Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 146.

¹⁷³ Frayer, Lauren, "Do Touch the Artwork at Prado's " for the Blind," NPR, May 26, 2015, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/05/26/408543587/do-touch-the-artwork-at-prados-exhibit-for-the-blind>.

¹⁷⁴ Wecker, Menachem, "At Some Museums, Blind Visitors Can Touch the Art," *The Washington Post*, July 10, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/at-some-museums-blind-visitors-can-touch-the-art/2015/07/09/df4a5bba-fd6d-11e4-833c-a2de05b6b2a4_story.html.

In a statement on their “Vision for the Impact of Museums,” the Museums Association repeatedly advises museums to be ambitious and take risks in a variety of ways.¹⁷⁵ Museum scholars and professionals around the world echo that conviction.^{176 177} A citizen focus group, too, suggested that museums “go outside of their own comfort zone in order to make other people feel more comfortable about going out of their comfort zone.”¹⁷⁸ Yet, museums are still passing up potential audiences in fear of their actions being construed as incompetent, biased, or outright offensive, especially when dealing with complex and often controversial social issues.^{179 180}

Several museum scholars have made recommendations for dealing with this fear of failure in museum social work: garner support from the museum’s governing body, assist museum staff members in broadening their expertise, and work alongside professional social workers and their clients to discuss objectives and establish trust.^{181 182 183} Museums should also avoid preciousness with collections, instead making items available for experiential use; plan risky outreach programs; and openly acknowledge – to themselves

¹⁷⁵ “Museums Change Lives,” 3, 12, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Marstine, “Museologically Speaking,” 39.

¹⁷⁷ Nightingale and Mahal, “The Heart,” 29.

¹⁷⁸ Paquet Kinsley, “Engaging with Homeless Adults,” 82.

¹⁷⁹ Nightingale and Mahal, “The Heart,” 29.

¹⁸⁰ Reeve, John, “A Question of Faith: The Museum as a Spiritual or Secular Space,” in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Sandell and Nightingale (London: Routledge, 2012), 128.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Fleming, “Museums for Social Justice,” 77.

¹⁸³ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 149.

and their audiences – that the social issues they are struggling with can be complex, controversial, and uncomfortable.^{184 185 186}

(7) Instill a Sense of Place

Museum social work should nurture an appreciation of place in the audiences it engages.¹⁸⁷ In return, that sense of place will lead to increased participation in the museum's social work programs. The specific implication of place, however, can be flexible.

(7a) Building

Some museum buildings naturally demand attention or reverence – those with exceptionally innovative design or restored and recreated spaces that are historically significant.¹⁸⁸ However, the majority of museums in the world do not have the luxury of innately transformative physical environments. Fortunately, there are other ways to inspire the appreciation of a building. First, making a museum feel comfortable and personal will enhance the feeling of a “home away from home” for many visitors.^{189 190} By also making their space useful to the public, museums can encourage citizens to take ownership of the building.¹⁹¹ Lastly, inviting community members to play a part in the design, creation, or upkeep of the museum's space, and promoting continued public participation in decision-making, will strengthen the sense of ownership and place.^{192 193}

¹⁸⁴ “Museums Change Lives,” 15.

¹⁸⁵ Paquet Kinsley, “Engaging with Homeless Adults,” 82.

¹⁸⁶ Reeve, “A Question of Faith,” 128.

¹⁸⁷ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 57.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 92.

¹⁹¹ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 35.

¹⁹² “5 Ways.”

¹⁹³ “Museums Change Lives,” 8.

(7b) Community

A museum, rather than becoming isolated in its own building, should be rooted in its community and actively contributing to the unique spirit and social welfare of that community.¹⁹⁴ ¹⁹⁵ One way to instill a sense of community pride while also working toward social objectives is to collaborate with and host programming at community businesses, prisons, government buildings, and other local institutions where community members can offer their support.¹⁹⁶ It is important to note that a museum's community could be physical – a neighborhood, city, or region – or it could be an interest constituency. This will depend upon the nature of the institution, so every museum must determine the margins of its community in order to better respond to that area's distinct social issues.¹⁹⁷

(7c) Domain

Another technique for instilling a sense of place in museum social work is to contextualize efforts within the museum's field of expertise. Similar to the inquiry presented in a previous section, the question a museum must now ask is, "How could [contemporary art/World War I history/space science/etc.] be a part of addressing this issue?"¹⁹⁸ The prevailing social injustices might pose a threat to the community's historical or art culture, or the museum's domain may offer critical insight into contemporary social issues.¹⁹⁹ ²⁰⁰ No matter the circumstances, people can be motivated to acquire a sense of

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹⁶ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 146.

¹⁹⁷ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 48.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁰⁰ Junkin, Lisa, "A Question of the Stomach: A Museum Contemplates Its Role within a Movement," *History at the Table*, February 19, 2013, accessed November 21, 2015, <http://historyatthetable.blogspot.com/2013/02/lisa-junkin-question-of-the-stomach.html>.

ownership around a subject area, and museums should employ the assistance of their domain to inform their response to current social issues.²⁰¹

(8) Be Transparent

Scholars Eithne Nightingale and Chandan Mahal write, in regard to certain social justice issues, that “museums need to be...more transparent on how (and why) they are addressing such issues.”²⁰² In theory, this should be the easiest step for most museums to tackle, because it simply means, as the Museums Association puts it, “trying to be as honest as possible.”²⁰³ In practice, however, it often demands courage. It could require museums to emphasize and make visible the participation and contributions of need groups in their institutions, reveal “hidden histories,” utilize underrepresented points of view, and address inequalities in their organizations.^{204 205}

As an example, after the racially charged riots in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, some museum associations appealed to all types and sizes of museums to come forward and openly acknowledge racial inequalities at their own institutions.²⁰⁶ At history museums in particular, transparency can often mean demonstrating the value of need groups by revealing repressed sides of the traditional narrative. The Museum of History and Industry in Seattle undertook this challenge through an exhibit called “Revealing Queer” that investigated the Puget Sound regional history through the experiences of the gay, lesbian,

²⁰¹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 95.

²⁰² Nightingale and Mahal, “The Heart,” 34.

²⁰³ “Museums Change Lives,” 10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Stocks, “Activist Social Work,” 14.

²⁰⁶ Boge, Alyssa and Katherine Rieck, “A Guide to Discussions Surrounding Ferguson,” *Museums & Social Issues* 10 (2015): 114.

bisexual, transgender, and queer community, a perspective that embodies a clear segment of history but one that is rarely explored in history museums.²⁰⁷

(9) Evaluate Impact

In order to inform strategy, apprise stakeholders, demonstrate value, and catalyze positive social change, museum social work must be regularly and thoroughly evaluated.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁹ Museums should then share their findings with other museums and any current or prospective partners.²¹⁰ Evaluating museum social work may be more challenging than evaluating other museum programs, but it can also be flexible according to the aptitudes of staff members and the needs of the institution. The evaluation process can utilize quantitative studies, visitor data, participant interviews, and/or reflections from staff members, as long as it is meaningful, consistent, rigorous, and suitable for the outcomes being measured.^{211 212 213} The specific impacts and outcomes a museum wishes to measure will vary by institution and the issues addressed, but a general trend is toward supporting a healthy community where the identified social justice issues are noticeably reduced through museum social work actions.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ "MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer," Museum of History and Industry, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.mohai.org/press-media/press-releases/item/2636-mohai-explores-lgbtq-history-in-locally-developed-exhibit-revealing-queer>.

²⁰⁸ Coffman, "What's Different?"

²⁰⁹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 93.

²¹⁰ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

²¹¹ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 151.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 93.

²¹³ Reisman, Jane, Anne Gienapp, and Sarah Stachowiak. "A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy." Organizational Research Services. 2007. Accessed March 9, 2016. http://orsimpact.com/wpcontent/uploads/2013/08/a_guide_to_measuring_advocacy_and_policy.pdf, 1.

²¹⁴ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 49.

It is important to evaluate each component of museum social work with the appropriate metric.²¹⁵ While the evaluation of all museum social work is complex, designing provisional museum social work evaluations is often the more straightforward type, and there is a direct link to professional social work literature. Evaluating conversational museum social work is more complicated.²¹⁶ Its long-term nature can be a particular challenge, so identifying short- and intermediate-term objectives can be of use in evaluating conversational museum social work actions.²¹⁷ Museums should first attempt to utilize and adapt evaluation processes with which they are comfortable and familiar. For those delving into new systems of evaluation for either type of museum social work and requiring accessible and practical approaches to evaluation, it is helpful to seek out resources devoted to that type of work.^{218 219 220 221 222}

(10) Make a commitment to the problem and to the community

Finally, the last step to engaging in successful and dynamic museum social work is also one of the most vital: commitment. It is one reason why museums have not made the

²¹⁵ "All for ONE."

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ "Guide to Measuring Advocacy," 7-8.

²¹⁸ For ideas on evaluating all types of museum social work, as well as some of the issues involved, see "How the Arts Impact Communities: An introduction to the literature on arts impact studies" by Joshua Guetzkow, 2002.

²¹⁹ For another view on evaluating museum's social (and economic) impacts, see "Demonstrating Impact – 4 Case Studies of Public Art Museums," by Jody Evans, Kerrie Bridson and Joanna Minkiewicz, 2013.

²²⁰ For a provisional social work evaluation example, see "Program Evaluation: Lessons from the Field" in *The New Social Worker* by Vivian R. Bergel and Peggy McFarland.

²²¹ For a comprehensive guide to evaluating conversational museum social work, see Organizational Research Services' "A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy" by Jane Reisman, Anne Gienapp, and Sarah Stachowiak, 2007.

²²² For a conversational social work evaluation example, see "Speaking of Change in Charlotte, North Carolina: How Museums Can Shape Immigrant Receptivity in a Community Navigating Rapid Cultural Change," in *Museums & Social Issues*, October 2015.

advances toward social justice seen in professional social work, but it also offers an opportunity – in combination with the rest of this list – to realize the full potential of museum social work with the most genuine and effective programs achievable.^{223 224 225}

David Fleming summarizes the issue well when he writes, “It is only by implementing a range of programmes and over a period of time that a museum will be able to make a genuine impact. There is little value in doing one-off events or one-off projects. Working towards social justice takes time and effort, which is why it requires commitment, determination and belief.”²²⁶

Other museum scholars reiterate this sentiment, expounding the greater social impact of long-term relationships with partners, sustained engagement with participants, and a continuous commitment to positive social change compared to time-limited work or isolated experiences.^{227 228 229} Making these commitments transforms collaborative projects into genuine collaborations and results in a more sustainable form of museum social work.^{230 231} Of course, financial constraints, transitory communities, and other factors can complicate such long-term commitments, but usership, funding, and broader evidence of positive social change can often serve as indicators of the overall trend toward longevity.

²²³ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 147-48.

²²⁴ Paquet Kinsley, "Engaging with Homeless Adults," 82.

²²⁵ Fleming, "Museums for Social Justice," 80.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 13.

²²⁸ Silverman, *Social Work of Museums*, 147.

²²⁹ "Museums Change Lives," 15.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Duclos-Orsello, "Shared Authority," 127.

In order to make long-term museum social work less burdensome on their institution, some museums may want to implement self-sustaining strategies. Self-sustaining museum social work is programming that continues through the active leadership and oversight of community members and stakeholders, allowing the museum to transition into a support role.²³² An example of this is the public charter high school founded by the Harrison Center for the Arts in Indianapolis. The Harrison Center recognized a community need for quality education and ran the school in their basement until it eventually became a separate, highly performing and self-sustained non-profit.²³³ Planning for self-sustaining strategies enhances the potential for adapting programming to the community's constantly shifting needs outside the constraints of the museum, while simultaneously freeing up resources for new museum social work endeavors.²³⁴

Conclusion

Nightingale and Sandell observed that, although museum social work practices are becoming more accepted and mainstream, there is some evidence showing that the momentum toward social engagement in museums is slowing down or even reversing due to the world's current social, political, and economic environment.²³⁵ The transition to a wholly inclusive, equitable, and socially just museum system has been and will continue to be riddled with adversity, but there is ever diminishing opposition to the change.²³⁶ This

²³² "4 Steps."

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Nightingale and Sandell, "Introduction," 2.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

paper, and the museum social work guide that makes up the bulk of its substance, is just one small step in the long journey toward that important change.

Of course, there could have been fifteen or fifty steps to social justice through museum social work; perhaps sections on engaging youth, making programs fundable, and more should have been included.^{237 238 239} Still, this is a start. By following the ten steps above, museums may expose themselves to new stress and controversy, but they will also find themselves transformed into a respected authority on social issues, positioned alongside an engaged audience, primed to work collectively and innovatively for positive social change. This guide is not all-encompassing, and there will be questions along the way, but it is as Ed Rodley of the Peabody Essex Museum wrote: "Sometimes just wrestling with the big, ugly, seemingly-intractable problems is restorative and necessary...It is more important to stand up and speak up against injustice now than to [wait to] have 'the answer.'"²⁴⁰ Museums may not solve the world's social issues in this lifetime, but, with the help of this guide, they can try.²⁴¹

²³⁷ "5 Ways."

²³⁸ Jameson, Yonci, "How Can Museums and Artists Help Advocate for Social Change?" Walker Art Center, June 5, 2015, accessed December 02, 2015, <http://blogs.walkerart.org/teens/2015/06/05/how-can-museums-and-artists-help-advocate-for-social-change-2/>.

²³⁹ Stocks, "Activist Social Work," 39

²⁴⁰ Rodley, Ed, "Issue: Museums and Social Change," Thinking About Museums, February 28, 2015, accessed March 23, 2015, <https://exhibitdev.wordpress.com/2015/02/28/issue-museums-and-social-change/>.

²⁴¹ For more examples of museum social work programming and ideas for where to start, see the Social Justice Alliance for Museums: Case Studies, <http://sjam.org/case-studies/>.

Appendix

Case Study:

Food Day: Exploring Hunger in Douglas County

About the Event

I conceived of Food Day as an interactive and educational museum social work program focused on hunger and food insecurity in the Douglas County area. It was a primarily conversational program, but there were provisional aspects, as well. Although fairly successful as a single event, Food Day was realized before I devised the 10-step guide to museum social work. There are many lessons that can be pulled from the guide that could have enhanced the program or will provide improvements for any future iterations.

About the Location

I chose the Watkins Museum of History as the site for Food Day for several reasons. First of all, it is located in downtown Lawrence on Massachusetts Street, within walking distance of a significant population of food insecure and/or homeless people. I did not intend to attract only that population to the event, but, in order for a social justice event to be provisional, the need-group must be represented in the audience.

Secondly, the Watkins Museum is an institution of the Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS). The mission statement of the DCHS is as follows: “The Douglas County Historical Society *encourages civic engagement* by supporting the research and interpretation of *county history* through active exhibits and *thought-provoking educational programs*” (italics added). Food Day was an interactive, challenging (socially and

emotionally), educational program that encouraged public participation in a discussion about an issue that has affected Douglas County, both past and present. Therefore, the event fit perfectly within the construct of the DCHS mission statement, making the Watkins Museum an ideal location to host Food Day.

In addition to those important reasons, the Watkins Museum was also a great fit because the museum's director was interested in the event, the staff was willing, and the museum had the space and resources to host the event as planned.

Schedule/Setup

The event started at 1 pm on Saturday, October 24, 2015, and lasted for just over 3 hours. There were multiple activities occurring at any given time. On the second floor, a game I designed and created was available for all ages to play. It was called "The Game of FOOD", and it attempted to put players in hypothetical positions where they might be vulnerable and exposed to food insecurity, personalizing the experience for each person. Also on the second floor was a small photography exhibit I produced with quotes from actual people living in Douglas County and struggling with food insecurity. Next to that were tables for making cornhusk dolls or responding to the talk-back prompt. The prompt asked the question, "How has hunger impacted your life?" Participants could then hang their responses (written or drawn on paper plates) in the stained glass windows in the stairwell.

On the first floor, various speakers rotated throughout the event. First, a short film released for Food Day 2015 was shown shortly after 1 pm. Food for Thought Food for Life lasted about 30 minutes and touched on various aspects of food justice, including food insecurity and food deserts. After the film, Helen Schnoes, Douglas County Food Systems

Coordinator, presented on some of the initiatives the county had been working on to battle food insecurity and work with those who were struggling. The next presenter, a coordinator from a local social justice organization, had to cancel last-minute. Emily Hampton, executive director of Sunrise Project, another community-based social justice organization, was next. She explained what Sunrise Project is, who they work with, and what types of projects/events/activities they undertake. Following that, Kelsey Fortin, a health educator from the University of Kansas, presented on food insecurity in the collegiate realm and what the group KU Fights Hunger was doing to resolve the issue. Finally, Emily Hampton and Crystal Hammerschmidt, Farm to School Coordinator for Lawrence Public Schools, collaborated to demonstrate how to prepare healthy and inexpensive veggie pancakes. They also provided handouts with the recipe and with lists of places to find inexpensive cooking utensils and free food for those who need it.

Throughout the event, refreshments provided by The Merc and My Picture Perfect Party were available downstairs. Picture books provided by the Lawrence Public Library were displayed downstairs where kids and their parents could enjoy them together. Event surveys were located both upstairs and downstairs, and food donations (later donated to Ballard Community Center) were accepted in boxes throughout the building.

Recap: What Worked

Approximately 100 guests participated in Food Day. By my pre-event estimation and the Watkins Museum of History's attendance standards, that makes Food Day a very successful program. Most people migrated throughout the building and spent time both upstairs and downstairs. Approximately 25 people (25% of attendees) played the Game of Food. The game received several positive comments in the participant survey (more details

on the survey below), and the ratio of players who experienced food insecurity in the game was almost exactly the ratio of food insecure people in real life (1 in 6) – a happy coincidence.

The photography exhibit also seemed to be popular, according to the time most people spent there and the survey comments. Downstairs, the food, of course, was a huge hit. In fact, I noticed several people – who may have been experiencing some level of food insecurity – who seemed to be eating as much food as they could while they were at the event. The presenters, too, were a great addition to the program. Each one shared useful information from a unique perspective. The audience, though small and a bit sporadic, brought up excellent questions and engaged with the speakers. The picture books from the Lawrence Public Library were a thoughtful touch, though perhaps underutilized. The museum took in about fifty pounds worth of food during the event to be donated to the Ballard Community Center.

Finally, a particularly significant moment during the event was when one woman started asking questions about the Market Match program presented by Helen Schnoes. She was clearly interested in the program and wanted to apply but was unsure how to go about it. Through conversation with Schnoes and Emily Hampton (who was also very familiar with the program), the woman learned how to apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e. food stamps) and then the Market Match program. The encounter demonstrated, as I had hoped, that Food Day had a significant positive (and provisional) impact on at least one person in the need group being addressed by the event.

Recap: What Didn't Work

There were a few aspects of Food Day that proved less successful. While there is always the hope for higher attendance and greater engagement, those were not the major concerns after the program. First, there was very little participation in the talkback station. Although the responses seemed to have been done thoughtfully, only 7 people completed and hung plates. I think there are several explanations for this. First, the question was intentionally challenging but perhaps too much so. People didn't have something to say right away, so they moved on. Additionally, the completed plates were hung in windows in the stairwell, not immediately visible from the table where the supplies for making the plates were located. Although the stained glass windows made for a lovely backdrop, if people could have seen the final product more readily, they may have been more enticed to participate.

The cornhusk dolls were similarly unsuccessful, although for a different reason. The table and supplies for making them were originally located downstairs with the food and presentations. People weren't participating in the craft because the room was fairly dark and quiet and they likely didn't want to disturb the presenters, so we moved the supplies upstairs near the talkback station. The adjustment solved the problem, but it was late in the program by that point, so only a few children came through to make dolls.

The only other suggestions for any future iterations of Food Day came from some of the presenters and can be found in the "What Contributors Said" section below.

Evaluation Based on 10 Steps

Looking back at the event through the lens of this guide's 10 steps provides ample suggestions for improvement. There were also several constraints on the program that can now be highlighted as barriers to museum social work and support for the 10-step guide.

For instance, I originally conceived of Food Day as part of a long-term approach to food insecurity in Douglas County, where the museum would serve as an occasional food distribution site. However, as a summer/temporary intern at the Watkins Museum, I was not in a position to guarantee any long-term commitment to the issue.

(1) Food Day was a highly conversational program, and I would have liked to include more provisional elements to help balance the attendance between need group members and general public as well as to make more of an immediate impact on the community. When my original conception of food distribution at the Watkins Museum seemed unlikely, I began to shape a different program to address the same issue, and my plans quickly became more conversational in nature.

(2) I did not build lasting relationships before beginning work on Food Day, nor did I reasonably have time to do so as a short-term intern, but I found that this step is extremely valuable. (3) Staff and board members at the Watkins Museum seemed supportive of my ideas for Food Day, but I now realize the importance of having museum leadership guide the transition into museum social work. While the executive director was supportive and encouraging of my work on the event, he was better situated to prolong any relationships built with collaborators, expand the event into a more sustained response to food insecurity, and unite the entire institution under the goal of positive social change.

(4) I attempted to reach out to members of the need group in multiple ways. I invited people to participate in the photography project, also inviting them to visit the completed exhibit at the museum. I asked for help from community organizations that were already working with the need group, and I also spent a few hours talking with people and handing out event flyers at a food distribution site. Despite all of this, I found it difficult

to make meaningful connections with members of the need group on a short-term basis and with a clear focus on an upcoming event. I also attempted to involve members of the need group more directly in the event. My initial idea was to invite several people both inside and recently outside the need group to share their experiences with food insecurity. However, without pre-existing relationships and trust, it was difficult to find volunteers, even with the assistance of community organizations.

(5-8) There were several steps that I didn't spend much time considering while planning Food Day (as I had not yet identified them), but they could have positively impacted the results. While I intended to include historic photos of food insecurity in Douglas County alongside the current photos in the photography exhibit, that plan fell through. I was not particularly familiar with the Watkins Museum collections or how to search them, but I should have expended more effort to reach out to other staff members for help in acquiring photos as well as other collections items that could have enhanced the program. The event was within the bounds of the DCHS mission statement as it addressed a community issue in Douglas County, but I would have also liked to include more historically related elements to tie in the museum's domain. I did, however, attempt to utilize various unique aspects of the museum building, such as the stained glass windows and the original teller's counter. The event itself was somewhat risky, as it was a departure from the museum's typical programs in subject matter and type of engagement with the public, however, I certainly could have taken more risks in planning individual elements of the event. As for transparency, I tried to reveal some hidden stories from a marginalized group through the photography exhibit, but the program would have been even more successful with clearer contributions from members of the need group.

(9) The evaluation of Food Day included several elements: a visitor survey, observations from contributors, and this report. If Food Day becomes part of a more prolonged engagement with food insecurity in Douglas County, more advanced or specialized system of evaluation may need to be considered. For details about the survey and observations from contributors, see below.

(10) As noted above, Food Day was originally imagined as part of a long-term effort toward positive social change in the Watkins Museum's community. As I spearheaded the event as a summer intern, I was not positioned to ensure a commitment from the museum. I do believe, however, that helping the Watkins Museum to engage in museum social work, possibly for the first time, I opened the door for the staff, leadership, and board to initiate an extension of this work. Whether or not it addresses the same issue and need group, a continuation of museum social work will demonstrate commitment to the museum's community.

Participant Survey

As noted above, surveys were located both upstairs and downstairs during the event. Visitors were reminded between presentations to fill out surveys. Upstairs, the surveys were placed near the Game of Food, where the volunteers could remind participants to fill one out before leaving. Unfortunately, even after taking these measures, only 15 surveys were completed by the approximately 100 guests for a 15% response rate.

Despite the low response rate, we can glean a great deal of useful information from the surveys we did receive. Our only option is to assume that this is a reliable sample and the trends would hold at a greater sample size.

The surveys show us that more than half of the survey responders, representing 6 different zip codes, had never before been to the Watkins Museum, and almost all of the attendees were unaware or only somewhat aware of the issue of food insecurity in our community. Food Day at least somewhat affected 100% of the survey responders' understanding of hunger/food insecurity. It also significantly affected their willingness to participate in certain hunger advocacy activities. Finally, 100% of responders said they would like to see the Watkins Museum put on more events focused on social issues in the community, with more than one suggesting more food-related events. Other suggestions included health (2), mental illness, and homelessness and students. The comments from survey responders were all very positive and reflected the attendees' enjoyment, learning, and emotions derived from attending Food Day. The following section details the highlights of the survey results.

Comments/suggestions:

"This is such an important subject. It was eye-opening to see stories so close to home."

"Enjoyed hunger game. Great learning experience."

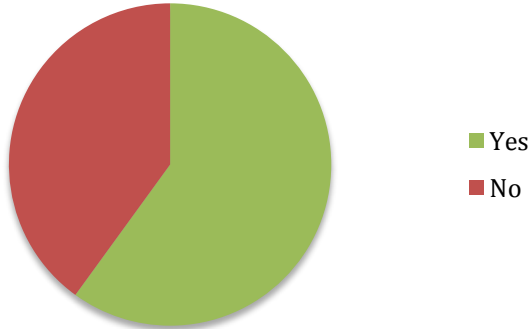
"Great job! I loved the photography exhibit - it made the issue of food insecurity real and personal."

"Amazing event! It was great to hear from a variety of people involved in addressing hunger in different ways. The game was educational and fun! The photos and accompanying stories were very moving. I feel inspired to contribute more."

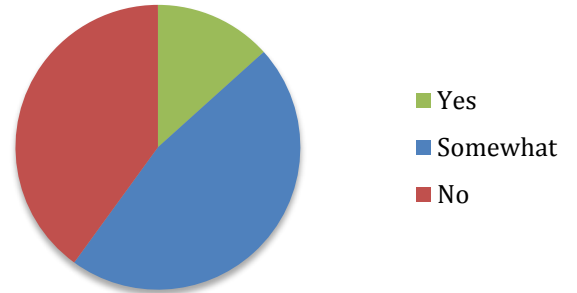
"Awesome event! Really enjoyed the game/photos/speakers."

"Great event! Loved the game."

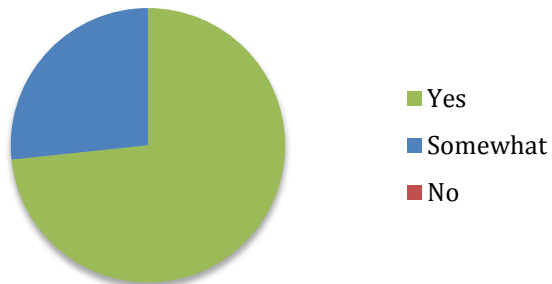
Is this your first time visiting the Watkins Museum?



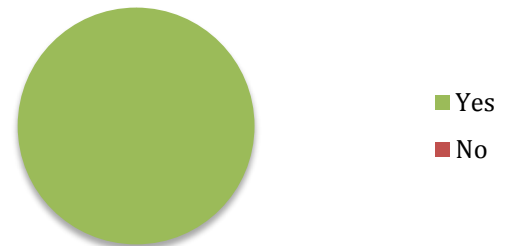
Prior to this event, were you aware of the issue of food insecurity in our area?

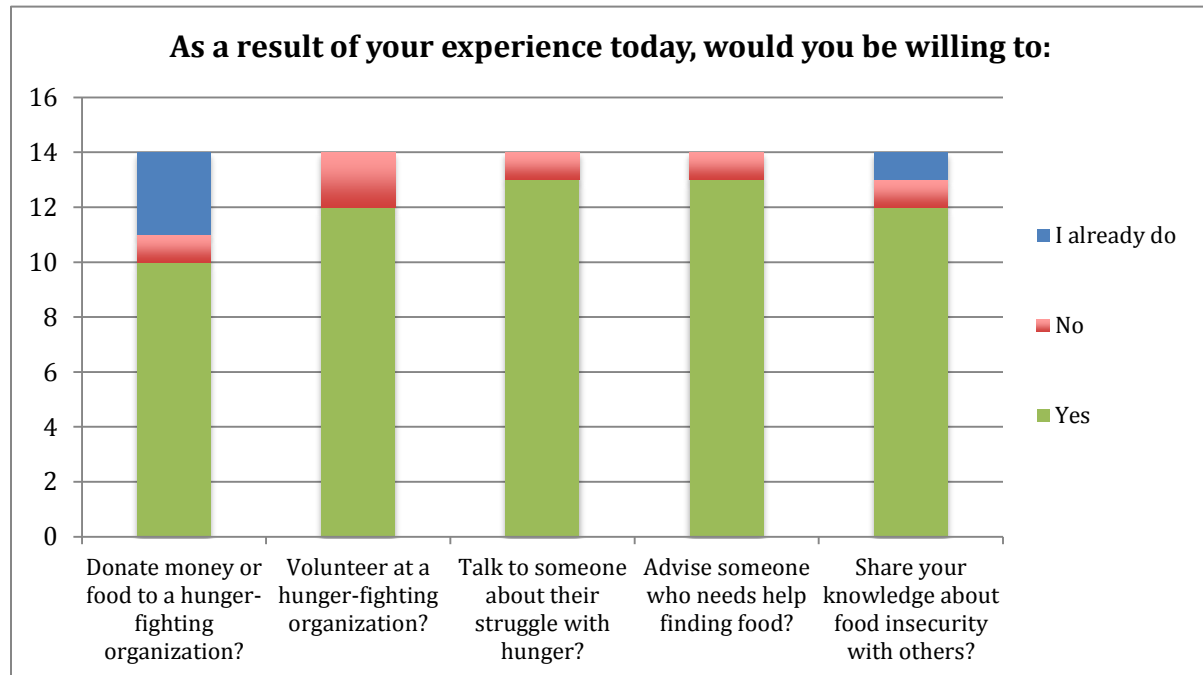


Did this event affect the way you understand hunger/food insecurity?



Would you like to see the Watkins Museum put on more events focusing on social issues in our community?





What the Contributors Said

"I had a wonderful time and the group was so engaged." - Crystal Hammerschmidt

"I thought it was a great program and I like the information that was being shared.

That being said, with the come and go nature of the event, I think it was a bit distracting at times. I think it would've maybe been helpful to have a panel discussion with all of the groups there to say a small piece about their program with a few guiding questions and then open it up for discussion. This could give both the audience and the members on the panel a chance to discuss and collaborate on this issue. Overall great success." - Kelsey Fortin

"I thought it was a really fun event and had some great content! I think it could really continue to grow. The only suggestions I have: perhaps publicize it a little better, especially to low-income communities, and have someone on site to help get people signed up for SNAP benefits." - Emily Hampton

"You did a great job creating a fun program about a tough subject." - Abby Magariel

"With the quality and variety of information being shared, from the city and county level to the organization level, the program deserved twice the attendance it received." - Steve Nowak

Conclusion

All in all, Food Day at the Watkins Museum was a success. It combined provisional aspects with what was otherwise a mostly conversational program. The expenditures were low, attendance was higher than expected, and the survey responses and contributor feedback were almost entirely positive. With a few adjustments made accordance with the 10 steps in this guide, Food Day could become a recurring program for the Watkins Museum, bringing in new visitors, helping to sustain relationships between the museum and collaborators/need group members, and fulfilling the desires of the community for more social justice focused programming.

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