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# Museums: An incubator for sustainable social development and environmental protection

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## Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on the socio-cultural impact of museums on sustainable regional development. Museums play a significant role within socio-cultural and environmental sustainability contexts. Specifically, they foster a collective sense of place, collective memory, social integration, education and environmental awareness. They help sustain cities as dynamic socio-cultural centers, acting as “instruments” for cities in the revitalization process. In addition, they encourage cohesiveness among different sectors of society, tolerance, democracy, and economic growth. The authors recommend that governmental and non-governmental institutions include cultural heritage and museums as key factors in their future priorities in pursuing sustainable development at local, regional, and national levels.

**Keywords:** Museum, Social Sustainable Development, Environmental Protection, Cultural Heritage

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## 1. Introduction

This study provides overview of the important impacts of museum on regional sustainable development. It contains deep analysis and wide spectrum scanning of major scholarly papers, books, and professional reports. In recent years, cultural heritage has been acknowledged as an increasingly important factor in a country's economy and society because of its major role encompassing all levels and aspects of social life and the economic benefits deriving from its management. Conserving cultural heritage represents an extraordinarily effective way to preserve the link with a nation's history, culture and traditions by safeguarding specific structures, sites, objects and settings significant to a particular development or historic event.

Cultural heritage was included in the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda, and in multiple occasions in recent years, cultural heritage was recognized by the UN as a successful driver and enabler of sustainable development. For example, UN resolution N.66/208, "Culture and Development", recognized cultural heritage as an important factor for social inclusion and social integration and recognized its potential as a vector for modernization and innovations in economic and social life (United Nations, 2014).

In 2012, the Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, "The Future We Want", also included significant references to culture, affirming that the welfare of communities depends on their cultural heritage. It maintains that cultural conservation directly contributes to the economic, social and environmental sustainable development of societies (United Nations, 2012).

The "Declaration placing culture at the heart of sustainable development policies" adopted on May 2013 at the UNESCO Hangzhou International Congress, and reprised in UN resolution N. 68/223, "Culture and Sustainable Development", presents evidence of the successful contributions of culture in furthering strategies and programs aimed at inclusive and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2013).

In particular, the resolution emphasized the importance of three-dimensional support of culture—including cultural heritage as part of it—to the realization of national development objectives and internationally approved development goals, including the MDGs. Such support has been shown to stimulate inclusive economic, social and environmental development.

In his study on "The contribution of culture to Europe 2020: Some key issues", Throsby (2011) indicates that culture is crucial to growth and development. He summarized the role of culture in four aspects of growth that the European strategy identifies: smart growth, sustainable growth, inclusive growth, and measurable growth. He argues that the role of the arts and culture has a direct bearing on each of these aspects (Throsby, 2011):

- Smart growth: The role of cultural industries in the creative economy
- Sustainable growth: Linking economic, environmental and cultural sustainability
- Inclusive growth: Ramifications of cultural policy on education, diversity, and social cohesion
- Measurable growth: Monitoring and evaluating progress

Furthermore, as societal views of cultural heritage evolve, it is vital that an open and ongoing dialogue be conducted on various interpretations and what they represent. Promoting a dynamic cultural heritage

acknowledges that society is characterized by a diverse and multifaceted history, and that the understanding of that history evolves as citizens and specialists alike learn more about the past and about human nature. This understanding creates a larger perspective on the development of their society and enriches people's lives. Such understanding belongs to everyone and should be seen as a public asset that can contribute to development and renewal, particularly if citizens remain involved in preserving, studying, and developing cultural heritage.

Finally, in addition to providing an extremely valuable source of creativity and a unique interactive experience, museums play a significant factor in attracting tourists to an area and therefore helping the local economy. Yet despite these myriad benefits, governmental financial support is often inadequate in the face of the important multi-dimensional role museums play.

The study recommends that governments support museums with appropriate subsidies. Keeping museums well-funded not only leads to sustainable development in the fields of history and art, it also enables a vital arena and active engine for implementing cultural policies, objectives, and activities on local, regional, and national levels.

## **2. Museums: From preserver of objects to incubator of social development and environmental protection**

Our analysis of the impact of museums on sustainable development involves many factors, including social sustainable themes and environmental protection efforts. We argue that museums play the role of an incubator within the sustainability context.

The mission of museums, including their civic and social responsibilities and modes of engagement with communities, are constantly shifting in response to economic and social imperatives. To stay relevant, museums must remain responsive to pressing issues such as the recent influx of immigrants of vastly diverse cultures immigrating to Europe, refugee social and cultural integration, employment, and social justice. Museums can use their programs to demonstrate social and cultural values to their local communities. They also have a vital role in raising consciousness about the importance of protecting nature and preserving the natural environment. At their best, museums become a place where the past and the future live side by side as museums engage with the issues of the day.

This research examines the impact of museums on social sustainable development and environment protection in their surrounding regions. These impacts might be most visible in the direct economic impact of cultural or heritage tourism, but we will also show the indirect social and environmental values added.

## **3. Research questions**

This paper examines the following issues:

1. What is the social development impact of museum activities, and what are its multiplier effects?
2. What kind of environmental protection impact do the activities of museums have on regional sustainable development?

#### **4. Methodology**

This study is based on qualitative research methodology. The research comprises text analysis, literature review, and the personal experiences of researchers who are academic and practical experts in sustainable development, cultural heritage policies and strategies, social development and environment protection.

This paper also reviews case studies that analyze the social impact of a number of museums using examples of environmental awareness and public participation in the surrounding zone as a result of museum activities. In addition, the authors reviewed academic and organizational reports on museums' indirect social and environmental impact. Relevant planning and sustainable development theories were also examined to illustrate how museums foster sustainable social development.

#### **5. Previous studies**

Museums are often under pressure to streamline their operations and secure adequate funding to secure their continued existence. Many studies and technical reports offer a range of strategies, approaches, and insights to help museums operate efficiently, effectively and sustainably. The studies also address the role of museums in sustainability, social cohesion, peace, cultural bridging, tolerance, leadership, planning and greening initiatives.

Table 1 and 2 show synopses of several of the scholarly writings studied for this paper. The tables indicate that museums can play an important role in regional renewal and regeneration. Previous works discuss the museum as a catalyst for social and environmental education and change and sustainable development through various case studies, and they show the variety of impacts museums have had in these areas. The resulting picture is that pro-active museums, working with local professional institutions and with forward-thinking leaders who have an effective vision and sustainable strategies, can represent a valuable example of sustainable development, help initiate social and economic renewal, and help change public opinion and policy on vital issues such as climate change.

#### **6. Conceptual framework**

Successful museums are deeply involved and engaged in their communities, including the surrounding development activities. Museums that are isolated from their surroundings suffer from low visitation due to their disconnection from other attractions and services.

**Table 1.** Previous Studies: social perspectives

Theme	Author, Country	Year, Publisher	Results Summary
Inclusiveness value	Scott, C.A., & Soren, B.J.; Australia and Canada	2009, Taylor & Francis	<p>The authors attempt to figure out how one would describe museum value from sector, community and individual perspectives by focusing on three questions:</p> <p><i>If museums did not exist, what would our society miss?</i></p> <p>Responses: 'Collective memory', 'a place to record, share and celebrate', 'continuity' and 'a sense of place'</p> <p><i>What kind of evidence indicates the value of museums to communities?</i></p> <p>Responses included the 'presence of visitors', as well as the 'willingness of local citizens to serve on Boards of Trustees'. Others included the recognition of museums as 'a place of solace and reflection in times of angst' and the role of the museum as 'the only place preserving the community's story in small communities'</p> <p><i>What kind of evidence indicates the value of museums to individuals?</i></p> <p>'Visitation', 'membership renewals' and 'transferring understandings to a new context', as well as the passionate commitment of the talented people who work in them (Scott and Soren, 2009).</p>
Urban Renewal	Lazzeretti, L., & Capone, F.; Italy	2015, Taylor & Francis	<p>The paper aims to contribute to the debate on urban renewal focusing on the resurgence of the societal function of cultural heritage. It focuses on a small scientific museum, the Museum of Natural History in Florence, which organizes cultural events in the historic city centre as a way to revitalize scientific knowledge and education in the city and surrounding region in conjunction with other, mostly local institutional actors (Lazzeretti and Capone, 2015).</p>
Cultural Policies	Stylianou-Lambert, T., Boukas, N., & Christodoulou-Yerali, M.; Cyprus	2014, Taylor & Francis	<p>This paper explores how museums affect cultural sustainability and cultural policy. The study examines the main players involved (from individuals to the national government), the various types of museums, and the forces that influence how museums are founded and managed, including tourism, politics, and national identity. It</p>

Theme	Author, Country	Year, Publisher	Results Summary
			offers a model for the sustainable development of museums and a process for designing appropriate cultural policies with cultural sustainability in mind (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014).
Community Development	Kelly, L.; Australia	2006, INTERCOM Conference, Taipei	To stay relevant to communities as social and economic imperatives evolve, museums must constantly adapt their modes of civic and social engagement. They must be responsive to pressing issues such as population change, social justice, Indigenous rights, and the environment. Museums and programs should be able to demonstrate their value and impact within their communities on an ongoing basis to continue to attract adequate support and funding (Kelly, 2006).
Social Economics	Manneby, H; Sweden	ICOM, 2010	As various regions compete to attract businesses and people by offering a higher quality of life in terms of work, affordable housing, leisure, and culture, investments in culture have become an increasingly prominent factor in community development. Thus politicians have come to believe in recent years that museum activities and projects play an increasingly influential role in the future growth of communities. The article shows the benefits of museums in terms of social outcomes as well as financial revenues (Manneby, 2010).
Museums encourage integration (link the past with the future)	Uriely, N; Israel	2005, Elsevier	This author suggests a new model using postmodernist theory to address the past and future of the tourist experience, transforming the focus from objective to subjective experience and complementary interpretations (Uriely, 2005).
Creativity	Hall, S.P.; UK	2000, SAGE	The researcher argues that there is a regional economic development benefit to developing creative cultural industries, including creative museums (Hall, 2000).
	Page, S.J.; UK	1993, Elsevier	This study examines how the attractive redesign of the Museum of Wellington has had a crucial redevelopment effect on the city's waterfront and on the promotion of heritage tourism in the Capital of New Zealand (Page, 1993).

	Gross, M.J., & Brown, G.; Australia	2006, Elsevier	Exploratory factor analysis was used to investigate the dimensionality of scales designed to measure tourists' involvement in tourism experiences, place attachment, and elements of lifestyle tourism. A reliable set of scales was developed, with relatively higher-dimension levels such as attractions, food and wine, and self-expression, and relatively lower levels such as place attachment and centrality (Gross and Brown, 2006).
Inclusiveness	Andrei, R., & Ruxandra, P.; Romania	2011, Universitaria Press Craiova	The "symbol museum" has arisen due to the growth of cultural influence on modern society combined with the increasing role of tourism in the economic life of cities. Good practices and more effective marketing based on the visitor's point of view can help maintain museums' competitive advantage (Andrei and Ruxandra, 2011).
	Harfst, J.; Austria	2015, Elsevier	This article discusses using cultural heritage and museums as a tool to reconstruct the negative image of declining regions such as post-mining areas of Central Europe, opening new opportunities for sustainable development (Harfst, 2015).
	Ginsburgh, V.A., & Throsby, D.; UK and Australia	2004, Elsevier	This paper discussing the new trends in the museum world such as superstar museums, special events and exhibitions in relation to demand and supply aspects (Ginsburgh and Throsby, 2004).
Visitors motivation and behavior patters	Jansen-Verbeke, M., & Van Rekom, J.; Netherlands	1996, Pergamon	The motivation and behavior patterns of museum visitors offer interesting clues about developing attractive urban tourism products (Jansen-Verbeke and Van Rekom, 1996).
Museum behavior	Ginsburgh, V.A., & Throsby, D.; UK and Australia	2006, Elsevier	The authors discuss different models related to both the neoclassical approach and a representative model. They discuss various institutional models of financing museum costs (Ginsburgh and Throsby, 2006).
Education	Geladaki, S., & Papadimitriou, G.; Greece	2014, Elsevier	Museums can act as a space of education, responding to student's needs, including students undertaking graduate studies in departments of education or those who attend primary or secondary school (Geladaki and Papadimitriou, 2014).



**Table 2.** Previous Studies: environmental perspectives

Theme	Author, Country	Year, Publisher	Results Summary
Climate Change	Hebda, R.J.; USA	2007, Taylor & Francis	This paper addresses museums' role in helping people make informed decisions about the importance of protecting nature. The author shows that traditionally, museums have been a place "where the past lives", full of historic artifacts, plant and animal specimens, and exhibits about famous events, cultures, and people. But there is an incredible opportunity for museums to become more socially relevant by engaging with the great issues of the day. By focusing on climate change, museums can become a vital space in which to engage meaningfully with one of the most important challenges of our time (Hebda, 2007).
Environment Sustainability	Kendall, G.; UK	2013, FOE	There is near-total consensus in the scientific community that global temperatures are rising as a result of human activity, specifically our over-reliance on fossil fuels. Other environmental factors, such as intensive farming practices, population growth, and pollution, also degrade natural habitats and diminish biodiversity. Unfortunately, because the issues are so hard to digest and because unscrupulous actors are constantly sowing disinformation and confusion, such issues are often met with apathy, despair, or even skepticism by the public. Museums should be encouraged to play a greater role in influencing public opinion and political leaders on these issues (Kendall, 2013).

Sustainable development benefits may be generated by the clustering of reinforcing activities and overlapping markets. The benefits result from complementary interaction among the three pillars of sustainability: economic development, social development, and environment protection. Sustainable development is aided by cost savings or revenue gains that result from the cohesive forces among co-located regional development activities.

Museum can be considered as aspects of a 'cultural cluster', reflecting groupings of activities that are dependent on these sustainable development principles. Moreover, museums can foster public consciousness of the needs and impacts of human life. Achieving a viable future globally will require a strengthening of local communities in ways that encourage reflection, dialogue and action - a role that museums have the potential to perform, even though it's not their traditional function.

Museums bring together relevant information about cultural objects as well as deeper, symbolic experiences of those objects that have contemporary resonance. Bridging the gap between information and personal experience will be crucial for securing a sustainable future. Drawing on the past, fully engaging the



reality of the present and imagining options for the future (on both individual and collective levels) is a tall order.

Yet museums have collections and insights that can provide access points to the experiences and wisdom of the past; objects that can help us to focus on contemporary issues; and spaces that can bring people together to imagine and work toward an acceptable future. Such a vision challenges museums to rethink many of our core assumptions about our role(s), the values we support, how we communicate and how we assess our impact. The following conceptual maps (as shown in Figure 1) show how museums can work as regional development engines.

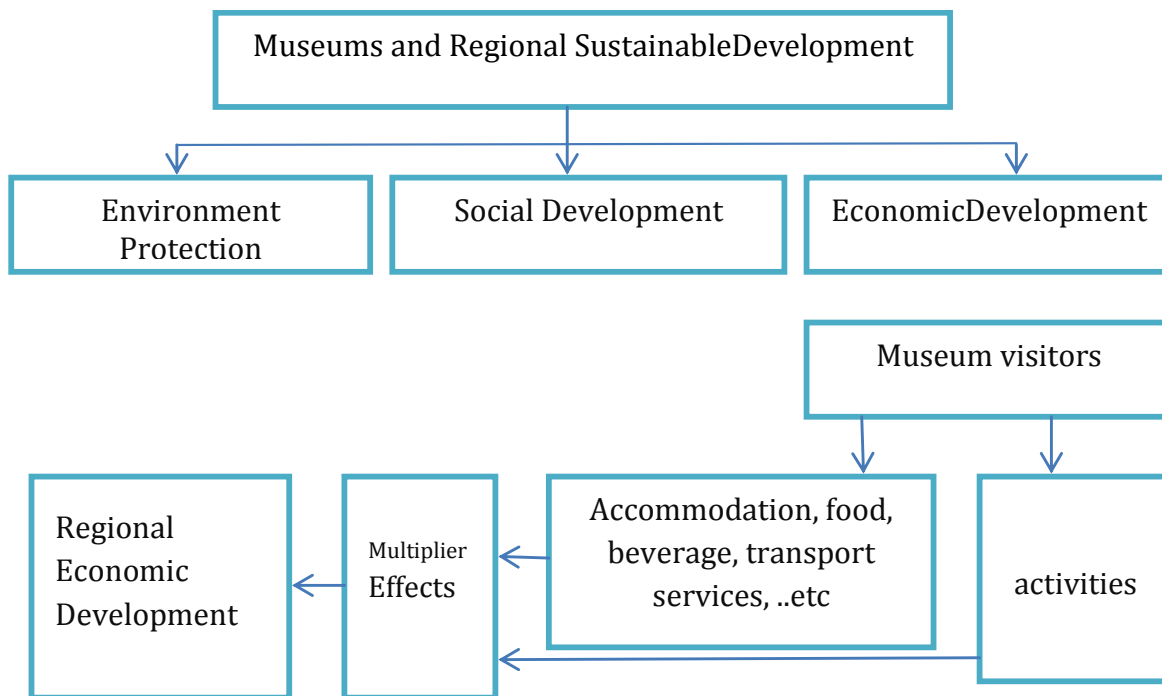
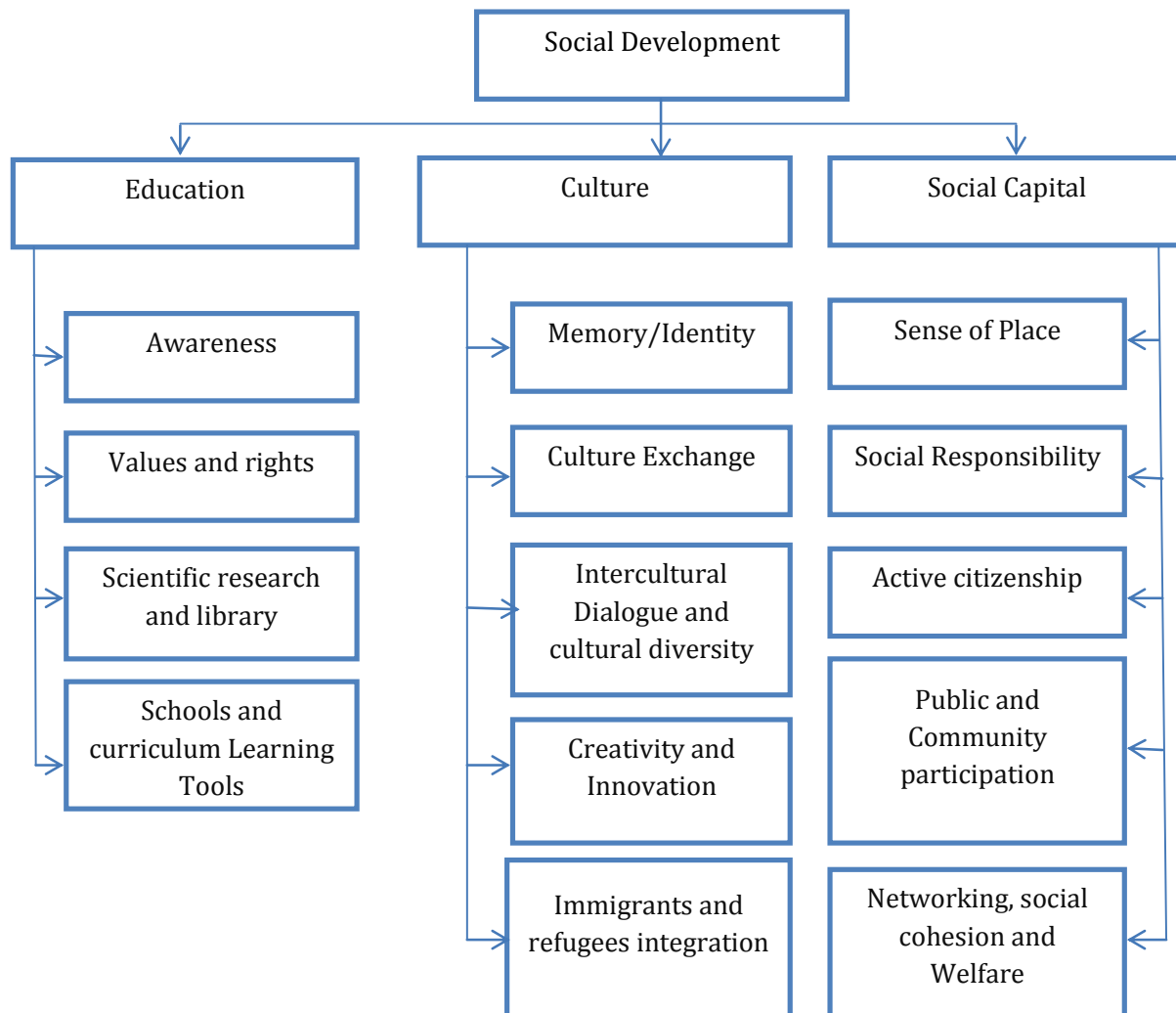


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### 7. Social sustainability

Museums can be far more than static collections of artifacts; they can act as agents of societal evolution, from the individual level to the level of social change. At their best, they help create cohesive communities and reflect the culture, history, and identity of all surrounding citizens.

To live up to their potential, they must engage their audiences both by creatively interacting with them in the museum itself and by reaching out to new groups, including those currently underrepresented in the museum. Their cultural and social value is greatest when they cultivate an atmosphere that fosters lifelong learning and the creation of new knowledge, nurturing creativity and innovation.

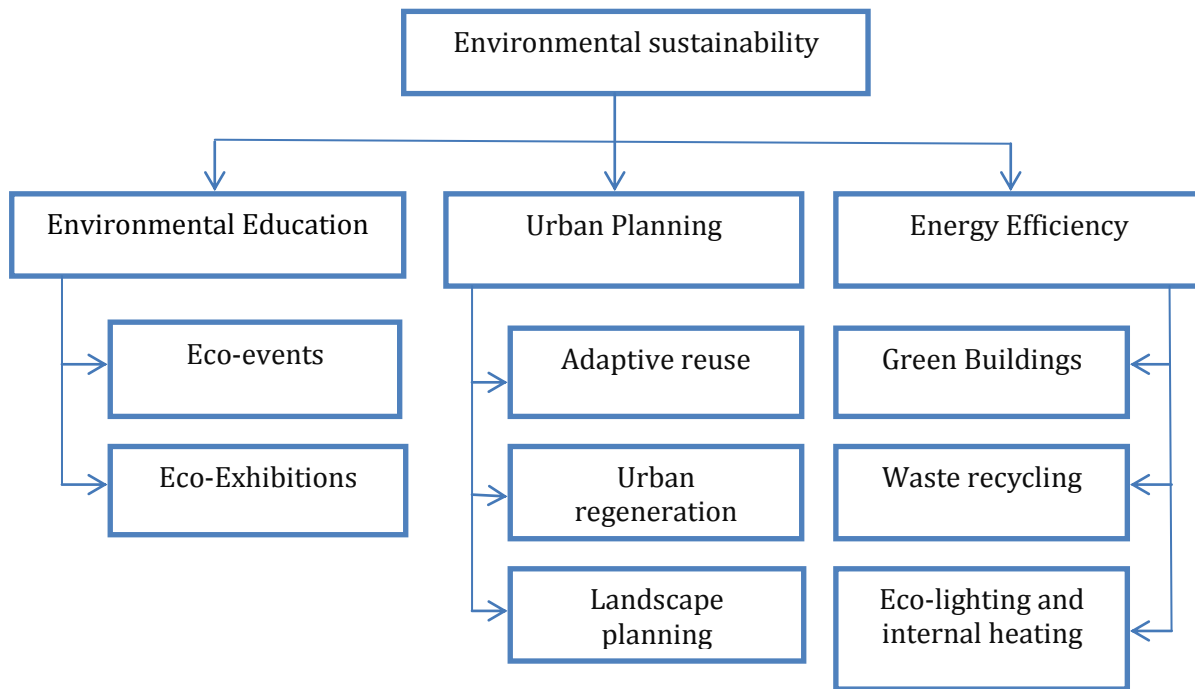


**Figure 2.** Social development framework

In addition, museums can create a sense of collective memory as well as a vision for the future and act as a space for thought, dialogue, and discussion about present realities and new ways to solve difficult, intractable problems. The social development framework demonstrates the importance of museums in creating social capital, integrating refugees from different cultures, creating sense of place and consolidating cultural identity.

## 8. Environmental protection

Humans and their cultures, values, and ecosystems are living, evolving, interdependent systems. Conservation and sustainable development go hand-in-hand to help these systems grow and thrive, and museums can serve as public learning spaces to ensure a brighter future by promoting such concepts as energy efficiency, green urban planning initiatives, and environmental education.



**Figure 3.** Environmental protection conceptual framework

## 9. Analysis and results

### 9.1. Sustainable social development

Museum programs create a vibrant hub to address their communities’ interests and concerns through a variety of inclusive, interactive, and collaborative formats that encourage community members to be active participants. Listed below are several benefits of these programs in the realm of social development.

#### 9.1.1. Museums build social capital

Robert D. Putnam, who wrote about social capital in American society in his book *Bowling Alone*, defines social capital as “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam; 2001). He describes two main forms of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding refers to further tightening the bonds of similar groups, such as family members and those with common interests or cultures. Bridging involves bringing different groups together that might not typically interact.

In *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu (2001) distinguishes between three types of capital: (1) Economic capital, defined as command over economic resources such as cash and assets. (2) Social capital, which Bourdieu described as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”

(Bourdieu, 2001). (3) Cultural capital, defined as knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that give a person higher status in society. Parents provide their children with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in a given social and educational system.

Museums and their programs can serve to build and strengthen social capital by bringing people with common interests together (bonding), as well as by reaching out to those who may otherwise have felt alienated from the larger community (bridging). They provide an optimal space to design, for example, a program to bridge children of two groups engaged in social or cultural differences such as refugees' children and indigenous Swedish children.

In short, museums offer a platform for strengthening existing relationships and a space for building new ones, both of which help build social capital. Increased social capital can lead to wiser, healthier, wealthier, more connected, and more socially sustainable communities (Putnam; 2001).

### *9.1.2. Museums offer a sense of place and inclusiveness*

Museums are places where children can discover who they are, explore their world, and find their place in it without judgment or fear. They are places where families can go to deepen their connection to each other and their communities. They help communities stay vibrant and resilient even as they welcome visitors and newcomers who wish to understand what makes this particular place unique.

Being grounded in a sense of place helps museums maintain their role as a commons or crossroads where the various threads of the region intersect and form a coherent whole, which can heighten a sense of rootedness and belonging. It is ever-evolving even as it preserves the past and a sense of meaning over time, inviting natives and visitors alike to learn, ponder, and connect.

### *9.1.3. Museums encourage social integration and participation*

Museums have an important role to play in connecting communities as well as integrating refugees into their new environment. They offer visitors an opportunity to see and to listen to refugees' personal stories and experiences in their own words and through unique tours and exhibitions. These activities aim to engage refugees in their new communities and help break down cultural misconceptions and challenge prejudices. New narratives can be learned by all along with a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of historical actors through time. Museums thus serve vital roles as messengers of peace and intercultural understanding.

### *9.1.4. Museums foster creativity*

As social institutions, museums are expected not only to preserve collections of relics and art pieces but also to engage creatively with visitors and the wider community. Hosting everything from groundbreaking exhibits to art classes to political and social dialogues, museums serve as living platforms for innovation and creativity for the entire community.

### *9.1.5. Museums can serve as educational institutions*

In an increasingly globalized yet often disturbingly xenophobic world, museums have become vital educational institutions that have the potential to profoundly impact the popular discourse. Reading about other cultures and faiths can be educational, but museums offer an interactive experience that cannot be replicated by a book. Walking among the cooking pots, intricate artwork, and hand-written letters of people far removed from us in space and time provides an immediacy that can humanize distant cultures and make them startlingly real. Museums can also host art, history, cultural, and language classes to further enlighten their communities.

### *9.1.6. Museum function as a hub for democracy and social resilience*

At their best, museums champion diversity and pluralism, serve as a hub for the exchange of ideas, and provide tools for effective communication. By humanizing distant cultures and nearby neighbors, by revealing all humans as similar in so many ways, from our common love of children to our common fears and struggles with our health, with aging, with making a living, an informed and empowered electorate can find more intelligent and compassionate ways to deal with both domestic and foreign policies.

## 9.2. Sustainable environmental development

Three aspects of most museums' missions can be related to environmental sustainability: public education, public service, and research. Thus sustainability and green design can be thought of as a natural extension of museum activities and goals, and more and more museums are making sustainability a key part of their identity and another way to support their communities.

Some 'green' museums integrate sustainable architecture and technology into their building design and maintenance grid (from heating and cooling to lighting and plumbing) and/or develop exhibitions, classes, events, and other programs to educate the public about 'green' design and other relevant topics. By educating about as well as modeling 'green' development, they can play an important role in raising consciousness about the human impact on the natural world and how sustainable development can mitigate those impacts. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of sustainability in local communities and around the world. Since this involves adaptation at a cultural level, including changing long-held beliefs and behavior, a cultural institution is in an excellent position to help foster that change.

## **10. Conclusion**

### 10.1. Social Sustainability

Museums have always contributed to society in numerous ways, perhaps especially by helping to create a sense of place as well as a sense of common humanity. They engage with local communities and actively develop new connections with previously underrepresented audiences. Museums can increase social

sustainability by deepening and diversifying societal relationships, aiming to reflect the diversity of society in all they do. They can be dynamic learning hubs responsive to people's interests and needs, not just destination attractions. In this way they rebuild depleted stocks of human and social capital through interactive, community-led activities that strengthen society and help create sustainable communities where people are excited to live and interact.

One of the keys to long-term sustainability is becoming more socially responsible. Social responsibility has been described as efforts to improve society and undo harm where harm has been done. Museums can play a critical role in moving the communities they serve towards a more sustainable future by modeling fair labor practices and buying ethically produced goods, from local tomatoes in the cafeteria to recycled pens and fair-trade bags in the gift shop.

Most importantly, museums can teach citizens about the pressing issues of the day and host dialogues, discussions, panels, and classes to foster a more tolerant, educated, and engaged voting public so that citizens can use their collective minds and power to make positive change.

## 10.2. Environmental sustainability

Environment protection has become a natural extension of the role of museums in many European countries. It would be difficult to safeguard human society without regard to environmental protection. Museums cannot claim to serve the best interests of future generations if they have a negative impact on the environment and do not participate in global and regional efforts to educate the public and preserve the natural world.

Climate change is currently the most urgent aspect of sustainability, and the most immediate way to address climate change is to reduce energy consumption. Museums should learn how to maintain conditions for collection preservation without excessive dependence on energy. One method is to regulate heat and humidity by controlling natural ventilation and improving the insulation of museum buildings. It won't always be easy to forego air-conditioned museum environments, and it can be expensive to retrofit buildings with newer technologies. Something even large museums can ill-afford something that may not even be necessary for the majority of collections. It might be helpful for lenders, funders and support organizations to review collection-care standards and the ways they are interpreted and applied. (For example, reducing energy use by improving and better managing the building is generally better and cheaper than installing wind turbines or solar panels to generate more energy.)

Reducing energy use is not only good for the environment; it saves money that can be used for other things and models 'green' design for the community at large. These benefits might outweigh any potential deterioration in the condition of the objects.

In addition to energy, museums will want to reduce waste and consider the environmental impact of other resources that they consume, such as exhibition and building materials, water and paper. There are several sources of 'green' office supplies, and some manufacturers of office furniture are working to minimize their environmental impact. Museums could work together on their procurement and use their joint buying power

to persuade manufacturers of museum-specific products and contractors to be more environmentally friendly.

Museums provide learning opportunities aiming at protecting the environment and disseminating knowledge about climate change and other pressing ecological issues, thus providing important social and educational benefits. Being sustainable is not about stopping our lives or our progress; it's about being more thoughtful and more creative in what we do, and museums are perfect places to foster this culture of consciousness and creativity.

## 11. Recommendations and policy implications

Political representatives and interested professionals in the field of cultural heritage and tourism as well as education venues should initiate a discussion on the impacts of museums on their regions to define the function of the museum: What is it trying to do? To professionals and funders, the conservation and documentation of, and research into, the collection are everything. For others, public education and maximizing access may be key objectives. Generally, any consideration of how objectives are to be met requires some knowledge of (1) the nature and measurement of museum output and (2) the nature of the cost function.

According to the study's analysis and discussion, there are a several special features of museum output that deserve mention. First, most museums offer a diversified output that may change over time. Second, museums conserve their current stock of heritage not only for the present but also for future generations who do not exist yet and therefore cannot be 'counted' or 'measured' in traditional ways. Third, the visitor experience encompasses a wide variety of elements, from artwork and architecture to parking, eating, and shopping at the gift shop. How these elements are combined can have a large impact on visitor enjoyment.

Innovations, of both a technological and non-technological character, are constantly impinging on museum operations, which inevitably has an impact on visitor numbers. Government and municipality regulations and funding are also major players in shaping a given museum's future and durability. There are two main strands of policy concerns related to developing and enhancing the mission of museums:

1. The role of public funding of the museum
2. The regulatory role of government

As cuts to cultural departments and municipalities become tangible, there is every possibility that some museum services may be shut down or some collections may have to be sold. Some museums may not survive at all, particularly local museums that often suffer most from funding cuts. The cost of building maintenance and salaries can be high, leaving little left over to make collections and exhibitions open to the public, to whom they purportedly belong.

Recent research shows that the public has a strong and growing attachment to museums, which occupy a unique place in the public imagination. As museums take on more civically-engaged missions, their value to



society increases further, and so does the public perception of their place in society. Museums are trusted by the public, in stark contrast to the common suspicion of the spin and bias of other public institutions.

A sustainable development model can be valuable to policymakers when drafting cultural policies related to museums. Cultural policymakers can encourage museums to consider all the parameters of sustainable development discussed in this research.

Every region's museum scene is composed of a complex system of stakeholders, priorities, and political forces, which determines the scope of the needed governmental support and funding. But the majority of economic analyses show that the contribution of museums to the economy is at risk. Every SEK (Swedish Krona) invested in culture produces two SEK. Thus withdrawing funding is a net economic loss, as it fails to attract tourists and their spending while at the same time endangering an institution that can provide key educational opportunities as well as a sense of identity and place in difficult times.

The study recommends the following:

1. Maintaining and increasing government funding is essential for museums' development and capital improvement; however, it is important also to take actions in terms of institutional reform within the museum sector, which can lead to improving funding status from non-government resources. Museums can undertake various organizational reforms aimed at encouraging donations and minimizing operational costs.
2. Government funding is considered an indispensable factor in maintaining and upgrading museums.
3. Government policies should aim at encouraging philanthropy by offering tax relief and incentives for donating to cultural entities such as museums.

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