



Hosted by the
Italian National Commission for UNESCO



Expert Meeting on Migration Museums

23-25 October 2006 – Rome, Italy

*If you don't know where you're from,
you don't know where you're going.*

Turkish saying

*Etre vivant, c'est être fait de mémoire. Si un homme
n'est pas fait de mémoire, il n'est fait de rien.*

Philip Roth, Etats-Unis

Final Report

From 23 to 25 October 2006, the first Expert Meeting on Migration Museums, co-organized by the Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit (PCI Unit) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Migration Programme of UNESCO, was held at the Italian National Commission for UNESCO, in Rome, Italy. The objective of the meeting was to exchange information on the role of migration museums in promoting migrant integration policies and cultural diversity.

Facilitate migrant integration and cultural diversity

IOM and UNESCO conceived an International Expert Meeting on Migration Museums to recognise that:

- There is an urgent need to give migrants and second generation migrants a voice, in order to foster cultural diversity as one of the basic principles of integration policies
- Migration museums offer a venue to facilitate cultural dialogue and cultural transmission between generations
- These institutions can contribute to peaceful social cohesion – by showing the migrants' contributions to their host societies, and by enabling them to feel an integral part of the host country
- Heritage sites (*lieux de mémoire*) can tell individual and communal stories of people on the move, in particular explaining the reasons for refugees or forced migrants to leave their country and as such developing empathy among the host population
- Providing information on the history of migration can also help in deconstructing stereotypes on immigration
- Listening to their parents' stories and discovering the wealth of their cultures of origin can help second generations of migrants to increase self-esteem and improve the way they find a place in society
- Migration museums may contribute to migrant integration and to cultural diversity in the host countries, for all the reasons mentioned above.

During the meeting, the participants also highlighted the political and social role of migration museums in providing better information for government policies on issues of migration and integration.

Finally, the many migration museums currently developed in Europe may be interested in exchanges with their neighbour countries and in the experiences of 'pioneer' institutions on other continents.

Fostering international exchanges

The objectives of this expert meeting were to:

- Facilitate sharing of experiences, good practices, contents and resources among countries which have developed migration museums
- Identify common challenges and potential responses
- Contribute to the creation of an international network of expertise.

The following outcomes were expected from this encounter:

- The various migration museums are aware of the existence, the works, the contents and the resources developed by their counterparts abroad
- Participants take advantage of other countries' lessons learned and good practices on common challenges
- A set of papers on the subject of migration memory projects and migration museums on the basis of the experts' contributions is published in the *UNESCO International Museum Journal* and in the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*
- A network of expertise is built that will facilitate sharing of contents and good practices after the meeting, and possibly be extended to the museums in so-called countries of origin of migration
- Collaboration and synergies are enhanced between the participants and institutions represented on common challenges, e.g. cultural dialogue and migrant memory or the role of the museum in social integration policies.

International participation

The meeting gathered more than 30 experts, including the directors of 15 national migration museums or related cultural institutions, coming from 13 countries, together with representatives of international organizations, namely:

1. The Immigration Museum, Australia
2. Memorial do Imigrante, Brazil
3. The Danish Immigration Museum, Denmark
4. La Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, France
5. DOMiT (Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland e.V.), Germany
6. The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Israel
7. Altretalie, Popolazioni e culture d'origine italiana nel mondo, Fondazione Agnelli, Italy
8. The House for Cultural Dialogue, The Netherlands
9. Museu da Emigração e das Comunidades, Portugal
10. MhiC (Museo de Historia de la Inmigración de Cataluña), Spain
11. The Immigrant Institute, Sweden
12. The Multicultural Centre, Sweden
13. The National Museums of World Culture, Sweden
14. Migrations Museum, Switzerland
15. 19 Princelet Street, United Kingdom
16. IOM Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit, Italy, co-organizer of the event
17. UNESCO International Migration Section, France, co-organizer of the event
UNESCO MUSEUM International, France
The Italian Commission for UNESCO who kindly hosted the event
18. The International Council of Museums (ICOM).

While they could not participate in this first expert meeting, three additional countries and institutions indicated their wish to join a network of migration museums, namely:

19. Pier 21, Canada
20. Cobh Heritage Centre, Ireland
21. Ellis Island Museum, United States of America.

Many more shows of interest were received from institutions all over the world, including Argentina, Indonesia, South Africa and Thailand.

A participatory approach

The approach of the expert meeting was participatory, to foster sharing of experiences, debates and networking.

- The preparation of the meeting included a needs assessment: the main topics of interest were identified among the participants in September 2006, and speakers were asked to focus their presentations on these specific topics.
- The participants' papers were circulated beforehand, to leave more time for questions and debates during the meeting.
- The meeting agenda allowed for real discussions after short presentations, and for informal exchanges to facilitate the creation of a network.
- The third day was entirely dedicated to working groups. The recommendations mentioned here below were made by the participants in these working groups.
- At the end of the meeting, a quick evaluation was made – seeking participants' feedback.

The participants' expectations

Before the expert meeting, the participants expressed the following expectations for an international network of migration museums:

- *Reassert together the political role and contribution of migration museums*
- *Get to know cultural dialogue initiatives in Europe and Worldwide*
- *Develop a vocabulary, exchange analyses, good practices and possibly co-production*
- *Focus on the audience, dialogue with the Middle East, use of media and education*
- *Carry out joint activities e.g. exchange databases, and develop common lines of research between countries of origin and host countries*
- *Develop research and project partnerships, collaboration and potentially staff and exhibit exchanges.*
- *Develop itinerary exhibitions (...) Host each others' travelling exhibits and make certain that literature and calls for materials go out with all exhibits*
- *Jointly work on an international call for stories and artefacts through our various websites*
- *Distribute literature about each others' sites, collections, and projects (...) Advertise and spread the word about each others' projects and museums, through websites brochures, conference and talks*
- *Find affordable ways to get together to share ideas annually*
- *Put key staff members (researchers, curators, fundraisers etc.) in touch with their counterparts in each of our museums*
- *Form eventual partnerships between institutions or associations.*

Topics for discussions

The discussions focused on the participants' main topics of interest and questions, namely:

- *What are the main integration and cultural diversity issues in the 13 countries represented?*
- *What are the migration museums rationale, contents, status, funding and evolution in each country?*
- *How does a former emigration country deal with immigration today?*
- *Who is the target audience? Who visit such museums and why? Who does not and how to interest them?*

- *What is the migrants' participation in the creation and then in the operational activities of such institutions?*
- *How to best work with the migrants, the communities and the countries of origin?*
- *What is the role of life stories and oral history? How to transform the museum into a 'loft of memory'? How to collect, elaborate and disseminate the migrants' stories, to allow for a better future?*
- *What is the cultural heritage of immigration? What are the collections and where do they come from? How to call for contributions? How could we coordinate for collection policies and travelling exhibitions?*
- *How to build awareness amongst the civil society? Which education programmes to develop with the schools and the universities?*

Key discussions

The Expert Meeting was opened on Monday 23 October by Paul de Guchteneire, Chief International Migration Section, UNESCO, Peter Schatzer, Director, Regional Office for the Mediterranean and Chief of Mission in Italy, IOM, and Ambasciatore Daniele Luca Biolato, Secretary General, Italian National Commission for UNESCO, who welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of the topic in Italy - the largest emigration country in the past and a new immigration country today.

During the two day debates, panel sessions were organized on the following topics:

- Emigrants from yesterday, new lands of immigration
- Experiences and good practices from the existing migration museums
- Cultural dialogue, integration and the creation of migration museums in Europe today
- From migration to cultural diversity
- International organizations' work and potential contributions in this field.

From these two-day debates, the following key ideas emerged.

Memory can help to forge a better future

- As the Turkish saying states: 'If you don't know where you're from, you don't know where you're going.'
- The migrant experience is complex, in a dual reality between the country of arrival and the country of origin. Working on memory with the migrants can address these identity issues, by integrating various experiences (departure, transit, arrival and eventual return) lived as contradictory so far.
- "Integration functions like a fusion process, never like an amputation. There only exists durable integration if nourished by the construction of an identity by addition, and not per caesura, even less by censorship. The voluntary or forced silence of the parents corresponds systematically to the revolt and the rejection of the children. The mechanisms of integration never operate on beings who forget, fictitiously recomposed." (Olivier Rouselle, France)
- Migration has long been a 'taboo', a negative experience, a constraint (facing hunger or war). Therefore, the parents were ashamed to narrate their stories: Today the second and third generations miss the stories.
- Memories are dynamic: They can be showed, visualized and changed.
- The journey is less a 'one way', and more and more a series of 'comings and goings'. Therefore the memory is developed between the country of origin and the host society and it should be preserved in both.

- When the return is not possible and/or in conflict situations, it is more difficult to preserve the memory, to bring, to collect artefacts and to narrate the story.

From integration to cultural diversity

- Integration is bilateral: The host society has to accept the differences of others.
- Most of the migrants live in large cities. Therefore integration is above all an urban question to address.
- All the countries represented acknowledge the complex identity of the migrants and of the second generations - even those who counted on migrants' *assimilation* toward 'Republic citizens', or on migrants' absorption to create a country of pioneers.
- Multiculturality is a target, but interculturality is also needed. "Today we are living in islands. We need to build bridges...".
- Mobility versus stability should be considered to analyse and reinterpret national histories.

The changing and growth of Migration museums

- Museums need to evolve to ask questions instead of showing and telling only pre-packaged stories.
- We may need to rethink the word 'museum' often associated to conservation and preservation, while migrants with their stories and their culture are moving fast today.
- Besides migration museums, la **CITE** de l'histoire de l'immigration, multicultural **CENTRES**, the **HOUSE** for Cultural Dialogue (which is not a house but a programme) are emerging.
- Migration museums host archives, but they are also a venue for theatre, art, social and cultural activities, education programmes, forums and encounters.
- The public is heterogeneous, including immigrants, residents and youth. However, efforts are still needed to reach a larger audience.
- Migrant museum is not an end in itself, but a tool and a venue to narrate the story - to be relayed by school, literature, art, theatre, etc.
- If we want to have an impact, we should develop a multidisciplinary approach, be inclusive, work at all levels and with all stakeholders – with governments, the migrants, the communities, civil society, schools, universities, research centres, etc. - and liaise with countries of origin.
- If exchanges of memories, stories or collections already exist between certain countries, the participants can systematize and broaden these exchanges.

Working groups and participants' recommendations

The third day of the expert meeting was entirely dedicated to working groups. For participation purposes, and in order to facilitate debates in small teams, the participants formed three working groups, with 7 to 11 members each.

Two working groups (Groups 1 and 2) reflected on *An International Network of Migration Museums: What for? Added Value? Sustainability?*

Working Group 3 focused on the following topic *Museum or Agora: How to best work with migrants and the communities?*

On Wednesday morning, each group discussed, produced and agreed upon a draft action plan with concrete recommendations. In the early afternoon, a *rapporteur* from each group briefly reported in plenary session and the three sets of recommendations were summed-up during the closing session.

On An International Network of Migration Museums: What for? Added Value? Sustainability?

Working Group 1 recommended that:

- The network be positioned as part of a bigger international movement – e.g. human rights, migration, and diversity – to facilitate the exchange of information and international cooperation, by developing common projects or common activities.
- IOM and UNESCO support the continuation of the group/network activities.
- The participants continue working together - recognizing that working together is beneficial for individual members and for the network.
- A network of migration museums be formed to foster cultural dialogue, research activities and sharing of information, ideas and strategies about running museums and similar institutions, on common challenges (e.g. collection building or funding).
- The network focus on human rights, the human dimension of migration, cultural diversity and dialogue on memory, migration and mobility.
- The network take advantage of the different approaches represented during the Expert Meeting, e.g. migration museums, memory projects and the House for Cultural Dialogue.
- Best practices be identified among the existing institutions and a methodology developed on common challenges, namely collecting individual migrant memories and oral histories; developing exhibitions; audience evaluation and research; contact with communities.
- The network coordinate the following joint activities:
 - Linkages and joint projects, e.g. exhibitions or research, between host societies and countries of origin
 - Travelling exhibitions on human movement and memory
 - Material exchanges
 - Joint publications
 - A common website to ensure web community presence with a portal about the network.
- Joint initiatives be developed to strengthen the visibility of this network.
- Joint funding proposals be formulated to support network and identified activities.
- The possibility of a Secretariat be envisaged in the long term.
- Participants in network be open to diverse initiatives, other than immigration museums.
- All participants investigate opportunities for funding and future meetings/forums.

On the same topic, Working Group 2 recommended that:

- A network be formed to:
 - Broaden, develop, and share knowledge, reflection and recognition of migration issues
 - Cross and link different (historical, sociological, cultural, economical...) approaches
 - Articulate different levels (national, regional, international) and different networks.
- Rely on a reference body, with shared concepts and values, and operate according to the principle of non-subsidiarity (each country being responsible).
- Include: International organizations (IOM, UNESCO); Cultural institutions; Universities; Research centres; Public and private institutions; Countries of origin and host countries; Non-profit associations (e.g. migrants associations); and liaise with other relevant networks.
- Focus on the following objectives and activities:

Specific Objective	Activity
Create an interdisciplinary platform of information, communication and dissemination	Create a unique database and a website including links to different resources
Develop an expertise and evaluation of practices	Identify various practices and define a common methodology, while ensuring different approaches to meet the specificities of each region
Develop an interdisciplinary training programme for the different institutions	Identify the needs, conceive common programmes and reassert the political purpose of these cultural institutions.

- Be coordinated by IOM and UNESCO - to stimulate all the national initiatives, to ensure each country representation and to facilitate sharing of lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation (*'évaluer pour évoluer'*) – with the support of a task-force representing different countries, with a three-year turnover.
- Define a triennial programme.
- Organize a symposium every three years in a different location.
- Be supported with some:
 - Internal resources - the participants pooling some of their resources, to develop common programmes, e.g. in the field of training
 - External resources - the participants liaising with public and private sources, foundations, governments, the EU, etc., to find the co-financial resources needed for the above-mentioned activities.

On the topic *Museum or Agora: How to best work with the migrants and the communities?*

Working Group 3 recommended that:

- Migration museums and projects aiming in establishing such museums work together with migrants and their communities, as "it is impossible to write immigrant history without the participation of immigrants". All the initiatives that did not have contact to the migrant groups are aiming to do so in future and "need to know more about the communities".
- They work both with the immigrant organizations and with experts of different fields who have an immigration background themselves, in order to reach the communities and the migrants. Actually, organizations run by immigrants themselves are more able to reflect the reality of immigration and; visitors of migration museums want to "find their own stories reflected" in there.
- Efforts be made to reach a greater variety of visitors for the museums. In particular the Swedish case shows that when the entrance is free, the variety of the visitors gets wider: There are more and more migrants coming to visit the mainstream museums.
- Marketing and communication strategies be developed, in order to reach a wide audience.
- Specific efforts focus on media relations to publicize the migration museums, as it is an efficient and cost-effective way to reach a wide audience. While the lack of budgets does not allow launching marketing or communication campaigns, the Swedish case¹ shows that marketing and communication can also be done thanks to a good contact to the press.
- Media relations focus mainly on the local media in each country, state or city, although international media can also be used to explain the projects².
- Specific efforts be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation of the visitors, as it is essential to "know who visits your museum in order to find out who is not visiting it and why". Actually, evaluation and monitoring are carried out in all the existing museums represented in the working group, and the other projects are also finding ways to identify the audience. A combination of methodologies, including "unofficial" surveys, are used to find out who the visitors are, as in most cases it is not suitable to ask the visitors about their ethnic background.

¹ The Museum in Sweden has been quoted in more than 2,500 articles in various newspapers and magazines in one year.

² There have been reports about 19 Prinzelet Street, United Kingdom, on CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera.

Conclusions and collaboration proposals

Considering the role migration museums can play in migrant integration and cultural diversity,

Considering these institutions as part of a bigger international movement on human rights, migration, and diversity,

And considering “that working together is beneficial for individual members and for the network”,

The participants and the organizers agreed, during the closing session on the 25 October of the three-day Expert Meeting on Migration Museums, to:

- Form an “*international network of cultural institutions related to migration*” with shared concepts and values
- Work together to foster migration memory, integration, cultural diversity and dialogue
- Facilitate the exchange of information and develop international cooperation, through common projects or common activities
- Develop joint activities in the following fields: Advocacy, research, publications, travelling exhibitions, collections (calls for contributions) and training
- Share practices on common challenges, e.g. collection of migrant memories, audience research, monitoring and evaluation, collaboration with the communities and with the migrants
- Develop a website as a platform for advocacy, information and discussions – with links to the site of each institution
- Formulate a project proposal, in order to mobilize financial resources to implement the above-mentioned activities.

For more information on the participants' experiences, please refer to the collection of papers which is posted on the website of UNESCO (www.unesco.org/migration) and the website of the IOM PCI Unit (under construction)

Rome, November 2006

The Participants in the Expert Meeting on Migration Museums.

Annex I

Expert Meeting on Migration Museums Concept Paper

Facilitate migrant integration and cultural diversity

The current trend in the development of 'migration museums', named differently worldwide, is an interesting phenomenon, as it may contribute to the creation of a new and multiple identity, at an individual and collective level. Like the United States (with Ellis Island), Australia or Canada, the European countries are currently creating such venues to facilitate transmission between generations as well as encounters between migrants and the host populations, by telling their personal story.

While these initiatives also serve the duty to remember, they seem to have three main objectives: Acknowledge, integrate and build awareness.

- **Acknowledge:** The contributions made by migrants to their host societies; the diversity and wealth of the origin cultures and; the right to a dual-belonging.
- **Include and Integrate:** Foster the sense of belonging; enable the communities to feel an integral part of the nation; find common ground and contribute to a national identity.
- **Build awareness** of the events that induced individuals - and refugees in particular - to leave their land, thus developing empathy among the host population. More generally, deconstruct stereotypes on immigration.

Given the international scene and the latest events, from the Van Gogh affair in the Netherlands in 2004 to the so-called 'crise des banlieues' in France in 2005, there is an urgent need to give the migrant generations (the youth as well as their parents) a voice, in order to foster inclusion, integration and the right to difference. Listening to individual stories may help to deconstruct stereotypes. Memory, History and Narration may also allow to take a step back and to consider the complete picture.

Migration museums face common challenges, in that they intend to be not only a venue for conservation and exhibition, but also and above all a lively meeting place. The challenge is not so much to bring in the intellectuals, academics, researchers, historians, traditional visitors of museums (the converted) but also and above all to attract the general public, those with preconceived ideas on immigration and the migrants themselves, while opening the 'museum' to dialogue, forum and encounter initiatives.

- Can such venues contribute to create a new plural identity at individual and country level?
- How to contribute to the development of a memory and patrimony of immigration? How to call for collections?
- What is the role of the communities and of the countries of origin in such initiatives?
- What marketing and communication strategies to develop to reach a wide audience? Indeed, how to bring these museums to the populations?
- Which educational policies and programmes should be implemented, to attract more students and teachers?
- More generally, how to impact and induce a change in perception, behaviour and attitude toward the foreigner, the stranger?
- Would memory and narrations help to forge a better future? How can migrant generations build on the wealth of their origins to increase their self-esteem and better interact with others? How to conciliate integration and cultural diversity?
- Would an international network provide some first responses to such questions?

Foster sharing of experiences at international level

Faced with such questions, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNESCO - two intergovernmental organizations with strong expertise and experience on migration and memory - are organizing an expert meeting that will gather representatives from migration museums worldwide at the Italian Commission for UNESCO, in Rome, Italy, on 23-25 October 2006.

Meeting objectives

- Facilitate sharing of experiences, good practices, contents and resources among the host countries which have developed migration museums
- Identify common challenges and potential responses
- Contribute to the creation of an international network of expertise.

Expected outcomes

- The various migration museums are aware of the existence, the works, the contents and the resources developed by their counterparts abroad.
- Participants take advantage of other countries' lessons learned and good practices on common challenges.
- A set of papers on the subject of migration memory projects and migration museums on the basis of the experts' contributions is published in the International Journal on Multicultural Societies.
- A network of expertise is built that will facilitate sharing of contents and good practices after the meeting, and possibly be extended to the countries of origin.
- Collaboration and synergies are enhanced between the participants/the countries represented on common challenges, e.g. cultural dialogue, migrant memory and patrimony.

Participants

The meeting will gather nearly 30 experts, including migration museums directors, IOM and UNESCO representatives.

Topics for discussion, approach and language

The discussions will focus on the role of migration museums in cultural diversity and migrant integration. Specific topics are being validated with the countries participating in the event, to best meet their specific needs, expectations and challenges.

The meeting will be participatory, with real discussions among the countries after short presentations. This three-day meeting will consist of multimedia presentations, discussions and working groups. The programme will enable informal exchanges and the creation of a network. The working language is English.

Annex II

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Annex III

The Participants' Papers

- 1. Memory is Migrant: From a Closed Past to an Open Future**
Natale LOSI, Head, Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit, IOM
- 2. Public History of Italian Migration: Museums**
Maddalena TIRABASSI, Scientific Director, Altreitalie, Fondazione Agnelli, Italy
- 3. Learning from the Past: Memory of Immigration**
Imma BOJ, Director, and Ricardo SILVESTRE NEBOT, MhIC (Museo de Historia de la Inmigración de Cataluña), Spain
- 4. The Portuguese Museum of Emigration: An Historical Mirror of Portuguese Migration Networks**
Maria Beatriz ROCHA-TRINDADE, Professor, Universidade Aberta, and Scientific Coordinator, Research Centre, and Miguel MONTEIRO, Director, Museu da Emigração e das Comunidades, Portugal
- 5. Memorial do Imigrante in São Paulo, Brazil: Studies and Challenges for the 21st Century**
Ana Maria da Costa Leitão VIEIRA, Executive Director, Memorial do Imigrante, Brazil
- 6. Connecting Communities and Sharing Stories: The Role of the Immigration Museum in One of the Most Multicultural Cities in the World**
Padmini SEBASTIAN, Manager, Immigration Museum, Australia
- 7. Who do you think you are? Exploring identity with children and displaced young people**
Susie SYMES, Chair of Trustees, 19 Princelet Street, United Kingdom
- 8. Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Israel**
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- 9. La Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration: A venue for encounters and for transformation**
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- 10. The House for Cultural Dialogue**
Han BAKKER and Mira KHO, The House for Cultural Dialogue, The Netherlands
- 11. The Political and Social Significance of a Museum of Migration in Germany**
Aytaç ERYILMAZ, Director, and Murad BAYRAKTAR, DOMIT, Germany
- 12. Swiss Migration Museum: A Vision for a New Identity**
Markus HODEL, Managing Director, Migration Museum, Switzerland
- 13. The Immigrant Institute, Sweden**
Miguel BENITO, Director
- 14. The Multicultural Centre, Sweden**
Ella JOHANSSON, Head, Research Department
- 15. The National Museums of World Culture, Sweden**
Eva GESANG-KARLSTRÖM, Director
- 16. A Small Local Museum in a Multicultural Society**
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