

**CULTURAL HERITAGE
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PEER LEARNING VISIT REPORT
AND ANALYTICAL DOCUMENT

LEADS FROM LEEDS LEARNING FROM AND WITH THE LEEDS MUSEUM & GALLERIES SERVICE

Leeds,
24-26 May 2022



Funded by the Creative Europe
Programme of the European Union

Executive summary	2
1. Analysis: Learning from Leeds	5
1.1 The Leeds curriculum	7
The Leeds Curriculum	8
The loan boxes and the primary school membership scheme	9
1.2 Co-curating with communities	11
1.3 Virtually there: digital engagement at LMG	15
Online Tools for engagement	16
2. Findings and recommendations	19
About Learning	20
About Engagement	21
3. Conclusions and recommendations	23
4. Annexes	27
Feedback from participants	28
Useful links	32
Useful contacts	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Cristina Farinha and Lia Ghilardi



Being a fast-growing city, economically, socially and culturally vibrant, Leeds is confronted with several challenges, from environmental issues to poverty and exclusion, especially among the lower income communities living at the margins. The city is committed to working together across departments and services to reduce inequality through the pillars of inclusive economic growth, health and wellbeing, and being a net carbon zero city by 2030.

The LMG service has put in place a vision which is about creating deeper connections with the people they serve by using the collections and heritage sites they care for in order to widen their impact on the community at large. Its success would have not been possible without the strong commitment to supporting culture and the arts by Leeds City Council, translated onto the forward-looking, co-created [Culture Strategy 2017-30](#). In particular, the work of LMG complements the culture strategy and supports its ambition of “making Leeds a connected city with a ‘yes’ mentality”.

The visit gave participants the opportunity to take a close look at how Leeds focuses its resources on meeting the needs of the community they are serving. When the pandemic hit, LMG was able to quickly adapt and make innovative use of digital media to maintain and develop contacts with communities, schools, and social media audiences, which in turn has provided the basis for the current recovery work, through curriculum planning, recovery curriculums, and podcasting:

- The [Leeds Curriculum](#): Launched in June 2018, aiming at raising educational achievement, the Leeds Curriculum provides primary teachers with the resources they need to instruct using a place-based, local approach with which they can teach any subject and any age group. The Curriculum is openly and freely accessible on [MyLearning.org](#), a website hosting free national teaching resources, managed by LMG. In parallel, the LMG School Membership scheme provides access to real museum artefacts, the “loan boxes” to use in classrooms and get support with curriculum planning, teacher training, and access to local resources.
- Co-curating with the communities: The community engagement team lis-

This peer learning visit took place between 24-26 May 2022, hosted by the Leeds City Council and Leeds Museum & Galleries (LMG), one of the largest local authority-run museum services in England. The visit focused on how this municipal service, in charge of a great deal of the city’s cultural heritage, coped with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering a range of activities and creating tools for maintaining and improving engagement of diverse audiences and communities.

tens to what is needed and acts as facilitators, creating the necessary conditions and resources, making the spaces and the collections available for the expression and empowerment of all. LMG also puts forward initiatives aimed at engaging people with social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH) in creative and social activities to improve well-being, self-esteem and combat isolation.

- Digital engagement: LMG has got a unique approach to digital engagement (podcast, YouTube & Twitter), targeting those who feel museums are not for them. Their distinction resides in the informality of the tone used, and the humour involved in their contents.

The key takeaways from this visit are:

- The collaboration between Leeds City Council and Leeds Museums and Galleries: as a local authority-run museum service, LMG is an important entity for LCC. Grounded within communities and the structure of the city, it performs a key civic role and is a pivotal organisation for the delivery of cultural and heritage activities at city's level.
- An approach to working with schools and providing learning experiences which is enquiry-based, and rests on three key words: Curiosity, Creativity, Conversation, and which goes beyond imparting simple knowledge, and involving the teaching of soft skills that can be adapted to a variety of work environments.
- By bringing objects into classrooms or community spaces, and by complementing this with digital learning packages made available to all, LMG not only build personalised learning, but they are also creating unique experiences for their audiences and communities alike.
- A key principle in the working of LMG is to deliver initiatives that are co-curated and tailor-made to the needs of the city and community they serve, especially in times of recovery from the pandemic. Beyond simply contributing to creating jobs, they invest in the long-term aim of growing communities as well.
- The digital element of the service is developed around the notion of interactivity, fun, and entertainment. It is storytelling at its best, with young and old

users contributing by sending in their personal take on everyday life.

- Regarding social media, the LMG's digital tone of voice is irreverent and a bit leftfield, but it tells stories in a memorable way by developing a direct, authentic relationships with followers.

The final recommendations and conclusions taken from the LMG service case study for other museums services and cultural stakeholders alike are:

- Museums should act more as platforms for community building, going beyond the simple display of collections;
- Learning should be co-created with the communities they serve;
- Museum culture should be reaching out into the internet world;
- Culture deserves a bigger role in education;
- Cultural institutions should strategically align their goals to those of other departments and agendas of the city;
- Organisations need to give “tea and time” to develop relationships with their staff.

1. Analysis: Learning from Leads

1.1 The Leeds curriculum

THE LEEDS CURRICULUM

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, LMG was forced to close all of its nine sites. But this was just the beginning. LMG was able to quickly adapt and make innovative use of digital media to maintain and develop contacts with communities, schools, and social media audiences throughout the pandemic, which in turn has provided the basis for the current recovery work.

The Challenge

There are 55,000 children in Leeds aged 5-11, and only 56% of the 8-11 ones achieve the standard of education required by central government, and this is 61% below the national average. Even before the pandemic the challenge was to find ways, using culture and the arts, of raising the educational achievement of these children.

The Response

Back in 2017 Leeds faced the challenge of raising children's educational achievement. As culture and engagement in arts activities has been at the top of the agenda of the city of Leeds for a number of years, it was decided to invest time and resources in developing projects that mobilised heritage and the arts for the purpose of helping children to improve their prospects.

To fully grasp the Leeds approach, it is important to understand that, in England, central government guides the National Curriculum while leaving it to teachers and schools to choose the topics they want to teach, and how they teach. In the case of Leeds, there was also an awareness of the potential offered by engaging pupils in creative activities as a tool to improve their wellbeing, mental health, self-esteem, identity and sense of belonging. The Leeds Curriculum was designed to provide all this by rooting the teaching in the locality (across the city and beyond) and the community that inhabits it, in order to celebrate all its cultural diversity and reflect the issues that matter to it.

The Process

In 2017 LMG led a city-wide consortium of over 50 arts, cultural and community organisations and worked with over 30 primary schools thus initiating the process of co-creating the Leeds Curriculum. The starting point for reimagining the curriculum was to ask the question: "What stories do we want our children to know about Leeds before they leave primary school?". The first story was piloted

early in 2017 and then through 2018 more story-gathering workshops were held, working closely with teachers and children around the National Curriculum objectives.

The Leeds Curriculum, officially launched in June 2018, provides primary teachers with a continuously evolving set of resources (every month something new is added!) which use a place-based approach. Before the pandemic LMG engaged 137,903 adults and children through informal learning activities. Today, LMG is the only museum service in England to be involved in whole school curriculum planning in primary schools and SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) settings using only accessioned museum objects in their learning programmes (including school loans boxes). Operating an income-generating School Membership scheme (which started before the pandemic and kept on during lockdown), and consistently tracking attainment (regularly monitored by inspectors of the OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education)).

Yet the pandemic increased the educational attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. To tackle this challenge, LMG worked with eight primary Membership schools (mostly in low income areas) to re-think the curriculum, create a SEND Recovery Curriculum, and implement digital workshops and hundreds of home schooling resources. The take up was very high, reaching over 100,000 people and having positive impacts on the well-being of 2,600 pupils.

The Recovery Curriculum, digital workshops and social media engagement were led by the LMG learning team and well supported by colleagues in the community, collections and audience development teams, as un-costed staff time (funded through Leeds City Council and Arts Council England).

Recently in partnership with the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) as sector leaders, LMG have trained over 750 museum learning professionals in developing Covid-19 secure loans boxes, curriculum planning, decolonising the curriculum, and digital delivery. The Leeds Curriculum is accessible on MyLearning.org, a website hosting free national teaching resources.

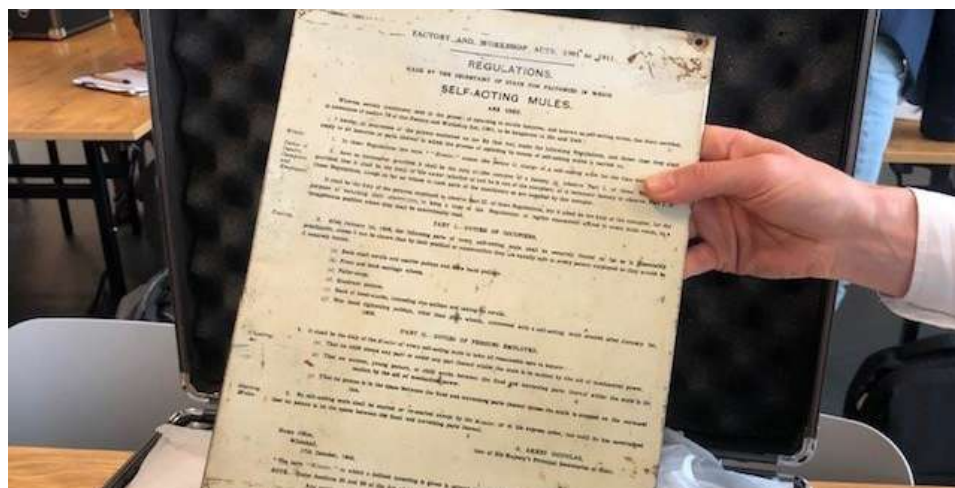
THE LOAN BOXES AND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP SCHEME



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The LMG Primary School Membership scheme provides access to real museum artefacts for use in classrooms, in order to embed cultural objects into the teaching, as well as the opportunity to take part in workshops delivered by LMG's nine museums and galleries. Members also get support with curriculum planning, teacher training, and access to local resources. There are three membership packages: Bronze, Silver and Gold, each with a different price tag ranging from £550 to £2,100 depending on the amount of loans boxes and support package provided.

The scheme enables LMG to build relationships with schools and co-develop their curriculums with them by only using accessioned museum objects in the boxes. This is underpinned by the Leeds Curriculum on the MyLearning.org platform.

Boxes are loaned for a half term each, and the school can take all their boxes in one term if they wish or spread them throughout the year. LMG tracks each box through simple tracking spreadsheets and provides schools with whole staff training and written rules specifying how to handle and take good care of the objects. Because the objects are not replicas, their responsible handling is crucial, and this comes from being very clear

about procedures. The experience has been excellent so far, with very few problems, as objects are very much valued, and the loan boxes have ended up being an incredibly empowering experience for all those who have used them. Children, most especially, feel honoured and their sense of belonging has been increased by the experience of being able to hold objects that are part of the history of their city.

In 2021-22, the Schools' Membership has generated £19,500, and curriculum development packages generated approx. £4,000. These are managed by 1.5 members of staff (Learning and Access Officer and Membership Assistant), funded through LMG's Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation funding. The success of the scheme leads to a "first come first served" approach as boxes are in insufficient number for all the requests.

Even if many school members are in deprived areas, the positive return of the Membership scheme makes the investment worthwhile.

1.2 Co-curating with communities



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Kirkstall Abbey



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Abbey House Museum

Initiatives focusing on wellbeing and communities

THE ANNUAL MINDFULNESS FESTIVAL in the atmospheric setting of Kirkstall Abbey features a blend of both secular and non-secular meditative practices, all hosted and co-ordinated by Leeds Mindfulness, Well-Being, and Spirituality Centre. There are regular mindfulness sessions held in the Abbey every week.

LIGHT FOR LEEDS an interfaith event, started in 2016 as part of a UK-wide Interfaith Week. In 2019 it led to a community exhibition of the same name, looking at what light means in different faiths and beliefs.

The Assistant Community Curator organises outreach visits to care homes and day centres through the REMINISCENCE SCHEME. Care homes, for example, can loan reminis-

cence boxes with real objects from the past.

Post lockdown, the Community Engagement team worked hard to develop a RECOVERY CURRICULUM made of digital resources which include Virtual Arts Award sessions for schools, self-led teacher resources, and topic-based mini resources that can be used at school and home. All are designed to promote collaboration, creativity, self-esteem and to aid in improving expressive communication skills.

Co-creation and co-curation with diverse groups

The Community Engagement Team is a key ingredient in the LMG's success in reaching out to locally diverse communities. There are six Assistant Community Curators, two Youth Engagement Officers and one Community Engagement Manager. It works across all of its nine sites, exploring their connections with the city, past and present. The team engages and listens to what is needed and acts as facilitators, creating the necessary conditions and resources, and making the spaces and the collections available for the expression and empowerment of all.

The Community Exhibitions and Displays section of the service deals with a number of flexible spaces located across all sites managed by LMG for communities to use. Here, the communities may approach the team with stories or objects specifically related to their group; the team might use current social or political issues as a starting point and/or examples from the LMG collections, and then work with a number of organisations and/or communities to draw on their experiences and expertise.

The Youth Programme works with young people on a variety of behind-the-scenes opportunities: from curating thought-provoking exhibitions to planning workshops and exploring archives and collections. At the Leeds City Museum, the Preservative Party is a group aged 14-24 years old that meet every week. They have been active since 2010 and have made films, given tours, run events, gone on trips and curated a series of exhibitions. This group is a safe place, where youngsters may explore and discuss issues of interest and concern freely, using the collection and museum resources to self-express and share them with the wider community. At the Leeds Art Gallery, the Youth Collective welcomes everyone aged 14-21 to connect and collaborate with them through co-curated events and workshops to access the arts and progress in their careers. In all cases young people contribute to push the organization forward, as they are passionate and do not see boundaries. They bring in new topics and approaches;

they react to what they do not like; they add new objects to collections.

Finally, the awe-inspiring site of the Kirkstall Abbey, formerly a Cistercian monastery, is the location of Abbey House Museum. This is the meeting place for culturally diverse communities to share memories and explore their stories and how they connect with the city.

LMG also puts forward initiatives aimed at engaging people with social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH) in creative and social activities to improve well-being, self-esteem and to combat isolation.

1.3 Virtually there: digital engagement at LMG

ONLINE TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Both during the visit and in preparing for it, participants had the chance to dive into the various online tools that LMG uses for learning and for promoting its activities. Here too their unique approach to digital engagement (podcast, YouTube and Twitter) is considered to be in the vanguard of such activities. In fact, the Digital Engagement Officer regularly presents to other museum services about social media engagement.

THE PODCAST

In 2020, LMG launched a new podcast, [Museums n'That](#), recorded and produced in-house, which has currently been downloaded over 10,000 times across the world (with 11% of listeners from North America). The podcast is in the top 10 favourite UK museum podcasts on Museum Crush (a British charity which publishes listings of cultural websites). In each episode, Digital Engagement Officer Megan Jones, and Audience Development Officer Sara Merritt, ask their LMG colleagues who work behind the scenes, curious questions, like for example: "How do you taxidermy a caterpillar?"

The target audience is people who feel museums are not for them or are too anxious to ask questions during a visit. What is different here is the informality of the tone used, and the humour involved in the discussion.

#MUSEUMFROMHOME

In addition, during the lockdown, the Learning and Access Officer at the Discovery Centre created #MuseumFromHome, an innovative initiative aimed at sharing short educational films about the Leeds collections on social media. They used real museum objects from their school loans boxes to create films for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Each week there was a different theme and each day a different object was discussed. They were one of the only museum services in the country to be using real museum objects in their digital engagement during lockdown. <https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/virtual-visit/online-activities/>

#MuseumFromHome and the podcast gathered a strong social media following of individuals and families, and since then the playlist on YouTube has been very popular with schools. Within three months of launching, they attracted nearly 77,000 views on social media, and 12,000 likes, shares and comments.





2. Findings and recommendations

ABOUT LEARNING

Curiosity, Creativity, Conversation

LMG's edge is on creating packages of learning that are interactive, fun, and relevant to the pupils and audiences alike.

Such an enquiry-based approach — based on the three key words: Curiosity, Creativity, Conversation — is unique in many ways, ultimately going beyond knowledge by teaching soft skills that can be adapted to a variety of work environments (for example, among the support activities that LMG offers there is the facilitation of work experience for children in need).

Building relationships with teachers, pupils, communities, and cultural organisations is a difficult art, but LMG has a unique approach to building bridges and connections which is based on making the case for the impact their work is having on improving the health and well-being of the community, together with their economic prospects. The crucial element here is the capacity of the team to be open to having “conversations” with partners and, yes, sometimes “sharing a cup of tea and cake” helps!

The hybrid between real life and the digital world is a plus because, for example, the loan boxes bring sensory experiences into the school environment (whether it's about dressing up costumes, or handling objects), so the memorability of such experiences is a key ingredient in spurring curiosity and continuous learning. For example, the visits to the Leeds Discovery Centre, with its million objects each with a story to tell, are equally unique learning experiences.

Some children don't have a knowledge of the city and never go into its centre. Learning about objects and visiting places they have never been to, makes them feel good, and improves their sense of self and belonging to the city they live in. “Give children roots, to give them wings” is the motto (from a first nations proverb). The practice of slow looking and reflecting on objects in a mindful way is something that can contribute to improving the mental health of children and adults alike.



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ABOUT ENGAGEMENT

Spaces that are open, understanding and fun!

Across the venues, LMG takes an innovative, community-led approach. It looks at ways of enabling heritage and art spaces to become meeting places for culturally diverse communities which can learn from each other and explore their different cultures. In the City Museum, for instance, there is something active to do everywhere, so it feels like a welcoming space. The idea is that people feel comfortable in crossing that threshold, even if they come in to do mundane things.

LMG is very aware of the power of creative involvement of people with diverse social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH). Beyond simply contributing to creating jobs, they invest in growing communities.

LMG has adopted the PACE Model (Playful, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) which aims to make children and young people feel safe and secure within their environments. Their version of the Recovery Curriculum is about understanding that children have been through a lot of pain, and it is not just about teaching the curriculum to catch up with exams, but to rebuild confidence, sense of self, love of curiosity, and sharing experiences. In most cases, the young people themselves created resources.

The digital element is developed around the notion of interactivity, fun, and entertainment. This is storytelling at its best but with a twist, in fact, both young and old users are asked to contribute to 'story building' using creative techniques.

Now more than ever it is vital that museums and galleries are relevant and speak to the people, so podcasts such as Museums n'That set a tone that the rest of the sector may want to follow.

#MuseumsFromHome was a highly innovative way to continue LMG's museum learning activity during lockdown. Among other results, it has also provided a permanent legacy of learning resources for schools.

Regarding social media, the Digital Engagement and Learning Officers are now increasingly bringing their informal digital tone of voice into the physical gallery spaces: they are spending more time on Instagram and investing energy in producing videos, but also audio content in general. They want to continue to tell stories in their unique way. An example is when a posting translates into a small-scale memorable event which is co-created with the followers.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

MAIN TAKEAWAYS AND LESSONS LEARNT

- **MUSEUMS AS COMMUNITY BUILDING PLACES:** While many museums, and cultural institutions, increasingly debate how to open their doors to welcome diverse audiences, the Leeds example shows how to put the needs of the communities first. Without such an understanding of the context and the reality in which they operate, it is difficult for any cultural institution to fulfil their remit. In places where social and economic divisions are strong, museums must get better at connecting, supporting, and helping local people to improve their prospects so that the whole of society can benefit.
- **CO-CREATED LEARNING:** In times when the rise of political populism, social conflicts and economic difficulties affects society, it is crucial that museums take an active role in helping audiences and communities alike to make sense of the world around them. The Leeds example shows that collections are not just inanimate objects in need of “interpretation”, but resources that can be activated for responding to a variety of needs. Here it is the museum that goes to the people, and often it is the community that brings in their stories and the objects that are meaningful to them. Challenging the role of the curator as the sole owner of the narrative and working instead with outside organisations and community groups to draw on their experiences and expertise, is a more effective way of embedding relevance in the museum experience.
- **MUSEUM CULTURE REACHING OUT TO THE INTERNET CULTURE:** It is important to find a balance between the current ways in which people access museums in real life and online. Museums need to have a more informal tone of voice; they need to learn to use a new language and logic that fits the diverse expectations of contemporary audiences. When dealing with the digital world, cultural institutions should be prepared to think beyond putting a page on the internet, or their collections online, and must be able to develop an approach centred on the “human touch”, which may translate into adopting a friendly, informal tone of voice, a way of taking visitors by the hand into a world of curiosity and discovery rather than traditional mainstream explanation. Thus, the role of social media within cultural institutions cannot merely be to bring more people/visitors to the museum but should rather engage in a meaningful way with online communities. Creating relationships with followers, having a dialogue with those who do not come or have special needs or different ways of communicating is key. In essence, a museum’s social media tools should be seen as an added value that contributes in a relevant and engaging way to inform and amplify knowledge of the contents displayed inside the galleries.
- **VALUING CULTURE IN EDUCATION:** The COVID-19 pandemic intensified many changes that were already happening in, among other areas, the education system. In Leeds, as a result of the establishment of the (cultural) Curriculum, teachers are more interested in the work of the LMG and ask for its advice. Many realise they need support with teaching various elements of the curriculum, as they are not well prepared to explore particular issues and subjects, nor have the time to do it. The School Membership scheme, and in general a close relation to museums, provides teachers with the resources, the time and space to interact with pupils from a different perspective; this, in turn, allows pupils to express their talents differently. Crucially, school attainment has improved considerably among those pupils that the LMG service has reached out to through their programmes. The visit to Leeds should help participants to sharpen the advocacy arguments for the role of culture in supporting communities and cities in times of recovery and beyond.
- **A CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM STRATEGICALLY ALIGNED:** In Leeds, having had a Culture Strategy in place since 2017 meant developing a common framework for the local cultural stakeholders to bond and work together.

The strategy brought in a culture of collaboration rather than competition between organisations and institutions. Generally, having a cultural strategy means setting common priorities, sharing values, and making decisions about how the cultural sector relates to the community. Furthermore, as cultural institutions often struggle with resources, partnerships are crucial to build economies of scale, developing awareness of common needs and interests, and coming together as a collective, are all necessary steps. Talking, meeting and connecting should figure more directly in the job description of cultural actors in general. This could help cultural institutions to build better evidence of the work done in order to lobby city councils and authorities about their relevance to other (social, economic, urban) agendas.

- **GIVING IT TEA & TIME:** LMG is an example of best practice not only in its innovative initiatives, but also in terms of service governance too. Crucial to

the Leeds model has been having a perspective with clear long-term goals and how to attain them, together with building relationships and trust. The “tea & time” or “tea & conversations” is a fundamental principle not only for the work the LMG service does with communities and partners, but also across the service, among the staff. The lesson here is that the management of the service is done from a “personalised” point of view, by talking to and investing in people at all levels of the hierarchy, and by communicating core values to the staff so that they feel that their contribution is valued. Finally, good service governance is also about getting the right structure and skills in place. Leeds, for example, has restructured the service so that curators have engagement duties in their job description. That said, organisational changes of this type take a long-time to come to fruition — they are not a quick fix!



4. Annexes

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

18 PARTICIPANTS FROM 15 CITIES AND REGIONS TOOK PART IN THE VISIT IN LEEDS

The complete evaluation has been reported based on 14 evaluation reports received from the participants. When asked about the peer learning visit experience, knowledge gained, information received, and relevance, the participants responded with either “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”. Similarly, all questions have scored the same evaluation points, intending that most participants positively perceived the peer learning visit in Leeds.

City/Region	Main learning points	Future use of ideas and knowledge gained
Baia Mare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community engagement both in real life and online.• The education policy - from cradle to grave - is mostly an edutainment strategy with different levels of interactivity for all community members.• For effecting some positive change, museum representatives need to conduct stakeholder analysis, target key stakeholders and advocates in the city, learn and talk their language and persevere until they succeed.• Metrics: using KPIs that are relevant for the community and not generic text book indices.• Leeds City Council joint perspective on culture and economy: capitalising on cultural identity and enhancing the benefits of culture in order to generate positive economic impact (esp. economic growth).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make our programmes more inclusive and more relevant for the community by creating a constant space for co-curated content.• Involve the community on a long-term co-creation project on relevant themes.• Focus on improving the digital strategy by creating several tailored educational programmes available online that can be used both in school and by families.• Invest on a more effective digital communication strategy.• Adapt and implement the KPIs suggested by the Leeds Museums and Galleries Head of Education.
Białystok	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An outstanding exchange of experience and knowledge gained as a result of discussions and workshops held between managers of cultural institutions in European countries.• Really interesting innovations arising from observing the operations of the cultural institutions of the city of Leeds.• New forms of creating museum displays observed at the Leeds City Museum as well as special programmes that involve schools in the museum life.• “Soft skills” in building the brand of a museum institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapting certain patterns learned from the example of the city of Leeds (working with schools).• Building the brand of the museum institutions of the city of Białystok considering the local specificity (of the city and the country).

City/Region	Main learning points	Future use of ideas and knowledge gained
Białystok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motivated and very enthusiastic team that implements a project in Leeds, full of zeal and with a fresh approach to culture in the city. • A policy involving the local community, especially young people, being not only a spectator but also a participant and co-creator of culture and cultural activities. • An innovative approach to social media and communication on culture and promotion of culture in Leeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of projects, e.g. boxes with objects related to the history of the city, change of cultural personalities view's on the challenges of contemporary cultural participants. • Development of educational projects related to cultural institutions, which have already been implemented in Białystok. • Build stronger relationships between people and institutions. • Employee training and building cooperation among municipal cultural institutions.
Chemnitz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the community about their needs and involving them in museological activities, like exhibitions. • Museums to play a greater role in everyday life - a positive aspect when asking for financial support and additional jobs. • Creating new structures in the museum team to have enough time to involve the communities ideas is exemplary. • The cooperation of the museums and the municipality is desirable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to work more closely with schools to also improve the education of students through the expertise of the museum. • Extend experience-boxes with originals like in the loan boxes of Leeds. • Extend the contact with the community to get information on how we can improve the museum so that people come to us more often.
Dresden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An openly accessible Discovery Center for all museum is a wonderful thing, though hard to accomplish • Participation in curation of exhibitions is a paradigm often quoted that here came to life. • A peer learning across European city museums is very helpful to see benchmarks of progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a task force to create a social media strategy for all our museums. Curation with one ear in society and its communities is something to bring into our discussions more, also in terms of a participatory digital strategy.
Espoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be patient and continue our work purposefully. • Process is often more important than the result. This is important to remember and accept when your museum is making communities priority partners in all work and projects. • How to combine collections and community work. Collection Storage can be a Discovery Center! Open Access Storage is really amazing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new collection storage facilities. We will try to add some areas for community work in our new premises. • Discovery Centre and all the projects there (for example the Primary Schools Membership Programme) are something our museum would love to learn more about.
Ghent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of a cultural strategy, strong example of a good strategy deployed and communicated in an enthusiastic way. Explicit linking of culture and economy. • Service-centric approach of a museum as an alternative for exhibition-centric approach, e.g. the membership formula: from a static to a dynamic museum! • Finding a good balance between the location/building/site and eligibility of events, generating income, e.g. wrestling competition at the Leeds City museum, music performances at Kirkstall Abbey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main focus will be on developing a cultural strategy regarding our candidacy as European Capital of Culture.

City/Region	Main learning points	Future use of ideas and knowledge gained
Gozo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a group of people with different abilities and skills working as a team with a specific set of targets is something that is very possible and doable. • Believing in what we are doing while projecting a clear vision will surely help us in achieving our ultimate objectives and goals. • Re-thinking and re-inventing our operations may help us to rejuvenate our product/services and make it more appealing to our audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following some of these good practices while nurturing my working relationships with all my stakeholders and colleagues, will surely help me to carry out my responsibilities more diligently and effectively.
Iasi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy must be connected with culture and vice versa, as they have to collaborate and keep a balance in order to provide a higher quality of life for the members of local community. • Limits can be crossed once the museums decide to reach out to schools, by putting at their disposal the loan boxes and the specialists who can train the teachers how to adjust the curriculum with a cultural heritage support • Importance of involving the children with disabilities or special needs within museum education, as part of a diversity and inclusive long term program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with the marketing team and with the colleagues from communication department in order to apply some of the marketing strategies learned at the digital engagement workshop at Kirkstall Abbey • Connection with the audience is a key factor to remain in contact with the visitors • Co-create the museum education workshops in a personalised manner so that the children can easily connect the theory with some practical experiences in the museums.
Milan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create compelling and meaningful experiences for people, you need to start from them, talking to them, and understanding their needs. • Museums should be welcoming places, where everyone can feel comfortable and inspired, where there is something specifically designed for them. • You need to talk to key people and allow time to do that. • Allow teachers and children to feel more comfortable with the museum content. • Museums are really part of the community and with deep boundaries with it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new techniques and models into the museum. • Strengthen our relationships with teachers and other associations in the city. • Connect with other community partners to create activities and experiences together.
Milan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See how museums can concretely enter into a relationship with the community. • Observe how the activities are naturally designed to “get the museum out” from its borders, placing both the heritage and the knowledge preserved at the service of the community. 	
Munich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the impact on the community first. • Building trust. • The great scheme of things: working for the community, in a network together with other cultural institutions under a common goal that is set by the city as a joint effort of meaningful impact, really helps making decisions and reaching goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural change: working for and with the community and not just in it. • Find colleagues and to form a personal network, to change small things and to find free spaces that allow for new approaches.

City/Region	Main learning points	Future use of ideas and knowledge gained
Šibenik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure you have an enthusiastic team and take care of wellbeing of your employees - understanding your employees' boundaries and working habits, and respecting their unique needs and motives will help you provide the best opportunities to them and bring better results and solutions for your organisation. • Children have only one chance for education - they are worth the extra effort and should be given best education and experience of childhood we can give them. • Good (edutainment) digital tools have to have footing or be transferable in real life, be enjoyable for the users and interactive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a few possibilities for the implementation, Fortress of Culture Šibenik will for sure work on further developing our programmes targeted for children and make sure that the programmes include the development of soft skills in children, we also might use the Primary School Membership Scheme (the boxes), although we'll have to use our multimedia content and equipment. Since we're in the midst of a very intensive period in a year, we still haven't had time to figure everything out.
Tampere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way of management and cooperation between different Leeds sites and museums working smoothly. • Ideas of working with schools. • Focus on mental health of employees. 	

USEFUL LINKS

FURTHER READINGS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Leeds cultural strategy 2017-2030 <https://leedsculturestrategy.co.uk/culture-strategy/>

<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/>

<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/LMG-Annual-Review-2021.pdf>

Leeds curriculum:

Interview with Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at Leeds Museums and Galleries, in which she presents the Museums + Heritage Educational Initiative of the Year 2019 award winning project Leeds Curriculum:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR95r10aY7g&ab_channel=TheBestinHeritage

<https://mylearning.org/collections/leeds-curriculum>

<https://culturalheritageinaction.eu/the-leeds-cultural-curriculum/>

LMG outputs:

The legacy of over 200 daily, subtitled #MuseumFromHome, Makaton and craft films, using accessioned museum objects to support home learners on social media, with follow-up activities on MyLearning.org

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLm0WvS2XqHfGjFQU-pBnBhlhUs14d7yju>

<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/podcasts/>

<https://twitter.com/LeedsMuseums>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/leedsmuseums>

Further sources

In the early 2000s, Leicester University worked with museums to develop Inspiring Learning for All, with Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs), and, if you prove those had happened, you could prove

learning / change had happened. More information here: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/inspiring-learning-all-home-page>

This has since been absorbed into the wider Arts Council Quality Principles, which go across all artforms and work with young people (but, take out the words 'young people' and they are as valid for all audiences!): <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/quality-metrics/quality-principles>

LMG draws on a lot of global research to develop their programmes and to advocate for them. Their 'go to' handy guide for these is the Cultural Learning Alliance: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/> They use these alongside more local statistics and reports to prove our case.

They also use educational research from the Educational Endowment Foundation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/> These are more about the impact of different teaching and learning strategies, rather than arts and cultural involvement.

In terms of other UK services who do community co-curation really well, might be good to look at [Birmingham Museums Trust](#), [The Museum of Homelessness](#) (mainly online), the [People's History Museum](#) and the [Black Cultural Archives](#) all do brilliant socially engaged practice. Others can be found on the [UK Museums Association Museums Change Lives campaign](#). Lots about decolonising practice here too: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/supporting-decolonisation-in-museums/>

Finally, if you want more of a community of practice around museum learning and community engagement, might be worth having a look at the Group for Education in Museums (GEM, <https://gem.org.uk/>). UK based, but there are international members and you can sign up for the free jicmail, which is email link to most of the museum educators across the country: <https://gem.org.uk/our-work/publications/gem-jicmail/> There's also Engage, who are visual art: <https://engage.org/>

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