



# Museums Connect Evaluation Findings

November 2017



**American  
Alliance of  
Museums**





# **American Alliance of Museums** *Museums Connect* **Evaluation Findings**

**Prepared by:**  
**Kirsten S. Büchner**  
**Insight Evaluation Services**  
**[www.insighte.net](http://www.insighte.net)**

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Museums Connect is an initiative of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that is administered by the American Alliance of Museums.

# Table of Contents

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<b>Discussion</b>	<b>1</b>
Recommendations	3
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Evaluation Goals	4
Methodology	4
Sample Selection Process	5
Table 1: Museums Connect Projects Selected For Inclusion In The Evaluation Sample	6
<b>Findings</b>	<b>8</b>
Greatest Take-Aways From Working With An International Partner	8
Shifts In Practice After Working With An International Partner	11
Shifts In Global Perspectives: Project Coordinators	13
Shifts In Global Perspectives: Primary Participants	15
Changes In Engagement With Local Communities	17
Changes In Museums’ Thinking About Their Work	19
Other Outcomes Of Museums Connect	21
<b>Photos</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> – Initial Email Request For Telephone Interview About Museums Connect	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix B</b> – Project Coordinator Telephone Interview Guide	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix C</b> – Complete Museums Connect Project List	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix D</b> – Project Coordinator Responses About Cross-Cultural Connections And Pursuits	<b>54</b>

Front Cover:  
Girls Design the World: Supporting Green Communities with STEAM  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota &  
National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

## Discussion

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The data obtained in this evaluation provide strong evidence that the Museum’s Connect program administered by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) has had substantial and enduring impact on participating U.S. museums, in particular the staff who served as project coordinators and the youth and other primary participants who were directly involved in project activities. U.S. coordinators who agreed to share their perspectives on Museums Connect clearly indicated that the exchange program was very rewarding on many levels, with the experience resulting in new connections abroad, as well as a marked interest to continue pursuing global initiatives.

- **Museums Connect effectively provided participating museum staff and project stakeholders with new appreciation for the benefits of international collaboration, including how they were prompted to pursue additional cross-cultural projects.**

U.S. project coordinators said they benefitted in a number of personal and professional ways from their Museums Connect projects. On a personal level, many coordinators mentioned that the cross-cultural aspect of their projects taught them a great deal about their partner country(s), as well as how their counterparts abroad operated within what appeared—at least in a few cases—to be quite challenging socio-political and/or economic circumstances. The travel portions of the projects were especially illuminating, and coordinators recounted many “a-ha” moments when they acquired real awareness about their partner country(s). For these coordinators, gaining a personal understanding about their counterparts’ perspectives facilitated their interactions and work together. In fact, many said they came away from their Museums Connect experience having developed “really meaningful relationships,” some of which became close friendships. Several coordinators also felt their experience had given them the skills and confidence to manage complex projects. Most importantly, working with an international partner got them thinking “more globally in scope” and helped them realize that they and their organizations had the potential to have a wider impact.

On a professional level, coordinators mentioned a number of ways their practice changed as a result of their experience working with Museums Connect. Significantly, many coordinators said their projects served to refocus departmental, if not institution-wide goals to continue offering programs that have an international perspective, provide “real world” opportunities for youth, and/or support the themes of their Museums Connect projects. Certainly, a noteworthy result is that most of the projects in the sample continued in some form after the grant year ended, and about one-third of those involved the same or other countries. The experience of working on an international project also encouraged some coordinators to “get out of their mindset” and try new ways of developing programs for specific audiences. Other coordinators said their experience changed how they approached collaborative efforts that followed. In particular, Museums Connect helped them to become more open to their partners’ perspectives and recognize the value they also “bring to the table.” In a similar vein, several coordinators came to realize they could involve more stakeholders in more ways; for example, a couple said that as a result of their experience, they began to invite youth into their planning meetings so their perspectives could be incorporated too.

Museums Connect had quite a profound impact on stakeholders as well, especially those who were involved as primary participants. Project coordinators said they observed numerous moments during which they recognized that primary participants’ perspectives on the world had shifted. For example, as primary participants learned about the location, language, history, etc. of their counterparts’ country(s), they came to realize that the world is “more than just America.” As occurred among

coordinators, the in-person visits were especially “eye-opening” and it is worth noting that in at least half of the projects in the sample, coordinators said primary participants were going abroad for the first time in their lives. Primary participants typically included youth under 18 years of age, and coordinators mentioned that during their visits they approached their counterparts in a very open and honest way. This approach helped youth break down stereotypes, discover commonalities, and gain appreciation for other people and cultures. In fact, some of the most gratifying moments for coordinators were seeing what happened “when you bring youth together globally and give them space to connect.” These cross-cultural exchanges were all the more significant when they prompted youth to reflect on who they were as individuals and as regarded their larger identity. For others, the visits prompted new appreciation for the United States and the opportunities they are afforded here.

The U.S. institutions involved in Museums Connect projects derived many benefits as well. Most coordinators said that their institution’s relationships with local schools and/or community organizations with whom they had worked carried forward into new collaborations on subsequent projects. In some cases, additional/new schools signed on to work with their institutions on the next iteration of their Museums Connect projects. Another benefit coordinators mentioned was the increase in visibility their institutions gained in their local communities, which in turn helped audiences understand the broad nature of their work. Indeed, some coordinators mentioned that specific events and activities they had created for their Museums Connect project were successful to the extent that they were added to their regular programming. Finally, increased attendance and interest from community organizations and funders in exploring new collaborations were also noted.

- **Museums Connect effectively increased long term interest in global initiatives among participating museum staff and project stakeholders, including maintaining the cultural connections they established with their counterparts abroad and/or forging new connections.**

The project coordinators who were interviewed for this evaluation repeatedly mentioned that their experience through Museums Connect prompted them and their organizations to think about the kind of work they would like to continue doing. Certainly, the personal connections they made and maintained with their colleagues at home and abroad helped coordinators leverage many new initiatives. Though many of the projects in the sample were conducted by institutions with a “broad” mission or that had worked on major international projects before, it seems important to note that Museums Connect was by and large the first international *program* they had carried out. For the institutions that had never worked outside of their immediate community, Museums Connect served to push those boundaries. For those that had, Museums Connect reactivated, if not reinforced the goal to implement more globally-focused programs. In fact, many institutions (along with the same coordinators and staff who worked on Museums Connect) began to pursue other projects that included a cross-cultural piece; in some cases, these projects were collaborations with other countries and in some cases, they were collaborations with immigrant groups from the same countries they had partnered with. For their part, primary participants also came away from their experience with a new sense for what kind of work they would like to do. Not only did they find points of connections with those whom they met abroad, most continued to stay in touch with their counterparts after their projects ended, and in about half of the projects, primary participants went on to pursue other cross-cultural or international work.

## Recommendations

- 1) If the exchange program is to be continued, one suggestion is to coordinate a panel presentation with grant recipients at AAM's annual meeting. By May, when the meeting takes place, coordinators from the preceding grant year would be able to discuss their projects and give AAM a way to showcase an effective and impactful program with the museum field. Such a presentation could serve as an inspiration for others to apply and/or implement similar projects on their own. In addition, coordinators/staff would have the opportunity to meet and learn about the projects their colleagues undertook, as well as support each other in the next phase of international work that might follow.
- 2) The interviews revealed that Museum Connect projects were very much person-driven. This seems to be especially true after projects ended. In a few cases, coordinators indicated that their superiors had provided the impetus for pursuing more global/cross-cultural work through a Museums Connect grant. However, when those superiors left, there was not enough momentum to continue on that internationally-focused trajectory. While IES acknowledges that strategic decisions around institutional goals and program development are outside the purview of AAM, it may be that if the exchange program continues, AAM could identify ways to support organizations as a whole so that in the event of staff changes, others can easily take over.
- 3) AAM is strongly encouraged to create a website dedicated to Museums Connect. The site would ideally house the (final) reports and other documentation for every project conducted to date so that anyone might conduct research about the issues addressed, activities implemented, outputs produced, and/or outcomes achieved. Essentially a digital library, the site would facilitate searches across partner institutions, project themes, and other criteria.
- 4) While Museums Connect projects clearly sparked new/greater interest in cross-cultural work, they also reinforced interest in the themes the projects addressed. It could be valuable to learn how the cross-cultural piece had an impact on staff and participant understanding about those issues—specifically, how partnering country(s) perceive and seek to mitigate specific concerns, and whether that understanding yielded new strategies that are applicable in their home countries. An analysis of all project reports could build the knowledge base of the informal learning field and inspire others to engage in international collaborative efforts to help solve the world's most challenging problems.
- 5) It would be useful for future evaluations of Museums Connect to seek the perspectives of international partners as well. In this way, it would be possible to triangulate findings and obtain a more holistic view of the impact of the exchange program on all involved.

## Introduction

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In 2017, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) received funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (State) to assess the impact of Museums Connect, a cross-cultural exchange program that AAM has administered for State for the past ten years. Through this program, museums and cultural and arts organizations in the United States collaborated with one or more counterparts abroad to implement projects that addressed critical issues within a given theme, were mutually beneficial to the participating organizations and their local communities, and included community and staff travel between the participating countries. The Museums Connect program supported approximately 7-10 projects each year since it began in 2007-08, for a total of 68 projects through the end of the grant year 2016-17. Now in its final year of administering the program, AAM was interested in learning how Museum Connect projects had contributed to building valuable and lasting relationships around the world, as global thinking is a central tenant to the AAM 2016-2020 strategic plan.

## Evaluation Goals

In support of this effort, Insight Evaluation Services (IES) conducted an evaluation that demonstrated the extent to which the Museums Connect program effectively:

- 1) Provided participating museum staff and project stakeholders with new appreciation for the benefits of international collaboration, including how they were prompted to pursue additional cross-cultural projects;
- 2) Increased long term interest in global initiatives among participating museum staff and project stakeholders, including maintaining the cultural connections they established with their counterparts abroad and/or forging new connections.

## Methodology

Data for this project were collected via telephone interviews with 28 U.S. project coordinators, one from each of the Museums Connect projects that was included in the sample. Given time and resource constraints, AAM and IES determined that evaluation resources would be best used by focusing on the American perspective of the cross-cultural exchange program. A fully comprehensive analysis of Museums Connect would also consider and measure the impact on foreign participants.

Project coordinators were individually emailed to let them know their Museums Connect project had been selected for evaluation, and were offered a range of dates and times to be interviewed by telephone. (See Appendix A for a copy of the initial email request.) Reminders were sent up to four times to ensure participation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The request was originally sent to 35 U.S. coordinators. Due to the limited time allocated for data collection, it was not possible to recruit additional coordinators to achieve the desired sample size of 30.

Interviews consisted of a series of open-ended questions about what project coordinators and primary participants took away from their cross-cultural experience. Project coordinators were asked how working with an international partner shifted their practice and their perspectives on the world, as well as what changes they observed in their institutions, local community, and/or primary participants, especially with regards to new/other cross-cultural or international work they might have pursued since their Museums Connect project. Telephone interviews took place between July 24 and August 11, 2017, and ultimately averaged about 30-45 minutes each. Interviews were recorded with project coordinators' permission to ensure all data was captured accurately. (See the Project Coordinator Interview Guide in Appendix B.)

Coordinators' responses were analyzed qualitatively by looking for patterns and creating categories that allowed for similar responses to be grouped together and tallied. Response categories are presented in order of frequency mentioned. Examples of participants' responses are used as evidence to support the analysis. Quotes may be edited for length and clarity.

## Sample Selection Process

IES worked with AAM's Museums Connect administrative team to select projects based on the following criteria (presented in order of importance to the team):

- 1) **General project theme** – Museums Connect supported projects that addressed a critical issue within a specified set of themes. These themes varied somewhat from year to year but generally fell into one of seven categories, as follows: Cultural Heritage/Diversity, Audience Development, Environmental Sustainability, Technology Access/Use, Civil/Equal Rights, Strengthening Community, and Economic Empowerment.
- 2) **Region of the world in which the international partner(s) is(are) located** – U.S. institutions partnered with cultural organizations located in one or more of the following six regions: Africa, Americas, Central & South Asia, East Asia & the Pacific, Europe & Eurasia, Middle East & North Africa.
- 3) **Type of institution that implemented the project in the U.S.** – The U.S. institutions that participated in Museums Connect generally fell into one of the following types: Art Museum, Arboretum/Botanic Garden/Nature Center, Children's Museum, History Museum/Society or Historic Site, Natural History/Anthropology Museum, Science/Technology Museum/Center, Specialized History Museum, Zoo or Aquarium, and Cultural Center/Museum.
- 4) **Grant year** – Projects were awarded beginning in 2007-08 through 2016-17.

AAM identified the general theme, international region, institution type, and grant year for each Museums Connect project and then tallied the number of projects that fell into each category within those criteria. In order to obtain a representative sample, IES then selected a proportional number of projects for each category in each criterion<sup>2</sup>. These projects are listed in Table 1 on pages 6 and 7. Please see Appendix C for a listing of all 68 Museums Connect projects.

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<sup>2</sup> For the fourth criterion, the goal was to include at least one project from each grant year, because it was assumed that attrition would reduce the likelihood that coordinators from the oldest projects would be available for interviews.

**Table 1. Museums Connect projects selected for inclusion in the evaluation sample (n=28)**

Project Year	Project Title	Principal US Partner	International and Other Partners	General Theme
2016-17	Lifelines/Aspectos Vitais: The Convergence of Arts, Ecology and Culture in the Amazon and New England	Stepping Stones Museum for Children (Norwalk, CT)	Museu Paraense Ernãõ Goeldi (Belém, Brazil)	Environmental Sustainability
2016-17	Maya From the Margins: Archives and Experiences of History, Identity, and Migration.	Southern Historical Society, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC)	Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (Merida, Mexico)	Cultural Heritage/Diversity
2016-17	Reel Stories: Empowering Young Women Through the Arts of Filmmaking.	Arab American National Museum (Dearborn, MI)	Palestinian Heritage Museum (Jerusalem, Palestinian Territories)	Civil/Equal Rights
2016-17	Waterways: Connecting Communities.	Museum Center at Five Points (Cleveland, TN)	Museo de Bellas Artes de la Boca de Artistas Argentinos "Benito Quinquela Martín" (Buenos Aires, Argentina)	Environmental Sustainability
2016-17	Weaving Strands of Knowledge: Connecting Culture and Science to Climate Change.	Montshire Museum of Science (Norwich, VT)	Folk Heritage Museum (Thimphu, Bhutan)	Environmental Sustainability
2015-16	Brighter Worlds: Confronting Violence Through Youth-Oriented Media.	AS220 (Providence, RI)	IZOLYATSIYA (Kiev, Ukraine)	Strengthening Community
2015-16	Connecting Coastal Communities: An International Dialogue About Ocean Conservation & Ecotourism.	New Bedford Whaling Museum (New Bedford, MA)	Húsavík Whale Museum (Húsavík, Iceland)	Environmental Sustainability
2015-16	Dialogues in the African Diaspora: Youth Reclaiming Community, Identity and Memory.	Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute (New York, NY)	National Museum Jamaica (Kingston, Jamaica)	Cultural Heritage/Diversity
2015-16	Girls Design the World: Supporting Green Communities with STEAM.	Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis, MN)	National Museums of Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya)	Civil/Equal Rights
2015-16	Hacking Space: A Student Exchange to Sustain Life on Earth.	Chabot Space and Science Center (Oakland, CA)	Science City (Calcutta, India)	Environmental Sustainability
2015-16	Youth Empowerment Through Social Practice Art: Strategies For Coping With Violence and Trauma.	Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (La Jolla, CA)	Museo Tamayo de Arte Contemporáneo (Mexico City, Mexico)	Strengthening Community
2015-16	Youth Mission to Mars: Exploring Space to Address Sustainability on Earth.	Space Center Houston (Houston, TX)	Cite de l'espace (Toulouse, France); Science Centre Singapore (Jurong East, Singapore)	Strengthening Community
2014-15	By the Work of Her Hands: Textile Arts in Morocco and the United States.	The Fabric Workshop and Museum (Philadelphia, PA)	Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies (Tangier, Morocco)	Cultural Heritage/Diversity
2014-15	Cities of Peace: Chicago and Phnom Penh.	Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (Chicago, IL)	Kraing Ta Chan Community Peace Learning Center (Kus Commune, Cambodia)	Strengthening Community
2014-15	Common Ground: Connecting Community Through Gardens.	Monterey County Agricultural & Rural Life Museum (King City, CA)	Casa Kimich Children's Museum (Copán, Honduras)	Environmental Sustainability

2014-15	Common Notes: Connecting Folk Traditions through Technology.	Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia (Charleston, WV)	"Alexandru Steriulescu" Gorj County Museum (Târgu Jiu, Romania)	Cultural Heritage/ Diversity
2014-15	Cultural Repercussions of Climate Change in Two Communities: A Teenage Viewpoint	Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA)	National Museum of Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)	Environmental Sustainability
2014-15	Defining Culture in Popular Culture.	Pearl S. Buck House National Historic Landmark (Perkasie, PA)	Pearl S. Buck Museum (Zhenjiang, China)	Strengthening Community
2014-15	eMammal International	North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (Raleigh, NC)	Museo de Paleontología (Guadalajara, Mexico); Bombay Natural History Society (Mumbai, India)	Environmental Sustainability
2014-15	Stories from the Home Planet (Historias de nuestro planeta).	James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)	Corporación Parque Explora (Medellin, Colombia)	Strengthening Community
2013-14	A Journey through the African Diaspora.	Prince George's African American Museum & Cultural Center (North Brentwood, MD)	Museu Afro-Brasil (Sao Paulo, Brazil)	Cultural Heritage/ Diversity
2013-14	Design Diaries International.	Minnesota Historical Society (Saint Paul, MN)	Palestinian Heritage Museum (Jerusalem, Palestinian Territories)	Civil/Equal Rights
2012-13	Girl Ambassadors for Human Rights.	International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (New York, NY)	Corporación parque por la paz Villa Grimaldi (Santiago, Chile); Tea Plantation Workers' Museum (Gampola, Sri Lanka); The Mathilda Joslyn Gage Foundation (Fayetteville, NY)	Civil/Equal Rights
2012-13	P.A.U.S.E.: Pollinators/Art/Urban Agriculture/Society/Environment	St. Louis Zoo (St. Louis, MO)	National Museums of Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya); Tohono Chul Park (Tucson, AZ)	Environmental Sustainability
2012-13	Written in Rock: Collaboration Among Azerbaijani and Pueblo Indian Communities.	Office of Policy and Analysis, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC)	Gobustan National Historical Artistic Preserve (Baku, Azerbaijan); National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, DC); Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (Albuquerque, NM)	Cultural Heritage/ Diversity
2011-12	Identities: Understanding Islam in a Cross-Cultural Context	Museum of History and Holocaust Education, Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw, GA)	Ben M'Sik Community Museum, Hassan II University (Casablanca, Morocco)	Audience Development
2011-12	Rainforest Leadership Academy: Cross-Cultural Teacher Training and Mentoring	California Science Center (Los Angeles, CA)	Maloka (Bogotá, Colombia)	Strengthening Community
2010-11	International Legacy Youth Leadership Project	Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Birmingham, AL)	The Apartheid Museum (Johannesburg, South Africa); The Mandela House (Soweto, South Africa)	Civil/Equal Rights

# Findings

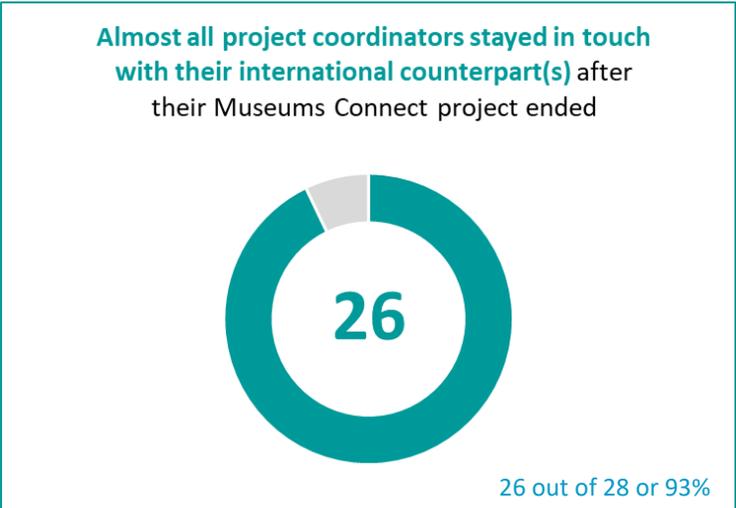
IES interviewed 28 project coordinators who had worked on a Museums Connect project at their U.S. institution.<sup>3</sup> All 28 had a major role in planning and implementing the project in their institution, and all traveled to the partner countries; however, three indicated they were not the lead person on the project, and one had a temporary association with the institution involved.

## Greatest take-aways from working with an international partner

When asked to talk about what they personally took away from their experience working with their counterparts abroad, U.S. coordinators said they benefitted in numerous ways:

### Learning about another culture

Eleven coordinators mentioned that in working on their Museums Connect project they learned about “cultural similarities and differences” between the United States and their partner country(s). Coordinators added that learning about the language, communication style, traditions, practices, and/or perspectives of their partner country(s) helped them better understand their counterparts, which in turn facilitated their work together.



### Developing meaningful relationships

Ten coordinators said their Museums Connect project gave them, as well as others on the project, the opportunity to develop “really meaningful relationships” with their international counterparts, and in some cases with their local collaborators as well. Among coordinators, these “personal bonds” had remained intact or had become “close friendships.” In fact, later in the interview, almost all coordinators said they stayed in touch with their international counterparts after their project ended; most

coordinators also noted that other museum staff and primary participants had similarly stayed in touch with their international counterparts (See Appendix D for a summary of these data).

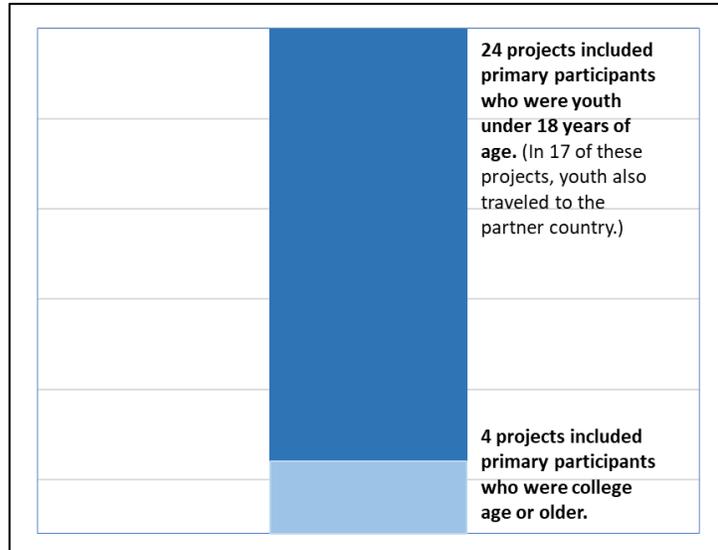
### Recognizing their potential to have wider impact

Nine coordinators said their Museums Connect project helped them recognize the potential of their institutions to expand their reach and have a wider impact i.e., beyond their local area or region. As one coordinator explained: “This got me thinking more globally in scope, and how some of the other work we do can include international partners.”

<sup>3</sup> Counts may sum to more than 28 because project coordinators offered more than one response to each question. In addition, counts may not total the sample size because coordinators were not required to answer every question.

### Realizing the benefits of bringing young people together

Eight coordinators said one of the most gratifying aspects of their Museums Connect project was seeing what happens “when you bring youth and teens together globally” and “create a space for them to connect and see how much they have in common.”



### Learning how other museums work

Seven coordinators mentioned that one of the greatest take-aways for them was learning how other museums operate, in particular the challenges they face in the socio-political and/or economic circumstances in which they work:

*I think we have a really strong sort of museology culture in the United States...I learned that American museums really have a social mission and they have an investment in maintaining their relevance to the community. (But for our counterparts abroad) it's a success to stay alive. They feel like they're really struggling with the political climate in Jerusalem.*

*This project made me appreciate what it's like to do the same work that we are doing here in just such a totally different context... (Our Ukrainian partners) have to sell themselves in a totally different way because they don't have the same granting opportunities that we have here.*

***“Lifelines” probably was the most challenging but the most exciting and most impactful project I’ve ever worked on in my entire 20+ year career.***

### Appreciating what it takes to implement an international collaboration

Six coordinators said that by working on their Museums Connect project they gained an appreciation for managing the logistics of an international collaboration, from building in enough time (“because culturally there are differences about what is a due date, but also their school schedules are different than ours”) and “the amount of effort it takes to coordinate resources” (for example, to obtain passports/visas for numerous travelers), to finding translators “both on our end and their end” and addressing technology issues, especially with museums in locations that do not have easy/any access to the internet.

The projects in the sample included partnerships with museums in 23 countries outside of the United States.



*The Museums Connect experience made the students realize how much bigger the world is. It's more than just America.*

*There was a lot of anxiety about traveling on the part of the students from each of our countries. And after their trips, almost to a person, they said, "I'd like to consider going into international work," or "I'd like to consider doing a degree overseas." It was as if a door had opened.*

## Shifts in practice after working with an international partner

U.S. coordinators were asked how their practice might have shifted as a result of working with their counterparts abroad, in particular how the cross-cultural aspect of the experience led to changes in the way they work in their home communities. In response, coordinators mentioned that Museums Connect:

### Refocused department/institution programming goals

Thirteen coordinators said that their experience highlighted the need—within their education department, if not the institution as a whole—to continue working on programs that focus on cross-cultural collaboration with partners abroad and/or with immigrant communities in the local area. Some coordinators also noted that their Museums Connect project served to emphasize the importance of engaging youth in “real world” opportunities. For a few, the theme of their Museums Connect project also elevated the importance of continuing to do programming in that area.

*Our (education) department is looking at our Girls Design the World project as a very successful model for how we could do other work with youth internationally. We probably would not have had the idea that we actually could do that had we not had this experience with Museums Connect.*

*Museums Connect prompted our museum to create a whole new initiative called “Global Connections,” which is looking at continuing international collaborations but focusing on the rich diversity that we have here in Connecticut. The work that we did in Brazil is shaping how we are developing an exhibit about the American experience from the immigrant contributions. We have communities north of Norwalk that are very heavily Brazilian and Ecuadorian and we are holding conversations with those communities to develop these exhibit experiences...*

*After Museums Connect, everyone from the president of the board of trustees to the people in security have understood that we are a leading organization when it comes to youth programming.... and we have slightly shifted the focus of (teen programs) to make sure that the arts are integrated with a social justice theme (because) we realized that it was critical to align formally with this theme to achieve the types of outcomes we wanted.*

### Encouraged new approaches to program development

Eight coordinators indicated that after working with their partners abroad they were encouraged to try new ways of developing programs. In particular, coordinators said they appreciated the ability of their partners to be resilient in challenging times, which encouraged coordinators to “get out of our mindset and look at things from different angles.” A few others said they learned how to tailor and share program content better with specific audiences.

*For me personally, it was a reminder that when I'm planning programming and looking at our exhibits and things like that, it pushed me a little bit to look outside of our regional focus of Cleveland, Tennessee, and try to pull in some of that international context, as well look for resources that are available internationally that are valuable to what we're doing here.*

*It changed the way I look at what we were doing, for example the importance of being bilingual, the importance of language acquisition in other cultures, and embedding that into everything we do here.*

### Increased sensitivity for partner perspectives

Seven coordinators noted that in working with their partners abroad they had developed greater “sensitivity” so that they now approached new partners with more appreciation for what they also contribute to a collaborative effort:

*Our project taught us that we can't go in like we're the white knights. We don't assume we know everything. We assume that our partners and neighborhoods and community groups bring a lot to the table...Not everyone has the same approach, and there are valid and complementary approaches in a partnership. You have to come to the table humble and open to conversation.*

*For many other projects, I'd seen that most museums working with outside partners, even community organizations in their own cities or neighborhoods tend to come as the big organization that's going to do something for that community without asking that community what they want and here Museums Connect structures the program in a way in which it's always a 50/50 conversation (to figure out) what are we all going to gain from this, how are all the resources going to be distributed, how are we all contributing to the project? And I think that's incredibly valuable because we need to be reminded that just because we have the dollars doesn't mean we get to write the rules.*

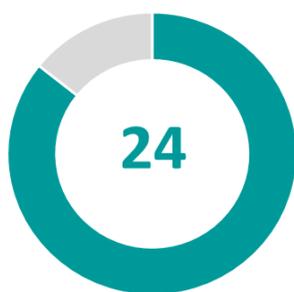
### Changed stakeholder involvement

Six coordinators said that their Museums Connect project changed the way they perceive and include community stakeholders in their work. In particular, coordinators mentioned that they benefitted from involving more people in more ways:

*Museums Connect made us very aware that there are lots of different organizations that we could be partnering with that we might not have originally thought about.*

*I think that it really did wake me up to the fact that in order for a project to have real impact and to be successful, you have to open your doors to collaborations and you need to have more people at the table aside from the museum staff. And diversity and young voices matter, they have to be at the table as well. Now, we definitely have more young people involved with our programming and our planning. We have interns sit in our staff meetings and do programming at the museum.*

**Most project coordinators pursued other cross-cultural or international work** after their Museums Connect project ended



24 out of 28 or 86%

### Improved project management abilities

Five coordinators said their Museums Connect project taught them how to manage “complex, multi-level projects” that involve many partners, varying schedules, time zones, and activities, as well as gave them the confidence to realize that “it’s not a huge scary thing to work on an international collaboration.” In fact, later in the interview, most coordinators said that they had gone on to pursue other cross-cultural or international work after their Museums Connect project ended. (Many noted that other museum staff with whom

they worked also pursued other cross-cultural or international work as well. See Appendix D).

## Shifts in global perspectives: project coordinators

U.S. coordinators were asked for “a-ha” moments when they felt their general perspective on the world had shifted as a result of working on Museums Connect. In response, coordinators echoed previous comments about their greatest take-aways, as well as reflected on other insights they gained:

### New awareness about partner country(s)

Fourteen coordinators mentioned moments during which they gained new awareness about the country with which they were working. These moments mainly occurred when they were visiting their partner country, but also occurred when partner teams were visiting them in the U.S. Many said “the opportunity to travel and to have visitors come here” expanded their understanding of the culture, customs, religion, geography, etc. of their partner country, i.e. more so than reading/hearing about it (see first quote below). Many talked about “seeing the issues on the ground” and learning about the particular challenges that their counterparts face with respect to the theme they were addressing in their projects (see second quote below).

*Bhutan is somewhat still closed off, it's a little bit of a hidden kingdom. They just brought in the internet and TV in like 1999. So you knew that it was going to be a different place... And sure enough it was. We went to a region in the south that normally westerners are not allowed in. And the people were thrilled and honored that we selected their village to work in. And these people are farmers. Eighty percent of the farming is subsistence farming and they have a little bit of cash crops that they sell. So we're not talking about people that have a lot of disposable income even in Bhutan terms and yet they were so open with us. They let us interview them for hours and they were so appreciative of the interest we had. It was a humbling experience.*

*When we were traveling to the research station deep in the Amazon, there were these barges that kept passing us with huge trees that were being transported down the river. And we learned from (our partner) that all of that was illegal. None of that was supposed to be happening, but there was no government enforcement. And so this was accelerating climate change. When we were there in November, they said it was literally five degrees warmer than it ever has been in the past, and it was very, very, very hot. So, the impact of climate change was really front and center for us because we were right here in this last major area (of the world) that is really the focus of a lot of conversations about climate change. To see these things in action changed all of us—our awareness and commitment to that.*

## New awareness about Americans/American youth

Nine coordinators mentioned moments during which they gained new awareness about Americans, in particular the students with whom they travelled. Some coordinators described situations when they realized how mature American youth are, including how well behaved and socially aware they are, as well as how they helped dispel their counterparts' pre-conceived ideas about American behavior (See first quote below). A few also mentioned their realization at the extent to which Americans are "insulated from and unaware of global issues and perspectives" (See second quote below).

*Our kids responded to (my South African counterpart) with "Yes, ma'am" and "No, ma'am." And she was actually kind of shocked. She was like, "You guys raise your children like we do." They were literally shocked at how well-behaved and how well-mannered our kids were, and it made us feel good. But at the same time, it made us feel like, "Wow, do Americans really come overseas and act up? Do we really act that way when we go to other people's countries?"*

*Our students wanted to act just like they would in the States and we had to explain that are issues with security. A lot of places in Nairobi have security guards at the entrances. So I think the safety concerns unfortunately were eye opening, and we had to make sure the students understood that it's not like being in St. Louis, it is a different country... And when we were in Nairobi National Park, there were some Maasai there and part of what they do is that they take a picture with you, but they're also looking for some payment for it. They are not just there to be in your pictures, they are also expecting something in return and we had to explain how people are sometimes trying to survive in these countries...*

## Connections primary participants made with their counterparts

For eight coordinators, the "a-ha" moments occurred when they saw primary participants meeting with their counterparts, and watched how they connected and found commonalities between their respective communities:

*In our project, we paired teachers, musicians, and students from each country to explore traditional forms of music and culture and then carry that forward into digital products so they were carrying forward the past into the future. The "a-ha" moment for me was when the Romanians came to West Virginia; we had set up a rehearsal schedule with them. You have to keep in mind that the Romanians do not speak English and the American musicians didn't speak Romanian and they didn't read music; they were very traditionally trained just by practice. And so I thought it was going to be a challenge getting them together and communicating about developing programs. But in the first rehearsal I was proven wrong. They immediately started playing together and they created a whole entire program in a couple of hours. They immediately bonded through music, they didn't need the language at all. And I knew we were on to something very important. It was an amazing experience.*

## Shifts in global perspectives: primary participants

Project coordinators were also asked to talk about any “a-ha” moments during which they perceived that others’ perspectives on the world had shifted as a result of working on their Museums Connect project. In response, coordinators mainly shared moments experienced by primary participants.

### Identified points of connection with others

Seventeen coordinators mentioned instances when primary participants had approached their counterparts *tabula rasa* and found points of connection or ways to identify with each other. In essence, primary participants realized the similarities they shared with their counterparts and, as a few coordinators noted, “built a bridge of diplomacy” with each other:

*I think that for our students the Museums Connect project really did expand how they relate to being black. I think they were kind of shocked that there were students that looked like them that live in a Latin American country. It definitely expanded their view of blackness in the Americas. And also that there were so many parallels in Brazilian history to African-American history in regards to the transatlantic slave trade, in regards to racial disparity in both countries, in regards to social justice movements. It was very powerful for them to learn they share that history.*

*I don't know that our students had any real thought as to what life was like in another country. When we were asking them questions about Honduras there wasn't a lot that they could answer. But when they were talking with each other on Skype, is that as different as (our countries are), there were similarities because the students did kind of share (the Spanish language), though there were times when they didn't quite get each other was saying. But then they would talk about a song they knew – one time they sang a song together from a TV show they all watch. So there were moments like that where they found common ground. And that was really cool.*

*We had two teachers from the Yurok tribe in Northern California that travelled with us to Colombia. There was one wonderful moment when we were down in the Amazon and one village was doing a ceremonial song and dance for us and one of Yurok teachers joined in—he is a drummer, and he started drumming with them. The villagers were surprised and pleased with just how much they had in common, that they sing these songs about their ancestors and the land and all of that.*



**14** coordinators spontaneously noted that **primary participants travelled abroad for the first time** as a result of their involvement in their Museums Connect project (another five coordinators also seemed to indicate this but did not state it directly).



**14** coordinators indicated that **primary participants went on to pursue other cross-cultural or international work** after their Museums Connect project ended (See Appendix D).

### Dispelled myths about others

Ten coordinators mentioned instances when primary participants had approached their counterparts with a number of preconceived notions and worked to “break down stereotypes” and “dispel myths,” and ultimately came away with new appreciation for other people/cultures.

*Each group had to do a little video about what they thought of (the other countries). When we were in France, we had all the American and French students in the room and they basically were like, “Americans just watch TV, play games, and are loud” and all the basic stereotypes. And then the American students were like, “Well, we always heard that French people stink and they’re stuck up, and they’re mean.” I mean, it got real. And then they talked it out, and they realized, “Well, we noticed everything is different and we know that this isn’t true anymore.” It was great they could be open about the stereotypes they had and come out of it as great friends.*

### Gained new awareness about themselves

Nine coordinators reflected on moments when the cross-cultural experience prompted primary participants to reflect on who they are and/or what they want to do with their lives. In several cases, participants’ new self-awareness was gained through learning about their cultural heritage, such as the experiences of their immigrant parents or the accomplishments of their ancestors:

*We visited an archaeological site that was built by Maya people 1,000 years ago, and the students literally walked into it and stopped and kind of looked around and said, “Oh, my gosh, this was built by my ancestors...” I think they were awestruck and had this expression on their faces of “Oh, my gosh, wow!” They knew they were going to be visiting these places and that it was going to be really neat, but I think being there and actually seeing their size and the immensity and how thousands of people visit these archaeological sites and that these visitors are sort of honoring the people who built these sites was a reaffirmation for them of “Wow, we come from these really incredible people and this is part of who we are.”*

### Gained new awareness about another country

Six coordinators said that primary participants’ “a-ha” moments came about when they learned the location, language, history, and other facts about their counterparts’ country:

*Were there moments that I observed that thinking about other cultures shifted? Yes, every day...A lot of our girls didn’t even know what Palestine was. And they had really no understanding of what the situation in East Jerusalem is. So for the American girls just even being able to find Jerusalem on a map was a real revelation. And then understanding the history and the story that is in Palestinian embroidery was really exciting to them, (they learned that) there’s so much symbolism and color in it.*

### Gained new appreciation for the United States

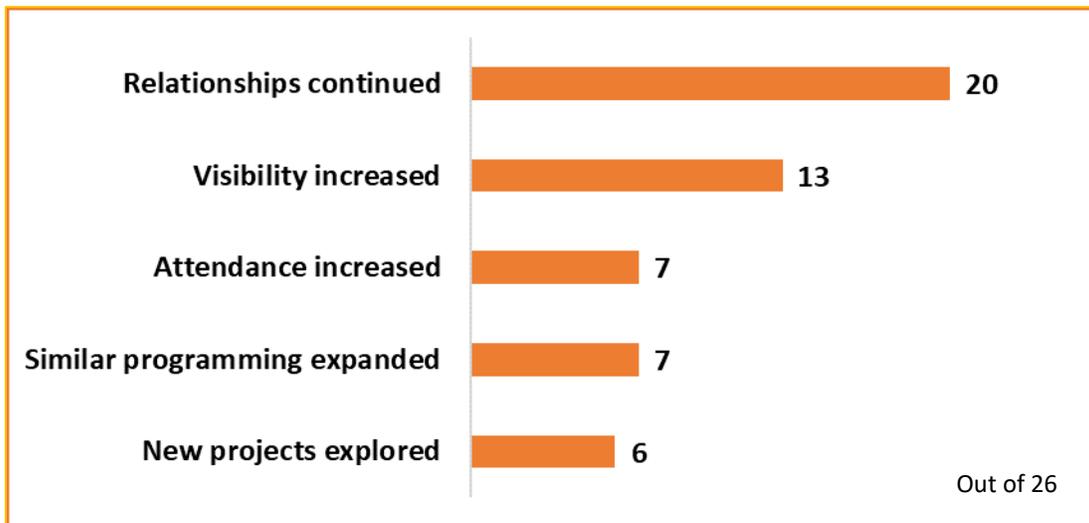
Five coordinators noted instances when primary participants gained new appreciation for the United States i.e., by witnessing some of the challenges their counterparts face in their lives:

*All of Kenya was an ‘aha’ moment but when the girls went to Mukuru (one of the biggest slums in Nairobi), they said, “Oh, my gosh! We worry that we don’t have the newest phone.” It really made some of them rethink how they thought about their own lives and needs. It was really profound.*

## Changes in engagement with local communities

When asked whether they saw a change in the way their local community engaged with their museum after the Museums Connect Project ended, 26 U.S. coordinators said “yes”; two felt they could not speak to that kind of outcome due to their particular role with the U.S. institutions involved.

Those who responded affirmatively were asked to describe what that engagement looked like; their responses are summarized in the table below:



### Relationships continued

Twenty coordinators explained that their relationships with local schools and/or community organizations with whom they had worked on their Museums Connect project continued; that is to say they collaborated again on projects that followed. About half of these relationships were new, i.e. they began working together because of Museums Connect. The other half of these relationships had existed prior to Museums Connect, and were strengthened as a result. A handful of coordinators noted that they also began relationships with additional/different schools who had not worked with their museums before but wanted to be involved in the next iteration of their Museums Connect projects. Indeed, as one coordinator noted, the Museums Connect project was a “game changer”:

*On a personal level we built these lifelong relationships and on a professional level, our Museums Connect project changed...how the surrounding community viewed the museum. After the project, the school system contracted the museum to implement our education programs. The students in “Culture Keepers,” our high school after-school program that was involved with the project had a culminating event where we unveiled the mural they had worked on. The mural was installed at Prince George’s County Public Schools’ main office. The superintendent came to the reception where the students talked about their experiences and (afterwards) he said he wanted to get us involved in his goal to make all the schools in Prince George’s County arts integrated. So we expanded “Culture Keepers” and went from serving one high school when the project happened (in 2013-14), to now serving 65 schools and over 4,000 students per year.*

### **Visibility increased**

Thirteen coordinators noted that their Museums Connect project “heightened the visibility” of their institution, offering comments like: “We had great media coverage so I think more people now see Pearl S. Buck House as a global organization,” and “Our project conveyed to our visitors, teachers, students, and community folks that our work is much broader and more diverse than just Holocaust history.” For a few of these institutions, the increased visibility in the community resulted in greater prominence in their larger organizations, especially those which are part of universities.

### **Attendance increased**

Seven coordinators indicated that their audiences and/or number of volunteers and members increased. As one coordinator stated: “We’ve seen an increased number of families bringing their children here and also families registering their children for other programs we offer.”

### **Similar programming expanded**

Seven coordinators said that their organization had added some of the events and activities they had created for their Museums Connect project to their regular programming (e.g., “Some of the events that we established as part of our project like ‘Party for the Ocean’ were things that we continued...”) In one instance, a museum obtained funding from another source to develop programming similar to that of their Museums Connect project so they could offer it to new groups.

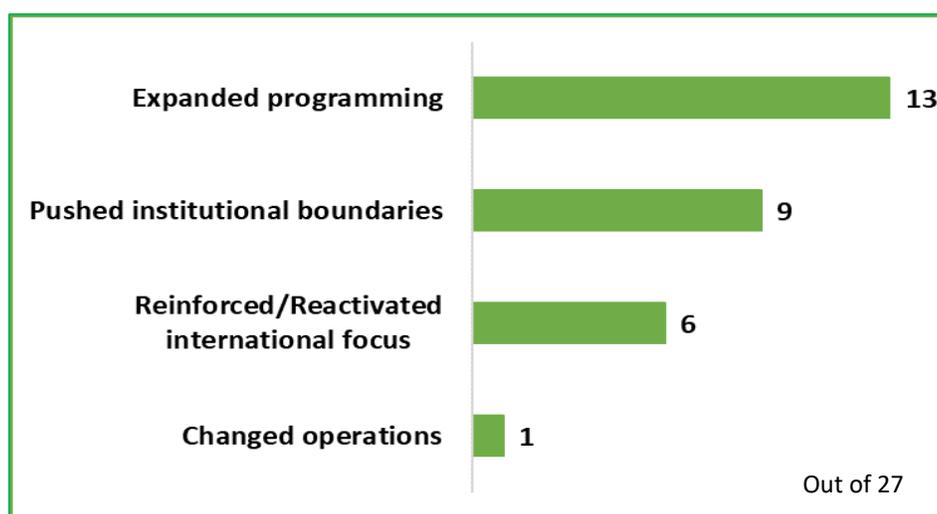
### **New projects explored**

Six coordinators mentioned that their Museums Connect project “opened up a number of different dialogues” with other community organizations, content experts, and/or funders to explore new ideas for projects and collaborations (e.g., “The Design Director at Target will now come to me and say, ‘I have an idea, can you connect with your textiles curator?’”)

## Changes in museums' thinking about their work/mission

U.S. project coordinators were asked whether their institution had been involved in global initiatives or cross-cultural projects prior to their work on their Museums Connect project.<sup>4</sup> In fact, while most coordinators noted that their museum had been involved in one or more international projects before, **21 said their Museums Connect project was the first time their museum had worked on something global/cross-cultural at a programmatic level**, that is to say through the education department. Of these, eight indicated that their Museums Connect project was also the first ever international project for their institution.

U. S. project coordinators were then asked how their Museums Connect project had changed their institution's thinking about their work and/or mission, to which 27 offered the following responses:



### Expanded programming

Thirteen coordinators mentioned that as a result of their Museums Connect project, they expanded their programming by “taking that very successful Museums Connect model and replicating it” with youth audiences and/or incorporating the cross-cultural exchange piece in other/new programs:

*We want to give a little bit more space in our programming to bring in more youth from different areas in the community to learn from each other and really explore who they are. So, one of the things that we're doing is creating a youth advisory board and bringing some of our (primary participant) girls back to be part of it, to help us shape more of our programming to attract more youth and to really address the issues that they face and at the same time they could help us address the issues that we face (in the museum). And the other thing is we want to do is replicate this cultural exchange at the state level—Michigan is a very segregated state with very different communities. For people who are really passionate about diversity and inter-cultural zones and social justice and anything that brings people of different backgrounds together...our museum has the opportunity to be part of the solution....*

<sup>4</sup> For purposes of this evaluation, this was defined as working actively in other countries, such as a substantive investment of staff, or exchange of exhibitions/collections, or implementation of research/resources that took significant money/time to plan and put into action.

### Pushed institutional boundaries

Nine coordinators mentioned that their Museums Connect project prompted their institution to look outwardly and expand their boundaries to audiences beyond their immediate community (see representative comment below). However, three of these coordinators said this outward look continued only in the short-term because executive staff who had championed doing more global/cross-cultural work left the institution and new staff “reverted to an inward focus.”

*Museums Connect was revolutionary for the museum team and their board, and the experience that the young women had was something that they were particularly interested in replicating... Funders and stakeholders were enthralled with the idea that this very small, very nascent historic site in upstate New York with 2.5 staff members, had made the project part of how they saw themselves, as an organization to be globally engaged... Often smaller historic sites turn inward, and... Museums Connect really did begin to redefine how the site thought of itself as an organization.*

### Reinforced/Reactivated international focus

Six coordinators mentioned either that “international work already sits within our institutional mission” or that “our mission is broad enough” so that their Museums Connect project essentially enhanced the kind of work they do and allowed them to put their international goals into action:

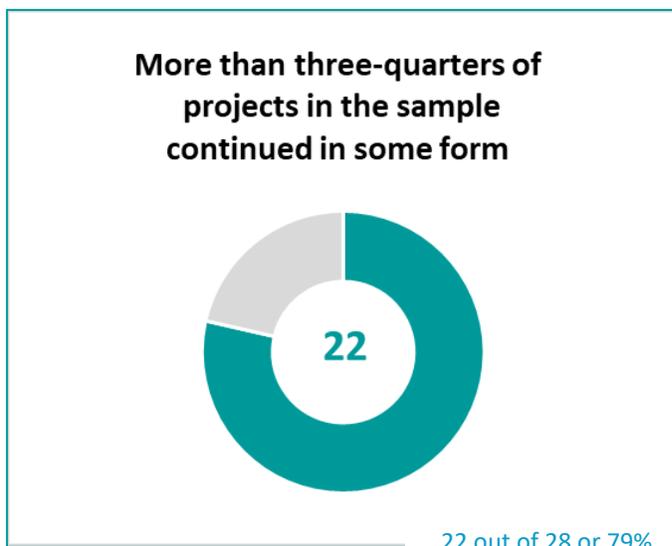
*Our Apprentice Program, which is what was involved in the project, has always been experiential in some way... While the program itself had not had an international component before, our museum is very connected to several communities, most notably the Portuguese communities of Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde, because of the connection through whaling... Museums Connect gave us some insights into how these cross-cultural experiences really can deepen students' engagement ...*

### Changed operations

One coordinator explained that their Museums Connect project inspired their institution to develop a new kind of membership model:

*To see (our partner organization) just always reinventing themselves... showed us the value in that and prompted us to think about organizational structure and program structure a lot. So our experience doing Museums Connect changed how we are operating. Our mission is to be affordable and accessible and so we felt like a membership system where you have to pay to play just to be recognized as a part of our organization wasn't what we were about... So we looked more at cohort models rather than what we have traditionally had which is like an institutional membership model where people pay \$40 per month and then they come and use the space. Instead we are doing smaller sorts of cohort incubations and giving a smaller group more ownership over the space for a certain amount of time and then bringing in the next small group of people. I think the work that's produced and the excitement around that has been really inspiring...*

## Other outcomes of Museums Connect



22 coordinators said their projects continued in some form. Of those:

**18** were implemented as a similar or modified program in the U.S. and/or abroad. Specifically, 16 continued locally (within the museum’s regional area) or in other states<sup>5</sup> and seven continued in the same countries and/or in new countries;

**10** resulted in a tangible product that was shared with the public. These products included: exhibits (three mentions), books (two mentions), curriculum guides (two mentions), gardens

(two mentions), films, oral histories, a website, a mural, and an animal database (one mention each).<sup>6</sup>

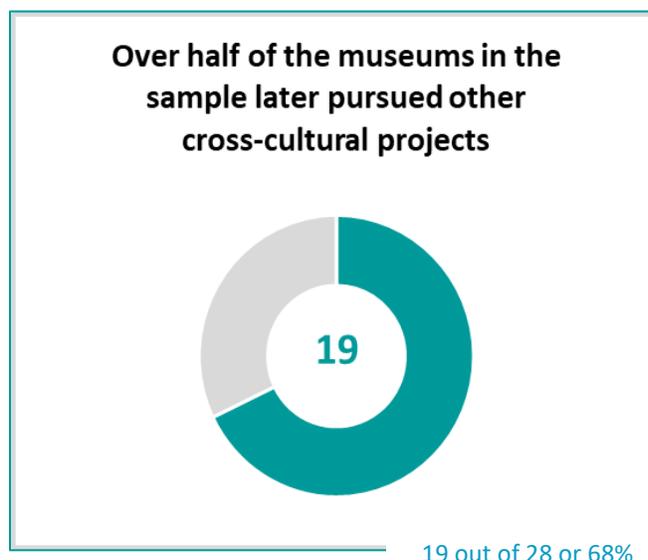
19 coordinators said their museums pursued other cross-cultural projects.

Of these:

**10** were international projects with new countries;

**8** involved outreach to specific immigrant groups within the local area that previously were not their target audience<sup>7</sup>;

**3** sought grants to pursue new international projects.



<sup>5</sup> Note: Eight of those programs were already in place prior to the Museums Connect grant.

<sup>6</sup> In seven of the projects, these products were produced during Museums Connect project activities that then continued to be disseminated/shared after the project ended.

<sup>7</sup> These included Somalian, Brazilian, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, and other Latino groups, as well as previously underserved Japanese-American, African-American, and Native American populations.



Photo 1: From the 2015 Museums Connect project, **Confronting Violence through Youth-Oriented Media**, AS220, Providence, Rhode Island & IZOLYATSIYA, Kiev, Ukraine



Photo 2: From the 2011 Museums Connect project, **Connecting Finnish and Adirondack Communities**, Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre, Vantaa, Finland & The Wild Center, Tupper Lake, New York



Photo 3: From the 2015 Museums Connect project, **Girls Design the World: Supporting Green Communities with STEAM**, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota & National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya



Photo 4: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Girl Ambassadors for Human Rights**, Corporacion Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi, Santiago, Chile; Sri Lanka Plantation Workers' Museum, Paradeka, Sri Lanka; The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Fayetteville, New York & International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York, New York



Photo 5: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Coral Reef Ambassadors**, National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium, Checheng, Pingtung, Taiwan & Birch Aquarium at Scripps, La Jolla, California



Photo 6: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Written in Rock: Collaboration among Azerbaijani and Pueblo Indian Communities**, Gobustan National Historical Artistic Preserve, Baku, Azerbaijan; National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Office of Policy and Analysis, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC & in collaboration with the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico



Photo 7: From the 2015 Museums Connect project, **Girls Design the World: Supporting Green Communities with STEAM**, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota & National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya



Photo 8: From the 2011 Museums Connect project, **Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity**, Museo de Arte de El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador & Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC



Photo 9: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Next Stop: Brooklyn/Dakar**, ImagiNationAfrika, Dakar, Senegal & Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn, New York



Photo 10: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Girl Ambassadors for Human Rights**, Corporacion Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi, Santiago, Chile; Sri Lanka Plantation Workers' Museum, Paradeka, Sri Lanka; The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Fayetteville, New York & International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York, New York



Photo 11: From the 2011 Museums Connect project, **At the Table: Connecting Culture, Conversation and Service in Latvia and the U.S.**, National History Museum of Latvia, Riga, Latvia & National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Photo 12: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **Muslim Women's Art and Voices**, The Women's Museum in Denmark, Aarhus, Denmark; The Ayala Museum, Manila, Philippines; Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates & International Museum of Women, San Francisco, California



Photo 13: From the 2012 Museums Connect project, **North-South: Art as a Tool to Mediate Political and Social Conflict**, Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Gyeonggi-Do, Korea & Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, California



Photo 14: From the 2010 Museums Connect project, **Sharing Biodiversity and Culture**, Tin Marín Children's Museum, San Salvador, El Salvador & The Discovery Museums, Acton, Massachusetts



Photo 15: From the 2011 Museums Connect project, **Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity**, Museo de Arte de El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador & Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC

## Appendix A-Initial email request for telephone interview about Museums Connect

Dear Museums Connect Program project coordinator,

My name is Kirsten Büchner and I am working with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) to provide an independent evaluation of the Museums Connect cross-cultural exchange program.

Specifically, we are interested in learning the extent to which the Museums Connect program has been effective in helping participating U.S. museums/cultural institutions build valuable and lasting relationships around the world. To do this, we have carefully selected 30 projects to ensure a broadly representative sample of Museums Connect projects and would like to **conduct a telephone interview with you**, as the U.S. point of contact, for the [insert year] project [insert project name].

**This message is to schedule a good day/time to speak over the next several days.** The conversation is estimated to take about **20-25 minutes**. Please let me know a time that will work best for you from the choices listed below, including a phone number where you can be reached:

[Insert list of available dates and times here]

Please let me know if there are other days/times (for example, evenings after 7 p.m. EST or the weekend) that would be more convenient so we can try to line up our schedules accordingly. Please also let me know if you are not at all available/able to be interviewed so we can take you off our call list.

Below is some additional information about the study we are conducting and how the findings will be used.

Thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to speaking with you soon!

Kirsten Büchner  
Insight Evaluation Services  
[www.insighte.net](http://www.insighte.net)

e: [XXXXXXXX@insighte.net](mailto:XXXXXXXX@insighte.net)  
m: 703-XXX XXX

**Purpose of the study**

*The purpose of this study is to learn the extent to which the Museums Connect program has been effective in helping participating U.S. museums/cultural institutions build valuable and lasting relationships around the world. Specifically, we are interested in assessing how the Museums Connect program has (1) provided participating museum staff and project participants with new appreciation for the benefits of international collaboration, and (2) increased long term interest in global initiatives among participating museum staff and project participants.*

**Procedure**

*You will be telephoned and asked a series of questions about the Museums Connect project your institution was awarded and for which you were the project coordinator. With your consent, the conversation may be recorded in order to ensure that your responses are captured accurately. Results will only be presented in aggregate form, your name will not be attached in any way to interview responses, and all data will be secured on a password protected computer. The interview should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.*

**Potential risks**

*Participation in this study poses minimal risk to you. The interview is confidential and all information collected is password protected.*

**Potential benefits**

*Your participation in the interview may help you to reflect on your own experience in the Museums Connect project. It will also provide AAM with information about the extent to which the Museums Connect project accomplished its main goals and objectives, and how cross-cultural collaborations may continue to be encouraged and supported.*

**Participation and withdrawal**

*Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to be interviewed, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Your decision whether or not to be interviewed will not have an impact on current or future relations with AAM.*

**Confidentiality**

*Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using aggregated data, password protection of files, and names will not be attached in any way to interview responses.*

## Appendix B-Project Coordinator Telephone Interview Guide

*Hello, this is Kirsten Buchner, calling you about your Museums Connect project. Is this still a good time for you? [Ask to reschedule if not.] I also wanted to just let you know that this call is being recorded in order to ensure your responses are captured accurately. Is that ok with you? [Type responses if not.] Finally, I want to reassure you that you will remain anonymous. All responses will be aggregated for report purposes and your individual responses will not be attributed to you without obtaining express permission beforehand. Ok, let's get started.*

*First, I'd like to talk about the larger impacts that working on the Museums Connect Project had on you.*

What was the single greatest take away for you personally in terms of your experience working with an **international** partner?

How did the experience of working with an international partner shift **your practice**, if at all? (Probes: To what extent did the **cross-cultural** aspect of the project help you in the work that you do now in your home community? How is the non-US/international perspective responsible for the shift in practice?)

Were there any "a-ha" moments where you felt like your general perspective **on the world** shifted as a result of working on this project? Those moments could have occurred during or after the project.

Did you observe those kinds of "a-ha" moments among other stakeholders (e.g., staff, primary participants, community members) where you realized that **their thinking about other cultures** had shifted?

*Now I just want to touch on the relationship between your museum and your local community ...*

Did you see a change in the way your local community engaged with your museum as a result of your MC project? (Did they stay involved with you in any capacity after the project ended?)  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If Yes: Please describe. (Probe: What did that work look like? Was there sustained engagement in the weeks and months after the MC project ended?)

*Now thinking about the impact that the MC project had on your museum/institution...*

Was your museum/institution involved in **global initiatives or cross-cultural projects** prior to the MC project?  Yes  No

How did **this cross-cultural experience** change your institution's thinking about the work it does and/or its mission? (Does the museum now have more of a global lens?)

Did the MC project you worked on continue in some form?  Yes  No

If yes: Please tell me about that.

Have you/your museum pursued any other cross-cultural projects since MC?  Yes  No

*Finally, I want to ask you about cross-cultural connections on the part of other staff, primary participants and community members...*

Have other museum staff, youth/primary participants, and community members stayed in touch with their international counterparts after the project ended?

Staff:  Yes  No

Youth/primary participants:  Yes  No

Community members:  Yes  No

Do you know whether other museum staff, youth/primary participants, and community members went on to pursue other cross-cultural projects or international work?

Staff:  Yes  No

Youth/primary participants:  Yes  No

Community members:  Yes  No

**Thank you for your time, your feedback is very much appreciated!**

## Appendix C— Complete Museums Connect project list

### Themes

*Museums Connect supported projects that addressed a critical issue within a specified set of themes. Each theme listed below represents a category based on the types of themes defined each year by the US department of State’s Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and the American Alliance of Museums which were presented during the application announcement of each Museums Connect cycle. A “strong secondary theme” may be listed, but only the “general theme” was used for the purpose of sample selection.*

Cultural Heritage/Diversity  
Audience Development  
Environmental Sustainability  
Civil/Equal Rights  
Strengthening Community  
Technology Access & Use  
Economic Empowerment

### 2016

#### **Lifelines/Aspectos Vitais: The Convergence of Arts, Ecology and Culture in the Amazon and New England**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Stepping Stones Museum for Children, Norwalk, Connecticut
- Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Belém, Brazil

Utilizing an Arts in Environmental Education model, approximately 50 American and Brazilian high school students and approximately four teachers will be immersed in an international exploration of watersheds as ecological, cultural, and economic lifelines. After forming teams, a watershed-focused artwork exchange between the teams will open the project. Reciprocal travel exchanges will include visits to museum host cities, a research station in the Caxiuanã National Forest of the Brazilian Amazon, study cruises on the Long Island Sound, and visits to historic maritime communities along the Connecticut coastline. Travel exchanges will combine scientific and cultural activities and will culminate in arts-based presentations to the public. Digital storytelling projects following each exchange will enable participants to reflect upon these experiences and develop a plan to transfer what they have learned to younger children within their communities. The project will culminate with exhibitions (online and onsite) at both museums.

#### **Maya from the Margins: Archives and Experiences of History, Identity, and Migration**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Archivo General de Estado de Yucatán, Mérida, Mexico

The story of the Maya diaspora transcends geo-political borders, and expressions of Maya culture are influenced by the various places where they have settled. Maya from the Margins is designed to empower minority communities through the recuperation of historical identities, particularly Maya communities that have been disenfranchised through the destruction of ancestral artifacts. Through social media and creative online discussions, approximately 20 Maya high school students from North Carolina and Yucatán (10/region) will collaboratively produce a museum exhibit focusing on the themes of history, identity, and migration. As amateur archivists, students will examine historical documents that inform what it means to be an indigenous Maya person and have deep historical roots while considering the impacts of migration on indigenous identities. The exhibit will travel with both cohorts of students to each country, where students will present their research to their home communities.

### **Reel Stories**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan
- Palestinian Heritage Museum, Jerusalem

Reel Stories aims to empower young people by improving the confidence, accomplishments, and imagery of marginalized girls and young women in the communities of metro Detroit and Jerusalem. This project offers joint programming for a total of 40 teenage girls, ages 14-17 (20/region) who are underserved in the arts. Participants will learn the art of filmmaking, and share their experiences with one another and their counterparts overseas via closed social media outlets, Skype, and immersive cultural exchange. In addition to technical skill-building in film production, sessions will facilitate dialogue on gender and empowerment, identity and culture, and civic participation. Courses will culminate in a series of public film screenings in Michigan at the Arab American National Museum and in Jerusalem at the Palestinian Heritage Museum.

### **Waterways: Connecting Communities**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Museum Center at Five Points, Cleveland, Tennessee
- Museo de Bellas Artes de la Boca de Artistas Argentinos Benito Quinquela Martin, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Waterways affect the economic, social, cultural, and artistic developments of regions. In many communities, they influence peoples' complex cultural identities, which are, in some ways, tied to these waters. This project engages upwards of 400 teens, aged 14-17, from schools in southeast Tennessee and Buenos Aires to study their waterways in order to develop a greater appreciation of water and to encourage environmentally sustainable habits. Teens from both communities will conduct historic and environmental research on their local rivers, as well as study artistic and cultural connections, in order to identify the similarities that connect them. Approximately eight students from each country will travel for an in-person exchange, while all of the teens will share their stories via virtual meetings, a shared website, online and

on-site exhibits, a community awareness campaign, community festivals at both locations, and public art projects.

### **Weaving Strands of Knowledge: Connecting Culture and Science to Climate Change**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Montshire Museum of Science, Norwich, Vermont
- Folk Heritage Museum, Thimpu, Bhutan

This project will engage two culturally distinct communities in rural New England and Bhutan in conversations and knowledge sharing focused on urgent issues of environmental sustainability. An international team of 10 college students (five/region) will collect personal stories of the impact environmental change is having on the lives of people in their countries. They will co-curate their collection during face-to-face cultural exchange visits and over a virtual platform. This work will help global community members merge scientific data with local narratives of environmental change; help university-aged students to understand the importance of integrating different knowledge systems into community-based science learning and dialogue; and bring international communities together to create programming that enhances understanding of environmental sustainability. The project will culminate with two full-day environmental sustainability awareness festivals (one at each museum) using the personal narratives collected to stimulate conversations at the local, regional and global level.

### **Youth Innovate Community Solutions**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, New York, New York
- Corporación Parque Explora, Medellín, Colombia

Youth Innovate Community Solutions will connect approximately 25 underserved Latino teens from New York City and approximately 25 at-risk young adults in Medellín, Colombia, aged 14-21. Working as a team, these youth will explore challenges that their respective communities face. Together, they will develop creative solutions that apply science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) and link their scientific knowledge with real-world community needs. The teams will communicate regularly via video conferences and social media tools, such as blog posts (in English and Spanish), and social mapping technology. Through this project, youth will gain global 21st-century skills and learn to work collaboratively, while developing social awareness and a deeper understanding of one another's cultures. The shared experiences of youth in Medellín and New York City will provide inspiration, build community, and empower project participants to apply scientific knowledge to real-life, everyday challenges.

**2015**

### **Confronting Violence through Youth-Oriented Media**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- AS220 (a non-profit community arts center), Providence, Rhode Island
- IZOLYATSIA, Kiev, Ukraine

This project will bring Ukrainian youth who have been affected by conflict in their country together with disadvantaged Rhode Island youth to explore how the use of youth-oriented media can channel their experiences in a positive and empowering way. At a Summer Lab Intensive Workshop, participants will learn new media techniques, such as 3D modeling, game design, laser cutting and small scale model building. The project will result in a website, as well as exhibitions in both cities that will be created and installed by the participants. Ten students, ages 16 to 18, from each country will participate, and four university students, ages 20 – 25, will serve as mentors throughout the project.

### **Connecting Coastal Communities: An International Dialogue about Ocean Conservation & Ecotourism**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Old Dartmouth Historical Society - New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts
- Husavik Whale Museum, Husavik, Iceland

Despite their social and cultural differences, students in New Bedford and Husavik come from similar coastal communities with maritime economies. Both share a deep history of ties to whales as economic generators and cultural symbols. In this project, teenagers in Husavik and New Bedford will explore their mutual economic and cultural heritage within the context of their ocean environments. The students will organize community and school events to celebrate whales in their local waters and share points of view about protecting the ocean and the creatures living in it, while also debating whale-based tourism and harvesting whales for economic purposes. High school students ages 15-18 in each country (18 in the U.S. and nine in Iceland) will form an “Ocean Crew.” They will receive instruction in whale science, biology and ocean ecology. The students will create public programs, including a “whale readathon” for children, a family-centered “Whale Celebration Day,” and a project website featuring the students’ digital presentations. In addition to the environmental theme, this program supports the 2015-2017 U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

### **Dialogues in the African Diaspora: Youth Reclaiming Community, Identity and Memory**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, New York, New York
- National Museum Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica

The formation of the African diaspora resultant from slavery tragically erased the history of entire peoples. This project aims to recover and preserve the diasporic history associated with

the rural community of Nonsuch, Jamaica and the urban community of San Juan Hills in Manhattan, New York. Through creative discussions and learning about the historical conditions that disadvantaged these two communities, the 30-40 middle school students participating in this project will reclaim a history that has been submerged over time and reconnect with their past as a means of better understanding the present and empowering their futures. The teens will learn how to use archival sources and conduct interviews with elderly residents in their respective communities as they develop compelling digital videos and art works. They will create exhibitions in their communities to display the results of their work. They will also create a bound written text of the history that they will recover through the project, assemble tours of relevant historical sites and design a curriculum about this history for future middle school students.

### **Girls Design the World: Supporting Green Communities with STEAM**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights (strong secondary theme: Environmental Sustainability)

- Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

Design thinking is an effective tool for brainstorming and prototyping creative solutions to solve practical problems. The fields of science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, benefit from the inclusion of the artistic process, or STEAM, and empower girls to imagine creative solutions to challenges in their communities. STEAM can encompass a range of contexts from the development of household goods to urban planning. Though it originates in the engineering field, STEAM also involves the creative processes of brainstorming, sketching and modeling that precede the creation of a final product. Fifteen to 20 girls in Minneapolis and Nairobi will investigate how their cities are impacted by environmental issues in order to create and prototype ways to address those issues. They will conduct interviews with people impacted by environmental problems in their respective cities as well as create ten projects (five at each museum) featuring plans, sketches, models and charts. The participants will also produce a video for screening at exhibitions and distribution to schools, as well as plan an exhibition of their prototypes as part of a community event.

### **Hacking Space: A Student Exchange to Sustain Life on Earth**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Chabot Space and Science Center, Oakland, California
- Science City, West Bengal, India

According to the United Nations, the Earth's population is expected to reach nine billion by 2050. This population growth will inevitably impact the ways in which human beings manage resources and adapt to environmental changes. The purpose of this project is to bring together 16 students ages 15-18 in the United States and India to generate potential strategies for environmental sustainability on Earth by focusing on the lessons learned from attempted space travel. Many technologies devised for the purpose of space exploration have been adapted to meet needs on Earth, including medical devices, solar panels and water purification systems, to name a few examples. This project will encourage students in both countries to develop

projects focusing on using space travel technology to address sustainability on Earth. Participants will create workshops for museum visitors and a web site to demonstrate the applicability of space travel innovations to addressing the issue of environmental sustainability on our planet.

### **Youth Empowerment through Social Practice Art: Strategies for Coping with Violence and Trauma**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, California
- Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City, Mexico

Young people in America and Mexico experience violence or the threat of violence in their communities, a significant social issue that impacts our countries and communities in profound ways. This project enables youth to find meaning and expression through the power of the arts and empowers them to envision solutions through creative interventions. This project will connect 40 teens (20 in each country) from underserved areas around San Diego and Mexico City with social practice artists who specialize in film and photography and have experience working with teens while addressing issues of social and political violence. The projects that the youth produce will examine the impact of violence on teen lives. The teens themselves will select a theme within violence, such as intra-familial violence, dating violence, gangs and cartels or gun use as the focus of their artistic work. They also will create a short documentary film and mount a public exhibition in both countries.

### **Youth Mission to Mars: Exploring Space to Address Sustainability on Earth**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Environmental Sustainability)

- Space Center Houston, Houston, Texas
- Cite de l'espace, Toulouse, France
- Science Center, Singapore

Space is a global enterprise. Space science and technology bring together people, resources, ideas and talents from many different countries and cultures from all over the world. Fifty disadvantaged students each from Houston, Texas; Toulouse, France; and Singapore, ages 15 – 16 will collaborate to plan a mission to establish a human base on Mars. They will investigate the cultural requirements for sustaining human life on Mars, develop a “chart of life on Mars,” and train on the basics of Mars science in order to design specific products or processes for providing the air, water, energy and nutrition needed to support human life on Mars. In the process, they will discover parallels between sustaining life on Mars and on Earth. By targeting disadvantaged youth and girls, the project aims to expose new audiences to the fascination of outer space. The students will collaborate throughout the year and participate in a three week STEM course consisting of engaging lessons and activities, videos of Mars scientists, learning games and student discussions. They will carry out team projects, culminating in a “Live the Mission” summit in Houston.

## 2014

### **By the Work of Her Hands: Textile Arts in Morocco and the United States**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies, Tangier, Morocco
- The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

College students in Morocco and Philadelphia will document oral histories from female embroidery artists and quilt-makers in the Au Grain de Sesame Collective in Morocco and the Quilters of Color Collective in Brooklyn, New York to weave stories and preserve a legacy of unique textile traditions through an online catalogue of the textile artists' work, an exhibition to be displayed in both locations, and a joint textile project that is a symbolic tapestry of common origins in these distinct textile art forms.

### **Cities of Peace: Chicago and Phnom Penh**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Kraing Ta Chan Community Peace Learning Center, Kus Commune, Cambodia
- Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Chicago, Illinois

Teens in Chicago and Phnom Penh will engage in various justice practices, including advanced training for youth peace-builders, production of a documentary film, and a Youth Peace Summit in Phnom Penh, to advance social equality and community healing.

### **Citizen-Led Urban Environmental Restoration**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Natural History Museum of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica
- Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, Miami, Florida

Through an exploration, with local scientist, of common environmental issues such as invasive species, sea-level rise, urban sprawl, and climate change, high school students in Jamaica and Miami will engage in urban habitat restoration and conservation practices to earn digital badges for completed assignments and activities.

### **Common Ground: Connecting Community through Gardens**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Casa K'inich Children's Museum, Copan, Honduras
- Monterey County Agricultural & Rural Life Museum, King City, California

To nurture knowledge and awareness of environmental conservation, students between the ages of 9 and 11, teachers, and community service organizations in Honduras and California will engage in the planning and care of an organic garden to forge common bonds around agricultural heritage, cultivate a lifelong appreciation for the natural environment, and educate children about their attendant responsibilities through a gardening curriculum that shares the rich agricultural bounty of these countries.

### **Common Notes: Connecting Folk Traditions through Technology**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- "Alexandru Stefulescu" Gorj County Museum, Târgu Jiu, Romania
- Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia, Charleston, West Virginia

Common Notes delves into the roots of folk music in Romania and West Virginia to enrich the lives of teens through the transcendent power of music, a language that has no boundaries, and inspire an online musical mash-up, a synthesis of the assonance and dissonance of their music, as well as public concerts.

### **Cultural Repercussions of Climate Change in Two Communities: A Teenage Viewpoint**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- National Museum of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The model WINS (Women in Natural Sciences) program at the Academy of Natural Sciences will serve as a launching point to empower high school girls in Philadelphia and Ulaanbaatar, working in partnership with scientists, to engage in a deeper understanding of climate education through scientific research, discovery, and enrichment; develop an after-school program curriculum about climate change; and will guide the visitor experience as Explainers in both museums.

### **Defining Culture in Popular Culture**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity)

- Pearl S. Buck Museum, Zhenjiang, China
- Pearl S. Buck House National Historic Landmark, Perkasi, Pennsylvania

Using Pearl S. Buck as inspiration, high school students will unearth stereotypes and prejudices that persist today between the two cultures in the media and popular culture; participate in youth leadership training about creative problem-solving, global vision understanding, and strategic decision-making; and initiate a community service project to champion Buck's ideals.

### **e-Mammal International**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Museo de Paleontologia in Mexico, Guadalajara, Mexico
- Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai, India
- North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, North Carolina

E-mammal International unites 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students in a global-citizen-scientist comparative study in Mexico, India, and North Carolina that will employ camera traps in schools to document animal population sizes, activation patterns, and habitat use and use the results to

inform an e-Mammal website accessible to a network of scientists worldwide in order to illuminate universal understanding of biodiversity.

### **Stories from the Home Planet (Historias de nuestro Planeta)**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Environmental Sustainability)

- Corporación Parque Explora, Medellin, Colombia
- James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Stories from the Home Planet invites teachers, their K-through-12 students, and the larger local communities to map bilingual planetarium programming and develop a curriculum focusing on the ways in which astronomy can foretell stories on environmental change and impact.

## **2013**

### **A Journey through the African Diaspora**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Museu Afro-Brasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- Prince George's African American Museum & Cultural Center, North Brentwood, Maryland

In celebration and exploration of the African American experience throughout the Americas, teams of high school students, teacher liaisons and teaching artists compare and contrast the history and impact of the African diaspora in Sao Paulo and Maryland's Prince George's County and collaborate on mural projects and exhibits in each location to showcase their findings in their communities.

### **Ancient Shores, Changing Tides—Developing Local Archaeological Heritage Expertise**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Palawan State University Museum, Palawan, Philippines
- Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Seattle, Washington

Local residents work together to develop resources to protect their fragile marine environments, preserve their archaeological heritage and revitalize traditional cultural practices while exploring methods for sustainable tourism.

### **Design Diaries International**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- Palestinian Heritage Museum, Jerusalem
- Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Young women representing diverse populations in Jerusalem and Minnesota's Twin Cities investigate the subtext of clothing in their regions and reflect on their museums' rich textile collections along with historical context provided by older generations to design garments that reflect their unique identities. Using their knowledge and designs, they dialogue with their partners about the meaning of clothing in their lives and how it shapes their personal, and even national, identities.

### **emPOWER Parents: Fostering Cross Cultural Networks between Families with Autism**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- Museo ICO, Madrid, Spain
- Queens Museum of Art, Queens, New York

Museums in Madrid and Queens support the creation of a bi-national network of parent advocates, giving parents of children with autism the resources to affect institutionalized change in both countries, request improved programming in schools and include their children's learning styles in community programs. Participating parents gain skills in teaching and behavioral methods, lead programs with other local families and maintain and disseminate resources in both English and Spanish to share their knowledge with a global audience.

### **Flag Stories: Citizenship Unbound**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Islamic Art Museum of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- SOMArts Cultural Center, San Francisco, California

Youth from Muslim, intercultural, refugee and immigrant communities in Kuala Lumpur and San Francisco interpret flags and cultural insignia through hands-on art production and storytelling; create new visual and multimedia representations of national, personal and cultural identity; and present public artworks in target community locations.

### **From the Ground Up: Nutritional Values and Cultural Connections**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Gidan Makama Museum Kano, Kano, Nigeria
- Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

High school students learn about nutrition, cooking and cultural food traditions by following local food from farm to table and creating recipe books that reflect the traditional recipes of their regions and cultures.

### **Forest Guardians**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Sicán National Museum, Ferreñafe, Peru
- Zoological Society of San Diego, San Diego, California
- Working with Three Mountain Alliance, Līhu'e, Hawaii

Communities in Peru and Hawaii build ecological literacy, cultural knowledge and environmental stewardship using a new model for conservation education in a network of schools that demonstrate a commitment to environmental action and to developing students' understanding of conservation in a global, multicultural context.

### **Rethinking Home: Climate Change in New York and Samoa**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Environmental Sustainability)

- Museum of Samoa, Apia, Samoa
- American Museum of Natural History, New York City

Residents from both regions with homes in coastal areas impacted by hurricanes share their personal and community experiences through in-person dialogue sessions and virtual conversations to produce an online exhibition, a mobile app and cross-cultural educational resources to better adapt to changing weather patterns and manage the impact and resources in the aftermath of severe storms.

### **Scaling the Walls/Escalando Paredes: Creating Urban Green Spaces**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability (strong secondary theme: Strengthening Community)

- Interactive Science Museum, Quito, Ecuador
- Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Teenagers in Quito and Pittsburgh explore the environmental, social and economic impacts of food systems on local and global communities to consider solutions to the health and environmental challenges facing their crowded, urban neighborhoods and create easily implemented designs for planters that can host edibles for residents with little access to fresh food or green spaces.

### **Turning the Table: Understanding Cross-Cultural Movements**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Ateneo de Yucatán, Mérida, Mexico
- Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, Texas

Using tables as a metaphor for bringing people and cultures together—whether to eat, create or resolve differences—high school students from Mérida, Mexico and San Antonio along with local artists explore their communities' cultural movements and adaptations over time through community meetings and workshops as well as oral history collection and present their artistic interpretations of community change through local and virtual exhibitions.

## 2012

### **Coral Reef Ambassadors**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium, Checheng, Pingtung, Taiwan
- Birch Aquarium at Scripps, La Jolla, California

Classrooms in Pingtung and San Diego utilized live coral reef tanks representing systems from the two countries to engage youth in hands-on, cutting-edge science and develop cross-cultural research and conservation skills critical to the future of these crucial marine ecosystems.

### **Digital Skies Student Partnership**

General theme: Technology Access/Use

- Hong Kong Space Museum, Hong Kong
- Chabot Space & Science Center, Oakland, California

Cross-cultural teams from Oakland and Hong Kong explored differences and commonalities in Western and Chinese astronomy and participate in career development workshops that highlight career paths in astronomy and space sciences.

### **Girl Ambassadors for Human Rights**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- Corporacion Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi, Santiago, Chile
- Sri Lanka Plantation Workers' Museum, Paradeka, Sri Lanka
- The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Fayetteville, New York
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York, New York

Using the unique histories of women's struggles for gender equality and human rights represented by three members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, young women in New York, Chile and Sri Lanka engaged in ongoing virtual and in-person dialogues about gender issues past and present as well as across cultures.

### **Muslim Women's Art and Voices**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- The Women's Museum in Denmark, Aarhus, Denmark
- The Ayala Museum, Manila, Philippines
- Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- International Museum of Women, San Francisco, California

Through an online exhibition, a new generation of Muslim women shared their perspectives and ideas, addressing myths and prejudices and fostering understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims in the U.S. and globally. Participants created and curated art and multimedia to

raise public awareness in their communities and beyond about the richness and diversity of their lives, ideas and identities.

### **Next Stop: Brooklyn/Dakar**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity)

- ImagiNationAfrika, Dakar, Senegal
- Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn, New York

Young adults in the cultural hubs of Dakar and Brooklyn investigated the current and historical impact of migration in their two communities, as well as the roles of migrants in shaping a national cultural identity, by thinking about the issue from the perspectives of local youth.

### **North-South: Art as a Tool to Mediate Political and Social Conflict**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Gyeonggi-Do, Korea
- Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, California

Teenagers living near the Demilitarized Zone in Korea and in neighborhoods affected by the Norteno-Sureno gang warfare in northern California explored the realities of one another's lives, reconsidered their environments from the perspectives of their peers abroad and created collaborative art that reflects their circumstances, identities and communities.

### **Object Stories Exchange**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Museo Nacional de San Carlos, Mexico City, Mexico
- Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon

Middle school students engaged in a year-long dialogue about their heritage, community and traditions by telling stories about objects, both their own personal possessions and those in the museums' collections. Using these objects as a starting point, the youth shared information about people, places, events and personalities important to them and to their larger communities.

### **P.A.U.S.E.: Pollinators/Art/Urban Agriculture/Society/and the Environment**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya
- Tohono Chul Park, Tucson, Arizona
- St. Louis Zoo, St. Louis, Missouri

Youth from three urban centers joined forces with community organizers to lead learning events on urban gardening, native pollinators and artistic creation. Teams of participants then worked together to design and build citizen-managed gardens and pollinator habitats on vacant or abandoned land in each city.

### **Past to Present: U.S.-Sino Bridge of Connection**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Jianchuan Museum Cluster, Chengdu, Sichuan, China
- Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii

Using the era of American-Chinese collaboration in the 1940s as a backdrop, high school students acted as amateur historians, conducting research on the American Volunteer Group/Flying Tigers of the Chinese Air Force and interviewing elders in their communities about World War II and its impact.

### **Written in Rock: Collaboration among Azerbaijani and Pueblo Indian Communities**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Gobustan National Historical Artistic Preserve, Baku, Azerbaijan
- National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
- Office of Policy and Analysis, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
- In collaboration with the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Members of the Pueblo Indian communities in Albuquerque and individuals from Azerbaijan worked together with archeologists and conservationists specializing in the study of petroglyphs—human-made carvings on rock surfaces—to tackle preservation challenges, share cultural perspectives and generate techniques for community outreach to ensure the future of these powerful yet fragile monuments of our common human history.

## **2011**

### **At the Table: Connecting Culture, Conversation and Service in Latvia and the U.S.**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- National History Museum of Latvia, Riga, Latvia
- National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Through oral histories with community leaders, service projects and meaningful dialogues, high school students worked together to increase understanding across cultures, foster a sense of civic responsibility and inspire acts of civic engagement.

### **Community of Conservation: Research Exchange Experiences for Global Youth**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary them: Environmental Sustainability)

- National Museum of Niger Boubou Hama, Niamey, Niger
- Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, Illinois

Middle school students conducted original conservation research projects that explored concepts in animal behavior and ecological biodiversity. As they shared their findings, they learned about the similarities and differences between their local wildlife experiences and their cultures.

### **Identities: Understanding Islam in a Cross-Cultural Context**

General theme: Audience Development (strong secondary theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity)

- Ben M'Sik Community Museum, Casablanca, Morocco
- Museum of History and Holocaust Education, Kennesaw, Georgia

Citizens of Georgia and Casablanca explored what it means to be Muslim in the U.S. and Morocco by collecting oral histories and sharing their findings with members of their own communities and with their partners abroad in hopes of moving beyond stereotypes and judgment.

### **Not Just Another Building on the Street**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Parco Astronomico InfiniTo, Pino Torinese, Italy
- Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center, Shreveport, Louisiana

Two years after Italian and American teens collaborated on a planetarium rock opera that reflected both their individual cultures and their knowledge of science and technology, astronomy teachers in the two regions reconnected to develop a planetarium program that addressed educational needs in their classrooms and provided students with formal and informal learning opportunities.

### **Nuclear Weapons Testing Legacy: The Tale of Two Cultures**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Karaganda Ecological Museum, Karaganda, Kazakhstan
- National Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas, Nevada

Students living near former nuclear-testing sites collected oral histories and radiation data, interpreted the lingering effects of the testing and explored how their two very different societies respond to their common challenges.

### **Rainforest Leadership Academy: Cross-Cultural Teacher Training and Mentoring**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Maloka, Bogota, Colombia
- California Science Center, Los Angeles, California

Mentor teachers from urban- and rainforest-based school districts collaboratively developed materials for teacher trainings and student activities. As the teachers trained their colleagues in inquiry-based science lessons, cross-cultural teams of students shared information about the diversity of the rainforests and cultures in their regions.

### **Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Museo de Arte de El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador
- Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC

Youth in El Salvador and Salvadoran-American youth used art as a means to communicate about themes such as self, family, tradition, community and migration while creating awareness of their personal and collective identities and cultural heritage.

### **Watch Your Waste e-Museum**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- The Children’s Museum Jordan, Amman, Jordan
- Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan

To call attention to the worldwide dilemma of increasing waste production and foster solutions, middle school students acted as amateur archaeologists, photographing, filming and describing their own families’ garbage and researching how the approach to waste has changed over generations.

## **2010**

### **Building a Transatlantic Bridge**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- LVR-Industriemuseum, Oberhausen, Germany
- Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Connected by their common industrial heritage, high school students in Greensburg and Oberhausen used blank journals as a platform to share art, poetry and stories about themselves and their cities. The journals formed the basis of student-curated and marketed exhibitions in both museums.

### **Connecting Finnish and Adirondack Communities**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability (strong secondary theme: Strengthening Community)

- Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre, Vantaa, Finland
- The Wild Center, Tupper Lake, New York

Responding to a shared concern about the effects of climate change on their winter cultures, lifestyles and economies, museums and communities in the Adirondacks and Finland joined forces to increase awareness and explore how they can work to limit the impact of this trend.

### **From the Adirondacks to the Middle of the World**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Museo de la Ciudad, Quito, Ecuador
- World Awareness Children’s Museum, Glens Falls, New York

Through art and video conferencing, youth in Ecuador and New York explored the challenges faced by their communities and their own role in addressing them. The partners developed traveling culture kits filled with art, videos and an associated curriculum for use in the museums’ outreach programs.

### **In Their Own Voices**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- National Museums of Kenya, Lamu, Kenya
- Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

With the help of museums and local community members, children in Cincinnati and Lamu learned to document oral histories and traditions with digital and virtual tools. As they discovered more about their own cultural heritage, they shared their stories and learned from those of their peers abroad.

### **International Legacy Youth Leadership Project**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- The Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa
- The Mandela House, Soweto, South Africa
- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham, Alabama

Youth from Alabama and South Africa explored the parallels between the civil rights movement in Birmingham and the anti-apartheid struggle in Soweto, the role of youth in promoting social change and the implications of their societies’ past on contemporary life.

### **iShare: Connecting Museums and Communities East and West**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- National Taiwan Museum, Taipei City, Taiwan
- University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, Boulder, Colorado

Two indigenous communities—Navajo Nation in the U.S. and the Paiwan people of Taiwan—guided the development of iShare, a collaborative online application intended to provide remote access to collections of tribal objects, document aspects of intangible cultural heritage and share information with the public.

### **Navigating Difference: Transatlantic Dialogues on Immigration**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Le Bois du Cazier, Marcinelle, Belgium

- Galata Maritime Museum, Genoa, Italy
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York City
- Ellis Island Immigration Museum, New York City

Members of three immigrant communities shared their experiences of identity, assimilation and discrimination through dialogue and public programs while an interactive installation at each museum collected visitors' personal reflections and opinions on immigration.

### **Sharing Biodiversity and Culture**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Tin Marín Children's Museum, San Salvador, El Salvador
- The Discovery Museums, Acton, Massachusetts

Using art, autobiographies and video conferencing, third and fourth graders in these two countries learned about one another's cultures and traditions, explored the biodiversity of their regions, and expanded their knowledge of the environmental concerns in their local communities.

### **Young Women Speaking the Economy**

General theme: Civil/Equal Rights

- The Women's Museum in Denmark, Aarhus, Denmark
- The Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines
- Sudanese Women's Museum, Omdurman, Sudan
- International Museum of Women, San Francisco, California

Young women from four countries used social media and online applications to discuss their perspectives on everything from careers and work-life balance to weathering financial hardship and combating gender discrimination.

## **2009**

### **Carrying Traditions Across the Waters of Time: Ainu & Pacific Northwest Cultural Collaborations**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- Ainu Association of Hokkaido, Sapporo, Japan
- Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Seattle, Washington

With a shared desire to preserve their unique cultures in a fast-paced, technologically advanced world, tribal representatives from indigenous coastal communities in Washington State and Sapporo, Japan worked together to preserve and promote traditional cultural knowledge for future generations.

### **Creating Community Collaboration**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Ben M'Sik Community Museum, Casablanca, Morocco
- Museum of History and Holocaust Education, Kennesaw, Georgia

Citizens of Georgia and Casablanca explored what it means to be Muslim in the U.S. and Morocco by collecting oral histories and sharing their findings with members of their own communities and with their partners abroad in hopes of moving beyond stereotypes and judgment.

### **Not Just Another Brick in the Wall: Engaging Italian & American Teens**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Parco Astronomico InfiniTo, Pino Torinese, Italy
- Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center, Shreveport, Louisiana

Two years after Italian and American teens collaborated on a planetarium rock opera that reflected both their individual cultures and their knowledge of science and technology, astronomy teachers in the two regions reconnected to develop a planetarium program that addressed educational needs in their classrooms and provided students with formal and informal learning opportunities.

### **Water: Using the Common Tie that Binds**

General theme: Environmental Sustainability

- Bendery City Museum of Ethnography & Natural History, Bendery, Moldova
- Roger Ehnstrom Nature Center, Wahpeton, North Dakota

Residents of river cities in North Dakota and Moldova joined forces to learn how to better manage their waterways, raise awareness of water conservation and evaluate its impact on their environments, cultures and sustainability.

### **We, the People: Afghanistan, America & the Minority Imprint**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul, Afghanistan
- National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A diverse group of high school students from Philadelphia and Afghanistan captured images reflecting their interpretations of concepts such as dissent, freedom and democracy in their countries. The photos turned into an exhibition that highlighted the amazing similarities the students found between citizens of these two very different multiethnic societies.

**2008**

**Dear Mr. Mandela, Dear Ms. Parks**

General theme: Strengthening Community (strong secondary theme: Civil/Equal Rights)

- Nelson Mandela Museum, Mthatha, South Africa
- Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, Michigan

Using letters written by children to Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela, the two museums and their partner communities raised awareness of the deep parallels between the struggles for racial justice in the United States and South Africa.

**Indo-U.S. Science Center Diversity**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- National Council of Science Museums, Kolkata, India
- Science City, Bangalore, India
- New York Hall of Science, Queens, New York

Museum staff worked together to increase access to science and science-education careers for underrepresented youth in both countries by sharing youth-program best practices and creating new and innovative demonstrations to improve the experiences of young volunteers and audiences.

**Inside/Outside/North & South**

General theme: Cultural Heritage/Diversity

- El Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore, La Paz, Bolivia
- Gallery "Casa del Caballero Aguila," Puebla, Mexico
- Museo de las Americas, Denver, Colorado

High school students from local majority and minority ethnic groups created visual, oral and literary components representing their personal experiences with stereotyping and prejudice for a multimedia art exhibition that traveled to all three museums.

**Promoting Volunteerism in Dushanbe**

General theme: Strengthening Community

- Dushanbe Zoo, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- Black Pine Animal Park, Albion, Indiana

After one of their Tajik pen pals was injured while visiting the Dushanbe Zoo, students in Fort Wayne, Ind. found a nearby sponsor organization, the Black Pine Animal Park, with whom they could work to help the zoo prevent future accidents. Partners developed youth-run volunteer corps to improve the safety of the animal exhibits and provide a more family-friendly visitor experience at both locations.

## Appendix D—Project coordinator responses about cross-cultural connections and pursuits

### Who stayed in touch with their international counterpart(s)?

	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	Info. not available
<b>Project coordinator</b>	26	2	---	---	---
<b>Other museum staff</b>	20	1	2	1	4
<b>Primary participants</b>	22	2	3	---	1
<b>Community members*</b>	8	3	5	11	1

### Who pursued other international work?

	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	Info. not available
<b>Project coordinator</b>	24	4	---	---	---
<b>Other museum staff</b>	17	4	2	1	4
<b>Primary participants</b>	14	7	7	---	---
<b>Community members*</b>	9	2	7	10	---

\*Community members include other cultural and community organizations, local government agencies, school districts, teachers, artists, content experts and/or consultants who collaborated with museums on their Museums Connect projects. In most cases, community members did not travel with museum staff and primary participants to their partner countries. As such, they would not have stayed in touch with their international counterparts (i.e., they did not have that kind of interaction during the project so the question was not applicable).