

Looking Ahead: **Innovations and Actions**

17 Museums x 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)
in Austrian Museums

"Climate engagement should be internal and external."

"Museums can set the pulse to inspire climate actions."

A Global Webinar on Museum Action during the UN Climate Week 2022 by:



American
Alliance of
Museums



Environment and Climate



ICOM international
council
of museums
Österreich

"The Environment and Climate Professional Network of the American Alliance of Museums is a volunteer community working to establish museums as leaders in environmental stewardship, sustainability, and climate action."

Resources:

-  17 Museum 17 SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
-  Microclimates - A Greener Future for Collection Care



The 17 X 17 SDGs project has demonstrated a diverse outline of the many ways that museums can work from their strength as museums to turn high-level efforts such as UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into meaningful and positive actions. It has cultivated open mindsets and created an impact internally to the museum teams and externally to the visitors and communities.



Laura Huerta Migus

Office of Museum Services,
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Overview

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) cultivates museum leaders through education, advocacy, and service. A sustainability and climate action initiative, AAM's Environment and Climate Network has brought meaningful programs such as:

Sustainability Excellence Awards. These awards celebrate museums reputable for energy efficiency, carbon/waste reduction, climate action, and creative design and programming.

Sustainable Exhibition Design and Construction Toolkit. This guidance encourages organizations to start with low-hanging fruit, defining and improving the sustainability of their exhibitions in ways that are most important to their communities and institutions.

Climate Week Webinar. This program explores SDGs as part of the museum DNAs with thought leaders around the world, starting with Hong

Watch the Event Recording
English



Kong and Australia (2020), to Columbia, Canada, Brazil, and UK (2021), to this year with Austria (2022).

In this year's program, ICOM Austria introduced their pilot program 17 X 17 SDGs as well as three case studies presented by museum leaders. Since its inception, this program has received interest in Switzerland and Germany and ten Viennese museums have signed on to "dig deeper" into the SDG framework. Let many flowers bloom.



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September 22, 2022

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What roles can a museum take in the society today? The COVID-19 crisis and exacerbated climate conditions around the world have prompted museums to think beyond their traditional role of cultural preservation. Today, ICOM Austria is leading a discussion on how museums can make visible and long-lasting contribution to the sustainability and solidarity of the society.

How has ICOM Austria led this discussion?

Through a pilot program called 17 museums x 17 SDGs (17 X 17), a climate and sustainability action engagement project, Bettina Leidl, Doris Rothauer, and their team helped museum participants strengthen their work for the community guided by Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through a lottery of 17 SDGs to 17 selected museums. ICOM Austria organized online workshops that gathered leaders across departments of each of the museums to learn about SDGs, discuss impact management, and brainstorm relevant programming ideas. Participating museums staff then co-created concrete programs that improved museum internal operations as well as those that engaged stakeholders and the public.

What has 17 X 17 found? Participating museums reflected that they reached a wider audience, received positive feedback from stakeholders and visitors, and raised more awareness of the complexity of SDGs within the own teams. After the program, many museums identified their unique ability to create a platform for discussions on pressing social issues and to support community solutions at a local level. Because of an overall positive experience, museums also uncovered more incentives and opportunities to curate future exhibitions on SDGs related topics.

Since the pilot program was a huge success, ICOM Austria is extending its program to the rest of Austria and even internationally.



1. Graz Museum, Graz

Graz Museum is a city history museum located south of Vienna in Graz, the second largest city in Austria. The museum brings forward contemporary issues such as democracy, human rights, social justice, and ecological awareness.

SDG 14: Life Below Water.

Approaches and Programs:

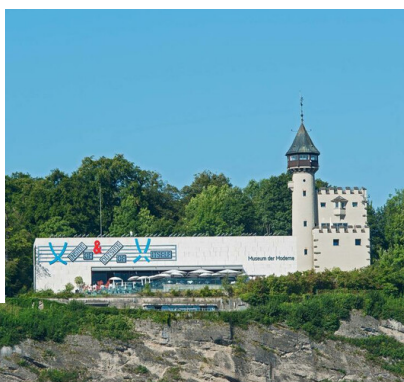
1. Recognize the relevance of the marine environment to Graz Museum.
2. Invite a local artist to curate an exhibit on plastic pollution in the ocean.
3. Develop a permanent installation called "Graz is by the sea" to educate the public in a land-locked city.

Takeaways

- A creative, open mind is key. Micro-plastic destroying water quality is relevant to the industrial history of Graz. The museum makes the connection of their river Mur running through Graz that eventually drains into the Black Sea.
- Graz Museum wants to keep demonstrating its social responsibility. 17 X 17 has not only raised staff's awareness and the potential of the SDGs, but also inspired the museum to create a new project on sustainable cities and communities.



**Museum der Moderne
Salzburg, Salzburg**



2. Museum der Moderne, Salzburg

Museum der Moderne is a mid-sized modern and contemporary art museum at a mountain location overlooking the city of Salzburg, where Mozart grew up. **SDG 2: Zero Hunger.**

Approaches and Programs:

1. Build a diverse and multi-functional project team.
2. Raise awareness among museum staff about the hunger issue: share knowledge, recipes, and practice food waste prevention.
3. Establish the museum as a platform for discussion, education, and strengthen partnership building by communicating the topic of world hunger and food waste, co-programmed with other neighboring museums and NGOs (e.g., fundraising, exhibition, hunger and food themed event fair).

Takeaways

- Create programs, such as food boxes, beyond the traditional art exhibitions to help the museum reach new audiences.
- 17X17 inspires the museum to do completely new programs such as farm-to-table cooking and new world hunger related films. Now, the museum has changed its own café menu to include local and fair-trade ingredients, integrates SDGs as a mission statement, and continues to build a forum for debate on global development topics. It is currently seeking Ecolabel for its facility.



**Österreichische Galerie
Belvedere, Wien**



3. Belvedere Palace Gallerie, Vienna

Belvedere is a complex of preserved Baroque palaces and gardens, contemporary house, and modern pavilions in the nation's capital.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

Approaches and Programs:

1. Build a team to coordinate 17 X 17 programming from public relations, community outreach, marketing, facility management, and tour management.
2. Install gender neutral toilet and create green Belvedere on the website.
3. Formulate the core education project as a free, self-guided booklet tour that puts a sustainability lens on its art and architecture. Set the impulse to inspire by making a video trailer on social media.

Takeaways

- Water is abundant on museum grounds and in its own art collection but there are questions as to how to engage deeply. Museum is not here to give answers but to provide motivation. Art can set an impulse.
- Start a process from within about sustainability practice by hearing insights from people together from different internal departments.
- Recognize that sustainability includes a social dimension, and that communicating such topics also means keeping language and messaging short and simple to reach as many people as possible.

In Closing

Since its release in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework from the United Nations has proved enormously adaptable. Not only are governments and NGOs embrace the framework, companies and businesses are increasingly referencing it to guide reporting and assessments.

Although the U.S. and Austrian museums are many thousands of physical miles apart, they can still apply these principles in different locales with an eye towards enhancing community benefits. The format is replicable in many North

American regions. The simultaneous internal and external focus accomplished by the Austrian museums is laudable, done within the span of a year. Every museum can take its mission/vision statement and 'dig deeper', as echoed in the webinar. There are always new partners to visit and new audience to engage, both inside and outside of the museum. Let inspirations bloom.



Left: A branding example of 17 x 17 SDGs



UN Climate Week Webinar 2022

New York 23 SEP 11:00–12:30 |

Vienna 23 SEP 17:00–18:30 |

London 23 SEP 16:00–17:30

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Green Museums
Community Network

graz
museum



Museum der Moderne
Salzburg

belvedere



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