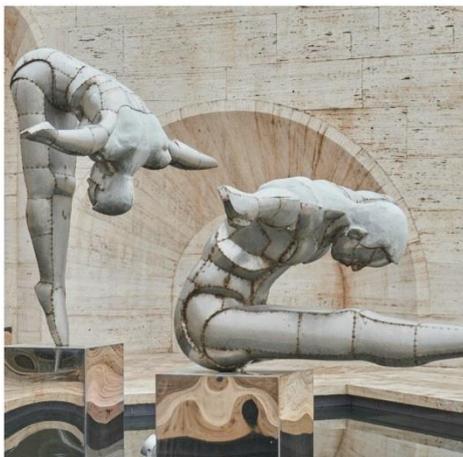# Toolkit for working with New Audiences

A project inspired by *Museum, Education and Learning* Conference, hosted by Museum Education Centre Armenia, Manchester Art Gallery and the British Museum

Held at the Cafesjian Centre for the Arts and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
24-28 October 2016

The Colour of Sound
Toolkit Introduction

In October 2016 colleagues from the British Museum, Manchester Art Gallery and the Museum Education Centre in Armenia hosted the *Museum, Education and Learning Workshop*, held at the Cafesjian Centre for the Arts in Yerevan, Armenia.

Museum professionals from UK Museums, Armenian institutes, and International Training Programme (ITP) Fellows from institutes in Egypt, India, Lebanon and Turkey took part in the workshop. Four project frameworks were created under the following categories:
- Family Learning
- Older Audiences
- Teen Engagement
- New audiences

These projects were created by groups of international museum professionals and will be implemented by museum educators from across Armenian institutions in Yerevan. This toolkit will be an essential resource for each group, providing guidelines and points for discussion for colleagues who are working in different countries but are invested in one project.

The Colour of Sound Project Group consisted of:

Emma Croft – British Museum, UK
Tugba Tanyeri Erdemir – Middle East Technical University, Turkey
Christine Fischer – Grassi Museum, Germany
Nairi Khachadourian – Komitas Museum-Institute, Armenia
Narine Khachaturyan – Hovhannes Toumanian Museum, Armenia
Anahit Mikayelyan – Sergei Paradjanov Museum, Armenia
Artavazd Zakyan – Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reservation, Armenia

The group brief was to create a project which would involve working with new audiences. Discussions throughout the week revealed that university students in Armenia were an overlooked and often misjudged audience, due to assumptions that as adults starting out in academia, students are already regular museum visitors. According to Armenian colleagues, there is in fact a steep drop in museum visits as those who were active and engaged visitors as children will drift away from institutions as they enter full-time higher education. Furthermore, students do not take advantage of the rich resources Armenian museums offer, such as archives, libraries and collections in storage, which could help their research.

The workshop group had a strong Armenian presence, particularly from museums with a rich collection of Armenian folk or popular culture which deeply informed the final project. Due to a resurgence of interest in Armenian folk and popular heritage among young people, both within the country and internationally, this was an ideal area for the project to focus on.

Furthermore, an exhibition currently in development between group members on archaeology, music and its role in daily life and contemporary culture meant the project already had strong foundations on which to build.

Armenian Context - Setting the scene in Armenia

Think about how your context affects your line of work?

There are approximately 120 museums in Armenia, around half of which are in the capital, Yerevan. Although Armenia's museums are concentrated within the capital city, a large amount of the country's registered material and non-material heritage can be found in the surrounding 10 provinces.   Most of the museums in Armenia are non-commercial state organisations run by various ministries and governmental bodies of the Republic of Armenia. A small number of private museums are under the authority of different foundations and non-governmental organisations. Generally museums in Armenia work towards gaining a balance of advocacy and investment from governmental and private bodies to centralise the support of culture whilst involving Armenian citizens and businesses in their heritage.

As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it a very specific cultural policy, in recent decades new legislation has emerged on cultural and intangible heritage and policy. This policy is more in-keeping with the interests of the independent state. Discussing Armenian cultural values and creating a precise policy for the citizens of the country is a current topic and a very important point of discussion for museum and heritage professionals in Armenia.

Specific policies regulating the work of museums and the cultural sector in Armenia is a developing area; over-riding goals for new policies within the sector include maintaining and replenishing Armenian cultural heritage, and developing and promoting heritage through a variety of institutions, museums being one of them.

More information can be found via the following links:

Compendium
http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries-quick-facts.php?pcid=1030

Regional Co-operation for Cultural Heritage Development
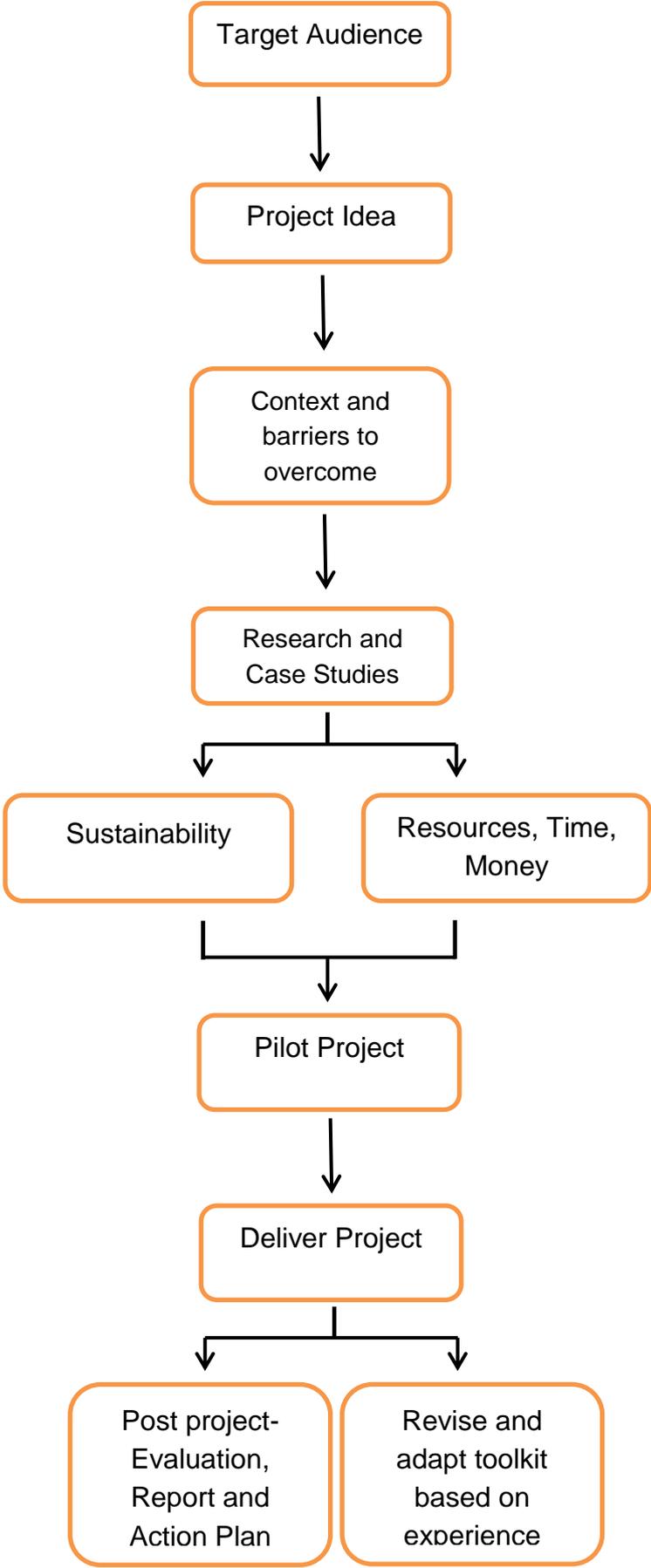http://rcchd.icomos.org.ge/?l=E&m=4-4&JID=2&AID=13

Ministry of Culture for Republic of Armenia
http://mincult.am/hiistory_and_culture_monuments_protection_agency.html

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2. What is the project?

Project scope

Create a project outline that briefly explains your plans.

The Colour of Sound is a video-based interpretation project – a series of creative video responses to museum objects on Armenian folk culture, designed, developed and delivered primarily by university students.

An example of a similar creative project, in this instance with schools, can be found in the British Museum's "Talking Objects" programme: https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/community_collaborations/partnerships/talking_objects/talking_objects_toolkit/what_is_talking_objects.aspx

The Colour of Sound is intended as a complementary programme for an exhibition already in development on Armenian folk culture and archaeology – a collaboration between the Komitas Museum Institute, Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reservation and other Armenian museums.

It is an interdisciplinary, international project, focusing in the first instance on cooperation between museums and universities in Armenia and Turkey.

The aim is to investigate the musical heritage of Armenia, such as the music of Komitas Vardapet or the art works of Sergej Paradjanov, and its connection to other regions and countries, alongside its archaeological history.

The project aims to work closely together with students, a target group which is not easy to reach for a museum. The museums in this project will try to attract their target audience via contemporary media.

In the first project phase the students are asked to research in archives and museums about an object of their choice from the collections of exhibition partners, focusing on the topic of Armenian musical heritage. In the second phase, students will translate their results into a visual language, creating short films together with a visual artist. This way they can use old audio or visual databases, as well as modern media and their own material. These will serve as a basis for longer group films to be integrated into permanent exhibitions currently under

development in Armenia and eventually in Turkey. A public presentation will be followed by an event programme for the students, friends, families and visitors, to celebrate success.

If the project is successful in Armenia and Turkey it could be transferred into other European countries, because of the strong link of the Armenian artists to Europe.

An international collaboration – the Armenia and Turkey element
A selected group of Turkish university students will be partially involved in the *Colour of Sound* project. The Turkish component will involve university students from a selected university in Turkey (they would also be taking a class for credit). The Turkish students would be conducting online research (not hands on); they would be corresponding with their Armenian counterparts (students) via Skype / Facetime; and would be contributing to the creative content production actively (preparing music videos, online sharing on YouTube and/or similar interactive socia-media venues). The Turkish students would be graded at the end of the semester, and a few successful ones (depending on the funding) would be granted a short cooperative study trip to Armenia, with a chance to meet their counterparts in Yerevan.

Why Armenia and Turkey?
Our primary aim was to engage university student age-groups to museum projects / studies. In the context of Armenia and Turkey this is the most important age-group if one hopes to develop sustainable bridge-building and peace-making strategies between these countries. The universality of music would provide a very suitable concept to formulate active discussions between Turkish and Armenian university students. The historical dimension would allow them to ponder shared (if frequently contested) histories, providing an affective space for empathy. The contemporary dimension is also of importance, as music plays a very important role in any young person's life -wherever they may be, and whatever their perspective in life. Thus, contemporary (pop / hip hop / rock etc.) music would be a bridge-building medium between involved parties. The development of online museum-exhibits and social media platforms would substantially popularize the outcomes of this project. As such, it would have a much larger impact on the global target age group.

3. Your target audience

3.1 <u>**Who are the group you are referring to?**</u>

University students in Armenia and Turkey

<u>What are the interests and needs of the target group?</u>

To develop research skills - university students who are usually limited to library resources and the internet to research their chosen subject will be able to use museum collections and archives to carry out project work.
To invest time in what they are interested in - students interested in Armenian folk and popular heritage will be given behind the scenes access to produce research.
To use different technologies - students will create a film out of their research.
To be creative - the project can be a creative outlet for students studying subjects which are essay heavy or more logic based.

<u>What are the benefits of targeting this group?</u>

- Why are you working with university students?

To re-establish connections that may have been lost as childhood visitors become adults and move into higher education.

To encourage partnerships between museums and universities.

Create and develop mutually beneficial relationships – students can broaden their understanding of their subject, share interests with other audiences, gain university credits and access to special events and programmes. Museums can gain insight and expand knowledge of their collections, as well as support for their on-going projects and a new influx of visitors.

- Why now?

Due to a resurgence of interest in Armenian folk and popular heritage among young people, now is the ideal time for certain museums in Armenia to use their resources to build relationships with university students.

- What do you hope to achieve?

A collaborative research project between museums in Armenia and Turkey, and universities in Armenia and Turkey (in the first instance), to encourage student engagement with museum collections and archives.

3.2 <u>**Engaging your target audience**</u>

<u>What will the museums' relationship be with this audience?</u>

The museums will act as project managers – providing resources such as collections, in-house teams (for PR and marketing, as well as design if possible) and creating the framework and scope for the research projects along with university staff.

Museums will work closely with university staff acting as co-mentors to students, and also provide research support through curatorial staff. Relationships between university staff, museum curators and students will be mutually beneficial, with gains in subject knowledge, access to academic resources, and the potential for future collaborations.

While students will not be involved in the larger (exhibition) project's formation, preparation workshops delivered in partner universities and museums will give students a greater, proactive role in how their creative projects will take shape.

They will also be able to act as honorary 'curators', with a strong influence on which objects are chosen and the disciplinary angle taken.

How might engaging your target audience be difficult and what will you do to counteract these difficulties-

Difficulties engaging university staff with an already full workload
The need to make students feel like full and equal partners

What can your institutions offer them?

- Sergey Parajanov Museum

'As home to S. Parajanov, director of the film *The Colour of Pomegranate*, a film about Medieval Armenia through the eyes of an 18th century poet/musician, the Sergey Parajanov Museum has a strong musical connection. Music is incredibly important to the aesthetic of the film, because there is no dialogue the music is particularly symbolic. In this project the role of the S. Parajanov museum will be to teach students about the art of film. Parajanov was a unique man and as a result engaged audiences from all generations and is therefore an excellent bridge into the museum world.
We live in a time when access to information is, for the most part, easy to reach; it is important to teach students how to find and select was is good and useful information. Through a recent project we recieved new technology, which allowed us to do and share different projects with our colleagues from different places in the world, this is something we could replicate with the Colour of Sound project.'
Anahit Mikayelyan – [Sergei Paradjanov Museum](#)

- Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reservation

'The Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reservation has a varied archaeological store, based on the work we do we our collection we would help museums with musical objects. In cooperation with other museums in Armenia, who have a collection of musical instruments we can organize a concert for folk music fans not only inside buildings, but also in the museum courtyard with Mount Ararat in the background. We would also work with a professional group of archaeologists who could conduct lectures on this topic.
As director of the museum I would be happy organize an exhibition from this project in our museum.'
Artavazd Zakyan – [Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reservation](#)

Getting them on board - where are your target audience and who will benefit from the project the most?

The target audience will be in full-time higher education, often staying on campus and possibly at a distance from museums (perhaps consider universities in cities or provide travel bursaries for those further away)

Main groups that may benefit from the project the most are:
- students currently studying visual culture, such as film or media studies, or those studying music or the history of music
- students who would like to know more about different disciplines
- those students who would like to gain further research experience
- museum visitors who are not aware of the benefits of visiting museums as students (who do not yet see museums as resources)

Benefits to colleagues at both partner museums and universities include:

- Increased knowledge of collections from diverse disciplines
- Ongoing research support from students
- New relationships developed and scope for collaboration in future projects

The project may wish to engage students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, as well as bearing in mind the inclusion of those who have entered higher education in later life – in order to invite diverse viewpoints and experiences to the project, encouraging those who could potentially become future museum visitors.

How will you approach your target group?

Initial contact through university staff to discuss feasibility of a project 'module', university visits, talks about upcoming exhibition projects, and potential partnership.
Preparation workshops delivered at universities and museums to gauge interest, shape creative projects.
Publicity and marketing throughout museums, galleries and universities, including student unions and film/music venues.

How will you maintain your audience's interest?

Students will be offered a chance to take part in this project as a fully credited, integrated module, as part of their wider university studies.
The project will be dealing with a great deal of contemporary material of relevant interest to students both personally and as researchers.
Students will have the chance to use new media and learn transferrable skills in documentary/film making and design.
Offering regular opportunities for our audience to share their ideas and current research with museum visitors in talks, public programmes.
The project will use tools and platform familiar to the target group throughout each project stage – YouTube, Twitter, Tumblr etc.

How might maintaining this audience's interest be difficult and what will you do to counteract these difficulties?

The problem:
Approaching students in a way that is appealing to them as young adults.
Engaging students beyond those who would normally enjoy such projects – attracting currently 'reluctant' students from untypical disciplines.

The solution:
Proactive campaigning through social media – including on campus, at university social clubs.
Professors directly inviting contributions, focused targeting on students from diverse disciplines and backgrounds.

4. Research

4.1   Who has worked with a similar group before?

Can you ask experienced colleagues for hints and tips? What can you learn from previous attempts? Are there any Case Studies who could refer to?

Useful documents-

Access for all Toolkit, The Council of Museums, Archives and Libraries
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081209011037/http://www.mla.gov.uk/policy/Inclusion/MLA_Activity_on_Social_Inclusion

Making Connections Toolkits, Engage
http://www.engage.org/toolkits

The Museum-University Partnership Initiative
https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/museum-university-partnerships-initiative

Museum-University Partnerships Case Study: Research Excellence Frameworks
https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/mupi_ref_review.pdf

The Museum of London: University Student Projects at the Museum
https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/universities/HE-student-projects

Manchester Museum: The Student Guide
https://app.box.com/s/rnpervmqs63rzqefaus6

Talking Objects
https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/community_collaborations/partnerships/talking_objects/talking_objects_toolkit/what_is_talking_objects.aspx

Museums and Higher Education
http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/m/higher-education/

5. Barriers (Challenges and Risks)

5.1   Physical / Environmental
Not all museums will have suitable spaces for students to do research. Libraries and archives may not be fully accessible.
The involvement of several museums will create challenges in choosing the most suitable space for workshops, research, programmes.

5.2   Sensory
How will the museums create a welcoming atmosphere for students?

5.3   Intellectual
Some museums encourage different areas of study, while others are more comfortable within one discipline.
Different approaches to audiences on an intellectual level can alienate – by being too intellectual or too 'patronising'.

5.4   Cultural
Challenge to question the idea that museums are just for 'looking at objects'.
Traditional attitudes towards visitors can discourage creativity, new interpretations.

5.5   Attitudinal
An engagement barrier – the assumption that many museums are for families, school groups, tourists.
Museums seen by some students as out-dated places for research, where universities offer innovative environments and ideas.

5.6   Financial
Funding cuts and austerity will place a heavier reliance upon external funding.
To ensure students from less affluent backgrounds are not discouraged from taking part, providing enough financial support for all partners to contribute without cost concerns.
Hidden costs of the project and any contingencies needed in case of emergency.

5.7   Technological
Some partners will not have the technological equipment to support the project equally. Will need to ensure partners can contribute with what is 'possible'.
Technologically complicated project – will require quite a lot of training and investment from all involved, including external help.

5.8   Other?

Providing incentives for university staff – will need a convincing business case.
Risk of the project being too 'grand' at the outset. Would starting smaller, or perhaps in a more informal way, for smaller outcomes, be more feasible?
Standardising research projects and accreditation across collaborating organisations.
The project's international aspect is a big challenge. How will this work? And how can the team make the project interesting/accessible to other, global audiences?

6. Resources

6.1 <u>People</u>

Project managers – who will manage the project's scope, timelines, budgets, measures of success, risks etc. Responsible for overall management of the project team.

Museum "mentors" - to provide regular advice and guidance to students along with University staff. They will act as the co-leaders of the project with collaborating universities. These will include archaeologists who will provide historical and archaeological contexts for each research project, providing feedback, object information, guidance and ensuring interdisciplinary.

Exhibition team - responsible for developing the main exhibition, which will be supplemented by the research projects and videos. They will provide regular feedback on their needs, update the team on exhibition progress, and provide guidance and standards of quality.

University staff - to provide a detailed research project structure for students, including a possible course outline for an accredited module at their respective universities. To work in partnership with museums.

Students - the main undertakers of research with guidance from university staff and museum mentors. Their role is to research across their discipline, to develop a research paper on Armenian musicology. They will then develop their videos, both individually in the first instance and then in their project groups, decided at a later stage.

Musicians – to help with the development of the videos by providing musical backgrounds for the videos, and general guidance.

Digital Team/Film Team – primarily responsible for designing and creating the final group videos, based upon input from student partners, University staff and museum partners.

6.2 <u>Time</u>

Given the short length of the academic year (8-9 months) at universities, it was felt that in order to develop the project fully and to a high standard was to allow approximately three years. A one year university module designed to incentivise students by offering university credit for project involvement, will help with this timeframe as students would be able to begin their research during term time.

We expect it will take a year to approach partners and build the core team, deliver initial workshops and agree on a project plan. The research projects and the production of the short films will take at least one academic year, with another half year to produce the final versions and six months to measure outcomes and evaluate.

Planning

Stage 1: Approaching partners, building the core team both at partner museums and universities, agreeing terms, assessing possible student involvement.

Stage 2: Pre-project workshops delivered across participating institutions to assess interest, including training and skills-building. Further workshops with student team-members.

One academic year to one full year.

Preparation

Stage 1: Student research projects begin. These will be supported by in-person workshops and Skype meetings throughout each semester with museum and professor mentors.

Stage 2: Development of the individual, shorter student videos. Initial publicity and uploading of videos onto YouTube.

One academic year to one full year.

Implementation

Stage 1: Team building for the longer group videos. Discussion and design of final videos with museum, university staff. Video development with design and filmography team.

Stage 2: Implementation of videos in museum spaces, both physically and online. Then, delivery of smaller public programmes to complement project, and to celebrate success.

Final evaluation and measurement of outcomes.

One academic year to one full year.

6.3   **Money**

Costs

- Initial project workshops including materials, travel costs and accommodation for visiting students/museum partners
- Staff costs including overtime for core museum staff and university staff.
- Audio/visual equipment hire if not available from partners.
- Possible contracting of film-maker and designer for the longer group videos if not available from partners.
- Meetings and workshops during the preparation stage – materials, travel costs, accommodation
- Public programme costs including materials, space.
- Publicity and marketing
- External evaluation to include interviews, surveys, visitor observation.
- Budget for 'celebrating success' – events, trips, free entry
- Sustainability budget

Income-

- In-kind support from museums, universities and students
- Individual fundraising from students through bursaries, grants
- Museums and Universities to supply funds, with lead museum partners as the main sources of financial support.

Sourcing the funding-

AREG: Funds and Charitable Organisations
http://areg.biz/ca/?lng=am&cid=26&o=0

Beeline Armenia
https://beeline.am/am/?lang=hy

British Council in Armenia
http://www.britishcouncil.am/en

Creative Europe
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/

Culture and Creativity: EU- Eastern Partnership Programme
https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en/opportunities

Embassy: International Organisations in Armenia (links)
http://www.embassy.am/international-organizations-in-armenia

Gagik Tsarukyan Charity Foundation
http://tsarukyanfound.am/eng/

Ministry of Defence
http://www.mil.am/

Ministry of Culture for Republic of Armenia
http://www.mincult.am/

Ministry of Education and Science
http://www.edu.am/

Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
http://www.msy.am/

Open Society Foundations
https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/offices-foundations/open-society-foundations-armenia

Pyunik Human Resources Development Foundation
http://himnadram.am/en/

State Urban Development Committee
http://minurban.am/am/

vhs: DVV International
http://www.dvv-international.am/

VivaCell-MTS
http://mts.am/en/company

Yerevan Municipality: Embassies
https://www.yerevan.am/en/embassies/

Youth Foundation of Armenia
http://heh.am/?lang=en

7 Sustainability

7.1 <u>Outcomes</u>

To add to the body of research on museum objects, particularly folk objects and musical instruments.

A supplementary programme to accompany a developing collaboration between archaeological and ethnographic museums in Armenia.

20 personal videos and eventually 4 group videos interpreting museum objects, to be included in museum spaces and online on History + Material, Folk Rituals, Religious Life, Depictions of music/musicians in culture.

Some exhibition materials prepared by students

An event programme to accompany the videos, with students giving talks and engaging with museum visitors.

University credits for students involved in the project.

A post-project party to celebrate success.

7.2 <u>Legacy</u>

The possibility for these videos to tour to other museums and countries (see barriers section for things to think about).

Free entry for student project members to all associated museums and galleries.

Possibility for cascaded training – students to deliver their own workshops based on film-making, creative responses to museum objects.

Multimedia resources (videos) to be kept as available for future researchers and audiences.

An evaluation phase.

An updated and enhanced toolkit.

8 Evaluation and Analysis

8.1   Evaluation

To send out a survey to participants and colleagues who worked on the project
To send out the survey during the final week and to ask for the survey to be filled in within a 2 week deadline, to ensure all surveys are completed while the programme is fresh in people's memory
Include a section where participants and colleagues can write about their experience, this is a good way of collecting quotes about what the project has done for people

The evaluation will also include:
- Face-to-face or Skype evaluation with each partner, including students.
- Visitor feedback surveys post-visit to exhibition
- Monitoring of YouTube traffic and responses to videos - likes, comments etc.

8.2   Analysis

The evaluation will be used to inform future collaborative projects in general, as well as to assess whether a repeat of the project is feasible or desired for the future.

Face-to-face (recorded) interviews with the students can be used for marketing purposes and to promote future projects at universities.

Visitor feedback surveys can be used to measure interest of audiences in digital media as a means of exhibition support, and therefore as justification for the use of such media in future exhibitions.

9 Report

A report will detail the stages and processes of the project including the role played by each partner organisation and students.

It will also include, the aims and objectives (the why) of the project, what the outcomes were and how the outcomes met these aims.

The report will include quotes from the evaluation surveys, 'screen-grabs' from the YouTube videos and quotes from student post-project interviews.

The report will be written in part by all partners through contributions, with the lead partner primarily responsible for the structure of the report, with input from other team members.

Finally, the report will require a strict deadline in order to ensure outcomes and results are measured and reflected upon, to share with sponsors, supporters and other team members, as well as the general public.

10 Checklist

<u>Project Preparation</u>

☐ Project scope created

☐ Aims and objectives of project understood, including legacy and sustainability

☐ How will the project be funded?
Initiate appropriate conversations internally and externally

☐ Research and learn from projects targeting similar audiences
Use web links provided also

☐ Research how best to advertise opportunities, to enable as many people as possible to access the opportunity

☐ Team structure decided and members aware of responsibilities

☐ Set dates in advance for regular meetings with colleagues

☐ Create a timescale and set deadlines for preparation and implementation of project

☐ Identify risks and challenges

☐ Opportunity advertised

☐ Participants selected

☐ Applicants informed of decisions

☐ Appropriate information sent out to participants

☐ Organise a meeting before project begins to start informal chat with participants about what they want from the project and to 'break the ice'

☐ Evaluation survey written

<u>During Project</u>

☐ Measure success and make notes throughout project

☐ Take pictures throughout project

☐ Evaluations distributed

Post Project

☐ Evaluations returned

☐ Evaluation Meeting

☐ Analysis of evaluations and lesson learnt

☐ Write Report- think about output, outcomes and legacy

☐ Publish Report and distribute to all departments in participating institutions

☐ Update and enhance the toolkit

☐ Focus on sustainability- maintain contact with colleagues and participants