**Museum of Paper Money: Processes of Change and Meeting Spaces (social gathering)**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”.

Margaret Mead

This is a story that involves the Museum of Paper Money and the Faculty of Arts, University of Oporto, specifically the Department of Heritage Sciences and Techniques.

It is not an easy story to tell, because it is a complex one, with stages of advancement and retreat, with victories and defeats. Nonetheless, what is important to state is that it represents a journey the Museum of Paper Money undertook searching for the essence of our work.

In this context of economic and social change, the museum wanted to know what was its role, how to break barriers to extend its limits and how to reposition the Museum of Paper Money in relation to the community, creating relevance.

Initial questions we seek to answer:

- Can the Museum really be an agent of change?

- How to conceive programs that give answers to issues that are important to people?

- Will the museum be able to change adjusting the programming to the needs of the people?

This paper will seek to reveal a process of change that the museum began in 2008. What sorts of developments this process pointed out and the social impact it caused, leading to the recognition of the importance of financial literacy.

The story of this process of change began in 2008.

It is a project that was aimed at schools and social associations, with the aim of changing the existing relationships. Underlying this entire process was the idea that the museum has the potential and responsibility to serve the community and may have impacts on people's lives.

Starting from the collections, the museum acts towards local development and social cohesion. The museum wants to turn these two structural dimensions on its own mission and ongoing projects. The museum has always seen itself as a social entrepreneur and has strong sense of social responsibility.

In 2008, when designing the collaboration with the Museology training course, we expressed the willingness to change the relationship paradigm we had with the schools which regularly visit us. The truth is that these visits, though regular, consisted so far of single unique visits. Meaning they were a onetime occasion which never repeated. The museum had never tried to develop a long-term project with any school. However, although the museum was aware of the effort this would required and the little impact in terms of visitors, who would represent it, we at the museum direction were willing to invest much of our time on this project.

In fact, the museum also wanted to develop evaluation mechanisms on our own practices. These factors were decisive to draw the paths of the project which we have called "Territorialisation a new paradigm in education."

Thus begins in March 2008, an action & research project developed with neighboring schools, in order to deepen relations and to help us understand how we (the museum) could respond to problems schools felt, so we can establish future sustainable relationships (long lasting ones).

The research involved three MA students of the Museology course. They visited, and "drew" the profile of 8 schools (only one school refused to participate), characterizing them in terms of socio-demographics, resources, activities, space and ongoing projects. There have been reports that were later analyzed and discussed.

In July 2008, 97 teachers were invited to come to the museum. We made a presentation and discussed the research results. Some new work areas have been defined and together, museum and schools, designed the first draft of a joint work plan, which was generally well accepted, as many have recognized the work of the Museum. Both the Museum and schools began to feel that this was a new and a quite different approach and that it would be quite useful to programme the museum activities closely.

However, after the initial enthusiasm, in September 2008, only three schools continued available to continue the collaboration project.

The first barrier was soon identified: it will be quite difficult to attract and maintain the enthusiasm of the teachers to jointly design a work plan for the museum. Afterwards the museum changed the initial perception regarding the low possibilities of schools for joint projects.

With the three schools that maintained available and open to collaborate the joint programming started. The museum presented to the School Clara de Resende a proposal to work on the history and evolution of money. The teacher discussed with her students and offered three completely different projects: bullying, volunteering and a research project to better understand how criminal minds operate! We were surprised and quite amazed! We hesitated ... But we decided to negotiate, on the assumption that we wanted the museum to become a space for reflection, a meeting space and gathering people. We accept the projects and arranged that the criminal minds project had to be developed around of the theme "Alves Reis" a theme that has to do with the museum collection.

[Alves dos Reis is a very famous Portuguese criminal who perpetrated one of the largest frauds in history, against Bank of Portugal, in 1925. It is often called the Portuguese Bank Note Crisis and it is part of the Museum of Paper Money collection.]

Regarding Garcia de Orta School, whose students profile is completely different, the museum and the teachers build and prepared a conference cycle on financial literacy.

Finally, with the Vertical School Group Manoel de Oliveira and Project Believe social worker, we initiated altogether another kind of work. This project connected the museum with another kind of network and a larger one. The Museum of Paper Money joined the already existing partners of Project Believe. This network organized within a Social Contract for Local Development already had an association of Ludotecas [a kind of libraries specialized in small children where one can borrow toys and playbooks]. In this final case the museum also work with a parents association of children with cerebral palsy, named Associação Somos Nós [We Are Association]. It is easy to see, our network expanded.

To show the social importance of this project, the Museum invited everyone to a very special program: the celebration of the International Museum Day. The aim was that all of them, from the three different schools work together; that each one interacted with people from different groups, each one learned to respect different perspectives and experiences and realized the sense of individual responsibility, in the context of a collective work.

This way from January to May 2009 a musical play was created.

We integrate students with low academic achievements and ex-students already outside the school system, almost marginal and even people with special needs.

In the final evaluation, the important thing was that these people said they never thought that the museum was for them; they were amazed that we made a specific program for them and enjoyed the visibility they had. The show was indeed a success. It was important for the self-esteem of the participants and the relationships they created with the museum.

The truth is that we all sang and danced, we integrated different types of people ... but none of this had to do with the museum collections.

The evaluation of this phase one led to an internal debate, very intense and full of controversy on the use of the collections and the role of the museum. Nonetheless it also resulted in notable relevance this project brought to the museum as an active partner in the community.

This recognition led to changing attitudes and values ​​not only by schools but also by the museum. The recognition of internal barriers that remained: the activities developed had nothing to do with the museum collections.

It was understood that this would be a long and slow pace procedure; but once given enough space to participants, (extended) relations with schools would be built.

What has changed in the Museum?

The museum then began the painful exercise of rethinking its programming following new orientation axes: What use to be given to collections? How to make our museum connect with the needs and expectations of the neighbors? How to develop projects that, based on the collections, are built on partnership and generate a node of relationships important for local development?

What should be the agenda of the new museum? How to set-up indicators to measure impacts the museum wants to have in the community? And what is this community? Does the museum reaffirm in its projects of social inclusion social stereotypes? Or does the museum try to create true sustainability for local networks of which the museum is one of the key players?

The museum realized that the heterogeneity of the parish is so great that to respond to their problems, it had to adapt. And to set-up a new paradigm of relations in the territory, it had to make different approaches and implement diverse projects, and all of them need to be negotiated separately.

The museum had explored new territories and now had new perspectives on its educational and social role. But... what is the exact extent to which the museum should be meddling in specific problems of the people, especially if they had nothing to do with the collection? Just how far should the museum go?

Jocelyn Dodd says: "Museums and galleries Involvement in neighborhood renewal is not becoming social workers but is about using collections and resources to support social agendas for the public good."

In fact, the museum cannot take the role of the social worker. In the community, each must have its role and the museum will always make the connection to the collections while programming.

What has changed in the community?

In the final evaluation of the project, the partners said:

- The perception people had of the museum completely changed now,

- Before the project, many do not dare to enter the museum, because the dignity of the institution made them feel excluded. With this project, they realized they were important and welcome,

- Some said that visitors are no longer passive but active players.

When asked whether they thought the project was sustainable they said yes and mentioned how important the themes of visibility, success, solidarity, openness of the museum, and understanding of multiple forms of exclusion; also mentioned that the museum gave them public recognition and a sense of true empowerment.

Relevance was created within the museum community; now we only needed to create the missing link; one connection between the collections and the answers people needed to solve their problems. How to do it?

Since 2010 another new phase starts. The museum mobilized 29 social institutions and was able to identify, after many meetings, a common problem: lack of money and lack of financial literacy. And this was the bond that linked the community's problems to the collections of the museum. Finally, we realized we had to design projects for financial education.

The museum begins to be seen has an important partner for the community, the network is much wider now and the project of financial education “No Poupar Vai o Ganho” [Saving is Gaining Money] is created.

What's revealing here is the process changed; one must note that the matrix and the nature of programming have changed: before the logic behind programming was from the inside to the outside of the museum; while the project developed, the museum agreed to a schedule that comes from outside to inside the museum. The museum assumes now a full collaborative attitude and finally achieves and connects to the needs of public through, i.e., using directly the museum collections.

The museum acceded to the invitation of the Social Contract for Local Development to integrate a Solidarity Market where offered advice on household management, planning and spending priorities of consumption. By request of the local Centre for Integrated Education and Vocational Training, the museum delivers workshops to empower people with special needs, promoting financial education.

In September 2010 starts in close collaboration and connection to the schools the innovative project “No Poupar Vai o Ganho” [Saving is Gaining Money], whose main idea is to raise awareness of the importance of money and promote financial education. So students can develop attitudes, perspectives and responsible behaviors about money.

This project was also presented to the Porto City Council which integrated within the wider municipal project "Education for Values."

A strategy was designed to change attitudes and behaviors and set goals, keywords, expectations, methodologies; we have a dissemination plan, gave training to teachers and wrote manuals for teachers and students; we drew activities for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education and present proposals for work. [The 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education meaning from KS1 between 6 and 10 years old, KS2 between 11 and 12 years old, and KS3 between 14 and 16 years old].

Of paramount importance to all this process was the ability to define indicators to measure the impacts of learning in children. With this tool the evaluation process has become much easier.

Since 2010 we celebrate the International Museum Day with an exhibition of works that both demonstrate and reveal the impact of financial learning on changing students’ attitudes and behaviors.

We are delighted due to the quantity and high quality of the works submitted and we are also moved with the students’ happiness when we give them a merit award in recognition of their achievements.

We took another step forward in 2011 creating the TEF (Território de Educação Financeira or TFE meaning Territory for Financial Education).

It comprises 51 classes (about 1000 students from several schools). This territory already has an official logo; it was chosen in a competition the Museum of Paper Money launched for primary schools on last 30th October, to celebrate Savings Day.

This is a sign that the museum also creates communities. However this process had successes and failures: a school joined in a fantastic way (The Fontes Pereira de Melo School), another was too slow to react, but now it's very collaborative. Little by little, we gradually conquer our Territory for Financial Education, which was always closely followed, monitored and evaluated.

In 2012 this project was extended to vulnerable groups (seniors and persons with disabilities) and gained new contours. The specificity of these groups required new approaches, always collaboratively built and depending on the needs of people.

What is the public value of this Financial Education project?

1. The project is already certified by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship recognizing has an initiative with great potential for entrepreneurship.

2. The relevance of the project is justified in the Behavioral Monitoring Report 2010 of the Bank of Portugal; in a world where individual accountability is increasing, greater financial markets complexity and bigger uncertainty over the future, recognizing that financial literacy is considered crucial for a responsible financial behavior by the citizens.

3. The Museum of Paper Money was considered a case study and its financial education project was presented at the 1st International Conference on Financial Literacy sponsored by the Bank of Portugal, in November 2011.

4. In 2012, the museum becomes part of the National Council of Financial Supervisors in order to work together with the Bank of Portugal and the Ministry of Education developing a common framework of financial education that will be included in the ongoing revised curriculum.

Can a museum create relevance in a community? I believe so.

Can a museum be an agent of change? I believe so.

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