

**MUSEUMS AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS:
8 STEPS TO SUPPORTING
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

April-August 2020

INTRODUCTION

Cultural and creative sectors are among the most affected by the current coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, and museums are no exception. We acknowledge the manifold challenges faced by museums and museum professionals during this time and urge policy- and decision-makers to rapidly allocate relief funds to ensure the sustainability of museums. In that regard, ICOM published a statement that is now available on our [website](#).

We are closely monitoring the impact of the crisis on the museum sector and applaud the creative solutions put in place by museums across the world to reach their audiences and continue engaging with their diverse communities. We are aware that this is not simply a matter of keeping our institutions alive but also of mobilising their efforts and capacities to support community resilience and an effective recovery.

While together with our partner organisations, we are seeking concrete ways in which museums and governments at all levels (local, regional, national) can collaborate to ensure that museums remain high on policy-makers' agendas, we would also like:

- to provide suggestions for actions that museums and museum professionals can take to support community resilience during and after the COVID-19 crisis
- to provide examples of museum initiatives and useful resources within the current context.

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1. SECURE YOUR OWN SAFETY AND WELL-BEING FIRST

The safety of your museum and the safety and well-being of your staff should be your top priority. You need them as much as they need you to get through this difficult time, for your organisation's recovery, and for building resilience, now and after the crisis. Following the recommendations of governmental and health institutions (e.g. the World Health Organisation) is key.

In the meantime, listen to your staff and ask what they need in terms of health, safety, and working conditions (e.g. resources, tools, materials). Some of them may need special accommodations to be able to do their work (from home or onsite) and protect their health and well-being and that of their loved ones. If some staff members cannot keep working under the new conditions, talk to them about possible ways to redistribute work or identify innovative and creative tasks that would be useful to your museum, or even consider allowing volunteer work during work hours (if legal and safety conditions permit).

Be aware that you may not always know your staff members' specific situations (e.g. regarding their health, housing, or family) due to privacy protection laws and other protective measures. They may have specific needs during the current crisis, so it may be preferable not to impose generic solutions that may not be appropriate for everyone, as they may put your staff in an uncomfortable position. Remember that they do not have to disclose their personal information, but it is the duty of all of us to consider that people around us may have specific needs.

Dedicate time and space (e.g. online, on the phone) during working hours for teams to adapt to the situation, talk to and support each other, and explore solutions together.

Keep yourself updated on the situation, globally and in the museum sector:

- Click [here](#) to see the results of ICOM's global survey analysing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museums in five areas: the current situation for museums and their staff, expected economic impact, digital activities and communication, museum security and conservation, and freelance museum professionals.
- The [World Health Organisation](#) continues to provide regular updates, resources, advice and guidance for the public and organisations as the situation continues to develop worldwide.

Find useful resources and tips:

- Stay connected with us as we continue to monitor the situation on the [ICOM website's COVID-19 page](#), where you can find advocacy campaigns, recommendations, data and webinars.
- ICCROM's [resources and tips](#) for heritage professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Museums Association, UK, has published a number of articles, including on [how museums are managing staff during the crisis](#).
- The American Alliance of Museums, U.S., published a webpage [entitled COVID-19 Resources & Information for the Museum Field](#) as well as an article explaining how [to use scenarios to plan your museum's COVID-19 response](#).
- Hands On!, the International Association of Children's Museums, provides a list of [coronavirus resources](#) for all children-centred museums to use during the crisis, including resources to share with visitors.

Find support and talk with peers:

- Contact your [ICOM National or International Committee](#) to find support and talk to your peers. Keep an eye out for efforts by International Committees, such as ICOM-UMAC, which launched an initiative called [University Museums from Home](#), providing a web page for museum professionals to share their experiences.
- The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is facilitating virtual [Collective Care Chats](#) for its members so they can share strategies related to self-care, remote working and health during this unprecedented time.
- The Museo de los Museos (Museum of Museums), a virtual initiative, organises [Facebook Live chats](#) for museum professionals in Ibero-America to develop open dialogues, understand strategies in times of epidemiologic crisis and "reinvent" themselves. Videos of the chats are available on the organisation's [YouTube channel](#).

Ethical guidelines should be followed even during these difficult times:

- The [ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums](#) is a reference text setting standards for the practice of museum professionals.
- Contact [ICOM's new International Committee, IC Ethics](#), to discuss any ethical issues that may arise during this time.

2. TRY TO FOCUS ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING BEST AND SEEK ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING IT; TRY NEW THINGS AND REVISIT TRADITIONAL WAYS OF DOING THINGS

Continue doing what you think is important:

-Some of your activities may be essential to continue during this time. If all health and safety conditions are met, try to keep them going.

-Seek out new ways to continue conducting activities that can no longer be performed in the new circumstances (e.g. turn family workshops into online tutorials or live events).

Times of change, whether bad or good, lead to new experiences and trying new things. In the media, we have seen many articles encouraging people who are staying at home to try to learn new things, improve on their usual routines, or create new, healthy habits (like cooking more or exercising indoors). This could also apply to your professional activities. Since your plans and habits have been disrupted, why not seek out new ways of working?

Of course, some people are facing professional, personal, and emotional overload, which makes it difficult for them to try to innovate, as they must focus on their basic needs first. The idea is not to create pressure to innovate on top of all the other challenges, but when possible, try to find new approaches that may lessen your workload or efforts by exploring new tools and revisiting traditional ones.

Try to diversify the communication tools and channels you use to reach your audience. Why not also reconsider your accessibility standards and procedures? Currently, many museums are putting an impressive amount of effort into their digital content. These initiatives are valued by a large audience, as reflected by the sharp increase in the number of website visitors. However, do not forget that some groups may not have access to or be familiar with digital platforms. If relevant to your community and your museum, help to develop digital literacy.

Modify your activities to keep in touch with your audience:

- Read ICOM's news article on [How to reach – and engage – your public remotely](#).
- NEMO published the results of its survey and a collection of [examples of museum initiatives](#) in Europe, and a webpage dedicated to [resources related to Covid-19](#).
- The Te Papa Museum, New Zealand, created [The Little Page of Calm](#) on its website to provide content supporting well-being.
- The Palestinian Museum launched its 'Museum from Home - Palestine Perseveres' campaign to provide cultural and educational content for all ages through its online platform ([content in Arabic](#) with [summaries in English](#)).
- The Ethnographic Museum of Istria, in Croatia, put the content of its exhibition [What Are You Afraid Of? Fear In Our Everyday Life](#) online, noting that it is now 'unfortunately more relevant than we would expect'. Similarly, the Israel Museum has offered a [new video](#) of its exhibition *Seated in Seclusion*, which has taken on new meaning now that billions of people are confined at home.
- The Iziko Museums of South Africa launched a [#MaterialsMatterChallenge](#) inspired by its *Matereality* exhibition, inviting people to post their own artwork made using recyclable materials on [social media](#).

- The Museo Reina Sofia in Spain developed [Uncertain Times](#), a film series aimed at fostering reflection in light of the current pandemic and social crisis.
- The [National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum](#) in Oklahoma City, in the US, put its head of security in charge of its Twitter account while the museum was closed and increased its online engagement with the public.
- The [Museo Interactivo Mirador](#) in Chile filmed its mediators at home doing experiments, launching challenges and starting discussions. The recordings were posted online to make museum activities available for the public at home.
- During the lockdown, the Papalote Museo del Niño (Papalote Children's Museum) in Mexico created an [online portal](#) designed to provide activities, resources and recommendations to both children and adults.
- The National Museum in New Delhi, India, launched the [#MuseumConcertFromHome](#) initiative, inviting the public to go on a musical journey and contribute by recording songs inspired by paintings from its collection.
- The M WOODS Museum in Beijing, China developed an experimental online exhibition called [Art Is Still Here: A Hypothetical Show for a Closed Museum](#), including videos, photographs, words, poems, instructions and thoughts by artists and thinkers on the themes of ecology, nature, extinction, isolation and kinship.
- During the lockdown, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (European House of Photography) in France launched the [#FenetreOuverte](#) challenge on Instagram, inviting people to take pictures from their window to show the boundary between the world inside and the temporarily inaccessible world outside.
- The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea launched a new ["Online Museum"](#) section on its website that includes a series of videos of curators' talks.
- The Museum of the City of New York in the US started an online trend that was taken up by museums worldwide, which are using [#Museummomentofzen](#) to promote well-being by sharing artwork, imagery and pieces from their collections on social media.
- The Europeana Foundation created a [Culture from Home](#) webinar exploring different ways cultural heritage institutions are engaging with their audiences online during lockdowns and closures.

Increase accessibility and bridge the digital divide:

- UNESCO has warned of the [digital divides in distance learning](#), while the International Commission on the Futures of Education issued "[Protecting and Transforming Education for Shared Futures and Common Humanity](#)", a statement recalling that "human interaction and wellbeing must be given priority" and that "we should be increasingly concerned that a shift to remote on-line learning will exacerbate inequalities".
- The Harvard Graduate School of Education published "[Remote Learning and the Digital Divide. Considering issues of equity when moving instruction online](#)", which

provides reflections for schools to consider before launching remote learning efforts. These tips can also inspire museums aiming to provide equal access to their educational materials and activities.

3. MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGING SOCIETAL NEEDS; LISTEN TO YOUR COMMUNITIES AND DETERMINE HOW YOU CAN HELP

Try to understand the current situation and its impact on society and especially the most vulnerable community groups in your specific context. For instance, we have seen that those hit hardest by the current crisis are the homeless, women at risk of domestic violence, children with difficult access to education, migrants, refugees, and minorities experiencing increased discrimination and xenophobia. As more and more companies undertake major layoffs, the unemployed are also more vulnerable. Remember that health workers are also among those under extreme pressure.

Use every means at your disposal to identify the needs of your community:

- Stay in touch with your local or regional government and social and health services.
- Track data, statistics, and current societal needs and demands.
- Keep in touch with your communities (through representatives) whenever possible, to hear directly from them about their most pressing needs.
- Keep the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) in mind. They address the global challenges to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all, so they can be a powerful source of inspiration.

Identify your museum's strengths and unique characteristics in relation to these needs and brainstorm about how you can respond to one or more of them.

You can be innovative and try new things, but sometimes, solutions can also be very simple, like using your existing social media accounts to raise awareness of health prevention measures or the dangers of spreading fake news.

Check out some inspiring examples of how you can support health education and the healthcare system:

- Museums worldwide **supported** and **thanked** healthcare workers by sharing medical-themed art using [#MuseumsThankHealthHeros](#) on social media to highlight the importance of the workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, Germany, is monitoring the outbreak and providing useful links and information to the public through its [website](#).

- Museums and heritage institutions in Normandy, France, are donating their masks to health professionals. Check out this [Facebook post](#) to see what they are doing.
- Curators Without Borders is offering [open-source templates](#) for making face masks from readily available materials. Check out its instructions for making and distributing masks in your community. The Musée National de la Marine in France also published a tutorial in French on [How to Make Masks](#) at home.
- Museums and institutions in Chicago in the US are supporting the healthcare system with high-tech tools. The [Museum of Science and Industry](#) has used 3D printers to supply hospitals with protective equipment, and the [Shedd Aquarium](#) has lent laboratory instruments to support COVID-19 laboratory testing.
- The Museum of the City in Buenos Aires, Argentina developed an online awareness-raising campaign using [portraits with masks](#) to encourage citizens to wear face masks.
- The Science Gallery in Dublin, Ireland launched the [Wellbeing Challenge](#) to help people cope with change, tackle mental health issues and improve wellbeing while in quarantine.
- The Boston Museum of Science in the US hosted [community conversations](#) with experts and local leaders to discuss the latest COVID-19 news.
- The Museo de Bogotá in Colombia opened a collaborative exhibition entitled "[#NoEsLaPeste La gripa de 1918 desde el presente](#)" ("This is not the plague: from the 1918 flu through the present") on social media.
- The Smithsonian Science Education Center and the InterAcademy Partnership in the US published [COVID-19: How can I protect myself and others?](#), providing learning materials that can be used by teachers, parents and educators to help children and students understand the pandemic.
- The Palais de la Science in France created an online exhibition called [Coronavirus: ce que sait la science](#) ("Coronavirus: What Science Knows") to provide the public with accessible knowledge for understanding the current health crisis.
- The Salvador Allende Solidarity Museum in Chile used selected artwork from its collection to provide [COVID-19 advice](#).

Museums have responded creatively to the multifaceted consequences of the crisis:

- The [MIDE Digital Museum in Mexico](#) developed online content to help people working from home during the lockdown, offering tips and guidance for working better remotely.
- The Museums Association in the UK published an article on [Practical Ways Museums Can Contribute During the COVID-19 Crisis](#), along with an article on how [Museums Join Efforts to Help Key Workers and Vulnerable Communities](#), such as homeless communities and people affected by dementia.

- In addition to launching a [WhatsApp programme](#) with stories and health prevention messages, the Children's Museum of Costa Rica also [thanked cleaning workers](#) on social media, raising its virtual community's awareness of their precious contribution to society.
- Museums have helped address temporary food shortages in their local areas. The [Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust and Museum](#) in the UK resumed flour production in its old flour mill in order to meet the increased demand for flour caused by the crisis. The [Birmingham Museum](#) turned its Sarehole Mill gift shop into a community store for its local community to stay stocked with food.
- The [Philbrook Museum of Art](#) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the US, developed online content to help its community and artists remotely and support mental health. It created a platform with online activities, broadcasted tours and music sessions, livestreamed its garden and started a pen pal project with two cats living in the museum.

Consider the human rights dimension of the outbreak and monitor other museums' responses to protecting vulnerable groups:

- Stay informed of the human rights dimension of the current COVID-19 response by following [Human Rights Watch](#).
- The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience organised a series of webinars entitled [Stronger Together](#), providing advice for museums on how to create a dialogue with communities and vulnerable groups and reflect on justice and activism in the time of COVID-19. These videos are some of the many [COVID-19 resources](#) the organisation has developed.
- Check out the Mexican Museo Memoria y Tolerancia's social media campaign to support human rights (on [racism](#), the [right to health, housing, decent work, social security](#), and [domestic violence](#)) in times of pandemic.
- The Museum of Homelessness in London, United Kingdom, has been mobilising volunteers through its [website](#) to provide food and care packages to the homeless.
- The [Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec](#) in Canada responded to the City of Montreal's call to provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness and help them overcome stress, giving them a place to rest and access to basic necessities.
- Noting that the lockdown is amplifying the digital divide, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery in Exeter, in the UK, [provided isolated groups with free activity packs](#).
- The Portland Chinatown Museum in the US has spoken out on its website [against ethnic labelling during crisis](#), a practice that fuels racism. Edward Tepporn, Executive Director of the [Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation](#) in the US, also spoke out on the relationship between public health and xenophobia and the role historic places can play during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The [House of Memory in Medellín](#), Colombia is helping its community by distributing food to vulnerable groups, providing shelter and supporting health workers.
- The [Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts](#) in Russia used digital methods to cope with social distancing by creating a new environment to increase engagement with visitors with disabilities and autism spectrum disorder and other special needs audiences.

Seek out guidance and inspiration from other sectors:

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published [Guidelines for Community Participation in Disaster Recovery](#).
- Resources developed by the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) can inspire museums to find solutions for supporting families remotely and bridging the digital divide. UNICEF published a list of [10 Things to Know About Digital Literacy for Children](#), [resources to support families](#) and a [guide for parents and caregivers](#), with a set of activities to help marginalized and vulnerable groups engage and support their children’s learning at home during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.
- The World Health Organisation published [mental health and psychosocial considerations](#) for the COVID-19 outbreak, which can be useful to institutions in all sectors. Various mental health institutions worldwide, such as the [New Zealand Psychological Society](#) (New Zealand), the [Ordre des Psychologues du Québec](#) (Canada) and the Psychology Department of the [Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia](#) (Spain), have also published resources to support societies during crisis.
- Check out the [Guide to Well-Being during Coronavirus](#), developed by the Greater Good Science Center of the University of California, Berkeley, where you can find helpful resources, practices and articles.
- See guidance on [Combating Bias and Stigma Related to COVID-19](#) from the American Psychological Association.

4. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE; KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH PARTNERS, COLLABORATORS, AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Remember that you are not alone and that you should not have to face these new and unprecedented challenges alone.

Get in touch with colleagues, stay connected to professional networks, and share information about your successes, challenges, and how you have adapted.

Build or revitalise partnerships and solidarity with others who are also trying to offer solutions and benefit from their co-operation. Cross-sectoral partnerships with institutions or NGOs from non-cultural sectors and community initiatives could help you to find new ways to support community resilience. Many volunteers and institutions like yours are working hard to find solutions and help society, with the aim of being as useful as possible. Some

institutions have created intra- or inter-organisational task forces to foster innovative actions. Consider if that could work for you!

Read the [ICOM-OECD guide](#) offering new and innovative ways to develop cross-sectoral partnerships and providing best practices for museums to maximise their social impact by co-operating with non-cultural sectors. You can also use the guide to seek out support from your local and regional governments. Cultural funding may be severely impacted by the current crisis, but by adapting their activities to respond to the most pressing issues, especially those related to health, well-being, and justice, museums should be able to benefit from other sources of support.

See how others are joining forces to stay relevant and provide a rapid response to current issues and needs through empowering partnerships:

- Read our *ICOM Voices* article on "[Community Responsive Programming at the Myseum of Toronto](#)" during the COVID-19 pandemic, which describes how the Myseum is keeping its community engaged and monitoring its needs through partnerships with community partners, cultural institutions and artists.
- The Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne, in the UK, partnered with local community organisations to deliver [creative art bags](#) to vulnerable households and people in the community who may be suffering from self-isolation and anxiety.
- The University of Johannesburg and its Art Gallery in South Africa reinforced their interdisciplinary approach by working with visual artists, choreographers and poets to develop a joint project called [The Pandemic](#). The final artworks will be published online and shown in an exhibition at the UJ Art Gallery.
- In the UK, museums have partnered with the Prisoners' Education Trust to help alleviate prisoners' isolation during COVID-19 by [donating postcards and stamps](#).
- The Ministry of Culture in Argentina launched a new call for its [Points of Culture](#) programme, which provides financial and technical support for the implementation of community cultural projects. With this new call, the ministry is trying to mitigate the social and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the cultural sector.
- [ART Power HK](#) is an online platform that has invited and encouraged all organisations in Hong Kong's art community (e.g. galleries, museums, and other art organisations) to get involved in their campaign to keep the Hong Kong art scene alive and attractive after the crisis.

Explore these guidelines and reports that may be of help in building and/or strengthening partnerships to increase your social impact:

- The [ICOM-OECD Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums](#) is a roadmap for local governments, museums, and museum professionals on how to jointly define a local development agenda that promotes a more sustainable future.

- Read the Voices of Culture brainstorming report, [Social Inclusion: Partnering with Other Sectors](#), published in October 2018, which offers a list of 'critical success factors as well as obstacles, and ultimately gives recommendations on how to improve the partnerships between the cultural and other sectors'.

5. LEARN FROM THE PAST

You can learn how others coped with similar situations in the past, even if the scales and contexts of their experiences may vary. Look for available documentation and remember that there are many colleagues out there willing to share their knowledge with you. Talk to them, read, and share these experiences with your network!

This is the time to develop more empathy and solidarity. Learn from other museums and organisations (e.g. libraries, archives, sites) with experience in disaster risk management and resilience. Initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable groups and addressing difficult issues can also benefit from the experience of museums that address difficult and controversial topics such as human or animal rights, protests and marches, conflicts, immigration, the homeless, LGBTIQ+ issues, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, or indigenous femicide.

Solidarity, empathy, and resilience are themes that have been studied and documented for years by other fields such as psychology and sociology, which could inspire our communities and help them better understand their own reactions and group behaviours.

Museums in times of crisis

- Watch the ICOM Kyoto Plenary Session on [Museums in Times of Disaster](#), where Alejandra Peña Gutiérrez's speech on Puerto Rico's experience after Hurricane Maria showed how museums can help strengthen community resilience and support recovery.
- The EU-LAC-MUSEUMS Project hosted a series of webinars on [Community-based Museums in Times of Crisis](#), exploring how they can play an important role in containing, reflecting on and remembering a crisis.
- The International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes (ICMEMO) held a series of webinars on [Memorial Museums in the Time of COVID-19](#), [How Our Museums Might Address Changes Wrought by the Virus](#) and [The Role of Museums in Times of Civil Unrest](#).
- Check out the American Association of Museums' article on [Lessons from History: Museums and Pandemics](#).
- The National Museum of Australia in Canberra has launched a [digital initiative](#) to provide a national platform for grassroots storytelling and honour front-line emergency workers as part of a wider documentary collecting and community outreach program dedicated to the summer bushfire crisis.

Museums tackling difficult, sensitive, contested issues

- Check out the 2018 issue of *Museum International*, '[Museums and Contested Histories](#)', showing examples of how museums can tackle current societal issues with contested or difficult nature.
- You can also find inspiration in the ways museums are addressing other sensitive societal issues. For instance, the [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in the US is tackling racism through [How the African American History Museum Is Curating "Black Lives Matter"](#) and has published tools and guidance for [Talking About Race](#).

6. CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF RAPID RESPONSE COLLECTING AND DOCUMENTING THE CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT

Documenting and exhibiting the crisis, its impact, and the various ways people are coping with trauma may enrich your collections and give them a new meaning, while also preserving knowledge and memories for future generations. See if existing strategies of contemporary and rapid response collecting (e.g. collecting new objects and/or digital materials and personal testimonies through oral history work) could be used without harming the safety of your staff and others or compromising your more demanding responsibilities.

Mapping and visualising current experiences or recontextualising your collections by developing new and creative platforms with the help of new acquisitions could be an effective way to engage with your communities. It may help them to better cope with trauma by sharing their worries, thoughts, needs, and emotions.

Whatever the type or size of your museum, if it is in line with your mission, there may be things to document and/or collect (e.g. new art around COVID-19, difficulties faced by the homeless, the impact on the environment, new urban landscapes, and the ways cities and communities are affected by the crisis).

Documentation of the crisis and online exhibitions:

- The House of European History developed "[COVID Makes History - A Platform for Museums Across Europe](#)" to share the experiences and results of a variety of museum actions to document the pandemic.
- The Museo Etnográfico Juan B. Ambrosetti in Argentina organised the collective exhibition [ExpoCuarentena](#) with objects being used by its community during the crisis.
- The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is collecting videos and organising an [online exhibition](#) of personal stories about COVID-19.

- Museums in the state of Colorado, in the US, are collecting stories and inviting the public to share their COVID-19 experiences, online or by phone, in order to [document this moment in time](#). Since 2011, the New York Historical Society has operated its [History Responds](#) programme to preserve historically important moments for future generations and is now documenting the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. You can also read the American Alliance of Museums' article on the [Unionville Museum](#) in Connecticut, showing how a small museum developed a rapid response collecting project.
- After introducing [Rapid Response Collecting](#) in 2014, the Victoria and Albert Museum in the UK recently launched the [Pandemic Objects](#) project to compile and reflect on objects that have taken on new meaning during the outbreak. Also in the UK, the [Science Museum Group](#) is building a collection with the aim of providing "a permanent record for future generations of medical, scientific, industrial, cultural and personal responses to the outbreak and chronicling its impact on society".
- The [Museum of Ethnology of Valencia](#), Spain is documenting internet memes related to the pandemic that are shared by the local community on social media.
- The [Museum Erding](#) in Germany is collecting testimonials, objects, and photographs to document life in the time of the coronavirus and how it is affecting its community.

Guidelines and ethical considerations:

- If you have a similar project or want to explore how to start one, consult the [documents](#) developed by COMCOL (ICOM's International Committee for Collecting) and read their call [here](#).
- The Museums Association also published a statement on the [ethics of contemporary collecting](#) in the time of COVID-19.
- The London Transport Museum in the UK, with the support of Arts Council England, has developed an [ethical toolkit for museum practitioners](#) on contemporary collecting.

7. CAPITALISE ON THE EXPERIENCE

While many museums are still in the midst of the crisis, some are starting to plan their reopening. This may be the time to reflect on what your institution and staff have gone (or are still going) through. You may also consider exploring ways to encourage your community to do the same.

Dedicate some time to reflecting on what was different between the crisis and 'business as usual'. Has this experience changed your priorities, as a professional and as an institution?

Have you (re)discovered new strengths or developed new skills in your institution and among your staff during this period? Have your attempts been successful? Were there any failed attempts that could be just as useful as the successful ones? Have you experienced difficulties? Any good moments of solidarity or creativity?

Are there things that you would like to integrate into your new way of 'normal' working? (It could be a new practise or tool, something you learned from a success or a failure, a new mindset, or a change in your priorities.)

It is still too soon to know how the crisis will affect your community, staff, and institution in the mid- and long-term. However, remember that you can talk to peers who have already passed the height of the crisis in order to benefit from their experience, which may help you plan for the future. For instance, they may already be seeing if visitors feel uneasy with the idea of big gatherings and are avoiding visiting museums, even in a post-crisis situation.

Professional networks like ICOM can provide valuable help in sharing knowledge and experiences with colleagues from all over the world who are facing similar challenges.

Monitor national and international discussions on how the crisis is changing the museum sector:

- Watch ICOM's webinar on [Preparing for the Reopening of Museums: The Aftermath of a Pandemic](#) and its webinar on [Impact, Innovations and Planning for Post-Crisis](#), hosted in partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Explore how sustainability can add value to your museum's activities with the AAM's [Looking Ahead: Sustainability Adding Value to Reopening](#) webinar and the ICCROM's [Heritage and Sustainability in a Post COVID-19 World - Building Back Better](#) webinar.
- Check out the article ["Reinventing Museums: Pandemic Disruption as an Opportunity for Change"](#) on the American Alliance of Museums' Center for the Future of Museums blog.

8. STAY UNITED AND HELP US IN OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Remember that your sustainability is crucial for your contribution to the sustainability of this planet. The current COVID-19 crisis is not only a health crisis but also a development crisis. As museums and museum professionals, we all have an important role to play in building a more peaceful, equal, and sustainable future.

We invite all museums and museum professionals to keep up with our [advocacy efforts](#), share our statements, and monitor the policy measures, relief funds, assistance opportunities, and advocacy campaigns that may help them get support. If you cannot find any of these either locally, regionally, or nationally, we are here to help.

Check out ICOM's advocacy initiatives:

- Read and share [ICOM's statement on the necessity of relief funds for museums during the COVID-19 crisis](#), as well as the [UNESCO and partners' statement, co-signed by ICOM](#), calling for turning the threat of COVID-19 into an opportunity for greater support for documentation.
- Read the [ICOM 2019 Resolution](#) and [President's Statement](#) on sustainability and watch the inspiring speakers from the [Curating Sustainable Futures Through Museums](#) session during the ICOM 25th General Conference in Kyoto, Japan in 2019.
- Read the ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action's (CECA) statement raising awareness of how the COVID-19 crisis is [threatening museum education](#).
- Check out our National and International Committees as well as regional alliances, affiliated organisations, standing committees, and working groups, who are all here to help ([ICOM Committees' directory](#)).

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