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in the bar below





A YEAR OF
CHANGE,
INNOVATION
AND RESILIENCE.

ICOM ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Contents

01

MOBILISING THE NETWORK IN TIMES OF CRISES

- RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- SUPPORTING MUSEUMS IN BEIRUT
- BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

02

BOOSTING DIGITALISATION

- INNOVATING IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- CREATING CAPACITIES VIRTUALLY

03

PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2020
- ADVOCATING FOR EQUALITY
- IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

04

ADAPTING TO THE PRESENT AND LOOKING FORWARD

- A BETTER ICOM FOR A BETTER FUTURE
- FOSTERING PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND BEST PRACTICES
- KEY FINANCIAL DATA

Editorial

"More than one year on from the worldwide lockdown that plunged us into a 'new normal', we are only beginning to understand its impact. We are proud to say that our museum community has clearly risen to the occasion, turning crisis into opportunity through resilience and solidarity.

We would like to commend all of you, our members, committees, the Secretariat and Executive Board for the exceptional work you have carried out under the most challenging and unforeseeable of circumstances. The ability of our community to adapt and reinvent its practices in the face of great adversity leaves us full of optimism for a healthy and innovative future for museums."

Alberto Garlandini, President
Peter Keller, Director General



2020: A Year of Challenge and Resilience

The year 2020 represented a pivotal moment for ICOM and the museum community. The entire world faced a great and unprecedented challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. It forced museums all over the world to close their doors, and the sector was struck by restrictions and a looming economic crisis. ICOM was no exception – our global network found itself in lockdown. However, in the midst of this incertitude, we found a spirit of resilience. ICOM, its Committees and its Members reacted to the crisis by pushing the boundaries of innovation to continue our missions and keep in touch with our communities.

While responding to the sanitary situation, we continually responded to other challenges, often marginalised during COVID-19 news cycles. The dramatic consequences of Global Warming continue to be felt. Ravaging fires and hurricanes across the world endangered museum collections and put cultural heritage sites at risk. This year was also marked by the explosions in Beirut and the call for social change arising after the murder of George Floyd. Museums were committed to pursue their actions for cultural heritage preservation which remained central and more important than ever.



ICOM IN NUMBERS

49,547 Members

+ 1,3% growth compared to 2019

118 National Committees

115 countries and territories

**22,893 Members in
International Committees**

46.8% of ICOM members are active in international Committees



MOBILISING THE NETWORK IN TIMES OF CRISES

A blue surgical mask with white elastic straps is hanging against a warm, yellow-orange background. The mask is slightly tilted and its edges are visible. The background has a soft, blurred texture.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Our daily lives were turned upside-down in early 2020, when the outbreak of COVID-19 plunged the world into an unprecedented crisis. ICOM swiftly changed gears and mobilised its network to respond to the emergency.

Working closely with the relevant International Committees, ICOM coordinated the creation of resources responding to the COVID-19 crisis and practical recommendations based on expert advice and best practices. A set of quick-response tools were published on a resource center on the [ICOM website](#).

Conservation of museum collections



Ensuring the safety of the public and staff



Ensuring cultural heritage security during lockdown



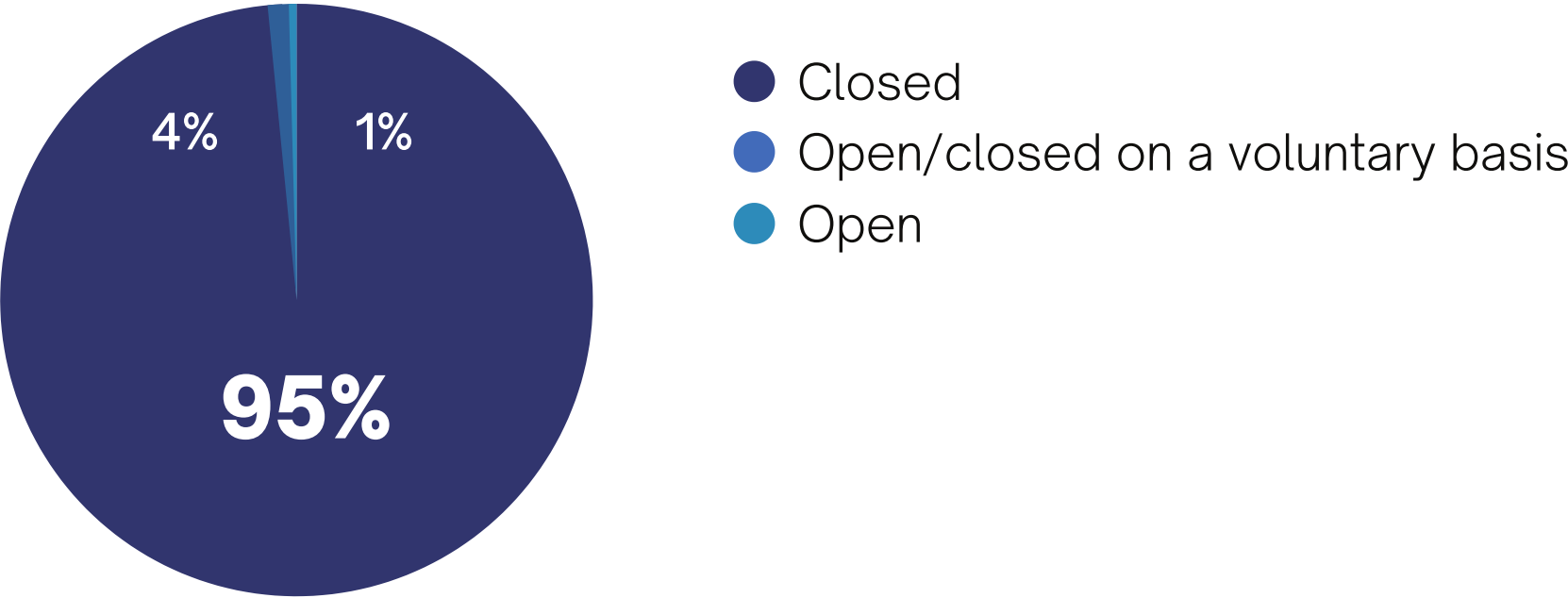
Recommendations include guidelines to reinforce museums’ primary function of the conservation of collections, to ensure the cultural heritage security during lockdown as well as the safety of staff and the public.

National Committees provided recommendations and guidelines through online publications including **ICOM Venezuela**, **ICOM Spain** and **ICOM Italy** as well as the **ICOM CC**. Before re-opening, all regional museums associations of Belgium, including ICOM Belgium, launched an advocacy program with a 7-point plan and an open letter promoting potential role of museums in both aftercare and mental health in a post COVID-19 world.

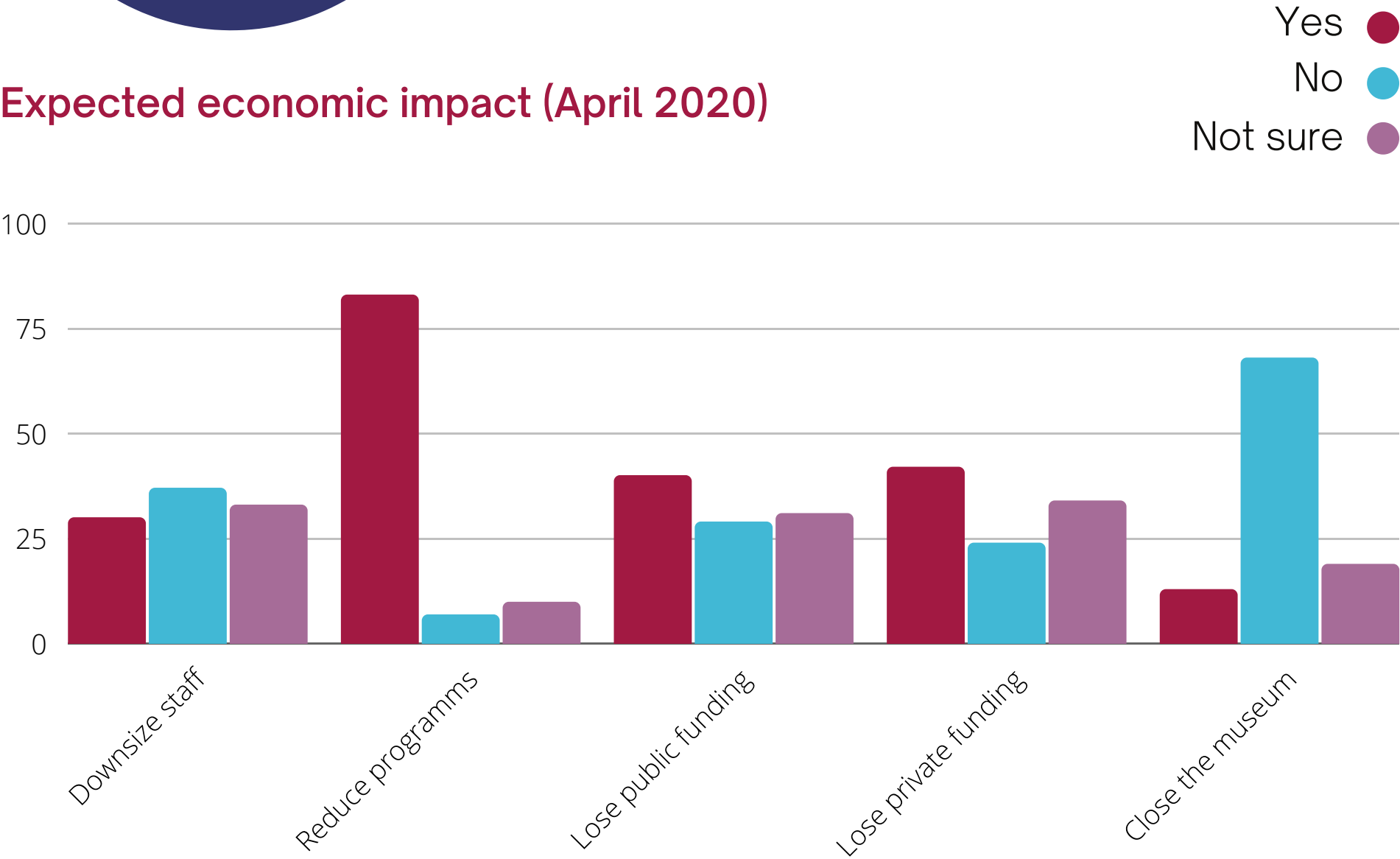
ICOM launched two global surveys to ascertain the degree to which the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, and subsequent lockdowns, have affected and will affect the cultural sector in the short and long term. The surveys covered five themes: the current situation for museums and staff, predicted economic impact, digital and communication, museum security and conservation of collections, freelancer museum professionals.

The **first survey** analysed almost 1,600 responses from museums and museum professionals, collected between 7 April and 7 May 2020 in 107 countries. Approximately 95% of institutions were forced to close in order to safeguard the wellbeing of staff and visitors, resulting in serious economic, social and cultural repercussions. Despite an increasing digital communication by an average of 15%, almost all museums around the world operated with reduced activities. Consequently c. one third of institutions will reduce staff levels and more than one tenth face permanent closure.

Status of museums in the world (April 2020)



Expected economic impact (April 2020)



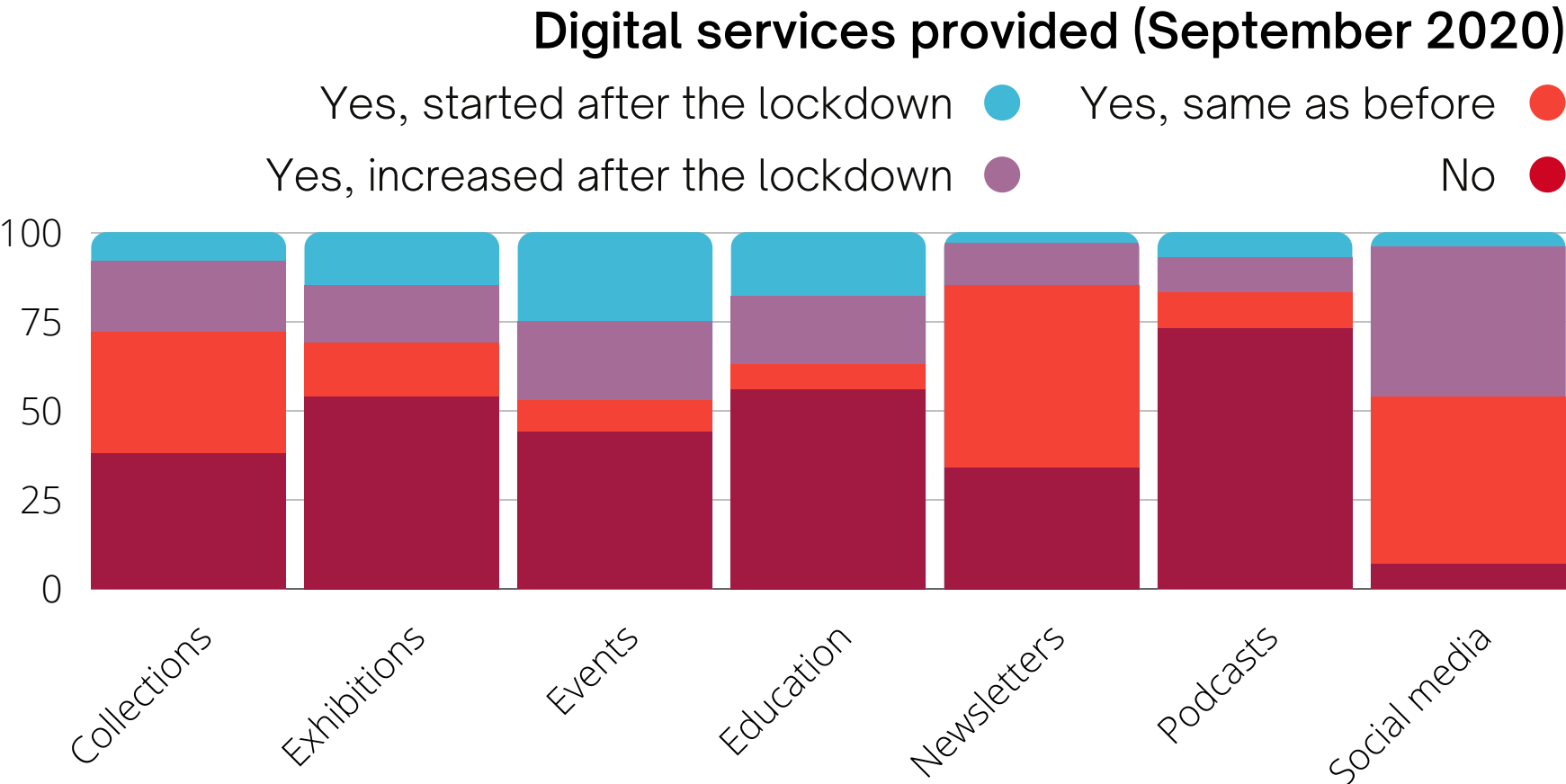
The **second survey** along the same lines as the first, assessed the evolution of the situation in light of the progressive reopening of museums in some regions. Almost 900 responses globally from museums and museum professionals were collected between 7 September and 18 October, 2020, just before Europe began to experience a second wave of generalised lockdowns. In comparison to the April survey, the situation in September-October 2020 was more dependent on a museum's location: in Europe and Asia most museums were open, in Latin America and the Caribbean they were closed and the situation in other regions was mixed.

The digital activities increased from 15% to 50% but it is likely that almost all museums will be confronted with reduced resources and activities. 30.9% will downsize their permanent staff; this percentage will rise to 46.1% for freelance and temporary contracts. While participants seem less worried about the reduction in exhibition volume (62.4%) and public programmes (67.4%) than they did in April (82.6%), the figure is still unsettling.

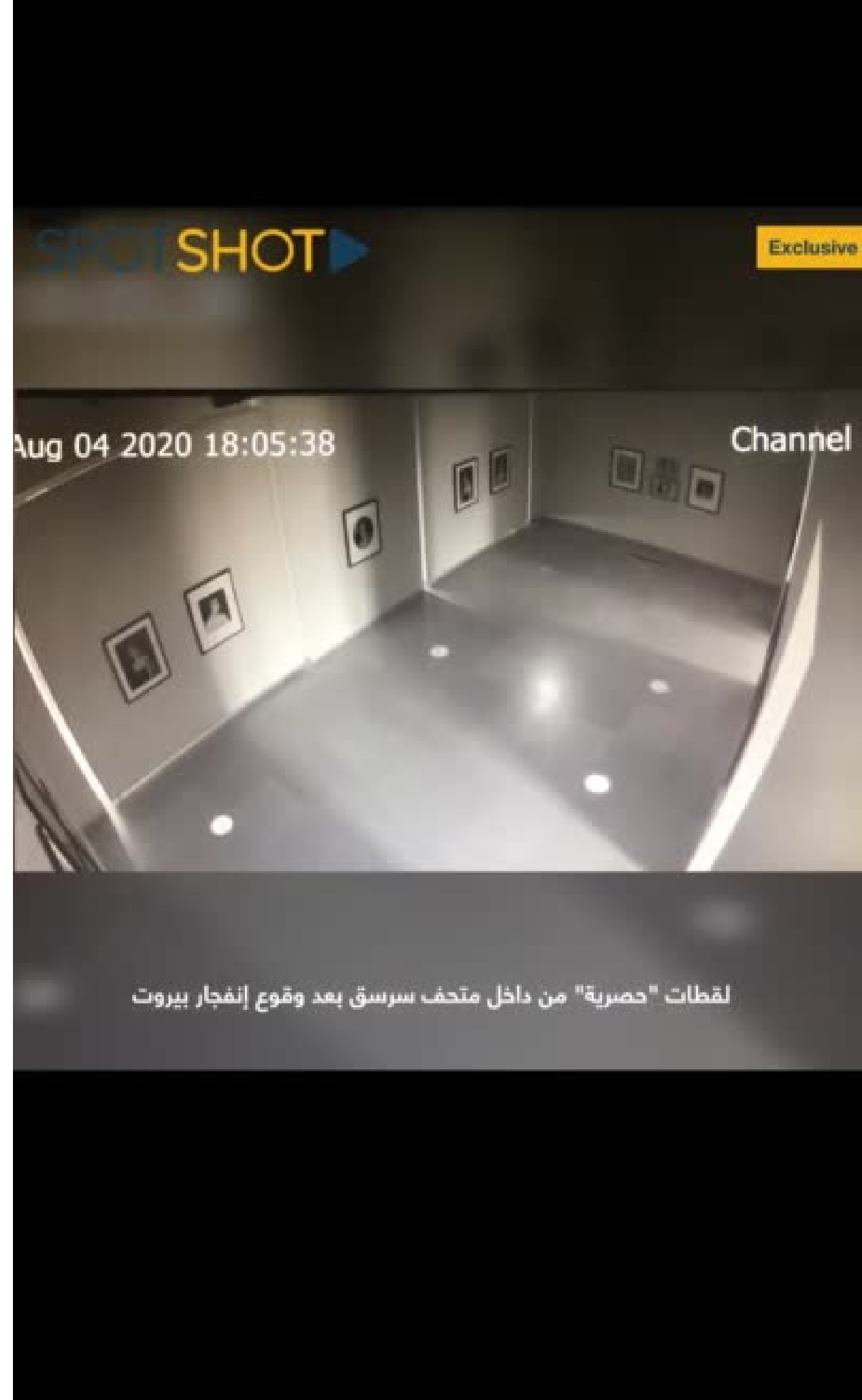
This global survey was complemented by national surveys by ICOM Bolivia, ICOM Chile, ICOM LAC and ICOM Poland,

which analysed the problems of museum administration and of personnel struggles as well as best practices in crisis management and health and safety regulations.

The survey findings helped us to build various responses to the situation, including the presentation of a webinar on 24 June 2020. **“Preparing for the Reopening of Museums: The Aftermath of a Pandemic”** which invited participants to take stock of what happened during these long months of closing and to assess innovative projects that have proved useful for the future. The discussion evaluated the global impact of the current pandemic on cultural institutions while also focusing on the delicate actions to be undertaken during the upcoming phase of reopening.



PROVIDING CULTURAL FIRST-AID IN BEIRUT



In the midst of the pandemic, on August 4, 2020, Beirut was hit by two explosions which devastated the city. ICOM reacted immediately and joined the efforts undertaken by the Lebanese museum professionals and volunteers to develop an emergency response to the blast.

Following a first mission to assess the damages to cultural property and museums in the capital city, ICOM, in cooperation with the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) and ICOMOS jointly committed to the rehabilitation of Beirut's heritage damaged by the explosion.



The aim was to contribute to the evaluation of the situation, identify the challenges, and to assist in the coordination of international action and the implementation of concrete projects for the rehabilitation of the heritage damaged by the explosion. Finally, ICOMOS, ICOM, and ALIPH **announced** the establishment of a joint task force dedicated to the protection of Beirut's heritage, in order to support the coordination of funding and actions carried out in the field, in close cooperation with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, and within the framework of the efforts of the international community.

“Our mission will not stop here. The rehabilitation of Beirut museums will take time, and we’ll be at their side along the way. The strength of ICOM comes from its network of professionals, who are mobilised and whose eyes are turned towards Beirut.”

– Peter Keller, ICOM Director General, Press conference, 15 September 2020

Our fight continues against illicit traffic of cultural property. 2020 was a stepstone year with the **50th anniversary of the UNESCO 1970 Convention and the 25th anniversary of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention**, both essential international texts to fight this traffic. ICOM, as close partner of these two intergovernmental organisations, was invited to participate and intervene in numerous events to recall the work that has been done up to now by the museum community to stress the need for a continuous cooperation at international level. ICOM is recognised as a key actor on this topic, in particular with the production and translations of ICOM Red Lists as well as the International Observatory.

Conferences, mainly virtual this year, offered the opportunity to give visibility to both the operational tools that we have created and the international cooperation that we have developed, such as “**Reinforced partnerships against the trafficking of cultural goods and its use to finance terrorism**” at the Peace Forum on 12-13 November 2019 in Paris, France. Work done at national level is also of utmost importance, see for example the collaboration between ICOM Colombia collaborated with the Ministry of Culture for the activation of a cooperation agreement against illicit traffic and has an active role in updating the INTERPOL database of stolen objects.





BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

As the representative of the international museum community, we called on policy and decision-makers to urgently allocate relief funds to assist museums and their professionals, so that they can survive the crisis and continue their vital public service. Other recommendations we published include resources to support community resilience.

The recovery of our economies and the healing process for our societies will be long and complex. Museums, key protagonists in local development and unparalleled arenas for interaction and learning, will play a fundamental role in rebuilding local economies and repairing the social fabric of affected communities.

This goes both ways as presented by ICOM in the webinar “**Local Communities Strengthening Museums**”. An open online debate regarding the current relationship between museums and local communities proposed actions and activities which have since been implemented in different areas of the world. Indeed, fruitful synergies bonding museums with the surrounding communities can lead to high-impact projects, for the benefit of both the cultural sector and society. The webinar “**Community-based museums in times of crisis**” and survey “What is a community museum in your region?” led by the **EU-LAC Museums project**, with ICOM as strategic partner, reached almost 170,000 people across all publications.

In the aftermath of the global outbreak of the pandemic, we worked hand-in-hand with ALIPH to develop concrete actions to support the museum community. The Geneva-based organisation launched the ALIPH COVID-19 Action Plan to support the cultural heritage protection sector and committed nearly 2 million USD to this action. The Action Plan is a partial response to ICOM’s Statement on the Necessity for Relief Funds, and several aspects, including the importance of accessing collections online, and security and safety measures, are in line with our recommendations.

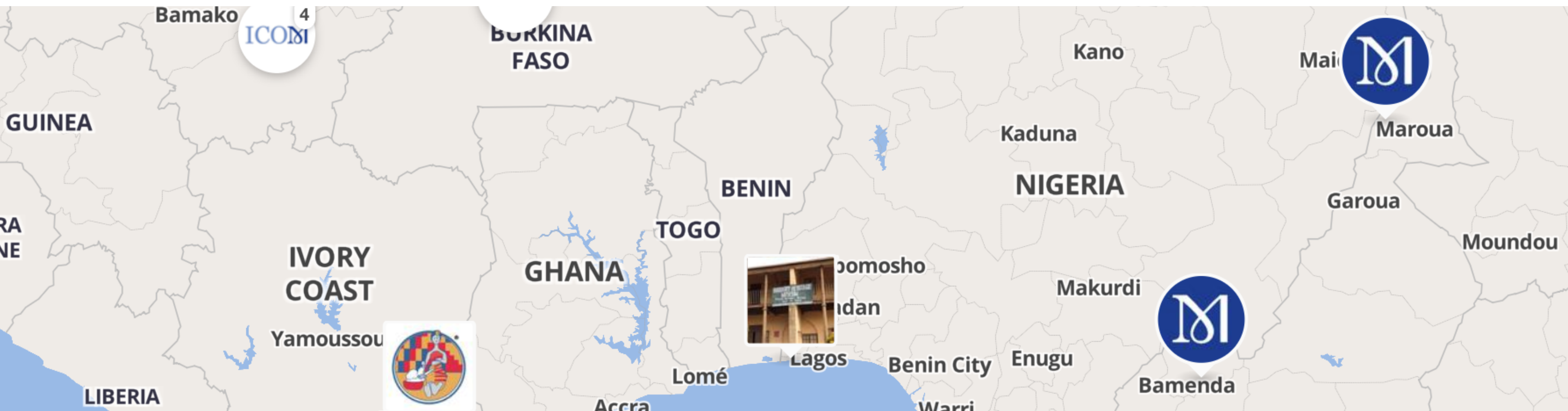


La Jornada and Together We Can Food Pantry, Queens Museum, Nominated for the Outstanding Museum Practices in a Time of Global Crisis by CIMAM

A new partnership was signed with ICOM to deliver concrete assistance to museums in the form of emergency grants. Thanks to this partnership, ICOM activated its network and called upon National Committees to identify museums eligible for emergency funding and the most urgent actions to be implemented. Through the ALIPH emergency granting scheme, we supported fourteen cultural institutions grouped into 5 initiatives totalling 74,200 USD. The selected projects improved museum security, provide staff training, and made the collections accessible online:

- The Grand-Bassam National Costume Museum, Côte d'Ivoire was equipped with showcases to protect its works, install security cameras, and redesign its visual identity.

- ICOM Cameroon identified two museums, the Babungo Museum and the Royal Museum of Mokolo in the North-Western and Northern Region, known to be among the most vulnerable zones to conflicts in the country, to inventory and digitise their collections.
- ICOM Mali identified 6 museums in Bamako, Sikasso, Segou, Timbuktu and Gao for a project of awareness-raising and disinfection of museums against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Badagry Heritage Museum, Lagos State, Nigeria conducted a research project and digitise its collection.
- ICOM Burkina-Faso safeguarded and secured the collections of the Birgui Julien Ouedraogo Museum of Gourcy, the Bendrology Museum of Manéga, the Douroula Museum and the Communal Museum of Kaya, all located in conflict areas.



The background of the image features a dark silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. They appear to be looking at a bright, glowing blue circular light source on the left side of the frame. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and purples, with a semi-transparent dark red rectangular area on the right side that serves as a backdrop for the text.

BOOSTING DIGITALISATION

INNOVATING IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH



While periods of lockdown limited the opportunities for museums to reach their audiences, several institutions around the world have shown great creativity and resilience by harnessing the power of social media.

We prepared a list of case studies and best practices in digital outreach that can inspire museums to deal with this situation: [Here's what you can do to reach – and engage – your public remotely.](#) These guidelines emphasise the need for a continuously active and innovative social network strategy, and describe several online initiatives that could be offered to connect with an audience.

ICOM ONLINE IN 2020



FACEBOOK

37,480 followers **+23%**
248 posts



TWITTER

32,600 followers **+21%**
1,400 tweets
5 million impressions



INSTAGRAM

18,900 followers **+90%**
83 posts
271 stories



WEBSITE

545,000 users
98 news articles



COVID-19

RESOURCES CAMPAIGN

30 news articles
292 social media posts
35,000 unique pageviews
580 K impressions

Along with an intensified presence of ICOM on social media in response to the skyrocketing use of digital communications during lockdown, we launched the campaign **#MuseumsAndChill** to share digital initiatives and resources created by museums to help communities cope with the situation and improve their well-being. The campaign had a social media reach of 41 million users and generated nearly 10,000 social media posts, blog posts, videos and press articles.



New on Social Media in 2020



Brazil, Czech Republic, Spain, Mexico, Chile, ICOM LAC



Czech Republic, Spain, UK, ICOM LAC



Czech Republic, Spain, Chile, ICOM LAC



Brazil, Spain

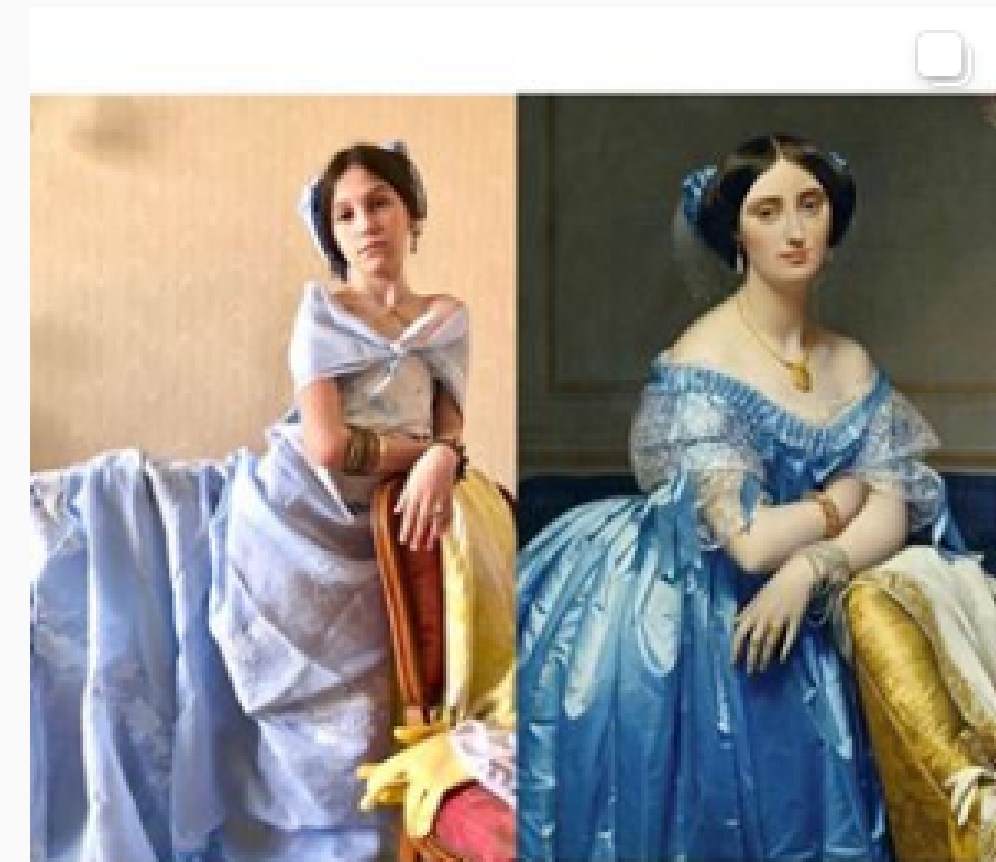


Chile, Venezuela

Many National Committees expanded and diversified their communication tools and digital presence. They created new profiles on various platforms: the majority of them on Instagram, but also on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. Some Committees also created or updated their newsletters (Brazil, Colombia) and their websites (**Japan, Colombia, ICOM LAC**).

Other projects expanded on the presence of social media through innovative projects, such as the launch of the bimonthly journal MUSEOlógico on the ICOM Venezuela website and the Premio de Buenas Prácticas de Museos Venezolanos 2020-2021, which awards best practices in programmes on innovation, sustainability, accessibility, and diversity. ICOM LAC launched the communication campaign “We want to keep in touch”, targeting National Committees in the region.

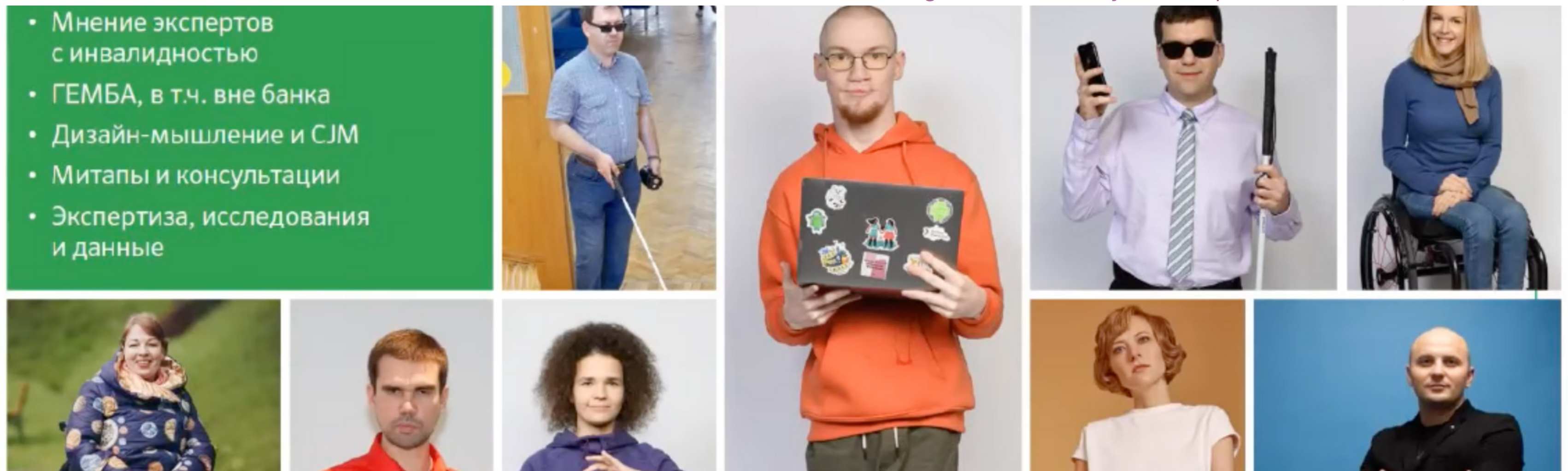
Online events and initiatives blossomed during lockdown. For example, ICOM Italy's research project dedicated to digital communication in museums. It was initially based on an observation of museum online activities through 47 parameters, followed by a short questionnaire which received 354 responses in one week. Their Committee on “Digital technology for cultural heritage” started the AperICOM format: a series of weekly online meetings open to everybody delving deeper into specific topics surrounding digital practices. Thanks to the renewed partnership with Microsoft, ICOM Italy also organised a session dedicated to museums and the digital sphere as part of their **EduDay2020** and a series of **three workshops** dedicated to the digital transformation.



On the occasion of International Museum Day, ICOM Russia organised the online conference “Digital Accessibility in the Sphere of Culture” and the conference “Digital Museum” in Crocus City Hall in Moscow. The event was organised by Midexpo company in partnership with ICOM Russia, «ADIT» and the Department of Culture of the Moscow city Government. The project “School of Digital Development for Museums” was created by the Council for Digital Development of Museums with the objective of developing digital competencies and increasing digital literacy among museum managers and staff.

Other research projects have broadened the horizon of digital communication by venturing into the field of games. ICOM Finland translated into English the publication Museum Jams in Recording Recent History Phenomena: a joint project between different Finnish museums and games and artificial intelligence. In November 2020, the National Museum of Korea, ICOM Korea and ICOM ASPAC jointly organised the first World Museum Forum, where innovative concepts for change in modern times were discussed in relation to museums with thirty world-class academics and experts.

Digital Accessibility in the Sphere of Culture, ICOM Russia



Necessity breeds innovation. On July 24, ICOM Members from all over the world participated in the first ICOM online Annual Meetings, a crucial step in the history of our organisation. International museum professionals met online to discuss the challenges that our organisation is facing and reflect together on a new way forward. The two videoconferencing and streaming platforms, which were simultaneously translated in ICOM's three official languages (English, French and Spanish), provided the ICOM Committees and Members with a space for democratic discussion and interaction, setting a new standard in ensuring ICOM's commitment in pursuing the active participation of its community.

Although the value of personal, face-to-face interaction is undeniable, the ICOM online Annual Meetings was certainly an important step towards accessibility and inclusion: with a record participation of 1,370 participants and 525 voting Members, this was the first General Assembly many of them were ever able to attend.

“

“The organisation of this meeting was a first test of what our online meetings could be in the future. We have to learn a lot from what happened today and what we can do in the future to improve our working methods, our decision making and also our communication.

This format certainly allows us to increase participation as it encourages the Members to submit their questions and proposals for amendments in advance with the aim of hearing more from the Members, which is what ICOM has been striving for since its creation. This effort to active participation democracy, debate and diversity of opinion must continue in the future.”

– Alberto Garlandini, ICOM President

”



CREATING CAPACITIES VIRTUALLY

During these difficult times, ICOM remained a point of support for museum professionals. We launched [four online seminars](#) that provided a space for reflection and discussion on relevant current topics for the museum sector.

Each webinar brought together four specialists from different regions who shared their experiences and thoughts on the challenges facing contemporary museums.



A majority of museums were closed for several months, exposing their storage areas and therefore collections to numerous risks. In the future, reduced manpower and funds for the collection maintenance will be a challenge.



This webinar brought together experts and museum professionals to discuss a subject of the utmost importance which is more topical than ever: the management of emergency situations.



This session presented good practices on how to foster continuous learning, reach out to our communities at a distance and generate additional revenue to address the lack of on-site visitors.



This discussion presented the results of a second survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the sector, an overview of emerging professions, and highlighted the role that museums can play as promoters of local development after the crisis.

National Committees created multiple online projects, transforming the challenge of the rules imposed by the global pandemic into a new playground for innovation. CIPEG reported of many museums going virtual to make their Egyptian collections accessible, including the Egyptian Collection of the State Museum of Oriental Art of Moscow and the Art Institute of Chicago. Many exhibitions were accessible online such as “Under Nut’s sky: Divine Egypt” at the Civico Museum Archeologico di Milano and “Golden Mummies of Egypt” as part of the US exhibition tour and publication of Manchester Greco-Roman highlights.

In Korea, for Museum Week 2020, items previously on display at museums and art galleries were displayed outdoors in central Seoul for public enjoyment. Media artist Lee Lee Nam and Collage Plus created two LED artworks, which were on display near the main gate of the palace Gyeongbokgung. The use of technology allowed ICOM Israel to present virtual tours of museums and reach visitors via social and digital media on International Museum Day, on the same day as Lag Ba'omer.

Workshop at Luxor Museum - Collection Management and Museum Practice, CIPEG and MoA



In Cambodia, over 60,000 documents of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum went digital. The museum launched a digital database to access the largest archive of the Khmer Rouge regime's prison system records.

Another interesting initiative in 2020 was **EXARC's #FinallyFriday**, a series of live shows on Discord, followed up by a monthly podcast. Free of charge and open access for both EXARC members and non-members alike, they bring together two EXARC members with common interests which they discuss from different perspectives.

ICOM grew stronger thanks to these efforts in developing new ways to fulfil our missions and reach our audiences. We used all these tools to continue to work towards better and more inclusive museum practices, a theme we focused on for International Museum Day 2020.



**Sew much to do,
Sew little time**

Episode #4
August 7th, 2020
5:00pm CET
(Amsterdam time)

**Alex Makin &
Ronja Lau**

**Hosted by
Matilda Siebrecht**

EXARC #FinallyFriday 

#FinallyFriday Podcast by EXARC

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. On the left, there are several houses with dark roofs and some greenery. A road runs vertically through the center, with a few cars visible. To the right of the road, there is a dense area of smaller, more uniform houses. A semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

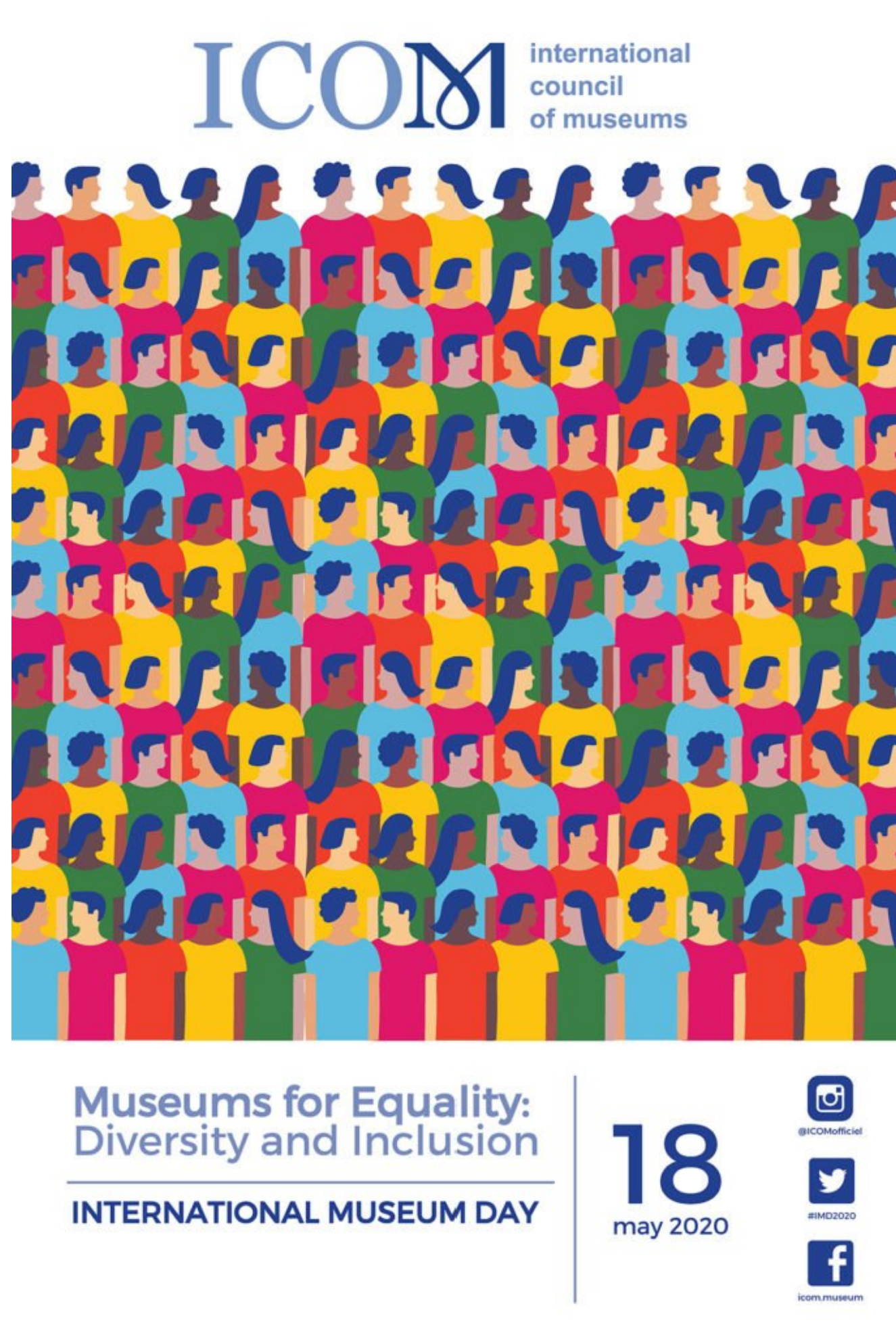


CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2020

The potential of museums to create meaningful experiences for people of all origins and backgrounds is central to their social value. The challenges of inclusion and diversity, while not unique to museums and cultural institutions, are important due the high regard in which museums are held by society.

For these reasons and many more, the theme “Museums for Equality: Diversity and Inclusion” was selected for International Museum Day 2020 with the aim of becoming a rallying point to both celebrate the diversity of perspectives that make up the communities and personnel of museums, and champion tools for identifying and overcoming the bias they display and the stories they tell.





Following the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns, ICOM decided to adapt the format of International Museum Day and focus on digital activities, promoting the values of the event while ensuring the safety of the public and staff. Despite the limitations imposed by a digital-only format, the event was a resounding success: the official hashtag, #IMD2020, reached more than 83 million users on social media on May 18 alone.

The IC-Ethics celebrated IMD 2020 by amplifying the voices of museum professionals who are experiencing unequal working conditions linked to the COVID-19 crisis. This initiative was oriented towards educators and freelancers. As a response to the social crisis and recent calls on museums to address historical inequalities, racism and homophobia inside their walls, the conference “**Ethical Challenges of Contemporary Collecting**” prioritised voices from black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTTTQI+ voices from around the world.

Poster of International Museum Day 2020



Drawing competition in Khuvsgul, Mongolia



Ayala Museum, Philippines



Rwandan Art Museum-Kanombe

National Committees participated in IMD 2020 with symposiums and online conferences. ICOM Japan organised an online symposium followed by discussions where five panellists from the museum community exchanged views on diversity and inclusion. ICOM Mexico, in cooperation with the UNESCO Mexico office, ICOMOS Mexico and other national partners, including the local government, organised the online seminar and an online symposium on the 2020 theme. The Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan and ICOM Azerbaijan also held an international virtual event on the topic as part of the International Museum Day celebrations in the country.

ICOM Brazil and ICOM Bolivia released statements on the role of museums in promoting equality, the latter also organising the virtual exhibition “Included Concepts”. ICOM UK invited their Members to reflect on what they can do to increase museum diversity and inclusion. Members were encouraged to post their individual commitments to diversity and inclusion on an online platform (Padlet and Twitter), which were then shared to inspire others to action.

The International Museum Day 2020 poster on the videogame Animal Crossing





National Museum of Gaborone, Botswana



Message of ICOM on International Museum Day 2020



Adaptation of the International Museum Day 2020 poster by ICOM Colombia

Committees also tackled these questions outside of the coordinated effort of IMD. An increasing public expectation for social change has catalysed a conversation around museums' potential for social good. However, there remains much to do to overcome conscious and subconscious power dynamics that can create disparities within museums, and between museums and their visitors. These disparities can relate to many topics, including ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and identity, socioeconomic background, education level, physical ability, political affiliation, and religious beliefs.

ICOM Chile, in cooperation with ICOM Mexico and ICOM Argentina, dedicated the XV Museological Chilean Days to the theme “**The integral-integrated museum and the Santiago Roundtable today: ¿egalitarian, diverse and inclusive?**”. COMCOL held their annual conference entitled “**Collecting Diversity: Divergence as Dialogue**”, jointly organised with ICOM Russia. Indigenous languages were placed as a priority for ICOM Colombia, who translated International Museum Day communication tools.

XV Museological Chilean Days 2020 poster



ICOM Mongolia focused on persons with disabilities by starting a “challenge” to promote museum facilities and services that grant access to all members of their communities. In Kenya, the Hyrax Hill Prehistoric Site and Museum carried out a wide variety of programmes dedicated to children, women, youth and persons living with disabilities. The project “**Inclusive Museum**” by ICOM Russia and its partners aimed to develop best practices of socialisation and creative rehabilitation of people with disabilities within the museum means, as well as fostering an accessible environment in museums.

Sign language was also at the center of the activities related to International Museum Day in 2020. ICOM Tunisia, in collaboration with the Tunisian Association of Translators of Sign Language, developed workshops for children and a presentation of the exhibition "Tunisia, a window to the Mediterranean" in sign language. ICOM Costa Rica cooperated with the National School of Sign Language to provide grants for ICOM Members to participate in the workshop “Basic workshop on sign language for museum personnel”.



ADVOCATING FOR EQUALITY



ICOM continuously works towards more equal and inclusive museums, fighting disparities that can occur with museum professionals and audiences, specifically in relation to gender and black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC).

We dedicated an issue of “Museum International” to the theme **Museums and Gender**, with the intention to provide fresh inspiration and provoke further discussion on this topic. This edition looks at gender issues in museums, how they are intertwined, and the role of museums in a world prioritising gender equality.

This Museum International issue focused on gender representation within museum management, operations and trusteeship, and in collections, exhibitions, education and public programmes. With contributions from Belgium to Barbados and Korea to Kazakhstan, among many others, this issue examines the varying politics of gender between societies and the innovative and provocative ways museums are addressing gender issues. For International Women's Day, ICOM explored the story of a forgotten figure of its history: **Margaret M. Brayton**, the Chair of the Children's Museums International Committee and a pioneering museum professional who understood the key role of museums in bridging nations and building peace.

Museums are not neutral, neither are they separate from their social context, the structures of power and the struggles of their communities. As highly trusted institutions in our societies, museums have the responsibility and duty to fight racial injustice and anti-black racism at all levels, from the stories they tell, to the diversity of their personnel. The senseless murder of George Floyd reminded us that there is a long way to achieve racial equality and that we need to act now.

“

At this pivotal moment when the eyes of the nation and the world are upon Minneapolis, will we join the struggle to seek justice and equality? Will we heed the call of courageous figures throughout history who spoke out against slavery, marched on for voting rights, and sat in for basic equality? Will we challenge the nation to live up to its founding ideals? In the memory of those taken from us and for the good of the country, I hope that we do.

*– Lonnie G. Bunch,
Secretary of the Smithsonian
and co-chair of ICOM US*

”

The Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) observed that there is growing consensus among museums that their role in society must be active, not passive. In this challenging context, they organised online sessions covering a range of topics, each driven by the following questions: Who holds the power when we share stories? Whose voice is absent, silenced or forgotten? How do museums promote equality and human rights?

Decolonisation was at the foreground of many training and research activities including the Special Project Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation coordinated by ICOFOM in collaboration with ICOM LAC, ICOM Brazil, ICOM Chile, ICOM Canada, MINOM and MAC which aims to foster international debates and develop theoretical bases for museum practice relating to the claims and actions of communities seeking greater agency through the forum of the museum. Part of this special project was the webinar “**Museums and Community Action: Decolonising the Curriculum**” presented in collaboration with the University of St Andrews.



ICOM South Africa, COMCOL and the South African Museums Associations (SAMA) hosted the joint seminar “**Decolonizing as a verb: Reinterpreting collections and collecting**” to explore with international guests different concepts and practices of decolonisation in the context of collection and collecting.

CECA founded the group Museum Education and Decolonisation and presented its first videoconference; “**Museums or decolonisation: practical challenges**” by Marilia Bonas. The 16th volume of ICOM Spain’s journal was dedicated to the theme “**Museums: ¿colonial storage? Readings of the other in our own museums**”.

“Decolonizing as a verb” conference by ICOM South Africa, COMCOL and SAMA



Monica Amekoafia, Miss Ghana 1957

Stills from Pathe News Reel
Miss Ghana Comes to Town





IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Climate change was not put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. As trusted members of the communities they are part of, museums are a strategic ally in informing the public on the dangers climate change poses to the future of our planet, as well as in disseminating and promoting sustainable practices.

In 2020, devastating fires ravaged various parts of the world, notably Australia, where the Australian ICOM National Committee actively participated in the cultural response roundtable. CIMAM's programs and webinars in 2020 included environmental sustainability as one of their topics of concern, and they also promoted the **Museums and the SDGs** guide, which is a tool to help museums contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ONLINE
CONFERENCE

Cover photo © Holger Link



WHEN MUSEUMS GO ONLINE

THE LAW & DIGITAL
CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY

11 DECEMBER 2020
13:00 - 18:30

ICOM
International
Council
of Museums

UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE
INSTITUTE OF LAW
AND ETHICS

Digital
Law
Center

Research and advocacy are a fundamental to the drive for sustainability. On World Intellectual Property Day, we joined our partners, the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), to ensure that **copyright law** enables libraries, archives and museums to preserve cultural heritage as a preventive measure to protect it from climate change. ICOM also continued to advocate to lift the EU ban on the use of **on-site generated Nitrogen**, defending it as an environmentally friendly conservation method.

In an online symposium organised by ICOM Japan, marking the first anniversary of ICOM Kyoto 2019, the participants discussed around the social role and responsibilities museums could and should carry out to achieve the SDGs. CIMUSET published the proceedings of their annual conference, "**Traditions for a Sustainable Future**", held during ICOM General Conference 2019 in Kyoto.

Conference "When Museums Go Online: The Law and Digital Cultural Heritage"



**ADAPTING TO
THE PRESENT
AND LOOKING
FORWARD**



A BETTER ICOM FOR A BETTER FUTURE

In order to continue their mission and meet the new challenges our organisation faced during the COVID-19 crisis, ICOM and its Committees adapted their institutional day-to-day lives to the new normal. Understanding that there was a need to maintain an efficient flow of information to respond to the most pressing issues, our network accelerated their institutional activities.

In 2020, ICOM also engaged in a process to improve governance and its working methods, putting transparency, participation and communication at the heart of a new leadership strategy. The resignation of former President Suay Aksoy and the appointment of Alberto Garlandini as new President came at a time of great instability for our museum community and the organisation in general. These changes at such a historical moment led us to adapt to a new situation that required agility and unity.

To meet our new objectives, we launched a communication strategy aimed at facilitating our Members' access to information and participation through the reorganisation and dynamisation of the ICOM website Member Space. Since then, the Member Space has become a hub for information and updates related to the governance and institutional life of ICOM (+9% of visits in 2020).

In November 2020, we also launched a new communication channel with our Members: the ICOM Member monthly newsletter, which includes the latest news on ICOM conferences, capacity building opportunities, institutional milestones and more. These efforts to increase the implication of our Members in the daily life of our organisation were felt through the whole of ICOM: in 2020, our Committees also stepped up their commitment with transparency, participation and communication.

ICOM Colombia designed a strategy to strengthen the administration of the Committee, with a special focus on transparency and communications. Harnessing the power of digital communications and social media, a large number of Committees intensified their efforts in this arena to keep in touch with their Members and among each other.

ICOM ICEE, IC Ethics and CAMOC increased their use of the institutional websites and laid out social media strategies to effectively deliver information about the Committee, its activities and relevant news on the impact of the pandemic in their respective areas of work. This was also the case of ICOM Cambodia, who in addition to putting in place a social media communications policy, worked to establish institutional relations with strategic partners.





FOSTERING PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND BEST PRACTICES

ICOM and its Committees strived to multiply the occasions for their Members to meet and exchange, all while revising and improving their governance practices.

In the last trimester of the year, the Secretariat kicked off the preparations for an extraordinary Advisory Council meeting for January 2021 with the aim of providing a platform for Committees to exchange about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on museum activities and to share solutions to mitigate them. ICOM Mexico also worked on additional institutional meetings in 2020, organising two online General Assemblies to revise the activities and strategies of the Committee.

The Executive Board of ICOM held a record-breaking number of meetings, going from two annual sessions totalling 30 hours to 14 sessions and 70 hours in 2020. The Executive Board thoroughly reviewed its working methods, searching for ways of improvement. The meeting schedules and procedures were streamlined, the minutes of the meetings are now published in the Member Space of the website, and the process of nominating members of Standing Committees and Working Groups was reviewed to involve the ICOM Membership. A Code of Conduct was part of this review in 2020 and will be published in 2021.

The Governance of ICOM Spain and ICOM Ireland multiplied their institutional rendezvous too, with 16 and 7 board meetings throughout the year, respectively. ICOM Ireland's Board also reviewed and updated the Rules for governing the National Committee. ICOM Zambia's 2020 Annual Meeting saw a new executive being ushered into office and a training session was held to train the new committee on ICOM structures and procedures, including roles, duties and responsibilities of office bearers.

ICOM Chile carried out a campaign around the benefits of being an ICOM member by promoting capacity building opportunities. The Committee also created regional delegations to decentralise its activities and maximise the participation of all Members. Similar campaigns and initiatives were implemented by ICOM Cuba and ICOM Venezuela who organised sessions to promote participation and ran a campaign on our ICOM and its missions, respectively.

The Board of ICOM Spain



KEY FINANCIAL DATA FOR 2020

ICOM's membership dues reached €4,074,442 in 2020, representing an increase of 1.8%. This increase is mostly due to an increase of number of members amounting to 49,547 in 2020.

In 2020, ICOM received a total amount of €409,872 in subsidies from:

- French Ministry of Culture and Communication € 20,000
- Subsidy from the Getty Foundation to fund the 2020 conference of CIDOC € 28,086
- Subsidies directly allocated to the International Committees € 13,637
- Donations from the ICOM Foundation € 278,000
- Subsidy from ALIPH € 68,465
- European Commission Consortium LAC-Museum - € 3,317
- Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (Tapis plein) € 5,000

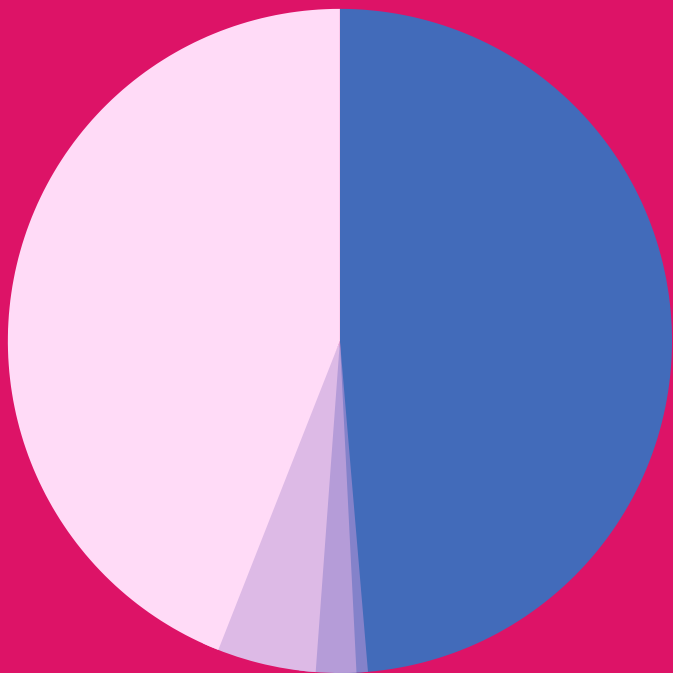
ABOUT EXCEPTIONAL INCOME AND EXPENSES

The charts on the right are unusually broken down due to exceptional income and expenses of 2020. These two figures are due to the relocation of the ICOM Secretariat to new premises, and correspond to the sale of the old offices, the moving expenses and the refurbishment of the new premises. As a result, other items may appear visually underestimated.

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR 2020

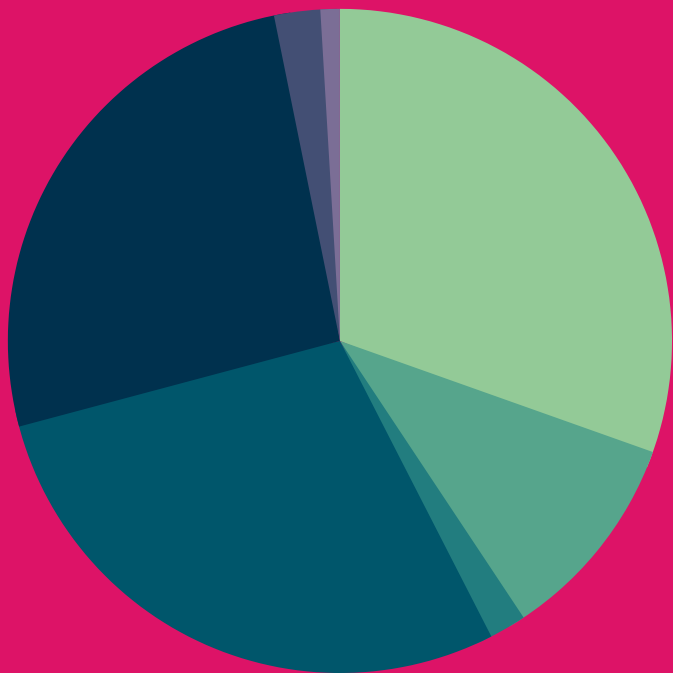
REVENUES

- Exceptional income
- Financial income
- Joint operations
- Other income
- Subsidies
- Membership dues



EXPENSES

- Exceptional expenses
- Financial expenses
- Depreciation and provisions
- Salaries, social charges and taxes
- Operating expenses
- Expenses allocated to programmes
- Support to the network



2020

Resources	4,701,066
Minus operating expenses	1,965,599
Minus salaries, social charges and taxes	1,913,755
Minus depreciation expenses	121,017
Operating result	700,695

Joint operations	51,148
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Financial income	4,920
Financial expenses	690,441
Financial result	-685,521

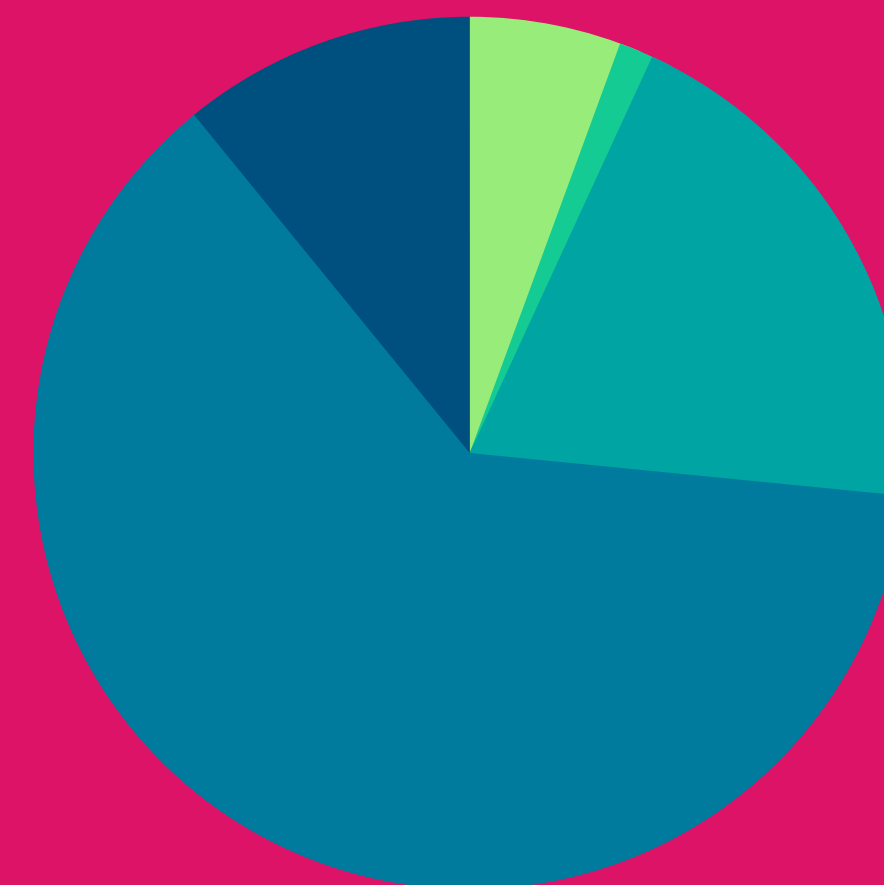
Exceptional result	2,456,043
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Final result	2,522,366
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Voluntary contributions	0
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Average staff number	27
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All figures expressed in euros



SUPPORT TO THE NETWORK

- Subsidies for the Regional Alliances
- Bursaries allocated to the Standing Committees
- Special projects funded
- Subsidies for the International Committees
- Bursaries allocated to attend the International Committees meetings

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