

“During the project, I met visitors who asked me to play a role in their next theater production.”
.....

PLANNING: Discuss in which ways the project could serve as a networking opportunity for the participants and how to seek out what connections they would like to make.

EVALUATE: What networking opportunities would be most valuable to you as participants and how can/did the project provide these?

“Participating in this event allowed us to network with digitally interested museum people and showcase our expertise which might lead to paid contracts in the future.”
.....

PLANNING: Discuss how your participatory project brings together professionals from various domains, their potential motivations and the rewards for participating as volunteers.

EVALUATE: What motivates/motivated you to participate in this project?

“Because we were working for three weeks with the same small group, I made new friends.”
.....

PLANNING: Discuss in what ways the project can stimulate socialization amongst participants. Do you expect groups to join that more often socialize together?

EVALUATE: Have you met new people and (how) do you want to stay in touch?

“I was excluded by participants who, amongst themselves, spoke a language that I do not understand.”
.....

PLANNING: Discuss how to avoid exclusion of people who do not speak the same language, and how to deal with practices of exclusion as they might occur.

EVALUATE: Do/did you feel excluded by other participants? What could the museum do/have done to avoid exclusion in the project?

“I came alone to the first meeting of the project and felt uncomfortable because I did not know anyone.”
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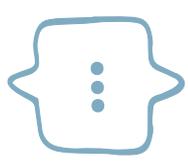
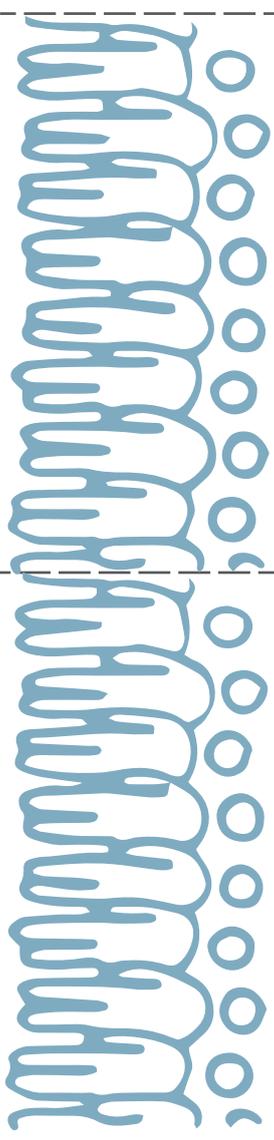
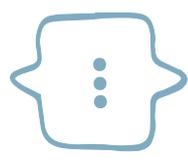
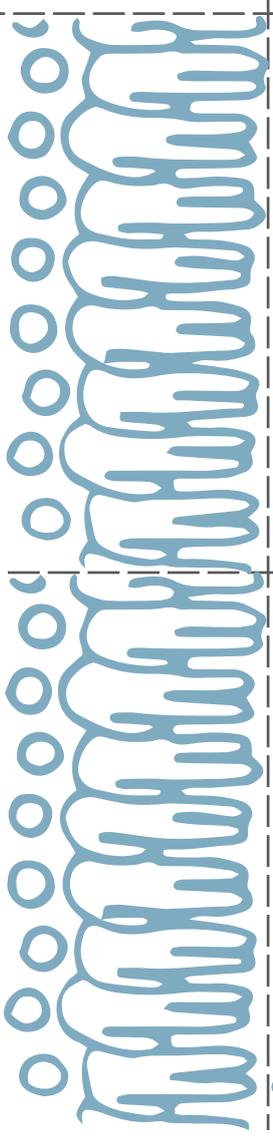
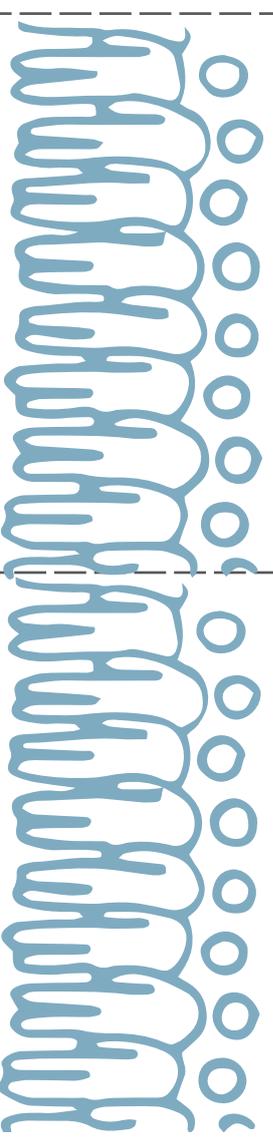
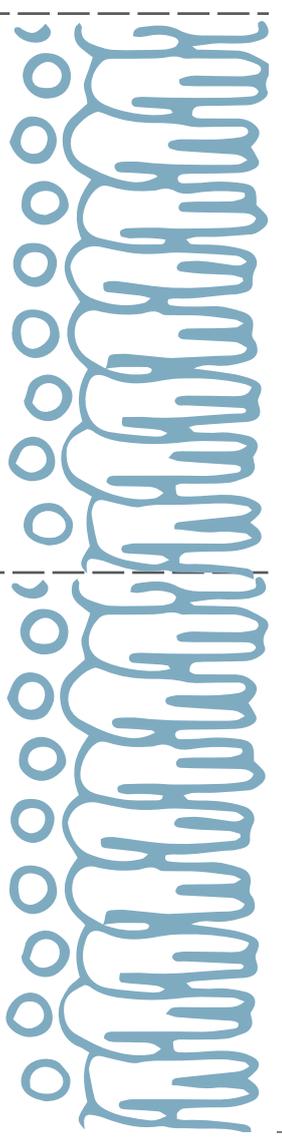
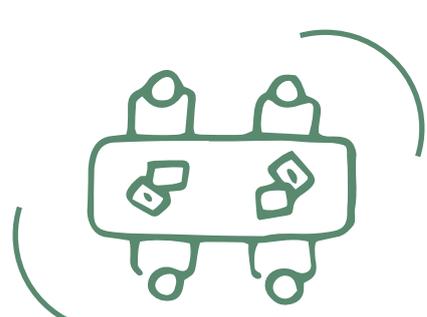
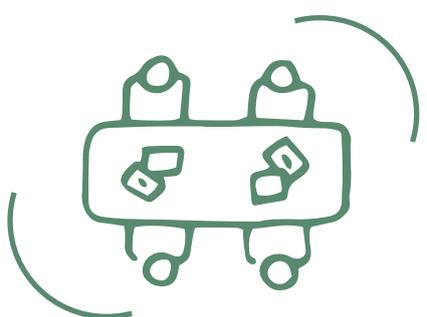
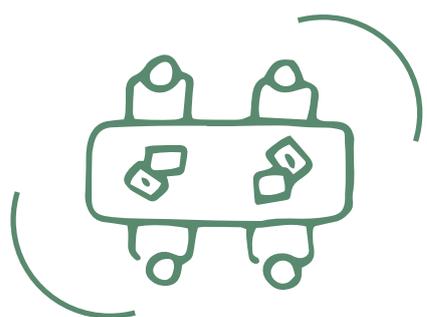
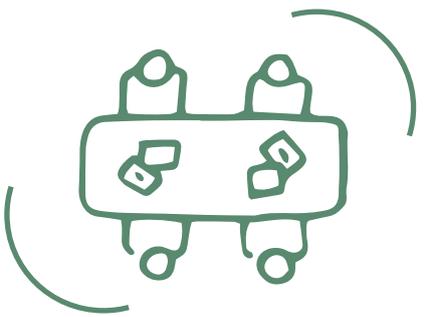
PLANNING: Discuss in what ways you can welcome people and break the ice.

EVALUATE: How was the start of the project for you?

“It was sometimes challenging to connect with participants during Zoom, some had trouble logging on and understanding how to use the mute/unmute button.”
.....

PLANNING: Discuss what digital tools participants are most comfortable with and or how to support them using new technologies.

EVALUATE: Do/did you feel confident and comfortable in using digital tools such as Zoom?



“I had expected to see and be able to show the beauty of my home city, but instead the exhibition focused on conflict and war. I couldn’t do anything about that.”

PLANNING: Discuss how to include focal points that the participants deem relevant, or how to clarify the need for the chosen focus of the exhibition.

EVALUATE: Which themes and related topics are relevant for everyone involved and how might they be included?

“One of the guards told me off for walking barefoot in the museum during our work.”

PLANNING: Discuss what structures and rules are in place that might limit how comfortable people might feel in a space, and how to deal with unforeseen challenges to the ‘normal’ use of the space.

EVALUATE: What would you like to be/have been allowed in the space and what does the museum need to do to make this possible (in the future)?

“There was space for me to use during a break. I could even heat up my lunch!”

PLANNING: Discuss where the project will take place and what happens during downtime. Where does everyone go? Do they have to leave the space?

EVALUATE: Do/did you have access to the space when you needed it? How about during breaks, when you are/were early, or when you have/had to stay longer?

“I did not have a choice in the topic of the exhibition.”

PLANNING: Discuss the positive and negative aspects of defining a project’s topic and consider to what extent the participants should be involved in these decisions.

EVALUATE: Discuss whether the chosen topic is relevant for everyone involved and which related topics/themes might still be missing from the exhibition.

“I unfollowed the museum on Facebook, because it seemed to be mainly a marketing channel rather than a way to include me personally in the museum’s activities.”

PLANNING: Brainstorm with staff and participants/user groups how to support their engagement and participation with cultural heritage through social media platforms.

EVALUATE: How would you want to engage with the museum on social media platforms? What type of engagement would make you feel more included in the museum’s work?

“It has felt like a safe space for sharing thoughts... you know what you share won’t go elsewhere.”

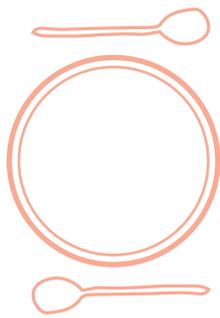
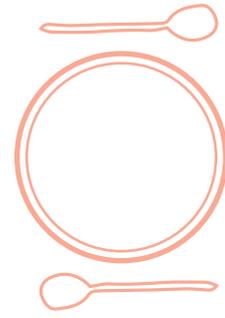
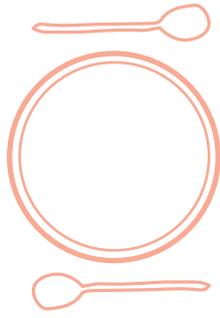
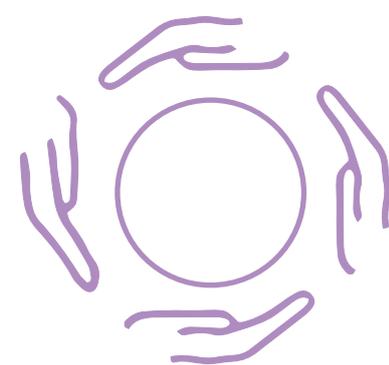
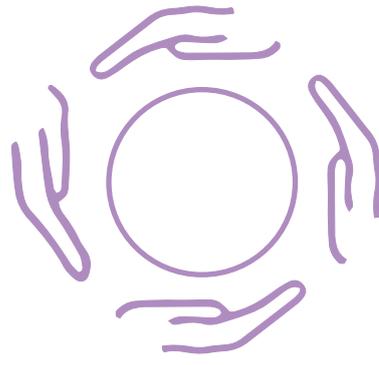
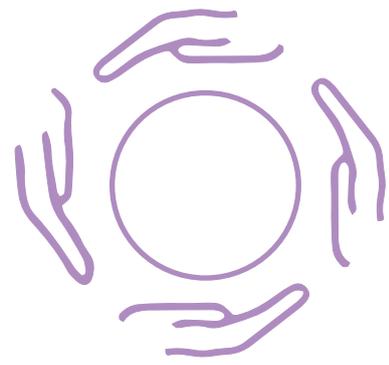
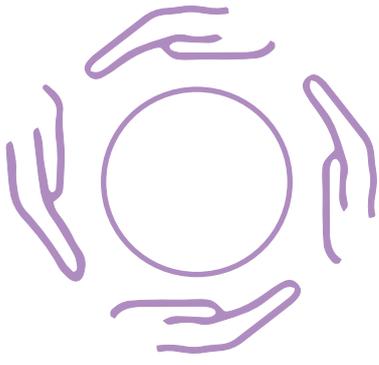
PLANNING: Discuss how to cultivate a safe/comfortable space for participants. This might encompass thinking about the length of the project, group size and where the project takes place.

EVALUATE: Do/did you feel comfortable and willing to share and connect with other participants and staff?

“There was no dedicated workshop space with big tables or crafting materials. Instead some people were even sitting on the floor drawing their posters.”

PLANNING: Discuss what types of space and material would best accommodate and support the activities you are planning to do. This relates to both physical and digital environments.

EVALUATE: How does/did the space impact your active participation?



“The food available at the workshop was not halal.”

PLANNING: Discuss the importance of meeting dietary requirements and how these can be taken into account.

EVALUATE: Do/did you feel that your dietary requirements were taken into account and do you find this important?

“When we moved to meeting online, we lost the interaction - the conversation that happens around food and drink.”

PLANNING: Discuss how important it is to involve and meet around food, and if there is some way to meet this interest either offline or in online spaces - such as through synchronized lunch breaks.

EVALUATE: Discuss with the participants if they feel/felt like their needs for social interaction and other forms of nourishment were met.

“We had a heated debate because the participating museum professional got very defensive about how they do things in the museum and could not deal well with critical questions.”

PLANNING: Discuss how museum routines and professional practices might clash with critical perspectives on interpretation, collection and exhibition of museum objects. What could be ways to prepare the team for facing and dealing with critical voices?

EVALUATE: Do/did you experience a conflict around various forms of knowledge or knowledge authority? What can you learn from it?

“In participating in this project, I felt heard and seen.”

PLANNING: Discuss how the museum can support in various ways and media the expert knowledge of participants - their voices, perspectives and concerns.

EVALUATE: Do/did you feel your perspective and knowledge and those of other participants, was valued and prioritized?

“By taking part in the project, I took part in a political debate that I didn’t know was going on.”

PLANNING: Discuss how to be transparent about the political and public discourse surrounding the themes of the project and the invited participants.

EVALUATE: What is/was the political nature of the project and how do you want/would you have wanted to contribute to the ongoing debate?

“All of a sudden the title of our exhibition changed, no one explained to us why.”

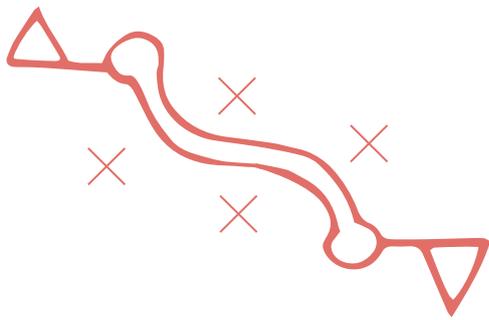
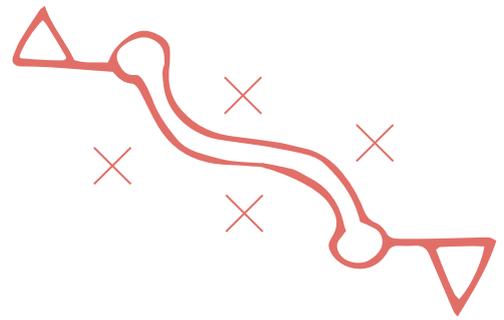
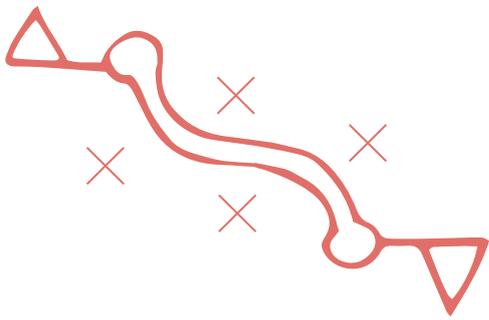
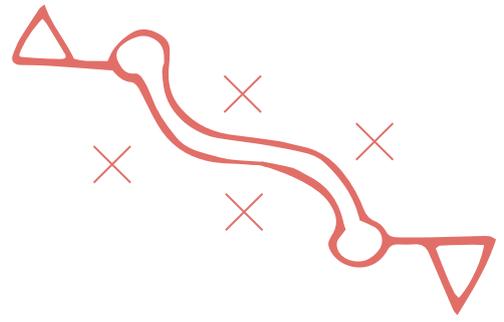
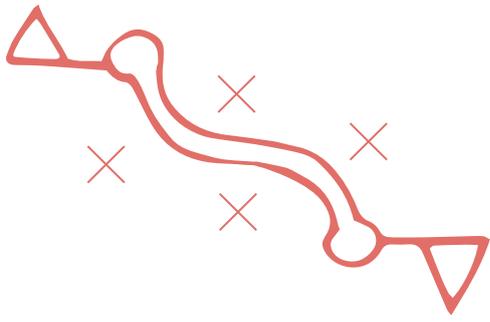
PLANNING: Discuss which organizational structures and workflows will impact the project. Think about who will make final decisions or what are important deadlines.

EVALUATE: Have there been moments where things were rushed, changed or slowed down because of the museum? Why did this happen? Did everyone understand why it happened at the time?

“Every time we met there were drinks and snacks.”

PLANNING: Discuss what is possible for your organization and within your budget in order to have some beverages and snacks.

EVALUATE: How have the food and drinks been during the project meetings?



“I was happy to exhibit my pictures in the museum but I wanted to make sure I would get them back afterwards. The museum asked if they could keep it for the collection, but they are very dear to me.”



PLANNING: Discuss in what ways the museum could collect the outputs of the project without keeping the personal objects from participants.

EVALUATE: Would you donate a personal item to the museum or not? What does the item mean to you and could the story be collected in another way? Also discuss: why would participants want the museum to keep their story?

“I am not happy with what I made as part of this project, and I don’t want anyone to see!”



PLANNING: Discuss what happens when participants are not happy with the end result or their contribution. Are they expected to share their work?

EVALUATE: How do you feel about what you have contributed?

“When the Black Lives Matter stuff happened all these museums conveniently started to talk about that subject matter, I was pretty pissed off about it, as were other members of the public.”



PLANNING: Discuss with participants/community members how to best support social movements and how to make this a consistent part of museum work.

EVALUATE: Discuss with participants if they feel or have felt that their social goals are consistently supported by the institution and in non-performative ways.

“The sudden end of the collaboration without any further development almost felt like a depression.”



PLANNING: Discuss how you are planning to end the project and what options could be offered for those interested in further collaboration/contact.

EVALUATE: How does/did the ending of the project feel? What are your expectations for completion of the project or its continuation?

“I contributed something to an exhibit in the museum, it made me proud.”



PLANNING: Discuss the goal of the project, for the museum as a whole and participants individually. Are there specific end results planned?

EVALUATE: What was or will be the most important end result for you? What are or were your expectations?

Why (not)



participate?!

A lot can happen in a participatory project. These 30 cards help you think through your plans or reflect together with staff and participants.

The cards are grouped in seven categories that highlight different aspects of participation:



Relevance



Food & Drink



Knowledge



Roles & Responsibilities



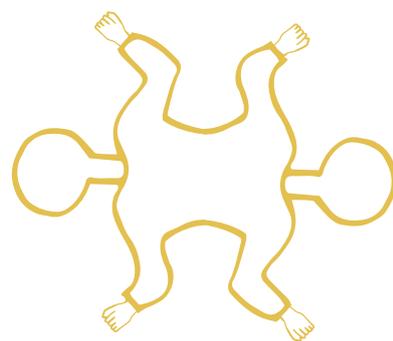
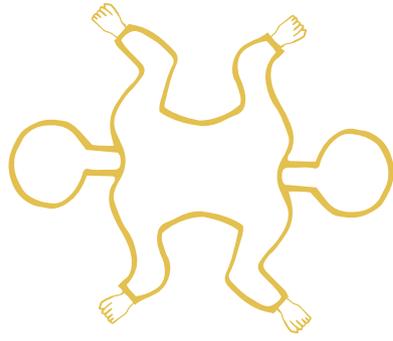
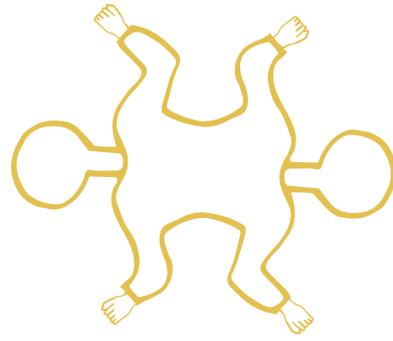
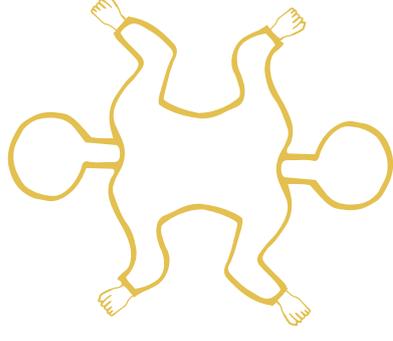
Relationships



Goals, Expectations & Results



Space



“I was paid for my work at the museum.”

PLANNING: Discuss the importance of payment of the participants for their role in this project and the possible managerial obstacles to arrange payment of the participants.

EVALUATE: What are/were the different roles and tasks in the project, and what did you gain from participating? Provide a space to talk privately about related needs from participants that they might not wish to share with others.

“Our project was a real team effort because everyone in this process had a task that felt needed and relevant.”

PLANNING: Think about the collaborative process between various participants: do you want it to develop organically or based on predefined roles? How can the project support everyone in the team to feel needed and relevant?

EVALUATE: Which roles emerged/emerged during the process and how do/did you feel during this process?

“When we met online, you could see into each other’s homes, sometimes their pets or even kids would make an appearance, even that of the curator - everyone seemed to be put on equal footing.”

PLANNING: Discuss how the media chosen for participation may change roles in positive or negative ways and if roles should be assigned for facilitating aspects of online projects.

EVALUATE: Discuss with participants how they feel/felt about their roles during the project and how these roles might change if using alternative media.

“I don’t see myself as a hacker and would not have participated in this event if my friend hadn’t asked me.”

PLANNING: Discuss how you conceptualize the group of participants you want to work with and in what ways invitations could limit their roles, as well as exclude people who do not feel addressed by these terms.

EVALUATE: Discuss stereotypes and terms which might have felt forced. What alternative self-attributions would feel more suitable?

Use the cards in a brainstorming session with colleagues, while planning your next project, or with participants during a project.

- 1) Draw a card one-by-one
- 2) Read the quote out loud
- 3) Discuss the point that best fits your situation

The rules are simple:

The cards begin with the perspective of participants. Each card starts with a quote based on real situations and experiences from participatory museum projects from around Europe. After the quote, two discussion points are suggested. One to help you during the planning phase and one for evaluation during or after a project.

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Impressum