

PARTICIPATION REPORT CONFERENCE "MUSEUM LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE ACTION" 15 - 17 NOVEMBER 2023. MUSEUM OF ITAIPU TIERRA GUARANI, HERNANDARIAS, PARAGUAY

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(Interactive Science Museum - Research Unit)**

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BACKGROUND

As part of the work plan of the Interactive Science Museum -MIC- we recognise the need to generate spaces for dialogue and exchange with local, national and regional institutions that work along the same strategic lines.

For this reason, the Conference "Museum leadership in climate action" was an excellent opportunity, and the topics addressed were inspired by the motto of the International Council of Museums for 2023: "Museums, sustainability and well-being", since museums play a fundamental role in the well-being and sustainable development of communities, contributing in various ways to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an integral and transversal part of the MIC educational model.

Support for this initiative, which brought together representatives from several countries, came from international organisations such as the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH), the International Committee for Museum Management (INTERCOM), the International Committee for Training of Personnel (ICTOP), and the International Committee for Marketing and Public Relations (MPR). At the national level, ICOM Paraguay, the Paraguayan Association of Museologists and Museum Workers (AMUS) and the Night of Museums Association support the event.

Likewise, the activity was declared of cultural interest, through resolution N°350/23, by the National Secretariat of Culture of Paraguay (SNC).

In February 2023, the international committees of ICOM: ICMAH, INTERCOM, MPR and ICTOP announced the 2023 annual conference, organised in collaboration with ITAIPU Binacional, ITAIPU Tierra Guaraní Museum and ICOM-Paraguay in Hernandarias, Paraguay, to be held between 15-17 November 2023.

The theme selected was "Museum leadership in climate action", based on the importance of the ITAIPU Biosphere Reserve, the Iguazu Falls and the cultural heritage of the Guaraní Land.

From the ICOM MPR International Marketing and Public Relations Committee, submissions were invited to address how museum communication, marketing, public relations, community relations, fundraising, membership and audience research, and other related areas are integral to museum leadership and play a critical role, and how all museums can make climate action a top priority.

After reviewing the general guidelines and format of the call for papers, an abstract entitled "Museums as allies of sustainability: the MIC in Quito, Ecuador" was submitted and accepted by the organising committee.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Itaipu Binacional is the largest renewable clean energy generator in the world, owned binationally by Paraguay and Brazil and located on the Paraná River, within the city limits of Hernandarias on the Paraguayan side. Itaipu is the driving force behind Paraguay's technological, social, cultural and environmental development, promoting various community, inter-institutional and multinational projects, seeking to contribute to the creation of a sustainable society. Its area of influence makes up the Itaipu Biosphere Reserve, recognised by UNESCO in 2017.

The Itaipu Museum was created in 1979 to house samples of the archaeological, historical, anthropological and florifaunal research carried out in the departments of Alto Paraná and Canindeyú during the construction of the dam and the creation of the reservoir. Over the years, it has become one of the main museums in the country, carrying out conservation, research and education programmes to promote the cultural and natural heritage of the region.

In this context, the Conference "Museum Leadership in Climate Action" was structured in different sessions, in two main areas: challenges and responses.

1. Welcome to the Anthropocene: facing the challenges.
2. Creating and innovating sustainable solutions.

Among the topics addressed were:

- Change to boards, partners, sponsors with an environmentally sustainable approach.
- Embedding and promoting environmentally sustainable missions, values, policies, practices, infrastructure and/or operations.
- Recruitment of staff, training and new skills needed to meet the challenges of the Anthropocene.
- Documenting and reporting our institutional impact on the environment.
- Training of citizens and future scientists / researchers / historians / archaeologists / activists.
- Branding, social media, communications and/or marketing that illustrate climate change and inspire climate action.
- Advocacy for human rights and climate justice.
- Support the critical role of indigenous stewardship of natural and cultural heritage.
- Adopt a strategic mindset and lead sustainable organisational and/or social change.
- Safeguard museum collections and heritage sites for the future.
- Inclusive and accessible climate action in museums and cultural heritage sites.
- Exhibitions, outreach and programming that inspire and engage children, families, communities, affinity groups and/or new audiences.

According to data provided by ICOM Paraguay, 185 professionals participated (in person and online).

Countries represented: 30, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela. Presentations: 29. Keynote speakers 5. Workshops 3.

On the first two days, 15 and 16 November, all accepted proposals were presented in a 15-minute presentation format, with a final time for questions and reflections.

On the 17th, while the members of each committee met to define their work agendas and other related issues, those of us who were not part of an ICOM committee held a workshop, followed by field visits to different areas of research and conservation of the Itaipu Museum.

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- In order to ensure sustainability in our museums, it is essential to generate research protocols on risk factors, understanding that sustainability has multiple facets and requires specialised technicians who can generate valid information that generates data to establish long-term processes.
- The concern for reaching certain degrees of sustainability is of interest to a great variety of museums, belonging to different areas, cities, etc. This interest is generated because these spaces are integrated to local problems, to their communities and have professionals who see this importance, because they consider museums as legitimate interlocutors in processes of sustainability generation.

- There is a latent need for many museums to have staff trained in collections management, education, planning, archiving, etc. This issue circulated quite a lot in the debates, given that internal training was seen as a weak point in many spaces.
- What happens in our context matters, if the territory to which the museum belongs undergoes processes of extractivism, violence, climate change, migration or human mobility, violation of human rights, are issues that cannot be alien to the reflections that are made, although depending on the type of museum, I have seen different approaches. However, being able to generate a space that gives rise to the events of the territory is fundamental to integrate the museum into its surroundings, and to understand how these problems affect us and what we can contribute to them.
- Apart from the human component, it is important to have up-to-date technological tools to assess risks in relation to climate change, and to be able to take action in the event that a real risk to the space and its contents becomes evident.
- Building support networks between museums is an urgent task, both to share strategies in different areas of management, and to think together about sustainable development strategies.
- In this sense, it is also important to make these new views visible to the public, both in the tours and in other networks, such as television channels and social networks, that is, that as cultural institutions we are working in accordance with current requirements.
- In each event it is necessary to highlight the component of the culture of sustainability, i.e. if recycled or recyclable materials are used, even if the ecological footprint index can be calculated, this is important to generate a narrative that is associated with museums and their willingness to contribute to a sustainable world, also, showing coherence, allows us to invite the public to imitate these actions in their daily lives.

- Sustainability goes hand in hand with decoloniality, you cannot have one without the other, because an important part of sustainable management is to listen to and give a place to populations and communities historically relegated from museums, such as Indigenous Nations, African Americans and urban tribes, and to give them a place in the museum.
- It is necessary to know very well the national and local legislation that protects and promotes the changes we need, in this sense, it is necessary to study in depth all the possibilities that the laws give us and that are constantly emerging.
- Sustainability management processes are not perfect, there is always room for improvement. In a long-term plan there must be flexibility to incorporate improvements (new materials, techniques, tools, ideas, partners, etc.).
- The coming generations, who today are our children, are very poorly represented in the projects presented. Starting from the basic definition of sustainability as the correct use of current resources without compromising those of future generations, the question that arises is how do we welcome these generations in our museums?
- There are very good initiatives, but they are not very well publicised, and considering that there are many museum networks, it would be good to deepen the work of communication.
- The ability to manage a crisis in communication, public relations and/or social networks is an essential skill that all members of museums must be clear about. This is important because miscommunications can lead to the destruction of years of work.
- One of the most significant reflections was the need for institutional leadership, i.e. a guide, a model, that, from a person or a team, understands the potential of the working group and generates empathy and commitment, understanding the importance of addressing this issue in each museum space.

- Finally, allocate part of the budget to sustainability actions, whether these are internal processes, generation of manuals, training, incorporation of alternative energies, recycling techniques, etc., or thinking of transversal actions. This is a requirement that must be considered in order to carry out efficient processes, including the hiring of experts in the field.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall objective of the conference was to explore strategies and experiences by which museum institutions can contribute to creating a more sustainable way of life and an environmentally conscious society from their respective workplaces. Furthermore, it reflected on how climate change affects collection care strategies, site museums and general museum management.

Climate change is a reality that no museum can ignore, as it directly affects the educational, conservation and management work of each museum. It has been observed that, despite the fact that each speaker presented a different museum (from textile collections to sports museums or a case of returning archaeological pieces), all of them were affected by issues related to reflections on sustainable management and how this changed the way they managed their processes.

In the case of the MIC, the presentation of the museum was received with great acceptance and congratulations from colleagues from all areas, many of whom were not aware of the work we are doing and have asked me for more information about it.

The different aspects dealt with in the educational management, the content of the projects, the gender perspective and the visual impact of the photos that show the different spaces of the MIC were pleasantly surprising. In this sense, I consider that we have much to contribute to the national and international debate on the role of museums in relation to processes of education, popularisation of science, climate change and the Anthropocene, understanding that sustainability means creating belonging in people.

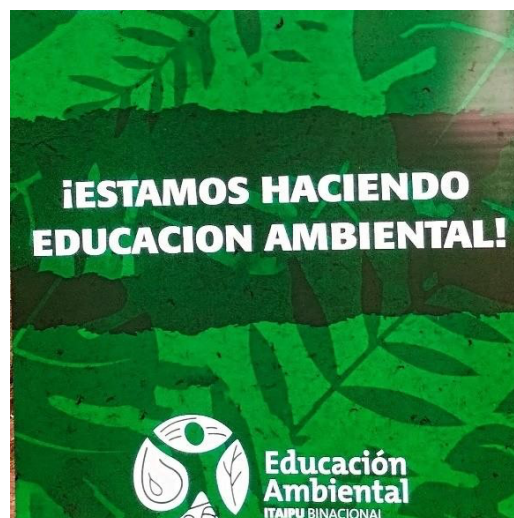
The teamwork carried out at the MIC was reflected in aspects that were highlighted by colleagues present: content, target audience, originality and relevance of the topics covered. Two issues stood out positively in comments: the approach of "Girls in STEM", and the Medicine Wheel.

All comments function as a positive stimulus to work as a team on the issues to be improved, many of them listed in point 4.

The Museo Interactivo de Ciencia, in Quito, is the only Ecuadorian museum whose focus is the popularisation of science from a sustainable development perspective. The central theme of the Conference will allow to deepen different approaches (educational, research, museum, etc.) to climate change.

This will enhance the interdisciplinary work we carry out, given the importance of sharing different analyses of the problems posed by the Anthropocene, the social actions in favour of the protection of nature and communities in megadiverse regions, and how we address the consequences of climate change in our territories, communities and museums.

ANNEX A: PHOTOGRAPHIC SUMMARY





PROYECTO PLANTAS MEDICINALES

HUERTO DE PLANTAS MEDICINALES

ITAIPU cuenta con un huerto de plantas medicinales de cultivo orgánico, situado en el Centro Ambiental, con una dimensión de 6.000 m² aproximadamente. Anualmente se produce una cantidad aproximada de 60.000 plantines de 65 especies identificadas, de las cuales el 43% corresponden a especies nativas y 57% especies introducidas de uso frecuente por la población. Los plantines son donados a productores, instituciones educativas de los municipios de la Reserva Biosfera de ITAIPU y visitantes interesados en el rubro de plantas medicinales.



SEMÁFORO DE RIESGO

Resolución N° 470/19 del MADES

E Probablemente extinta en el mundo silvestre	P Peligro de extinción	A Amenazada	Pr Fuerte protección especial	SD Sin datos
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ITAIPU BINACIONAL





firmado electrónicamente por:
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ROBLEDO

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Fundación Museos de la Ciudad