

“Exhibiting” Lifelong Learning in Museums: The Museum of Education/ Xeniseum as a space of Civic Understanding and Social Connectedness¹

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Abstract

By allowing people to share what they already know and utilize it with others, museums are able to use their collections and related programs as catalysts for dialogue and learning, encouraging active participation, exchange of views, social interaction and critical reflection, which are fundamental to adult education. In such a context, the learning experience that is acquired in the museum can be seen as a cultural achievement against social exclusion and social discrimination. In this sense, the museum exhibiting the lifelong learning represents different cultures/ identities and motivates us to give them our own meaning. That is, we see identities as social achievements in the context of civic understanding and social connectedness, embedded in their contexts, and not outside of them. In the present paper we aim to explain how the interaction with the Xeniseum’s exhibits can lead to the development of the visitors’ citizenship. In that framework, we examine the role of the museum regarding an individual’s education. Specific museum activities are also reported. Finally, a more specified museum application is described, aspiring to the achievement of a cross cultural dialogue.

Keywords

Museum, Lifelong Learning, Civic Understanding, Social Connectedness, Aesthetic Perception, Critical Thinking

Περίληψη

Επιτρέποντας στους ανθρώπους να μοιράζονται αυτό που γνωρίζουν και να το χρησιμοποιούν με άλλους, τα μουσεία είναι σε θέση να αξιοποιούν τις συλλογές τους και τα σχετικά με αυτές προγράμματα που υλοποιούν, ως καταλύτες για διάλογο και μάθηση. Αλλωστε, η ενθάρρυνση για ενεργό συμμετοχή, ανταλλαγή απόψεων, κοινωνική αλληλεπίδραση και κριτική σκέψη αποτελούν βασικά στοιχεία για την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, η μαθησιακή εμπειρία που αποκτάται στο μουσείο μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως ένα πολιτιστικό επίτευγμα ενάντια στον κοινωνικό αποκλεισμό και τις κοινωνικές διακρίσεις. Μ’ αυτήν την έννοια, η δια βίου μάθηση που επιτελείται στο μουσείο, αντιπροσωπεύει διαφορετικές

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κουλτούρες/ ταυτότητες και παρέχει νέο νόημα/ περιεχόμενο. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι αντιλαμβανόμαστε τις ταυτότητες ως κοινωνικά επιτεύγματα στο πλαίσιο της πολιτικής επίγνωσης και της κοινωνικής συνοχής. Στην παρούσα εργασία στόχος μας είναι να εξηγήσουμε πώς η αλληλεπίδραση με τα εκθέματα του Μουσείου/ Xeniseum μπορεί να οδηγήσει στην ανάπτυξη της ιδιότητας του πολίτη/ πολιτειότητας στους/τις επισκέπτες/τριες. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο εξετάζεται ο ρόλος του μουσείου αναφορικά με την εκπαίδευση κάθε ατόμου. Ως προς αυτό παρουσιάζονται συγκεκριμένες δράσεις του και περιγράφεται μια πιο εξειδικευμένη μουσειακή μάθηση και εμπειρία που επιδιώκει την επίτευξη ενός διαπολιτισμικού διαλόγου.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά

Μουσείο, δια βίου μάθηση, πολιτική επίγνωση, κοινωνική συνοχή, αισθητική αντίληψη, κριτική σκέψη.

1. Lifelong learning in the “symplegades” of schooling/ standardization

In this unit we aim to engage in a discussion of the terms used in lifelong learning and adult education, both theoretically and in terms of applying the so-called principles of adult education in practice.

The first point to focus our attention relates to the distinction or separation of continuing education and learning based on the age and experience of students or trainees. In this respect, in conventional pedagogy the idea has prevailed that adults are people with suppressed knowledge, experiences, opinions, needs and expectations, who learn in specific ways that are usually different from those of children. This indicates that minors are deprived of experience, attending school, or lacking interest, motivation or expectations. One issue therefore concerns the criteria by which adulthood is defined in relation to social maturity (Jarvis, 1983: 58) or autonomy (according to Rogers, 1999: 61), elements which, as can be understood, are not determined solely by date of birth or age of study in any learning structure, but from data related to one's education and skills.

The second point questioned concerns the existence of a vertical and hierarchical relationship of adult education with other forms-types of education, bearing in mind the usual distinction between 'formal', 'non formal' and 'informal' education, which varies as administrative distinction in different educational systems. Such instrumental institutional segregation contradicts the concept of lifelong learning that occurs during one's life and aims to acquire or develop the knowledge, skills/abilities and attitudes that contribute to the development of an integrated personality, professional integration and the development of the individual in general (Jarvis, 2004: 54-57). Therefore, education and all the more learning should be seen as notions placed in a dynamic ‘continuum’ in an individual’s life.

A third point worth mentioning refers to lifelong learning, and in particular adult education, which mimics the encyclopedic/cognitive nature of school education and attempts to respond to the environment of information abundance of the time. We would therefore call it wholly or partly schooled and at the same time a meaningless process.

This means that our orientations must be redefined, incorporating aesthetic perception and reflective thinking into the field of education, the pursuit of social ethics, the promotion of culture, the cultivation of challenge, but also the active social participation and development of the status of the citizenship, in a way that adult education responds to the development of one's abilities, enriching their knowledge, expanding or redirecting their qualifications. The outcome of such an educational process will be, on the one hand, a change in attitude or behavior and personal development, and on the other hand, involvement in a more anthropocentric society. These data on personal development and the anthropocentric and social nature of lifelong learning can be derived from both the basic definitions of adult education by UNESCO (1976) and OECD (1977) (Rogers, *op. cit.*: 55-56).

In the next part, we will seek to link the theoretical rationale we have developed so far with a lifelong learning educational structure within the academic area, linking it to economics and the production process while at the same time emphasizing its transformative and empowering character.

2. Linking lifelong learning with society: the case of the University of Crete's Lifelong Learning Center

The content of lifelong learning is largely determined by the general socio-economic context and institutions that exist. At the present time the term "uncertain work" is the most appropriate to describe the conditions in which vocational training is a means of dealing with rising unemployment in a fragmented market, characterized by a general decline in working conditions (fixed-term contracts, seasonal work, lending, self-employment, undeclared work). Despite the justified criticism that such education is increasingly identified with training and removed from 'lifelong education', and in many ways helps to reproduce the way wage labor is organized, it continues to be a form of intervention so that people through the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and social competences, have some opportunities in the labor market with positive effects on income and overall living standards (Anastasiou et al., 2016: 405-406). Furthermore

and equally important, investing in quality education, training and lifelong learning systems is a powerful factor in achieving sustainable development.

But, despite the benefits of productivity and adaptation of countries such as Greece, technological development and the speed of change in the labor market and the ability of workers to develop survival strategies, the concept of lifelong education should be placed in a broader context of parameters and actions, which on the one hand are related to the cultivation of personality and education of the citizen and on the other, take into account its socio-economic background, through which the productive and professional activity of the person is achieved. In addition, the state must ensure that lifelong learning and education are secured and disseminated as an inalienable social right and a powerful means of tackling various forms of exclusion by taking measures to expand its reach (Karalis, 2010: 5). In this sense, lifelong learning/ education is based on the political and ethical application of values and operates within socio-political institutions, constituting the supreme form of self-realization at the individual, political and social level, without shifting to standardized, technocratic and mechanistic training that will simply serve the labor market (Nikitara, 2001: 72).

The Greek state, with the new legislative framework for training and lifelong learning (Law 4485/2017, Government Gazette A 114/ 4.8.2017) defined the conditions under which the various bodies involved in this process will operate. A key prerequisite should be quality assurance, which will be the pillar in the new context of training and lifelong learning, as well as responding to new uncertain labor and living conditions. Organized adult education and training at the university, on the one hand, is called upon to correct/improve the weaknesses/deficiencies of formal education, providing a second opportunity for beneficiaries, and on the other, to contribute to the dynamic response to workplace exclusion, needs and personal searches of trainees and secondly in determining the role of the adult educator.

On the basis of this institutional framework, the University of Crete (hereinafter referred to as UC) has met increased obligations to contribute to Lifelong Learning programs, which are in line with its teaching and educational character. Through the establishment and operation of the Educational Center of Lifelong Learning (hereinafter: KEDIVIM) it has been able to extend its educational activities to both its graduates and to various professional and social groups, as well as to the local community and the local government.

Through the KEDIVIM, linking vocational education and training to the modern socio-economic reality is aimed, by contributing qualitatively to increasing employment and ensuring equality of opportunity in the knowledge society and enhancing social cohesion. In particular, KEDIVIM aims to: (a) enhance human resources through the provision of professional knowledge, competences and skills; (b) integrate, reintegrate occupational mobility within the labor market; (c) supplement, update and upgrade knowledge, competences and skills. (e) Update knowledge and certification of non-formal, informal learning acquired through long-term vocational experience, e) provide expertise and transversal key competences and certification of their acquisition, f) Improve the attractiveness of the quality of vocational education and training in Greece. In this context, the competences of participants are enhanced and improved, such as: basic skills in science, technology and digital competences, learning to learn skills, social skills related to citizenship, cultural knowledge and expression, creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions across a wide range of communication means (music, theater, literature and the visual arts).

3. Lifelong learning in the museum

3.1. The role of the museum in the education of the citizen

We have chosen the case of museums, incorporating it into the field of lifelong learning, as according to theory, even if efforts for individual and social self-actualization can be successful in school or formal education, the question arises whether we should limit ourselves to this or also trust the responsibility of educating the citizen to other institutions or organizations belonging to non-formal learning, where the cultivation of social understanding, cohesion, reciprocity and cultural education, based on lifelong learning, can be fulfilled in a more experiential and natural way (Brouwer, 2011).

However, it should be borne in mind that formal education systems, such as schools, or standardized training systems, tend to pursue more quantitative objectives, downgrading the teaching of social studies in their programs, and thus all those anthropocentric, sociocentric cultural characteristics of learning. Therefore, through mutually supportive practice, formal or non-formal education providers can work with museums to cultivate all those skills, knowledge and attitudes that support widespread participation in public life and lead to the democratization of society through the development of the communication among human beings, their sympathy and their political participation,

having the museum as a starting point. The concept of lifelong learning is also dictated by changes in social structure and complex intergenerational relationships, which reflects the need for people to learn to live and learn together, as learning takes place throughout life and also includes the senior population (Hsieh, 2010: 4833).

The museum's importance in lifelong learning stems in principle from the fact that it is an educational, cultural and social educational institution that has and uses its collections, exhibitions and activities to provide a more flexible, diverse, interactive non-formal learning experience. In the International Council Of Museums (ICOM) Statute (adopted in 2007) we read that museums are non-profit organizations, open to the public and at the service of society, that preserve, research, communicate and exhibit the tangible and intangible heritage of humankind for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (Hsieh, *op. cit.*). In this context, the museum is regarded, not as a storehouse of knowledge or a preserver of tradition, but as a living organism in which dialogue develops, learning is social and integrated into its socio-cultural and historical context, and concerns issues of interest to people, therefore plays an important role in supporting visitors through the learning process (Grenier, 2007).

This shift, from an "enclosed, closed and autonomous entity" to an ever-changing institution that focuses on the individual and society, changes the concept and mission of museums and enhances their lifelong perspective, contributing to "lifelong education and promoting a pluralistic perspective, acting as a mechanism for shaping culture and cultural critique skills" (Kokkinos & Alexaki, 2012: 11).

Equally important is the enhancement of the citizen's education in the sense of political participation, and in particular as individual and collective action aimed at making a 'difference' in the social life of their communities (Khadka, 2018). According to Silverman (2010: 124), it is a process of empowerment, in which one 'perceives the influence of social factors on one's experience, is certain of one's ability to promote change in the social environment and be effective through his/her action'. This is especially true in societies characterized by unequal distribution of resources, so citizen participation is the only way to balance the imbalance in the distribution of power between social groups and to maintain democracy (Black 2010), mainly through the building of cooperation and activism within the community (Kadoyama, 2018).

Within a cultural organization with the characteristics we have described, such as a museum, lifelong learning is inoculated with its educational/humanitarian orientation and can at the same time become a highly energetic process based on individual and

social self-realization and democratic co-existence (Victorious, op. Cit: 72). As a result, both in concept and in practice, it raises questions about the ways in which the values of education are applied to every aspect of human life. In other words, as a learning process, it expands throughout human life, it's intertwined with the experience of our daily lives, and guides our political and social activities, which are aimed at fulfilling human needs, and, as mentioned above, improves the quality of life, through dialogue, cooperation and respect for human rights and the values that govern the functioning of democratic society at all levels (Kocoska & Petrovski, 2015). This democratic principle of rights aims to enable all citizens to participate in society equally as creators and consumers of culture.

Literature records show that adults of all ages and educational backgrounds positively value museums' credibility with their education (Blankenberg & Lord 2015). The rationale is that they prefer to learn in a more non-formal or informal setting, by participating in groups, sharing life experiences (Jeff & Smith, 2005) and at the same time having the opportunity to learn through more active and experiential participation (Hood, 2004). They also want the content of museum exhibitions and activities to be free, educational, and relevant to their lives and at the same time entertaining and attractive (Landmin, 1997).

However, the paradox is that the role of museums have been downgraded and underrepresented in existing adult education literature (Taylor, 2006). Thus, there is a need for adult education providers to extend their range of activities to museums to provide visitors with an alternative approach to the relationships between museum exhibitions and the public. The question is, of course, whether museums adapt to the demands of adult learning by promoting "the ability to live productively in a pluralistic society and to contribute to solving the challenges we face as global citizens" (Grenier, op. Cit : 6) or operate in the traditional way, which is based on an exhibition-centric transmission of cultural heritage and has, as its target group, an audience that already knows (elite).

3.2. The adult visitor of the museum as an active subject

In this subunit we will look at the museum's link to lifelong learning, a fact inextricably linked to the question of "how does one learn in the museum" and thus the identity of the museum itself and its place and role of the visitor in it. Below we will analyze how

we perceive this identity, documenting the role of museums in adult education. From the perspective of the museum's educational potential as an informal body of learning (see Falk & Dierking, 2000), a visitor-centered approach to museum design is suggested, where instead of the adult being expected to adapt to a given museum narrative, the museum is adapted to the individual, who is considered to understand, care about, question, research, make sense of (individual and social) his/her performances, seeks learning in a pleasant way, etc., in relation to the museum exhibits (Marty, 2007).

The Museum of Education-Xeniseum (hereinafter: MoE-X) is oriented towards the visitor-centered/idealistic epistemological example of museum learning, documenting its relationship with visitors and the activities that are expected within it to relative theoretical models⁴ that place the person at the center of the museum's narrative, according to which the individual takes on an active role, communicates with the exhibits/objects, associates museum collections with his/her daily life, deposit his/her interpretations through the activation of experiences related to his/her culture and feelings⁵.

In a visitor-centered view, museum learning is achieved interactively and through participation (Falk & Dierking, 2012), a prerequisite necessary also for adult education, but at the same time it's emancipatory, non-boring, attractive, and entertaining ('learntainment'), enabling participants to retrieve memories, experiences and performances from their lives (e.g. from their school biography) and also allow them to alternatively/unconventionally develop their critical thinking and their cultural communication (Hammond & Collins, 1991). Visitors are invited to come up with alternative and different interpretations, to create their own interactive versions/narratives with the museum exhibit and thus redefine their relationship to (educational) cultural heritage. This gives their learning added social and cultural value, depending on their intake and interaction with visualized material, richly visual, practical and symbolic (Matsumoto, 2017: 135-136), which is transformed from a

⁴ Constructivism and discovery (Hein, 1998), with multiple forms of intelligence (Gardner, 1993), supported by the cultural model of communication, in which the audience of a museum is heterogeneous, consisting of individual groups with different social, cultural, educational features (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999), but also from the interactive museum experience model (Falk & Dierking, 2012), are such basic interpretative patterns in the field of museum learning

⁵ The visitor-centered character of the MoE-X is clarified in the units 3 and 4 of the present paper by providing relevant examples.

simple exhibit into social objects with a vibrant cultural and social message that releases many stories and raises concerns of social interest (Ioannidis, et al .: 2013).

It is well known that through a lifelong learning experience the individual constructs his or her own personal meanings and imparts his or her own truth to things (see specifically in relation to the museum: Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 35). In this way, the individual is led to self-actualization through the reflection of his knowledge and experience, in this case within the museum, which we perceive as a social context in the building and understanding of knowledge. Museum learning also has a social character in the sense that visitors communicate their actions and thoughts with each other and with the museum as a community of experience. Through this process, the subjects redefine their identity as they study the evidence of material culture; they redefine the world around them. In this way, museum objects become multichannel codes, multi-sense vectors that can tell many stories, inviting people to reflect on issues related to their collective and cultural identity.

At the social level, finally, there can be an effortless dialogue about strengthening democracy, justice, equality and solidarity, and the emergence of a new conception of public space and the common good, given its pedagogical intake (teaching, cognitive and behavioral centered), which refers to typical educational settings, we move to the museum as an open and interactive learning ecosystem (open, complex, adaptive, sustainable, with a social and intercultural horizon) which is called, to the extent possible, to contribute to the promotion of a real educational democracy and change in adult education.

3.3. Lifelong learning implementations at the MoE-X

In this part, we will present three examples of linking the theoretical principles of adult education and the museum's role in lifelong learning, which are developed and supported in the MoE-X of the UC.

a. Visits of adult population groups to the MoE-X

The MoE-X welcomes adult groups with which it develops a variety of activities with adult participation through the utilization of exhibits/social objects of the museum collection. This population is heterogeneous and includes population groups such as: students of the University of Crete in their undergraduate and postgraduate studies,

academic and administrative staff of the University and other internal and external institutions, teachers of elementary and secondary education, school administration (school principals), groups belonging to cultural networks (e.g. 'friends of the archaeological museum'), but also individuals wishing to visit the museum e.g. in the context of educational tourism. Participants in these visits can browse through museum sites and discuss with each other and with the exhibition contributors about the content or the impressions they created and/or participate in museum programs or activities that last as long as their visit. In each case, they act as bridges of cooperation, outreach and good practice (see Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 238) with other groups or audiences from their workplace and various other social and cultural factors, transferring their experience and mainly their participatory/ active role, which is developed in the framework of the museum exhibition as an example of an individual's participation in the public sphere and the social systems in which s/ he daily engages.

b. Lifelong Learning & Education Programs in Museum Education

As mentioned earlier, there is a need to equip people for the kinds of jobs that are needed now and in the future, including innovation and adapting learning to future work environments. The KEDIVIM/MoE-X of the UC, in the context of lifelong learning and training, organizes and offers Museum Learning and Experience Programs with the main purpose of offering pedagogical/teaching methods and tools, participatory learning and experiences of reflection, entertainment and creativity in teachers and other specialties that will promote their work in museum education. More specifically, the aim is to educate adults about the educational/learning role of museums (Lord, 2007) and in particular the museums of education today, within the museum environment and in related exhibitions (Helene Glykatzi- Ahrweiler Collection), with the development and implementation of good practices (Moffat & Woollard, 1999), experiential learning, visual expression and the production of personal meanings for the world and the individual. Thus, the museum becomes an open space, a lifelong 'laboratory of experience and knowledge' (Vuillaume 2015), a space of play and learning, where the connection to the present is sought, given Greece's rich historical and monumental educational landscape and efforts to upgrade and innovate in formal and non-formal education in the 21st century through educational actions that will broaden the knowledge, experience and skills of pupils and adults. At the same time, equally important in adult education, these programs offer a new orientation of labor market

interests (applied pedagogy related to its place of implementation), utilizing digital media and applications (Tallon & Walker, 2008), in an ever-expanding field beyond conventional education and communication tools (digitally mediated learning and experience) (Barranh & Martins, 2015).

c. Research program implemented by the MoE-X

The MoE-X of the UC in the experimental research "Enhanced Experience with New Digital Systems for Educational Tourism in Museums- XENISEUM", utilizing innovative digital applications, aims at creating a diversified cultural experience and learning environment that encourages the visitor's active participation and enhances museum learning and experience in a fun, interactive and playful manner, promoting critical/reflective views of cultural heritage through museum educational exhibits (Chourdakis, et al, 2019). In this context, the emerging digital technology of the MoE-X is a tool for an interpretative approach to the material and intangible evidence of the history of Modern Greek education. The goal is for the 'virtual' to communicate with the 'real' (Lifton & Paradiso, 2009: 12-26), activating adult school memories and experiences so that when they visit the museum exhibition they can have actively intervene in the museum accomplishment. Consequently, the role of new technologies in the museum focuses on enhancing the natural museum experience and contributing to the visitor-user circular browsing path, from physical exposure to digital application and vice versa (Barry, 2006). In addition, information sharing is achieved through the creation of digital applications that establish conditions for interacting with exhibits and personalizing the museum experience (Marty, 2003: 1906-1911). Thus, new technologies create an opportunity for the virtual museum itself to become a lifelong learning community, as it encourages and develops thematic/ educational tourism, it 'can allow content to be accessed worldwide and, as a result, releasing an untapped wealth of knowledge (Borowiecki & Navarrete, 2017: 227).

4. Intercultural dialogue on the museum exhibition of the MoE-X

4.1. Theoretical prerequisites of intercultural dialogue

Based on the principles of modern museology/ museum education, followed by the MoE-X, culture is perceived not as a static thing, but as a dynamic size and evolving quality that relates to the individual and society, as it relates to the issues that concern

the individual and at the same time are social issues. As a result, free access to its cultural assets, as a basic human right, which is recorded in literature as the museum's democratizing culture, makes sense only if the museum places cultural heritage before an open dialogue, eventually negotiating its identity and role itself with visitors (Reeve & Wollard, 2006). This presupposes an active/ interactive involvement of the subject in museum activities in relation to defining cultural heritage. In our approach, therefore, the "familiarity" of culture refers to the participatory role of the visitor and to a "bottom-up" re-meaning of his/her experience with regard to museum exposure and the exhibits/objects of the museum, which means that from a simple 'consumerist' he/she becomes a co-modifier of the museum experience and culture.

Here we must not forget, that the visitors of the museum, whether physically present or digitally, come from different countries and different cultures. Clifford (1997:188-219), seeking to emphasize the interactive nature of the relationship and contact between different communities, visitors and museums, proposes the alternative term 'contact zone'. The museum, it argues, functions more as a permeable intercultural meeting place, where different cultures and communities interact.

As museums focus on their intercultural audience, the recognition/understanding of each visitor's diverse profile, needs and cultural characteristics emerges as key elements of the relationship they develop with them. As public spaces, museums play an important social role, where different people can interact with museum collections, relate them to their experiences, interpret or give new meaning to them. The interpretation of cultural heritage thus becomes a communication process through which, according to Carey (1989: 23), cultural (and social) reality is produced, maintained, or transformed.

The signification of museum exhibits, with their inherent connotations as representational entities of a culture, depends on the interpretive circle of visitors, which is always open, sometimes even antithetical to the dominant discourse, as it constitutes a cultural construction which depends on the culture within which it is framed. Lyotard (1984) points to the shift of emphasis from the isolated object to the cultural and social contexts within which the concepts of objects are produced. We are also concerned with the way the museum, as a diversified environment of cultural experience and non-formal learning, can alter the predispositions of visitors regarding educational and cultural heritage in general.

On another level, relating to the museum's connection to society, museums have the potential to promote citizens' participation in actions related to their everyday life or to the community they belong to or to participate in various events and voluntary activities, which contribute to building a more democratic society (Hein, 2015: 12). This is a more activist approach, which considers museums on the one hand as agents of social change in the community through the social involvement of their visitors, and on the other hand, as sites of social service to disadvantaged groups and relief from prolonged isolation (Gurian 2006). In this sense, according to Hein (2012: 49), the 'Ideal' museum goes beyond the content of its collections by relying on the ability of its visitors to highlight local needs and events that reflect the local community, based on museum exhibits.

4.2. Description of museum facilities, conceptual and methodological references

We will now go on to describe specific museum facilities with intercultural content in the MoE-X, which relate to the presence of people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in Greek society, in order to first point out their characteristics: a. Map of tribes. b. Closed borders in education. c. Religiousness and inter-religiosity.

a. Map of tribes

This particular art installation, which deals with the uprooting of migrant populations and how these people are treated in the field of education and in society, but also how they themselves take up this approach, is divided into three parts.

From the left we can see a lifeboat hanging on an easel and pebbles on the floor, among which are a toddler's shoe, a piece of wood, the type that drifts out of the sea and flows to the shores due to bad weather, simple eating utensils upside down (dishes and wineglasses), and a worn-out wretched boat. On the wall, next to the easel, there is a large photograph of the Red Cross, a non-governmental organization in Greece, with work based on immediate response and voluntary contribution and civilian action towards those in need (see, Figure 1).

Figure 1, © Xeniseum. "*Red Cross*"/ *volunteering activities*



In the middle, we see wooden desks, which existed decades ago in Greek schools, which are upside down and "randomly" arranged, on which there are geographical atlases, which are still used by pupils today, as well as various musical instruments from various cultures and musical scores (see, Figure 2).

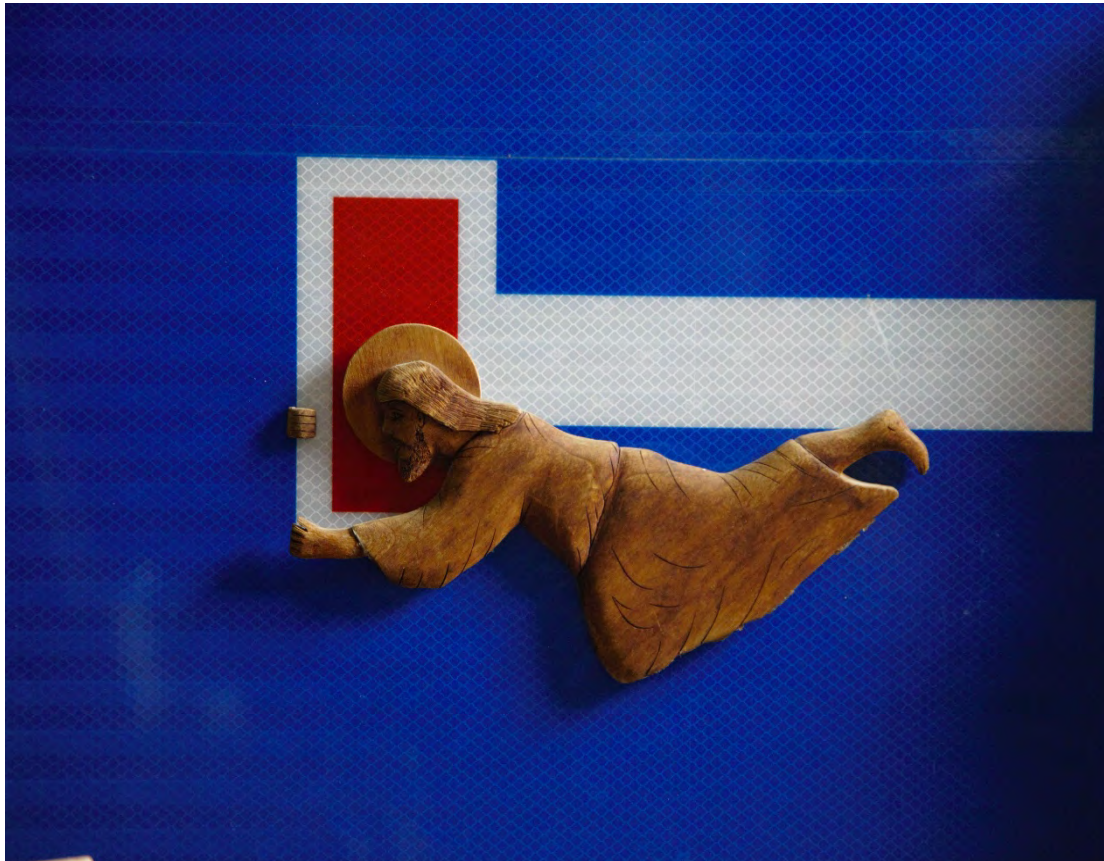
Figure 2, © Xeniseum. *Immigrants/ walled bodies/ ethnocentric education*



Behind the desks there is a grid of rods, which are mounted crosswise and fastened at their joints, and hung over them, the "tribal map" in two copies (Caucasian-white, Mongolian-yellow, Ethiopian-black, American-red, Malayan tribe) and a map with the anatomy of the human body.

To the right an uprooted tree trunk has been placed and right next to it, on the wall pillar, a "dead-end" traffic sign has been stuck to the wall, which is carried by Christ on his back (see, Figure 3).

Figure 3, © Xeniseum. *Exit from "dead-end"*



b. Closed borders in education

Above a showcase containing language content books - Elementary School Readers (Language books), with a strong ethnocentric element (on its covers depicting parades and national heroes) – barbed wire in the shape of a cylinder has been placed and rests on its side on wrapped school maps, on both ends, on one end an iron axis and on the other end an axis pointing to the horizon. Both axes rest on books (see, Figure 4).

Figure 4, © Xeniseum. *Fear for the foreigners/ gulls that liberate us / border education*



On the side of the wire which rests upon the maps, there is an old Greek textile flag, which is torn and frayed. On the same side, just a few inches behind the flag, is a vertical curtain, on which a sea bird, the seagull, is attached.

c. Religiousness and inter-religiosity

Religious books in different languages have been placed inside in plastic containers, one stacked on top of the other. Above the last showcase there is a hand prototype, holding a rope tied at the bottom with a concrete spiral, with which the old fishermen would pull their nets and other fishing gear, when they remained trapped in the seabed (see, Figure 5).

Figure 5, © Xeniseum. *Blank religionism/ Religious bigots*

Above and behind the windows there is a chronological map with historical events, where the year "1" is called "The Birth of Jesus Christ". This map is partially covered by fishing net.

Before proceeding to the subunit 4.3, where the analysis of the exhibits/ social objects contained in the museum exhibition is made, we consider it appropriate to proceed with some conceptual and methodological insights. Our first point is that museum exhibits are considered 'social objects', which urge visitors to interact with them, to construct their own concepts based on them, placing them in a broader context depending on the cultural environment they come from, and proceed to sharing them (Simon, 2010). Such a vision gives voice to people's personal memories and experiences and makes different kinds of representations visible (Mason 2013: 166).

The second point is that the design of the exhibits was based on a research methodology that combines the interpretative historical method with art-based research. It has been noted that the use of this method can substantially contribute to a fuller understanding and exploration of a scientific field (and in this case museum exposure), as the researcher(s) succeeds in utilizing more creative techniques, which require producing an artistic effect (McNiff, 2008: 28-29). This is expected to serve as a reinforcement mechanism that will more accurately and authentically highlight the characteristics of the field being studied compared to conventional research (quantitative or qualitative) methodology.

In light of the above, a third point to note is that the use of curtains in a museum exhibit serves to orient the visitor's gaze to the space, in the context of exploring and supporting discovery learning, which will allow him/her to participate in museum achievement.

4.3. Conversing with museum exhibits/ social objects

In this section, we will analyze museum facilities in relation to their interaction with their visitors and negotiate their messages in a lifelong perspective.

The existence of a high number of forced migrants and refugees in Greece and Europe again raises issues of school and social participation/enrollment of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds and the need for intercultural communication and understanding in society and within school life. The key is to develop a fruitful reflection on how to learn to live with 'Others', resolve our differences peacefully, meet culturally, tackle stereotypes and prejudices, and develop support networks for all those vulnerable groups of the population, so that they can participate in society and develop their skills.

The impulse is given to us by the tribal installation, and in particular the "Life vest", as it leads us directly to the refugee issue and forced displacements taking place around the world. In particular, Greece now has a rich immigration experience both as country sending as well as receiving immigrants, making it easier to approach the issue emotionally. Some of our audience may have been immigrants themselves, so the following questions would be reasonable: why do people have to migrate, what does it mean to cross the maritime border in rotten boats risking their lives, what would 'we' do in a similar case?

How is the life of immigrants the first period after their arrival, how do they communicate with their families, what traumas can be caused by uprooting and how can they be overcome? The "uprooted trunk" causes visitors to wonder about all this. How would visitors represent a similar experience of their own and what items would be placed in the trunk to express their feelings about what they left behind and the beginning of a new life?

How can we alleviate the pain of these people as their lives go through a 'barbed wire', as represented by the second museum installation? We can get our answer from the Red Cross volunteers, as well as other organizations that aim to relieve human suffering by treating and supporting injured, sick and elderly refugees, people in financial distress etc. But is it good enough for some, when the majority of society may have a different view? How does society treat a stranger? Are we prepared to communicate with them? Do we recognize a good testimony?

The example of the school, through the installation with the tribes, is representative of education's role. Do the languages of immigrants have a place in schools? Do immigrant students see themselves, their lives or their culture in school text books? Which religion is taught in school?

The 'map of tribes' is quite revealing about the timeless attitudes of Western-oriented schools towards children/carriers of other cultures. Which portrayed man (pictured - woman - does not exist) looks like a "normal" man of modern society in the eyes of children? Do all people in western culture have a beard or do they wear a tie? What is the meaning of such comparisons? Characteristic is the reference of the map for the Ethiopian (black) race: "... There is no developing culture, some of them are cannibals..." In what other ways, more vague or non-visible, does the school and society still attempt to reproduce similar divisions today? How do we react to the sight of a 'black' in our daily lives? The 'zones' in the same installment symbolize ethnocentric

education, which classifies people according to their origin, religion, language, history and culture. The more we tighten them, the more fences erect around and inside it/us.

One of the basic functions of the school is to construct collective identities with specific characteristics that refer to the homogenization of the student population. Thus, any 'differences', which always exist, are considered deficient and marginalized. Here is a contradiction between social reality, which is multicultural, and the function of the school to prepare tomorrow's students to join/ participate in it by adopting monolithic tools (one language, one religion, one civilization). For the school and state institutions, it seems that the reproduction of society in ethnocentric and religious terms is superior. Otherwise questions could be answered, such as why do we self-identify on the basis of ethnicity/ origin or reduce religion (and through teaching) as a decisive criterion for shaping collective identity.

The more closed we keep the education system to national anchors, the more we diminish our cultural identity. Border education aims at social justice and equality for individuals or groups that are separated from all forms of invisible borders. "Wires" meanwhile refer to freedom from the internal chains that one does not usually see. How can skin color determine human existence? Why teaches a religion? By what logic is the 'chronology' of history clothed in a religious cloak?

School largely subjugates the freedom of the senses and the mind and teaches us to "see" whatever it wants. In this perspective, we must undertake a radical revision of a cognitive-oriented school curriculum, which is called for to include broadened understandings and acceptance of a multicultural social reality and thus lead to new pedagogical principles that will be removed from current practice, which continues to emphasize the development of linguistic and logical-mathematical thinking, neglecting other skills and in a cultural context that emphasizes particularly the Western culture, while ignoring others. As can be seen, education can help us escape from the dead ends that it had previously created.

Since schools 'reproduce' culture, they can also 'produce' it. As we know, learning is established within our social and cultural context; it is achieved within communities of practice and is the result of collaborative learning. One such community of lifelong practice is the museum. The narratives of visitors may support an active process of acquaintance and interpretation with the cultural material contained in its collections. In essence, these testimonies constitute additional material in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

Visitor involvement is possible through initiatives and actions that can build on museum achievement with a view to empathy, active participation opportunities and community connectivity. For example, during the exhibition visitors are invited to write poems or create drawings for immigrants, thereby expressing their solidarity. At another level, they are invited to identify a social injustice with regard to refugees and to undertake as a group a commitment to take action which the museum will be the reference point of. In this way, the lives of immigrants and families become central to the museum's narrative, which can work with the city's migrant population in an effort to improve their living conditions. A first step is to involve immigrant groups in society through programs implemented by the museum. Also included are visits by teachers who teach in multicultural classes to develop a dialogue on the subject of migration and in particular how different cultures brought about by students should be cultivated at school. Thus, the museum challenges visitors to tackle cultural and social inequalities by bringing marginalized voices to the forefront.

5. Conclusion: expectations in the field of lifelong museum learning

By allowing people to share what they already know and utilize it with others, museums are able to use museum collections and related programs as catalysts for dialogue and learning, encouraging active participation, exchange of views, social interaction and critical reflection, which are fundamental to adult education.

A key methodology adopted in these cases is to encourage creativity through the search for new means of expression, mainly aesthetic and artistic, which bring us deeper into the social and cultural context of the museum environment and accompany actions with social and cultural meaning.

Through such a process it is possible to democratize culture in the sense of providing opportunities for access to cultural resources for wider social groups and specifically excluded groups from the public sphere (Reeve & Wollard, op. Cit.). In such a context, the learning experience acquired in the museum can be seen as a cultural achievement against social exclusion and social discrimination (Gibbs, et al., 2007: 84). Consequently, the museum's narrative in its intercultural dimension concerns the cultivation and expansion of the richness of diversity in cultural identity, emphasizing different experiences as a value for the individual, social groups and nations in the spirit of cultural pluralism

In this sense, the museum exhibit itself represents different cultures/ identities and motivates us to give them our own meaning. What we also expect to come from the visitor's involvement with museum exhibits/ objects at the MoE environment is a critical consideration of cultural identity. That is, we see identities as social achievements in the context of cultural (and other semiotic) interactions, embedded in their contexts, and not outside of them.

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