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## The concept of social inclusion in art museums in Chile: perceptions of educators, curators and directors

### The Concept of Social Inclusion in Art Museums in Chile: Perceptions of Educators, Curators, and Directors

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#### Abstract

*Inclusion understood as a process and purpose must receive special attention from museums and their educational practices in order to attract and support more diverse audiences. The aim of this study is to uncover and describe how social inclusion is conceived and implemented in nine art museums in Chile, through interviews with their education, curatorial and management professionals, and to generate a reflection based on the data collected. The research employs a qualitative approach based on Grounded Theory and the paradigm of Interpretivism. The instruments used to gather information were semi-structured interviews and the study participants are 14 educators, five curators, three directors and one curator-director. Through coding and data comparison, eight categories were identified in relation to the concept of inclusion: accessibility, diversity, safety relevance, communication awareness, political awareness, relevant skills, non-traditional educational practices and museum work structure. The results show the adaptation of the categories to the practices and functioning of museums with regard to the effective achievement of social inclusion.*

*Keywords:* Non-formal education; social inclusion; art museums; Grounded Theory.

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## Resumen

*La inclusión entendida como proceso y finalidad debe recibir una atención especial por parte de los museos y sus prácticas educativas, para poder atraer y apoyar a públicos más diversos. El objetivo de este estudio es develar y describir cómo se concibe e implementa la inclusión social en nueve museos de arte en Chile, por medio de entrevistas a sus profesionales de la educación, curaduría y dirección y generar una reflexión a partir de los datos levantados. La investigación emplea un enfoque cualitativo con base en la Teoría Fundamentada y el paradigma del Interpretativismo. Los instrumentos utilizados para levantar información fueron entrevistas semiestructuradas y los/as participantes de estudio son 14 educadores/as, cinco curadores/as, tres directores/as y una curadora-directora. Por medio de codificación y comparación de datos se identificaron ocho categorías en relación con el concepto de inclusión: accesibilidad, diversidad, relevancia de la seguridad, conciencia en la comunicación, conciencia política, habilidades relevantes, prácticas educativas no tradicionales y estructura de trabajo en el museo. Los resultados evidencian la adaptación de las categorías a las prácticas y el funcionamiento de los museos respecto al logro efectivo de la inclusión social.*

*Palabras clave:* Educación no formal; inclusión social; museos de arte; Teoría Fundamentada

## Introduction and objectives

In the field of non-formal education, museums are considered relevant and significant institutions for our society, so it is important that the concept of social inclusion is incorporated into their practices and reflections in order to adapt them to the needs of different audiences and contexts.

Traditionally, activities such as the acquisition, conservation and exhibition of collections have been recognised as functions of museums, however, over the last 20 years, the role and mission of these institutions has expanded, evidencing a social shift and a new focus on visitors rather than on the exhibition itself (O'Neill, 2006).

The concept of social inclusion has been extensively researched by different authors (Coleman, 2018; Sandoval, 2016; Tlili, 2008) and its analysis and clarification should be a push for it to be incorporated into the mission of museums, because despite the fact that one of their declared purposes is to reach different audiences, many of these spaces, especially art museums, still sustain elitist cultural practices and logics (Anila, 2017; O'Neill, 2006). It is worth noting that the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which oversees the future of these institutions, published a new definition of museums in August 2022, which explicitly includes inclusion, understood as accessibility, diversity and sustainability (International Council of Museums, 2022). In addition to this, UNESCO has stated that all forms of exclusion in education, whether by gender, ethnicity, class, language, religion, nationality, and ability, should be avoided (UNESCO, 1960).

In addition to the new ICOM definition, museums have begun to focus on the practices of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility concepts (Maddock, 2022), and are tending to become more democratic institutions. Among these practices, there is an increasing focus on providing equitable access for diverse visitors, staff and partners

with and without disabilities, from different cultures and ethnicities (Lott, 2019), and with an emphasis on engaging the voices of marginalised and/or indigenous groups (Bazan et al., 2021).

## **Social inclusion in museums**

Currently, there are several publications that identify different lines of research in relation to inclusion in museums (Springinzeisz, 2022). Some of them focus their postulates on learning in museums (Candlin, 2003; Vidal et al., 2019), and others on training and/or internships for university students or secondary schools (Kreuzer and Dreesmann, 2017; Muzi, 2019; Taylor, 2017). However, most publications focus on engaging and/or strengthening the museum visitor community (Anila, 2017; Martins, 2016; Vaz et al., 2021; Wright, 2020). Other studies, on the other hand, analyse the effects and advantages of special programmes implemented in groups of people with dementia or Alzheimer's disease (Belver and Hernández, 2019; Belver et al., 2018; Monzó et al., 2019), whose conclusions point out that art-related activities can improve the cognitive and mental state of visitors (Belver et al., 2018). In relation to the latter, it was expressed that these workshops are beneficial, as they prioritise artistic creation and visits to exhibitions, allowing those who participate to dialogue and share their past experiences and impressions of the works or objects explored. In this sense, the exercise of remembering is an important objective in these activities, as people who suffer from some type of neurological deterioration systematically lose their memory (Belver and Hernández, 2019), so these programmes allow them to connect and experience cognitive stimulation (Monzó et al., 2019).

In relation to the function and purpose of museums, education is one of their main assets, as established by ICOM in the current definition. In this sense, Candlin (2003) and Grek (2009), in their studies on the public, concluded that museums are visited mainly to receive new knowledge, to which are added the contributions of Vidal et al. (2019), who point out that it is through dialogue that knowledge is most easily acquired in a museum. Apart from the relevance of education, Falchetti (2020) details the positive effects of museum programmes on young convicts, as scientific and artistic workshops organised in prison and in the museum show that young people not only develop cognitive skills, but also improve their adaptability and social relations, strengthening their values and self-esteem.

Other studies such as Anila (2017) and Bunch III (2017) emphasise the importance of community participation and empowerment in museums, linking the concept of inclusion to the decolonisation of these spaces and the equal acceptance of all ethnicities. Therefore, and in accordance with this, the voices of people from minority cultures should be heard in museums and considered in discussions about their cultures. However, in practice this does not happen for two reasons: firstly, the curator's opinion still prevails as the main voice in the mediation of collections, and secondly, the perspective of the dominant culture of a society continues to be expressed over that of minority cultures. Faced with this fact, Anila (2017) and Bunch III (2017) point out that museums should work with polyvocality, taking into account the different points of view of their audiences, enriching the discourse and favouring the identification and inclusion of cultural diversity.

While the integration of different points of view should be more prominent in museum projects, it is also necessary to use different languages to provide information, as it helps to engage visitors and non-native speakers, as well as to broaden participation in programmes and make museum content more easily received by non-native audiences (Harden et al., 2015). The museum, therefore, must recognise, value and embrace visitor diversity and consider it as a natural part of the human condition (Bradford et al., 2021), and to achieve this, De la Iglesia-Mayol and Rosselló-Ramón (2014) suggest implementing the so-called universal design and adapting it to the museum, because the groups that attend museums are not a homogeneous group, as museum staff sometimes think, but are plural and come from different realities (Candlin, 2003; Martins, 2016; Moorkens et al., 2022).

With regard to museum workers, Taylor (2017) points out that it is important that the concept of inclusion is also expressed among them, as this could generate a real awareness of the concept and identify with the mission of these institutions and fulfil their purposes, such as generating activities for socially excluded groups.

### **Educational practices in museums**

Typically, those responsible for educational practices in museums have been curators and educational staff. In the case of the curator, his/her role has traditionally been to care for the collections, as well as, as Hansen et al. (2019) point out, to take on the responsibility for the creation and design of exhibitions. However, in the 1960s the curator became independent and no longer belonged to the museum. This new style of independent curator generally corresponds to recognised professionals in the art museum world who work as critics, selecting artists, artworks and creating exhibitions aligned with a thematic or narrative. Likewise, and in order to avoid forms of arbitrariness, authoritarianism, and aspiring to a more intersubjective vision, some curators invite other peers or artists to be co-curators. However, according to Siedell (2007), it is recurrent that in exhibition projects the curator's authoritarian voice still remains, or that the curator seeks justifications and approval from the curatorial community itself, as well as tending to offer space to artworks and objects valued by the dominant culture, which allows us to point out that even official artistic-cultural viewpoints do not reflect from broad perspectives and ignore the interpretations of minority cultures. This bias challenges today's museums to adopt polyphonic perspectives in their practices because, as previously expressed, visitors are not a homogenous audience and their backgrounds can be very diverse (Anila, 2017; Bunch III, 2017). To avoid ambiguities, in this study, the concept of curator refers to the person who is responsible for planning, designing and implementing exhibitions.

Museum education has received increasing attention over the last 50 years, as have the profiles and roles of museum education staff. In relation to the latter, several studies point out that the occupations of those in charge of educational areas in museums are designing programmes, developing guided tours and implementing activities for schools, adult communities, families, among others (Hein, 2006; Johnson et al., 2009). In addition, and from an inclusive approach, the fact that museum educators are in daily

contact with different visitors develops in them skills to design and implement programmes for diverse audiences.

In addition, as Black (2012) argues, the quality and variety of learning experiences in museums contribute to building visitor loyalty and redirecting the interest of museums towards the community rather than the work itself. In this sense, Black (2012) points out that for the museum to have an appropriate learning environment, two central practices must be implemented: incorporating different points of view through conversations between visitors, as well as reflecting multiple perspectives considering the cultural diversity of communities.

## **Approaches to museum education**

The educational function of museums evolved continuously by the end of the 20th century (Johnson et al., 2009), and this process has been strengthened today by ICOM's new definition of a museum, which emphasises inclusiveness. In relation to this, Kemeza (2019) argues that museum education programmes can engage an audience as long as they are designed from a variety of approaches.

According to Bennett (1995), the museum has generally focused on fulfilling three objectives: acquiring, conserving and exhibiting objects, considering the public as a secondary actor who passively receives knowledge (Hein, 2006). According to Hooper-Greenhill (2007) the environment of this type of traditional museum is usually authoritarian, in addition to the fact that educational processes are designed to transfer information from expert to visitor, under a vertical and behaviourist logic of teaching.

Fortunately, in the last 30 years, different and non-traditional ways of approaching museum education have emerged, which have a common aspect: valuing and making visible the experiences and/or preferences of the public, i.e. learning is mediated not only by the works of art and objects on display, but also by the culture and previous experiences of those who visit (Hein, 2006).

Another approach to museum practices that has emerged in recent years is the so-called participatory museum, whose function, according to Hooper-Greenhill (2007) is to give prominence to the body and space, in addition to the fact that the exhibitions and environment awaken curiosity, inspire and promote new learning. In this type of museum, according to Simon (2010), visitors share skills and ideas with educators and collaborate in activities, thus avoiding vertical relationships. Participatory museum staff listen to the voices of communities and consider them when designing and implementing exhibits and activities (Anila, 2017; Bunch III, 2017), so it is possible to assert that these museums encourage the development of creative and respectful dialogues, strengthening interpersonal interactions among a diverse public.

## **The context of Chilean museums**

In Chile, the problem of inequality is strongly manifested in socio-economic status and access to education and culture (Peters et al., 2022), which obviously influences museums, especially art museums (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2018). According to the National Survey of Cultural Participation in 2017, 20.5% of the Chilean population visited a museum at least once, compared to 2012 when the proportion of

visitors was 23.6%. On the other hand, visits to visual arts exhibitions experienced a significant drop: while in 2012 participation reached 24.9%, the proportion of participants decreased to 16% in 2017 (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2018). According to the report *Situación de los museos de Chile Diagnóstico 2019*, the percentage of participation at least once in a museum in the last 12 months is as follows in other countries: 11% in Argentina, 12.3% in Colombia, 52.5% in England, 33.2% in Spain and 30% in France. Compared to the aforementioned Latin American countries, Chile achieved a higher participation, however, this percentage is below the numbers of the indicated European countries (Observatorio de Políticas Culturales, 2019). Due to the inequality in access to culture and the low percentage of participation in museums, the objective of this research was formulated.

## **Target**

The aim of this study is to understand and describe how social inclusion is conceived and implemented in nine art museums in Chile, through interviews with their educators, curators and directors, and to generate a reflection based on the data collected.

## **Method**

This is a qualitative study of an exploratory nature, developed from the paradigm of Interpretivism, using Grounded Theory methods of data collection and analysis. Under the interpretive paradigm, the researcher validates his or her perspective, experience and skills to understand how participants explain a phenomenon or process and make sense of their own worlds. According to O'Donoghue (2007) and Charmaz (2006), this paradigm expresses that the person and society are inseparable units and knowledge is socially constructed through mutual negotiation, focusing its interest on the meanings behind an aspect of reality, which is articulated with the characteristics of this project, which is to know how the concept of social inclusion is understood in art museums and how it permeates their practices.

The theoretical position of this research is Symbolic Interactionism, which according to O'Donoghue (2007), is where the person being investigated constructs an image of how they think they are seen by other people and becomes an object to be considered and evaluated. Mead (1934) points out that in this case the concept of the self relates to how people reflect and act with respect to a phenomenon, so articulating the Interpretivist paradigm with symbolic interactionist theory allows us to discover people's perspectives on a phenomenon.

## **Population and sample**

The type of sampling used is theoretical and its inclusion criterion is based on the potential contribution of the participants to the generation of theory (Charmaz, 2006). The sample was chosen purposively and with maximum variation (Creswell, 2013). That is, 13 public and private museums were selected from a total of 27 art museums in different regions of Chile with a mediation or education department. Of this original

sample chosen (13 museums) six responded to the solicitation. In order to broaden the sample, the other museums were then invited to participate in the research. From this universe, a total of nine museums finally responded to the invitation to be part of the study. With regard to their location, these are located in the capital Santiago (Metropolitan Region), the Valparaíso Region and the Maule Region. Initially, the museum directors were written to and through them the workers were contacted. In total, the study involved 24 interviews with 14 educators, five curators, three museum directors and one curator-director.

## **Instrument**

Three individual semi-structured interview scripts were developed for educators, curators and directors, with the flexibility to adapt to the interviewees to clarify their perspectives, concepts and terms (Díaz-Bravo et al., 2013). The questions related to the following themes: (1) participant's personal context (background, relevant previous experiences); (2) his/her role, work and responsibilities (clarity of functions, organisation, possible improvement, type of contract, collaborative work, support and materials); (3) educational programmes (types of activities, educational approaches, didactic materials developed, exhibits); (4) museum target groups (involvement and challenges); (5) museum principles (mission, vision, goals, representation of 21st century needs) and (6) the concept of social inclusion and its expression (associated words, possible difference between inclusion and social inclusion, collaboration with other institutions, social inclusion within workers, political role of museum). For the collection of the interviews, the first five interviews were transcribed and analysed; the questions were then adapted according to the emerging concepts and applied to the other participants. This process of question modification was continued throughout the data collection process until theoretical saturation occurred (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

## **Data collection and analysis procedure**

The data collection process was conducted individually and remotely (due to the covid-19 health emergency) through the Zoom platform in video call mode. With the consent of each participant, all interviews were recorded. The duration of each interview varied between 30 and 90 minutes. The process started in August 2021 and ended in February 2023, overlapping with the analytical process.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) the Grounded Theory approach is appropriate for the study, considering that little is known about the subject matter. The designs that can emerge from this approach are characterised by using the conceptual-inductive model as a reference, which, instead of verifying a theory, seeks to create it by means of induction (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). According to Charmaz (2006), Grounded Theory delves into the perspective of diverse participants and can reveal the complexity of the context.

Interviews were analysed using Atlas.ti 8 software on an individual basis. Grounded Theory methods (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) were used to collect data and generate theory based on the data, that is, the theory is based on the data, and the analysis of this data forms the concepts that the researchers construct. The data were analysed in two stages:

initially open coding was used to label and code words and phrases using inductive logic, which helps to classify and summarise each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006). In the second stage, categories and/or themes were generated to assist in the development of the concepts that form the substantive theory (O'Donoghue, 2007). The main activity of this phase consisted of contrasting the data, forming categories, establishing the boundaries between categories, and summarising their segments. With the second set of data, interviews were compared with data, holding and opposing concepts (Tesch, 1990). To ensure objective analysis, reliability and validity, researcher triangulation (Denzin, 1970) was employed.

### **Ethical considerations**

It is important to point out that the participation of those working in the museums was voluntary. Contact was made by email, through which they received information about the purpose of the research, the role of the participant, the mode of data collection and analysis and the guarantee of their anonymity. To this message was added the digital informed consent form, which had to be read and accepted by the key actor. Participants' identities were protected using pseudonyms.

### **Results and discussion**

From the analysis of the interviews, eight central categories were extracted that illustrate how social inclusion is understood in art museums in Chile: (1) accessibility, (2) diversity, (3) safety relevance, (4) communication awareness, (5) political awareness, (6) relevant skills, (7) non-traditional educational practices and (8) working structure in the museum, from which a diagram was designed to show the relationship between categories (see Figure 1).

The analysis of the data revealed three subcategories among the eight described: the indispensable categories (accessibility, diversity, safety relevance), the conditions (communication awareness, political awareness, relevant skills) and the facilitators (non-traditional museum education, work structure). In relation to the indispensable categories, these are necessary for the fulfilment of social inclusion, while the conditions create the necessary aspects and characteristics. Finally, facilitators help to achieve the indispensable categories for inclusion. It can also be observed that the relationship between most of the categories is reciprocal and they affect each other. In the case of the category security relevance, relevant skills and communication awareness, a unidirectional relationship is shown, where relevant skills of museum workers and communication awareness affect security relevance. Unidirectionality also appears in the relationship between accessibility and political awareness, as well as between political awareness and non-traditional museum education. The following sub-parts describe and discuss the eight categories found, which are shown in Figure 1.



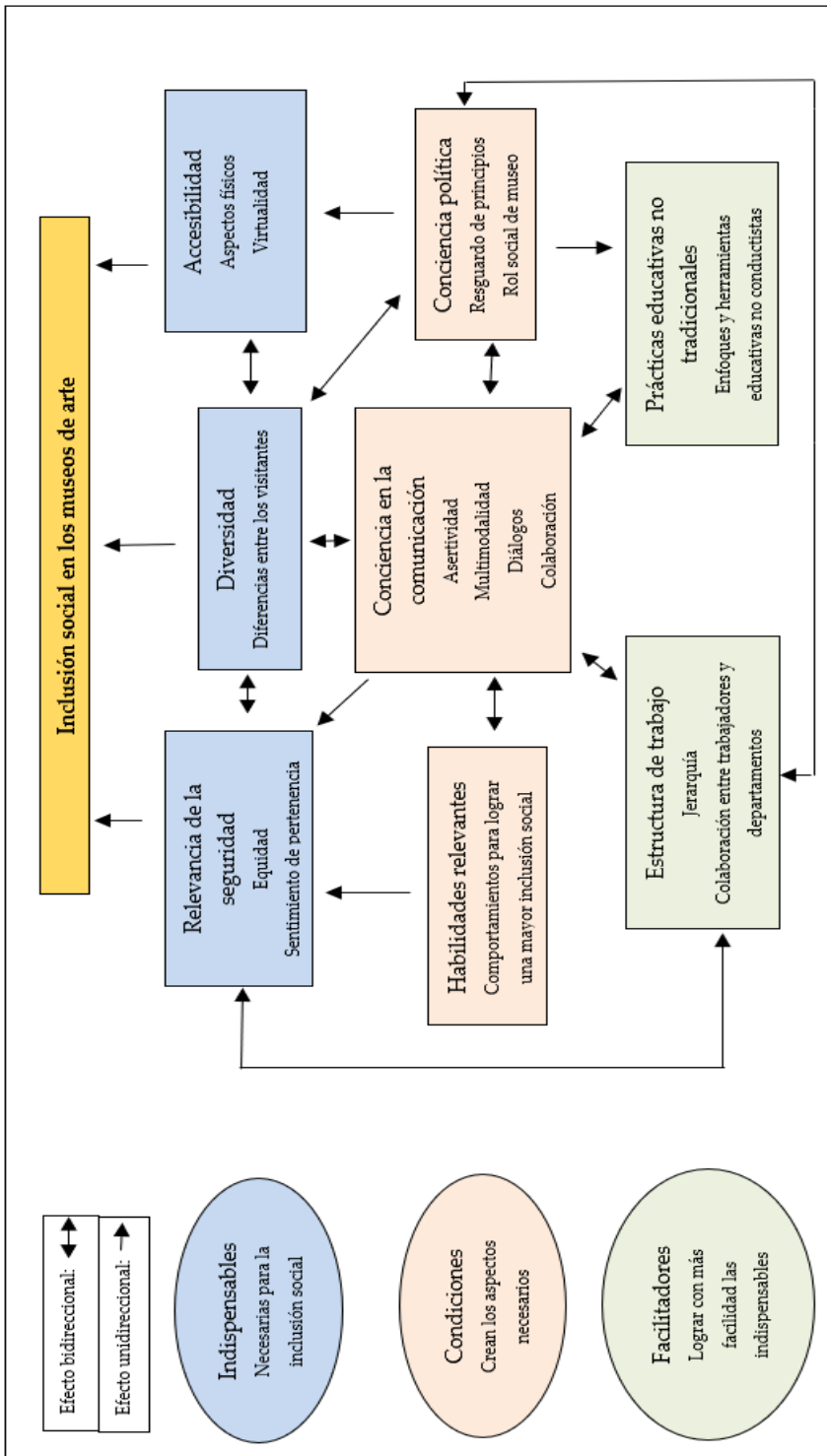


Figure 1. Conceptual map of connections between categories and types of categories relating to social inclusion

## Accessibility

With regard to the accessibility category, this covers the physical aspects of the museum, activities outside the building and the use of virtuality for the programmes, i.e. all types of visitors, with and without disabilities, from different socio-economic levels, from different cultures and ethnic groups, can access the museum without any difficulty. On the other hand, several of the museums investigated offer programmes outside their buildings and bring the exhibition closer to the localities. In this sense, the educator Emilia describes the category of accessibility as follows:

*There is another programme that we have (...) which is The Museum goes to school (...), which we include in inclusion, because not only works from the collection go there, but also those who educate, those who mediate, but also a deaf person, a blind person, the blind person does tactile mediation, the deaf person does a description of the work, or tells a story of a work in reality...*

In this regard, Bradford et al. (2021) point out that there are different inclusive strategies, such as universal design or travelling exhibitions, which serve to bring exhibitions closer to all types of visitors, with or without disabilities. Therefore, museums should and can create accessible spaces where people from different groups can interact, so there is a relationship between facilitating accessibility and building the loyalty of diverse visitors.

## Diversity

With regard to the category of diversity, this includes concepts such as neurodiversity, ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-economic levels, religions, age and vulnerable groups, as well as heterogeneity within the same target group (Candlin, 2003), which coincides with Emilia's testimony:

*We started to have a programme with deaf artists, and of course, that's when you realise that you have to have an interpreter. Then you realise that you don't need one interpreter, you need two, because in reality deafness is not unique and there are people who are deaf and there are others who are hard of hearing (...) so you realise the diversity and that's what is rich.*

However, heterogeneity can pose challenges in communication and in the attitude of the public and museum workers. Koutsouris et al. (2020) found in their study with young university students that, although there is an intention to invite and include deaf people from different cultures, ethnicities and/or socio-economic backgrounds in the activities, there is a barrier, in this case the use of sign language, which the participants in the study were not able to overcome. It is relevant to investigate, in future studies, how these barriers manifest themselves among museum visitors.

## Security relevance

With regard to the concepts of openness to accessibility and diversity, these are connected to the category of safety relevance, which encompasses fairness and the feeling of belonging, acceptance and familiarity with the museum. These aspects, if manifested, lead to physical, emotional and economic security for both the public and museum workers. Research by Maddock (2022) with refugees and Moorkens et al. (2022) in their study of people with dementia corroborate this idea and the importance of a feeling of safety and respect in the museum environment. In a safe and open environment, visitors can have the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge without feeling judged. In this respect, museum educator Andrea points out:

*It's complex, people are very afraid of getting it wrong! And they say "oh, teacher, but what if I get it wrong? "What does it matter?", I tell them, "just give it a brushstroke". "But, teacher, it's the only canvas I have. "It doesn't matter, if you can paint over it again, what's the problem", I said (...). So, at first I was very scared, I had a lady who wanted to learn to paint and in the first class she went home crying, she went home crying in the bus. She said to me "teacher, no, no, no, no". And she told me that she had cried all the way home, and then she came back, and came back, and came back...*

The mission, vision and objectives of the museum have the power to establish the basis of possible familiarity with both the public and those who work in the museum. In this regard, Sasaki (2019) points out that these elements must be clear and explicit, so that workers can identify with them, and the more open these topics are, the more confident the museum team will be. The director, Lorena, on this idea, says:

*For us, from the point of view of the models and values of the museum, we have teamwork. For us it is essential that the work in a museum (...) that works for education, is in a group of people, even if one is thinking about something different or has a different point of view. It is very important to have everyone's point of view, to gather everyone's point of view.*

## Communication awareness

Another relevant condition for achieving social inclusion in museums is communication awareness. Four aspects define this category: assertiveness and timeliness in communication between museum workers and visitors, multimodality, dialogues, and collaboration, a concept that Moorkens et al. (2022) consider necessary and emphasise the usefulness and necessity of collaborations between different sectors, agents and institutions.

The data analysis also showed the importance of knowing the needs and profiles of different audiences, knowing how to reach them and communicating appropriately with them. Likewise, museums must establish two-way collaboration links with other museums, cultural institutions, schools, universities, neighbours and other groups. In relation to this, the educator Catalina says: "from the perspective of territoriality, we have tried to reach out to institutions or organisations that help us to reach people who are further away, both geographically and culturally".

## Political awareness

The next category, political awareness, describes the safeguarding of guiding principles, such as mission, vision and objectives, the social role of the museum, its possible agency vis-à-vis citizens and the addressing of relevant social issues. According to Kotler and Kotler (2000) objectives should focus on the interests and needs of visitors and the strengths and weaknesses of a museum. The museum director, Lorena, states the following:

*I think the world is very crazy and it is evolving very fast. I think it's something you can't lose sight of, especially as a museum (...) So, I can say that we have some basic principles and one of our principles is to work (...) with socially important issues (...). We always try, and I think we succeed, to be at the forefront of current issues. But more than in the artistic avant-garde, in the social avant-garde. That's the theme we work on, themes of social relevance. That is the core of it.*

Some of the people interviewed also understand the museum as an agency vis-à-vis the citizenry, as at least the curator, Úrsula, puts it:

*I am thinking that, precisely in the context of the pandemic, we became active as a soup kitchen (...) for people in street situations or hungry people, who in Chile went hungry... And I dare say that they are still going hungry as a result of the pandemic, we try to make, to contribute with a, let's say, a small, small grain of sand. I think it's the fact that we set ourselves up as a canteen and try to be an agent in the community.*

## Relevant skills

In relation to the category of relevant skills, this implies possessing behaviours and characteristics that help to achieve greater social inclusion, such as: caring, valuing multiculturalism, empathy, attentive listening, good treatment, kindness, observing the environment, learning from visitors, an open mind, humour, curiosity, creativity, adaptability, educating oneself and making people feel comfortable. The educator, Maria, contributes with the following idea:

*They are the protagonists [visitors] and you learn from them, prepare yourself. That for me is inclusion. It is empathy, because deep down I am with them and I see if it works or not, if they like it or not and, also, not to say, "hey, I know everything". No, I don't know everything, there are many things I don't know and I want to learn from you....*

Regarding this category, Kim et al. (2018) found statistically significant findings in the school environment, according to which the likeability, conscientiousness and neurosis aspects of teachers' personalities influence how much students feel supported, and how they perceive their own academic ability. According to the authors, especially the subcategories of agreeableness, agreeableness and agreeableness can influence the socioemotional development of students (Kim et al., 2018). These encounters point to some characteristics reported by participants in this study. However, future research

may determine which aspects of personality are relevant in educators and museum workers.

### **Non-traditional educational practices**

In the case of non-traditional educational practices, these refer to the different educational approaches and tools present in activities and exhibitions and to the active participation of visitors in exhibitions and museum functions. The data analysis of the study revealed that Chilean art museums offer, in addition to permanent and temporary exhibitions, a variety of educational programmes for their audiences, such as guided/mediated visits, different types of workshops, theatre plays, concerts, among others. Generally, all museums try to adopt an educational approach more focused on visitors' experiences and knowledge.

According to Hooper-Greenhill (2007), in the participatory approach, which describes the above, visitors, in this learning experience, use both their body and spatiality, as well as their cognition. The educator, Emilia, expresses that she develops her practices from this approach, in addition to her knowledge of neuroscience:

*First there is a connection with the groups (...) then you talk. You always make a circle, and in that circle you talk a bit to get to know them, and then you play a game: a game of the body. So, and with what I learned in neuroscience, if we awaken the body, the neurons wake up, your mind will be more awake...*

Another example is the case of Ana, who takes a constructivist approach, i.e. in educational activities she stimulates and uses the audience's previous experiences and knowledge:

*The idea is always participatory, that (...) the public is also the one who can actively interact in the visit. It's not the idea that I'm talking like I'm in a monologue and they're silent and don't understand anything. The idea is that they can participate and that everything is super. That it's not boring, I mean that they don't go.*

### **Working structure**

Finally, the structure of work in the museum encompasses the dynamics, hierarchy and collaboration between workers and between different departments in the museum, which is also related to the clarity of responsibilities and roles of those who work. In line with this, Dragouni and McCarthy (2021) emphasise the importance of the relationship between clarity of responsibilities, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Effective communication and a participatory approach to organisational decisions positively affect workers, as expressed by the educator, Pilar:

*I have always been quite clear about what I have to do. That is to say, whether it is written or not, clarity exists because you either discuss it with your superiors, or you discuss it with your team or with the museum team.*

Dragouni and McCarthy (2021) also point out that job ambiguities and extra workload and tasks have negative effects on employees and can influence their commitment to the organisation. Andrea puts it this way: "I think that the profile of the educator, of the mediator nowadays, especially in national museums, has no limits, because one has to take care of many other things".

Martins (2016) states that the inclusion of people with disabilities in the staff team raises awareness and fosters the museum staff's understanding of their conditions. The author's findings are confirmed by the views of the educator, Isabel:

*An NGO that collaborated with him [a person with a physical disability] came and gave us a training to see how we could facilitate and the richness that it meant for us to work with a person with this type of disability, with him present. The truth is that it was very interesting, and I thought it was going to be very enriching for us.*

## Conclusion

In relation to the data collected and their interpretation, we have shown that several of the art museums in Chile that were part of the sample of this study exhibit a new perspective, centred on those who visit, and that several of the people interviewed are interested in the concept of social inclusion and wish to take it as a basis for the design of educational practices and the functioning of the museum.

This study identified and described eight categories, defined as central aspects for achieving social inclusion in art museums: accessibility, diversity, safety relevance, communication awareness, political awareness, relevant skills, non-traditional educational practices and museum working structure. Among them, accessibility, diversity and safety relevance are indispensable for inclusion to manifest itself, while communication awareness, political awareness and relevant skills are conditions that enable inclusion to be achieved. Finally, the structure of museum work and non-traditional educational practices facilitate the fulfilment of these topics.

In the group of museums investigated, accessibility, diversity and equity are mentioned alongside inclusion, and this study revealed that these three categories are necessary for their achievement. However, due to the small sample size of this study, we must take it as a preliminary precedent with a high projection, which allows us to communicate more exhaustive conclusions. Nevertheless, and as this is an unprecedented study in Chile, we can point out that social inclusion can be interpreted with the concepts that emerged and consider them when developing new research that contrasts these findings with how visitors perceive the concept in the museum environment.

The concept of social inclusion must play a leading role in the mission and practices of museums, as this will make it possible to reach different audiences and break down the elitist barrier that still exists in many of these spaces. It is also important for each museum to consider to what extent it is able to accommodate inclusion according to its resources and contextual characteristics.

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