

Education and communication concept

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I Introduction

The German Maritime Museum – Leibniz Institute for Maritime History (DSM) plays a key position in establishing the relationship between people and the sea in the consciousness of society as a whole. It offers its visitors the possibility in a very special way of examining the invention and implementation of maritime technologies and their significance for humankind. To this end, the museum is currently developing a programme, beginning with early childhood education, through school education to the further education of senior citizens, in order to anchor maritime themes in the curricula of pre-schools, schools, universities and other educational facilities. A supplementary multifaceted, modern programme is also being developed for other groups in society such as tourists, families, naval personnel, dockyard workers, recreational sailors, etc.

In formulating an educational and communication concept, the DSM is focusing on three points:

- the reinforcement of the USP within the German museum landscape;
- the setting of benchmarks against which the DSM can constantly check and improve its own quality;
- the creation of a differentiated offering without getting lost in the heterogeneity of the target groups.

Established in Programme Segment III – Transfer of Knowledge, educational work is an integral component of the DSM. All educational and communication services therefore refer to the DSM's guiding principles which also apply to research and collection, whereby some have a separate concept relevance for the

educational work due to their thematic connections. It is the task of the educational and communication work to make the research themes and focuses of the DSM more visible.

II Principles

1. Research

As a research museum of the Leibniz Association, the task of research – in addition to the other classic tasks of a museum: the collecting, preserving, exhibiting and communication¹ – is particularly important for the German Maritime Museum and is the "central basis for the quality of all other working areas of the research museum"². The object-related research of the DSM is interdisciplinary and based on international exchange. In this, the research in the DSM takes a findings- and application-based approach which strives for the transfer of knowledge in politics, science, economics and public life.

The DSM disseminates current processes and findings from its maritime historical research through publications and at specialist conferences. As an integrated research museum, however, dissemination is first and foremost through its exhibitions, which are undergoing a process of redesign that will continue through to 2020 and possibly beyond, and will allow visitors to gain insight into the themes of seafaring and shipping from various perspectives. Nevertheless, the exhibitions should not be static but rather flexible within themselves. The modules are designed in such a way that objects and content can be changed. This semi-permanent approach ensures that the DSM is in a position to exhibit current research themes and to encourage examination and analysis in this regard.

In a museum, research in communication work always also means collection. Since the selection of research themes by the DSM is always based on material evidence, the collection of archives and objects on seafaring (also as a cultural memory of society) becomes a foundation for its educational work. "This means that a unique, active, sensual and also emotional educational experience can be created that, particularly because of the authenticity of the objects, benefits the transparency of the scientific findings as well as sort of own researching of the exhibition objects by the visitors"³. A direct connection exists there where the museum's educational work itself is investigated, if – as is recommended by the GWK – museum education, didactic presentations and new ways of disseminating knowledge are examined scientifically and on this basis are developed into a museum-specific research area.⁴ Questions regarding the educational processes in the museum play just as great a role here as increasing the quality of educational work in the museum.

2. Participation

Visitors have long outgrown the passive, knowledge-recipient role of the museum-goer and have become active participants. The reasons lie, for one, in the changed self-image of the museums, which see themselves these days much more as a venue for exchange and of an authentic experience rather than a mere "stamp of knowledge". Correspondingly, their exhibition concepts and their communication with the

¹ ICOM Ethische Richtlinien für Museen (Ethical Guidelines for Museums), 2004

² GWK: "Bund-Länder-Eckpunktepapier zu den Forschungsmuseen der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft" (Federal, state and cornerstone paper on the research museums of the Leibniz Association), 2012, p.4

³ *ibid.*, p.12

⁴ *ibid.*, p.6; see also: <http://www.leibniz-historische-authentizitaet.de/start/> (latest access 7.2.2017)

outside world have changed. Modules which encourage action or feedback in the museum and the use of social media are just two examples. Moreover, the proportion of people in Germany who are active on a civic basis levelled out at around 35% since 1995 (when it was still below 25% of the population).⁵ As cultural venues, museums are a fundamental area for voluntary engagement.

With programmes such as PUSH and PUR having been established in the 2000s in order to encourage greater involvement of society in research and science, current scientific communication deals with the principle of "citizen science". Whereas PUSH and PUR were always conceived from the perspective of science and promoted understanding and acceptance, citizen science goes beyond this and encourages citizens to participate themselves in research – in various intensities and in its strongest form with the goal of driving science forward in a "jointly determined" way.⁶ For a research museum, the question is thus no longer: "What can the people do for the institution (museum)?" Instead it must be asked: "What can the people do for themselves or for society by using the museum?"

This is the cue for the German Maritime Museum. Citizens and visitors are involved in research in various ways. The processes and results of this collaboration are in return made accessible to all by the museum. The DSM integrates the empirical knowledge of people with maritime professional experience into exhibition projects to a much greater extent and allows visitors the role of active user and commentator. In the sense of participatory approaches, the DSM should also be established as a new social space in which present questions meet witnesses to the past, as is recommended by the Science Council for the Implementation of Transfer Strategies. This means in particular that museum employees are ready to get involved in this field in learning processes and other forms of knowledge production. To ensure that as many people as possible can participate in the work of the DSM, there are various offerings available to get involved in diverse ways and on a variety of levels of intensity. This can take place in direct involvement with the exhibition or in special projects and events. In this, personal support and supervision on site as well as the involvement of social media play important roles.

Citizen science is a step in the direction of greater participation in research that has been little tested thus far by the scientists. On the other hand, as a research concept, only methods tested and recognised by scientists will continue to be used. Cultural education can go beyond this and drive the development of the democratisation of research because it allows for other research concepts, too, such as aesthetic work. Artistic processes (e.g. art, theatre) provide the freedom to conceive, simulate, test and ultimately reflect together on societal scenarios, for example.

⁵ Federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Eds.): "Bericht zur Lage und zu den Perspektiven des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements in Deutschland" (Report on the situation and perspectives of civil engagement in Germany), Berlin 2009, p.34 ff.

⁶ See also: PUS: Public Understanding of Science < PAS: Public Awareness of Science < PES: Public Engagement in Science < PPS: Public Participation with Science. In: van der Auweraert, Ann: "Das Stufenmodell der Wissenschaftskommunikation" (The graduated model of scientific communication), https://www.zewk.tu-berlin.de/fileadmin/fl2/.../39_LKM_6_Auweraert_deutsch.pdf (latest access 12.12.2106)

3. Diversity

Diversity describes commonalities and differences such as gender, age, origin, religion, ability/disability, sexual identity, culture and education.⁷ A research institute must take this into consideration internally (in the sense of diversity management) but of course also externally: people come to the museum with various different needs and the museum must develop a visitation culture that corresponds to these. Specifically and as an example, the DSM has implemented barrier-free accessibility as far as possible in all its exhibition concepts since 2015, and has removed or avoided any obstacles for mentally or physically disabled visitors. The aim is to design communication programmes in a way that every person can participate and will be appreciated in his/her individuality.

For the DSM as an extracurricular place of education, this measure has particular relevance because inclusion has been anchored firmly in Bremen school law since 2009: Schools in Bremen "should, in the context of their educational remit, promote the inclusion of all schoolchildren, irrespective of their ethnic background, their nationality, religion or any disadvantage, in social life and the school community, and avoid the exclusion of individuals".⁸

The demographic changes in our society affect the education work in the museum. It means, on the one hand, thinking in a more target group differentiated way than before; on the other hand, however, designing concepts in a culturally integrative and transgressive way, too. The DSM has given itself the task of recognising and dealing with diversities sensitively. It sees itself as a public place for exchange and contact.

4. Cooperation

Cooperation is a firmly anchored principle in the self-conception of the DSM – not only with regard to research and exhibition concepts but also in the area of education and communication. It can already depend on reliable partners such as the LFI teacher-training institute in Bremerhaven or the Bürgerstiftung Bremerhaven civic trust. In the context of the research cooperation still in the development stages with other university institutes, the DSM regularly hosts historical or museum-related block seminars (University of Bremen, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg and the University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven).

The DSM strives to develop its multiplier network even further by offering joint further education events with the Teacher-Training Centre and the Landesinstitut für Schule (State Institute for Schools) and working together with the Koordinationsbüro für Kulturelle Bildung (Coordination Office for Cultural Education – Bremerhaven Schools Board) to establish partnerships with schools, for example.

With its location in the "Havenwelten" (port worlds), the DSM also seeks contact with the educational facilities in its immediate vicinity. It is currently in exchange with the German Emigration Centre to develop joint services. The DSM has also collaborated with the Klimahaus 8° Ost, the Bremerhaven Historical

⁷ See: Joint project "Nachhaltigkeitsmanagement für außeruniversitäre Forschungseinrichtungen (LeNa)" (Sustainability management for research institutions outside universities): "fact sheet diversity", 2016, in: <http://www.nachhaltig-forschen.de/fact-sheets/personal/> (latest access: 4.1.2016)

⁸ Section 3(4) Bremen School Law (BremSchulG), in: http://www.bildung.bremen.de/sixcms/media.php/13/neues_bremisches_schulgesetz.pdf (latest access: 12.12.2016)

Museum, the University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven, the Zoo am Meer and the Phänomenta for several years now in the context of the "Sommerschule Wasser" (water summer school).

Moreover, the DSM would like to continue to participate even more intensively in the BMBF programmes, whether in the lines of funding for museum research or for cultural education.

III Communication

1. Communication approach

In the museum, objects are set into a new context as pieces of history in connection with in-depth information; knowledge comes about by these means. Moreover, the museum creates social events through common experience. Against this background, the DSM prepares subject-related content in a way specific to the target groups.

The central question of the communication approach is based on the direct relationship between object and visitor. In this, the themes and objects are examined according to their relevance, i.e. their meaning for people and society. The starting point is the dialogue between the visitors and the object, i.e. the question of how the object and the themes communicated through it connect with the everyday reality of the visitor. In investigating the object, the visitors can discover connections to themselves, their environment and to other themes and objects. Communication forms are aligned with these intentions, i.e. they have to take the character of the object "seriously" and make it speak, on the one hand, and deal with the needs of the viewer in a way that is appropriate to the target group on the other hand. We approach the objects with the following questions, which are represented in the exhibit texts, media and through personal communication:

What is this?

What has it got to do with me?

Why is it being displayed in the museum?

Who made it and how?

How did it work?

Who used it?

How did it change?

What significance does/did it have?

How does it contribute to the theme of people and the sea?

What is its significance for research?

How has it changed research and the questions associated with it?

How does research alter my life/my perception?

2. Visitor orientation

It is important to the DSM to create an atmosphere in which the visitors feel welcome in the museum. We achieve this through target-group and needs-related discourse (e.g. for children and families). We want the visitors to

- experience a pleasant, entertaining and happy visit;

- move within a stimulating learning environment that allows and encourages discovery, discussion and reflection;
- feel supported and respected in their intellectual, emotional and physical needs;
- experience individual, empathic discourse, to leave the museum feeling refreshed and enriched, and to look forward to visiting again.

Visitor services, which is staffed by trained cashier and supervisory personnel, sets the framework for a successful visit. It distinguishes itself through the service staff's personal, service-orientated contact in the background (central office, event management) and on site (exhibition, cashier). This also includes low-threshold, needs-orientated services and arrangements (entrance prices, visitor policy, shop, café, the SEUTE DEERN restaurant ship, merchandising, opening hours, etc.) as well as the visitor-friendly, target group-orientated and as barrier-free as possible design of the exhibitions and the recreational, communication and service areas.

In order to check and improve recreational quality, evaluations for the purposes of visitor profile analysis have been carried out in the DSM on a regular basis since 2009. The surveys take place throughout the "Havenwelten" on behalf of the Bremerhaven Tourism Office. In this context, the prominence and the image of the museum or the satisfaction with the exhibitions are also determined. For the purposes of quality control, the educational offerings should also be subject to continual evaluation. In this context, training for the educational staff involved should take place on an on-going basis. The text and media offerings must also be evaluated continuously in the future exhibition and correlated with the newest research findings and technical developments.

3. Target groups

The target groups of the DSM are very heterogeneous and belong to the public, science and political spheres. Visitors include groups of the population who are fans of the sea and seafaring, so-called ship-lovers, members of promotional associations, scientific and academic specialists and families. The primary target groups include small family groups, schoolchildren of various ages and from various types of schools and college/university students; these should be acquired as repeat visitors. As a research museum of the Leibniz Association, the German Maritime Museum also strives to be recognised and used as a research and teaching platform in the university and tertiary education sectors. In the sense of "life-long learning", the museum also wants to develop a profile in the context of adult and senior education as well as to extend its offerings in early childhood education (pre-school children as "researchers"). At the same time, the interests of domestic and international tourists will be satisfied through the offer of a stimulating and unique exhibition visit.

To counteract the trend of falling visitor numbers, it makes sense, for example, to strengthen the bond with the people in the Bremerhaven region. Around a quarter of all workers in the port city are gainfully employed in the area of maritime business or a related area. Similar values could be assumed for the surrounding region. This target group should thus be given greater focus. The DSM does this by further developing the position of the museum as a central discussion platform for the nautically-minded population. In the context of its public relations work and its events, it picks up current themes such as climate change, the use of resources, urban planning, ocean research, coastal protection and shipbuilding. There should be special focus on generating visitors from amongst those groups who, because of their personal circumstances, have never been in the museum.

VI Practice

The most important instrument used for communication in the museum is the exhibition with original objects, supplemented by explanatory media such as text, film and audio materials, experiments and hands-on stations. In this way, the visitor is offered a deeper and thematically-focused insight. The great number of five accessible museum ships also offers a holistic experience with a variety of possibilities for association with the maritime way of life. Due to financial and personnel resources, the museum has up to now taken the opportunity to supplement and extend these through virtual presentations in only one exhibition unit. Within the framework of the digitisation strategy, the potential of virtual exhibitions is to be exploited in the future. This should open up the possibility, in particular, to take a virtual look "behind the scenes" in the museum's collection as well as in collaborating collections, for example from the circle of Leibniz research museums or other cooperating research institutions and projects, such as experiencing the goings-on on one of the research ships operated by the Alfred Wegener Institute.

1. Educational opportunities

Personal communication is of great importance in the DSM. The portfolio of offerings for individual visitors currently includes:

- general and themed tours
- tours in German, English and French
- tours of special exhibitions
- demonstrations (machines and objects are operated on a daily basis and explained)
- discussion events in the exhibition in cooperation with the VHS Bremerhaven
- participation in the "science lounge" of the University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven
- children's birthday parties
- Girls' Day (Future day)
- Sommerschule Wasser

The following offerings are at the preparation stage:

- Tours in Turkish
- Tours for the blind and visually impaired (adults and children)
- Holiday courses
- Educational holidays for adults

The DSM is currently developing a "bookable" museum educational programme for schools and pre-schools. These offerings are to be coupled with various different media communication forms corresponding to the age of the children. One further goal is the development of hand-outs for teachers.

The following offerings are planned with the opening of the Cog Hall:

- Mini tours with a strong narrative and exploratory character for pre-schoolers
- Tours for school classes staggered according to age group, e.g.
 - Interactive tours for primary schools
 - Dialogue-based tours for intermediate levels
 - Dialogue-based tours for upper levels on themes that encourage discussion
- Tours for "welcome classes" (classes for refugee children and young adults)
- Museum boxes on maritime themes for loaning to schools
- Time-limited educational projects financed by funding programmes

Here, the communication and visitor service teams work closely together and approach the various groups or visitors individually. The members of staff will regularly be posted at the "Miniport" or the "ship's bridge" and on the museum ships. They explain the exhibits, encourage the visitors to try something out themselves or point out details to them. In the Sunday tours, there is also the opportunity to discuss individual objects intensively with the DSM employees. In the sense of the close coordination of research and museum work, researchers should get involved in a more intense dialogue with the visitors, as already happens in the case of the "Schätze aus unsere Sammlung" (Treasures from our collection) event format. The children's birthday parties are discussed in advance in a personal meeting with the parents. Here, rather than on the concept of communication, the focus is on providing a pleasant experience in the DSM for the children and parents/guardians, who should in this way be acquired as "repeat visitors".

Alongside personal communication, the didactical materials provided by the DSM also have a great role to play in the educational work. Aside from a rally booklet (which has been guiding families through the exhibition since 2016), media tuned to the various school types and ages should be established in the mid-term, e.g. worksheets for schoolchildren and hand-outs for teachers.

2. Events

All events are based in terms of content on the (research and exhibition) themes of the DSM; this ensures that the programme retains its own character. In order to achieve a high recognition factor, there are events series with their own formats:

- scientific evening lectures
- specialist tours led by scientists of the DSM, for example
- workshops
- theatre and music performances in the museum, theatre or in public spaces
- "history workshops" (e.g. "The cog & I")

In addition, special events take place regularly: aside from "Open Monument Day", International Museum Day and the "Long Night of Culture" in Bremerhaven, the DSM also organises future action days based on either the exhibition, a research project or certain object groups (or individual objects), for example the Cog Day for families, or which are based on the theme of the specific science year.

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Credits / Legal Notice

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