



Embassy of Us:

Finding and delivering relevance

Appendixes

Master Thesis - Cesar Lucho Lingan



# 7. Appendixes

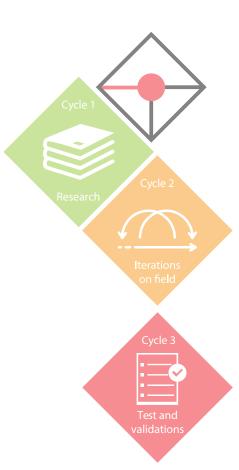
This section is focus on the appendixes. Here the reader can find additional information that complements the research and actions conducted during the project. The appendix are:

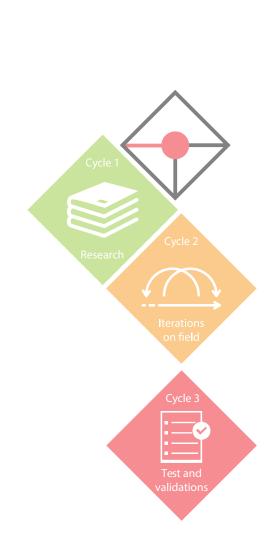
Approved Brief

Appendix 1: More than interviews.

Appendix 2: Iterative process of the C-RD tool. Appendix 3: Meaningful exhibitions session.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Cervantes' session.





### 7.1. Appendix 1: More than Interviews.



In this appendix you will find additional information about the people who were interviewed. Here, the interviewers will be presented, their role in the institutions and the topics that were addressed during the interview. It is important to remark that many of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, because that was the main language in many of the institutions.

As mentioned, here is going to be presented the addressed topics for each interviewees in an informal way, as the interview was conducted. In that regard, the interviews' outcome can be found in section "2.2. Exploring the institution realm: Roles, collaboration, exhibitions, organization."



## MWSEUM V%LKENKUMDE

From the Museum Volkenkunde, the interviewers were Eijda Tervoort and Martin Berger. Eijda is an exhibition maker at the museum and is involved in the process of ideating, organizing and executing the development of exhibitions. Martin is the curator in charge of the Central and South America collection, becoming responsable together with his team to provide knowledge together with his team about the pieces related to that region.

Eijda introduces me "source communities" -those that are represented through the exhibition and what is exhibited. For a good relation with these source communities, the VK Museum needs to achieve an agreement with the source communities about what is it going to be shown and how. For cases where reaching the Source community is complicated, the VK Museum contacts embassies. Embassies' help for this scenario, is about networking, funding and transportation across countries. However, telling a story through an exhibition can be difficult sometimes. Political interests can create complicated relationships (the other side of working with embassies). When not the case, the work with embassies focus on getting a common point of view with the people working there. The "negotiation" comes with the defined roles of each institution working together. Both are willing to tell a story, but to deliver a successful story as an exhibition experience, they need to understand what visitors know and don't know.

The VK Museum works with historical contents that need a contemporary point of view – similar to what was proposed by Du Gay, supported by the approach of Giaccardi. VK Museum works with a more interactive "less text more media" approach. It is necessary to have people that are related to exhibition development with an interactive –focus approach. This will reflect at the moment of presenting something with a more personal link what will help to trigger the curiosity and get the attention in its visitors.

VK Museum's visitors are already interested in going there to see things from different socio-cultural contexts. Sometimes they are more interested in the exhibition's topic rather than "go to the museum to see the pieces".

### MWSEUM V%LKENKUMDE

In the case of the Netherlands, there is a colonial heritage, that they need to understand. For Martin, his role as a curator is to be an "expert" of Latin America (although he humbly remarked there are plenty of topics about the region that he doesn't know). His role facilitates others to work with the collection for research, exhibition and community work. In the case of some museums, there is a cooperation role between curators and exhibition makers. The purpose of exhibitions makers is similar to a translator of the academic knowledge developed by curators to the public.

It isn't very easy to generalize the work of making an exhibition between different institutions. Some embassies are interested in promoting culture, and at the same time, there are embassies that not. In that sense, it is about people's attitudes.

Nevertheless, the reason for cooperation in developing this type of exhibitions is to give people from Dutch culture tools to understand how people from different cultures how they preserve and resist the eradication of culture while facing phenomena like colonialism – in early times- and globalization –nowadays-. With this, the ultimate goal is to make local people understand how and why Latin America is this mix (and clashing) of cultures around the world nowadays. A fantastic example of this is the following: Dutch people before the Eighty Years' War and the Aztecs that were being conquered by the Spanish ended up being sort kind of "compatriots" during a time between the 16th century.

There are plenty of stories that can be told, the problem is if the story will not connect, and consequently, not be relevant for the people. To deal with this situation, the VK Museum looks at how historical links can be used to track basic human needs/ Basic human questions across cultures. The answers to these needs/ questions can be served to establish potential connections. With this approach, the VK Museum invites the public to start thinking with a more "curatorial" mind-set. This helps to understand the possible different views of the same element, which relates to what Du Gay et al. explained. This ended up reinforcing the concept of shared humanity: We all have the same questions, but we answer in different ways. This statement would be the basis of what is known as Universal Themes, one of the most essential ideas for the entire project. Universal Themes (or questions) is an idea that applies to everybody regardless of the cultural, geographical or temporal contexts. This idea generalizes the idea of the human condition, human nature and concerns.

However, by using a more thematic approach (like labelling socio-cultural manifestations strictly with a Universal theme), it can be difficult not to lose the process of understanding the cosmovision of a culture.



From the Cervantes Institute, talking with Itziar Muñoz, Coordinator of cultural activities at the Cervantes Institute was important to discover the institution's perspective and process at the moment of developing an exhibition.

Itziar introduced an interesting concept that the Cervantes Institute refers to when its goal appears: Pan-Hispanic. Spanish, for this case, can not only be seen as a language but also a tool that facilitates the development of joint projects, ideas and goals with other countries that share the language. It is important to mention one intriguing aspect of Spanish: the verb "to be" is split into two different verbs: "Ser" and "Estar". While "Ser" can be seen as from a permanent and intrinsic perspective, "Estar" can be applied for temporal scenarios yet more objective and functional aspects.

This presents an opportunity: as it is explained during the sections related to technology and how people interact with it, the user is involved in an immersion cycle that helps them to understand the experience that is occurring to him/her in different stages. Across these different stages, the user will experience what is happening in both objective and subjective levels.

This phenomenon is where the "Ser" and "Estar" concepts can be used to understand, relate and differentiate the user's experience with the goals and meanings of the exhibition. Even further, it is possible to extrapolate this idea into two significant areas that were explained across the sections: The nature of experience and the particularities of sociocultural contexts combined universal themes. On one hand, the nature of the experience, as it was addressed, has a mutable nature. This nature is also affected by the elements that are part of the experience. Thus, the real nature of experience has a temporality factor with implications in the visitors' experience towards the exhibition and how the dynamics/interactions will be developed. On the other hand, the particular characteristics of sociocultural contexts and the universal themes across are extemporal, shared by different societies across different cultural, geographical and temporal contexts. These elements affect people in a more subjective yet permanently way: They are being shaped by them, because these help them to find a meaning to the experiences, even without knowing.

While working with other institutions, the Cervantes Institute address the cases where it can be possible to detect a "comfort zone" coming from some embassies and institutions. The comfort zone here is related to certain types of exhibition topics, procedures and methods that are used very often, affecting the diversity of exhibitions or presentations that an institute is able and willing to execute.



One of the most interesting talks was with the Medhak group, a group from TU Delft working in a project in Italy related to a co-curational goal. An aspect that encouraged the project was the curiosity of Medhak members towards the experience. Another point it was the necessity of aligning of the goals, key elements and procedures.

The team had an objective to put everyone involved in the exhibition-making process at the same level. This level is related to power dynamics and assertively between members. It is necessary to know the outcomes and the reasons why it is decided to "empower someone" - and be able to evaluate the factors. The difficulties that can affect this action are related to the terminology and how different parts understand the same words with different possible definitions. According to the team members, the problems that happened during the project were also related to communication problems.

The collaboration between the Medhak group and the ONG Mare Memoria Viva was involving an exchange of methodological knowledge. Knowing that it was right when both parts were able to acknowledge the usefulness of the tools, but also finding when both collaborators applied the same tools in different ways. Both of them used the tools as they needed, however, the differences arose at the moment of understanding the tool. Again, ending up in a terminology mix. Maybe they don't need new tools per se, perhaps it is about existing readapting tools. With this, an excellent insight appeared: The project should address the same terms and ideas between all the actors, to establish an alignment during the execution of it.

One of the most essential insights was the acknowledgement of the people's expertise from the institution and visitors. They already knew what was happening in the context, so the method/tool had to be focused on how they discover something new by using the tool/method knowing the value of it in the context. Metaphors were a powerful ally in this process. However, it was seen sometimes with a required "high-level professional expression" when in reality was not. People need to get rid of prejudices to achieve desire equality in power dynamics.

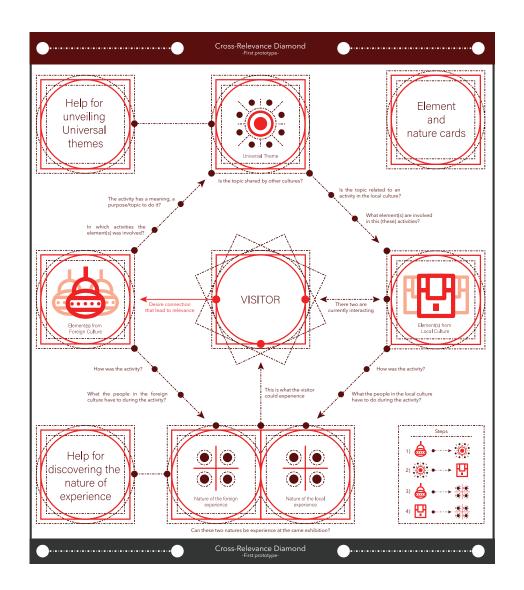
There is an intrinsic Human-Centred design approach in the process of finding relevance: It is necessary to understand that elements are mutable, for whom this is relevant. The museum that was part of the project has different natures: More open and more reflective, contradictory but a reality at the same time in that museum. That also applies to people, both visitors and those who are part of the institution.

## 7.2. Appendix 2: Iterative process of the C-RD tool.



This appendix presents the iterative process that the prototypes went throught. Each iteration will be presented with commentaries about the reception, feedback and changes that it was necessary to perform for next stage in the process.

In this case, the digital version will not be considered as part of the process, as it was based on the elements that were elaborated for the final version of the tool.





Element(s) from Foreign Culture







Universal theme in Local Culture



Universal Question



Nature of experience

Think about Sensorial experience

Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and/or tasting were required by the user when they have to experience something in a personal or collective

Nature of experience Help

Think about

Connection (Absorption, immersive)

attention required from the people is i brought to their mind (absorptive) or i happening virtually or physically arour

Think about

Participation

While being part of an experience, the actions of the person can alter its surroundings or not (obects, people or

Nature of experience Help

Think about

Involvement

The experience is guiding the feeling of being part of something with both mental and physical participation.

Nature of experience Help

Think about

nteractive/ dynamic experiences

What people have to do with som objects, environments , protocols involved, performances required by one or many people at the same time.

Think about

Cognitive memory

Sensorial memory

What people remember from the surroundings, knowledge but also of what they saw, heard, touched, etc. These memories are in constant update and changing.

Nature of experience Help

Think about Presence

The experience, no matter the type of

Nature of experience Help

Think about "Being there" effect

After the experience, the people felt

Nature of experience Help

Think about Fidelity with evious experience

The activity is similar to experie

Nature of experience Help

Force Force attracts holds or renels rorce attracts, holds, or repels
 Force influences or changes
 Force and inertia are co-dependent
 Force may be countered with equal or greater force

Universal Question Help

PASSIVE

Think about Power

Power is the ability to influence Power may be used or abused Power is always present in some form

Think about

Patterns

Patterns h ave segments t hat a

Universal Question Help

ACTIVE

**IMMERSIVE** 

Nature of experience

ACTIVE **ABSORPTIVE** 

Nature of experience

PASSIVE **IMMERSIVE** 

**ABSORPTIVE** 

Nature of experience

Patterns h ave segments t h repeated
 Patterns allow for prediction
 Patterns have an internal order
 Patterns may have symmetry
 Patterns are everywhere

Universal Question Help

Think about

Change generates additional change
 Change can be either "good" or "bad"
 Change is inevitable.

Change Change is necessary for growth.

Universal Ouestion Help

Community

Community members share a com-Communities follow patterns of grow

nd change when one community c ontact w ith another c ommunit

Universal Ouestion Help

Conflict

Conflict is composed of opposing force Conflict may be natural or man-made Conflict may be intentional of

Conflict may allow for synthesis an

Universal Ouestion Help

Exploration

Exploration requires taking risks
 Exploration confronts "the unknown"
 Exploration may result in "new findings or the confirmation of "old

 Exploration r equires leadership (i.e. Universal Ouestion Help

Order

Order may be natural or constructed
Order may allow for prediction
Order may communicate concepts
Order may have repeated patterns
Order may have elements of chaos

Universal Ouestion Help

Think about Relationships

elationships can be simple or comple Relationships m ay h ave positive and egative effects Relationships can be natural, forced,

elationships are connections Universal Question Help

A visitor could be a: Affinity seekers

Are visitor motivated to visit a particular lar museum o r exhibition becase i speaks to their sense of heritage and/o Big "I" identity or personhood

Visitor type

A visitor could be a:

Facilitator

The one who helps others to enjoy th experience. Their v isit is primari focused on enabling the learning and experience of others in their accompanying social group.

Visitor type

A visitor could be a: Recharger

They s eek a c ontemplative, spiritua Institution is like a refuge from the work-a-day world or as a confirmation of their religious/ spiritual beliefs.

Visitor type

A visitor could be a: Experience seeker

The institution is a must-see destina tion, "Been there done that" approach because is important for them.

Visitor type

A visitor could be a

Professional/ hobbyist

Visitor type

A visitor could be a:

Explorer

Curiosity driven visitors with a generic interest in the contents of the museum. They expect to dinf something that will grab their a ttention, c uriosity and

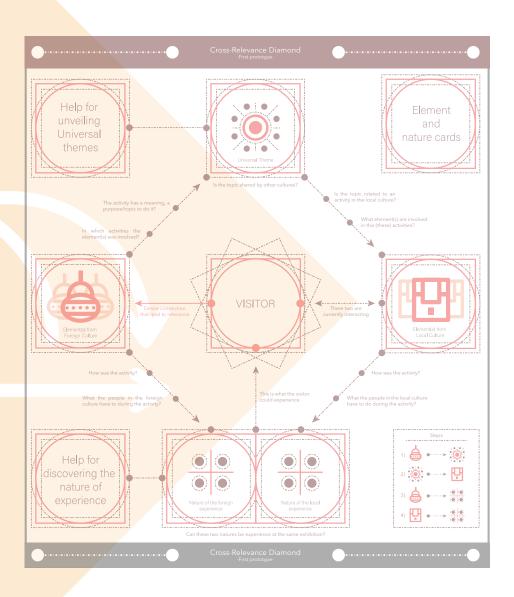
Visitor type

A visitor could be a:

Respectful Pilgrim

neir visit is related to a sense of duty or oligation to h onor the m emory o f ose represented at the institution.

Visitor type



#### 7.2.1. First version

The first version had the following goal: To explore the possibility of the graphical elements that would compose the map. In this version, an arbitrary decision with the graphical elements was taken to understand the potential user's reaction.

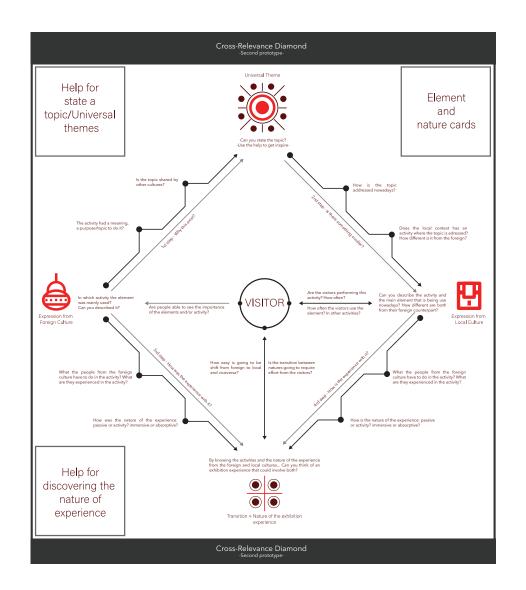
During the iterative process, the concept behind the map was understood by the users. The problem, of this version, was around the graphical elements which were perceived negative. The tool had to be redesigned. The graphical elements overwhelmed the tool's clearness, obstructing the steps the users had to take. The cards, however, were helpful. Nevertheless, the cards combined with the map it was an overwhelming experience due to the complexity on the map.

The goal for this first version was fulfilled. It was necessary to redesign the graphical elements around the diamond shape.

#### Elements in favour:

- The concept (method) behind the map was understood.

- The graphical elements were overwhelming.
- The graphics were based on an arbitrary decision.
- Combined with the cards, the use of the map was an overwhelming experience.





Element(s) from Foreign Culture









Universal theme in Local Culture



Universal Question



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Universal Question Help

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Universal Ouestion Help Think about

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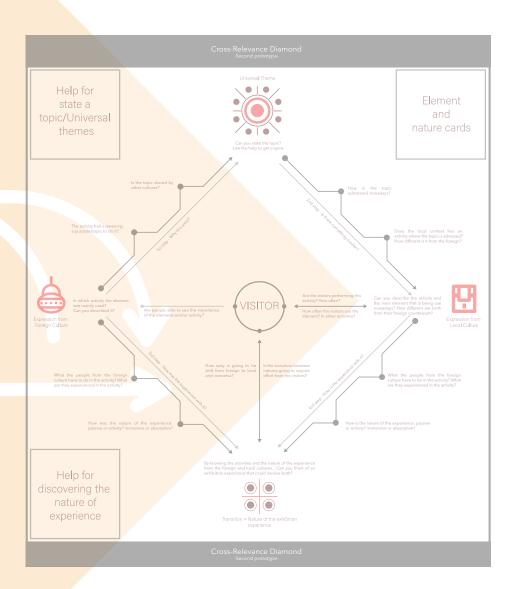
Visitor type

A visitor could be a:

heir visit is related to a sense of duty or bligation to h onor the m emory o f nose represented at the institution.

Respectful Pilgrim

Visitor type



#### 7.2.2. Second version

The second version focused on the map's redesign. It was decided to keep the symbols to and the steps based on the previous version. The cards were kept based on the feedback of the prior version.

There was a significant difference between the user's reception towards this version than the previous one. The method behind the map was more palpable to the users, thanks to this decision. This allowed users to focus their feedback towards the method, the steps, and the cards.

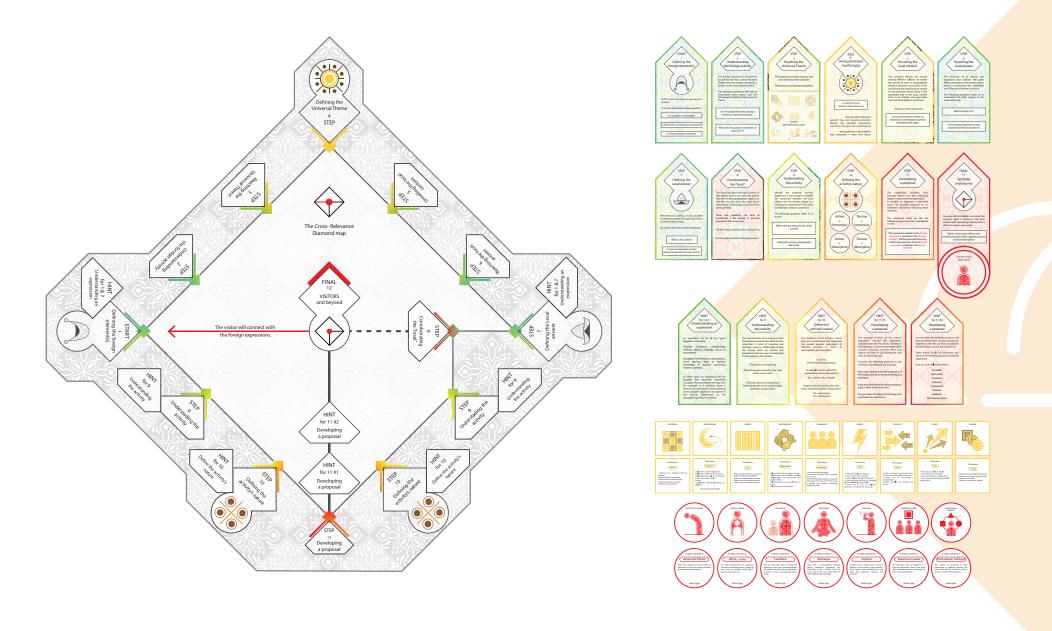
The first thing users noticed was the similar shape that all the cards had. This could become a problem if the user wanted to look for a specific card among the deck. In this version of the method, The expressions were exclusive to steps 1 and 7. Is, at this moment, that users asked for the relation between expressions and activities since the beginning. That was important, because the expressions lead straight to the universal theme line, while the activities were strictly related to the activities' nature. That lead to a redesign of the steps. In addition to this.

Furthermore, it was necessary to provide additional information among the steps to understand the goal of each one to proceed to the next one. A significant comment was related to the activities' nature identification. Users were not so sure about the utility of the merging the activities' nature as a final step from the diamond. Nevertheless, this second version show an increase acceptance than the previous one.

#### Elements in favour:

- The method behind the map was easy to understand.
- The simple graphical elements help to focus on the steps among the map.

- The cards' shape was the same, this could create confusion and annoyance.
- It was necessary to set the relation between activity and expressions for both sides: Universal themes an activities.
- The activities' nature need to lead to the merging, and not become the culmination of the activities' line.



#### 7.2.3. Third version

The third version represents the introduction of several changes. These changes were based on the stages in the "Relevance by Play Framework" combined with the feedback from previous versions.

The general graphical identity was redesigned. A concept similar to a tabletop game was introduced, which was received as a positive experience by the users. The majority of the elements that are part of the map were redesigned.

Following the map's redesign, the method also changed. Steps were redesigned to integrate with the cards. That idea leads to the creation of steps cards. These cards related to the steps through the number in each card/ step alongside the introduction of a gradient. As mentioned in the report, the required information could overwhelm its users. For that reason, the cards related to the steps and method were divided into steps cards and hints cards. The cards related to the visitors' types and the universal themes were redesigned. This decision focused on their general shape. This decision, alongside the previous mentioned, were perceived as positive by the tool's users.

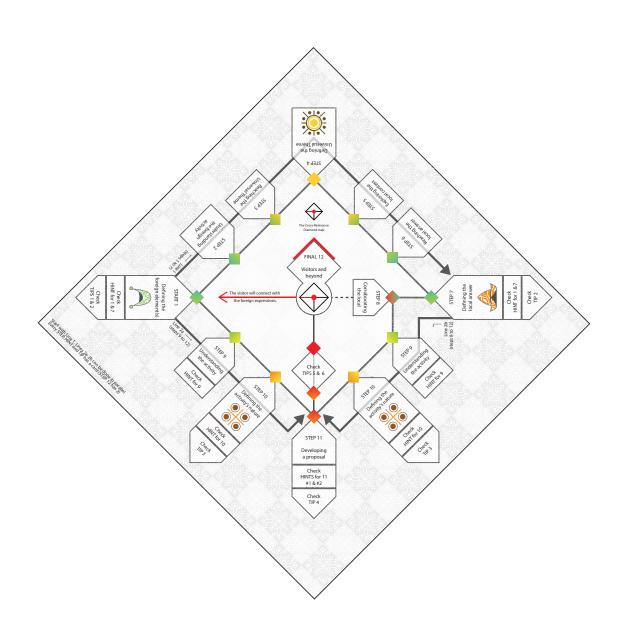
As it was explained, the method also was redesigned. The activities that involved the expressions were present for both sides (Universal themes and activities). The identification of both activities' nature leads to a statement formulation as the final stage. This formulation was an improvement because it allowed users to understand the relationship between activities.

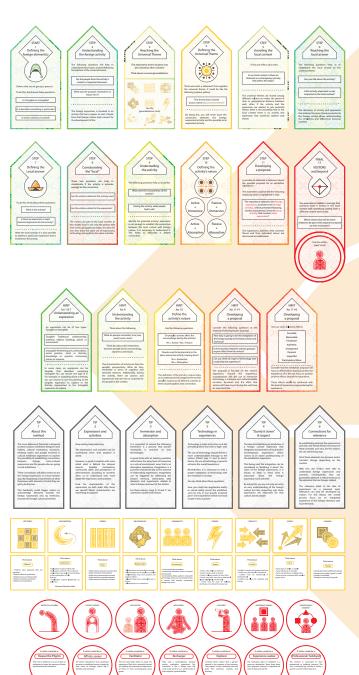
With this version, users were curious about the tool and open to interacting with it. However, they felt it was necessary to improve some minor details for an overall positive experience. The step cards' content had to prioritize each step's goal. Same as the statement formulation for the activities, the universal themes could benefit from this. Also, the map required some instruction to follow through the steps, supporting the steps' numbers and gradients.

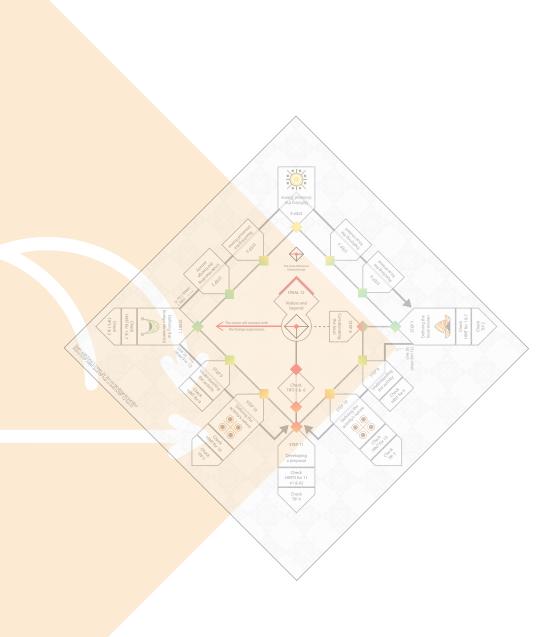
#### Elements in favour:

- The map's redesign based on a tabletop game was positive.
- The presence of steps cards and hint cards to support the steps was appreciated.
- The different shapes between generalizations and visitors' cards.
- The presence of a formulation statement as a step in the activities' line help to clarify the purpose.

- Universal themes' line could take advantage of a statement.
- Prioritization of what is required in each step through their respective card.
- It is necessary to show the path during the method's use.







#### 7.2.4. Fourth version

The fourth version is the culmination from the iterative process. In this version, some improvements were made based on the feedback from the previous version.

In general lines, this version presents some changes in the graphical depiction of the steps on the map. Now the steps that in addition to their own Step card, they will have a marker in the map showing if they also have a Hint card. The Steps and Hint cards were redesigned following the prioritization of each step's goal.

In addition to the Step and Hint cards, Tip cards were introduced as a way to explain general concepts that the method employs for reaching its goal.

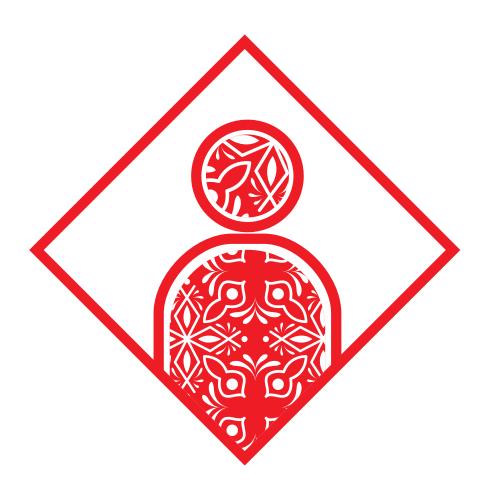
The general shape of the map was simplified into a square for printing purposes. The path that serves as the proposed typical way of use was highlighted with arrows to understand the process. Consequently, an explanation was elaborated to follow the steps across the map. Nevertheless, the physical version of this tool could be complicated for assembling.

#### Flements in favour:

- The tabletop map triggered curiosity and excitement on its users.
- The Step cards, Hint cards, and Tip cards transmit to the users the idea of a helpful tool.
- The different shapes between generalizations and visitors' cards.
- The universal theme is easier to address thanks to the statement.
- The presence of arrows and guides helps the tool's users with the interaction, complementing the gradient on cards.

- There are initial complications related to the map's assembly.
- It could be possible to reduce the amount of text among the Step and Hint cards.

## 7.3. Appendix 3: Meaningful exhibitions session.



This appendix focuses on the session conducted as part of the iterative process and the moments' definition (See section "3.2.1. Across the diamond: The method among the map".

The process was conducted by a facilitator who prepared the session with different activities to ensure that participants had their ideas aligned with the session's goal. In this appendix, the process of the session will be described, and the session's outcome.

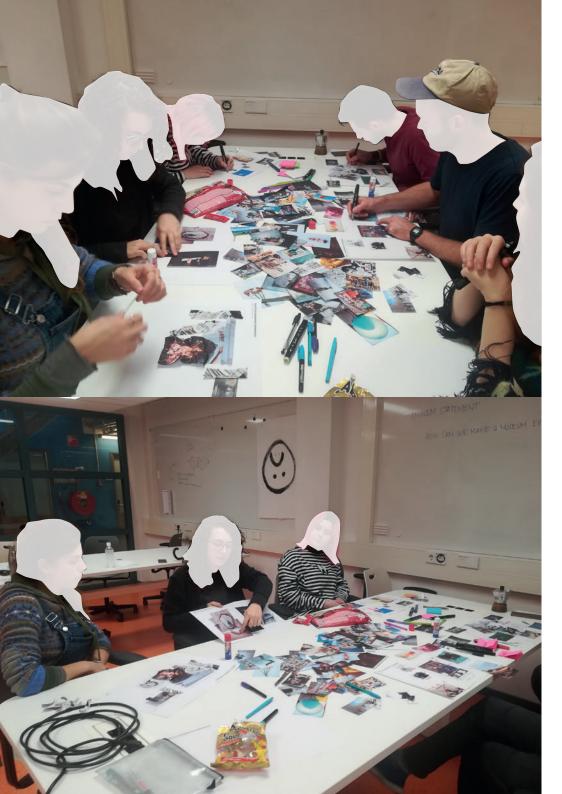
While usually this type of creative session would be focused on reaching concepts about to solve specific problems, the approach given to this particular session was to find out about what are the characteristics of a meaningful exhibition. Participants were people who can attend museums and cultural institutions and interact with the exhibitions in the institutions.



#### Introduction

Prior to the session, the facilitator asked the participants to bring an object that had a special meaning for them and somehow represents who they are as part of their culture. The participants had to introduce themselves through the object.

After the participants' introduction, The problem owner (me) gave a short presentation about the project and the goal of this session. To allow people to align with the general idea of relevant exhibition experiences, it was necessary to explain relevance as part of addressing something as important. With that approach, a question was formulated: How can we make a museum exhibition more meaningful?



### Collage activity

With that question in mind, participants were asked to elaborate a collage with different elements. The goal of this activity was to make them reflect on the word "meaningful" while considering the idea of exhibition experiences. Therefore, the collages were about their views about what a meaningful exhibition was (and was not) for them. After this activity, each participant presented its collage to the others and talked about the elements they used for them and how these helped them to represent qualities of a meaningful experience.

The talk between participants was valuable for the session. While talking, participants were given keywords to other participants collages. These keywords were collected by the facilitator to proceed with the session.



### Clustering activity

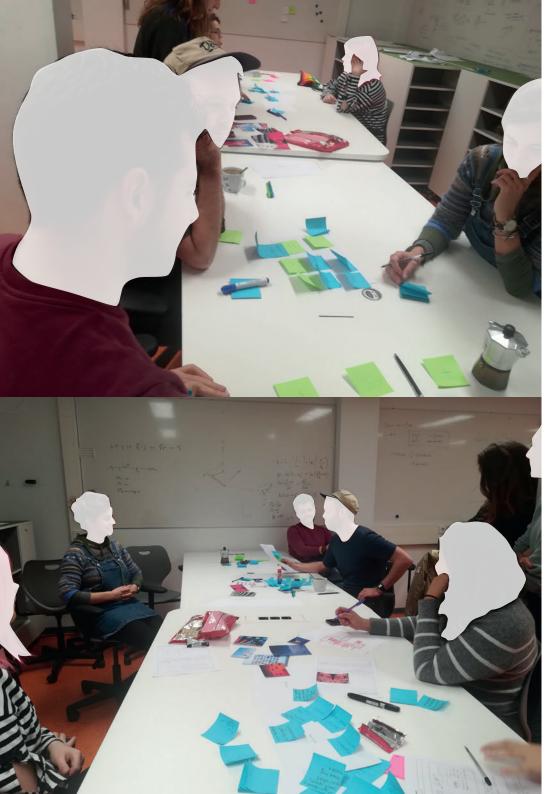
With the keyword written, the participants had to perform a clustering activity. The goal was to group the words into useful concepts based on the qualities collected from the collages.

With this activity, the participants identified 8 different qualities of a meaningful experience. This moment was considered important because it highlighted characteristics that in the main project would be the basis of a positive effect from a relevant exhibition experience.

With the identified qualities, the main question for the session changed. Instead of being "How can we make an exhibition experience more meaningful?", the question changed based on the resultant words:

- How can we make an exhibition experience more accesible?
- How can we make an exhibition experience more memorable?
- How can we make an exhibition experience more emotional?
- How can we make an exhibition experience more authentic?
- How can we make an exhibition experience more unexpected?
- How can we make an exhibition experience more personal?
- How can we an exhibition experience more impactful?
- How can we an exhibition experience more participatory/share?

As mentioned in section "3.2.1. Across the diamond: the method among the map.", 8 different positive effects were collected from this session based on this clustering activity.



### Concept activity

With the 8 qualities identified, the final activity was to develop a concept using them. The objects that participants explained at the beginning will be used as the centre of an exhibition. The participants divided into two teams an choose one of the objects to do the activity. They had time to reflect and elaborate an exhibition proposal based on the introduction given by the object's owners combined with the clustering activity and the resultant words/ qualities of a meaningful experience.

Once they finished with their proposal, each team presented their concept to the rest.



#### Session conclussion

The session turned out to be more valuable than initially expected. The guiding process developed by the facilitator was outstanding. It led to the collection of the positive effects/ qualities to could become essential pieces for linking the visitors with the conceptualization of ideas based on the use of the C-RD tool. Thanks, Fabiana!

As mentioned in the main report, these qualities resonate with the work developed by the History Relevance Initiative, where they describe the qualities of a relevant exhibition. The particularity around this resonancy was about how the participants reach to these concepts: By presenting their own perspectives. This scenario reinforces the idea of shared humanity, not only oriented towards universal themes that every society is addresing but also how people with different background can identify something as meaningful.

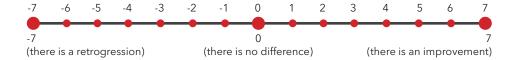
## 7.4. Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Cervantes' session.

This appendix shows the questionnaire given to the Cervantes team during the final session with them. The purpose of this questionnaire was not collect quantitative data, bur rather to trigger conversations with the team based on the value that each one of them gave to the different aspects that were addressed by the questionnaire.

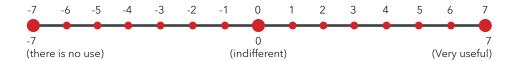


The following questions have three different levels: -7, 0 and 7. The value "0" is related to the processes and methods that are being currently done and applied.

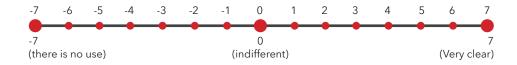
The efficiency of the method in comparison with we are currently doing:



The outcome's applicability:



Clearness of the tool (the map was easy to follow?):



Understanding the goal:

