

The Value of Collaboration and Sustainable Development Goals on the Issue of Native Artifacts in European Museums



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The Problem

- Museums are seen as relic of colonialism
- Misconceptions and misrepresentation of Native cultures
- Natives are advocating (particularly on social media) for the respect of their cultures
- Museums as centers of knowledge/education: they must be impartial, respectful, egalitarian and sustainable

The Aim

- Call for collaboration between museums and Native communities
- Use of the SDGs, namely Goals 4, 10, 11 and 16, to implement systematically respectful display of Native artifacts as well as collaboration

How can European museums, in the context of SDGs, intensify their collaboration with American Native communities on the issue of Indigenous artifacts to allow for collective knowledge and understanding?

Theory

- Museums are problematic: white construction, exoticism, neocolonialism = risk of misconception of Native cultures and ...
- Misrepresentations of Native cultures: artifacts do not have the same role, need to change the narrative surrounding Natives for the general public to understand Native cultures and history.
- Natives are advocating for their rights - translation in national (mainly in the USA) and international laws (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2008)
- Sustainable communities: protect and share the artifacts, museums can have a social impact but need of a realignment of authority and/or a decolonization of museums

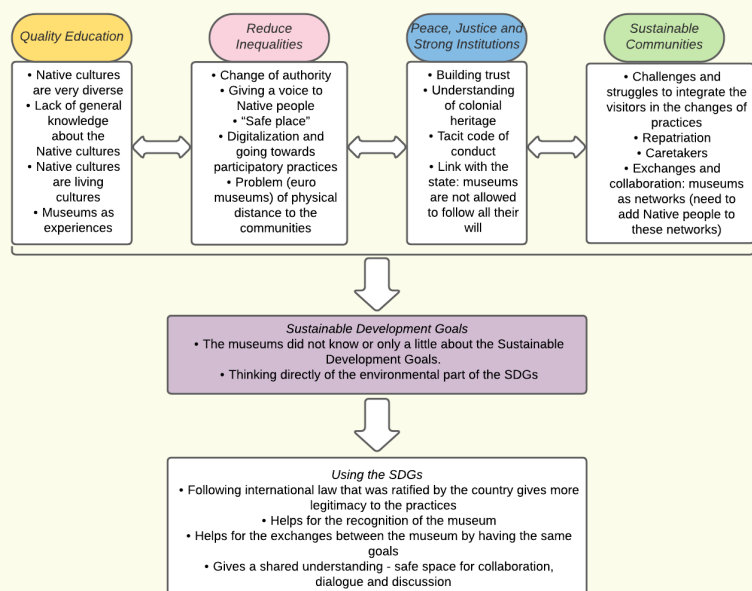
Methods

Qualitative strategy with a cross-cultural comparative design:

- Interviewing 3 American museums: the Field Museum, Chicago; the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC and the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, Onamia.
- Interviewing 3 European museums: Volkenkunde Museum, Leyde; Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt and Nouveau Monde Museum, La Rochelle.

Findings and Conclusions

Museums are places of education, they could be the best mediator between Native cultures and the general public. Nevertheless, they need to use the rights tools: SDGs are ones. They are gathering the need of respectful display of artifacts and collaboration with Natives adding other sustainable practices. They are opening many entryways for museums to be more sustainable and to allow curators to advocate to their governments for higher financial resources and political support.



To know more about Native cultures:



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