Museums Connect: The Next Chapter of International Collaboration

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What is Museums Connect?
“Communities in the US and abroad develop a broader knowledge about and understanding of one another’s cultures by participating in an innovative, museum-facilitated collaborative project.”

-American Alliance of Museums
“Museums create replicable models for international collaborations that reach beyond their physical walls to directly engage members of their communities.”

-American Alliance of Museums
Person to Person Cultural Diplomacy

Diplomacy

- Government to Government
- Government to Community
- Community to Community

Museums Connect
“A museum’s audience has never been so large, and not everyone will experience the museum by arriving at the main entrance.”

-National Museum Director’s Conference, 2002
“Increased global and cultural awareness and competency have become essential skills for 21st century U.S. citizens.”

-Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2010
Resources

Factors Contributing to Success

Challenges
Resources

Used
- Existing Programs
- Existing Audiences
- Supplemental Personnel

Desired
- Previous Project Info
- Funds
- Tech/Logistical Support
Existing Programs

Museums Connect follows models of scale.
Factors Contributing to Success

- AAM
- Community Support
- Planning
- Relationship Building
- Individual Commitment
- Flexibility

Project Coordinators
Participants
Project coordinators need to build trusting, personal relationships with each other.
Both museum professionals and community members are committed to (and excited by!) this type of work.
Challenges

Communication
- Press Communication
- Between Project Coordinators
- Between Participants

Logistics
- Lack of Time
- Technology
- Reporting
Program infrastructure is not a substitute for expertise in dialogue facilitation.
Museums Connect builds on strengths and exposes weaknesses.

- Dedication of program staff
- Capacity to build relationships
- Ability to incite community involvement
What does dialogue facilitation look like...

• With international communities?

• On digital platforms?
Looking Forward...

Museum professionals engaged in person to person cultural diplomacy need a forum.
Thank you!

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